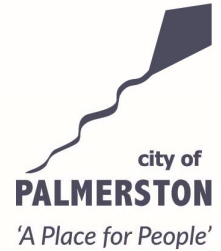


RATES CONCESSION

COUNCIL POLICY



PURPOSE

This policy provides a framework and guidance for applying rates concessions in line with the requirements of the *Local Government Act 2019* (NT) to eligible ratepayers.

PRINCIPLES

City of Palmerston is committed to providing a transparent, impartial and consistent process of application and consideration for rates concessions, financial hardships and requests to waiver charges, interest or legal fees.

DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this Policy, the following definitions apply:

TERM	DEFINITION
Deferment	The action or fact of putting something off to a later time; postponement.
Financial Hardship	Financial hardship is where a ratepayer is found to be unable, because of illness, unemployment or other reasonable cause, to discharge their financial obligations towards the City of Palmerston.
<i>Local Government Act 2019</i> (NT)	The <i>Local Government Act 2019</i> (NT) and its subordinate legislation, as currently in force.
Natural Disaster	A natural event such as a flood, earthquake, or cyclone that causes great damage or loss of life.
Public Benefit Concessions	As defined by <i>Section 250</i> in the <i>Local Government Act 2019</i> (NT).
Public Emergency	A public emergency as declared by the Northern Territory or Federal Governments.
Rate concession	As defined by <i>Part 11.8</i> in the <i>Local Government Act 2019</i> (NT) : A rate concession is one or more of the following: (a) a waiver in whole or part of rates or a component of rates; (b) a deferment in whole or part of an obligation to pay rates or a component of rates.



TERM	DEFINITION
Social & Affordable Housing	Housing leased under a prescribed housing scheme under the <i>Housing Act 1982</i> (NT); or Leased at below-market rates to low or medium income earners, essential workers or people with complex needs.
Waiver	A waiver removes the liability to pay and may be offered to include the whole or part of rates and/or legal charges.


POLICY STATEMENT

1. Financial hardship

- 1.1. The Chief Executive Officer may grant a rates concession, upon application, for the balance of a financial year for proven financial hardship.
- 1.2. Council encourages applicants experiencing financial hardship to seek assistance from independent financial counselling services when preparing and submitting applications.
- 1.3. Financial hardship applications must be accompanied by a reasonable payment plan.
- 1.4. If the payment plan is not honoured, the hardship application becomes void and overdue interest and any legal charges will begin to be applied to the ratepayer's account.
- 1.5. If the financial hardship is approved then any waiver is a one-off waiver for the balance of a financial year in response to circumstances presented at the time.
- 1.6. Financial hardships are reviewed annually.

2. Community benefit concessions

- 2.1. A rates concession may be granted if the Chief Executive Officer is satisfied that the concession will advance one or more of the purposes outlined in Section 250(1) of the *Local Government Act 2019* (NT).
- 2.2. Any application for a rate concession requires a written submission by the organisation explaining why the submission should be considered and how it satisfies the condition in section 2.
- 2.3. To be considered for a community benefit concession, applications must show evidence of advancement of one or more of the following purposes:
 - (a) securing the proper development of its area
 - (b) preserving buildings or places of historic interest
 - (c) protecting the environment
 - (d) encouraging cultural activities
 - (e) promoting community health or welfare
 - (f) encouraging agriculture
 - (g) providing recreation or amusement for the public
- 2.4. Only not for profit organisations are eligible.
- 2.5. Organisations cannot apply for a rates concession on a property that caters for gambling or that holds a license related to gambling.

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- 2.6. Applicants must provide copy of their most recent audited financial statements and the constitution of the organisation with their application. The constitution must clearly prohibit any member of the organisation making a private profit or gain, either from ongoing operations or as a result of distributions of assets if the organisation is wound up.
 - 2.7. To be considered for a rates concession, organisations must provide substantial community benefit by meeting at least two of the following criteria:
 - a) The facility is regularly used for junior development.
 - b) The facility is regularly used by members of the public other than members of the organisation at no charge.
 - c) Where unrestricted/free access is not possible due to the type of facility, the organisation must provide 'pay as you play' type activities.
 - d) Where unrestricted or unsupervised access is not possible to the facility due to the type of facility, organisations must demonstrate other methods of encouraging community access through open days, come and try events etc.
 - 2.8. Organisations are eligible for one of the following rates concessions:
 - a) Category 1: Not for profit organisations that undertake community activities and that predominately rely on member fees, community support and/or grants regardless if they have a special liquor license for events or social purposes can apply for a rates concession that reduces their rates to the declared minimum rate for that zone under the NT Planning Scheme;
 - b) Category 2: Not for profit organisations that hold a liquor license and operate a commercial bar, that is open to the public regular hours irrespective of events held at the location, or that has a license to sell take away alcohol can apply for a 50% rates concession or a concession that reduces their rates to the declared minimum rate for their zone under the NT Planning Scheme, whichever result in a lower concession.
 - 2.9. Notwithstanding that an applicant may submit all required documentation and satisfy the specified eligibility criteria, the assessment and determination of any application remains at the sole and absolute discretion of Council.

3. Social & Affordable Housing

- 3.1. Social and affordable housing providers may apply for a concession as defined in the *Local Government Act 2019* (NT) section 250(1)(ea) *providing social and affordable housing*.
- 3.2. Any application for a rate concession requires a written submission by the organisation explaining why the submission should be considered and how it satisfies the condition in section 3.
- 3.3. Applications must be submitted for individual properties. Council will assess each property on its own merits and will not accept or assess applications seeking a concession at the organisational level.
- 3.4. The concession may apply that reduces individual allotment rates to the declared minimum rate for that zone under the NT Planning Scheme.
- 3.5. To be considered for a rates concession:
 - (a) The housing must be leased under a prescribed housing scheme under the *Housing Act 1982* (NT) with evidence provided; or
 - (b) Leased at below-market rates to low or medium income earners, essential workers or people with complex needs with evidence provided.

- 3.6. Notwithstanding that an applicant may submit all required documentation and satisfy the specified eligibility criteria, the assessment and determination of any application remains at the sole and absolute discretion of Council.

4. Waiving of charges, interest or legal fees

- 4.1. Any other waiver of charges, interest or legal fees is to be submitted to the Chief Executive Officer in writing from the ratepayer or the ratepayer's agent, with reasons as to why the waiver should be considered.
- 4.2. Any waiver is a one-off waiver in response to circumstances presented at the time.
- 4.3. In the event of a Public Emergency such as a Natural Disaster, the Chief Executive Officer may elect to:
- a) Waive interest for a nominated period for ratepayers; or
 - b) Defer external recovery action to a later date.

ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

- City of Palmerston Declaration of Rates and Charges.

REFERENCES AND RELATED LEGISLATION

- *Local Government Act 2019* (NT)
- *Local Government (General) Regulations 2021* (NT)

POLICY DETAILS

OWNER	CEO	RESPONSIBLE OFFICER	General Manager Finance and Governance
APPROVAL DATE	07/07/2026	NEXT REVIEW DUE	Term of 12 th Council
RECORDS NUMBER	634322	COUNCIL DECISION	11/0472

