Glen Eira City Council

Revenue and Rating Plan 2025–2029

City of GLEN EIRA

GLEN EIRA
CITY COUNCIL

BENTLEIGH
BENTLEIGH EAST
BRIGHTON EAST
CARNEGIE
CAULFIELD
ELSTERNWICK
GARDENVALE
GLEN HUNTLY
MCKINNON
MURRUMBEENA
ORMOND
ST KILDA EAST

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THE GLEN EIRA CITY COUNCIL *REVENUE AND RATING PLAN 2025–2029* WAS ENDORSED BY GLEN EIRA CITY COUNCIL AT ITS ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING ON 30 JUNE 2025.

Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners

Glen Eira City Council acknowledges the Boon Wurrung/Bunurong and Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung peoples of the Kulin Nation as Traditional Owners and Custodians, and pays respect to their Elders past and present. We acknowledge and uphold their continuing relationship to land and waterways. Council extends its respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Council honours the rich histories and cultures of First Nations peoples and recognises and values the important contribution of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in enriching our community. We support the Uluru Statement from the Heart and are committed to a *Reconciliation Action Plan* which is underpinned by the principles of self-determination. We work towards improved outcomes and long-term generational change, and to consolidate Glen Eira as a culturally safe place for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. We are committed to achieving equality for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to live healthy and prosperous lives and to improve life outcomes for current and future generations.

Glen Eira resides on country that always was, and always will be, Aboriginal land.

Message from the Mayor

Every decision we make at Council comes back to one key question: how do we best serve our community? Our *Revenue and Rating Plan* plays a crucial role in answering this question, as it guides how we generate income to fund the services and infrastructure that you rely on every day.

Glen Eira is a special place — home to people from all walks of life, rich in culture and community spirit. Whether it's the local sporting clubs, our cherished parks and gardens, or the welcoming spaces of our libraries and community centres, our City thrives because of the people who live and contribute here. This plan ensures that we can continue delivering essential services and infrastructure while maintaining financial responsibility and fairness for our community.

Rates and charges are our main source of income, governed by the *Fair Go Rates System*, which limits how much we can increase rates each year. While this system helps keep rates affordable, it also presents challenges as costs continue to rise. That's why we are committed to being strategic in how we manage resources, invest in priority projects, and explore alternative funding sources like government grants, partnerships, and user-pays models where appropriate.

We also understand the importance of keeping fees and charges fair and reflective of the cost of delivering services. Our approach ensures that funds are used responsibly and contribute to a stronger, more sustainable, and more connected Glen Eira.

Through extensive community engagement, including most recently *Our Place, Our Plan*, we've heard what matters most to you — safe and accessible spaces, environmental sustainability, and high-quality services. This plan reflects those priorities and ensures that our funding model supports the long-term wellbeing of Glen Eira.

I want to thank everyone who has contributed their time and insights to this process. Your feedback helps us make informed, community-driven decisions. Together, we will continue building a thriving, inclusive, and sustainable Glen Eira.

Councillor Simone Zmood

Glen Eira Mayor

Foreword from Chief Executive Officer

At Glen Eira City Council, we know that delivering the services, infrastructure, and programs our community needs rely on sound financial planning. Our *Revenue and Rating Plan* is a key part of this, ensuring that we have a fair and sustainable approach to raising the income needed to keep our City running.

I am pleased to present the *Glen Eira City Council Revenue and Rating Plan*, which sets out our approach to generating and managing revenue over the next four years. This plan is a critical component of our financial strategy, ensuring that we can continue to provide high-quality services, maintain infrastructure, and support the long-term sustainability of our community.

Like other councils, Glen Eira operates in a challenging financial environment, where balancing the needs of our growing community with a sound budget is essential. With rate capping in place for several years, we must carefully manage our resources while seeking opportunities to diversify revenue streams, maximise efficiency, and ensure a fair and equitable approach to rating and generating income.

Glen Eira is more than just a municipality — it's a place we call home. From our tree-lined streets to our vibrant community hubs, our parks, playgrounds, and bustling shopping strips, every part of Glen Eira reflects the people who live, work, and contribute here.

Our focus is on transparency, accountability, and sustainability, ensuring that all revenue decisions support the wellbeing and future prosperity of our residents. The plan explains how we determine rates and charges and apply principles for user fees and charges. It's not just about numbers — it's about ensuring we have the resources to support our community's wellbeing, maintain our facilities, and build a more sustainable and inclusive Glen Eira.

Glen Eira City Council remains committed to sound financial management, strategic investment, and responsible decision-making, ensuring that we can continue to meet community expectations while maintaining financial stability.

Thank you for being part of this journey with us.

