

Assistance for ratepayers affected by the bush fires



The purpose of this document is to inform ratepayers and other stakeholders affected by the current bushfires of the options available with respect to the payment of 2019/2020 Council Rate payments.

Council is legally required to levy ratepayers (under the *Local Government Act 1993*) and unfortunately we are not able to waive rates. However, we can provide residents who have been affected by the recent bush fire crisis with the following assistance for the remainder of the 2019/2020 financial period.

Properties identified as being affected by bushfires will have 'FIRE 2019/2020 Bush fire Affected Property' recorded on their 3rd quarterly rates installment notice (which will be issued on 21 January 2020). In recognition of those ratepayers affected by the bush fires, Council has implemented a number of options to assist ratepayers.

Payment arrangements

Extended instalment payment plans may be available. Interest penalties can also be put on hold during the period of the arrangement. Requests will be considered on a case by case basis. Contact Council and ask for the Revenue team, on 4780 5000.

Waste Management Service Charges

Reductions in the Domestic Waste Management Charge (included in your rates notice) are available for ratepayer's whose homes have been destroyed. Call Council on 4780 5000 or email council@bmcc.nsw.gov.au to ask for this to be applied. All requests are managed by Waste Services.

The *Local Government Act 1993* requires all properties to pay a 'Vacant Waste Management Charge' (currently set at \$144.00 per annum) and therefore an appropriate reduction adjustment will be made to affected rate accounts. This adjustment will be reflected in future rate and instalment notices that are issued by the Council.

Onsite Sewer Management Charges (OSM)

Fees apply to all properties with an onsite sewage system. If your home has been destroyed or is uninhabitable, a credit adjustment can be made to the OSM Charge. Advice will be provided by Business & Systems who are responsible for the administration of Sewage Management-Septic Safe Program.

Pensioner concession rebate

Council provides pensioner concession rebates of \$250 at the beginning of each financial year. Any changes or adjustments to the rebates are normally processed on a quarterly basis. However, for any pensioner currently receiving a rebate on their rates who has been affected by the bush fires, there will be no adjustment or review to their existing rebate until the end of the 2019/2020 period.

Change of postal address

We normally require a written request to change an address, however we understand that people affected by the bush fires are facing a range of challenges, and we have arranged for these requests to be made over the phone. If you need to update your postal address with Council, please call us on 4780 5000 and ask for the Revenue team. They will process the request on your behalf.

RFS volunteers

We understand that many RFS volunteers are self-employed and are likely to be experiencing difficulties keeping up to date with paying of rates and sundry debtor accounts. We can arrange to have payments made on an interest free basis over a period of time. Please contact Council on 4780 5000 or at council@bmcc.nsw.gov.au and ask to speak to the revenue team.

Small businesses

Many small businesses are experiencing financial difficulties as a result of the extended bush fire situation. Council can offer arrangements to pay rates and debtor accounts over a period of time, and on an interest free basis. Please contact Council on 4780 5000 and ask to speak to the revenue team.