

Policy Reference Number:	1.50
Classification:	General
First Issued/Approved:	April 2020
Review Frequency:	Every three months
Last Reviewed:	July 2020 (Res 15/2021) October 2020 (Res 112/2021) October 2020 (Res 125/2021)
Next Review Date:	January 2021
Responsible Officer:	Chief Executive Officer
Applicable Legislation:	Local Government Act 1999, Section 182
Relevant Policies:	
Related Procedures:	
Compliance Standard:	

1. Objective

To provide rate relief to ratepayers who are experiencing financial hardship due to unemployment, business closure or significant reduction in turnover in Robe during the Pandemic Health Event: COVID-19 as announced by the Federal Government of Australia and the State Government of South Australia.

2. Scope

This policy outlines the option for ratepayers seeking relief from rates due to financial hardship in specific extenuating circumstances. Council may grant relief in the form of postponement of rates for up to six months with interest and fees waived during this time. Assistance does not include rate rebates or remissions or any amounts over 12 months old.

3. Legislation and References

Local Government Act 1999

- Section 177 advises that rates imposed on land are a charge on the land
- Section 178 advises that liability for the rates charged on the land is the principal ratepayer (owner)
- Section 182 advises of Council's power to grant relief of rates due to hardship or extenuating circumstances by way of postponement or remission of rates

4. Definitions

The Act is the Local Government Act 1999.

Council is the local government entity known as District Council of Robe.

Ratepayer means a person who owes amounts for rates, fees, or other charges due and payable to the Council.

Pandemic Health Event – COVID-19 is the announcement from the Federal Government of Australia and South Australian Government of the outbreak of the COVID-19 disease.

Financial Hardship means a circumstance of experiencing a lack of financial means, but does not include circumstances where a person chooses not to meet a liability for an unpaid debt.

Policy means this Pandemic COVID-19 Rate Relief Policy.

Assistance means support available for ratepayers.

5. Hardship Postponement – during a Pandemic Health Event

A ratepayer experiencing financial hardship during the Pandemic Health Event COVID-19 is someone who is identified by themselves, by Council, by an accredited financial counsellor, or welfare agency as having the intention, but not the financial capacity to make required payments in accordance with Council's payment terms.

The Hardship Provision under this Policy will only apply to the ratepayer's principal residence and/or a business physically located in Robe and owned by a Robe ratepayer. Any other financial hardship application will be considered by Council under the provisions of Section 182 of the *Local Government Act 1999*.

Applicants will need to provide evidence that they:

1. Are unemployed, e.g. letter from employer, final payslip; or
2. Are a business that is closed e.g. by letter; or
3. Have a reduction in turnover of 30 percent or more when compared with the same period last year, e.g. a letter from their accountant or a statutory declaration attesting to the reduction.

Applicants that satisfy the requirements for relief from rates due to financial hardship or extenuating circumstances during the Pandemic Health Event – COVID-19 the Council may grant relief of up to nine months in the form of postponement of rates in whole or in part for such period as the Council sees fit. Fees and interest to be waived during the nine month period from the 1 June 2020 to 1 March 2021 Effective date of postponement will take effect from the Quarter 4 2019/20 rate installment to and including Quarter 2 2020/21 rate installment due.

6. Relevance to Action Plan

THEME 1: COMMUNITY

Goal: A vibrant, engaged, inclusive, diverse community providing a healthy, quality lifestyle

THEME 4 GOVERNANCE AND FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

Goal: Provide leadership, good governance, efficient, effective and responsive Council services

7. Accessibility

Applications for rate postponement or hardship assistance can be made by phone, email or letter. Please contact council via the following methods:

Email: council@robe.sa.gov.au

Phone: 08 8768 2003 and request to speak to the Rates Officer

Post: District Council of Robe
Rates Officer
PO Box 1
Robe SA 5276

8. Feedback

We invite your feedback on this policy which can be directed to the Manager Corporate Services and Finance at council@robe.sa.gov.au

9. Approval and Change History

Version	Approval Date	Approval By
New Policy	8 April 2020	Council Resolution 373/2020
Amended Policy	15 April 2020	Council Resolution 408/2020
Amended Policy	8 July 2020	Council Resolution 15/2021
Amended Policy	14 October 2020	Council Resolution 112/2021
Amended Policy	21 October 2020	Council Resolution 125/2021

10. FURTHER INFORMATION

This policy will be available for inspection at the Council offices listed below during ordinary business hours and available to be downloaded, free of charge, from Council's internet site: www.robe.sa.gov.au

3 Royal Circus, Robe SA 5276

Copies will be provided to interested parties upon request.
Email council@robe.sa.gov.au

Any grievances in relation to this policy or its application should be forwarded in writing addressed to the Chief Executive Officer of Council.

11. POLICY REVIEW

This policy may be amended at any time and must be reviewed at least every four years since its adoption (or latest amendment).