Rebecca McKenzie
Chief Executive Officer

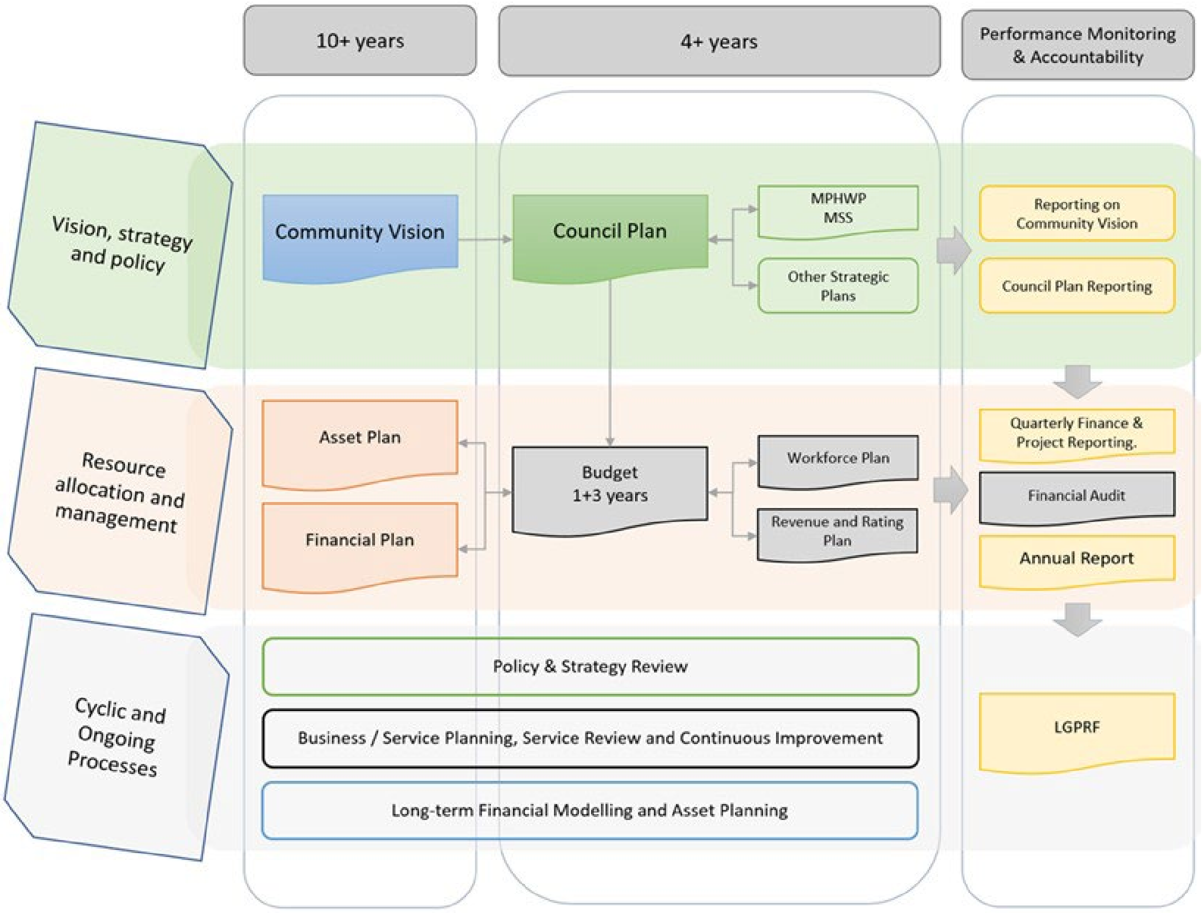
Introduction

1.1 Purpose

The *Revenue and Rating Plan* is a critical component of Council's strategic planning. Developed in conjunction with the *Council Plan* and other long-term plans, it ensures a cohesive and systematically integrated approach within the broader planning process.

The *Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework (IPRF)* utilised by the Council comprehensively guides its strategic planning process (Figure 1 below). This approach helps achieve the community vision of *'A thriving and empowered community working together for an inclusive and sustainable future.'* Through their *IPRF*, Glen Eira City Council ensures all strategic objectives, initiatives, and financial commitments are meticulously coordinated.

Figure 1: Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework.



Source: Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions

Additionally, Council's integrated approach highlights the importance of community engagement to inform the planning process. By involving residents and stakeholders, Glen Eira

City Council ensures its strategies and plans reflect the community's needs and priorities. This collaborative approach fosters transparency, accountability, and trust between Council and the community.

The strategies in this *Revenue and Rating Plan* align closely with the objectives in the *Council Plan* and inform our budgeting, long-term financial planning, and other strategic documents.

By defining the revenue and rating parameters within which Council proposes to operate, this plan ensures all financial strategies are cohesive and systematically integrated within the broader planning process.

The *Revenue and Rating Plan* provides a medium-term outlook on how Council will generate income to deliver on the commitments outlined in the *Council Plan*. This includes a thorough examination of programs, services, and capital works over a four-year period.

The *Plan* is not just a financial document but a strategic tool guiding Council's effort to create a thriving, inclusive, and sustainable future. It is a clear roadmap for generating the necessary income to support the *Council Plan*'s initiatives and commitments, ensuring all actions align with the broader strategic vision.

This *Revenue and Rating Plan* will explain how Council calculates the revenue needed to fund its activities, and how the funding burden will be apportioned between ratepayers and other users of Council facilities and services.

In particular, this *Plan* will set out decisions that Council has made in relation to rating options available to it under the *Local Government Act 2020* to ensure the fair and equitable distribution of rates across property owners. It will also set out principles that are used in decision making for other revenue sources such as fees and charges.

It is also important to note that the *Revenue and Rating Plan* does not set revenue targets for Council, it outlines the strategic framework and decisions that inform how Council will go about calculating and collecting its revenue.

1.2 Financial sustainability

Our financial sustainability continues to be challenged by increasing costs such as construction, utilities and borrowings, which have outpaced the growth in our revenue. The impact of increased regulation and cost shifting from other levels of government is also a contributing factor. The rate cap set by the Minister for Local Government has been significantly below the actual cost escalation for the previous few years.

Our financial sustainability journey has been supported by independent experts and advisors to undertake extensive analysis on our long-term financial position. This has helped us to better understand our financial sustainability challenge and the options to address it. The reviews highlighted options for increasing revenue through borrowings, philanthropy, rates and fees, as well as options for decreasing expenditure. Council commenced a process of re-building cash reserves and returning to a position of healthier long-term financial sustainability.

We aim to maintain and improve our services, infrastructure and facilities, especially in terms of access, equity and environmental sustainability. To achieve this, Council must carefully manage finances and use innovation and continuous improvement measures to ensure services are the most efficient and cost-effective that can be provided.

Council is also cost efficient in the delivery of services and has always used available funds to invest in facilities, services, and spaces for the community rather than to deliver annual surpluses.

Our financial sustainability journey is directly linked to our *Revenue and Rating Plan* because this plan determines how Council will generate income to fund services, infrastructure, and operations over the long term.

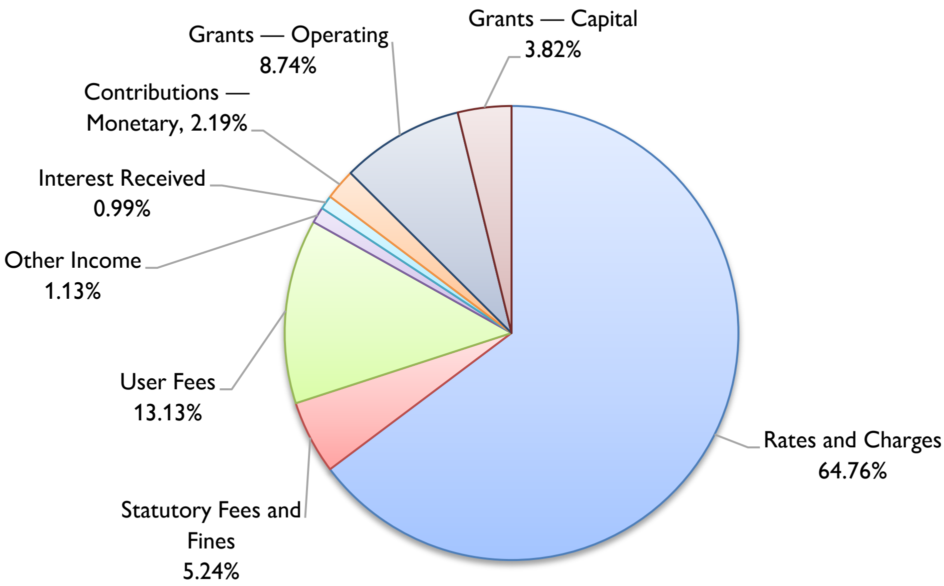
1.3 Overview

Council plays an important role in delivering a wide range of services to their local communities, as well as building and maintaining community assets and infrastructure, and enforcing various laws. In doing so, Council must collect revenue to cover costs of providing services and facilities. Council's revenue sources include:

- *Rates and charges*
- *Waste charges*
- *Grants from other levels of government (operating and capital)*
- *Statutory fees and fines*
- *User fees*
- *Contributions — monetary (open space contributions)*
- *Interest from investments*

Rates and charges are the most significant revenue source for Council and make up approximately 65 per cent of its annual income as shown in the graph below.

Operating Revenue 2025–26



The introduction of the Fair Go Rates System (rate capping) has provided substantial financial challenges to Council's long-term financial sustainability and continues to restrict Council's ability to raise revenue to maintain service delivery levels and invest in community assets. This strategy will consider Council's reliance on rate income as well as other alternatives of revenue generation.

Council provides a wide range of services to the community, often for a fee or charge. The nature of these fees and charges generally depends on whether they relate to statutory or discretionary services. Some of these, such as statutory planning fees, are set by the Victorian Government statute and are commonly known as regulatory fees. In these cases, councils usually have no control over service pricing. However, in relation to other services, Council has the ability to set a fee or charge based on the principles outlined in this revenue and rating plan.

