



Redland City has a number of canal and lake estates where residents enjoy water-front properties and in some cases private berths right outside their homes. These estates include the Raby Bay Canals (constructed in the 1980s), Sovereign Waters and Aquatic Paradise. These require regular upkeep and maintenance. This includes work on more than 20 kilometres of revetment walls, as well as regular dredging to clear the canals so boats can access beautiful Moreton Bay. The cost of this maintenance is covered under a special benefit levy imposed by Redland City Council and paid by the residents who own property on the canals and lake, meaning the majority of the cost of maintenance is borne by those who benefit from the work rather than it being subsidised by other ratepayers across the city.

Why we are reviewing how these funds are collected

In late 2016, Council decided to review the special charges after questions were raised within Council about the special charges compliance with the requirements under the Local Government Regulation 2012.

While there is no doubt Council can levy the special charges for the purpose of canal, lake and revetment wall maintenance, the overall plans (as required for special charges under the Local Government Regulation) contained a number of deficiencies, including for example that they failed to provide an estimated cost for carrying out the overall plan and timeframe.

As a result of the review Council has taken the position that the money from the levies collected since this time, which has not been spent on the various maintenance and repair work, should be returned to those who paid it.

There has been no direction to take this action - we are doing it as a proactive step and will work with an external accounting firm to determine exactly how much should be returned.

What does this mean for the rest of the city?

Council's decision only affects people who have been paying the special canal or lake special charges and means these property owners will not be charged the special levy in their April 2017 rates notice. Council has communicated with these property owners directly.

Next steps

We will be engaging an independent accountancy firm to complete a forensic review and determine exactly how much money will be paid back and to whom. We appreciate residents' patience while we go through this process.

Please be assured that despite the decision to provide a refund, Council will continue to undertake maintenance of the canals/lake. Subject to future budget deliberations and Council resolution, a new special charge for these services and activities may be adopted in Council's 2017-18 budget.

Council will also consider adopting a 12-month special charge for revetment wall maintenance in 2017-18, again dependant on budget deliberations and Council resolution.

This special charge will help fund revetment wall works for 12 months while we consult with the wider Redlands community about the best way to manage these works in the future. This community conversation will help guide future decisions about funding contributions.

Council maintains its position that the maintenance of our canals should be predominantly funded by those who own property on them. This includes the revetment walls that protect these properties.

To find out more

Council is writing to all property owners on the city's canals or Sovereign Waters Lake who have been paying the special levy.

For more information:

phone **3829 8999** or

email rcc@redland.qld.gov.au or

to **P.O. Box 21 Cleveland 4163**.

