WHITEHORSE
CITY COUNCIL

Rates Hardship Assistance Policy

2026-2030

Responsible Directorate:	Corporate Services
Responsible Manager:	Manager Finance
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Rates Hardship Assistance Policy

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1. Policy Purpose

The purpose of the Rates Hardship Assistance Policy is to set out Council's commitment to supporting ratepayers who are experiencing hardship or financial hardship, while ensuring the fair, equitable, and sustainable collection of rates and charges for the benefit of the broader community.

This policy ensures that hardship assistance is provided in a compassionate, proportionate, fair, consistent, and transparent manner, in accordance with the *Local Government Act 1989* and the Ministerial Guidelines Relating to Payment of Rates and Charges (December 2025). Council is committed to treating all ratepayers with dignity and respect when considering applications relating to hardship and financial hardship.

This policy applies to:

- The management of the payment of rates and charges, including payment plans
- Applications to defer the payment of rates and charges
- Applications for the waiver of rates and charges

In administering this policy, Council and its employees are required to exercise professional judgement across a range of matters, including assessments of hardship and financial hardship, requests for payment deferrals, interest waivers, and payment plans.

2. Background

Council has a legislative responsibility to levy and collect rates and charges to fund essential services and infrastructure for the community. At the same time, Council recognises that some ratepayer's experience hardship or financial hardship that affects their ability to meet these obligations, often due to circumstances beyond their control.

In recent years, increasing cost-of-living pressures, housing stress, health impacts, family violence, unemployment, and broader economic uncertainty have led to a greater number of ratepayers seeking support. These factors have heightened community expectations that councils respond to hardship in ways that are fair, accessible, and proportionate, while still ensuring the sustainable collection of revenue.

This policy has been developed and updated in response to several key external and strategic drivers, including:

- Legislative obligations under the *Local Government Act 1989* and governance principles introduced through the *Local Government Act 2020*, which emphasise decision-making that is transparent, equitable and responsive to community needs
- The release of the Ministerial Guidelines Relating to Payment of Rates and Charges (final December 2025), which provide clearer expectations for how

councils identify, assess, and respond to hardship and financial hardship, including vulnerable customers

- Findings and recommendations arising from the Victorian Ombudsman's work on local government hardship and financial hardship practices, highlighting the importance of early engagement, flexibility, and minimising harm
- Council's strategic objectives relating to financial sustainability, community wellbeing, social inclusion, and good governance
- The need to ensure consistent, well documented, and defensible decision making across payment plans, deferrals, waivers, and recovery processes

This policy replaces and consolidates previous approaches to rates hardship to ensure Council's practices remain contemporary, aligned with best practice guidance, and responsive to emerging risks. It provides a clear framework for officers to support ratepayers experiencing genuine hardship, while balancing individual circumstances with Council's responsibility to administer the rating system fairly for the benefit of the wider community.

3. Objectives

The objectives of this Policy are to ensure alignment with:

- **Council's hardship and financial hardship relief options**, including eligibility criteria and the process by which ratepayers may apply for assistance.
- **A fair, equitable, compassionate, and accountable approach** to the management and collection of rates and charges, particularly where ratepayers are experiencing or at risk of financial hardship.
- **Provide flexible and alternative payment arrangements** to support ratepayers to meet their obligations, including variations to payment amounts and payment frequency.
- **Support and assist ratepayers experiencing financial hardship** through timely, accessible, and appropriate relief measures.
- **Provide guidance to enable the prompt, efficient, and consistent recovery of rates and charges**, while balancing Council's revenue responsibilities with community wellbeing.
- **Establish clear guidelines for Council employees and contractors** to ensure financial hardship matters are managed consistently, appropriately and in accordance with this policy.

Strategic Alignment

All actions, decisions, and processes under this Policy align with and support the delivery of Whitehorse City Council's strategic priorities, values, and long-term outcomes, as set out in the Corporate Plan and associated strategies listed here.

Strategic Link	Description of Link
Integrated Council Plan 2025-2029 **Strategic Direction 1: Community** **Strategic Direction 5: Governance**	This Hardship Assistance Policy supports **Strategic Direction 1: Community** of the Whitehorse Integrated Council Plan by promoting equity, inclusion, and community wellbeing, while also contributing to **Strategic Direction 5: Governance** through fair, consistent, and sustainable financial management

Consistency and Integration

Implementation of this Policy is consistent across the organisation and integrated with related policies, frameworks, and business plans to avoid duplication, gaps, or conflicting direction.

