

## 1. Policy intent

This Revenue Policy provides the parameters within which Council develops its annual revenue budget. Council will levy rates and charges in compliance with this policy and relevant legislation.

## 2. Scope

This Policy applies to all aspects of making and levying rates and charges, granting concessions for rates and charges, recovering overdue fees, rates, and charges, setting cost-recovery methods and developing infrastructure charges for Tablelands Regional Council.

## 3. Background/supporting information

This Policy complies and is consistent with:

- 3.1 *Local Government Act 2009*
- 3.2 *Local Government Regulation 2012.*
- 3.3 Rates and Charges Concession Policy
- 3.4 Debt Recovery Administrative Policy
- 3.5 Water Usage Concession Policy
- 3.6 Water Usage Concessions for Not-for-Profit Recreation and Sporting Clubs Policy
- 3.7 *Magistrates Courts Act 1921*

## 4. Policy statement

### 4.1 General

- 4.1.1 In accordance with the *Local Government Act 2009*, this Revenue Policy will be used in developing Council's budget.
- 4.1.2 Council will be guided by the principles of equity, fairness and user pays in the development of rates and charges to ensure a fair and equitable system is implemented for the benefit of all ratepayers.
- 4.1.3 This Policy is prepared in accordance with section 104(5)(c) of the *Local Government Act 2009* and section 193 of the *Local Government Regulation 2012*.

### 4.2 Making and levying rates and charges

- 4.2.1 In general, it is Council's policy that a *user pays principle* applies to all specific services provided to ratepayers and other users in the Tablelands Regional Council area.
- 4.2.2 Exceptions to the *user pays principle* include general services to the community as a whole when it is in the community interest to do so.

- 4.2.3 When formulating rates and charges, Council will have regard to the principles of:
- a. Equity by taking into account the actual and potential demands placed on Council and TRC infrastructure, the location and use of the land, the unimproved and site value of the land, the private and economic uses of the land and the land's capacity to generate revenue
  - b. Transparency in the formulation of rates and charges
  - c. Having in place a rating regime that is as simple and efficient as possible
  - d. Fairness by taking into account the different levels of capacity to pay within the local community
  - e. Flexibility to take account of any material changes in the local economic circumstances
  - f. National Competition Policy legislation where applicable.
- 4.2.4 In pursuing the abovementioned principles Council may avail itself of the following:
- a. A system of differential general rating
  - b. Minimum general rates
  - c. Utility charges (either fixed price or consumption based or both)
  - d. Special charges
  - e. Separate charges
  - f. Limitation of rate and or charge increases (capping)
  - g. Averaging land valuations.
- 4.2.5 In levying rates and charges Council will apply the principles of:
- a. Maintaining financial sustainability while minimising the impact of Council rates and charges upon the community
  - b. Distributing the burden of payment equitably across the community where possible
  - c. Clearly articulating what is the Council's and each ratepayers' responsibility to the rating system
  - d. Making the levy system as simple as possible to administer
  - e. Timing the levy of rates, where possible, to take into account the financial cycle of local economic activity in order to assist smooth functioning of the local economy
  - f. Maintaining equity through flexible payment arrangements for ratepayers.

## 4.3 Granting rebates and concessions for rates and charges

- 4.3.1 In considering the application of concessions, Council will be guided by section 120 of the *Local Government Regulation 2012* and the principles of:
- a. Fairness by having regard to the different levels of capacity to pay within the local community
  - b. Equity through the uniform treatment of ratepayers with similar circumstances
  - c. Transparency by clearly articulating the requirements necessary to receive concessions

- d. Flexibility to allow Council to respond to local economic issues.

4.3.2 The purpose of the concessions granted by Council is to:

- a. Reduce the financial burden of rates and charges payable by pensioners
- b. Support not-for-profit organisations where the land is considered to contribute to the social, cultural, economic or sporting welfare of the community
- c. encourage the preservation, restoration or maintenance of land that is of cultural significance
- d. Provide relief to ratepayers by partially remitting water consumption charges in cases of financial hardship resulting from an undetectable water leak which has occurred on a ratepayers property
- e. Provide relief to ratepayers by partially remitting water consumption where the water consumption is required to operate a home renal dialysis machine in their principal place of residence.

