

# CITY OF PLAYFORD

# 2020/21 ABP –

# FAQs



## Why do we pay council rates?

In South Australia, council rates are a form of taxation on property values and are a requirement under State Legislation.

Money raised through rates assists Council provide the Playford community with a wide range of services. These include existing ongoing, core services such as keeping our streets clean, rubbish removal, running immunisation clinics, operating libraries and community programs, as well as renewing, replacing and building new assets such as footpaths, roads and sporting grounds.

We see the benefits of council services everyday through cleaner streets, safer roads, services to support you and your family, places to play and places to meet.

## Have rates increased in 2020/21?

Yes. The City of Playford Annual Business Plan and Budget is based on an average rate increase of 0.45 per cent.

This equates to an additional \$17 per year, based on the average capital value of a home in Playford of \$271,000.

## Why has Council increased rates?

The 2020/21 Annual Business Plan and Budget incorporates a 0.45% rate increase for 2020/21 raising \$0.370M, comprising:

- \$0.313M – 0.39% funding state-government imposed cost pressure.
- \$0.104M – 0.12% funding 12 new and enhanced services.
- (\$0.047M) – (0.06%) savings from operating costs of previous initiatives.

The City of Playford has diligently reflected on the impact of rate increases on the community, particularly given this unprecedented time in history. We are balancing this with our firm focus on financial responsibility to strike a budget that recognises the importance of now, while planning for a healthier tomorrow.

### *Inflation – 0%*

Each year Council takes into account the inflationary impacts on the delivery of existing services. In preparing the budget for 2020/21 Council was able to identify short term, financially sustainable, measures which will generate operational savings. These savings have been used to offset the General Index increase for 2020/21.

### *Cost Shifting – 0.39%*

On 18 June 2019 the State Government unexpectedly announced a further increase to its Landfill levy with the increase applied to the \$103/tonne to be \$110/tonne effective 1 July and a subsequent increase to \$140/tonne effective 1 January 2020. This resulted in an unprecedented \$534k addition to Council's 2019/20 budget and a further \$313k to the 2020/21 budget. This had a direct impact on household rates of an additional 0.7% and 0.39% increase, respectively.

### *Twelve new services - 0.12%*

Twelve new initiatives will be introduced, making sure we keep up with growth in the City as well as renew and replace infrastructure in our established suburbs.

- New Northern Adelaide School Shared Use Facilities
- Virginia Main Street Upgrade – Supplementary Funding
- Virginia Main Street - Institute Park and Gawler Road Entry Statement
- Stormwater Deeds - Stebonheath Road Culvert
- Footpath Shading/Tree Replacement
- New Footpath Projects
- Open Space Minor Projects
- Sport and Recreation Minor Projects
- Goulds Creek Road Acquisition and Upgrade
- Reach Slashing Program
- Tractor Slashing Program
- Angle Vale Community Sports Centre – Stage 5

### **What do I get for my rates?**

In 2020/21, Council will invest \$107 million to provide a wide range of existing 'business as usual' services, \$6.857 million to continue projects commenced in 2019/20 and \$17.257 million on new capital projects. Council will also receive \$10.844 million in donated assets from developers.

In addition, growth revenue will be used to fund five new infrastructure projects from the list above. These projects are not funded by increases to rates.

\$19.521 million will go towards the renewal or replacement of our existing assets such as:

- renewal of 13km of footpath
- renewal of 117km of kerbing
- renewal of 25km of sealed roads and surfaces
- renewal of sections of various leisure and sporting building infrastructure
- renewal of irrigation and sporting oval infrastructure
- renewal of two playgrounds

### **Why did the rates for my house increase by more than 0.45 per cent?**

Rates are made up of both a fixed charge component and a variable charge, calculated as a rate in the dollar and applied to property capital values.

The fixed charge component of rates is the same for all ratepayers, regardless of land use and irrespective of capital value. The fixed charge is set to raise 50 per cent of total rate revenue including growth.

However, properties with a higher capital value than the average will incur a greater percentage of the increase in rates through the variable charge. Generally under State Legislation, the higher the value of the property, the higher the rates to be paid. For example, a person with a property valued at \$150,000 will contribute less than someone with a property valued at \$300,000 in the same council area.

Property Capital Values are determined annually by the SA Government's State Valuation Office and your rate increase may be higher than the average due to an increase in your property value.

## What is Council's 2020/21 rate in the dollar?

Rate in \$ Summary	2020/21
General rate in the dollar	\$0.00241174
Commercial rate in the dollar	\$0.01342094
Fixed Charge	\$1,018
Regional Landscape Levy	\$0.00008850

## Does Council benefit from property valuation increases?

No, valuations do not determine the rates income of a Council. Property valuations are used to divide the rate revenue amount among individual ratepayers.

Council reviews the rate in the dollar annually to make sure that it only raises rates to match the income required, which means that Council does not benefit from valuation increases.

