



HUME CITY COUNCIL

Re-Source

Rural Environment Newsletter

In this Autumn 2022 edition:

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hume.vic.gov.au/resource



Grants and rebates for rural landholders – apply now

The Rural Engagement Program provides grants and rebates to support local landowners and managers to sustainably manage their land, agriculture and the environment.

To determine your eligibility and understand the requirements of the program, please read over the grant guidelines available on our website at hume.vic.gov.au/REP. Hard copies can be made available on request.

If you are a new applicant, please contact Council's Rural Engagement Team on 9205 2200 or coregrant@hume.vic.gov.au to arrange a property visit to discuss your project.



Applications open for 2022/23 CoRE grant

You can now apply for a 2022/22 Conserving our Rural Environment (CoRE) grant.

The grant aims to conserve and improve the natural and environmental assets on private rural property. Eligible landholders, managers and environmental community groups can now apply for a Project Grant (up to \$10,000) for the 2022/23 financial year.

Council will fund a range of activities including on-ground environmental projects, capacity-building activities, and community engagement initiatives, including but not limited to:

- noxious and environmental weed control
- pest animal control
- revegetation
- fencing for stock exclusion / management
- materials and equipment
- property management plans
- flora and fauna assessments
- training and development
- community group activities.

Visit hume.smartygrants.com.au/CORE2223 to apply. Applications close Saturday 30 April 2022.

Rural Land Management Grants

Applications for 2021/22 Rural Land Management Grants close on 31 May 2022, with applications for 2022/23 opening on Friday 1 July.

The Rural Land Management Grant (RLMG) is for properties 0.4 hectares in size or greater within the Green Wedge, Green Wedge A, Rural Living and Farming zones with satisfactory land management.

Successful applicants will receive \$300 per property plus \$20 per hectare of that property to assist with land management activities such as weed control and revegetation. Apply for RLMG 2021/22 at hume.smartygrants.com.au/RLMG21

Primary Producer Rate Rebate

The Primary Producer Rate Rebate (PPRR) provides a 30 per cent discount on the general rate for demonstrated agricultural businesses on properties over two hectares with satisfactory land management.

Applications are submitted every two years for this rebate. New applicants are encouraged to contact Council to have their eligibility assessed prior to submitting an application. Applications close Thursday 30 June. Applications for 2022/23 will open later in the year.

Apply for PPRR 2021/22 at hume.smartygrants.com.au/PPRR2

Drop-in grant information sessions

Need assistance with your grant application or looking for more information on land management?

Join one of our drop-in grant information sessions. We will also be offering plant identification service, so please bring in samples of plants you wish to identify.

Wednesday 9 March, 10am – 3pm
Hume Global Learning Centre – Sunbury
44 Macedon Street, Sunbury

Wednesday 16 March, 10am – 3pm
Hume Global Learning Centre – Craigieburn
75-95 Central Park Ave, Craigieburn



Ecological burning in land management

by Eric Stone, Conservation Team Leader (East)

Many of Hume City's species-rich grasslands are evolved to benefit from regular fire events. Here's how it works.

Hume City Council Conservation Team regularly conducts ecological burns – mainly in our volcanic soils, grassland sites and in woodlands with older soils. The ecology of these indigenous landscapes is deeply connected to burning.

Importance of burning:

- Burning of thick grasses, inter-tussock space and bare earth is created for flowering herbs - particularly lilies, orchids, daisies, and many more.
- Many Australian plant species require smoke, heat or increased light to germinate.
- More flowering herbs equals more habitat for insects, reptiles, birds, etc.
- Health of the grasses is improved by removal of older, cured growth.
- Soil health and water-retention can be improved through burning.
- Creates opportunities for follow-up, targeted weed control of invasive species, with less chance of off-target damage.
- Fuel reduction, to reduce risk of arson/wildfire, and protect the community.

Methods:

- Burn period is Spring or Autumn.
- Burn areas usually range from 0.1ha to 5ha, leaving some areas unburnt, in a 'mosaic' fashion.
- We follow similar principles to cultural burning, but not always in the same way and not always for the same reasons.
- Firebreaks, water, weather conditions and experienced staff are utilised to ensure safe burns.
- Our burns are restricted to the ground-layer of plants, not the midstory or canopy.



Common questions:

Why burn it? Why not slash / graze it?

Many indigenous species require heat, smoke, extra light to germinate. Mowing / Slashing is not a complete replacement for fire, and also tend to spread invasive weeds. Grazing as a management tool is not used in our conservation reserves.

Won't burning harm native wildlife?

The native animal species in these landscapes have evolved with fire, and are good at evading it, through fleeing or hiding underground. It's generally accepted that there may be some losses, but this is offset by the overall increase in habitat from a burn which benefits all of these species. In fact, if the landscapes are left too long unburnt the native animal species would also suffer habitat loss.

The style in which the blocks are burnt can also be tailored to give any animals the best chance of surviving. We never burn an entire reserve at once, and always leave refuge areas.

Readership feedback received and voucher winner announced

Thanks to all those who responded to our recent request for feedback on our RE-Source newsletter.

The results indicated that the majority of readers:

- Prefer a quarterly edition.
- Prefer receiving a hard copy to read over a cuppa.
- Feel that the length is just right.

We will incorporate feedback into future editions. We value your feedback, which can be sent at any time via email to resource@hume.vic.gov.au

**\$50 voucher winner:
Brad Allender,
Wildwood**

Upcoming events

City Nature Challenge

Friday 29 April to
Wednesday 2 May

Get out and take photos of wildlife, plants, and fungi to be part of City Nature Challenge!



This four-day biodiversity blitz is a global effort with 419 cities from 44 countries involved in last year's event. As friendly competition, cities aim to record as many species as possible and make the most observations by the biggest number of observers. Hume City is part of the Greater Melbourne project.

It's not just for cities. Rural landholders have a far greater chance of encountering wildlife!

An online information session about City Nature Challenge and using the iNaturalist platform to upload your observations will be held on Wednesday 20 April, 7.30pm to 8.30pm.

Visit hume.vic.gov.au/citynaturechallenge for more information and to register.

Property planning workshop

Saturday 30 April 9am – 4pm

Sunday 15 May 9am – 2pm

Hume Global Learning Centre – Sunbury

Morning tea and lunch provided both days.

Receive assistance to prepare or update your property management plan. Aerial photos provided upon registration.

Register via: hume.vic.gov.au/LMPEvent



Goodbye to our former editor!

Ian Smith, RE-Source editor and Rural Environment Officer of the last two years, has recently moved on from Hume City Council. We thank Ian for his valuable contribution to supporting rural landowners in Hume.

Weed management in Autumn

Following the Autumn break, it is time to prepare for treatment of weed seedlings that will emerge in approximately six to eight weeks' time – given the prevailing soil temperature and onset of rain.

Make sure you...

- Regularly monitor your property for weeds.
- Avoid having bare ground on your property, where weeds will opportunistically invade.
- Implement sowing of new pasture and continue to maintain desirable pasture species.
- Treat young weed seedlings to avoid headaches down the track.
- Treat actively growing plants for most effective kill.
- Always read the herbicide label and follow safe handling practices.

Do you have an annual weed control calendar for your property?

Preparing your activities in a timely way enables more effective control over the long term, saving money and time, improving productivity and the health of your land. Seek advice from the Rural Engagement Team. Here is an example of an annual control calendar for Serrated Tussock prepared by the Victorian Serrated Tussock Working Party:



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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