



City of
LAUNCESTON

LATE COUNCIL ITEM AGENDA

**COUNCIL MEETING
THURSDAY 6 AUGUST 2026
AT AGENDA ITEM 22 OF THE
ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING**

Notice is hereby given that a LATE COUNCIL ITEM will be tabled at the Ordinary Meeting of the City of Launceston Council will be held at the Council Chambers, Town Hall, St John Street, Launceston:

Date: 6 August 2026

Time: At the Agenda Item 22 in the Ordinary Council Meeting Agenda

Certificate of Qualified Advice

Background

To comply with section 65 of the *Local Government Act 1993* (Tas):

1. A General Manager must ensure that any advice, information or recommendation given to the council, or a council committee, is given by a person who has the qualifications or experience necessary to give such advice, information or recommendation.
2. A council or council committee is not to decide on any matter which requires the advice of a qualified person without considering such advice unless -
 - (a) the General Manager certifies, in writing -
 - (i) that such advice was obtained; and
 - (ii) the General Manager took the advice into account in providing general advice to the council or council committee; and
 - (b) a copy of that advice or, if the advice was given orally, a written transcript or summary of that advice is provided to the council or council committee with the General Manager's certificate.

Certification

I certify that:

- (i) the advice of a qualified person has been sought where required;
- (ii) this advice was taken into account in providing general advice to the council or council committee; and
- (iii) a copy of the advice, or a written transcript or summary of advice provided orally, is included with the agenda item.



Sam Johnson
Chief Executive Officer

LEGISLATIVE TERMINOLOGY - GENERAL MANAGER

At the City of Launceston, the title Chief Executive Officer is a term of reference for the General Manager as appointed by Council pursuant to section 61 of the *Local Government Act 1993* (Tas). For the avoidance of doubt, *Chief Executive Officer* means *General Manager* for the purposes of the *Local Government Act 1993* (Tas) and all other legislation administered by or concerning Council.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

22. LATE ITEMS5

22.1. Notice of Motion - Councillor Alan Harris - Report into the Effect of Applying
a Rate Capping of 20% on Primary Production to Commercial Rate Charge
in 2026/27 Budget - 5 August 20265

22. LATE ITEMS

22.1. Notice of Motion - Councillor Alan Harris - Report into the Effect of Applying a Rate Capping of 20% on Primary Production to Commercial Rate Charge in 2026/27 Budget - 5 August 2026

AUTHOR: Kelsey Hartland (Team Leader Governance and Information Services)

APPROVER: Sam Johnson (Chief Executive Officer)

DECISION STATEMENT:

To consider the Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Alan Harris on 5 August 2026 requesting that a Report into the Effect of Applying a Rate Capping of 20% on Primary Production to Commercial Rate Charge in 2026/27 Budget be tabled at the Council Meeting to be held on 20 August 2026.

RELEVANT LEGISLATION:

Local Government Act 1993 (Tas)

Local Government (Meeting Procedures) Regulations 2025 - regulation 19

PREVIOUS COUNCIL CONSIDERATION:

Council - 18 June 2026 - Agenda Item 4.3 2026/2027 Rating Framework

Workshop – 12 March 2026 – Budget and Fees & Charges 2026/27

Workshop – 26 March 2026 – Budget 2026/27

Workshop – 21 May 2026 – Budget and Rates Modelling 2026/27

RECOMMENDATION(S):

That Council:

1. notes concerns raised regarding the impact of the 2026/27 rates equalisation process on a number of properties, including those within the Primary Production rating category;
2. requests the Chief Executive Officer provide a report to the Ordinary Meeting of Council on 20 August 2026 regarding the impacts arising from Council's decision to equalise rating categories, with a particular focus on properties within the Primary Production category;
3. requests that the report include, where available:
 - a. a summary of impacts identified following the issue of 2026/27 rate notices;
 - b. information regarding the application and outcomes of Council's existing 20% capping arrangements, including the number and type of properties that have received relief under the policy;

