

Financial Management – Refunds

The Relevant Authority will be responsible for determining if a refund is to be paid to an applicant and the amount of refund that will be paid. A council is only permitted to refund fees that are payable to that council.

The Development Application Processing (DAP) System will not allow the Relevant Authority to select fees for refunding that were not paid to them, such as the lodgement fee.

Fees payable to a Referral Agency may only be refunded by the council with full agreement of the Referral Agency, who will be responsible for determining how much of the Referral Agency fee is to be refunded.

A refund may be processed for any of the fees paid at any stage of the process, and for a number of different reasons. The main reasons are listed below.

Application withdrawn (Appendix 1)

- If an applicant withdraws their application after paying the appropriate fees, they may be due a refund. A refund is at the discretion of the Relevant Authority and is based on the amount of effort already put into assessing the application.
- Once an application is withdrawn, an assessing officer at the Relevant Authority will be tasked with determining how much, if any, will be refunded to the applicant. Each of the fee types paid on the Fee Advice for that application consent can be assessed and assigned a refund amount ranging from zero to the full fee amount. A brief reason can also be added to the refund determination.
- An application that is withdrawn after a consent has been granted or refused (finalised) will not be eligible for a refund.

Refund processing

- Once approved by the Financial Approver, the refund will be processed in a manner consistent with the method of payment by the applicant. For example, if the payment was made online in the DAP, the refund will be paid via the DAP system via an automated process through the BPoint Payment Gateway where the payment was originally made. However, if the payment was made over the counter at a council then the refund will be made via the method determined by each council.
- Regardless of the payment method, when a refund has been approved by an officer with authority to do so, a Refund Advice will be generated and distributed either directly to the online applicant or to the council via the email address provided in the DAP.

Fee or service not required

- Fees payable for a given Development Application are determined by the Relevant Authority during the 'Verification' stage of the assessment process. Fees are assigned depending on the nature, size and value of the proposed development. A Fee Advice is generated by the system based on the fee elements selected by the verifying officer at the time.
- It may be found during the Assessment Phase that a particular service has been paid for but is not actually required for the assessment activity, and therefore should be refunded.
- The assessing officer may select the Fee Advice on which the fee was paid and mark that specific fee (or fees) for refunding. After providing a short comment indicating why the fee is to be refunded, the assessment is submitted for approval by a Financial Approver. The Financial Approver may approve or reject the assessment made by the assessing officer or request further information.
- Once approved by the Financial Approver, the refund will be processed in accordance with the Refund processing mentioned above.

Incorrect or duplicate payment of fees

- Fees paid by credit card using BPoint, the online payment gateway in the DAP, can only be paid in full as the system will prepopulate the amount to be paid from the total shown on the Fee Advice being paid and this amount cannot be altered. This should prevent any occurrences of incorrect payments when paying online.
- The payment gateway will automatically mark the Fee Advice as 'paid' upon successful completion of the transaction. Once paid, any Fee Advice cannot be paid again. This should prevent any occurrences of duplicate payments when paying online.
- If a council elects to accept payments over the counter, the council staff member must ensure that the amount being paid is equal to the Fee Advice total, and that the Fee Advice has not already been paid by some other method. If a council staff member accepts an incorrect payment amount, or accepts a payment for a Fee Advice that is already marked as paid in the DAP, the council will be responsible for ensuring the correct adjustment or refund is processed.
- If there is a system issue where the customer is charged twice by BPoint but only one transaction is recorded in the DAP, the customer will be able to make contact with DPTI.DAPFinance@sa.gov.au, and provide appropriate documentation for a refund to be processed back on to the card it was charged to.

Over the counter payments

- Payments that were made by any means at a council office will be refunded by the council.
- The refund still needs to be processed through the DAP in the usual manner, up to and including endorsement by the Financial Approver. At this point, and if the DAP determines that the original payment was made over the counter at the council, it will generate a 'Refund Advice' that will be sent to the generic email address for that council that has been established in the DAP. The council would retrieve these refund advices from this generic email address and make payment of the refund to the applicant via the method determined by each council.

- **IMPORTANT TO NOTE:** For payments made by credit/debit card, the payment card rules that govern refunds made by DPTI also apply to card payments made at councils. If collected by the council via credit/debit card, the refund is to be returned to the applicant to that credit/debit card.

Financial approver

- When the assessing officer has submitted the refund assessment, it will be presented to a Financial Approver who can approve or reject the refund assessment, or request more information from the assessing officer.
- The Financial Approver role within the DAP system does not necessarily need to be a Finance Officer. It will mostly likely be an Assessment Officer, but it is a role that should be restricted to a small number of senior staff who have the authority within the organisation to approve a refund payment to an applicant.
- If the assessment is rejected or the Financial Approver requests more information, the task will be returned to the assessing officer for updating and resubmitting.
- Once approved by the Financial Approver, the refund will be processed in accordance with the Refund processing mentioned above.

