

Primary Producer Rate Rebate Program

2021/22



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 natural heritage, environment and rural spaces are protected, enhanced, maintained and valued. 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 PPRR supports investment in sustainable agricultural land use and sustainable land management activities, by providing approved applicants with a discount on the annual rates levied on approved properties.

1.2 Primary Producer Rate Rebate

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. The discount is applied on an annual basis, following an assessment and approval of an application. An application must be received for each property; multiple properties cannot be considered as a group application.

To receive a rebate, it is a requirement that a property has a Land/Property Management Plan or similar which will need to be provided to Council outlining how the property is being managed sustainably, including the control of noxious weeds.

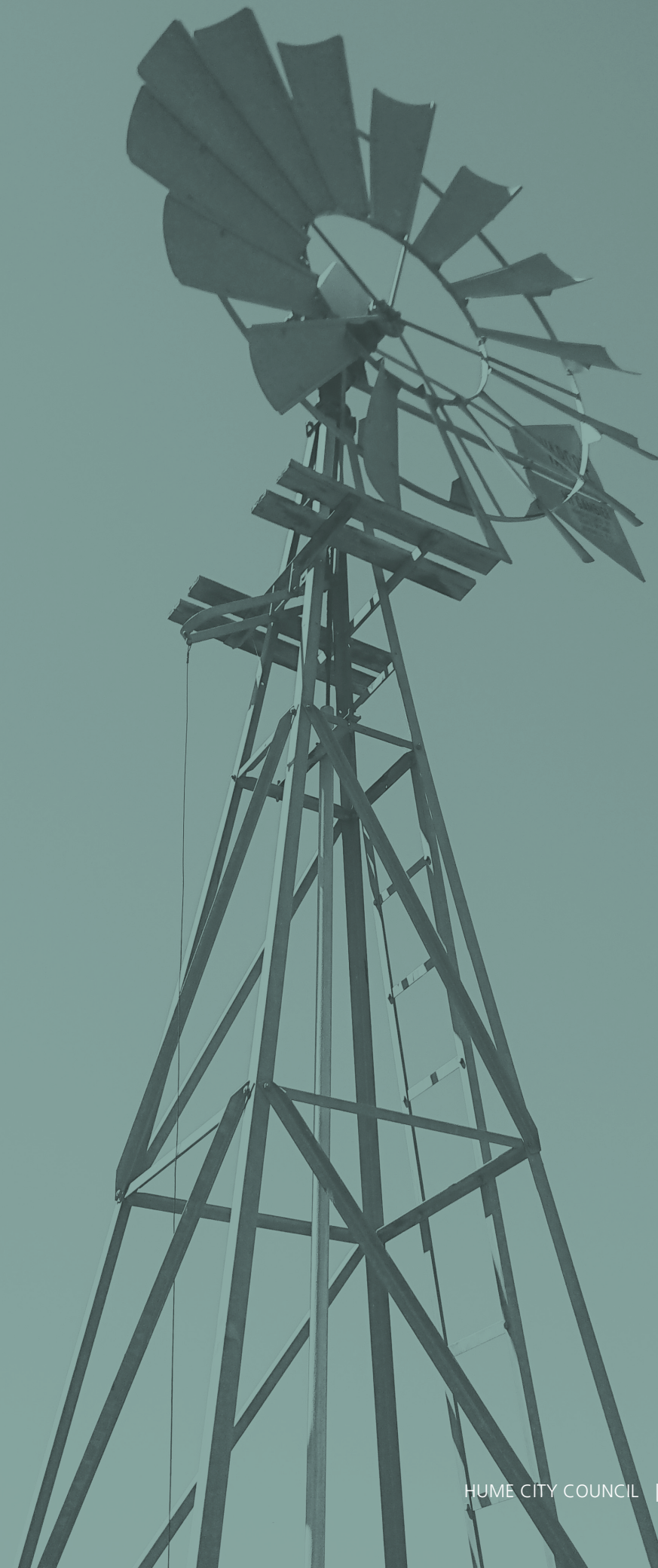
1.3 Who can apply?

