



# LAND MANAGEMENT RATE REBATE SCHEMES

## PURPOSE OF RATE REBATE SCHEMES

Council supports landholders who recognise the importance of adopting practices which preserve the quality and health of their land – sustainable land management. To assist and encourage landholders in their efforts, the Sustainable Farm Rebate (SFR) and Sustainable Land Rebate (SLR) are available.

These rebates provide eligible landholders with a financial incentive to adopt and maintain sustainable land management practices on their property. It is not the intention to cover the full cost of managing land, rather to assist, encourage, and reward landholders who actively undertake annual works.

## SUSTAINABLE LAND MANAGEMENT

There are a number of actions that are central to sustainable land management and the rebate schemes.

These include:

- control and management of weeds
- prevention of soil erosion
- pest animal control and
- protection of native vegetation.

There are many long-term benefits of adopting sustainable land management. These include increased productivity and land value, healthier landscapes and conservation of our natural and rural areas within the municipality.

## INTRODUCTION TO REBATE SCHEMES

The rebates provide landholders with financial assistance to address land management issues including weeds, pest animals and soil erosion.

### SUSTAINABLE FARM REBATE

The Sustainable Farm Rebate is available to landholders of properties that are not less than 2 hectares in area and are registered as 'Farm Land'.

'Farm Land' means any rateable land that is used primarily for farming purposes, that is used by a business, and has a reasonable prospect of making a profit from its activities on the land.

Landholders who commit to implementing annual sustainable land management practices on their farm are eligible for a rebate. The value of this rebate is a 23% reduction of the total rates payable.

### SUSTAINABLE LAND REBATE

The Sustainable Land Rebate is available to landholders of properties that do not have 'Farm Land' status. Properties must be 0.4 hectares or greater in area and zoned as either Green Wedge, Green Wedge A, Rural or Farm under the Victorian Planning Policy Framework.

Landholders who commit to implementing annual sustainable land management practices on their land are eligible for a rebate. The value of this rebate is a 15% reduction (up to a maximum of \$1,000) based on the site value of the property.

The definition of Farm Land is provided according to the *Valuation of Land Act 1960* Section 2 (1).

Farm land means any rateable land -

- a) That is not less than 2 hectares in area; and
- b) That is used primarily for grazing (including agistment), dairying, pig-farming, poultry-farming, fish-farming, tree-farming, bee-keeping, viticulture, horticulture, fruit-growing or the growing of crops of any kind or for any combination of these activities; and
- c) That is used by a business -
  - (i) That has a significant and substantial commercial purpose or character; and
  - (ii) That seeks to make a profit on a continuous or repetitive basis from its activities on the land; and
  - (iii) That is making a profit from its activities on the land, or that has a reasonable prospect of making a profit from its activities on the land if it continues to operate in the way that it is presently operating.





## RATE REBATE REQUIREMENTS

Landholders are required to commit to addressing the land management challenges on their property. Upon application, landholders need to outline the short and long-term works they will implement to manage, and control or reduce the impact of these challenges.

Once the application form is approved by Council, it constitutes a Works Agreement Form. Property visits are conducted to ensure landholders are meeting the requirements of these schemes, and enables Council Officers to provide individual property advice.

Participation in either rebate scheme is voluntary, however landholders have a legal responsibility to control declared noxious weeds and pests under the *Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994* and to adhere to the requirements of native vegetation removal under the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*.

## PROVISION OF RATE REBATE SCHEMES

Landholders need to complete and submit an application form each year in order to be eligible for the rebate. The rebate is issued at the beginning of the financial year and is automatically deducted from the first rate notice received by landholders. Landholders are required to carry out the works in their Works Agreement Form, to ensure they do not have to repay the rebate to Council.

## RATE REBATE DELIVERY

The following timeframe outlines the delivery for the rate rebate schemes.

### FEBRUARY

- Eligible landholders are mailed an application form.

### MARCH

- Landholders identify the land management issues on their property and outline the short and long-term works they will implement in response to these issues.
- Completed and signed application forms must be submitted to Council by the end of March each year.
- Landholders who do not submit an application form will receive one reminder notice before the due date.

### JUNE

- Landholders are notified by mail as to whether their rate rebate was approved for the upcoming financial year.

### ALL YEAR

- Assistance is available to landholders through telephone advice and property visits to complete application forms, identify land management issues and determine a plan of action.
- Property visits are conducted by Council Officers to ensure landholders meet the requirements of these schemes.
- Landholders who fail to meet the requirements of these schemes may have their rebate revoked.

## FURTHER INFORMATION

In addition to incentive schemes, Council provides field day and training opportunities to build the capacity of our community in skills and knowledge.

A variety of information and programs are also available to support landholders in managing and adopting sustainable land practices on their land.

These include:

- Plant Donation Scheme
- technical advice
- property visits
- short courses
- property aerial photographs
- environmental newsletters
- indigenous plant lists.

For more information regarding land management practices or the rate rebate schemes, visit Council's website at [www.hume.vic.gov.au](http://www.hume.vic.gov.au) or contact the Sustainable Environment Department on 9205 2200.

