

**Q. Why do people who live on canals pay a special levy?**

**>A.** Because there is a cost associated with maintaining the canal system, and for repairing the revetment walls. Council has determined that those properties that 'specially benefit' from the maintenance and repair services should be the ones that pay for them.

**Q. Do other councils charge levies?**

**>A.** Fraser Coast charges a levy, while in other cities such as Gold Coast, canal residents fund canal works themselves.

**Q. What led to the decision for Council to refund a proportion of the canal special charges?**

**>A.** The requirements under the Local Government Act 2009 and Local Government Regulation 2012 for levying special charges are quite prescriptive and, as such, must be strictly complied with. After questions were raised about the validity of the special charges, Council reviewed the processes it had followed to levy the special charges and determined that there were some deficiencies, such as overall cost and timeframe. Council has taken the view that the remaining money from the levies collected since this time should be returned to those who paid them.

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.

**Q. What happened with the rest of the money that was collected?**

**>A.** Money collected which is not being refunded has been spent on revetment wall repairs and canal maintenance, being the services and activities for which the levies were originally collected.

**Q. Why can't the special charge simply be updated so it complies?**

**>A.** Council is committed to transparency and engaging with the community, so we will be speaking with residents about the best way to levy these charges in the future.

**Q. Who is entitled to a refund?**

**>A.** The people who paid are entitled. This includes past property owners who paid these charges from 2011-12 but have since sold their properties. Refunds will be proportionate to the amount paid.

**Q. How many properties does it affect?**

**>A.** Approximately 1200

**Q. When will the refund be made?**

**>A.** Council is working with an external accounting firm to ensure the refunds are processed correctly and we will keep members of the community updated.

**Q. How much will be refunded and how will it be determined?**

**>A.** Council will work with an external accounting firm to determine the final amount to be refunded. We are committed to taking the necessary steps needed to provide residents with the correct information and appreciate residents' patience while we go through this important process. We will communicate directly with individual residents when this process has been completed.

Currently there is approximately \$9 million in the canal/lake reserve, of which 20-30% was contributed by Council and which will not be subject to refunds. Refunds will be proportionate to the amount paid.

**Q. If I am entitled to a refund, will I get interest?**

**>A.** Yes, Council has determined that it will pay interest on the refunded amounts.

**Q. What is going to happen now with funding the upkeep of our canals/lake, and is responsibility for maintaining revetment walls changing?**

**>A.** Separate to the revetment walls, maintenance and activities will continue to be undertaken by Council. Applying special charges for ongoing canal maintenance will also be considered as part of Council's 2017-18 budget deliberations and will be dependent on a future Council resolution.

All revetment wall repair work that is currently scheduled to occur in 2016-17 and 2017-18 will be completed. Subject to future budget deliberations and Council resolution there may be a 12 month special charge introduced to fund this work. In terms of the responsibility for and funding of the revetment wall repairs in the longer term, residents will be consulted about this over the next 12 months to determine the best approach.

**Q. How will the canal and lake reserve balances be treated?**

**>A.** Canal and lake-front property owners will not be required to pay any levy charges for the final quarter of the 2016-17 financial year (April-June 2017). Please be assured that canal and lake works will however continue to be undertaken as planned in 2016-17.

Council has put a hold on the money in the canal and lake reserve balances as of 31 March 2017 and will not use this money for the planned works in 2016-17. Council will not transfer any money out of these reserve balances until refunds to property owners are ready to be paid. Interest revenue on the reserve balances will however continue to be added from 1 April 2017.

An external independent company is currently working to identify the refunds and properties. Council will continue to keep property owners up-to-date with the latest information available.

**Q. Will the community be given an opportunity to have a say on future arrangements for canal maintenance and revetment wall repairs?**

**>A.** In relation to revetment walls there will be community consultation on how to fund that work moving forward. In relation to canal maintenance it

has been determined that the properties that benefit from the maintenance services should be levied for those services.

**Q. What happens if there's a problem with my canal wall while decisions are still being made?**

**>A.** Council has recently completed an audit of all revetment walls in the city and is aware of those that are in need of repair. Council will complete the existing schedule of revetment wall repair works for 2016-17 and 2017-18.

**Q. Does the refund affect any other residents in the city?**

**>A.** No.

**Q. What if I used to own property on the canals or lake but no longer live there?**

**>A.** If you are a previous owner of a canal property at Raby Bay from 2011, Aquatic Paradise from 2013, Aquatic Paradise Marina from 2011, or lake property at Sovereign Waters from 2013, please let us know. While Council will be undertaking a process to contact former property owners, your assistance in proactively providing details is appreciated.

It may take some time before refund amounts are established so we appreciate your patience during this time.

Your details:

- Name
- Current contact details including postal address
- Previous property details and length of time you owned the property, if known.

Please email, post or contact Council via phone with this information.

**Q. If I have a specific inquiry about my canal property, who should I contact?**

**>A.** If you have any question please contact Council:  
phone - 3829 8999  
email - [rcc@redland.qld.gov.au](mailto:rcc@redland.qld.gov.au)  
post - P.O. Box 21 Cleveland 4163.

We also have information on our website at [www.redland.qld.gov.au](http://www.redland.qld.gov.au)