

Latrobe Council

Frequently asked questions – Rates

Councils are expected to deliver many services and to provide an acceptable level of public amenity for the benefit of all residents. Their main source of revenue is a property tax, commonly known as 'rates'. This tax is based on the assessed value of each property on a fixed date for all rateable properties across the municipal area. The following information will help you to understand your responsibilities as a ratepayer. It also outlines allocations of rates and charges, penalties, and concessions that may affect you.

[DISCLAIMER](#)

Important information concerning the interpretations of legislation and other policies is contained in this page. It is recommended that the [Disclaimer](#) be read in conjunction with the information provided.

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1. What are rates and why do we have them?

Rates are a tax levied by council. Their purpose is to support the council in providing services for the benefit of all residents. Rates help pay for:

- waste and recycling collection & disposal
- animal control
- community safety initiatives
- street lighting and cleaning
- local roads, footpaths and drainage
- stormwater disposal services
- operation of halls, centres and libraries
- maintenance of parks, playgrounds and sportsgrounds
- youth, family and senior services
- community events
- State Government charges for a range of services including fire service
- other works, programs and facilities.

Rates are normally made up of a **general rate** and a **service rate** and/or charge. Under certain circumstances, a council may levy a **construction rate** or charge, or a **separate rate**.

- **General rates**

A general rate is a 'progressive' tax, reflecting the land, capital or Assessed Annual Value (AAV) of property. It may involve an additional fixed charge which applies equally to every property.

=A council may make a general rate whether or not it provides any services to the land upon which the rating is made.

- **Service rate or charge**

A council may make a service rate for any, all, or a combination of the following services:

- waste management
- stormwater removal
- fire protection
- a community medical service
- an on-site wastewater treatment or disposal system requiring a permit
- any other prescribed service.

The service rate is also 'progressive', being determined by the same property value as the general rate. Councils may set a minimum amount payable for a service rate if it does not include a fixed charge.

Councils may levy a service charge in addition to, or instead of , making a service charge.

A service charge is a fixed charge payable on each property. The charge may differ in various parts of the municipal area depending on the type of service being provided and the circumstances in a particular area.

If a service is not provided or is unavailable, the prescribed rate or charge for that service may not apply.

- **Construction Rate or Charge**

A construction rate or charge may be set by councils in order to provide the infrastructure currently lacking for stormwater services to land that is within an established drainage district.

2. Who has to pay rates?

Generally, owners of land have to pay rates. Occupiers of land may pay the rates in exceptional circumstances. They may do so with the written consent of the owners. If someone other than the owner is paying the rates then the council has to be notified accordingly.

3. When are rates due?

Rates are paid periodically by a due date or dates set by each council

4. How can I make payments?

A council may allow rates to be paid by instalments instead of in one payment. You should check with council what arrangements are possible and the dates by which instalments are to be paid. These will be notified in a rates notice issued to each ratepayer.

If a ratepayer fails to pay any instalment within 21 days of the date on which the rates are due, the council may require the ratepayer to pay the full amount owing.

Methods of payment are usually outlined on the back of your rates notice and include payment:

- in person at any **Post Office** or **Australia Post agency**
- in person at council offices at **170 Gilbert Street, Latrobe**
- by mail to...**PO Box 63, Latrobe TAS 7307..**
Cheques should be made payable to **Latrobe Council** and marked 'Not Negotiable'.
- by Bpay – Call your bank, credit union or building society to make this payment from your cheque or savings account. You will need to quote biller code **868992** and will be asked for a customer reference number which is the Property number found on the top right hand corner of your rates notice
- by ringing **1300 886 451** during business hours with your credit card and property details
- online at **www.latrobe.tas.gov.au**. Select **Payments**

5. What is the Assessed Annual Value (AAV)?

An assessed annual valuation is an assessment of the market value of a property, at a specific date and in accordance with legislation. The Valuer-General determines the AAV under the [Valuation of Land Act 2001](#).

It is the gross annual income that, at the time of valuation, the owner of the property might reasonably expect to obtain from letting it to a tenant. The assessed annual value of the land cannot be less than 4 per cent of the [capital value](#) of the land.

6. What is the capital value?

It is the expected sum of money that might be realised if the land and any existing dwelling or improvements were offered for sale at a particular time. For instance, on a rates notice, it may show land value as \$40,000 and capital value as \$125,000. The capital value includes the land value plus the value of any buildings on the site.

7. How can I check my rates balance?

If you wish to check your rates balance, please contact council

8. Do I get a discount if I pay my rates early?

A Council may offer a ratepayer discount of up to 10% if rates are paid in full (not in instalments) before a date specified in the rates notice.

Latrobe Council offers a discount of 2% if paid in full by the first instalment date.

9. Am I entitled to a rates remission?

Under the provisions of the [Local Government Act 1993](#), a ratepayer may apply to a council for remission of all or part of the rates paid or payable.

To be entitled to apply, the [Local Government \(Rates and Charges Remissions\) Act 1991](#) requires that a ratepayer must be an eligible pensioner and must occupy the property as his or her principle dwelling on or prior to 1 July of the rating year.

To be an eligible pensioner you must have:

- a Centrelink Pensioner Concession Card OR
- a Department of Veteran's Affairs Repatriation Health "Gold Card" which bears the inscription "War Widow " or "TPI".

Applications for rates remissions must be received by the council by 31 March of any year in which the rates are calculated

10. What if I am experiencing difficulties in paying rates?

A ratepayer who is having difficulty in paying rates should contact their local council at the earliest opportunity to arrange a payment schedule that is agreeable both to the Council and the ratepayer. This is essential to avoid council taking legal action to recover the outstanding rates.

A ratepayer may also apply to council to defer the payment of rates on the grounds of hardship. An application has to be in writing and must be lodged with the council's General Manager.

A council may grant or refuse a deferral application. Any granted deferral may be subject to a condition that the ratepayer pay interest on the amount due.

11. What if my payment is late?

If a ratepayer does not pay the rates on his or her property a council may commence legal action against the ratepayer to recover the outstanding amount. If council takes such legal action the ratepayer may also be liable for the council's legal costs associated with the action.

If rates, or any one rates instalment, are not paid on or before they fall due, the council may impose a penalty not exceeding 10% of the amount owing, and/or charge a daily interest rate determined by the council.

12. What happens if I don't pay my rates?

If rates are not paid for a period exceeding three years, the council may sell a property or part of a property to recover the unpaid rates. The council can sell it by public auction or by direct sale.

If the owner of a property cannot be found, the council may apply to have that property transferred to the council.