Council revenue can also be adversely affected by changes to funding from other levels of government. Some grants are tied to the delivery of council services, whilst many are tied directly to the delivery of new community assets, such as roads or sports pavilions. It is important for Council to be clear about what grants it intends to apply for, and the obligations that grants create in the delivery of services or infrastructure.

1.4 Community engagement

The *Revenue and Rating Plan* outlines Council's decision-making process on how revenues are calculated and collected. The following public consultation process will be followed to ensure due consideration and feedback is received from relevant stakeholders.

The *Revenue and Rating Plan* community engagement process is as follows:

30 April - 18 May

- Draft *Revenue and Rating Plan* advertised for community feedback
- Engagement is conducted using local news outlets, social media and information sessions

10 June 2025

- Council considers community feedback at its meeting

30 June 2025

- Draft *Revenue and Rating Plan*, including any revisions, presented to Council for adoption

The development of the draft *Budget* and *Revenue and Rating Plan* was informed by the community's feedback during Council's *Our Place, Our Plan* between February and April 2025. Community members had the opportunity to provide feedback during exhibition of the plan between April and May 2025.

This integrated planning and engagement process ensured the community could meaningfully contribute to the development of Council's integrated long-term plans — including the *Budget* and *Revenue and Rating Plan* — across multiple phases of engagement. The program included broad engagement, targeted stakeholder engagement, engagement with harder-to-reach cohorts, and deliberative engagement through the reactivated deliberative Community Priorities Panel.

We learned that for long-term sustainability, the community would like the Council to raise funds to continue delivering the services they rely on. The community expressed the importance of seeking funds through sponsorships and partnerships with other levels of government and the private sector, where possible. Additionally, they suggested revisiting our fees and charges for services and activities—such as venue hire and permits—and considering increasing them to support the delivery of other programs and services.

This built on the community's feedback received during the 2023 *Our Priorities, Our Future* engagement program, where the deliberative Community Priorities Panel suggested Council investigate new sources of revenue and consider commercialising its assets.

1.5 Rates and charges

(a) Rating context

Rates are property taxes that allow Council to raise revenue to fund essential public services to cater to their municipal population.

The whole community pays taxes and rates. Of the total tax revenue collected by all levels of government, currently councils across Australia collect only 3.5 per cent. The other 96.5 per cent goes to Australian and Victorian governments. The more tax revenue that Australian and Victorian governments return to local projects, the less pressure there will be on rates.

Glen Eira City Council's reliance on rates is influenced by policy and legislative factors that preclude or limit Council's ability to charge. Council does not have discretion to set user fees and charges for a range of services where this is set out in Victorian Government legislation or regulation, such as prescribed fees for planning permits, or in funding agreements with other levels of government such as those applying to aged services and maternal and child health. Other fees and charges are benchmarked with the market or other comparators to ensure that they are fair and reasonable.

(b) The Fair Go Rates System

The Fair Go Rates System introduced across Victoria in 2015 has severely constrained councils' ability to draw upon traditional avenues of revenue to continue the provision of essential community services at their current levels.

While rate capping aims to provide a downwards force on cost-of-living pressures felt by residents, rates comprise a sizeable proportion of revenue inflows for local governments each year and a discrete cap on these inflows means these same affordability pressures are exacerbated for Local Governments and their ability to sustain the level and quality of services to the community.

This is amplified by the actual level that applicable rate caps have been set at in recent years, specifically in the years of heightened inflation post pandemic — for example, annual consumer price index (CPI) to June 2023 was six per cent, while the applicable rate cap for Victorian Local Governments for the same period was 1.75 per cent.

The compounding effect of a low rate cap for councils results in slower revenue growth, which over time can impact their long-term financial sustainability, limiting their ability to provide services, maintain infrastructure, and meet new demands. Without the flexibility to compound revenue at a rate that matches inflation and service demands, councils face a challenging balancing act, which may lead to reduced services, increased debt, or a backlog of deferred projects that becomes more costly to address later. A year-by-year rate cap also diminishes the ability of councils to manage their rate base over time.

Each year the Minister for Local Government sets the rate cap, that is, a maximum percentage increase allowed for councils' average rate for the forthcoming financial year. If this average rate appears insufficient for the needs of any council, the Council can apply to the Essential Services Commission (ESC) for a higher rate cap percentage. Any increase in rates in one year has a compounding beneficial impact to Council for every year thereafter.

To be successful, a rate cap variation application must demonstrate it promotes the purpose of the Fair Go Rates System by meeting the following objectives:

- *to promote the long-term interests of ratepayers and the community in relation to sustainable outcomes in the delivery of services and critical infrastructure; and*
- *to ensure that a Council has the financial capacity to perform its duties and functions and exercise its powers.*

In comparison to similar councils, Glen Eira City Council has had the lowest rates per assessment for a number of years. This means that we generate comparatively less income from rates and, due to the compounding impact, the gap increases year on year.

Since the introduction of rate capping in 2015, the rate caps have been:

Financial year	Rate cap
2025-26	3.00%
2024-25	2.75%
2023-24	3.50%
2022-23	1.75%
2021-22	1.50%
2020-21	2.00%
2019-20	2.50%
2018-19	2.25%
2017-18	2.00%
2016-17	2.50%

(c) Victorian Government taxation of Glen Eira property

- *Fire Services Property Levy (from 2013 – 30 June 2025)*

In 2013 the Victorian Government passed legislation requiring the Fire Services Property Levy to be collected from ratepayers. Previously, this was collected through building and property insurance premiums. The Levy is listed on Council's rate notices, collected by councils, and paid to the Victorian Government. The Fire Services Property Levy helps fund the services provided by Fire Rescue Victoria and Country Fire Authority (CFA), and all levies collected by Council are passed through to the Victorian Government.

The Fire Services Property Levy is based on two components, a fixed charge, and a variable charge which is linked to the Capital Improved Value of the property. This levy is not included in the rate cap and increases in the levy are at the discretion of the Victorian Government.

- *Emergency Services and Volunteers Fund (effective 1 July 2025)*

The Emergency Services and Volunteers Fund (ESVF) will replace the Fire Services Property Levy (FSPL) starting from July 1, 2025. This fund aims to support a broader range of emergency services, including the State Emergency Service (VICSES), Triple Zero Victoria, the State Control Centre, Forest Fire Management Victoria, and Emergency Recovery Victoria, along with the Country Fire Authority (CFA).

ESVF will be calculated based on a fixed charge that varies by property type, and a variable charge based on property value similar to the existing Fire Services Property Levy charge. All levies collected by Council for ESVF are passed through to the State Government.

- *State Waste Levy*

The Victorian Government Waste Levy is the amount that Council pays to the state Government for every tonne of waste delivered to landfill. The government uses the levy to promote recycling and related programs, and the levy reflects the government's policy to reduce waste going to landfill. The waste levy is beyond Council's control.

Since July 2020, the Victorian Government's Waste Levy has increased from $66 to $133 per tonne (a 102 per cent increase).

It is estimated that Council will be required to pay approximately $3.7 million in 2025–26 for the Victorian Government Waste Levy which is 12 per cent of Glen Eira's total waste collection and disposal costs.

