

Rates Harmonisation

Why is Council harmonising rates?

Council is required to create one general rating structure as a result of the Palerang-Queanbeyan amalgamation. The government has given Council a deadline to have one rating structure in place.

Does rates harmonisation mean everyone pays the same rates?

No. Rates harmonisation is about creating a harmonised rating structure across the local government area, rather than the two existing structures that remain from the former Palerang and Queanbeyan City Councils.

How does rates harmonisation affect my rates?

Under rates harmonisation, the creation of a uniform structure will mean that some rates increase, and some decrease in the first year.

There are two other factors that are affecting the rates calculation at the same time, from July 2020:

1. Council's total rates income for the year will be increased by the rates peg of 2.6%. The rates peg is not the amount that each individual rates assessment can increase, but the increase in the total rates income that Council receives.
2. The NSW Valuer General values land every three years. All properties were revalued this year, and the new values will be used for rating from 1 July 2020 to 30 June 2023. The valuation process is something Council can't influence and ratepayers should receive a valuation notice. Increases in land values do not necessarily lead to similar increases in rates; but they can cause significant impacts if individual properties experience rises or falls in value out of step with other properties across the Council area.

Does Council's total rates revenue increase?

Not through the rates harmonisation process. Rates harmonisation is about distribution of rates across the rating categories. Council's total rates revenue is capped at an increase of 2.6%, which is set by IPART (Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal).

Council also receives additional rates income for new subdivisions; with revenue used to pay for new infrastructure and services for a larger population.

How does my land valuation affect my rates?

The NSW Valuer General is the statutory independent valuing authority in NSW. The valuation process is something Council cannot influence. Land is valued by the Valuer

FAQ

General under the *Valuation of Land Act 1916*. These valuations are carried out every three years and you should get a valuation notice after it is done.

All QPRC properties were revalued in 2019 and these new values must be used for rating from 1 July 2020 to 30 June 2023. Ordinary rates are made up of a variable rate based on the land value of individual properties in proportion to the total value of all land in the Local Government Area.

Land values are one factor used by Council in the calculation of a landowner's rating liability. Increases in land values do not necessarily lead to similar increases in rates.

Changes to land valuations do cause a redistribution of the rates levied across categorised properties, but individual rates may not go up and down in line with the property value.

What if I don't agree with my land valuation?

Information about the NSW Valuer General's valuation process and how to request a review is issued with the valuation notices. It is very important to read that information as it explains what you should do if you have concerns about your valuation and how to go about requesting a review of your valuation.

As valuations are provided by NSW Land & Property Information on behalf of the NSW Valuer General who is the statutory independent valuing authority, all enquiries should be directed to NSW Land & Property Information:

Phone: 1800 110 038

Website: www.valuergeneral.nsw.gov.au

Email: valuationenquiry@property.nsw.gov.au

The NSW Land & Property Information and NSW Valuer General's Office websites contain information on the valuation process and how to request a review/lodge an objection.

What are the rating categories?

Each parcel of land in New South Wales falls within one of four categories for rating purposes and Council is required to categorise each one based on its characteristics and use.

1. Farmland - where the dominant use of the land is for farming or agricultural production, where the primary production business has a significant and substantial nature and a purpose of making a profit. Hobby farms do not meet the definition.
2. Residential - where the dominant use is for residential accommodation or rural residential land (except for hotels, caravan parks, nursing homes etc.). Vacant land is categorised as residential, if it is zoned or designated for use as residential purposes.
3. Mining - where the dominant use is for a coal or metalliferous mine.

4. Business - all land that cannot be categorised as farmland, residential or mining.

What if I don't agree with my rating category?

If you don't agree with Council's categorisation of your property, you can contact us to request a review.

If you still don't agree with the categorisation following the review, you can appeal to the Land and Environment Court within 30 days of receiving our decision.

Can I find out how much my rates would be under the proposed structure?

If you received your land value, you can use the following formula to calculate what your rates would be under the proposed structure.

The calculation for the cost of rates is:

$$\frac{\text{Land value} \times \text{ad valorem amount}}{100} + \text{base amount}$$

If you haven't received your land valuation, please contact NSW Land & Property – they are the statutory independent valuing authority.

Phone: 1800 110 038

Website: <http://www.valuergeneral.nsw.gov.au>

Email: valuationenquiry@property.nsw.gov.au

Rates staff will be available at the drop-in community engagement sessions in Braidwood, Bungendore and Queanbeyan. Meeting dates and times to be confirmed. We will have a database of the land valuations provided by the Valuer General that we can use to calculate your rates against the proposed structure – if you haven't received your valuation notice.

What if I don't know my category / subcategory?

Staff can advise the current category ie residential, business, farmland or mining.

The subcategory can be identified by looking at the maps linked on our website in the rates harmonisation area.

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What do I do if I have trouble paying my rates?

If you are having difficulty paying your rates, contact Council as soon as possible and discuss your situation frankly with the council staff. Make it clear what you can afford to pay or ask the council to put a proposal to you.

Council recognises there are cases of genuine financial hardship requiring respect and compassion in special circumstances. Council has adopted a Financial Hardship Assistance Policy that requires us to apply the principles of fairness, integrity, appropriate confidentiality and compliance to hardship applications.

What happens next?

Council is seeking community feedback on the proposed rating structure. The community engagement period is open until Thursday 9 April. Council will consider all community feedback at the Council meeting on 22 April, and will formulate a draft Revenue Policy.

The Revenue Policy will be on public exhibition for a further 28 day period, and a final round of consultation, before being put to the June Council meeting for adoption.