

Frequently Asked Questions - Special Rates

	Question	Answer
1.	<i>What is the purpose of a special rate scheme</i>	<p>The <i>Local Government Act 1989</i> and <i>2020</i> permits Council to apply a Special Levy (Special Rate) after completing a statutory process, to raise funds from defined commercial properties within a defined boundary specifically for the following purposes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Marketing and promotion of the shopping precinct 2. Business engagement, liaison and development of those businesses in the shopping precinct <p>How the rate is applied and to which properties, how it is expended and by whom is determined by Council and the entity that will expending the Special Rate funds and will be outlined during the statutory process.</p>
2.	<i>What are the proposed Special Rate schemes in City of Stonnington</i>	<p>There are six proposed Special Rate schemes in the City of Stonnington, they are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapel Street – South Yarra, Prahran & Windsor (approx. 1700 properties) • Glenferrie Road - Malvern shopping precinct (approx. 520 properties) • High Street - Armadale shopping precinct (approx. 370 properties) • Toorak Road, South Yarra shopping precinct (approx. 880 properties) • Toorak Village shopping precinct (approx. 300 properties) • Hawksburn Village shopping precinct (approx. 200 properties)

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4.	<i>How long will Stonnington's Special Rate schemes run for?</i>	If approved, Stonnington's Special Rate Schemes will run for four and a half years. The new Special Rate is proposed to run from 1 January 2024 until 30 June 2028.
5.	<i>Who requests that a Special Rate be raised or considered for a shopping precinct?</i>	An Incorporated Business Association within a shopping precinct makes a formal request to Council to commence the statutory process to implement a Special Rate Scheme.
6.	<i>What happens with the funds once they are collected?</i>	<p>Council collects the Special Rate and remits the funds raised to the Business Associations to facilitate projects and activities to promote their precincts. Activities must be in line with a Business Plan and yearly action plans that are submitted to Council via regular reporting.</p> <p>Special Rate funds are provided under a robust funding agreement with the Associations that outlines how the funds can be expended, and on what terms.</p>
7.	<i>Is it compulsory to pay special rates?</i>	Yes – if a Special Rate is Declared by Council then all commercial properties liable to be special rated within the geographic region must pay the special rate.
8.	<i>What happens if I refuse to pay the Special Rate?</i>	<p>Once Declared, Special Rates are compulsory and must be paid.</p> <p>If you choose not to pay the special rate the same procedure for non-payment of general rates will apply</p>

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9.	<i>Which properties are exempt from Special Rates?</i>	<p>Special Rates are only applied to the commercial properties within a designated commercial precinct boundary.</p> <p>Properties that are not eligible to be Special Rated are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residential properties. • Roof signs, mobile telephone towers and vacant land. • Properties that do not have general rates applied (those deemed as non-rateable).
10.	<i>I want to find out how the Special Rate is being spent. Who can I contact?</i>	<p>Contact the local Business Association responsible for expending the Special Rate funds for this information. You may be required to become a member of the Association to access some information.</p>
11.	<i>How are the Special Rates calculated on my property?</i>	<p>Council's Rates department will be able to provide detail as to how your rate is calculated please contact 8290 1220 or rates@stonnington.vic.gov.au . This detail can only be provided to the registered ratepayer.</p>
12.	<i>How do I pay the special rate?</i>	<p>The special rate is included on annual general rates notice and all payment methods available to general rates are available to pay Special Rates.</p>

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13.	<i>How is a Special Rate implemented?</i>	<p>Special Rates are implemented via a strict statutory process outlined in the <i>Local Government Act 1989 & 2020</i>. Those properties liable to pay the special rate are notified of a new or renewing Special Rate and provided with opportunity to provide a submission/objection to Council regarding the rates introduction or renewal.</p> <p>Council reviews all submissions and makes a determination on whether the Special Rate can be implemented or renewed (declared).</p>
14.	<i>Once a Special Rate is declared by Council, can I appeal against the special rate?</i>	<p>Once a Special Rate is declared by Council, property owners and occupiers will be notified of the declaration in writing. From the date of this notification, a person has thirty (30) days to lodge an appeal with VCAT.</p> <p>No further appeals can be lodged for the remainder of the scheme.</p>
15.	<i>My business doesn't rely on passing traffic or I do my own marketing why should I pay the special rate?</i>	<p>Special Rates are applied to the property not to the business occupying the property. Special benefit must be delivered to the property. Businesses choose a location because of the prosperity, amenity and the convenience of that location. The proposed special rates precincts are considered valued destinations for both property owners and shoppers.</p>

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16.	<i>I pay a Special Rate, am I automatically a member of the Business Association?</i>	<p>No, membership is not automatic. As a Special Rate payer you are entitled to join your local Business Association as a member, to give you the opportunity to participate in the spending of the funds.</p> <p>To join, you must complete a membership form and submit it to the Association for processing. Joining the Association as a member is not compulsory.</p>
17.	<i>My property is now residential or vacant land but I have received a Special Rate levy on my property, who should I call?</i>	<p>Questions relating to whether a property has been correctly levied should be directed to Council's Rates Department on 8290 1220 or email rates@stonnington.vic.gov.au to review the property.</p>
18.	<i>Any other queries regarding Special Rate Schemes?</i>	<p>Contact Stonnington Council on 8290 3333 or email rates@stonnington.vic.gov.au</p>