

HUME CITY COUNCIL

# Agricultural Assistance Scholarship

**Guidelines 2023-2024**



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# ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF TRADITIONAL OWNERS

Hume City Council recognises the rich Aboriginal heritage within the municipality and acknowledges the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung, which includes the Gunung Willam Balluk clan, as the Traditional Custodians of this land. Council embraces Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander living cultures as a vital part of Australia's identity and recognises, celebrates and pays respect to the existing family members of the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung and to Elders past, present and future.

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# 1. PROGRAM OVERVIEW

## 1.1 Program Purpose

Council is committed to ensuring that the City's Green Wedge which includes natural heritage, environment values, agriculture activities and rural spaces are protected, enhanced, maintained and valued. Council supports rural landholders to carry out agriculture and supports landholders to explore alternative and new agricultural methods. For this reason, Council supports and invests in a range of programs and projects that support rural residents to manage their land sustainably. This includes field days and workshops, fauna monitoring, technical assistance, the Conserving our Rural Environment project grant (CoRE), Rural Land Management Grant (RLMG) and the Primary Producer Rate Rebate (PPRR).

The Agricultural Assistance Scholarship (AAS) supports Hume's rural community by assisting with fees associated with employing specialised consultants to offer on-farm advice around sustainable agriculture and agribusiness related activities.

## 1.2 The Agricultural Assistance Scholarship

The scholarship should encourage landholders to explore alternative agricultural businesses that are resilient to the ongoing challenges rural landholders face within Hume's rural landscape.

The AAS will be administered via payment of up to 80 per cent of agricultural consultancy fees, up to a maximum of \$1,500, GST exclusive. Applicants can apply maximum once per year per property.

## 1.3 Who can apply?

Landowners or managers with property that is zoned: Green Wedge, Green Wedge A, Rural Living and Farming outside the urban growth boundary, or Rural Conservation, Special Use or Rural Living zones within the urban growth boundary.

# 2. ELIGIBLE APPLICATIONS

## 2.1 Eligible Activities

Council will fund a range or combination of activities for on-farm advice from a professional consultant. All activities must be for the purpose of assisting landholders to implement sustainable agricultural practices and explore alternative agricultural businesses that are resilient to the ongoing challenges within the rural community. This includes but is not limited to:

- Soil health
- Succession planning
- Leadership development, coaching and mentoring
- Water portfolio management
- Climate change (mitigation and adaptation)
- Agricultural land capability assessment
- Agribusiness start up

Climate change presents challenges to rural landholders and is likely to have a detrimental impact on biodiversity and land use in Hume. Extreme weather conditions such as storms, flooding, drought and bushfires will increase in frequency. Water will be less available and new pest weeds and animals are likely to emerge.

Priority will be given to applicants seeking professional advice to support sustainable agriculture and climate change adaptation.











## 2.2 Non-eligible Activities

There are a range of activities that will not be funded through the AAS. These include but not limited to:

- Physical on-ground works.
- Tertiary degrees and TAFE courses (funding support for these courses are made available by other levels of government).
- Fees associated with attending conferences, courses, or seminars.

If you would like to attend a conference, course or seminar or conduct additional training you may be eligible for Council's Environmental Scholarships program. Environmental scholarships support those who live, work or volunteer in Hume to create positive environmental change, by providing financial assistance towards environmental education. For more information please contact Council's Sustainability Engagement Team or alternatively visit [hume.vic.gov.au/Your-Council/Grants-awards-and-funds/Environmental-Scholarships](https://www.hume.vic.gov.au/Your-Council/Grants-awards-and-funds/Environmental-Scholarships).

## 3. AGRICULTURAL ASSISTANCE SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION

### 3.1 Scholarship application process

Applicants must complete an application form which includes the required supporting documentation by the due date to be considered for funding. A Council Officer may contact the landholder to discuss their application and if needed arrange a property visit to discuss an application as part of the approval process.

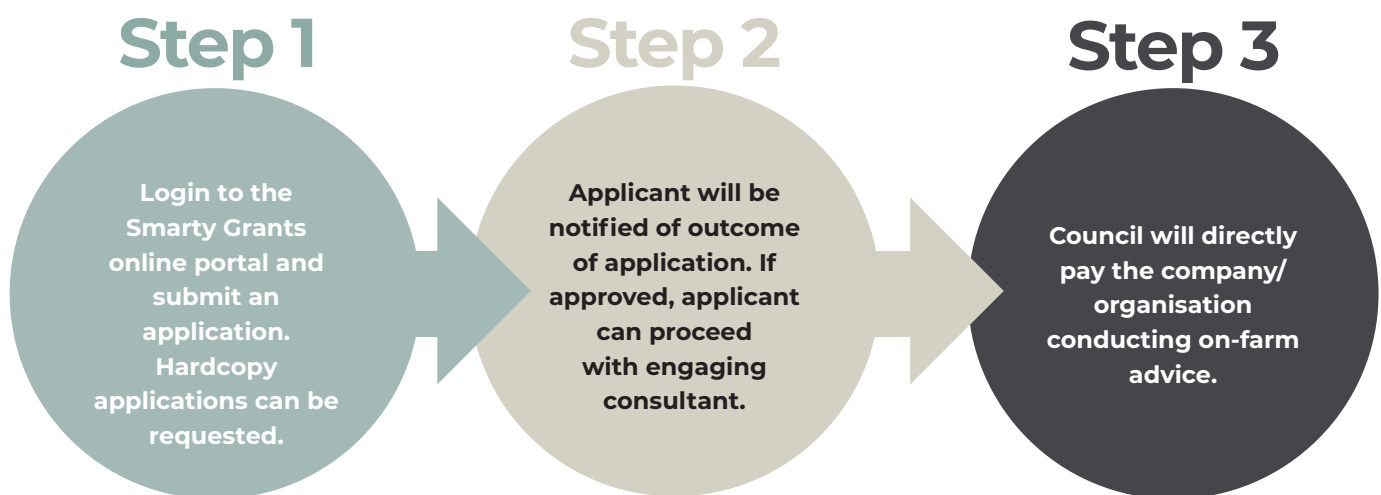
If a property owner or occupier has more than one eligible property, an application must be submitted for each property.

