

Revenue and Rating Plan 2025-26



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1.1 PURPOSE

The *Local Government Act 2020* requires each council to prepare a Revenue and Rating Plan to cover a minimum period of four years following each Council election. The Revenue and Rating Plan establishes the revenue-raising framework within which the Council proposes to work.

The purpose of the Revenue and Rating Plan is to determine the most appropriate and affordable revenue and rating approach for Yarra City Council which in conjunction with other income sources will adequately finance the objectives in the council plan.

The Plan is an important part of Council's integrated planning framework. Strategies outlined in this plan align with the objectives contained in the Council Plan and will feed into our budgeting and long-term financial planning documents, as well as other strategic planning documents under our Council's strategic planning framework.

The following figure demonstrates how each element might inform or be informed by other parts of the integrated framework.

The Plan is underpinned by the Financial Sustainability Strategy (FSS), allowing Council with the premise of optimising revenue through various means, such as adjusting pricing policies and leveraging strategic partnerships.



This 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.

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 this 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 INTRODUCTION

Council provides a range of services and facilities to our local community, and in doing so, must collect revenue to cover the cost of providing these services and facilities.

Council's revenue sources include:

- Rates and Charges
- Grants from other levels of Government
- Statutory Fees and Fines
- User Fees
- Cash and non-cash contributions from other parties (i.e., developers)
- Interest from investments
- Sale of Assets

Rates and charges, user fees and statutory fees and fines are Council's largest revenue source, accounting for 86% of total revenue as budgeted in 2025-26. Compared with the inner-city council average, Yarra has a lower reliance on revenues from rates and a comparatively higher reliance on revenue from user fees and charges.

Rates and Charges are the most significant revenue source for the Council and budgeted to make up 56% of total revenue in 2025-26.

The introduction of rate capping under the Victorian Government's Fair Go Rates System (FGRS) has brought a renewed focus to Council's long-term financial sustainability. The FGRS continues to restrict Council's ability to raise revenue above the rate cap unless an application is made to the Essential Services Commission for a variation.

How the rate cap works

The rate cap limits the total amount a council can increase its rates each year based on the amount it levied in the previous year.

Only the general rate and municipal charges part of a rates bill are subject to the rate cap. In addition, the public waste and household bin collection increases will be subject to the rate cap. All other parts, such as other user fees and levies, remain uncapped.

The rate cap applies to the council's total rate revenue and not individual properties. In many cases, individual rates bills may increase or decrease by more (or less) than the capped rise amount. This may happen because:

- the value of the property has increased or decreased in relation to the value of other properties in the council
- other charges and levies that are not subject to the cap
- the amount of rates levied from properties of that type (residential, commercial or rural) has changed through the council's application of differential rates

Maintaining service delivery levels and investing in community assets remain key priorities for Council. This strategy will address Council's reliance on rate income and provide options to actively reduce that reliance.

Council provides a wide range of services to the community, some for a fee or charge. The nature of these fees and charges depends on whether they relate to statutory or discretionary services. Some of these, such as statutory planning fees are set by State 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 can set a fee or charge and will set that fee based on the principles outlined in this Revenue and Rating Plan.

Council revenue can 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.

Council adopted a Financial Sustainability Strategy (FSS) in December 2023. The FSS includes seven strategic levers, the second being "Optimise Revenue" and the seventh being "Prioritise advocacy and partnerships." These strategic levers aim to generate new revenue or increasing current fees and charges to properly reflect the cost of service beyond statutory limits (whilst balancing affordability for our community) and strategically aligning grant applications, so Council can allocate resources more efficiently and ensure that the grants received have a meaningful impact on the community respectively.

Realistic options to uplift revenue include leveraging strategic partnerships to attract more funding, reviewing our pricing policy, ensuring developers fairly share the burden to contribute to new infrastructure and open space, and reviewing Council's strategic property portfolio and leasing arrangements.

1.3 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 consideration and feedback is received from relevant stakeholders.

Revenue and Rating Plan community engagement process:

- Revenue and Rating Plan prepared by officers;
- Revenue and Rating Plan placed on public exhibition after Council meeting in April and calling for feedback;
- Community engagement through local news outlets and social media;
- Hearing from community members wanting to speak to their feedback in June; and
- Revenue and Rating Plan (with any revisions) presented to Council meeting in June for adoption. This

is conducted as part of the community engagement process for the annual budget.

1.4 RATES AND CHARGES

Rates are property taxes that allow Council to raise revenue to fund essential public services to cater to their municipal population. Importantly, it is a taxation system that includes flexibility for councils to utilise different tools in its rating structure to accommodate issues of equity and to ensure fairness in rating for all ratepayers.

