

# General Rates Frequently Asked Questions

## KEY POINTS

- » Register online and receive your rates notices in your inbox, not your letterbox
- » Manage your rates by making weekly, fortnightly or monthly payments via BPAY or direct debit
- » Receive a 10% prompt payment discount when you pay your rates before the due date

Townsville City Council issues rates notices half yearly, usually in February and August. These notices include charges for general rates and utilities (water, sewerage, and rubbish). Supplementary notices are issued throughout the year for properties that undergo changes that may affect their rating categories i.e. change of ownership, subdivisions or material changes of use, or there has been a change to the services available to the property i.e. ordered bins, changed water plan. These Frequently Asked Questions may help you plan your rate payments or provide you with information regarding your rates notice. Please contact the Customer Service Centre on **13 48 10** for more information.

## How are rates calculated?

### General rates

General rates are based on unimproved or site valuations which differ between properties. Information about your land valuation is located on the front of your rates notice.

### Water

The fixed price for the Standard Plan water allocation of 772kL is \$784 with an excess water charge of \$3.00 per kL. The Water Watchers fixed service charge is \$358 and water consumption is charged at \$1.43 per kL.

### Sewerage

The residential sewerage charge is \$806. The residential vacant land sewerage charge is \$724.

### Rubbish Collections

The 240L waste and 240L recycling combined service charge is \$206. For other waste combination options available, please contact Council's Customer Service Centre.



## Where can I find out more information about rates charges?

The General Rate Categorisation Statement is included with your August rates notice. It includes important ratepayer information regarding land valuations and differential general rating categories for the current financial year. You may also refer to the Schedule of Rates and Charges on the website for all rates and utility charges.

## Can I receive a discount on my rates?

A 10% prompt payment discount will apply on the general rates if all rates and charges, including any arrears, are paid by the due date displayed on the front page of the rates notice.

## Do pensioners get a special discount?

Council offers a concession to eligible pensioners who own and occupy their property as their principal place of residence.

The Queensland Government also provides a subsidy to approved pensioners. This is equivalent to 20% of the total rates and charges and up to a maximum amount of \$200 per annum. This is determined by the Department of Human Services. This subsidy is paid by the State Government to Council to pass on to approved applicants.

For more information on how to apply for a pensioner concession on rates, please contact the Customer Service Centre or visit the website.

## What other concessions are available?

Concessions may apply for general rates, water and sewerage charges for certain organisations as set out in Council's Charitable and Community Organisation Rates and Charges Concessions Policy. Contact the Customer Service Centre for details of application requirements.

## What happens if my rates are overdue?

Unpaid rates are considered overdue and recoverable by Council once the due date has passed. Compound interest, at a rate of 9.83% per annum, will be charged in the following circumstances:

- a) On all overdue rates, charges and fire levies, interest will be charged from 30 days after the due date until the date of payment.

- b) On approved pensioner rates, charges and fire levies, interest will be charged on overdue amounts from 1 July until the date of payment.

### **What if I'm having trouble paying my rates?**

Payment plans may be accepted if ratepayers are facing financial difficulty.

For payment plans to be approved, ratepayers must contact Council's Customer Service Centre before the due date shown on any notice. All payment plans will be confirmed in writing and interest will still apply on outstanding rates and charges.

### **What do I need to do if my postal address changes?**

The property owner is responsible for notifying Council (by email, mail or phone) of any change of postal address where rates notices are to be sent. Failure to do this may result in the loss of the prompt payment discount.

### **Is there a charge to make changes to ownerships, title or land records?**

Council's records must reflect the same detail as displayed on the title deed of the property held by the Department of Natural Resources, Mines and Energy. Council is charged a fee for the supply of information relating to any changes to title which include ownership, name and land changes. To assist in the recovery of costs, a \$53.10 Change of Ownership fee is passed onto the owner(s) of the property whenever Council is required to amend the property record.

### **Is there a charge to get a copy of a rates/water notice?**

Sign up with Council's eNotices service to access your rates notices for free.

eNotices allows residents to self-manage all their properties, send notices to multiple email addresses and print off additional copies. Alternatively, a fee of \$18.60 applies for each copy of a previous financial years rates notice. To register for eNotices visit: [townsville.qld.gov.au/enotices](http://townsville.qld.gov.au/enotices)

### **Managing your rates payments**

You can make weekly, fortnightly or monthly rate payments via BPAY or direct debit. Divide your rates into smaller, more manageable amounts to make payment easier. Just use your BPAY biller code and reference number to make your payment.

## **LAND VALUATIONS FAQS**

### **How does council determine the rateable value of land?**

Council uses the unimproved or site valuation as advised by Department of Natural Resources, Mines and Energy to determine the rateable value. The last valuation of the city was 1 October 2016 with the valuation being applied from 1 July 2017.

### **Is there a separate valuation for each lot in a plan of a subdivision?**

Section 52 of the Land Valuation Act 2010 provides for a separate valuation record for each lot. This means that a valuation will be issued in the name of the subdivider for each lot on plan.

There will be no subsequent split actions. Section 50 states that the amount of each valuation issued will be adjusted by the local council by a reduction of 40%, or other value as contained in the Land Valuation Act 2010. This section applies provided the land is not developed and continues to be owned by the original subdivider.

### **How can I object to my valuation?**

Any owner who is dissatisfied with the valuation made by the Department of Natural Resources, Mines and Energy under the Land Valuation Act 2010 can lodge an objection. This must be done within 60 days of the date of issue of your notice of valuation.

Objection forms and full details regarding objections to valuations can be found at:

[qld.gov.au/environment/land/title/valuation/lodge-objections](http://qld.gov.au/environment/land/title/valuation/lodge-objections)

### **FOR MORE INFORMATION**

 13 48 10

 [enquiries@townsville.qld.gov.au](mailto:enquiries@townsville.qld.gov.au)

 [townsville.qld.gov.au](http://townsville.qld.gov.au)