4.3.3 Further details are provided in Council's Rates and Charges Concession Policy, Water Usage Concession Policy and Water Usage Concessions for Not-for-Profit Recreation and Sporting Clubs Policy.

## 4.4 Recovery of unpaid rates and charges

4.4.1 Council will exercise its rate and charge recovery powers pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 4, Part 12 of the Local Government Regulation 2012, in order to reduce the overall rate burden on ratepayers.

4.4.2 It will be guided by the principles of:

- a. Transparency by clearly articulating the obligations of ratepayers and the processes used by Council in assisting them meet their financial obligations
- b. Making the processes used to recover outstanding rates and charges clear, unambiguous, simple to administer and cost effective
- c. Capacity to pay in determining appropriate arrangements for different sectors of the community
- d. Equity by having regard to providing uniform treatment for ratepayers with similar circumstances
- e. Flexibility by responding, where necessary, to changes in the local economy.

## 4.5 Formulation of miscellaneous fees and charges

Council will be guided by the following principles in formulating miscellaneous fees and charges:

- 4.5.1 Fees associated with regulatory services will be set at the full cost to Council of providing the service or taking the action for which the fee is charged, unless State Government determines the levy amount. Council may choose to subsidise the fee from other sources if it is in the community interest to do so.
- 4.5.2 Commercial service charges will be set to recover the full cost to Council of providing the service and may include a component for return on Council's investment.

## 4.6 Funding of new trunk infrastructure for development

- 4.6.1 Council requires developers to pay reasonable and relevant contributions towards the cost of physical and social infrastructure required to support their development. Council may choose to subsidise the cost from other sources to incentivise development and if it is in the community interest to do so.
- 4.6.2 Council's policy is to recognise the total cost of development, including the cost of upgrading trunk infrastructure, when formulating infrastructure charges for trunk infrastructure (water supply, sewerage, storm water, transport and public parks and land for community facilities) for new development. Council will have regard to the provisions of any relevant Priority Infrastructure Plan, Local Government Infrastructure Plan, Adopted Infrastructure Charges Resolution and any statutory requirements including regulated maximum infrastructure charges. However, Council may choose to subsidise trunk infrastructure upgrades from other sources, including general rate revenue, when Council believes that it is in the community interest to do so.
- 4.6.3 For developer contributions that are not paid by the due date and where debt recovery action has been unsuccessful, Council may apply the outstanding debt to the property and include any unpaid balance on the rate notice until the debt is paid in full.
- 4.6.4 Council will be guided by the following principles:
- a. Clearly articulating the obligations of new development and the processes used by Council in the formulation of infrastructure charges
  - b. Making the processes used in setting an infrastructure charging regime simple to administer and cost effective
  - c. Flexibility by responding where necessary to changes in the local economy and forecasted population growth.

## 4.7 Delegation of authority

- 4.7.1 Authority for the implementation of the Revenue Policy is delegated by Council to the Chief Executive Officer in accordance with section 257 of the *Local Government Act 2009*.
- 4.7.2 Authority for the day-to-day management of the Revenue Policy is to be delegated by the Chief Executive Officer to the General Manager Community and Corporate Services and/or the Manager Finance.
- 4.7.3 Authority to write off outstanding rates and charges and other receivables at the conclusion of debt recovery processes is delegated by Council to:
- i. The Manager Finance to the value of \$10,000
  - ii. The General Manager Community & Corporate Services to the value of \$25,000
  - iii. The Chief Executive Officer to the value of \$50,000.

## 5. Responsibility

Council is responsible for the adoption, amendment and repeal of the Policy and the Chief Executive Officer is responsible for the development and amendment of any associated procedures and guidelines relevant to the Policy.

## 6. Review

It is the responsibility of the Manager Finance to monitor the adequacy of this Policy and recommend appropriate changes. This Policy will be formally reviewed annually by Council in sufficient time to allow an annual budget that is consistent with the Policy to be adopted for the next financial year.

This Policy is to remain in force until otherwise amended/repealed by resolution of the Council. This Policy repeals the former Tablelands Regional Council Policy titled Revenue Policy 2022–2023 adopted 26 May 2022.