Council has an option of a rating structure comprised of three key elements. These are:

- **General Rates** – Based on property values, 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 for council services to reflect benefits provided by Council to ratepayers who benefit from a service; and
- **Municipal Charge** - A 'fixed rate' portion per property to cover some of the administrative costs of Council.

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

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

- Valuation x Rate in the Dollar

The rate in the dollar is included in Council's annual budget.

Rates and charges are an important source of revenue, accounting for over 50% of operating revenue received by Council. The collection of rates is a key 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 Victorian Government's Fair Go Rates System, all rate increases are capped to a rate declared by the Minister for Local Government, which is announced in December for the following financial year.

Council has made the decision to separate public waste and household bin collection costs from general rates in 2023/24. The general rates would be reduced by the same amount to ensure that the total revenue is within the rate cap.

Council currently does not levy a municipal charge.

1.4.1 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 significant 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 (CIV) and Net Annual Value (NAV).

The advantages and disadvantages of the respective valuation basis are discussed further in this document. 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*.

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 the 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 the Council intends to apply for a special order to increase the Council's average rate cap for the financial year or any other financial year; or
- b) that the Council has made an application to the ESC for a special order and is waiting for the outcome of the application; or
- c) that a special Order has been made in respect of the 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 will be determined in the annual budget.

1.4.2 RATING PRINCIPLES

Taxation Principles:

When developing a rating strategy, a Council should consider the following good practice taxation principles:

- Wealth Tax
- Equity
- Efficiency
- Simplicity
- Benefit
- Capacity to Pay
- Diversity

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 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.

Rates and Charges Revenue Principles:

Property rates will:

- be reviewed annually;
- not change dramatically from one year to next; and
- be sufficient to fund current expenditure commitments and deliverables outlined in the Council Plan, Financial Plan and Asset Plan.

1.4.3 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 Value (CIV)** – Value of land and improvements upon the land.
- **Site Value (SV)** – Value of land only.
- **Net Annual Value (NAV)** – Rental valuation based on CIV.

For residential and farm properties, NAV is calculated at 5 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 5 per cent of the CIV.

Capital Improved Value (CIV)

Capital Improved Value is the most used valuation base by local government with over 90% of Victorian councils applying this methodology. Based on the value of both land and all improvements on the land, it is generally easily understood by ratepayers as it equates to the market value of the property.

CIV includes all property improvements and hence is often supported on the basis that it more closely reflects “capacity to pay.” The CIV rating method considers the full development value of the property, and hence better meets the equity criteria than Site Value and NAV.

Site value (SV)

There are currently no Victorian councils that use this valuation base. With valuations based simply on the valuation of land and with only very limited ability to apply differential rates, the implementation of Site Value in a Council context would cause a shift in rate burden from the industrial/commercial sectors onto the residential sector, and would hinder council’s objective of a fair and equitable rating system.

Net annual value (NAV)

NAV, in concept, represents the annual rental value of a property. However, in practice, NAV is loosely linked to capital improved value for residential and farm properties. Valuers derive the NAV directly as 5 per cent of CIV.

In contrast to the treatment of residential and farm properties, NAV for commercial and industrial properties are assessed regarding 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.

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 were to choose the former, under the *Local Government Act 1989* it must adopt either of the CIV or NAV methods of rating.

Yarra City Council applies Net annual value (NAV) to all properties within the municipality to consider the fully developed value of the property. This basis of valuation considers the total market value of the land plus buildings and other improvements.

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.

Supplementary Valuations

Supplementary valuations are conducted 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 valuations and advises council monthly 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 Council within two months of the issue of the supplementary rate notice.

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 Council. Property owners also can 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 the State Revenue Office).

1.4.4 RATING DIFFERENTIALS

Council raises its ad valorem rates through a uniform rate.

In the final report from the Local Government Rating System Review Panel, it was suggested that there is a lack of clarity about rationales and evidence for using differentials. The simplest form of ad valorem rates is the uniform rate. This is raised by a single rate in the dollar being applied to the valuation of all properties in the municipality.

1.4.5 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 valuation.

Under the *Local Government Act 1989*, a council's total revenue from a municipal charge in a financial year must not exceed 20 per cent of the combined sum 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.

Council currently does not levy a municipal charge.

1.4.6 SPECIAL CHARGE SCHEMES

The *Local Government Act 1989* recognises that councils need help to provide improved infrastructure for their local communities. Legislation allows councils to pass on the cost of capital infrastructure to the owner of a property that receives a unique benefit from the construction works. The technical explanation of a Special Charge comes from legislation (under the *Local Government Act 1989*) that allows councils to recover the cost of works from property owners who will gain special benefit from that work.

The purposes for which special rates and special charges may be used include road construction, kerb and channeling, footpath provision, drainage, and other capital improvement projects.

