



Rates and Valuations Frequently Asked Questions

Why do I have to pay rates?

Council collects rates from residents and businesses to help fund vital community services and infrastructure for the enjoyment and safety of the whole community. Some examples of these services are road construction and maintenance, public gardens, youth and children's services, library services and aged care services.

What do my rates pay for?

Your rates allow Council to deliver a variety of services that impact almost every aspect of day-to-day life. Some of these services include:

- Waste Management
- Economic Development
- Support of local events and festivals
- Building Maintenance
- Early years and maternal and child health services
- Libraries
- Youth services
- Aged Care Services
- Maintenance of Gardens and Parks

How are my rates calculated?

Rates are based on the combination of two variables plus the municipal charge.

- The rate in the dollar – set by Council each year as part of the budget process
- The valuation – the Capital Improved Value (CIV) of your property, as provided to Council annually by qualified Valuers contracted by Valuer General Victoria
- The municipal charge – a set fee on each assessment in the Municipality

An example of the 2021/2022 rates for a residential property based on a CIV of \$250,000 is below:

General rates (\$250,000 X 0.005705c)	\$1426.25
Municipal charge	\$164.00
Garbage charge	\$277.00
Recycling charge	\$190.00
Fire Service levies	\$128.75
Total	\$2186.00

You can find out more on our "How rates are calculated" page on our [website](#)



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When are rates due?

Rates are payable by four quarterly instalments. Instalment dates are shown on the first notice issued in each year. This notice is normally issued in late August.

Instalment reminder notices are issued prior to the due date of each instalment. The due date of each instalment is:

Instalment 1 – Due 30 September

Instalment 2 – Due 30 November

Instalment 3 – Due 28 February

Instalment 4 – Due 31 May

Council does not have a lump sum due date. However, if you choose to do so, you can pay by the due date of the 1st instalment to avoid any additional interest charges.

What is a Municipal charge?

The municipal charge recoups and covers some of council's administrative costs and is a flat fee for all properties, regardless of your property valuation. Exemption from payment of the municipal charge is available for farming properties that meet the following criteria:

- The property must be classified as farm land.
- The property must form part of a single farm enterprise.
- The property must be occupied by the same person/s.

However, a municipal charge must be paid on at least one of the properties that form part of the single farming enterprise, and in circumstances where the property has multiple occupied residences, may be payable more than once.

The municipal charge for the 2021/2022 year is \$164.00

How is the rate in the dollar calculated?

Council firstly determines the total rate revenue required to fund programs in the annual budget. It is then provided with the total value of all rateable properties, i.e. total CIV. The rate in the dollar is set by dividing the total rate revenue required by the total CIV to get a rate in the dollar.

What are differential rates? Differential rates are where Council sets different rates in the dollar for different categories of rateable land. Differential rates can be set for Farm land, Commercial and Industrial type properties.

Council believes that each different rate contributes to the equitable and efficient carrying out of council functions.



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You can find out more about the differential rates applied in the 2021/2022 year on our [“How rates are calculated”](#) page on our website.

What is rate capping? In 2015, The Fair Go Rates system to cap rates was introduced to limit the amount of revenue increases a council can levy through rates.

Each year the Minister for Local Government sets a cap on rate increases based on that period’s Consumer Price Index (CPI) and advice from the Essential Services Commission (ESC).

For the 2021-2022 financial year, council rate rises were capped at 1.50%.

It is important to note that there is no connection between rate capping and an individual’s rates. Rate capping applies to the total rate revenue for the whole municipality.

The overall rates revenue collected by council cannot exceed the rate cap. However, the amount each property owner pays is calculated based on the value of their property. Some rate payers will pay less than the rate cap, others will pay more. However, the overall rates collected by Council will not exceed the rate cap unless they are granted an exemption.

Northern Grampians Shire Council has always complied with the rate cap and has never sought permission for a higher cap.

What percentage of Council’s total income is collected from rates? In the 2021/2022 year, Council raised \$18,811M through rates. This amount does not include waste charges or the Fire Services Property Levy charges which are fully remitted to the State Government.

The amount of \$18.811 M equates to 45.83% of total income.

Further information about revenue can be found in Council’s budget document accessible from [Council Publications](#) on our website.

How is Council’s budget determined?

Council’s budget is developed in the context of its long term financial plan (the ‘Financial Plan’) and the Council Plan, which outlines the strategic agenda for the Council during its term. These key plans priorities Council’s activities the allocation of resources.

Council must balance income and revenue with expenditure on services, programs, capital works, new initiatives and implementation of strategy whilst maintaining financial sustainability.



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There are three different valuations shown on my rate and valuation notice. What do they all mean?

