



Council Rates Concessions



Introduction

On 14 May 2015, the State Government announced a proposed Cost of Living Concession (CLC) to replace the concession formerly available on Council rates to pensioners, low income earners and self-funded retirees holding a Commonwealth Seniors Health Card. The proposed CLC has not yet been introduced to parliament but is anticipated to be part of the budget on 18 June 2015.

On the same day as the announcement of the CLC, the State Government amended the *Rates and Land Tax Remission Regulations 2009* abolishing concessions on Council rates. This abolition takes effect from 1 July 2015.

What do I do with the petitions that sought the reinstatement of concessions on Council rates?

The LGA has contacted the Deputy Clerk at Parliament House on what to do with the signed petitions. It has been recommended that any outstanding petitions now be collected and submitted to your local Member of Parliament to have them tabled regardless of recent outcomes. This will enable a natural conclusion of process for people who have signed the petitions and to ensure that Members of Parliament are aware of how many public members were engaged. Additionally it will enable an end tally for records of signatures received.

Who is entitled to receive the CLC and how does this differ from the concessions on Council rates?

The eligibility for the CLC has been expanded to include pensioners and low-income earners who are tenants, which means an additional 45,000 people will receive an extra \$100 per year.

	Outgoing Council rate concession (\$ p/a)	New cost of living concession (\$ p/a)	Change (\$ p/a)
Pensioners and low-income earners who own their own home	\$190	\$200	+\$10
Pensioners and low-income earners who are tenants	\$0 (ineligible)	\$100	+\$100
Self-funded retirees who hold a Commonwealth Seniors Health Card* who own their own home	\$100	\$100	No change
Self-funded retirees who hold a Commonwealth Seniors Health Card who are tenants	\$0 (ineligible)	\$100	+\$100

*Assumes recipients held a State Seniors Card.

The CLC is payable per household, not per individual.

How do people apply for the CLC?

Home owners who currently receive the concession on Council rates will not need to apply separately for the CLC.

Tenants will need to apply by 31 October 2015. Application forms for the concession will be available from 1 July 2015 by contacting the State Government Concessions Hotline on 1800 307 758. All constituents should be directed to this hotline for further information on the CLC or to www.sa.gov.au/.

Unlike the concession on Council rates, this CLC will be means tested for self-funded retirees. Self-funded retirees earning more than \$51,500 a single or \$82,400 a couple will not be eligible.

When will cheques be provided to recipients?

Payments are expected to be made directly to home owners by cheque in about September 2015 and to tenants in early 2016.

What is Councils role in the CLC?

It is the LGA's view that Councils do not have a role in the administration of the CLC. However, it is critical that Councils appropriately communicate the connectivity between the CLC and the former concession on Council rates. The LGA will be providing draft wording for use by Councils in communication with their constituents (e.g. proforma budget media release, insert with rates notice, etc.).

What wording should now be put on the back of Council rates notices?

The LGA has amended the back of the model rates notice to reflect the abolition of the concessions on Council rates and the introduction of the CLC. For a copy of the new wording please see the Content for Model Rates Notices on the LGA website here: <http://www.lga.sa.gov.au/page.aspx?u=263>

Will the concession for Community Wastewater Management Systems (CWMS) still apply?

Yes. The CWMS concessions have remained unaffected by the abolition of concessions on Council rates.

Will Councils still have access to the concessions data from the Department of Community and Social Inclusion (DCSI)?

Yes. The LGA has received confirmation that DCSI will be providing concessions data to all Councils via SA Water. However, it remains unclear if the provision of data will be ongoing past the 2015/16 financial year.

The LGA will maintain a watching brief on the legislation process of CLC and advise Councils further.

For further information please contact Bethany Loates on 8224 2038 or email bethany.loates@lga.sa.gov.au.