



KIAMA MUNICIPAL COUNCIL
your council, your community

POLICY

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| Policy Title | Hardship Policy |
| Related Documentation | Application for Hardship Rate Relief |
| Responsible Officer | Rates Manager |

Policy details may change prior to review date due to legislative changes etc, therefore this document is uncontrolled when printed.

Objectives

To provide financial relief to customers of Council experiencing difficulties in meeting their commitments in Rates, Debtors and other Fees and Charges.
Each application will be assessed on its merits.

Policy Statement

Assessment of financial hardship is to be made by Council following the completion of Council's 'Financial Hardship Relief Application Form'. Criteria for income and asset values shall be determined in accordance with the Centrelink 'Pensions - Income and Assets Test' as reviewed annually in September.

1. Rates

- Write off interest charges accrued over a period of twelve months from the date of debt, subject to the debt being paid in the agreed period.
- Reduce penalty interest by one half over a period of eighteen months on ratepayer accounts where financial hardship has resulted due to significant changes in the rateable valuation of their land.
- Limited to the single property owned and occupied (jointly or not) by the applicant.
- It must be the principal place of abode.

2. Debtors

- Write off administration fees for debts paid within a structured payment plan geared to clear the debt within a maximum twelve-month period.

DATA AND DOCUMENT CONTROL

Division: Rates Department

Adopted Date:

Revised Date:

Review Date:

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3. Fees and Charges

Waste collection charges

- Write off interest charges accrued over a period of twelve months from the date of debt, subject to the debt being paid in this period.
- Limited to the single property owned and occupied (jointly or not) by the applicant.
- It must be the principal place of abode.

Other Fees and Charges

- Due to the nature of the adopted fees and charges, any reduction or abandonment of a fee due to financial hardship being incurred shall be determined on an individual basis subject to Council resolution.

Council must be satisfied that the case falls within a category of hardship, alternatively fees and charges must not be reduced unless public notice given over a twenty-eight day exhibition period.

Scope

This policy will be available to all ratepayers and organisations within the Local Government Area. It is however anticipated to have a direct impact on less than 100 individuals at any given time.

Definitions

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| Date of Debt | The amount due to Council on the day an application is made including arrears and current annual instalments in any given year. |
| Penalty Interest | Interest raised in accordance with the Local Government Act, 1993 and as adopted by Council within its Management Plan. |
| Rateable Valuation | Land value used for rating purposes, ie net of allowances allowed by Valuation of Land Act, 1916 and Local Government Act, 1993 - Section 585. |
| Administration Fees | Standard flat fee as adopted by Council in annual Fees and Charges. |

Legislative Context

The following Sections of the Local Government Act, 1993 are included and influence this policy:

Section 564 Section 566 Section 567 Section 601 Section 610E

Principles

The Rates Manager will be responsible for administering the principles and that appropriate steps are taken to maintain a level of confidentiality with data supplied for the purposes of conducting a fair and equitable assessment.

Responsibility

The Rates Manager may delegate their responsibility to the Assistant Rates Officer, to ensure proper procedural documentation is maintained at a level satisfactory to Council and relevant legislation. All applications will be reviewed in consultation with the Manager Corporate Services.

Effectiveness of this Policy

Key Performance Indicators

- maintain or reduce the amount percentage of outstanding debts with Council through a formal customer assistance program.
- monitor the number of successfully completed applications within the scope of this policy.

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| Michael Forsyth General Manager | Sandra McCarthy Mayor |
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END OF POLICY STATEMENT

DOCUMENT HISTORY AND VERSION CONTROL RECORD

Contact for inquiries and proposed changes

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|-------------------------|---------------|
| Name | Linda Fury |
| Position/Section | Rates Manager |
| Contact Number | 4232 0406 |

| Version Number | Revised Date | Authorised Officer | Amendment Details |
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