

Fee Waiver or Reduction

COUNCIL POLICY NO. 122

1. POLICY OBJECTIVE

The Fee Waiver or Reduction Policy (the Policy) provides guidance to staff, customers and ratepayers around the treatment of requests received to either fully waive or reduce various types of fees and charges.

This Policy should be read in conjunction with the Schedule of Fees and Charges as updated and published within the Budget annually.

2. SCOPE

This Policy applies to any not-for-profit organisation, incorporated association or unincorporated community group that provide a community benefit to the Shire and requests a fee waiver or reduction that relates to the delivery of these activities.

This Policy does not apply to Council rates and charges. Guidance on these types of charges are located with the relevant rating Policies and Revenue and Rating Plan.

3. REFERENCES

Section 77 of the Local Government Act 2020 determines that Council, or a delegated officer, has the power to reduce, waive or refund in whole or in part fees.

Section 13(1) of the Planning and Environment (Fees) Regulations 2000 determines that Council, as a Responsible Authority, may waive or rebate planning permit fees.

4. DEFINITIONS

Term	Definition
Community benefit	A demonstrable positive impact that contributes to the wellbeing, social inclusion, environmental improvement, cultural enrichment, or economic development of the Shire's community. Community benefit is typically evidenced where an activity or service: • is accessible to the broader community or a defined community group • is delivered on a not-for-profit basis • encourages participation, volunteering, or community connection • supports vulnerable or disadvantaged groups • enhances local facilities, environment, or public spaces • contributes to local events, traditions, or cultural activities. Assessment of community benefit will consider the scale, reach, and outcomes of the activity, as well as alignment with Council's strategic objectives.
Not-for-profit organisation	An organisation that does not operate for the profit, personal gain, or benefit of particular individuals, and where any surplus funds are directed towards achieving its stated objectives.
Fee waiver	A full exemption from a fee or charge that would otherwise be payable.
Fee reduction	A partial decrease in a fee or charge, as determined by Council or its delegate.

Term	Definition
Discretionary fees and charges	Fees set by Council through its annual budget process that are not regulated by statute and may be waived or reduced at Council's discretion.
Statutory fees and charges	Fees prescribed by legislation or external regulatory bodies, which are not eligible for waiver or reduction except where permitted by law.

5. FEE TYPES

General fees – these include categories such as photocopying and printing ~~faxing~~ charges which are set by Council as part of its annual budget processes. The recommendation for this request is to reduce the fee to the level of the cost of providing the service in question.

Local laws fees – Local Laws fees and charges are determined by Council resolution and may only be waived, reduced or deferred in accordance with the relevant Local Law clauses, with waiver of permit fees recommended for fundraising activities undertaken by eligible organisations or groups where a demonstrated community benefit is provided.

Building permit fees – Council no-longer issues building permits, this is carried out by private building surveyors. There are parts of the building permits that are set by the State Government (levies) and must be passed on to them. The recommendation for this fee type is for minor building works, where projects are being undertaken by community groups and or grant funded, may be waived to maximise the dollars to be spent on the physical works undertaken.

Planning permit fees – Planning permit fees prescribed under legislation cannot be waived. Any waiver of discretionary fees related to land use and development may be considered where a demonstrated community benefit is achieved.

Waste management fees – include charges associated with the disposal of waste at Council landfills, transfer stations, and related waste facilities.

Council may consider applications for a waiver or reduction of waste management fees where a clear community benefit is demonstrated and the activity aligns with Council's strategic objectives.

Eligible activities may include community-led clean-up events, environmental initiatives, or working bees that:

- are undertaken by not-for-profit organisations, community groups, or volunteers
- provide a direct and identifiable benefit to the broader community, public spaces, or the natural environment
- do not generate private financial gain for the organising group or participants
- promote civic participation, environmental stewardship, or community wellbeing.

Where approved, support may include:

- waiver of disposal fees for general or green waste generated by the activity
- provision of free or subsidised waste disposal vouchers, or allocated disposal volumes
- access to Council waste facilities under specified conditions.

All requests must:

- be submitted and approved prior to the activity taking place
- clearly identify the nature, scope, and expected outcomes of the activity
- demonstrate how waste volumes will be managed and minimised
- comply with any operational, safety, and environmental requirements set by Council.

Council reserves the right to place reasonable limits on the type and quantity of waste accepted, and to decline requests where the activity does not sufficiently demonstrate a community benefit or where it would result in an unreasonable cost to Council.

Council also offers event bin hire, the fees for this are set within the Budget on an annual basis, however eligible organisations can apply for a reduced fee, which is recommended to be set at cost recovery for Council.

Facility hire – some facilities and equipment hire have a nil or reduced fee for specified groups. For more information see the annual adopted Schedule of Fees and Charges and associated policies.

6. APPLICATION PROCESS AND ASSESSMENT

Each request must be made via the application form provided and will be assessed by the relevant department manager or director. Any authorisation process must also comply with any relevant instrument of delegation. The below thresholds are also set:

- Applications with a cost to Council at or under \$200 are reviewed and can be approved by the relevant departmental manager.
- Applications between \$201 and \$1,000 will be considered and approved by the relevant director.
- Applications between \$1,001 and \$4,000 will be considered and approved by the Chief Executive Officer.
- Applications over \$4,001 will be considered by the Executive Leadership Team and will be presented to Council for formal approval.

7. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

If a staff member involved in the process has a conflict of interest, whether it be actual, potential or perceived, they are required to declare the conflict and remove themselves from the application and decision making process.

Another staff member at a similar or higher delegation level will be required to assess and approve the application in the absence of the conflicted staff member.

8. DISASTER PROVISIONS

In the event of an emergency or disaster during the period of immediate response and recovery the Chief Executive Officer is delegated to:

- Waive the application and assessment processes outlined in this Policy
- Approve fee waivers and reductions exceeding the thresholds specified in this Policy to support disaster response and recovery efforts.

Once the Chief Executive Officer declares the natural disaster to be over, the process will revert back to the approved principles and policy requirements.

9. VERSION CONTROL

This Policy was renamed from 'Non-Refund of Statutory and/or Regulatory Services Fees' to the current policy title in the 2026 version update.

10. POLICY REVIEW

Council will review this policy with any necessary amendments no later than **1 year** after the adoption of this current version.

At the time it was developed, this policy was compliant with the Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006.

11. FURTHER INFORMATION

Members of the public may inspect all Council policies at Gannawarra Shire Council's Kerang and Cohuna offices or online at www.gsc.vic.gov.au.

Any enquiries in relation to this policy should be directed to the Director Corporate Services on (03) 5450 9333.

Revision History

Originally adopted:	17/04/2013
Reviewed:	18/07/2018
Reviewed:	16/03/2022
Reviewed:	17/06/2026
Next review:	June 2027

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