- Landowners or managers with property larger than two hectares that is zoned: Green Wedge, Green Wedge A, Rural Living and Farming outside of the urban growth boundary, or Rural Conservation, Special Use or Rural Living zones within the urban growth boundary.
- The owner or manager primarily uses the property for an agricultural purpose and the property is used as a business. Agricultural purpose will be based on the definition of "Farm Land" under the *Valuation of Land Act 1960*

Farm Land definition

"Farm land" means any rateable land that is:

- a) not less than two hectares in area;
- b) 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 those activities;
- c) used as a business:
 - i. having a significant and substantial commercial purpose or character;
 - ii. seeking to make a profit on a continuous or repetitive basis from its activities on the land;
 - iii. 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 operating.





2. REBATE ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

The following criteria will be used to assess each property for the Rebate:

2.1 Property size

The property must be two hectares or more in size. Properties that are smaller than two hectares cannot apply for a rebate, though may be eligible for Council's Rural Land Management Grant. For further information contact Council's Sustainable Environment Department on 9205 2200.

2.2 Evidence of agricultural business

The activity being conducted on a property must be an agricultural business as opposed to a hobby or recreational activity. The activity being carried out on a property must be a business for the purpose of earning an income on an ongoing basis in accordance with the definition of "Farm Land". Council will consider the following as evidence of an agricultural business:

- Income Tax Assessment showing Primary Producer
- letter from accountant determining Primary Producer
- ABN (Australian Business Number)
- evidence of registered primary producer with the Australian Taxation Office
- evidence of customer facing, such as a website where customers can place product orders
- sales receipts for product sales
- clear visual evidence of primary production that Council Officers can sight on your property
- other business records to Council's satisfaction.

A current copy of this evidence must be provided with the application. Please contact Council's Sustainable Environment Department on 9205 2200 if you are unsure about what evidence you need to provide.

2.3 Sustainable land management

Sustainable Land Management refers to the use of land resources, including soils, water, animals and plants, for the production of goods while simultaneously ensuring the long-term productive potential of the land and its environmental functions. Land managers must seek to manage their land sustainably, including the control of noxious weeds and preventing their spread to neighbouring properties, protecting soils, native vegetation and creeks, and managing pest animals.

The Victorian *Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994* (CaLP Act) legislates several requirements to ensure land is managed sustainably. This includes preventing the spread of and, as far as possible, eradicating noxious weeds such as Serrated Tussock and Artichoke Thistle and declared pest animals such as Rabbits, Feral Cats and Foxes, protecting soils and protecting water resources. Further information about the CaLP Act is included in section 4.1.

To be considered eligible a Council Officer must see evidence during their property inspection that the property is being satisfactorily managed in accordance with the objectives of this program. In addition, all participants must submit a Land/Property Management Plan or similar to Council with their application outlining how the property will be sustainable, including:

- what the business and land management goals for the property are
- how noxious weeds and pest animals will be managed
- how environmental values such as native vegetation and creeks will be protected
- how soil and any other natural resources are being managed / protected.

3. PRIMARY PRODUCER RATE REBATE PROGRAM APPLICATION

3.1 Rebate application process

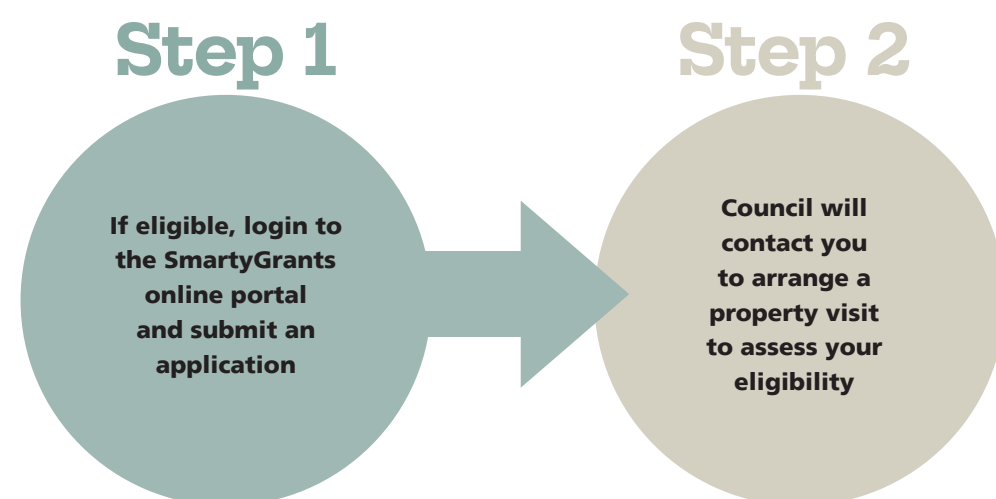
Applicants must complete an application form every two years which includes the required supporting documentation by the due date to be eligible for the Rebate. A Council Officer must conduct a property visit with the applicant to discuss their application prior to it being submitted.