- c. identification of any other rating categories or individual assessments that have experienced rate increases exceeding 20%;
 - d. a comparison with rating approaches adopted by other Tasmanian councils where similar rating structures or equalisation arrangements exist;
 - e. analysis of the implications, including financial impacts, associated with extending a 20% capping mechanism to all rating categories; and
 - f. advice regarding any consequential changes required to Council's rating strategy, rates policy, budget or revenue position should Council wish to consider broader application of a capping mechanism.
-

REPORT:

Background provided by Councillor Harris:

City of Launceston has commenced a process of Rate Equalisation between the three income producing rate categories. Primary Production properties were increased to the same level as Commercial & Industry rate category, without the protection of a 20% maximum rate increase that currently only applies to Residential properties.

This Urgent motion has been brought forward today in response to the number of enquiries that Councillors have received from those property owners whose current State Government Valuer General rating category is Primary Production, whereas the property has described more as Residential, if the property owner were to apply to the Office of the Valuer General for this change.

Basis for inclusion on the agenda:

Regulation 19 of the *Local Government (Meeting Procedures) Regulations*.

- (1) A councillor may give to the general manager, at least 7 days before a meeting –
 - (a) written notice of a motion; and
 - (b) supporting information and reasons for the inclusion of the motion on the next meeting agenda.
- (2) If a councillor gives to the general manager written notice of a motion less than 7 days before a meeting, or during a meeting, the chairperson, in consultation with the general manager, may –
 - (a) permit debate on the motion at the meeting; or
 - (b) set aside the motion for inclusion on the agenda of a later meeting.
- (3) The general manager is to include a motion with notice on the agenda of the next meeting if the motion –
 - (a) was given in accordance with subregulation (1) ; and
 - (b) was not refused under regulation 18(6).

The Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Alan Harris on 5 August 2026 provides less than 7 days' written notice of a motion. The Notice of Motion has not been refused under regulation 18(6) and is permitted for debate by Deputy Mayor Hugh McKenzie in consultation with Sam Johnson OAM (Chief Executive Officer).

OFFICER COMMENTS

City of Launceston, at its Ordinary Meeting held on 18 June 2026, adopted the 2026/27 Statutory Estimates, Rates and Charges Policy and Rating Framework including the decision to equalise the rate in the dollar applicable to the Commercial, Industrial and Primary Production rating categories. Aligning rates across these categories is considered as an equalisation measure across income-generating rating categories.

The decision followed Councillor workshops and discussions regarding the relativity of rates across rating categories and the appropriateness of maintaining different rates in the dollar for property classes that are generally income-producing in nature.

During workshop discussions, consideration was given to the fact that commercial, industrial and primary production properties are generally operated as businesses, generate income for their owners and may be able to treat rates as a business expense.

The recommendation today acknowledges concerns raised by a number of ratepayers following the issue of the 2026/27 rate notices and seeks additional information regarding the impacts of the equalisation process, particularly for properties within the Primary Production category. The requested report will provide Council with an assessment of the impacts experienced by ratepayers, the operation and outcomes of the existing residential capping arrangements, and the financial and policy implications associated with extending a similar mechanism to other rating categories.

Officers also note that initial enquiries received following the issue of rate notices suggest there may be some properties currently classified within the Primary Production category that may be more appropriately classified as Residential. Under Tasmania's rating and valuation framework, the Office of the Valuer-General is responsible for determining property valuations and classifications. Council relies on the information provided by the Valuer-General when calculating and issuing rates notices and does not independently determine the classification assigned to individual properties. Where a property owner believes the classification applied to their property is incorrect, the matter may require review through the valuation and classification processes administered by the Office of the Valuer-General.

The recommendation above does not alter the rates and charges adopted by Council on 18 June 2026. Rather, it seeks further information regarding the impacts of the adopted rating model, the operation of existing rating mechanisms, and the implications of any potential future amendments to Council's rating approach.

