

Rates FAQs

Rates are levied on all rateable properties within the boundaries of the Shire of Bruce Rock in accordance with the Local Government Act 1995. The overall objective of the proposed rates and charges in the 2020-2021 budget is to provide for the net (i.e. after taking into account all other forms of revenue) funding requirements of the Shire's services, activities, financing costs and the current and future capital requirements of the Shire as outlined in the Shire's Corporate Business Plan and Strategic Resources Plan.

How are my rates calculated?

- The rates paid on residential and rural properties are calculated based on the operating requirements of the Shire.
- The rates you pay are a proportionate share of what is needed by the Shire to provide local services and facilities.
- That is, if your home has greater rental return than your neighbours, you will pay a higher share of total rates budgeted by Council.

How are rates applied?

- The Shire applies a rate per dollar that is multiplied by the valuation of each property to obtain the rate amount for each property.
- Please note that a Gross Rental Value (GRV) is applied generally in town sites and an Unimproved Valuation (UV) is applied in rural areas.

What can make my rates go up?

- Rates can also increase if your property increases in potential rental value faster than others in your area. For example, if you make improvements to your home that increase its rental value then your share of rates will increase.
- However, changes to property values that affect the whole market – such as times of boom and recession – do not directly affect rates as the comparative value between neighbouring properties remains the same.
- Your rates can increase if the Shire requires more funds to provide local services and facilities.
- Local governments budgets and consequently funds required through rates are also affected by changes to charges by other sectors of Government such as electricity pricing.

Why don't my rates go down when there is a drop in the property market?

- This is because your rates are not directly linked to movements in the property market – only the value of your property in comparison with your neighbours.
- If rates were directly linked to the property market, rates would be far greater than currently.
- Using each local government's budget as the starting point for setting the amount of rates required, protects ratepayers from increases that are not directly aligned with the provision of services.

What if I disagree with my rates?

- There are two options to object or appeal your rates;
 - Under the *Local Government Act 1995* you have 42 days from the time the rates notice is issued to appeal your rates if you believe there is an error with the rate record. If you decide to query your rates, you must still pay the full amount while it is being reviewed.
 - You can also appeal how the value of your property was calculated. This is against the Gross Rental Value (GRV), generally for townsites or the Unimproved Value (UV) for rural properties, determined by the Valuer General and as mentioned previously sets your share of what the Council requires. Your annual valuation is included on the rates notice. If you believe this is too high, you can challenge this, for further information go to: www.landgate.wa.gov.au/for-individuals/property-valuations/loading-an-objection

What is the Emergency Services Levy

- The State Government requires Councils to collect the Emergency Services level from ratepayers.
- The funds raised go to the Department of Fire and Emergency Services. The funds do not go to Councils and the rate charged is not set by Council.

Do Pensioners get a discount on rates?

- Pensioners with a valid seniors' or concession card are entitled to rates reductions depending on their status on Council rates, water charges and the Emergency Services Levy.
- The State Government caps the rebate to pensioners at 50 per cent of their rates up to \$750.
- To apply for a rebate, go to www.watercorporation.com.au/concessions and fill out the application form online. If there are arrears outstanding on the property when you apply, they must be paid or a satisfactory arrangement made to clear the arrears to receive your rebate.
- **If your circumstances change, ie are no longer the owner-occupier or lose your pensioner/seniors status, you must tell the rates department immediately.**

Do I have to pay my rates all at once?

- The Shire understands that sometimes people experience financial hardship which makes it difficult to meet all of their financial commitments when they are due.
- Please contact the Shire to arrange a suitable payment arrangement to settle rates debts by the end of the financial year.