(d) The Rating System

The rates system is set out in Victorian Government legislation. One of the easiest ways to explain this system is that if you own one per cent of the value of property in a municipality, you pay one per cent of the total rates revenue that Council needs to collect.

Rates are set according to how much your property is worth compared to other properties in the rest of the municipality. For example, a $1 million property in a wealthy municipality may be below the average house value so the owner would pay below the average rates, while a $1 million property in a less affluent municipality might be well above the average house value so the owner would pay above average rates.

Glen Eira has established a rating structure comprised of:

- General Rates

These are based on property values (using the Net Annual Valuation methodology), which are indicative of capacity to pay and form the central basis of rating under the Local Government Act 1989.

- Service Charges

A 'user pays' component to use service charges to reflect benefits provided by Council to ratepayers who benefit from a service.

Striking a proper balance between these elements will help to improve equity in the distribution of the rate burden across residents.

Council does not make a further distinction when applying general rates by applying rating differentials based on the purpose for which the property is used, that is, whether the property is used for residential, commercial/industrial, or farming purposes. This distinction is based on the concept that different property categories should pay a fair and equitable contribution, taking into account the benefits those properties derive from the local community. The use of differential rating is dependent on the use of the Capital Improved value when raising rates.

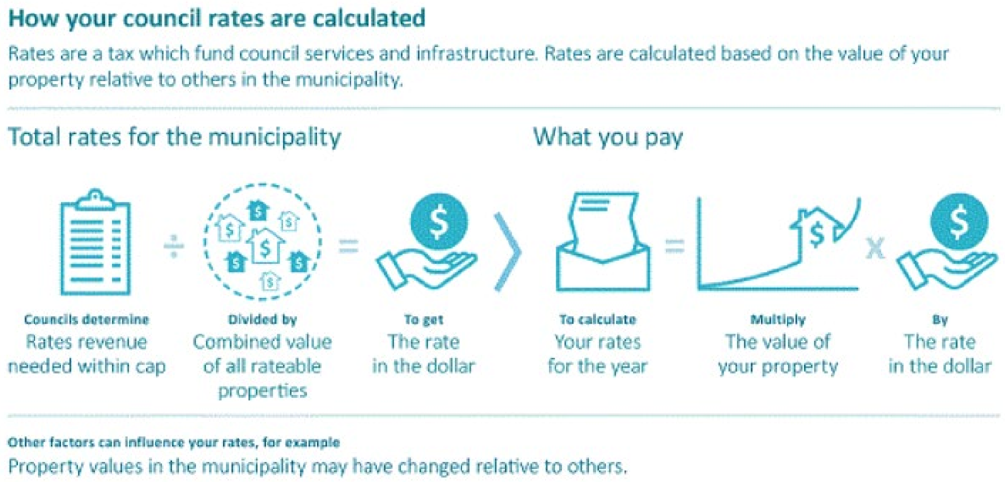
Glen Eira City Council's rating structure comprises a uniform rate for residential, commercial and industrial properties.

Council does not levy a municipal charge. The municipal charge is a minimum rate per property and declared for the purpose of covering some of the administrative costs of Council. Applying the municipal charge would result in lesser valued properties in the municipality making a larger contribution.

The formula for calculating General Rates, excluding any additional charges, arrears or additional supplementary rates is:

Valuation (Net Annual Value) x Rate in the Dollar (Uniform Rate)

The diagram below shows how council rates are calculated.



The uniform rate in the dollar is included in Council's *Budget*.

Rates and charges are an important source of revenue, accounting for over 65 per cent of operating revenue received by Council. The collection of rates is an important factor in funding Council services.

Planning for future rate increases is therefore an essential component of the long-term financial planning process and plays a significant role in funding both additional service delivery and the increasing costs related to providing Council services.

Council is aware of the balance between rate revenue (as an important income source) and community sensitivity to rate increases. With the introduction of the State Government's Fair Go Rates legislation, all rate increases are capped to a rate declared by the Minister for Local Government, which is usually announced in December for the following financial year.

(e) Waste Charges

Current approach

Council currently utilises a service charge to fully recover the cost of Council's waste services.

Waste and recycling charges appear on your rate notice for the use of our waste collection service. These charges pay for kerbside waste collection, hard rubbish collection, recycling, waste disposal, and the Victorian Government Waste Levy — which we must pay when depositing waste at landfill.

Waste and recycling charges are compulsory for residential properties, but optional for commercial properties. They don't apply to properties with no improvements (i.e., vacant land).

The waste service charge is not capped under the Fair Go Rates legislation.

Guidelines for Services and Charges

On 22 December 2023, the Victorian Government released *Good Practice Guidelines* for service rates and charges. These *Guidelines* were issued to provide clarity on the utilisation of service rates and charges for the collection of kerbside waste and recycling from properties.

The *Guidelines* outline recommended good practice in the levying of service rates and charges, and it is understood that they will be further reviewed over the coming year. Council will continue to review all aspects of the guidelines and will investigate a pathway for compliance once clarification from the Minister is received.

1.5.1 Rating legislation

The legislative framework set out in the *Local Government Act 1989* determines Council's ability to develop a rating system. The framework provides flexibility for Council to tailor a system that suits its needs.

Section 155 of the *Local Government Act 1989* provides that a Council may declare the following rates and charges on rateable land:

- *General rates under Section 158*
- *Municipal charges under Section 159*
- *Service rates and charges under Section 162*
- *Special rates and charges under Section 163*

The recommended strategy in relation to municipal charges, service rates and charges and special rates and charges are discussed later in this document.

In raising Council rates, Council is required to primarily use the valuation of the rateable property to levy rates. Section 157 (1) of the *Local Government Act 1989* provides Council with three choices in terms of which valuation base to utilise. They are Site Valuation, Capital Improved Valuation and Net Annual Value.

Glen Eira City Council has adopted the Net Annual Value as the valuation base. Whilst this document outlines Council's strategy regarding rates revenue, rates data will be contained in the Council's annual *Budget* as required by the *Local Government Act 2020* and the integrated planning and reporting requirements of the *Act*.

Section 94 (2) of the *Local Government Act 2020* states that Council must adopt a budget by 30 June each year (or at another time fixed by the Minister) to include:

a) the total amount that the Council intends to raise by rates and charges;

b) a statement as to whether the rates will be raised by the application of a uniform rate or a differential rate:

c) a description of any fixed component of the rates, if applicable;

d) if Council proposes to declare a uniform rate, the matters specified in section 160 of the *Local Government Act 1989*;

e) if the Council proposes to declare a differential rate for any land, the matters specified in section 161(2) of the *Local Government Act 1989*.

Section 94 (3) of the *Local Government Act 2020* also states that Council must ensure that, if applicable, the budget also contains a statement –

a) that Council intends to apply for a special order to increase Council's average rate cap for the financial year or any other financial year; or

b) that Council has made an application to the Essential Services Commission (ESC) for a special order and is waiting for the outcome of the applications; or

c) that a special Order has been made in respect of Council and specifying the average rate cap that applies for the financial year or any other financial year.

This plan outlines the principles and strategic framework that Council will utilise in calculating and distributing the rating burden to property owners, however, the quantum of rate revenue and rating differential amounts will be determined in the annual Council budget.

