

PENSIONER CONCESSION REBATES POLICY

Responsible Officer	Group Manager, Financial Services
Contact Officer	Rates & Revenue Co-Ordinator
Authorisation	Port Macquarie-Hastings Council
Effective Date	15/07/15
Review	Rates & Revenue Co-Ordinator on an annual basis
Associated Documents	Council Rating and Revenue Raising Manual Department of Local Government (2007); Local Government Act, 1993, as amended; and Local Government Regulation (2005).

1. INTRODUCTION

The Policy was introduced after consultation with the NSW Department of Local Government who indicated it was advisable for Council to put in place a policy pertaining to pensioner concession rebates.

2. POLICY OBJECTIVE

To provide eligible pensioner's with the statutory pensioner concessions relating to rates and charges under the provisions of section 575 of the Local Government Act 1993.

To provide assistance to eligible pensioners under sections 567, 577 and 582 of the Local Government Act 1993.

To outline Council's policy in relation to the granting of pensioner concession rebates to eligible pensions with respect to previous rating years.

3. POLICY SCOPE

The policy is applicable in relation to those ratepayer's who are in receipt of a Pensioner Concession Card (PCC Card) and are therefore eligible to receive the benefit of a rate rebate.

4. DEFINITIONS

Council officer:	A member of Council staff.
General Manager:	A 1 st tier management position and titled as such.
Director:	A 2 nd tier management position and titled as such.
Group Manager:	A 3 rd tier management position and titled as such.

“Pensioner Concession Card (PCC Card)” - Entitlement card that has been issued by either Centrelink or the Department of Veteran Affairs.

“TPI” - Gold Card embossed with TPI meaning Totally Permanently Incapacitated

“EDA” - Gold Card embossed with EDA meaning Extreme Disability Allowance

“WW” - Gold Card embossed with WW meaning a War Widow

5. LEGAL & POLICY FRAMEWORK

This Policy operates under Sections 567, 577 & 582 Local Government Act 1993.

6. POLICY STATEMENT

Please refer to Policy section.

7. IMPLEMENTATION

7.1 Roles and Responsibilities

The following Council officers are responsible for the implementation of this Policy:

- Rates & Revenue Co-ordinator;

The following Council officers are responsible for the adherence to this Policy:

- Rates & Revenue Co-ordinator; and
- Group Manager, Financial Services.

7.2 Support and Advice

The following Council officers may provide support and advice on this Policy:

- Rates Certificate Clerk; Rates Officer; and
- Debtors Clerk.

7.3 Communication

Policy will be communicated utilising the Port Macquarie-Hastings Council Policy Development Process.

Additionally:

Pre-Policy adoption – The community will be made aware of the proposed Policy via the applicable Council Business Paper.

Post-Policy adoption – A brief will be provided for Councillors, Executive Group and Group Managers.

7.4 Procedures and Forms

Pensioner Concession Application Form

7.5 Guidelines

The adopted Policy outlines how pension concessions are to be granted.

8. REVIEW

Review of this Policy will incorporate relevant legislation, documentation released from relevant state agencies and best practice guidelines.

The Group Manager Financial Services is responsible for the review of this Policy.

This Policy will be reviewed annually, from the previous review date.

A review of this Policy can be initiated at the discretion of the General Manager.

POLICY

REDUCTIONS FOR ELIGIBLE PENSIONERS

Division 1 of Part 8 of Chapter 15 of the Local Government Act 1993 provides for concessions for eligible pensions. The Local Government (General) Regulations 2005 and the Act dictionary prescribe an “eligible pensioner” as a person being the holder of a current pension concession card issued by Centrelink/Veteran Affairs or has a Gold Card which has been embossed with TPI, EDA & WW.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA AND REDUCTIONS AVAILABLE AS PER SECTION 575 OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1993.

The person should be solely liable, or jointly liable for a rate or charge levied on land on which a dwelling is situated and who occupied that dwelling as their sole or principal place of living.

The total amount of reductions will be:-

- (a) Reductions on ordinary rates and charges for domestic waste management services levied on any land for the same year are not to exceed \$250.00;
- (b) Reductions on water supply special rates or charges so levied are not to exceed \$87.50; and
- (c) Reductions on sewerage special rates or charges so levied are not to exceed \$87.50.

Rate/Water rebates will be granted to pensioners who have met the eligibility criteria and will be limited to the current rating year and the rating period immediately preceding it.

APPLICATIONS

- (a) Pensioners requesting a rebate are required to submit an application on the prescribed form available from Council.
- (b) The applicant must have a current Pensioner Concession Card or a Gold Card which has been embossed with either of the following: TPI, EDA or WW.
- (c) If an applicant has a War Widows gold card and who do not have a current blue Pensioner Concession Card will be required to complete a means test based on the current limits and allowances as supplied by the Commonwealth.
- (d) The application must be signed by the eligible pensioner or a person with power of attorney for the eligible pensioner, a copy of the Power of Attorney should be provided with the application.

- (e) The property must be the applicant's sole or principal place of abode and the applicant must be residing on the property.
- (f) Production of these cards together and verification with Centrelink/Veteran's Affairs is sufficient evidence to calculate the amount of the Rates and Charges reduction allowed under the Local Government Act 1993.

APPLICATION ASSESSMENT

- (a) Applications will be assessed against the criteria outlined in section 6 of this document. The assessment will initially be conducted by the Rates and Revenue Co-ordinator who will make a recommendation to the Group Manager Financial Services.
- (b) Each application will be checked and verified with Centrelink to ensure eligibility prior to the pension rebate being applied to the rate account.
- (c) If a ratepayer has applied for the current year and prior year rebate and the customer call centre has not provided the amount of the rebate, a letter will be sent to the ratepayer advising them of the amount granted.

REFERENCE MATERIALS

1. Council Rating and Revenue Raising Manual Department of Local Government (2007);
2. Local Government Act, 1993, as amended; and
3. Local Government Regulation (2005).