



27 August 2024

SUMMARY

- The Shire Council has unanimously decided on the rate in the dollar, ensuring our rates are in line with similar Local Government entities across Western Australia.
- In response to community concerns, Council has decided to offer individual interest-free payment plans to residential owner-occupiers who do not rent out their properties. This move highlights the Shire of Exmouth's dedication to supporting local homeowners and ensuring fair treatment for everyone.

SHIRE OF EXMOUTH ADDRESSES RATE INCREASE CONCERNS AND OFFERS SUPPORT TO HOMEOWNERS

The Shire of Exmouth is a vibrant, close-knit community nestled in the stunning landscape of Western Australia, home to the awe-inspiring Ningaloo Reef. However, as with any thriving community, there are times when changes and adjustments are necessary to ensure our residents' continued development and well-being. Recently, the Shire has experienced a rate increase, sparking questions and concerns among its community members.

Every five years, Landgate, the statutory authority responsible for property valuations in Western Australia, conducts a revaluation of the GRVs for all properties. This revaluation is a key factor in determining rates for property owners. The most recent revaluation, effective as of 1 July 2024, marked the end of a six-year cycle since the previous valuation.

The Shire Council unanimously set the rate in the dollar, aligning our rates with those of other comparable Shires.

	Rate Category: Residential	Population Census 2021
City of Greater Geraldton	13.8611	39,489
Shire of East Kimberley	12.7700	7,477
Shire of Denmark	11.8100	6,310
Shire of Bridgetown-Greenbushes	11.0431	5,238
Shire of Shark Bay	10.6300	1,031
Shire of Augusta Margaret River	10.2453	16,791
Shire of Nannup	10.2000	1,538
Shire of Harvey	9.8908	28,567
Shire of Ashburton	9.8300	7,391
Shire of Carnarvon	9.8174	5,251
Shire of Exmouth	9.5800	3,085
City of Busselton	9.1300	40,640
Shire of Manjimup	9.0110	9,093
City of Mandurah	8.9670	107,641
Shire of Broome	8.7268	16,959
Shire of Halls Creek	8.6270	3,574
Shire of Capel	8.2500	18,172

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This alignment ensures that our community contributes fairly to the Shire's budget, which funds essential services and infrastructure projects that benefit all property owners.

Understanding that rate increases can pose financial challenges for some residents, the Shire of Exmouth has implemented several support options to ease the burden.

Fee Relief for 2024/25 Rate Payments	In an effort to provide immediate relief, the Shire offers fee relief for the 2024/25 rate payments. Under this initiative, ratepayers can make instalments on their rate payments without incurring interest charges. This measure is designed to alleviate financial stress and provide much-needed support to our residents.
Hardship Policy	The Shire's hardship policy provides more flexible payment arrangements for ratepayers experiencing genuine financial hardship.
Pensioner Rate Rebate	<p>Eligible pensioners can access a pensioner rate rebate, which allows them to defer their rates. Importantly, no interest is charged on the deferred amount, offering significant financial relief to our senior residents.</p> <p>This is in addition to the State Government's Rebate to assist with cost-of-living pressures available to pensioners. Rebates of up to 50% can be made available, and different caps apply. Please note rebates can only be as high as \$750.</p> <p>More information on the State Government Rebate: https://www.wa.gov.au/government/media-statements/Cook-Labor-Government/Rebate-to-assist-with-cost-of-living-pressure-available-to-pensioners-20240728</p>

Listening to the community's concerns, the Shire has also taken the additional step of offering Alternative Payment Plans for residential owner-occupiers who are not renting out their properties. This decision reflects the Shire of Exmouth's commitment to supporting local homeowners and ensuring fair treatment for all.

The Shire President proposed the item as 'New Business of an Urgent Nature introduced by Decision of Meeting' and endorsed by all seven Councillors.

Community Members registered for the Shire of Exmouth's SMS Service have been notified, and all information is available on the Shire of Exmouth's website under <https://www.exmouth.wa.gov.au/council/publications/rates-fees-and-charges/payment-options.aspx>

COMMENTS ATTRIBUTED TO THE SHIRE OF EXMOUTH – SHIRE PRESIDENT MATTHEW NIIKKULA

"During the last council meeting, 118 community members attended to discuss the rate increase and seek answers to their questions. This high level of engagement underscores the importance of transparent communication and community involvement in decision-making processes, which the Council thrives to become better at. I strongly encourage all community members to utilise our website forms and Public Question Time to stay involved and sign up for engagement workshops in the future."

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“In light of the concerns raised by the community, we have taken additional measures and made a decision to provide Alternative Payment Plans for residents who own homes in the Shire of Exmouth. This option is available for those who are not renting out rooms or ancillary dwellings and are facing difficulties paying their rates in full or according to the instalment plan outlined on their rates notice.”

----- ENDS -----

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Sandra Flint, Coordinator Communications, Shire of Exmouth

M: [0459 431 439](tel:0459431439) | E: sflint@exmouth.wa.gov.au