- Site Value (SV) is the value of the land only, and assumes the land is vacant with no improvements such as buildings.
- Capital Improved Value (CIV) is the assessed market value of the property including both land (SV) and all improvements such as buildings.

Capital Improved Value is used for rating purposes by Northern Grampians Shire Council.

- Net Annual Value (NAV) is the current value of a property's net annual rent less legislated expenses. Generally NAV for residential and primary production properties is legislated to be 5 per cent of the CIV.

SV, CIV and NAV are defined in the *Valuation of Land Act 1960*.

Please note that you do not add the valuations together for rating purposes. Rates are levied on the CIV only, which is the market value of the property at a given date.

How is my property valued?

The Valuer-General Victoria (VGV) is responsible for all valuations in Victoria. VGV contract and engage qualified valuers to determine property values throughout the Shire. Council has no jurisdiction over valuing properties for rates purposes.

The Local Government Act and the Valuation of Land Act require all properties to be revalued annually. The valuation shown on your rates notice represents the value as at 1 January, ie the current valuation is based at 1 January, 2021.

The valuation process assesses the amount that a property would sell for at a specific date. The latest property sales, rental data, land type, building condition and all property improvements are analysed as part of the valuation process. The valuation applied to the property should represent its market value as at 1 January (for the 2021/2022 year this is 1 January 2021).

It is important to note that property revaluations do not increase the total amount of rate revenue raised by Council.

It only redistributes who pays the rates.

What is the Capital Improved Value system?

The Capital Improved Value (CIV) system is the most commonly used valuation by Victorian Councils. It takes into account the assessed market value of the property including both land (Site Value – SV) and all improvements such as buildings.



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Who values my property?

Valuations are conducted by qualified valuers contracted by [Valuer General Victoria](#)

How often is my property valued?

Valuations are conducted annually in accordance with the Local Government Act and the Valuation of Land Act.

Why has my valuation increased?

There are various reasons as to why the valuation of your property may have changed, including higher sales figures for similar properties or improvements to the property, ie building additions.

The valuation process assesses the amount that a property would sell for at a specific date. The latest property sales, rental data, land type, building condition and all property improvements are analysed as part of the valuation process. The valuation applied to the property should represent its market value as at 1 January (for the 2021/2022 year this is 1 January 2021).

Does an increase in valuation mean an increase in rates?

It is important to note that property revaluations do not increase the amount of rate revenue raised by Council. It only redistributes who pays the rates. The total amount of revenue is governed by the rate cap which is set by the State Government.

What if I don't agree with the valuation?

If you believe that your property is incorrectly valued, you may lodge an objection. Sections 16, 17 and 18 of the Valuation of Land Act 1960 provide that ratepayers have a right to object to a property valuation.

Objections must be lodged within two months of the date on the first rate notice in any year, or within two months from the issue date of any supplementary rate and valuation notice.

[Objections to Council rate notices](#) must use the prescribed objection form.

Any questions about valuations and objections can be discussed with Council by phoning our Rating team on 03 5358 8710.

Even if you have lodged an objection, you must continue paying your rates and charges until your objection is resolved to avoid interest charges.

I lodged an objection but I still don't have a result.

The process, once an objection is lodged, takes a few months before you are notified of an outcome. You will have received a letter from Council acknowledging receipt of the objection, and will have been provided with a contact phone number for the Valuers should you wish to



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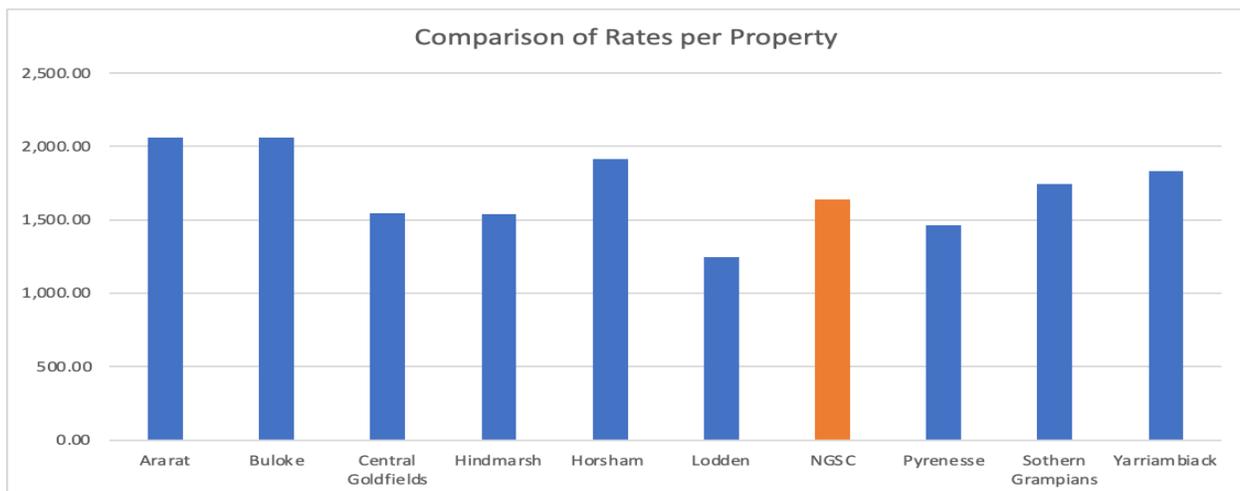
check its progress. Alternatively you are welcome to contact the Rates department on 03 5358 8710. All objections must be certified by the Valuer General before you will be notified of the outcome.