## Do I have any right of appeal against land use/valuation?

Yes – there are avenues of appeal available to ratepayers. These are located on the back of the Rates Notice which you receive in the mail and are also summarised below.

You must lodge your written objection with the Office of the Valuer-General within 60 days of receiving your first rates notice for the financial year, and can be lodged via:

**Online:** <https://forms.sa.gov.au/#/form/5962edffad9c5a3aa8f3cc61/app/604ab4db4d43313ef8060165>

**Post:** Office of the Valuer-General – GPO Box 1354, ADELAIDE SA 5000

**Email:** OVGO objections@sa.gov.au

**Fax:** (08) 8115 5709

A ratepayer may object to the land use applied to their property within 60 days of notification. The appeal must be made in writing to Council, addressed to the Chief Executive Officer. The appeal must set out the basis for objection and details of the land use that should be applied. Council will review the objection and notify the ratepayer of its decision. If not satisfied, the ratepayer may appeal against the council decision to the Land and Valuation Court.

## How are my rates calculated?

Council allocates the portion of the budget to be raised from rates across all properties, adopting a fixed charge component (which in total equates to 50 per cent of all rate revenue raised) in addition to a variable charge component (calculated as a rate in the dollar applied to property capital values). The effect is that the total rates paid by the community will equal the amount set in the budget.

Example: For General properties

Rates Notice Item			
Assessed Capital Value (from Rates Notice)	\$150,000	\$271,000	\$400,000
General Rate in the \$ (from Rates Notice)	\$0.00241174	\$0.00241174	\$0.00241174
<i>(Capital Value multiplied by General Rate in \$)</i>	\$362	\$654	\$965
Fixed Charge	\$1,018.29	\$1,018.29	\$1,018.29
Regional Landscape Levy Rate in the \$ (from Rates Notice)	\$0.00008850	\$0.00008850	\$0.00008850
<i>(Capital Value multiplied by Regional Landscape Levy Rate in \$)</i>	\$13	\$24	\$36
<b>Total Payable</b>	<b>\$1,393</b>	<b>\$1,696</b>	<b>\$2,019</b>
<b>Increase in rates bill from previous year</b>	<b>\$11 (0.82%)</b>	<b>\$17 (1.01%)</b>	<b>\$23 (1.15%)</b>

Example: For Commercial properties

Rates Notice Item			
Assessed Capital Value (from Rates Notice)	\$300,000	\$500,000	\$1,000,000
General Rate in the \$ (from Rates Notice)	\$0.01342094	\$0.01342094	\$0.01342094
<i>(Capital Value multiplied by General Rate in \$)</i>	\$4,026	\$6,711	\$13,421
Fixed Charge	\$1,018.29	\$1,018.29	\$1,018.29
Regional Landscape Levy Rate in the \$ (from Rates Notice)	\$0.00008850	\$0.00008850	\$0.00008850
<i>(Capital Value multiplied by Regional Landscape Levy Rate in \$)</i>	\$27	\$44	\$89
<b>Total Payable</b>	<b>\$5,071</b>	<b>\$7,773</b>	<b>\$14,528</b>
<b>Increase in rates bill from previous year</b>	<b>\$167 (3.2%)</b>	<b>\$282 (3.5%)</b>	<b>\$568 (3.76%)</b>

### Why do I pay more for my rates than a home of a similar value in another council area?

Different council areas have different needs and priorities, making it hard to directly compare rates.

Every council provides different services, in different ways, to different standards. This means there are different costs required to delivery services and makes a makes a fair and equal comparison difficult.

It is also difficult to directly compare similar priced properties across different council areas. The Capital Value of a property incorporates the value of land and improvements and takes a number of indicators into account, including location, general amenities and recent sale activity.

What this means is that a property's land value would be different if the property was located in a different council area, so the same value property between council areas may not necessarily be a direct comparison.

### What is the Regional Landscape Levy?

The City of Playford is in the Green Adelaide Region area and is required to collect the Levy on behalf of the Board.

The Regional Landscape Levy is set by the City of Playford and the entire amount that Council is legislated to collect is passed on in full to the Board. The Board uses the Regional Landscape Levy to fund vital natural resource management projects including the managing and protecting priority water, land, marine and biodiversity assets. More information about the Regional Landscape Levy can be found at <https://www.environment.sa.gov.au/topics/green-adelaide>.

## **Where can I find more information about how rates are calculated?**

The 2020/21 Rating Policy and Rate Rebates Policy can be found at <https://www.playford.sa.gov.au/council/council-documents/annual-business-plan-and-budget>.

These documents outline how the City of Playford sets its rates.

## **As a homeowner, why does my Pensioner Concession not show on my Rates Notice anymore?**

In 2014, the State Government introduced a new concession called “Cost of Living Concession” (CLC) which replaces the previous Pensioner Concession for Council Rates. The concession is paid directly to you instead of being offset against your Rates account.