Corporate Document Link	Description of Link
Revenue and Rating Plan	Establishes the principles of fairness, equity, and capacity to pay that are operationalised through this Hardship Assistance Policy.
Integrated Council Plan	Provides the strategic direction for community wellbeing, inclusion, and good governance that this Policy supports through fair and compassionate hardship arrangements.
Financial Plan	Ensures hardship decisions are made in a financially responsible, consistent, and transparent manner aligned with Council's broader financial governance framework.

Accountable Decision-Making

Roles and responsibilities defined under this Policy support transparent, accountable decision-making that can be clearly traced back to strategic intent.

4. Scope

This policy applies to Whitehorse City Council property owners for rateable properties in accordance with the following sections of the *Local Government Act 1989*: Deferred payment (s170), Waiver (s171), Waiver by application - financial hardship (s171A), Payment plans for unpaid rates or charges (s171B) and Council to sell a property where there are unpaid rates (s181).

Specifically, the policy applies to:

- Ratepayers and property owners whose primary place of residence is located within the Whitehorse municipality.
- Properties that are not the ratepayer’s principal place of residence, where exceptional circumstances exist, at Council’s discretion.
- Outstanding debts owed to Council, including:
    - general rates
    - Special rates and charges
    - waste charges
    - interest
    - fees and penalties

Exclusions
This policy does not apply to:
- Non-compulsory waste services
- Private contractual debts

This Policy also applies to all Council staff who have responsibility to ensure collection of Council’s rates and charges.

In accordance with legislative requirements, Council must allocate all payments received proportionately across all applicable rates and charges. Accordingly, Council is unable to accommodate requests from ratepayers to apply payments to specific rates, charges, or debt components.

5. Policy

5.1 Understanding Hardship and Financial Hardship

Council recognises that hardship affects individuals differently and commits to assessing each application on its own merits, with sensitivity, fairness, and respect. Hardship may arise from financial or economic difficulty, but it can also result from a broader range of personal circumstances or life events that adversely affect a person’s wellbeing or quality of life. Some hardship situations may lead to financial hardship.

A ratepayer seeking assistance under this Policy is not required to demonstrate ongoing financial hardship to access support measures such as a payment plan or a short-term deferral of rates and charges. However, the ratepayer must demonstrate that payment of the rates and charges by the due date would be likely to cause financial hardship or significant financial difficulty.

Financial hardship refers to more serious circumstances where a person:

- is unable to afford the necessities of life for themselves and/or their dependants; or
- would be unable to meet essential living costs if required to pay rates and charges.

Financial hardship may be temporary or ongoing and can result from one or more factors, including but not limited to:

- loss of employment or prolonged unemployment;
- reduced, insufficient, or unstable income;
- illness, injury, disability, or mental health conditions;
- family violence, economic abuse, or elder abuse;
- bereavement or the death of a family member;
- gambling harm;
- scams or financial fraud;
- alcohol, drug, or substance misuse;
- incarceration; or
- impacts of natural disasters or other emergencies.
- temporary cash flow constraints arising unforeseen events, where additional time is required to restore financial capacity; and
- the administration of a deceased estate, where the executor or administrator does not have access to funds to pay rates and charges until the estate has been finalised.

In assessing requests for assistance, Council will consider both the nature of the hardship circumstances and the impact that payment by the due date would have on the ratepayer's financial position., a ratepayer does not need to demonstrate financial hardship to request support such as a payment plan or deferral of rates and charges. However, the ratepayer must demonstrate that payment by the due date would likely result in financial hardship.

Experiencing inconvenience or short-term difficulty in making a payment does not, of itself, constitute financial hardship. In some circumstances, meeting payment obligations may require adjustments such as reorganising household finances, reprioritising expenses, or reducing discretionary spending. Support from a qualified financial counsellor or advisor may assist in managing budgets, prioritising essential costs, and planning repayments.

5.2 Rates and Charges Collection

Arrangements for the payment of rates and charges are detailed in the *Local Government Act 1989* (Section 167). The current legislative instalment due dates for rates and charges are:

- First instalment — 30th September
- Second instalment — 30th November
- Third instalment — 28th February
- Fourth instalment — 31st May

Flexible payment options are available for the payment of rates and charges on a weekly, fortnightly, and monthly basis and are outlined in the Council annual and instalment notices as well as via the council website.

