



**TRUST FOR
NATURE**

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20 February 2024

Tammy Smith, CEO
Yarriambiack Shire Council
34 Lyle St
Warracknabeal VIC 3393

By email: info@yarriambiack.vic.gov.au
Cc: rates@yarriambiack.vic.gov.au

Dear Ms Smith

Yarriambiack Shire Council rating strategy – Trust for Nature covenants

This letter is to provide you with an up to date list of Trust for Nature covenants in your Shire (**Attachment A**).

We would also like to highlight an opportunity for Yarriambiack Shire Council to provide a rating concession, exemption or rebate to landholders with a Trust for Nature covenant on their land. Around one third of rural and regional councils across Victoria currently support landholders with a rate rebate or incentive payment of varying levels (**Attachment B**).

As you may know, Trust for Nature is Victoria's dedicated private land conservation agency. Among other things we work with landholders to protect, manage and restore native vegetation on their land via permanent, on-title covenants, to provide habitat for our endangered plants and animals forever.

Across Victoria, around 1,600 covenants are now registered on title, protecting nearly 80,000 hectares of habitat on private land. You will see from Attachment A that Yarriambiack Shire currently has 19 covenants, representing a total of 1162 hectares of private land permanently protected for the future benefit of all Victorians, but in particular for the benefit of the citizens, landscapes and ecosystems of your Shire.

Some of the benefits of covenanting private property include that these properties:

- help retain key habitat patches and connections across the Shire and increase the health and resilience of the Shire's ecosystems and species;
- mitigate drought conditions by improving soil and moisture retention;
- improve weed and vermin control on the land (active management of non-indigenous flora and fauna is a requirement of the deed);

- ensure that the site will be regularly assessed, with advice provided by Trust for Nature staff into the future, presumably reducing costs to council for environmental management activities;
- support climate mitigation by ensuring that some of the Shire's remaining carbon sinks are secured permanently.

As well as the substantial environmental contributions made by landholders through their conservation work, some are also limiting their capacity to earn income from their land, for example by committing not to subdivide, overgraze or practice intensive agriculture.

To recognise this sacrifice, **many Shires use concessions or exemptions to offer some compensation or incentives for private landholders covenanting their land** (Attachment B). The two most common rate rebates are a 50-100% refund of the rates covering the portion of land under protection (manually adjusted), and a per hectare rebate (generally \$20-\$30 per hectare of covenanted land capped at a total of between \$500 - \$1,000).

Native habitat on private land in Victoria continues to be lost and the challenge is to arrest and reverse this decline. It is now very well understood that the way to do this is to protect and build back habitat for nature, as well as supporting ecosystem resilience and enhanced connectivity. International commitments like [30x30](#) will become increasingly relevant in delivering these outcomes.

By offering a rate concession or rebate, council will be recognising the commitment and contribution of landholders in your shire for the public good, and providing an important incentive for new landholders to protect their conservation values.

We would be very pleased to discuss this further with you – including presenting to interested staff. If your query relates to rating reform or policy, please contact our Senior Policy Advisor Cecilia Riebl at ceciliar@tfn.org.au; if it relates to covenant data or stewardship, please contact our Stewardship Coordinator Karen Tymms at karent@tfn.org.au.

Kind regards



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Attachment A: Trust for Nature covenants in the Yarriambiack Shire Council area

Record Type	Interest Status	Property Address	Covenant Registration Date	Covenant Area	Local Government Area
Regular Covenant	Registered	cnr Sheep Hills-Bangerang & Homebush Roads, Warracknabeal, Victoria, 3393	23/11/1989	272.2	YARRIAMBIACK SHIRE
Regular Covenant	Registered	Henty Highway, Kellalac, Victoria, 3393	15/04/1991	0.15	YARRIAMBIACK SHIRE
Regular Covenant	Registered	560 McLeans Road, Wilkur, Victoria, 3393	11/02/1993	8.54	YARRIAMBIACK SHIRE
Regular Covenant	Registered	Murtoa-Glenorchy Road, Murtoa, Victoria, 3390	21/03/1995	84.21	YARRIAMBIACK SHIRE
Regular Covenant	Registered	Murtoa-Glenorchy Road, Murtoa, Victoria, 3390	21/03/1995	104.78	YARRIAMBIACK SHIRE
Regular Covenant	Registered	cnr Duck Swamp & Hotkers Roads, Minyip, Victoria, 3392	29/07/1999	24.73	YARRIAMBIACK SHIRE
Regular Covenant	Registered	off Banyena-Pimpinio Road, Minyip, Victoria, 3392	22/11/2002	13.4	YARRIAMBIACK SHIRE
Regular Covenant	Registered	Lawler Road, Boolite, Victoria, 3392	7/05/2003	23.2	YARRIAMBIACK SHIRE
Regular Covenant	Registered	Lallat North Road, Rupanyup, Victoria, 3388	31/01/2005	12.61	YARRIAMBIACK SHIRE
Regular Covenant	Registered	Yarto-Speed Road, Patchewollock, Victoria, 3491	11/07/2006	387.78	YARRIAMBIACK SHIRE
Regular Covenant	Registered	Lawler Road, Boolite, Victoria, 3392	4/12/2006	25.99	YARRIAMBIACK SHIRE
Regular Covenant	Registered	Newell Road, Bangerang, Victoria, 3393	27/08/2008	11.67	YARRIAMBIACK SHIRE
Regular Covenant	Registered	Martins Road, Brim, Victoria, 3391	18/11/2009	9.1	YARRIAMBIACK SHIRE
Regular Covenant	Registered	Rabl's Rd, Lubeck, Victoria, 3385	23/05/2011	59.56	YARRIAMBIACK SHIRE
Regular Covenant	Registered	Rabl's Rd, Lubeck, Victoria, 3385	23/05/2011	40.62	YARRIAMBIACK SHIRE
Regular Covenant	Registered	Taylors Rd, Bangerang, Victoria, 3393	21/06/2011	30.33	YARRIAMBIACK SHIRE
Regular Covenant	Registered	Not entered, Minyip, Victoria, 3392	22/10/2014	9.24	YARRIAMBIACK SHIRE
Regular Covenant	Registered	1497 Schultz Rd, Bangerang, Victoria, 3393	18/04/2015	3.96	YARRIAMBIACK SHIRE
Regular Covenant	Registered	Clonan Rd (off Mellis Rd), Bangerang, Victoria, 3393	18/04/2015	39.99	YARRIAMBIACK SHIRE