### 3.2 How can I apply?

- Applications open on 1 July each year and remain open until the end of the financial year, unless total available scholarship money has already been allocated.
- Properties can only receive one scholarship per financial year.
- Applications must be completed through Council's online portal, known as SmartyGrants. Users must log in to an existing account or create a log in, then draft, submit and manage their applications online. Council officers can assist with the application process.
- All supporting documents must be provided as part of the application. This includes a quote from the desired consultant outlining the proposal for assistance and costings.
- Council will contact you to arrange a property visit to assess your application if needed.
- The applicant will be notified in writing of the outcome of the application.
- Council will directly pay the company/organisation conducting on-farm advice. Applications that are applying for retrospective activities will not be approved.

Applicants should contact Council's Senior Rural Environment Officer if they require assistance with their application (or require a paper-based application).

### 3.3 Application steps



### 3.4 Selection process and notification

- A Council Officer will check eligibility, ensure each application is complete and email the applicant to acknowledge receipt of the application.
- Eligible scholarship applications will be assessed against the eligibility criteria by the Senior Environment Officer or Rural Environment Officers and forwarded to the Manager Community Health and Wellbeing for approval.
- The Senior Rural Environment Officer, Rural Environment Officers and Manager Community Health and Wellbeing will assess any possible Conflict of Interest in line with Council's Conflict of Interest Guide – Staff and report a Conflict of Interest using the Staff Disclosure of Interest Form. Should a Conflict of Interest occur, the application will be assessed by the Coordinator Sustainability Engagement and the Director City Services and Living.
- If/ when the budget is fully expended the scholarship will close for the financial year. This will be communicated via the website and online media and applications will no longer be processed for that financial year.

## 4. INFORMATION AND ASSISTANCE

### 4.1 Rural Engagement Program

The Rural Engagement Program supports rural landowners and managers in Hume to sustainably manage their land, agriculture and the environment. This includes activities such as controlling noxious weeds and pests on properties, protecting and enhancing native vegetation and creeks, and supporting agricultural land uses such as running a viable agribusiness or hobby-farm.

It is made up of a suite of sub-programs, including the:

Primary Producer Rate Rebate (PPRR)

The objective of the PPRR is to encourage the retention of primary production holdings and to support sustainable land management practices. The rebate is calculated as a 30 per cent discount on the general rate for approved properties, which is calculated against the Capital Improved Value of the property.

Conserving our Rural Environment (CoRE) Grant

The Conserving our Rural Environment grant aims to conserve and improve the natural environmental values on private rural property. This will be achieved through the support and funding of on-ground environmental works, training activities and community engagement initiatives.







### Rural Land Management Grant (RLMG)

The aim of the Rural Land Management Grant (RLMG) is to provide sustainable landowners or managers with the support and incentive to conduct land management activities across their property. The grant is offered at \$300 per property plus \$20 per hectare.

For more information about the Rural Engagement Program please visit:

<https://www.hume.vic.gov.au/Your-Council/Grants-awards-and-funds/Rural-Engagement-Program>

## **4.2 Environmental Scholarships**

Environmental scholarships support those who live, work or volunteer in Hume to create positive environmental change, by providing financial assistance towards environmental education.

Courses that will be funded include conservation, land management, or environment and sustainability courses. The scholarship can fund up to 80 per cent of course fees to a maximum of \$1500 per applicant.

For more information about the Rural Engagement Program please visit:

<https://www.hume.vic.gov.au/Your-Council/Grants-awards-and-funds/Environmental-Scholarships>

## **4.3 Hume Small Business Grants**

If you have an idea for a small business and seeking financial support, then we encourage you to apply for a Hume City Small Business Grant. Hume City is keen to support small businesses who are seeking to:

- create new employment opportunities
- support local employment growth and
- further expand their business and build on their already successful business model and growth potential.

For more information about the Rural Engagement Program please visit:

<https://www.hume.vic.gov.au/Your-Council/Grants-awards-and-funds/Small-Business-Grants>

### **Senior Rural Environment Officer**



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HumeCityCouncil





# HumeLink

Multilingual telephone  
information service

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## Connect with us



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