In circumstances where a payment arrangement is not agreed to with Council, interest will be charged on all overdue amounts in accordance with the *Local Government Act 1989* (Section 172) at the rate set under the *Penalty Interest Rates Act 1983*.

5.3 Rates and Charges Recovery Process

At all stages of the recovery process, Council will encourage ratepayers to contact us to discuss any payment difficulties and to seek hardship assistance. Council will continue to accept and assess hardship applications at any point during the recovery process.

Council issues rate and debt recovery notices during each financial year as follows:

- Annual Valuation and Rate Notice issued in August.
- Instalment notices are required to be issued at least 14 days prior to the due dates of instalments two, three and four where the ratepayer has elected to pay by instalments. Council has made a commitment to 30 days.
- Overdue rates will be communicated to property owners where an amount remains outstanding and no registered, compliant payment plan is in place.

Ratepayers who are paying under an approved payment plan will only receive the Annual Valuation and Rate Notice.

Property Owners paying via instalments will receive communication regarding their instalment payments via their preferred method, providing the first instalment (inclusive of any outstanding amounts) is paid by 30 September of the current financial year.

Where rates and charges remain unpaid by the due dates, Council may progressively undertake the following recovery actions, in accordance with relevant legislation and Ministerial Guidelines.

2. **Reminder and Communication for Overdue Rate Payments**
    - Annual - after the due date for lump sum payment, 15 February, has passed.
    - Interim instalment notices will include unpaid instalments + interest (if applicable)
    - Instalment - in June after the last date for the final instalment payment, 31 May, has passed.
    - Penalty interest may apply to overdue annual and instalment amounts and be included in the communication.
    - If an overdue balance remains and no arrangement is in place, Council will attempt to engage directly with the ratepayer through a combination of communication channels.
3. **Referral to recovery agency**
    - If satisfactory arrangements cannot be made directly, the account may be referred to Council's appointed debt recovery agency.
    - The agency may issue reminder notices or a letter of demand and, where necessary, initiate legal proceedings through the Magistrates' Court, including obtaining a default judgment.
    - A default judgment may impact a ratepayer's credit rating.
    - Council will suspend recovery action where a genuine hardship circumstance is identified or declared, or where the debt is paid in full.
4. **Enforcement actions (post judgment)**
    - Following a court judgment, Council may pursue enforcement actions in line with legislation, including oral examination, attachment of earnings, title searches and notification of mortgagees, placement of a caveat on title, bankruptcy proceedings (commercial/industrial ratepayers only), or the issue of a warrant to seize goods.
5. **Sale of land (last resort)**
    - As a last resort, and only after all other reasonable recovery options have been exhausted, Council may commence proceedings to sell land under section 181 of the *Local Government Act 1989*.
    - This action may only occur where:
        - the amount owed exceeds three years of unpaid rates and charges;
        - no current payment or hardship arrangement exists; and
        - a Court Order requiring payment has been obtained.
    - Prior to sale, Council will issue all required statutory notices to interested parties and the public.
    - Sale proceeds will be applied in accordance with legislative requirements.

- Council will not pursue a sale of land where a valid hardship assistance application is in place or where the ratepayer is actively engaging with Council to resolve the debt.

Debts outstanding for more than two years may be referred to Council's appointed recovery contractor.

5.4 Application and Eligibility for Rates Hardship Assistance

Eligibility

Rates hardship assistance is available to ratepayers who are experiencing genuine hardship that affects their ability to pay rates and charges.

To be eligible:

- The applicant must be the legal owner of the property or hold a life tenancy supported by a valid legal document.
- The property must be the applicant's principal place of residence.
- Applications from tenants of residential, commercial, or industrial properties will not be accepted, as the legal responsibility for payment of rates rests with the property owner under the *Local Government Act 1989*.

Application Process

Applications for hardship assistance should be submitted in writing by the property owner, either through Council's online application form or by completing the Rates Hardship Assistance Application Form which can be found on Council's website. Council officers are available to provide guidance and support throughout the application process.

Council recognises that some applicants may experience barriers to completing a written application, including language difficulties, limited access to technology, disability, illness or other personal circumstances. In these situations, applicants may seek assistance from a family member, friend, support person or other representative to help complete and apply on their behalf.

Where an applicant is unable to submit a written application, Council officers may assist by accepting and documenting an application through a telephone or in-person appointment. Appointments can be arranged through Council's website or by contacting Council directly. Supporting documentation may be requested to assist Council in assessing the application.