1.5.2 Rating principles

(a) Taxation principles:

When developing a rating strategy, in particular with reference to differential rates, a Council should give consideration to the following seven good practice taxation principles:

Wealth tax

The 'wealth tax' principle implies that the rates paid are dependent upon the value of a ratepayer's real property and have no correlation to the individual ratepayer's consumption of services or the perceived benefits derived by individual ratepayers from the expenditures funded from rates.

Equity

Horizontal equity — ratepayers in similar situations should pay similar amounts of rates (ensured mainly by accurate property valuations, undertaken in a consistent manner, their classification into homogenous property classes and the right of appeal against valuation).

Vertical equity — those who are better off should pay more rates than those worse off (the rationale applies for the use of progressive and proportional income taxation. It implies a 'relativity' dimension to the fairness of the tax burden).

Efficiency

Economic efficiency is measured by the extent to which production and consumption decisions by people are affected by rates.

Simplicity

How easily a rates system can be understood by ratepayers and the practicality and ease of administration.

Benefit

The extent to which there is a nexus between consumption/benefit and the rate burden.

Capacity to Pay

The capacity of ratepayers or groups of ratepayers to pay rates.

Diversity

The capacity of ratepayers within a group to pay rates.

The rating challenge for Council therefore is to determine the appropriate balancing of competing considerations.

(b) Rates and charges revenue principles:

- *They should be reviewed annually;*
- *They should not change dramatically from one year to the next;*
- *They should be sufficient to fund current expenditure commitments, and:*
  - *Council's Vision, and*
  - *Deliverables outlined in the Council Plan, Financial Plan and Asset Plan.*

1.5.3 Determining which valuation base to use

Under the *Local Government Act 1989*, Council has three options as to the valuation base it elects to use. They are:

- *Capital Improved Valuation (CIV) — Value of land and improvements upon the land.*
- *Site Valuation (SV) — Value of land only.*
- *Net Annual Value (NAV) — Rental valuation based on CIV.*

For residential and farm properties, NAV is calculated at five per cent of the Capital Improved Value. For commercial and industrial properties, NAV is calculated as the greater of the estimated annual rental value or five per cent of the CIV.

Glen Eira City Council has adopted the following valuation base:

(a) Net Annual Value (NAV)

NAV, in concept, represents the annual rental value of a property. However, in practice, NAV is closely linked to capital improved value for residential and farm properties. Valuers derive the NAV directly as five per cent of CIV.

In contrast to the treatment of residential and farm properties, NAV for commercial and industrial properties are assessed with regard to actual market rental. This differing treatment of commercial versus residential and farm properties has led to some suggestions that all properties should be valued on a rental basis.

Glen Eira City Council has adopted the Net Annual Value (NAV) system for rating purposes. NAV for non-residential properties is the assessed rental value. In accordance with legislation this must be at least five per cent of the Capital Improved Value (CIV) for any property. For residential properties it is fixed at five per cent of the CIV, but for commercial or industrial properties there is no set amount and will generally be higher.

Council calculates the general rate in the dollar by dividing the total rate revenue by the Net Annual Value (NAV) of all rateable assessments (properties). Council then applies this rate to all rateable assessments. For example, if total rate revenue is $40 million and our rateable assessments have a total NAV of $950 million, the rate in the dollar is 0.042105 rate in the dollar of NAV.

(b) Cultural and recreational land

The *Cultural and Recreational Lands Act 1963* requires that Council undertake a separate process for the purpose of setting an applicable charge 'in lieu of rates' for eligible properties.

Council considers the charge each year as part of its planning and budget setting process. This process effectively levies a charge that provides a discount for these properties compared to the equivalent municipal rates they would otherwise pay.

Section 4(1) of the *Cultural and Recreational Lands Act 1963* provides that the charge must be reasonable, giving consideration to:

- *the services provided by Council in relation to such lands; and*
- *the benefit to the community derived from such recreational lands.*

Council has approximately 29 properties that are classified as cultural and recreational land for rating purposes.

(c) Recommended Valuation Base

In choosing a valuation base, councils must decide on whether they wish to adopt a differential rating system (different rates in the dollar for different property categories) or a uniform rating system (same rate in the dollar). If a Council was to choose the former, under the *Local Government Act 1989* it must adopt the CIV method of rating.

Glen Eira City Council applies a Net Annual Valuation (NAV) to all properties within the municipality to take into account the fully developed value of the property. This basis of valuation also takes into account the annual rental value of commercial or industrial properties. A uniform rate is applied to each properties Net Annual Value.

Differential rating allows (under the CIV method) Council to shift part of the rate burden from some groups of ratepayers to others, through different 'rates in the dollar' for each class of property.

(d) Property valuations

The *Valuation of Land Act 1960* is the principle legislation in determining property valuations. Under the *Valuation of Land Act 1960*, the Victorian Valuer-General conducts property valuations on an annual basis. Council applies a Net Annual Value (NAV) to all properties within the municipality. This basis of valuation considers the total market value of the land including buildings and other improvements and the annual rental value for commercial and industrial properties only.

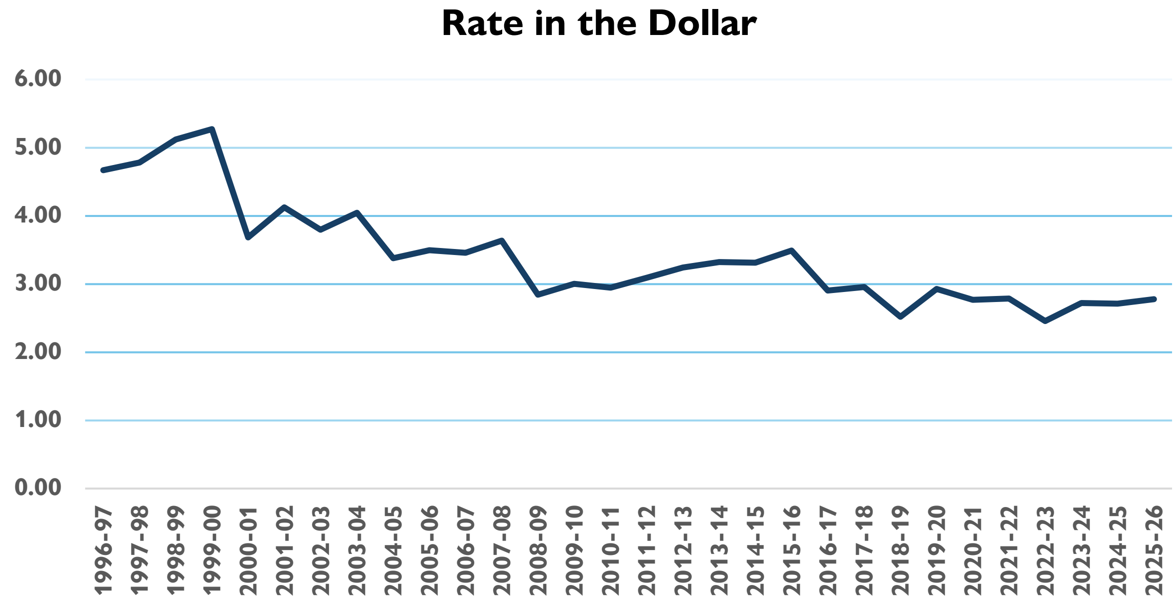
The value of land is always derived by the principal of valuing land for its highest and best use at the relevant time of valuation.