## **How much is the CLC payment for a Homeowner?**

The CLC payment is \$215.10.

## **How do I apply for the Cost of Living Concession payment?**

Homeowners entitled to receive the concession in the 2020/21 year can apply by contacting the Concession Hotline on 1800 307 758.

## **Can tenants also get the CLC payment?**

Tenants entitled to receive the concession in the 2020/21 year can apply by contacting the Concession Hotline on 1800 307 758.

## **How much is the CLC payment for a Tenant?**

A Tenant is entitled to a payment of \$107.60

## **How much is the CLC payment for a Self-Funded Retiree Tenant who holds a Commonwealth Seniors Health card?**

The CLC payment is \$107.60

## **Is the CLC payment means tested?**

For eligibility enquiries please call the Concession Hotline on 1800 307 758.

## **What is Seniors Postponement?**

The *Local Government Act* provides for the postponement of rates for seniors. It is a system designed to assist senior citizens by allowing them to postpone amounts over \$500 of their annual rates charge for an indefinite period (up until the property is sold or circumstances change). Seniors postponement is available to a person (or their spouse) who holds a seniors card issued by the State Government and is only available on the principal place of residence.

## How can I pay my rates?

The payment options are set out on the front and back of the Rates Notice and include the following payment methods:

- via Council's website at [www.playford.sa.gov.au](http://www.playford.sa.gov.au) using a Credit Card (minimum \$20)
- BPay (minimum \$20)
- in person at Australia Post (minimum \$20)
- in person at Customer Service Centres – EFTPOS, Master Card, Visa Card or Cash
- over the phone with Councils Customer Service Officers on 1300 278 903 – Credit Card (minimum \$20)
- by direct debit – set up direct debit payments by visiting Councils website [www.playford.sa.gov.au](http://www.playford.sa.gov.au) to pay your rates weekly, fortnightly, monthly or quarterly.

Centrelink's Centrepay system allows Centrelink customers to pay rates via Centrepay. Please contact a Rates Officer to set up a Centrepay deduction towards your council rates or contact Centrelink for further details.

## What happens if I can't pay my rates on time?

If the amount due remains unpaid after the due date it will be subject to fines raised in accordance with the provisions of the *Local Government Act 1999*, Sect 181(8).

A statutory fine of two per cent on the unpaid quarterly amount and a further interest penalty of the prescribed percentage on any further arrears monthly will apply.

If you experience ongoing financial difficulty you can speak with a Council Rates Officer to make suitable arrangements for payment of overdue amounts.

## Can I get support to pay my rates?

People experiencing difficulty paying their rates should contact Council's rate department as they can agree to more flexible payment arrangements. Under Legislation, fines must be imposed when the quarterly amounts are not paid in full by the due dates. However, by paying small amounts on a regular basis, you will gradually reduce the amount owing. This means you will only have a small balance to pay on the due date, which can help minimise or eliminate fines.

The City of Playford is committed to assisting customers who are experiencing financial hardship and has developed a Hardship Policy, which is available on our website at <https://www.playford.sa.gov.au/live/home-and-property/rates/rates-relief>. Assistance available includes payment arrangements, referral to a free accredited Financial Counsellor, protection from debt recovery, regular contact and Centrepay and direct debit payment options set up over the phone. Contact the Rates Team for assistance.

## Can I still apply for a rate rebate for the 2020/21 rating year?

Yes, the calculation and application of rate rebates occurs in conjunction with the generation and posting out of first quarter Rates Notices. Any new application for 2020/21 will be reviewed after generation of the rates, and needs to be approved by the CEO or Council (depending on the type of rebate).

As such, these rebates will be calculated after the first quarter Rates Notice has been issued. Under section 186(1) of the *Local Government Act*, ratepayers are still required to make rates payments as they fall due. A refund will be provided if the rates paid exceed the rebate provided.

Ratepayers who feel they are entitled to a rate rebate for 2020/21 should contact our rates department for further details. The Rate Rebate Policy and Application can be found on the Council website at [www.playford.sa.gov.au](http://www.playford.sa.gov.au).

### **Why hasn't a payment shown on my Rates Notice?**

The rates data is collected approximately two weeks before the Rates Notices are posted so any payments made during this time will not show on the notice.

### **I've sold my property and still received a Rates Notice. Why?**

The ownership may have changed after the Rates Notice data was collected. If the rates have not been paid the Notice should be returned to Council, otherwise you can disregard the notice.

### **Where can I get more information about the budget and how my rates are spent?**

A full copy the 2020/21 Annual Business Plan can be accessed at

<https://www.playford.sa.gov.au/council/council-documents/annual-business-plan-and-budget>.

Information will also be included with the 2020/21 Quarter One Rates Notice.

For further information please contact our Customer Contact team on (08) 8256 0333 or email [playford@playford.sa.gov.au](mailto:playford@playford.sa.gov.au).