

# RATES

## Frequently Asked Questions



### WHY DO WE PAY RATES?

Council is required to raise sufficient revenue to maintain general assets and provide services to the community. Rates and utility charges are a major part of Council's revenue with comparatively minor contributions from grants and subsidies, fees and charges and contract work.

General rates raised contribute to services such as:

- Local road maintenance and construction
- Asset maintenance
- Public libraries
- Public sporting and recreation facilities such as swimming pools, ovals, parks, gardens, playground and public halls
- Town planning and related services
- Regulatory services such as permits, and local laws including animal control
- Economic development activity, tourism, community arts projects and events.

### HOW ARE RATES CALCULATED?

#### General Rates

Council categorises rateable land based on land use with Councils twenty-nine (29) rating categories using the differential rating system. General rates are determined by dividing the amount of revenue required from different categories of land by the total rateable value of land for each category.

The general rate is calculated on an individual property by multiplying the land valuation by the rate in the dollar using the respective differential rating category. The minimum general rate applies when the resulting amount falls below the set minimum general rate for that category.

The value of your property, along with the main or primary land use is the basis for the calculation of the general rate. Additional information is provided in Council's Revenue Statement, which can be found on the website here:

[www.cassowarycoast.qld.gov.au/our-council/publications/revenue-statement](http://www.cassowarycoast.qld.gov.au/our-council/publications/revenue-statement)

### Utility Rates

These include:

- **Water Access** – Is a fixed charge for using the infrastructure that supplies water.
- **Water Consumption** – Is a variable charge for the amount of water that is actually supplied to and used by the consumer.
- **Sewerage** – Seeks to recover all costs associated with the provision of sewerage and waste water services, including the cost of ongoing maintenance and operations of the treatment plant system and capital works associated with each scheme.
- **Waste Collection** – Seeks to fund refuse collection services, the operation of waste management facilities, including landfills and other waste management services and programmes provided.

### HOW IS THE LAND VALUATION DETERMINED?

Your land valuation is determined by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR). Council uses the unimproved or site valuation to calculate the general levy. For more information on land valuations, please visit

[www.qld.gov.au/environment/land/title/valuation](http://www.qld.gov.au/environment/land/title/valuation)

### HOW CAN I OBJECT TO MY LAND VALUATION?

If you do not agree with your land valuation, you can lodge an objection within 60 days of the date of issue of the valuation notice to DNR. For more information visit

[www.qld.gov.au/environment/land/title/valuation/about/dispute](http://www.qld.gov.au/environment/land/title/valuation/about/dispute)



## DO I PAY FOR WATER CONSUMPTION AND IS THERE AN ALLOWANCE?

Water consumption is charged to promote water conservation and reflects the additional demands placed on the water infrastructure by higher water consumption.

You are charged for every kilolitre you use. There is no 'free water' allowance. It is however charged at different tier levels for the relevant financial year. Refer to the Revenue Statement for the latest tier and cost data.



## WHAT IS THE STATE WASTE LEVY?

The Queensland Government introduced a waste levy for commercial operators from 1 July 2019. Part of the State's new waste strategy is to increase recycling and resource recovery and reduce waste. This is achieved by applying a waste levy on all waste sent to landfill. This is regulated by and paid to the State government by Council based on the quantity of waste received.

## WHAT IS THE EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT LEVY (EML)?

The Emergency Management Levy (EML) is a State Government levy whereby Council acts as a collection agency only. Enquiries should be directed to the Queensland Fire and Emergency Services on 13 74 68.

## WHY IS SEWERAGE AND WATER CHARGED TO VACANT LAND?

If your property is capable of being connected to Council's water and/or sewerage systems, a water access and vacant sewerage charge applies. These levies contribute to the ongoing costs of providing and maintaining the systems ready for connection.

You will not be charged for water consumption if no water is being consumed at the property.

## WHEN DO RATE NOTICES ISSUE AND WHEN ARE THEY DUE?

Rates notices are issued six monthly and 30 days are given to pay in-full to receive the discount.

<b>Rates Period</b>	<b>1 Jan - 30 June</b>	<b>1 Jul - 31 Dec</b>
<b>Issue</b>	<b>End Jan</b>	<b>Early Aug</b>
<b>Due</b>	<b>End Feb</b>	<b>Early Sept</b>

## DO I RECEIVE A DISCOUNT ON MY RATES?

Council offers a five percent (5%) discount on the General Rate. The discount will only be allowed if payment of all rates and charges is received on or before the close of business on the last day of the discount period, as stated on the rate notice.

## WHY CAN'T I RECEIVE THE DISCOUNT IF I ONLY PAID ONE DAY LATE?

Council provides 30 days for arrangements to be made and several different payment options to ensure payments are received by the due date. Information on the discount is provided on the back of the rate notice and is advertised across a number of media channels during the rating period.

To ensure consistency and transparency with all property owners in the region, Council strictly follows the discount procedure as set out in the Revenue Statement and mentioned on the rate notice.

## WHAT HAPPENS IF I CAN'T PAY BY THE DUE DATE?

Should you not be able to pay your rates in full by the due date as stated on the rate notice, there are a number of payment arrangement options available. To find out more, please contact Council upon receiving your rate notice.

If no payment arrangement is entered into, you will be issued a reminder notice 14 days after the due date. Should you not contact Council at this time to make an arrangement, your rate file may be referred to Council's debt collection agency without further reference to you, and possible legal action taken.