As of 1 July 2018, the Valuer-General has been conducting a revaluation of all properties every year. The current revaluation is effective as at 1 January 2025. The current capital improved value of all rateable property is approximately $84.5 billion.

The property values are used by:

- *State Government to levy land tax (SV) and the Fire Services Property Levy (CIV - effective 1 July 2013); and*
- *Council to levy rates (NAV).*

A revaluation has no effect on Council's total rate income. Rising property values do not impact on Council's total revenue collection. They usually result in the adjustment, by Council, of a lower rate in the dollar to offset the overall increase in property values. For example, the rate in the dollar in 1998–99 was 5.1183 of net annual value compared to 2.7782 in 2025–26.



A revaluation can affect the rates on an individual property. Rates are redistributed according to the shift in property values that have occurred in different parts of the municipality. In a revaluation year some ratepayers may experience a change in their rates depending on the type of property they own, where it is located and how its value has moved relative to the average.

(e) Supplementary valuations

Supplementary valuations are carried out for a variety of reasons including rezoning, subdivisions, amalgamations, renovations, new constructions, extensions, occupancy changes and corrections. The Victorian Valuer-General is tasked with undertaking supplementary revaluations and advises Council on a monthly basis of valuation and Australian Valuation Property Classification Code (AVPCC) changes.

Supplementary valuations bring the value of the affected property into line with the general valuation of other properties within the municipality. Objections to supplementary valuations can be lodged in accordance with Part 3 of the *Valuation of Land Act 1960.* Any objections must be lodged with the Valuer-General within two months of the issue of the supplementary rate notice.

(f) Objections to property valuations

Part 3 of the *Valuation of Land Act 1960* provides that a property owner may lodge an objection against the valuation of a property or the Australian Valuation Property Classification Code (AVPCC) within two months of the issue of the original or amended (supplementary) Rates and Valuation Charges Notice (Rates Notice), or within four months if the notice was not originally issued to the occupier of the land.

A property owner must lodge their objection to the valuation or the AVPCC in writing to the Valuer-General. Property owners also have the ability to object to the site valuations on receipt of their Land Tax Assessment. Property owners can appeal their land valuation within two months of receipt of their Council Rate Notice (via Council) or within two months of receipt of their Land Tax Assessment (via State Revenue Office).

1.5.4 Municipal charge

Another principle rating option available to councils is the application of a municipal charge. Under Section 159 of the *Local Government Act 1989*, Council may declare a municipal charge to cover some of the administrative costs of the Council. The legislation is not definitive on what comprises administrative costs and does not require Council to specify what is covered by the charge.

The application of a municipal charge represents a choice to raise a portion of the rates by a flat fee for all properties, rather than sole use of the NAV valuation method.

Under the *Local Government Act*, a Council's total revenue from a municipal charge in a financial year must not exceed 20 per cent of the combined sum total of the Council's total revenue from the municipal charge and the revenue from general rates (total rates).

The municipal charge applies equally to all properties and is based upon the recovery of a fixed cost of providing administrative services irrespective of valuation. The same contribution amount per assessment to cover a portion of Council's administrative costs can be seen as an equitable method of recovering these costs.

Glen Eira City Council does not raise a municipal charge.

1.5.5 Special Charge Schemes

The *Local Government Act 1989* allows councils to recover the cost of a special rate or charge scheme introduced from property owners who will gain special benefit from that scheme.

The purpose of the special rate is to defray the costs of advertising, management, decoration, security, promotion and other incidental expenses associated with encouraging commerce in the Centre, that Council considers will be of special benefit to those persons required to pay the Special Rate and such persons being the owners of the properties in the area within the municipal district of Council.

The special rate or special charges may be declared on the basis of any criteria specified by Council in the rate (Section 163 (2)). In accordance with Section 163 (3), Council must specify:

- *the wards, groups, uses or areas for which the special rate or charge is declared;*
- *the land in relation to which the special rate or special charge is declared;*
- *the manner in which the special rate or special charge will be assessed and levied; and*
- *details of the period for which the special rate or special charge remains in force.*

The special rates and charges provisions are flexible and can be used to achieve a wide range of community objectives. The fundamental principle of special rates and charges is proof that a "special benefit" applies to those being levied.

Glen Eira City Council currently has three special charge schemes for the marketing and promotion of the Bentleigh, Carnegie and Elsternwick shopping centres by their respective Traders Associations.

1.5.6 Service rates and charges

Section 162 of the *Local Government Act* (1989) provides Council with the opportunity to raise service rates and charges for any of the following services:

- *The provision of a water supply*
- *The collection and disposal of refuse*
- *The provision of sewerage services*
- *Any other prescribed service.*

Council currently applies a service charge for the collection and disposal of refuse for residential properties (compulsory) and non-residential properties (optional) and providing waste services for the municipality (street litter bins, etc). Council retains the objective of setting the service charge for waste at a level that fully recovers the cost of the waste services.

This *Revenue and Rating Plan* proposes no change to the existing waste service charge, relieving any requirement to raise the same amount by way of an increased general rate — meaning that residents in higher valued properties would substantially pay for the waste service of lower valued properties.

Whilst this same principle applies for rates in general, the mix of having a single fixed charge combined with valuation driven rates for the remainder of the rate invoice provides a balanced and equitable outcome.

1.5.7 Collection and administration of rates and charges

The purpose of this section is to outline the rate payment options, processes, and the support provided to ratepayers facing financial hardship.

(a) Payment options

Glen Eira City Council accepts payments in instalments only. However, ratepayers may also elect to pay their annual rates in one payment. If paying in this way, payment must be received by September 30 in the year that the rates fall due.

In accordance with the *Local Government Act 1989*, Section 167(1), Ratepayers have the option of paying rates and charges by way of four instalments. Payments are due on the prescribed dates below:

- *1st Instalment: 30 September*
- *2nd Instalment: 30 November*
- *3rd Instalment: 28 February*
- *4th Instalment: 31 May*

Council offers payment of rates via direct debit (bank account or credit card) through the following ways:

- *Quarterly (four payments) — amounts to be deducted on 30 September, 30 November, 28 February and 31 May (or next working day)*
- *Monthly (10 payments) — amounts to be deducted on the first working day of the month from September to June.*

Council offers a range of payment options including:

- *In person at Council offices (cheques, money order, EFTPOS, credit/debit cards and cash)*
- *Telephone credit card payments (Visa or Mastercard)*
- *Online via Council's payment portal (Visa or Mastercard)*
- *Monthly and Quarterly Direct debit*
- *BPAY*
- *Australia Post — in person only by cash, cheque or EFTPOS*
- *By mail (cheques and money orders only).*

(b) Interest on arrears and overdue rates

Interest is charged on all overdue rates in accordance with Section 172 of the *Local Government Act 1989*. The interest rate applied is fixed under Section 2 of the *Penalty Interest Rates Act 1983*, which is determined by the Minister and published by notice in the Government Gazette.

(c) Pensioner rebates

Holders of a Centrelink or Veteran Affairs Pension Concession card or a Veteran Affairs Gold card which stipulates TPI or War Widow may claim a rebate on their sole or principal place of residence. Upon initial application, ongoing eligibility is maintained, unless rejected by Centrelink or the Department of Veteran Affairs which occurs during the annual verification process. Upon confirmation of an eligible pensioner concession status, the pensioner rebate is deducted from the rate account before payment is required by the ratepayer.

