

RATES – FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Why do I have to pay Council Rates?

Council Rates are a form of property taxation based on property capital values.

What do I get for my Council Rates?

As it is a system of taxation the rates paid may not directly relate to the services used by each ratepayer. Council must provide services required by the community and the community must share the costs.

Please refer to the Council Services fact sheet for further details of services provided by Council.

How are Rates calculated?

General Rates

General rates are calculated in two parts:

- A fixed charge
- A differential general rate based on different land use categories

Fixed Charge

The reason for imposing a fixed charge (a flat amount) is to ensure that everyone contributes an equal base amount to the cost of administering Council activities and maintaining the services and infrastructure. The remaining revenue is then collected from all ratepayers based upon the value of each ratepayer's property and the land use of the property.

Differential General Rates

This component of your rate account is calculated using the capital valuation of the property multiplied by the rate in the dollar set for the Land Use Category applied.

Land Use Categories are: Residential, Commercial, Industrial, Primary Production, Vacant Land and Other.

The Capital Value of the property is provided to Council by the State Valuation Office.

Why has my property valuation increased?

Valuations increase for many reasons:

- Building or completing a house
- Construction of any additions (rooms, carports, pergolas etc)
- Landscaping improvements
- General increase in valuations due to increasing sales values

Refer to the Valuation fact sheet for further information.

Objection to Valuation

You may object to the valuation within 60 days after the date of the service of your first rate notice for the financial year. But note:

- If you have previously received a notice or notices under the Local Government Act 1999 referring to the valuation and informing you of a 60-day objection period, the objection period is 60 days after service of the first such notice;
- You may not object to the valuation if the Valuer-General has already considered an objection by you to that valuation.

A written objection to valuation must set out the grounds for objection.

Differential rates (and or charges) imposed by rates (and or charges) are still due and payable by the due date even if an objection has been lodged.

Objections are to be forwarded to:

State Valuation Office
GPO Box 1354,
ADELAIDE SA 5001
Phone 1300 653 345
Email: lsg.objections@saugov.sa.gov.au

Community Wastewater Management System (CWMS) Charge

Council operates and maintains sewerage schemes in several township areas.

Following a sector wide audit of all schemes in 2005 Council has been required to increase the annual service charge over a pre determined period to ensure Council achieves financial sustainability for each scheme.

All money raised through the charge is used for work on the CWMS.

The Property Units attributed to your property has been based on the "Code for Establishing and Applying Property Units as a Factor for the Imposition of Annual Services Charges for Community Wastewater Management Systems" provided by the Local Government Association.

NRM Levy

Council also charges a Natural Resources Management Levy on each property. This is a State Government Levy that Council must collect and pay directly to the NRM Board. The NRM board invests this levy in managing and protecting priority water, land, and marine and biodiversity assets.

Where does my rate money go?

Please refer to Council's Annual Business Plan for further information.

My State Government Concession is not showing on my Rate Notice?

Pensioner ratepayers applying for state government concessions for the first time and those receiving an eligible Centrelink benefit need to fill in the appropriate application to obtain the relevant rebate.

You also need to complete a new application form if you shift house.

Forms are available from council offices or by downloading from www.sa.gov.au/concessions – see the back of your rate notice for further information.

State Seniors Card ratepayers can also obtain relevant forms from council's office or the concessions web site.

Council Rebates

Certain persons and organizations may be eligible for a rebate, eg community groups, health and education organizations. Please contact 08 8828 1200 for further information.

Postponement of Rates – seniors

Ratepayers who hold a State seniors card (or who are eligible to hold a State seniors card and have applied for one) are able to apply to Council to postpone payment of rates on their principal place of residence. Seniors must pay the first \$400 rates charge each year but can postpone payment of any amount above this. Pensioner or Self Funded Retiree concessions can further reduce the amount to be paid each year.

Postponed rates remain as a charge on the land and must be paid when the property is sold or disposed of. Monthly interest charges apply to amounts postponed.

An application form and information sheet can be provided, please phone 08 8828 1200 for further details.

I'm having problems paying my rates – can I make regular small payments?

If you are having difficulties paying your rates Council is happy to negotiate a payment arrangement with you.

Please discuss your situation with the Rates Officer who will assist you with a payment schedule.

Part payments are accepted through BPAY, Centrepay, Australia Post Billpay or at our Kadina Council Office.

Centrepay is a great payment system for anyone who receives benefits from Centrelink. You can nominate to have deductions directly from your regular benefits for Council Rates and other utilities. Centrelink then pays the money directly to Council. Forms are available at the Council Office in Kadina.

Ratepayers who are experiencing extreme financial hardship please discuss your situation with the Rates Officer who will advise you of possible options available for financial assistance through Families SA and Council.

Payment of Rates

Rates are payable in four approximately equal installments. You may elect to pay any installment in advance. We will send you further notices for each quarter.

Rates can be paid by:-

- Post Billpay
- BPAY
- Paying in person at the Kadina Council Office
- Mailing your payment
- EFTPOS facilities are available for **personal payers only** at our Kadina Office.

Fines on Rates

Rates will be overdue if they have not been paid by the "last day for payment" shown on the front of your rate notice. After this date, additional charges will apply:-

- A fine of 2% of the amount due will be added immediately and
- At the end of each month thereafter, interest (at the rate prescribed in the Local Government Act 1999) will be added on any balance (including interest) not then paid.

Change of Address

It is very important to notify the Council of any change of address. This can be done in writing and emailed to info@coppercoast.sa.gov.au or posted to District Council of the Copper Coast, PO Box 396, Kadina, SA 5554.

Change of Ownership

A land broker, qualified agent or solicitor must address change of ownership details. When ownership of a property changes, liability for the payment of rates remains with the owner listed with the council until a notice of disposition is received.

Council will not amend a property record due to separation of owners. The billing address can be changed to the person accepting responsibility for the rates. However, both owners remain equally and severally responsible.

Council cannot remove a name from the property records due to death. The details can be amended to deceased if a copy of the death certificate is provided.