

SPECIAL BUDGET MEETING

22 JUNE 2022

22**ADOPTION OF RATES FINANCIAL HARDSHIP POLICY FOR THE 2022/23 FINANCIAL YEAR**

M Wise | 63/2/10 | #6906468

RECOMMENDATION:

That Council resolves, pursuant to *section 121(b)* of the *Local Government Regulation 2012*, to grant rates and charges concessions to those ratepayers experiencing financial hardship as a result of COVID-19 by way of extended payment plans and interest waivers through the Financial Hardship Policy.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

This report seeks to formally adopt the Financial Hardship Policy to continue to provide assistance to ratepayers experiencing financial hardship as a result of COVID-19 by way of extended payment plans and interest waivers.

On 13 May 2020 Council resolved to grant rates and charges concessions to those ratepayers experiencing financial hardship as a result of COVID19 by way of extended payments plans and interest waivers through a Financial Hardship Policy.

COMMENT:

Council recognises the long terms impacts of COVID19 on the financial circumstances of some ratepayers. The Financial Hardship Policy will therefore remain in place for the 2022/23 financial year.

OPTIONS:**Option 1 (Recommended):**

That Council adopts the Financial Hardship Policy.

Or

Option 2:

That Council does not adopt the Financial Hardship Policy and proposes amendments to the policy.

CONSIDERATIONS:**Statutory:**

Adoption of the above Rates Concession is in accordance with *section 121(b)* of the *Local Government Regulation 2012*.

ATTACHMENTS:

Financial Hardship Policy (#6392844v6)

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mandy Wise'.

Mandy Wise
Executive Manager Cairns Shared Services

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lisa Whitton'.

Lisa Whitton
Chief Financial Officer



FINANCIAL HARDSHIP POLICY – RATES AND WATER USAGE

Intent To establish a policy for the provision of assistance to ratepayers suffering financial hardship due to the COVID-19 event.

Scope This policy will allow Council to consider assistance for ratepayers with outstanding debt for rates or water usage.

PROVISIONS

This policy only applies to ratepayers with outstanding debt of rates and charges and water usage charges.

To be eligible for assistance ratepayers must agree to a reasonable repayment plan.

Assistance is provided in the form of waiver of interest charges.

The repayment plan must be maintained as per agreement to continue to receive waiver of interest.

Interest is still applicable where no suitable repayment plan is in place.

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This policy is to remain in force until otherwise determined by Council.

General Manager Responsible for Review:

Chief Financial Officer

ORIGINALLY ADOPTED: 13/05/2020

CURRENT ADOPTION: 13/05/2020

DUE FOR REVISION: 13/05/2024

REVOKED/SUPERSEDED:

**Mica Martin
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**