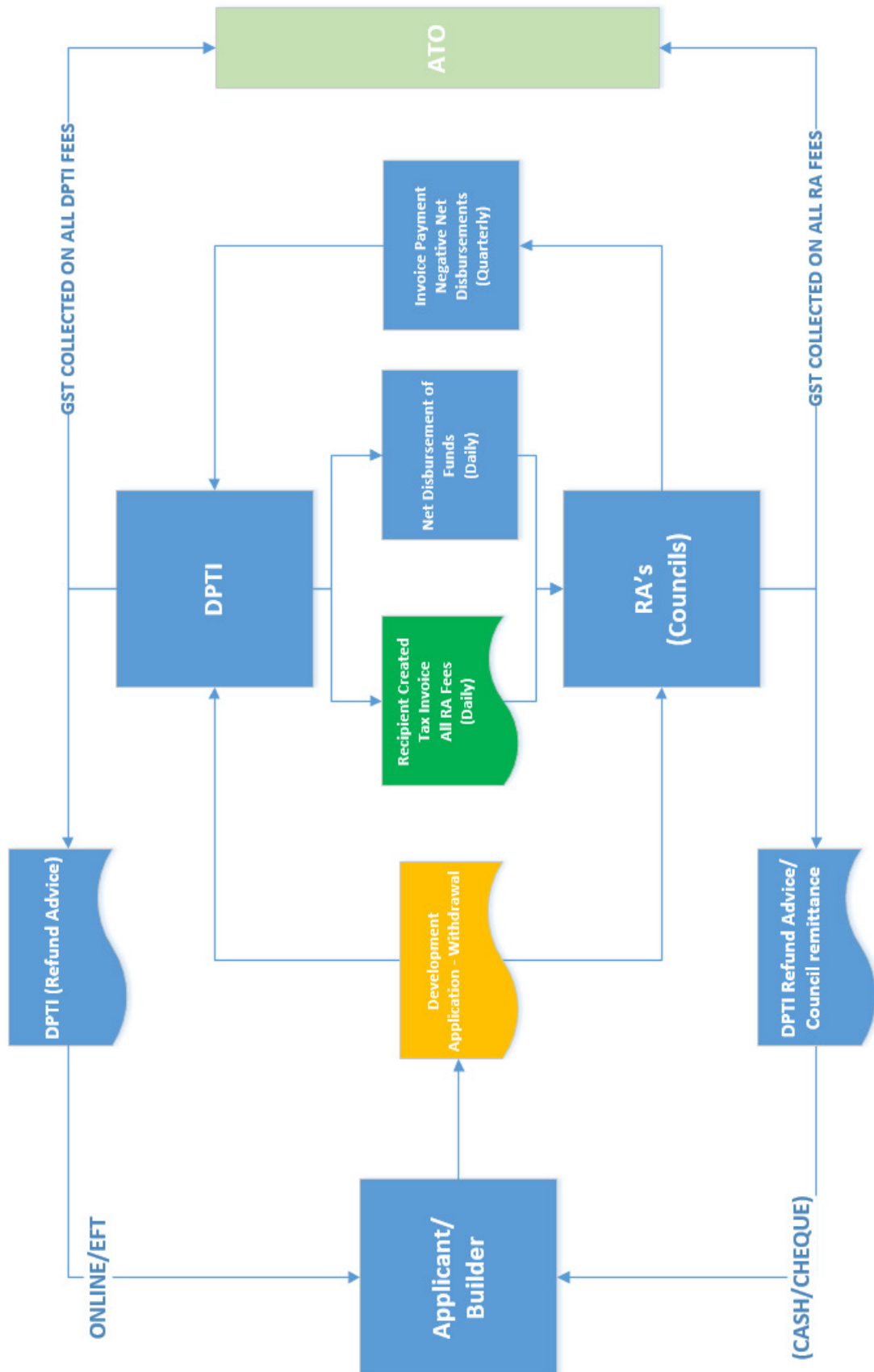
BPoint refunds

- Payment card industry rules stipulate that any payment that was originally paid via a payment card must be refunded to that same payment card.
- The DAP system will automatically determine if a payment was made using a payment card, and will send the refund request back to BPoint for processing. This is done by way of a 'token' assigned to the original payment transaction. The token will allow a refund (or refunds) to be made up to the amount of the original transaction.
- **IMPORTANT TO NOTE:** All information relating to the card used in making the original payment is stored with the Bank and not by the Payment Gateway, DAP or DPTI.

Information provided – when and where

- Where the applicant has provided an email address in their online application, they will be sent an email informing them that a refund has been approved. The email will contain a link to the DAP Document Store where they can find a more detailed 'Refund Advice' that they can view or download and save as required (refer Appendix 2).
- An application can be submitted in hard copy at the council for the development location. This would normally be reserved for those who do not have the option of lodging online, and should be discouraged if possible. Submitting an application in hard copy will attract an additional fee to account for the extra effort required by council staff.
- Should an applicant not be able to manage any part of the application process online, council staff will be required to manually process the application in DAP on behalf of the applicant. At several stages throughout the application lifecycle, there is a requirement to correspond or interact with the applicant regarding their application. If the application is marked as 'Hard Copy', no email communications will be sent. Instead, email communications and documents will need to be printed and mailed to the applicant, and any further receipt of information from the applicant entered manually into the DAP system by council staff.

Appendix 1 – Development Application Withdrawal (Refund)



Appendix 2 – Refund Advice example



Invoice Contact:
Test Automation

For enquiries, please contact:

Kimba
Kimba
1 Fake Address Adelaide 5000
08 888 1111

Adjustment Note (Refund Advice)

Application number: 20000983
Refund Advice No: 53
Refund Advice Date: 20 Jul 2020

Nature of development:
New housing Planning and Building Consent
Created By Test Auto

Description of Supply	Amount	GST	GST inc.
Building Assessment - Class 1	\$681.82	\$68.18	\$750.00
Building Assessment - Classes 2-9	\$1,490.91	\$149.09	\$1,640.00
Issue Essential Safety Provisions	\$218.18	\$21.82	\$240.00
Totals	\$2,390.91	\$239.09	\$2,630.00

If these fees were originally paid by Credit Card through the Plan SA online system, your refund will be automatically returned to that credit card.

If you paid these fees at your local council office, please contact that office to arrange collection of your refund.



Government of South Australia
Department of Planning,
Transport and Infrastructure
ABN 92 366 288 135