The available Victorian Government concession is 50 per cent of rates to a maximum amount determined each year. Glen Eira City Council is one of the few Councils to provide an additional rebate to further assist all who are eligible for the State Government rebate. The maximum total Council and Victorian Government rebate granted is $270 meaning Council's contribution is $270 less the State rebate amount.

With regards to new applicants, after being granted a Pensioner Concession Card (PCC), pensioners can then apply for the rebate at any time throughout the rating year. Retrospective claims up to a maximum of one previous financial year can be approved by Council on verification of eligibility criteria. Claims prior to this period are required to be approved by the relevant government department up to maximum of an additional three years.

(d) Deferred payments

Under Section 170 of the *Local Government Act 1989*, Council may defer the payment of any rate or charge for an eligible ratepayer, allowing ratepayers an extended period of time to make payments.

In all applications for rate deferrals, the applicant will be encouraged to continue to pay the portion of rates that is affordable given their individual circumstances. This will be mutually agreed on a case-by-case basis.

(e) Rates assistance

Council may become aware that a ratepayer is in financial hardship through conversations, receiving a hardship application form or a referral from an independent financial counsellor. Council recognises that financial vulnerability is complex and varied, with different circumstances needing a range of options for assistance available. A ratepayer's circumstances may make it more difficult for them to ask for assistance.

Council understands that not all situations are alike, and that financial hardship can arise from a range of individual circumstances including, but not limited to:

- *Bereavement*
- *Unemployment*
- *Illness*
- *Impacts of natural disasters*
- *Separation/divorce*
- *Family violence*

Council is committed to ensuring that eligible ratepayers in genuine financial hardship will be provided with assistance and an explanation of their entitlements to rates and charges payment options.

Applications for consideration of financial hardship will be managed in accordance with Councils' Rates Financial Hardship Policy.

(f) Debt recovery

Council makes every effort to contact ratepayers at their correct address, but it is the ratepayer's responsibility to properly advise Council of their contact details. The *Local Government Act 2020* Section 122 requires the buyer of a property, or their agent (e.g., solicitors and or conveyancers), to notify Council by way of a notice of acquisition of an interest in land.

In the event that an account becomes overdue, Council will issue an overdue reminder notice which will include accrued penalty interest. If the account remains unpaid, Council may take legal action without further notice to recover the overdue amount. All fees and court costs incurred will be recoverable from the ratepayer.

If an amount payable by way of rates in respect to land has been in arrears for three years or more, Council may take action to sell the property in accordance with the *Local Government Act 1989* Section 181.

1.6 Other revenue items

1.6.1 User fees and charges

User fees relate mainly to the recovery of service delivery costs through the charging of fees to users of Council's services.

User fees and charges are an important source of revenue. Properly designed fees enable residents to make efficient decisions about how much of a service to consume and for Council it is about how much of the service to provide. Under-pricing (or not charging) for services, may lead to over-consumption and place pressure on Council to absorb more costs.

Examples of User fees and charges include:

- *Leisure Centre, Gym, and Pool visitation and membership fees*
- *Waste Management Fees*
- *Aged and Health Care Service Fees*
- *Leases and Facility Hire Fees of Council Buildings.*

The provision of infrastructure and services form a key part of Council's role in supporting the local community. In providing these, Council must consider a range of 'Best Value' principles including service cost and quality standards, value-for-money, and community expectations and values. Council must also balance the affordability and accessibility of infrastructure and services with its financial capacity and in the interests of long-term financial sustainability.

Councils must also comply with the government's *Competitive Neutrality Policy* for significant business activities they provide and adjust their service prices to neutralise any competitive advantages when competing with the private sector.

The setting of fees and charges are to be set with reference to:

- *User capacity to pay*
- *Community service obligations*
- *Cost recovery principles*
- *Benchmarking of similar services*
- *Utilisation*
- *Statutory limitations.*

In providing services to the community, Council must determine the extent of cost recovery for particular services consistent with the level of both individual and collective benefit that the services provide and in line with the community's expectations. To deliver appropriate community outcomes, Council may develop concessional fees for each service. These fees will be determined by taking the following into account:

- *Type of service being provided*
- *Balancing individual and community benefit*
- *Users' ability to pay*
- *Market pricing — the pricing of comparable services offered by other providers*
- *Competitive neutrality (where relevant).*

Services are provided based on one of the following pricing methods:

- *Market Pricing*
- *Full Cost Recovery Pricing*
- *Subsidised Pricing*

Market pricing

This is where Council sets prices based on the benchmarked competitive prices of alternate suppliers. In general, market price represents full cost recovery plus an allowance for profit. Market prices will be used when other providers exist in the given market, and Council needs meet its obligations under the government's *Competitive Neutrality Policy.*

It should be noted that if a market price is lower than Council's full cost price, then the market price would represent Council subsidising that service. If this situation exists, and there are other suppliers existing in the market at the same price, this may mean that Council is not the most efficient supplier in the marketplace. In this situation, Council will consider whether there is a community service obligation and whether Council should be providing this service at all.

Full cost recovery

This pricing aims to recover all direct and indirect costs incurred by Council. This pricing should be used where a service provided by Council benefits individual customers specifically, rather than the community. In principle, fees and charges should be set at a level that recovers the full cost of providing the services unless there is an overriding policy or imperative in favour of subsidisation.

Cost Recovery Principles promote equity and efficiency and enable Council's fees and charges to be transparent and be calculated on a consistent basis. Cost recovery is about recouping all costs associated with the service provided. Allocations of internal overheads are apportioned including:

- *Information Technology Costs — charges for Information Technology recurrent expenditure are charged to business units based on each department's use of IT equipment. Types of equipment include desktop computers and laptops*
- *Human Resources — calculated based on the number of employees*
- *Treasury & Finance — calculated based on the number of employees*
- *Payroll — calculated based on the number of employees*
- *Accounts Payable — calculated based on the number of vouchers and corporate card transactions processed*
- *Accounts Receivable — calculated based on the number of invoices processed*

- *Mail Services — calculated based on the number of employees and mail usage*
- *Customer Service Centre — calculated based on the number of service requests*
- *Risk Management (public liability) — calculated based on the number of new public liability claims.*

Subsidised pricing

This is where Council subsidises a service by not passing the full cost of that service onto the customer. Subsidies may range from full subsidies (i.e., Council provides the service free of charge) to partial subsidies, where Council provides the service to the user with a discount. The subsidy can be funded from Council's rate revenue or other sources such as Commonwealth and Victorian funding programs. Full Council Subsidy Pricing and Partial Cost Pricing should always be based on knowledge of the full cost of providing a service.

As per the Victorian Auditor General's Office report *'Fees and charges — cost recovery by local government'* recommendations, Council has developed a user fee pricing policy to help guide the fair and equitable setting of prices. The policy outlines the process for setting fee prices and includes such principles as:

- *Both direct and indirect costs to be considered when setting prices*
- *Accessibility, affordability, and efficient delivery of services must be considered*
- *Competitive neutrality with commercial providers.*

Council develops a table of fees and charges as part of its budget each year. Proposed pricing changes will be included in this table and will be communicated to stakeholders before the budget is adopted, giving them the chance to review and provide valuable feedback before the fees are locked in.