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

- a. the wards, groups, uses or areas for which the special rate or charge is declared; and
- b. the land in relation to which the special rate or special charge is declared;
- c. the manner in which the special rate or special charge will be assessed and levied; and
- d. 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 that "special benefit" applies to those being levied. For example, they could be used to fund co-operative fire prevention schemes. This would ensure that there were no 'free-riders' reaping the benefits but not contributing to fire prevention.

Landscaping and environmental improvement programs that benefit small or localised areas could also be funded using special rates or charges.

Council has one current special charge scheme at this moment.

1.4.7 SERVICE RATES AND CHARGES

Section 162 of the *Local Government Act 1989* has been amended by the *Local Government Legislation Amendment (Rating and Other Matters) Act 2022*. The amended s162 provides that a Council may declare a service rate or an annual service charge or any combination of such a rate and charge for waste, recycling, or resource recovery services. In addition, a service rate or service charge may be declared based on any criteria specified by the Council in the rate or charge.

Service rate

This is based on property valuation in the same way general rates are applied where properties with lower values pay lower rates. With a service rate there is no correlation with the individual ratepayer consumption of services. This is also the case before the public waste and household bin collection cost is separated from the general rates prior to 2023/24.

Service charge

This is a user pays type approach where ratepayers pay the same charge for the same service, independent of property valuation.

Household Bin Collection

Council provides a household bin collection service, such as regular household rubbish and recycling bin collection, as well as providing new and replacement bins. Household bin collection covers the cost of transport, fuel, waste management contracts and recyclables processing. The collection includes, all kerbside collections – rubbish to landfill, comingled recycling and glass for recycling.

The Household bin collection will be raised for rateable properties that receive Council waste services and increase have been capped at the rate cap of 3%.

Public Waste Collection

Council provides a public waste collection that benefit the whole community, such as bins in streets and parks, street sweeping, illegal rubbish dumping and litter removal. Public waste collection covers the costs of street cleaning, parks litter collection, street sweeping and dumped rubbish and litter collection.

The public waste collection will be raised for all rateable properties, on the basis that all ratepayers benefit from this service. Increases have been capped at the rate cap of 3%.

Garbage Charge on Non-Rateable properties – Service Charge

Council currently applies a flat fee service charge for the collection and disposal of refuse on non-rateable properties.

1.4.8 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.

Payment options

In accordance with section 167(1) of the *Local Government Act 1989* 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 a range of payment options including:

- in person at Council offices (cheques, money orders, EFTPOS, credit/debit cards and cash),
- online via Council's ratepayer portal, direct debit (on prescribed instalment due dates or monthly),
- BPAY,
- Australia Post (over the counter, over the phone via credit card and on the internet),
- by mail (cheques and money orders only).
- by phone (1300 792 772), it accepts payment only by Visa and Mastercard.

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.

Pensioner rebates

Pensioner rebates are a waiver of the whole or part of any rates, charges or interest obligation for eligible recipients under the *State Concessions Act 2004*. In a process administered by the Victorian Government, a concession on municipal rates is available to assist eligible ratepayers afford rates on their principal place of residence. Where only part of a property is being used as a place of residence, each part of the property is to be rated separately.

The City of Yarra also provides a supplementary rebate to eligible pensioners in addition to the Victorian Government rebate.

To be eligible for the municipal rate concession, the ratepayer must be the holder of a:

- Pensioner Concession Card issued by Centrelink or Department of Veterans Affairs DVA)
- DVA Gold Card - Totally and Permanently Incapacitated
- DVA Gold Card - War Widow.

Applications for municipal rates concessions are made directly to the City of Yarra. Eligibility is confirmed with the Victorian Government. Where a rate rebate was recognised the previous year and where the ratepayer remains eligible, no further application is required.

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 whose property is their sole place of residency, allowing ratepayers an extended period of time to make payments or alternatively to forestall payments on an indefinite basis until the ratepayer ceases to own or occupy the land in respect of which rates and charges are to be levied. Deferral of rates and charges are available to all ratepayers who satisfy the eligibility criteria and have proven financial difficulties.

Financial Hardship Policy

It is acknowledged at the outset that various ratepayers may experience financial hardship for a whole range of issues and that meeting rate obligations constitutes just one element of a number of difficulties that may be faced. The purpose of the Financial Hardship Policy is to provide options for ratepayers facing such situations to deal with the situation positively and reduce the strain imposed by financial hardship.

Debt recovery

Council makes every effort to contact ratepayers at their correct address, but it is the ratepayers' responsibility to properly advise Council of their contact details. The *Local Government Act 1989* Section 230 and 231 requires both the vendor and buyer of property, or their agents (e.g., solicitors and or conveyancers), to notify Council by way of notice of disposition or acquisition of an interest in land.

If 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.