Why are my rates in NGSC more expensive than my house in Metro Melbourne?

The answer to this question is quite a complex one. Amongst some of the challenges we have in small rural councils is that our shire covers more than 6,000 square kilometres of land containing over 3,000 kms of roads, 126 buildings, over 400 bridges and other infrastructure all of which is paid for by just 9,400 ratepayers. The total value of this infrastructure per capita in rural areas is about twice that of metropolitan councils.

A comparison also requires consideration of the average rates per property. As you can see from the graph shown below, Northern Grampians Shire sits midway of rates in our neighbouring Municipalities. This information was gathered from a State Government website called Know Your Council. It is available at [Compare Councils - Know Your Council](#).

The average rates are calculated using the average value of residential properties in our Shire, which is \$210,500. If your property is valued at more than \$210,500, then you will pay more than the average.



NGSC does not have the ability available to raise income as some Metro Councils do. We do not have parking meters, for example, which are a major revenue source for many Councils.

What is the Fire Services Property Levy?

The Fire Services Property Levy (FSPL) is a state government charge that was previously included on insurance premiums. The Victorian Government requires all Councils to collect the



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FSPL from property owners. All funds collected for FSPL are passed onto to the state government to support the Country Fire Authority.

The levy is payable on all Victorian property, including council owned property.

Further information regarding the FSPL can be found [here](#).

What is an AVPCC?

The Australian Valuation Property Clarification Code (AVPCC) is a property classification code. It is assigned to your property by the valuers in accordance with the Fire Service Property Levy Act 2012, and is shown on your rates notice.

The AVPCC has no effect on the valuation of your property, it is used to identify the property's classification (residential / commercial etc.) which is then used to calculate the correct Fire Service Property Levy that you contribute in accordance to the Fire Services Property Levy Act 2012.

Legislation requires this code to be printed on your rates notice.

What are the waste charges on my rates notice?

Every improved property in urban areas of the municipality must pay compulsory charges for the collection of waste and recycling. The charges for collection of the waste are shown as two separate items on your rate notice, i.e. a Garbage charge of \$277.00 per annum and a Recycling charge of \$190.00 per annum. The charges cover your weekly waste collection and fortnightly recycling collection. Further information about waste services in the Shire can be found on our "waste management" page on our website –[here](#)

Can I apply for a concession on my rates and how?

Social Security and Veterans Affairs pensioners may be entitled to a concession on their municipal rates up to a maximum of \$247.00. Eligible pensions will also be entitled to receive a \$50.00 concession on their Fire Services Property Levy.

To receive the concession, you must lodge a concession application form with Council. To obtain more information regarding eligibility and to download an application form please see our Pension Rebates page –[here](#).

Please note that a Health Care card does not entitle the holder to concession.



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Which pension cards are eligible for a concession?

To be eligible for the rebate, you must be a current holder of one of the following cards:

- Pensioner Concession Card issued by Centrelink or the Department of Veterans Affairs
- DVA Gold Card TPI
- DVA Gold Card War Widow

The pensioner will also need to satisfy the following criteria:

- The property is your principal place of residence.
- The property address for which you are seeking a concession is the same as that on your pension card.
- The pensioner is listed on council records as the ratepayer at the property.

Images of each of the eligible and ineligible pension cards are shown on the Pension Rebates page on Council's website - [here](#)

Has a pension concession already been applied to my rates account?

The concession is displayed on the first notice that is issued in any year. However, if you are unsure please call the rating team on 5358 8710 who will assist you. Please note that provided individual pension details have not changed, it is not necessary to re-apply for the concession each year.

A Health Care card does not entitle the holder to a rates concession.

Am I eligible to apply for a Single Farm Enterprise exemption?