Council is committed to providing an accessible and respectful application process and will work with applicants to ensure they can access support in a manner that meets their individual circumstances.

Evidence and Assessment

Applicants are required to provide reasonable supporting evidence to substantiate their hardship. This may include, but is not limited to:

- Centrelink or income statements;
- medical certificates;
- financial counselling reports; or
- statutory declarations.

Council will apply flexible evidentiary requirements, consistent with the Ministerial Guidelines, to avoid placing unnecessary burden on vulnerable applicants. Only information that is reasonably necessary to assess the application will be requested. In assessing hardship assistance applications, Council will consider a range of factors to ensure decisions are made consistently, fairly and without bias. These may include, but are not limited to:

- whether the property is a principal place of residence or investment property;
- the ratepayer’s income, employment circumstances, and financial resources;
- essential living expenses, assets, liabilities, and capacity to meet financial commitments;
- the nature, severity, and expected duration of the hardship;
- actions taken by the ratepayer to manage or improve their financial situation;
- supporting documentation or independent financial advice (including from a financial counsellor);
- health, medical or disability impacts;
- family violence considerations (with appropriate confidentiality and safeguards, particularly for jointly owned properties);
- pension or Health Care Card status;
- the existence of a mortgage, ownership of multiple properties, and caring responsibilities or dependants.

Review Timeframes and Recovery Safeguards

Council will endeavour to assess hardship assistance applications within **10 business days**. Applicants will be contacted within this timeframe if further information is required. All decisions and correspondence will be provided in writing.

No further debt recovery enforcement action will occur while a hardship assistance application is under assessment, or where hardship assistance has been granted.

5.5 Hardship Assistance measures

Where a ratepayer is experiencing hardship or financial hardship, Council may provide one or more of the following assistance measures, having regard to the individual circumstances of the application and relevant legislative requirements:

Payment Plans
Council recognises that paying rates on time can be difficult, particularly during times of financial pressure or personal hardship. To help ratepayers meet their obligations, Council offers payment plans.

A payment plan allows outstanding rates to be paid over an agreed period. While the plan is in place and payments are made as agreed, Council will not take legal debt recovery action.

During an active and compliant payment plan, penalty interest on the outstanding balance will be paused to help reduce financial strain.

Ratepayers who wish to apply for a payment plan are encouraged to register via Council's online application process on Council's website at: Your Rates | Whitehorse City Council, or download a PDF form.

Alternatively, ratepayers may contact Council's Revenue and Rates team or Customer Support by phone or in person for assistance.

Council may offer payment plans to assist ratepayers experiencing hardship or financial difficulty to manage their rates and charges in a way that is affordable and sustainable.

- Payment plans may include:
  weekly, fortnightly or monthly instalments; and
- flexible payment amounts that consider the ratepayer's individual circumstances and capacity to pay.

While a payment plan remains active and payments are made in accordance with the agreed arrangement penalty interest will not be applied to the outstanding debt.

Council encourages ratepayers who are having trouble meeting the terms of a payment plan to contact Council as soon as possible. Where circumstances have changed, Council may be able to review the arrangement and discuss alternative support options.

If a payment plan is no longer maintained and no alternative arrangement can be agreed, Council may:

- end the payment plan;
- apply penalty interest in accordance with legislative requirements; and
- take steps to recover any outstanding debt in accordance with Council's debt recovery processes.

Council aims to assess payment plan applications within **10 business days**. If further information is required to support an assessment, Council will contact the applicant within this timeframe.

Council will work with ratepayers throughout the term of a payment arrangement or deferral to monitor progress and, where appropriate, review the arrangement if circumstances change. Ratepayers are encouraged to contact Council if they experience difficulties meeting the agreed terms, as alternative arrangements may be available.

Where a property is sold or ownership otherwise changes while a rate deferral or payment arrangement is in place, any outstanding rates and charges will become payable at settlement or upon the transfer of ownership. As payment arrangements and deferrals are specific to the circumstances of the current property owner, they cannot be transferred to a new owner and will cease upon a change in ownership.

Deferral of Rates

Council may approve a temporary deferral of rates under section 170 of the *Local Government Act* where a ratepayer is unable to pay their rates due to hardship or financial hardship.

- Deferrals may apply to all or part of the rates liability.
- Deferrals are reviewed annually and ratepayers are contacted to provide an update of their situation.
- Where a deferral is approved, Council encourages ad hoc or part payments where possible to reduce the overall debt.

