

1. BACKGROUND AND PRINCIPLES

The State Government grants a rebate of rates and charges to those persons who meet the required criteria and hold a current pension card. In line with this concession, Council recognises the financial constraints for pensioners and has in previous years also granted a concession on the general rate and service charges to pensioners.

As the issue date of the rate notice can vary, Council recognises this may affect the timing of the receipt of pension supplements that are received by some pensioners, and, subsequently, their ability to make payment in full of their rates by the due date. Supplements that are paid quarterly to pensioners are paid after 20 March, 20 June, 20 September and 20 December.

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to all ratepayers within the Whitsunday Regional Council area who meet the required criteria for the State Government rebate of rates and charges.

3. POLICY OBJECTIVES

The objective of this policy is to offer a benefit by way of a concession on the annual rates charged in recognition of the financial constraints that are endured by many pensioners.

4. POLICY STATEMENT

- 4.1 In accordance with Section 96 of the *Local Government Act 2009*, Council will grant a remission, from the current rating period, on rates, being 30% of the gross rates and charges excluding special rates and charges, and rural and state fire levy/charges, to a maximum amount of \$350.00 as set in its annual Budget Meeting for a financial year to applicants who are pensioners and owners as defined in Section 123 of the *Local Government Regulation 2012*.
- 4.2 Should a pensioner seek to make application pursuant to Section 121(b) of the *Local Government Regulation 2012* for a deferral of liability to pay rates, then a written submission will be required in accordance with Council's separate policy – Rates Assistance for Eligible Pensioners.
- 4.3 Where a pensioner receives a "Pension Supplement" and/or requires an extension of time to make full payment of their rates due to the time of payment of this supplement or reasons of hardship, a written request and evidence from the pensioner is required and Council shall give consideration on a case by case basis. The extension of time may also include an extension to the availability of the discount.
- 4.4 Applications must to be made by the recipient/s of the pension/s on the required form. Approved pensioner's cards shall be accepted by the Chief Executive Officer as sufficient evidence that the person/s applying is/are an approved pensioner, or if no card is presented, through confirmation by the Commonwealth Department of Human Services and the Commonwealth Department of Veterans Affairs, in accordance with the definition 1 - 5 of the Administrative Guidelines for the Queensland Government Pensioner Rate Subsidy Scheme – amended 4 March, 2004.

- 4.5 In cases where the applicant is a joint owner of a property with a person other than their spouse, a pro-rata remission shall be granted.
- 4.6 Where an applicant has been granted a Council remission in accordance with this policy in a previous financial year, and where with applicant's pension has not altered, and residential requirements have not altered, confirmation by the Commonwealth Department of Human Services and the Commonwealth Department of Veterans Affairs that he or she is an approved pensioner, will be accepted in lieu of a written application.
- 4.7 The Team Leader Rates is responsible for the administration of the Policy and for processing applications in accordance with the requirements of the Act and Council's policies.
- 4.8 The Team Leader Rates shall ensure that this policy is formally reviewed and referred to Council prior to advertisements (as per Clause 4.10) each year.
- 4.9 The Team Leader Rates shall ensure that public notices are given by 15th June in each year advising of the terms of Council's policy.
- 4.10 Where a pensioner requests further time to pay in line with their pension supplement, then their written submission shall be presented to the Director Corporate Services for approval and identification of the specific time frame and discount period granted.

5. RELEVANT LEGISLATION

Local Government Act 2009

Local Government Regulation 2012

6. RELATED DOCUMENTS/PROCEDURES

Rates Assistance for Eligible Pensioners Policy
Application for Pensioner Rate Subsidy Form

7. DATE REVIEWED

June 2017

8. NEXT REVIEW

June 2018