RISK IMPLICATIONS:

Failure to undertake the requested analysis and provide Council with a clear understanding of the impacts arising from the 2026/27 rates equalisation process may result in Council making future rating decisions without sufficient evidence regarding the

financial, social and operational consequences. There is also a reputational risk to Council if concerns raised by affected ratepayers are not adequately considered and addressed through a transparent review process.

Should Council subsequently wish to extend capping arrangements to additional rating categories, there are potential financial and governance risks associated with any reduction in rates revenue, including the need to identify alternative revenue sources, reduce expenditure or amend service delivery levels. Any future changes to Council's rating strategy or policies would require careful consideration to ensure compliance with legislative requirements and the principles of equitable rating.

ECONOMIC, ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL IMPACT:

The report requested by Council will examine the economic impacts associated with the 2026/27 rates equalisation process, including impacts on properties within the Primary Production category and the financial implications of extending the current 20% capping mechanism to additional rating categories.

Any future decision to broaden capping arrangements may reduce Council's rates revenue and could require offsetting measures, including adjustments to expenditure, service levels or future rating strategies.

The requested review will assist Council in understanding the impacts of the rates equalisation process on affected ratepayers and the broader community. The report will provide information to support informed decision-making and may identify opportunities to improve affordability outcomes for ratepayers experiencing significant increases in rates.

STRATEGIC DOCUMENT REFERENCE:

City of Launceston Corporate Strategic Plan 2025-2035

Not applicable:

Council's consideration of this matter supports delivery of a core service or function.

BUDGET AND FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

There are no direct budget implications associated with the preparation of the requested report.

The report will, however, assess the financial implications associated with Council's rating equalisation decision and consider the impact of extending capping arrangements across all rating categories. Any future changes arising from Council's consideration of those matters may require adjustments to Council's budget, Long Term Financial Plan, Rating Strategy, Rates and Charges Policy, or service delivery levels to address any reduction in rates revenue.

DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS:

The Chief Executive Officer has no interests to declare in this matter.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Memorandum Notice of Motion Cllr Alan Harris [**22.1.1** - 2 pages]

CITY OF LAUNCESTON

MEMORANDUM

FILE NO: SF5547
AH/vh
DATE: 5 August 2026

TO: Sam Johnson OAM Chief Executive Officer
c.c. councilmeetings@launceston.tas.gov.au

FROM: Vanessa Holloway Councillor: Alan Harris

SUBJECT: Notice of Motion - Rate Equalisation category changes

In accordance with Clause 19(3) of the *Local Government (Meeting Procedures) Regulations 2025* please accept this Notice of Motion for placement on the agenda of the Meeting of Council to be held on 6 August 2026.

Motion

That Council:

1. Notes concerns raised regarding the impact of the 2026/27 rates equalisation process on a number of properties, including those within the Primary Production rating category;
2. Requests the Chief Executive Officer provide a report to the Ordinary Meeting of Council on 20 August 2026 regarding the impacts arising from Council's decision to equalise rating categories, with a particular focus on properties within the Primary Production category;
3. Requests that the report include, where available:
 - a. A summary of impacts identified following the issue of 2026/27 rate notices;
 - b. Information regarding the application and outcomes of Council's existing 20% capping arrangements, including the number and type of properties that have received relief under the policy;
 - c. Identification of any other rating categories or individual assessments that have experienced rate increases exceeding 20%;
 - d. A comparison with rating approaches adopted by other Tasmanian councils where similar rating structures or equalisation arrangements exist;
 - e. Analysis of the implications, including financial impacts, associated with extending a 20% capping mechanism to all rating categories; and
 - f. Advice regarding any consequential changes required to Council's rating strategy, rates policy, budget or revenue position should Council wish to consider broader application of a capping mechanism.

CITY OF LAUNCESTON

MEMORANDUM

Background

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Attachments

NA.



Councillor Alan Harris