



SOUTHERN DOWNS REGIONAL COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING OF COUNCIL

Dear Councillors

Your attendance is hereby requested at the Special Meeting of Council to be held in the Council Chambers, Southern Downs Regional Council, 64 Fitzroy Street, Warwick on **Friday, 13 September 2019** at **9:00AM**.

Notice is hereby given of the business to be transacted at the meeting.

David Keenan

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

11 September 2019

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- 1. ATTENDANCE**
- 2. APOLOGIES**
- 3. DECLARATIONS OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

4. CORPORATE SERVICES REPORTS

4.1 Request for Extension of the Due Date Period

Document Information

 Southern Downs REGIONAL COUNCIL	Report To: Special Council Meeting	
	Reporting Officer:	Meeting Date: 13 September 2019
	Revenue Coordinator Manager Finance and Information Technology	ECM Function No/s: 25.17.05,

Recommendation

THAT Council resolve to extend the payment due date and the discount period end date for the rate notices issued on 15 July 2019 from 13 September 2019 to 11 October 2019.

Report

On 6 September 2019 a bushfire started in the Amiens area. Due to strong winds and dry drought conditions the fire was unable to be contained. The fire threatened the town of Stanthorpe and the areas of Applethorpe and The Summit over a three day period. During this period a number of structures have been identified as being damaged or destroyed.

On 9 September 2019 a second bushfire started in the Ballandean area.

As at 10 September 2019 while contained, both fires are still burning with fire crews continuing to strengthen and patrol containment lines and working to extinguish hot spots.

On 15 July 2019 Council issued the annual rate notice with an extended payment period of 60 days (usually 30 days). The due date for payment of the notice is 13 September 2019.

Payment statistics from the past five years shows in the last week of the payment period on average 40% of the rates and charges are collected (approx. \$16M for the current rate notice run). This represents a significant amount of Council's revenue.

Council recognises that with the fires being so close to the due date for payment of a rate notice, ratepayers affected by the fires may be facing hardship and may be unable to pay by the due date – this could be due to the loss of a house or infrastructure or physical and/or mental exhaustion.

Council could take the following action to alleviate the strain on the residents in and around Stanthorpe in relation to the rate notice due date.

1. Extend the due date for payment to a later date;

Section 130 of the *Local Government Regulation 2012* states if Council decides to allow a discount for payment of rates or charges before the end of the payment period it must do so by resolution at its budget meeting. However, Council may, by resolution, change the discount and payment period to end on a later day. This allowance would be for all ratepayers, not just those within the fire affected areas.

The following list is an example of possible extension dates:

Extended by		New Due Date
2	Weeks	27/09/2019
4	Weeks	11/10/2019

Budget Implications

Council has already extended the payment period for regular rate notices from 30 to 60 days in the 2019/2020 financial year due to the current drought conditions.

Payment statistics from the past five years shows Council is tracking within range of received payments at similar periods from past years.

A short (up to 4 weeks) extension to the due date for payment and discount should not significantly increase the amount of discount allowed. It may mean payments could be received at a later date reducing the amount of interest Council may earn.

Policy Consideration

PL-FS013 – Revenue Policy – s4.3 Consideration may be given by Council to granting a class concession in the event all or part of the Southern Downs Regional Council area is declared a natural disaster area by the State Government.

Community Engagement

Nil

Legislation/Local Law

Local Government Regulations 2012

Section 130 – Discount for prompt payment of rates or charges

Chapter 4 Part 10 - Concessions

Options

Council:

1. Resolve to change the payment due date and the discount period end date for the rate notice issued on 15 July 2019 from 13 September 2019 to 11 October 2019.
2. Resolve to change the payment due date and the discount period end date for the rate notice issued on 15 July 2019 from 13 September 2019 to a different date.
3. Resolve not to change the payment due date and the discount period end date for the rate notice issued on 15 July 2019 from 13 September 2019.

Attachments

Nil