A deferral does not extinguish the debt but postpones recovery for an agreed period in accordance with this Policy.

Waiver of Rates, Charges, or interest

Sections 170–172 of the *Local Government Act 1989* and the Ministerial Guidelines issued under section 181AA provide Council with the ability to waive or reduce rates, charges, or interest.

Council's primary approach, however, is to support ratepayers through payment arrangements and other appropriate assistance measures, as unpaid rates and charges ultimately affect the wider community.

Waiver of State or Commonwealth Government charges, including charges collected by Council on behalf of another authority is excluded.

Requests to waive interest are assessed individually and determined by an authorised officer, having regard to the applicant's circumstances, and fall within the following categories:

- **Waiver for Administrative Reason/Error**
  Council may consider an interest only waiver where a delay or failure to pay rates occurred due to a Council administrative issue, error, or omission. This may include circumstances where incorrect information, processing delays, or other administrative matters contributed to the late payment.

Requests for interest waivers on this basis will be assessed on an individual, case-by-case basis in accordance with this Policy. The nonreceipt of rates notice, on its own, does not constitute grounds for an interest waiver.

- **Waiver on Compassionate Grounds**
  Ratepayers may be eligible for an interest-only waiver where compassionate grounds have been demonstrated for the late payment. This may include situations involving serious illness, bereavement, or other exceptional personal circumstances.

All applications for a waiver of interest assessed by Council may be approved in whole or in part.

Referrals and Support Services
As part of its hardship response, Council may refer ratepayers to independent financial counselling services; and/or provide information about relevant community support services.

Ratepayers are encouraged to seek advice from a recognised financial counsellor, particularly where complex financial circumstances exist, including ownership of multiple properties.

6. Review and appeals

If a ratepayer is dissatisfied with a decision made under this Policy, they may request a review in accordance with Council's Complaints Handling Policy. Reviews will be undertaken by an appropriately authorised Council officer who was not involved in the original decision, to ensure the matter is considered fairly and independently.

If a ratepayer remains dissatisfied following Council's review process, they may seek an independent review through the Victorian Ombudsman.

7. Privacy and Data Handling

Council is committed to protecting the privacy of individuals and ensuring that personal information is managed lawfully, securely, and responsibly.
In administering this Policy, Council will:

- collect, use, and disclose personal information in accordance with the *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014*;
- ensure personal and sensitive information is accessed only by authorised Council officers and contractors for legitimate business purposes;
- not disclose personal information without the individual's consent unless such disclosure is required or authorised by law.
- Ensure all Council contractors comply with privacy and data security legislation.

8. Responsibilities

All applications for rates and charges will be considered by the Coordinator Revenue and Rates, Manager of Finance, and/or Director Corporate Services in line with the Instrument of Delegation.

Sale of Land recovery action will be considered by Director Corporate Services.

Application of caveats to a property will be considered by Chief Executive Officer.

9. Reporting, Monitoring and Review

Reporting	Monthly reporting on hardship assistance applications, payment plans and deferrals will be provided to the Manager Finance and Director Corporate Services
Monitoring	The Revenue and Rates team undertakes monitoring of active payment plans/arrangements quarterly to ensure adherence and assistance.
Review	Monthly monitoring and reporting by the Coordinator Revenue and Rates being reported to the Manager Finance

10. Definitions

Term	Definition
Controlled Document	A document in Council's document Management system that has a set of administration and review parameters in place.
Council	Whitehorse City Council
Deferral	A temporary postponement of payment obligations, permitted under s170 of the *Local Government Act 1989*.
Financial Counsellor	Financial counsellors are qualified professionals employed by financial counselling agencies to provide information, advice, assistance, advocacy, and support to people experiencing or vulnerable to financial difficulty and/or with debt problems, to empower them to make informed choices. Financial counsellors have extensive knowledge in a range of areas of law and policy including consumer law, credit law, debt enforcement practices, the bankruptcy regime, hardship policies, and practices in a range of industries, internal and external dispute resolution schemes and government concession frameworks, and other specific areas. Financial counsellors are also highly skilled in collaborating with people experiencing vulnerability in a supportive and empowering framework. A fundamental tenet is a focus on person-centered practice. This places the person at the centre of the