1.6.2 Statutory fees and charges

Statutory fees and fines are those which Council collects under the direction of legislation or other government directives. The rates used for statutory fees and fines are advised by the state government department responsible for the corresponding services or legislation, and councils will have limited discretion in applying these fees.

For some fees and charges, Council's role is to administer services and apply fees set or controlled under statute or funding agreement. These fees may only provide a partial recovery of the cost of providing the service.

Examples of statutory fees and fines include:

- *Animal Registrations*
- *Building and Inspections*
- *Food Act Registration*
- *Freedom of Information*
- *Infringements and fines*
- *Land Information Certificates*
- *Planning and subdivision*

- *Public Health Act Registration*
- *Magistrate Court fees*
- *Voting Infringements*

Penalty and fee units are used in Victoria's acts and regulations to describe the amount of a fine or a fee.

Penalty units

Penalty units are used to define the amount payable for fines for many offences. The rate for penalty units is indexed each financial year so that it is raised in line with inflation. Any change to the value of a penalty unit will occur on 1 July each year.

Fee units

Fee units are used to calculate the cost of a certificate, registration or licence that is set out in an act or regulation.

The cost of fees and penalties is calculated by multiplying the number of units by the current value of the fee or unit. The exact cost may be rounded up or down.

1.6.3 Grants (operating and capital)

Grant revenue represents income usually received from other levels of government. Some grants are singular and attached to the delivery of specific projects, whilst others can be of a recurrent nature and may or may not be linked to the delivery of projects.

Council will pro-actively advocate to other levels of government for grant funding support to deliver important infrastructure and service outcomes for the community. Council may use its own funds to leverage higher grant funding and maximise external funding opportunities.

When preparing its financial plan, Council considers its project proposal pipeline, advocacy priorities, upcoming grant program opportunities, and co-funding options to determine what grants to apply for. Council will only apply for and accept external funding if it is consistent with the Community Vision and does not lead to the distortion of *Council Plan* priorities.

Grant assumptions are then clearly detailed in Council's budget document. No project that is reliant on grant funding will proceed until a signed funding agreement is in place.

Council's advocacy objectives include:

- *Provide clarity on the advocacy agenda and priorities for the community.*
- *Identify priority projects to generate economic activity, employment growth, improved productivity, and community benefit.*
- *Increase levels of funding for infrastructure and services from other levels of government to meet community needs and aspirations now and into the future.*
- *Influence state and federal legislation, policy, standards, and guidelines to improve our community and the health and wellbeing of our residents.*
- *Keep the community informed about Council advocacy activities through regular reporting.*

1.6.4 Contributions — monetary

Contributions represent funds received by Council, usually from non-government sources, and are usually linked to projects.

Contributions can be made to Council in the form of either cash payments or asset handovers.

Examples of contributions include:

- *Monies collected from developers under planning and development agreements;*
- *Monies collected under developer contribution plans and infrastructure contribution plans;*
- *Contributions from user groups towards upgrade of facilities; and*
- *Assets handed over to council from developers at the completion of a subdivision, such as roads, drainage, and streetlights.*

Contributions should always be linked to a planning or funding agreement. Council will not undertake any work on a contribution-funded project until signed agreement outlining the contribution details is in place.

Contributions linked to developments can be received well before any Council expenditure occurs. In this situation, the funds will be identified and held separately for the specific works identified in the agreements.

Council's Public Open Space Reserve can be used to fund projects that meet the conditions of the *Open Space Strategy*, which is focused on increasing or enhancing open space in identified gap areas. Contributions to the Reserve during the financial year relate to public open space levies received under Section 18 of the S*ubdivision Act 1988*.

There are different contribution rates that apply in different parts of the municipality. These include:

- *In the area known as Caulfield Village, five per cent of the site value of the land which is contained within the Mixed-Use Precinct and the Smith Street Precinct, and four per cent of the site value of the land which is contained within the Residential Precinct.*
- *In the area known as East Village, in accordance with the East Village Comprehensive Development Plan, May 2020 and East Village Development Contributions Plan, May 2020.*
- *All other land, 8.3 per cent of the site value of the land effective March 2023.*

1.6.5 Interest on investments

Council receives interest on funds managed as part of its investment portfolio, where funds are held in advance of expenditure, or for special purposes. The investment portfolio is managed per Council's investment policy, which seeks to earn the best return on funds, whilst minimising risk. The objectives are to ensure that:

- *All funds are invested in accordance with legislative and Council requirements;*

- *Effective internal controls are in place to minimise investment risk;*
- *The financial yield is managed through prudent investment of funds whilst ensuring sufficient liquidity for Council's day to day operational commitments;*
- *Investment decisions are based on the security of funds by limiting unnecessary exposure to risk; and*
- *Environmental, social and governance risks and opportunities are appropriately considered when investing Council funds.*

1.6.6 Sale of land and buildings

One way Council delivers its range of services to the community is through effective use of its assets. Council assets include roads, footpaths, drains, libraries and learning centres, town hall, parks, sporting and recreational centres, and other community facilities. Council controls and manages approximately $2.8 billion in assets for its community.

Council reviews the performance of its assets and whether those assets are continuing to deliver community benefit. In some cases, where an asset is low performing and there are opportunities for Council to consider the use of resources from this asset to create greater benefit, an asset may be considered by Council to be surplus to current needs.

In accordance with Council's *Sale of Land and Buildings Policy*, Council will transfer the net proceeds of the sale of Council's land and buildings to the *Strategic Asset Development Reserve.* The proceeds from the sale will be used to purchase other land or land and buildings. Where Council purchases priority land acquisition projects using debt funding, future asset sales linked to this acquisition may be used to retire this debt.

Any potential surplus Council land or buildings will be subject to a report to Council outlining the reasons for the recommended sale, a formal valuation, the proposed method of sale and community consultation plan and outcomes.

1.6.7 Borrowings

Whilst not a source of income, borrowings can be an important cash management tool in appropriate circumstances. Loans can only be approved by Council resolution. Council's Borrowings Strategy is detailed in the Financial Plan.

1.7 References

1.7.1 Policy

- *Advocacy Policy*
- *Community Engagement Policy*
- *Investment Policy*
- *Payment of Rates Policy*
- *Rates and Hardship Policy*
- *Sale of Land and Buildings Policy*

1.7.2 Legislation

- *Cultural and Recreational Lands Act 1963*
- *Fire Services Property Amendment (Emergency Services and Volunteers Fund Bill 2025)*
- *Local Government Act 1989 and 2020*
- *Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020*
- *Local Government Legislation Amendment (Rating and Other Matters) Act 2022*
- *Penalty Interest Rates Act 1983*
- *State Concessions Act 2004*
- *Valuation of Land Act 1960*

City of GLEN EIRA

GLEN EIRA CITY COUNCIL

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BENTLEIGH EAST
BRIGHTON EAST
CARNEGIE
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ELSTERNWICK
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National Relay Service

A phone solution for people who have a hearing or speech impairment. Internet relay users connect to NRS then ask for 03 9524 3333.

TTY dial 13 36 77 or Speak and Listen dial 1300 555 727 then ask for 03 9524 3333. https://internet-relay.nrscall.gov.au

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