Where multiple parcels of land are used to operate a single farming enterprise, a person may only be required to pay Council's municipal charge and the Fire Services Property Levy fixed charge once, by applying for a Single Farm enterprise exemption.

Applications for exemption must be submitted to Council and any changes will be effective in the year that the application is received.

An application form is available on the How Rates are Calculated page of our website [here](#)

If further information is required about eligibility for Single Farm Enterprise exemptions, please contact the rates team by telephone on 03 5358 8710.



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How can I pay my rates?

Payment options are detailed on the back page of each rate notice issued. Details can also be found at our How to Pay your rates page on our website [here](#).

Can I set up direct debit?

Direct debits are a great way to ensure that your rates are paid on time every time.

Council accepts direct debit payments for quarterly instalments, or by fortnightly or monthly payments. Before making an application for fortnightly or monthly direct debits, please contact the rates team to discuss an appropriate payment amount and the dates that the payments will be deducted. You can contact the rates team by telephone on 03 5358 8710 or via email at rates@ngshire.vic.gov.au

Direct debit payment can only be made from a nominated bank account – not from a credit card.

An application form for direct debit payments can be found [here](#).

I pay my rates via a Direct Debit. Why do I still get rate notices?

Council is obliged to issue instalment notices to all ratepayers who have a balance due.

How can I obtain the current balance owing on my rates account?

If there have been any changes since the last instalment notice, or if you are unsure of the amount due, please contact the rates team by telephone on 03 5358 8710 or via email at rates@ngshire.vic.gov.au

What happens if my rates payment is late?

Unpaid rates will incur a penalty interest rate of 10 per cent per annum after the instalment due date. The interest charged on overdue rates and charges is set by the Attorney General under the *Penalty Interest Rates Act 1983*.

Please note that Council has not charged interest since the declaration of the Covid-19 pandemic, however interest will be charged from 1 July, 2022.

What if I am having difficulty paying my rates?

Council recognises that some customers may have difficulty paying part or all of their rates account. A phone call to the rates department is all that it takes to let us know that you are experiencing difficulties and for us to assist you. All enquiries made will be kept strictly confidential.

Having a payment plan is often an effective way to ease the burden. NGSC offers a range of options for ratepayers to set up a payment plan.



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In cases of financial hardship, additional assistance can be provided in the form of a referral to a free independent financial counsellor.

Please contact the rates team on 03 5358 8710 for any advice or assistance.

What if I am experiencing financial hardship?

Council has a Personal Financial Hardship policy to assist those ratepayers in genuine financial distress. Assistance available includes a referral to a free independent financial counsellor.

Please contact the rates team on 03 5358 8710 for any advice or assistance.

What happens if I don't pay my rates?

Any unpaid rates remain a debt on the property regardless of any change of ownership. If rates and charges remain overdue for more than three years without an arrangement being made with Council, a court order may be obtained to enable the sale of the property to recover the outstanding debt.

How do I update the mailing address for notices?

A change of address form can be obtained on the "Changing your details" page of our website - [here](#).

Alternatively, details of any changes may be emailed to the rates team at rates@ngshire.vic.gov.au

Please note that Council is able to email rate notices to you rather than send them via traditional post. This is a quick, secure and easy way to receive your rate notices direct to your email. Information about how to register for eNotice is available [here](#).

How do I set up eNotices?

Information on how to register for eNotices (electronic delivery of rate notices) is available on our "[How to pay your rates](#)" page of our website.

If you require further advice or assistance from our rates team in relation to this, please contact us either by phoning 03 5358 8710 or via email at rates@ngshire.vic.gov.au

Can I have my rate notices emailed and posted?

No, unfortunately we cannot issue notices both via email and Australia Post.

Email is Council's preferred method of delivery as it is more cost effective and allows for quick and efficient delivery to customers.



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How can I obtain copies of my rate notices?

Any ratepayer who is registered for eNotices has access to a portal containing copies of all of their rate notices. Registrations for eNotices can be made via the "[How to pay your rates](#)" page of our website.

Ratepayers not registered for eNotices should contact the rates team on telephone 03 5358 8710 or via email at rates@ngshire.vic.gov.au

I hold Power of Attorney on behalf of a property owner. Can I make enquiries on their behalf? |

If you hold Power of Attorney (POA) for a property owner you will be asked to provide a copy of the document to Council so that we can be sure of your entitlement to any information. Please email a copy of the POA document to rates@ngshire.vic.gov.au.

I have another question about my rates. How should I contact Council?

Please contact the rating department by telephoning 03 5358 8710 or via email on rates@ngshire.vic.gov.au