Emergency Services and Volunteers Fund (Fire Services Property Levy)

In 2016 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 Fire Services Property Levy helps fund the services provided by the Metropolitan Fire Brigade (MFB) and Country Fire Authority (CFA), and all levies collected by Council are passed through to the Victorian Government. From 1 July 2025, the Fire Services Levy (FSPL) will be replaced by the Emergency Services and Volunteers Fund (ESVF).

Like the FSPL, the ESVF is based on two components, a fixed charge that varies by property type, and a variable charge based on property value. Pensioners, veterans and single farm enterprises will continue to receive concessions. The ESVF will still be collected through local councils.

Every dollar raised will go towards vital life-saving equipment, vehicles, staff, training for volunteers, community education, and recovery support for when Victorians need it most.

This levy is not included in the rate cap and increases in the levy are at the discretion of the Victorian Government.

1.5 OTHER REVENUE ITEMS

1.5.1 USER FEES AND CHARGES

User fees and charges are those that Council will charge for the delivery of services and use of community infrastructure.

Examples of user fees and charges include:

- Kindergarten and Childcare fees
- Leisure Centre, Gym, and Pool visitation and membership fees
- Public waste and household bin collection fees
- Aged and Health Care service fees
- Leases and facility hire fees

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. The FSS provides that Council must balance the affordability and accessibility of infrastructure and services with its financial capacity and in the interests of long-term financial sustainability.

Councils are required to adhere to the government's Competitive Neutrality Policy when offering significant business activities. This policy mandates that councils adjust their pricing strategies to eliminate any competitive advantages they might have over the private sector, ensuring a level playing field for all competitors.

Council has adopted a pricing policy that guides the setting of user fees and charges for Council services with transparency, consistency and equity. Council is progressively implementing this policy.

1.5.2 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 provided by the state government department responsible for the corresponding services or legislation, and councils will have limited discretion in applying these fees.

Examples of statutory fees and fines include:

- Planning and subdivision fees
- Building and Inspection fees
- Infringements and fines
- Land Information Certificate fees

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. For example, the fine for selling a tobacco product to a person aged under eighteen is four penalty units.

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 happen on 1 July each year.

Fee units

Fee units are used to calculate the cost of a certificate, registration or license that is set out in an Act or Regulation. For example, the cost of depositing a Will with the supreme court registrar of probates is 1.6 fee units.

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.

1.5.3 GRANTS

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.

1.5.4 CONTRIBUTIONS

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
- 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 a 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.

1.5.5 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.

1.5.6 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. The following financial sustainability principles must be adhered to with new borrowings:

- Borrowings must only be applied for where it can be proven that repayments can be met in the Long-Term Financial Plan
- Council will maintain its debt at levels which are sustainable.

1.6 FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY

The Financial Sustainability Strategy (FSS) includes key strategic levers and actions required to be delivered to help the Council achieve financial sustainability in the longer term. This Plan ensures that the Council further implements to actions of the FSS and is well placed to deliver services and infrastructure for this community.

To ensure that Council continues to be financial sustainable and well placed to deliver services and infrastructure for its community it is imperative that it builds on the foundation set out in this Plan.

To achieve this, during the life of this Plan Council intends to review:

- Implement the Pricing Policy for fees and charges including applying user pays principles where it is appropriate to do so
- Development of the Public Waste and Household Bin Collection and Recycling Strategy
- Develop a new Strategic Property Plan, including review existing revenue generated by each property, current financial performance and potential for growth for each property, and underperforming properties
- Review Council's parking strategy, including financial modelling.
- Review Council's Developer Contribution Plan and Open Space contributions.
- Investigate new and/or alternative revenue streams
- Assess the risk of variability for current income sources and its impact to Council.
- Undertake an educational campaign to enhance community knowledge of the way in which Council subsidises its fees for services
- Investigate opportunities to "hand back" responsibilities to the State and Federal Government (i.e., land management)
- Quantify the financial impact of cost-shifting to Council.
- Refresh Council's strategic advocacy approach to specifically address cost shifting policy and identify community projects to leverage partnership funding with government and strategic partners.

What we have already delivered

- Advocacy for Minister for Planning approval of Amendment C286yara to the Yarra Planning Scheme
- Undertake an education campaign to enhance community and industry awareness about how the municipal rating system is applied in distributing property-based rates, levies and charges.
- Adopt new City of Yarra Advocacy Strategy
- Benchmark high volume fees with other Councils and establish comparable rates.
- Seek funding for a greater State Government contribution towards the upgrade, renewal and maintenance of community assets and programs.

This Revenue and Rating Plan will be effective from 1 July 2025. Annual reviews of the Plan will be completed and the Plan updated to reflect the requirements of relevant strategies and plans, including but not limited to; the Council Plan, Annual Budget, 10-Year Financial Plan and Asset Plan.