For full details on Council's recovery process, please refer to the Council's Rates Recovery Policy

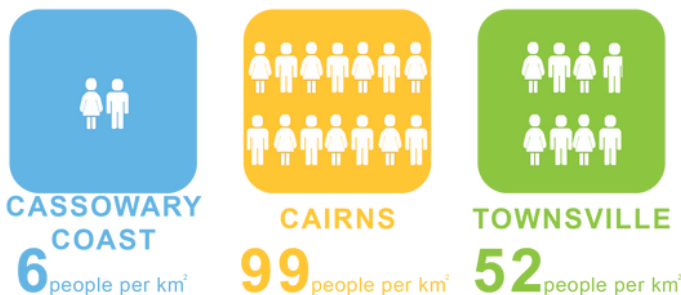
[www.cassowarycoast.qld.gov.au/downloads/file/1436/rates-recovery-policy](http://www.cassowarycoast.qld.gov.au/downloads/file/1436/rates-recovery-policy)

## WHY ARE CCRC RATES MORE EXPENSIVE THAN SOME OTHER COUNCILS?

There is more than one factor to consider when answering this question.

When comparing the rate notice to other Councils, it's important to look at and compare all utility charges, not just the net payable amount. You may find differences such as our rate notice includes being charged for water and sewerage utilities, whereby other larger Councils have their utility charges (water and sewerage) privatised, meaning they are billed separately through a private entity, making the net amount payable on their rate notice less.

- Cassowary Coast is one of the highest rainfall regions in Australia. This comes at a significant cost with more damage to roads, more rapid deterioration of facilities, more frequent mowing cycles, more expensive sewerage systems, the list goes on. All that rainfall also makes us the bridge capital of Australia, with 164 bridges compared to 40-50 in neighbouring areas. That's one bridge for every seven kilometres of road!



- Cassowary Coast rate base is smaller when compared to other councils, which is why the cost is higher for services and infrastructure.
- Our population per square kilometre:
  - The Cassowary Coast region has an area of 4,701km<sup>2</sup> and hosts approximately six people per/km<sup>2</sup>.
  - The Cairns region has an area of 1,687km<sup>2</sup> and hosts approximately 99 people per/km<sup>2</sup>.
  - The Townsville region has an area of 3,733km<sup>2</sup> and hosts approximately 52 people per/km<sup>2</sup>.

### What does this mean?

The larger and more sparsely populated the area, the more demand for infrastructure and services with less people to pay for it.

## CAN I PRE-PAY MY RATES?

Yes. Ratepayers have the option to make pre-payments to their rate files if they wish. This can reduce the financial pressure of having to pay a lump sum when the notice is due.

Automatic payments can be set up and made weekly, fortnightly or monthly via BPay through your internet banking or via direct debit through Council. Alternatively you can make a payment at any time using any of the options shown on the back of your rate notice.

Any payments made in advance will show as a brought forward balance on your rate notice.

## WHAT IF I AM A PENSIONER?

Council offers a maximum of \$300 per year for pensioners who meet the eligibility requirements of the Queensland Government's Pensioner Remission Policy. This amount is in addition to the State Government Pension Remission.

Please note to apply for the concession, the applicant must hold a current QLD Centrelink Pensioner Concession Card or a Veterans' Affairs Concession or Gold Card.

Seniors Cards and Health Care Cards will not be accepted. Refer to the Rating Concession Policy for full conditions and to assess your eligibility. Should you wish to apply, please complete an Application for Pensioner Rate Concession Form found on Council's website or at Council offices, and provide a copy of your pension card.

For more information about the State Government Pension Subsidy, please visit [www.communities.qld.gov.au](http://www.communities.qld.gov.au)



## ARE THERE OTHER CONCESSIONS AVAILABLE?

Yes. Concessions available are as follows. Please refer to Council's Rating Concession Policy for full conditions and eligibility requirements.

1. **Not-For-Profit** - Council offers assistance to not-for-profit community, recreation and sporting organisations;
2. **Dialysis Patients** - A non-chargeable water allowance of up to 190KL per year may be granted to those patients on a home renal dialysis machine; and
3. **Water Consumption** - Council understands leaks can occur and can go for long periods without being detected and cause financial difficulties. A reduction in water consumption may be permitted, should all conditions be met, as per Council's Rating Concessions Policy.

## HOW DO I UPDATE MY POSTAL ADDRESS?

All change of address requests are to be made in writing to Council. This can be done by completing the Change of Address Notification Form or by emailing Council. Verbal advice will not be accepted.

It is the ratepayer's responsibility to ensure Council is notified of any changes and has the most up-to-date postal address supplied.



## HOW DO I CHANGE MY NAME ON THE RATE NOTICE?

If your name has changed for any reason (Eg: recently married), and you require the rate notice to be updated, please contact DNR on 13 74 68 to amend the property 'Title'. A cost may apply to do this. Once the Title has been updated, DNR will notify Council of the change and Council will update the rate file accordingly.



## HOW CAN I SIGN UP FOR ELECTRONIC NOTICES?

Council offers two options to receive your rate notice electronically. Once you complete either of the below registrations, you will no longer receive your rate notice via post.

Please Note: You are still required to keep your postal address up to date with Council for other correspondence.

### Option 1

#### **EzyBill**

Go to [cassowarycoast.ezybill.com.au](http://cassowarycoast.ezybill.com.au) to sign up for emailed rate notices. Sign up for an EzyBill account and register your property.



### Option 2

#### **BPay View**

Enables you to receive and pay your rate notices in your online banking. To register, refer to the online brochure shown on the 'Rates Information' page on Council's website.



1300 763 903

[enquiries@cassowarycoast.qld.gov.au](mailto:enquiries@cassowarycoast.qld.gov.au)

[cassowarycoast.qld.gov.au](http://cassowarycoast.qld.gov.au)