

Rates Grant for Landowners of Significant Natural Areas Policy

1. Introduction

The continual loss of indigenous biodiversity is a widespread issue at a district, regional, national, and international scale. A Significant Natural Area (SNA) is an area of significant indigenous vegetation and significant habitat of indigenous fauna. Protection of SNAs is a matter of national importance under Section 6(c) of the Resource Management Act 1991. The Proposed District Plan identifies mapped SNAs that must be protected. Many of these SNAs are located on private land.

2. Policy context

The intention of this policy is to provide landowners of SNAs with rates relief, via a rates grant, in order to go some way towards acknowledging their contribution to protect and maintain the District's indigenous biodiversity. In many cases, there is an opportunity cost in retaining a SNA as the land cannot be developed for alternative uses.

3. Policy objective

To provide landowners of SNAs with rates relief, via a rates grant, to go some way towards acknowledging their contribution to protect and maintain the District's indigenous biodiversity.

4. Policy statement

- 4.1. The annual rates grant for SNAs is a flat rate per rating unit plus a rate per hectare of SNA (or part thereof) (including GST) in accordance with Schedule A, which adjusts annually in line with the Local Government Cost Index. It goes towards the rates on properties that contain part or all of a mapped SNA listed in ECO-SCHED1 of the Proposed District Plan.
- 4.2. The maximum rates grant for each rateable unit is capped at the rateable unit's maximum annual rates amount.
- 4.3. The rates grant is applied annually and may not be credited, rolled over, or applied retrospectively.
- 4.4. The rates grant cannot be applied to non-rateable land as per the Local Government (Rating) Act 2002.
- 4.5. Some SNAs are located within non-rateable land due to it being subject to a Queen Elizabeth the Second National Trust covenant (QEII covenant). Where this is the case, a rates grant will be calculated for the area of the SNA within the QEII covenant and transferred to any rateable land on that property. If the entire property is non-rateable land, no transfer will be applied.
- 4.6. Rates grants are paid directly into the rates account of each eligible rateable unit prior to the issue of the first instalment (July) rates assessment.

- 4.7. Council may choose to decline a rates grant if upon monitoring (generally every 5 years but maybe sooner if required to address a change in circumstances), the SNA is found to have degraded from its previous assessment by, or on behalf of, Council.
- 4.8. The rates grant is funded through the Greenspace Department budget.
- 4.9. This updated policy takes effect on 1 July 2022.
- 4.10. This policy will be reviewed and considered for incorporation into the Rates Policy, by 1 July 2027.

5. Links to legislation, other policies and community outcomes

5.1. Legislation

- Local Government (Rating) Act 2002, Section 7 rateable land and Section 8 non-rateable land.
- Resource Management Act 1991, Section 6(c) the protection of areas of significant indigenous vegetation and significant habitats of indigenous fauna is a matter of national importance.

5.2. Other Council policies

- Rates Policy waives the requirement to pay rates under certain specific circumstances.

5.3. Community outcomes

- Indigenous flora and fauna, and their habitats, especially Significant Natural Areas are protected and enhanced.
- Conservation, restoration and development of significant areas of indigenous vegetation and/or habitats is actively promoted.

6. Questions

Any questions regarding this policy should be directed to the Senior Policy Planner or the General Manager Community and Recreation in the first instance.

7. Effective date

28 June 2022

8. Review date

This policy will be reviewed, and considered for incorporation into the Rates Policy, by 1 July 2027.

9. Policy owned by

General Manager, Community and Recreation

10. Approval

Adopted by Waimakariri District Council on 28 June 2022

Schedule A

Year	Local Government Cost Index change (%)	Rates grant
2022	N/A	\$155 flat rate per rateable unit plus \$30 per hectare of SNA(s).
2023	6.24%	\$164.67 flat rate per rating unit plus \$31.87 per hectare of SNA(s).
2024	3.9%	\$171.09 flat rate per rating unit plus \$33.12 per hectare of SNA(s).