If a property owner or occupier has more than one eligible property, an application must be submitted for each property; multiple properties cannot be considered as a group application. The rebate applies to one rating year and is itemised on the annual rates notice mailed out during August.

3.2 How can I apply?

- Previous years' applicants will be notified of the expression of interest period in February 2021. For the 2021/2022 financial year, all previous recipients of the previous Agricultural Land Use Rate Rebate will be notified of the eligibility criteria to enable them to determine their eligibility.
- Council will contact you to arrange a property visit to assess your eligibility.
- Following a property visit by a Council Officer, applications must be completed through Council's online portal, known as SmartyGrants. Users must 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. If evidence of primary production business operation cannot be supplied, the property will not be eligible.
- The rebate on the rates will occur after the application form has been approved; it will be provided to the landowner on their annual rates notice.
- If the application is received after the due date, the property will receive the discount in the following quarter of the rating year. The same will apply to new applicants who apply for the rebate.

3.3 Application steps



3.4 Time-frames

Time-frame	Activity
February 2021	Application period opens.
February-June 2021	Applications assessed, property visits organised and conducted.
August 2021	Applications presented to the Council for consideration.
September 2021	Successful applicants will receive their second quarter rate notices with the discounted rate.

4. INFORMATION AND ASSISTANCE

4.1 Legislation:

Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994

The main legislation covering noxious weed and pest animal management in Victoria is the *Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994* (CaLP Act). Under this Act species of plants and animals can be declared as noxious weeds and pest animals.

The main objective of the CaLP Act is to protect primary production, Crown land, the environment and community health from the effects of noxious weeds and pest animals. The CaLP Act defines roles and responsibilities and regulates the management of noxious weeds and pest animals.

In relation to his or her land, a landowner must take all reasonable steps to:

- avoid causing or contributing to land degradation which causes or may cause damage to land of another land owner
- conserve soil
- protect water resources
- eradicate regionally prohibited weeds
- prevent the growth and spread of regionally controlled weeds
- prevent the spread of, and as far as possible eradicate, established pest animals.

Planning and Environment Act 1987

This Act sets up a system of planning schemes to regulate the use and development of land in Victoria. Clause 52.17, outlines the requirement for a permit to remove, destroy or lop native vegetation, unless the removal is exempt under the planning scheme that applies to the land.

4.2 Council resources

A range of resources and information is available to assist applicants when preparing their application. Information can be found on Council's page at hume.vic.gov.au For all enquires contact the Sustainable Environment Department on 9205 2200 or email ruralenvironment@hume.vic.gov.au

Land & Biodiversity Guidelines

Council's Land & Biodiversity Guidelines is a resource to assist in the management of rural land, as well as the conservation and protection of natural environmental values. It includes such topics as:

- weed and pest animal management
- effective grazing
- managing soil erosion
- fire management
- managing native vegetation, revegetating and establishing windbreaks

Directory of Service Providers

To assist with managing your land, Council's Directory of Service Providers provides an up to date list of local contractors and suppliers that service the Hume area. Contractor services include such things as weed control, pest animal control, fencing, revegetation, slashing and farming maintenance/assistance. Suppliers include farm supply stores and plant nurseries.

WEEDeck weed identification guide

Council's WEEDeck is a waterproof and durable weed identification guide that covers the priority weeds in the Hume area.

HumeLink

Hume City Council's
multilingual telephone information service.
General enquiries: Telephone 9205 2200

للمعلومات باللغة العربية	9679 9815
معلومات باللغة العربية	9679 9809
Za informacije na bosanskom	9679 9816
Za informacije na hrvatskom	9679 9817
Για πληροφορίες στα ελληνικά	9679 9818
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Muốn biết thông tin tiếng Việt	9679 9823
For other languages...	9679 9824



Primary Producer Rate Rebate Program Guidelines 2021/22

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