	engagement with control over the process and decisions. Financial counsellors are employed by agencies – typically not-for- profit community organisations – that operate under specific sub- regulations of the *Corporations Regulations 2001* and the *National Consumer Credit Protection Regulations 2010*. These sub- regulations permit the organisations to provide financial counselling services without holding a financial services or credit licence, subject to services being provided by trained, qualified and professionally accredited financial counsellors. The conditions of the exemption require the financial counselling service to be free, independent, and without conflict. The requirement for no conflict means industry cannot directly fund financial counselling positions, which are primarily funded by state or federal governments, or through philanthropic sources. A financial counsellor is not a: • financial planner • financial advisor • accountant • finance broker • legal advisor • business advisor • therapeutic counsellor
Financial Hardship	Financial hardship means circumstances in which a ratepayer is unable to pay rates or charges, or cannot do so without experiencing serious difficulty, because meeting those obligations would compromise their ability to meet basic living needs. Financial hardship may arise from prolonged or unforeseen personal, social, economic, or financial circumstances, and may include (but is not limited to) loss of income, unemployment, illness or injury, family violence or economic abuse, caring responsibilities, or other significant life events.
Hardship	Defined as a difficult or challenging circumstance/s which can encompass personal, emotional, financial, or physical difficulties that make life less comfortable for individuals.
Legislation	Relevant Laws, Acts or Regulations that impact or influence the policy topic.
Owner	A person, company, or entity that holds legal title to land or buildings within a local government area and is therefore

	responsible for obligations such as paying rates and complying with local regulations.
Payment Plan	A structured arrangement allowing payment of outstanding amounts over time.
Policy	A document of Council's intent, commitment or position intended to inform decisions and achieve a vision or desired outcome. Describes what Council considers to be appropriate on a particular matter.
Policy Owner	Position responsible for writing and reviewing the policy and ensuring the document is kept up to date with any legislative or operational requirements.
Ratepayer	For this policy the ratepayer can be the person or persons, business, or company within whose name the rates, charges, special rates and charges debt applies. The director of a company who is responsible for payment of rates, the occupier who is responsible for payment of rates or a nominated third party who is responsible for payment of rates.
Review	A formal assessment of something with the intention of instituting change if necessary.
Staff	Employees of Whitehorse City Council
Version	A particular form of the document differing in certain respects from an earlier form.
Vulnerable customer	A person experiencing disadvantage due to age, disability, illness, family violence, unemployment, or other factors recognised in the Ministerial Guidelines Relating to Payment of Rates and Charges (December 2025).
Waiver	A reduction or reversal of interest, fees, or charges, permitted under s171A and s171B of the *Local Government Act 1989*.

11. Reference and Legislative Parameters

Name	Description
Gender Equity	This policy has been reviewed in line with Council's Gender Equity responsibilities, and a Gender Impact Assessment has been undertaken during its development.
Relevant Legislation	*The Local Government Act 1989* is the primary legislation for the levying and collection of rates and charges. The key sections include: • Section 170 allows Council to defer the payment of rates, charges, and interest. • Section 171, sub sections (1), and (2) allows Council to waive the whole or part of any rates, charges, and interest.

	• Section 171A allows Council to waive the whole or part of any rates, charges, or interest on financial hardship grounds • Section 171B allows Council to enter a payment plan with a ratepayer for rates, charges, and interest. • Section 172, allows Council to apply, or exempt, interest on outstanding rate and charges • Section 172A refers to the maximum rate of interest that Council can charge on unpaid rates and charges • Section 180A states when Council can commence proceedings for recovery of unpaid debt • Section 181 allows Council to sell a property where there are unpaid rates. *Local Government Legislative Amendment (Rating and Other matters) Act 2022* *Ministerial Guidelines for Councils relating to Payment of Rates and Charges* *Penalty Interest Rates Act 1983* *State Concessions Act 2004* *Emergency Services and Volunteers Fund Act 2012* *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014 (Vic)* *Victorian State Government's Model Litigant Guidelines*
Victorian Human Rights	This policy has been reviewed for Human Rights Charter compliance with the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006,* and social impacts have been considered as part of the development and updating.

12. Version Control

Version	Author	Description of Changes	Release date
1	Anne McLennan	Revised policy to reflect Ministerial Guidelines and operational practice	23 June 2026

13. Administrative Amendments

Minor administrative updates that do not change the intent or application of this Policy may be approved by the Chief Executive Officer (or delegate) and noted in the Document History.

Any change that alters the Policy's intent, scope or requirements must follow the formal approval process. Governance advice should be sought if unclear.