Attachment B: Councils in Victoria offering rates incentives to landholders with a Trust for Nature covenant:

NB With 79 rural, regional and metro councils with evolving rating and biodiversity strategies, this table is a work in progress. Please advise if there are other incentives you are aware of that are not captured in this document.

Incentive	Shire	Details	Source
100% rate rebate on covenanted land	Bendigo	One-off upfront payment of \$25 per hectare of protected land and an annual 100% rate rebate thereafter.	Bushcare Incentive Program Webpage City of Greater Bendigo Revenue and Rating Plan 2021-2025
	Macedon Ranges	100% waiver of rates on successful application over the proportion of land protected by the covenant.	Macedon Ranges Revenue and Rating Plan 2021-2025
	Mount Alexander	100% annual rebate for the portion of the land that is covered by a covenant. Ratepayers are still required to pay the Fire Services Property Levy and a waste charge if applicable.	Mount Alexander Rating Strategy 2022-2027
	Queenscliffe Borough	100% rebate available for rateable land areas of 1 hectare or greater which are protected by a covenant. Smaller areas will be assessed on a case-by-case basis based on the property's unique environmental value.	Conservation Covenant Incentive Queenscliffe Revenue and Rating Plan
Other percentage rebate	Pyrenees	50% discount on the general rate for properties protected under a covenant.	Pyrenees Revenue and Rating Plan 2021-2025
	Hepburn Shire Council	50% rebate properties protected under a covenant.	Hepburn Revenue and Rating Plan 2021-2025
	City of Greater Geelong	Land protected under a Trust for Nature covenant is classified 'farmland' and accordingly receives an 18.7% rebate.	Geelong 2021-2025 Revenue and Rating Plan
	Mornington Peninsula	35% rebate for land under a Trust for Nature covenant.	Trust for Nature Rate Incentive Mornington Peninsula Revenue

Incentive	Shire	Details	Source
			and Rating Plan 2021-22
P/ha rebate, capped	Cardinia	Rebate of \$30 per hectare of land protected by a Trust for Nature covenant with a minimum of \$200 and a maximum of \$500.	Protecting your bushland – Trust for Nature
	Mansfield	Rebate of up to \$25 per hectare of land placed under a Trust for Nature covenant with a minimum rebate of \$50 and a maximum rebate of \$500.	Native Vegetation & Wildlife
	Greater Shepparton	Rebate of up to \$20 per hectare for land protected under a Trust for Nature covenant with a minimum rebate of \$100 and a maximum rebate of \$1000.	Shepparton Revenue and Rating Plan 2021-2025
	Moira	Rebate of \$20 per hectare for land protected under a Trust for Nature covenant with a minimum of \$100 and a maximum of \$1000 per landholder.	Moira Conservation Covenants Brochure
	Mitchell	Grant of \$20 per hectare for Trust for Nature covenanted land with a minimum of \$100 and a maximum of \$500.	Mitchell Conservation Covenants Grant
	Moyne	Rebate of \$20 per hectare up to a maximum of \$1,000 for land with a Trust for Nature covenant.	Trust for Nature Covenanted Properties
	Bass Coast	Incentive payment of \$5 per hectare of land protected under a Trust for Nature covenant with a minimum payment of \$100 and a maximum of \$500 per annum.	Trust for Nature Covenant Protection
	South Gippsland	Incentive payment of \$5 per hectare of covenanted land (with a minimum payment of \$100 and a maximum of \$500 p.a.)	
	Wellington	Incentive payment to be determined annually by the Council. Currently, the rebate is valued at \$15 per hectare of covenanted land	Rates Rebate on Land for Conservation Purposes Policy

Incentive	Shire	Details	Source
		(with a minimum payment of \$100), maximum equal to the annual general rate on the property.	Wellington Shire Council Revenue and Rating Plan 2021-2024
	Yarra Ranges	Provides a rebate amount of \$70 p/ha of covenanted land. Applies to a minimum of 4 hectares and a maximum of 12 hectares.	Yarra Ranges Revenue and Rating Plan 2021-2025
	Nillumbik	Rate rebate of \$50 per hectare of land protected by a Trust for Nature covenant with a minimum of \$200 and a maximum of \$500.	Trust for Nature Rebate
	Colac-Otway	Rebate of \$10 per hectare of land protected under a Trust for Nature covenant with a maximum of \$1000.	Rates and Notice Explained
	La Trobe	Rebate of \$100 per property + \$5 per hectare of land with a "Deed of Covenant for Conservation purposes".	La Trobe City Revenue and Rating Plan