



POLICY NO:-

CP2-003 FINANCIAL HARDSHIP POLICY

GOVERNANCE INFORMATION

Procedure Link:	N/A	Administrative Policy Link:	
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ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

History	1	CP2-001	OCM	10/2/26	Res: 9728	Synopsis:	Policy Created
Version:	2						

1. RESPONSIBLE DIRECTORATE

Corporate and Community Services

2. PURPOSE OR OBJECTIVE

This Policy establishes Council’s commitment to supporting ratepayers and debtors who are experiencing genuine financial hardship, while ensuring responsible revenue management. It provides a high-level framework for the fair, consistent and transparent consideration of financial hardship requests relating to debts owed to the Shire.

3. SCOPE

This Policy applies to all ratepayers, residents, businesses and other debtors who owe monies to the Shire of Collie and who are experiencing genuine financial hardship.

It covers all debts lawfully owed to the Shire, including (but not limited to) rates, service charges, fees and other sundry debts.

This Policy applies to elected members and employees involved in the assessment and management of financial hardship applications. It provides the overarching framework for hardship considerations, with operational matters addressed through the Financial Hardship Administration Policy and associated procedures.

4. DEFINITIONS

Financial Hardship A situation where a person is unable to meet financial obligations to the Shire without adversely affecting their ability, or the ability of their dependants, to meet basic living needs.

Debt Any rates, service charges, fees or other monies lawfully owing to the Shire.

Nil.

5. POLICY

The Shire of Collie recognises that individuals and businesses may experience financial hardship due to circumstances beyond their control. Council is committed to:

- considering financial hardship applications in a compassionate, equitable and confidential manner;
- providing appropriate relief options, including payment arrangements, where genuine hardship is demonstrated;
- maintaining clear separation between internal debt management and referral to external debt recovery agencies; and
- ensuring decisions are made in accordance with legislation, approved delegations and sound financial governance principles.

Council notes that detailed eligibility criteria, assessment processes, delegated authorities and administrative procedures are set out in the Financial Hardship Administration Policy.

5.1 Debt Management Principles

1. Debts will generally be managed internally while a hardship application is under consideration or while an approved hardship arrangement is being complied with.
2. A debt may be referred to an external debt recovery agency where:
 - no hardship application is lodged within required timeframes;
 - a hardship application is declined and the debt remains unpaid; or
 - an approved hardship arrangement is defaulted without reasonable cause.
3. Once a debt is referred to an external agency, negotiations will be managed in accordance with contractual arrangements and approved delegations.

6. REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

Local Government Act 1995