ARART RURAL CITY COUNCIL

Revenue & Rating Plan

2025-2029

Ararat Rural City

Traditional Acknowledgement

Ararat Rural City Council acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the land on which we live and work, the Eastern Maar, Wotjobaluk, Jaadwa, Jadawadjali, Wergaia, Jupagulk, and Wadawurrung peoples, and recognise their connection to the land and waterways.

We pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging, and to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Table of Contents

Introduction	**4**
Background	**6**
Community Engagement	**7**
Rates and Charges	**8**
Rating Legislation	9
Rating Principles	10
Property Valuation Base	11
Rating Differentials	13
General Rate	14
Farm Rate	14
Commercial / Industrial Rate	15
Municipal Charge	16
Special Charge Schemes	16
Service Rates and Charges	17
Collection and Administration of Rates	**21**
Emergency Services and Volunteers Fund	**21**
Other Revenue Sources	**21**
User Fees and Charges	21
Statutory Fees and Charges	22
Grants	22
Contributions	22
Interest on Investments	22
Appendix 1: Application for Waiver/Deferral of Rates and Interest	**23**
Appendix 2: Application for Farm Land Classification	**26**
Appendix 3: Equalising Rating Burden	**29**

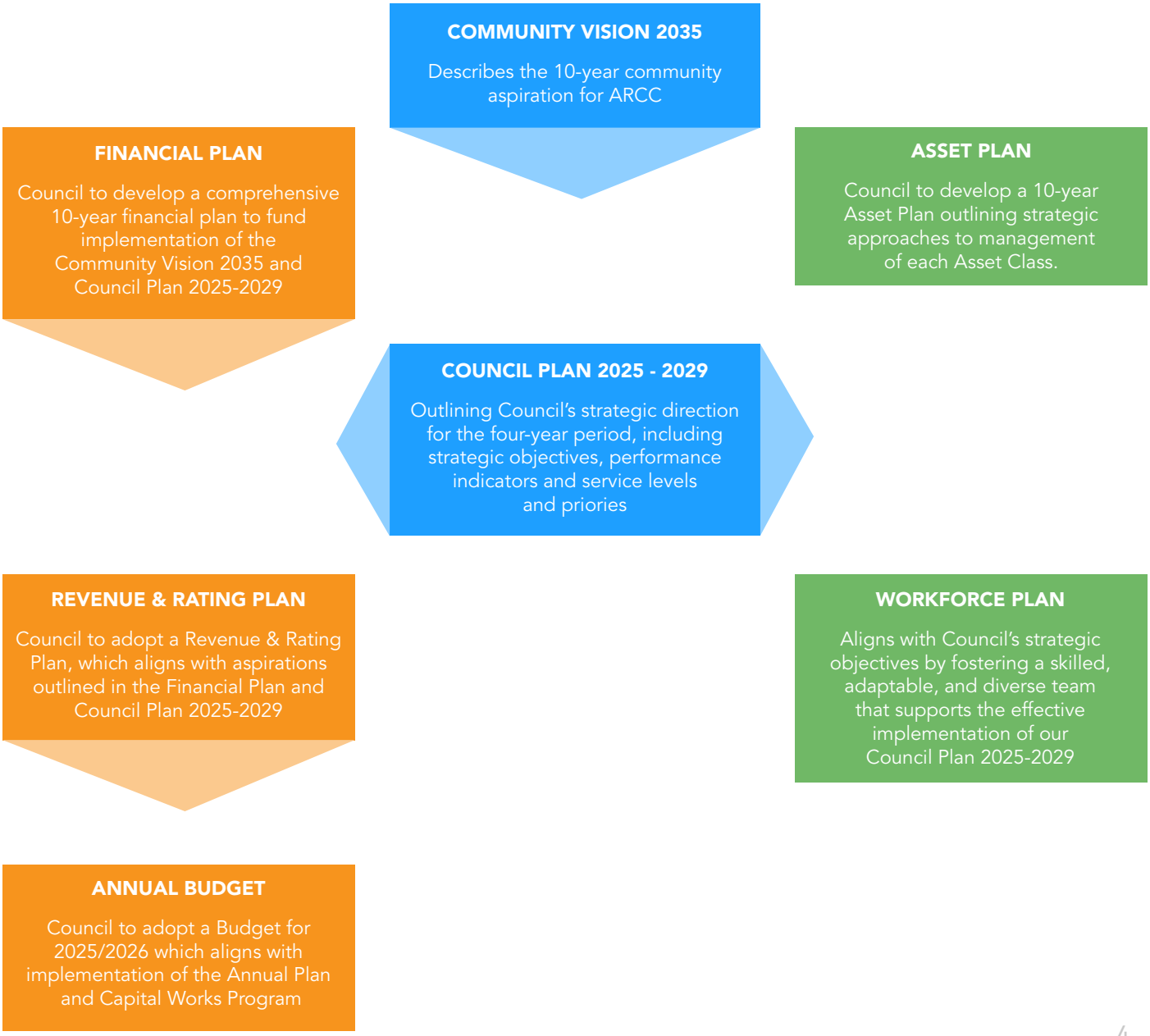
Introduction

The *Local Government Act 2020* requires Ararat Rural City Council to prepare a Revenue and Rating Plan to cover a minimum period of four years following each Council election. The Revenue and Rating Plan establishes the revenue raising framework within which the Council proposes to work.

The purpose of the Revenue and Rating Plan is to determine the most appropriate and affordable revenue and rating approach for Council which in conjunction with other income sources will adequately finance the objectives in the Council Plan 2025-2029.

This plan is an important part of Council's integrated planning framework, all of which is created to help Council achieve the outcomes of the Community Vision 2035.

Strategies outlined in this plan align with the objectives contained in the Council Plan and will feed into Council's budgeting and long-term financial planning documents, as well as other strategic planning documents under Council's strategic planning framework.



This Plan will explain how Council calculates the revenue needed to fund its activities, and how the funding burden will be apportioned between ratepayers and other users of Council facilities and services.

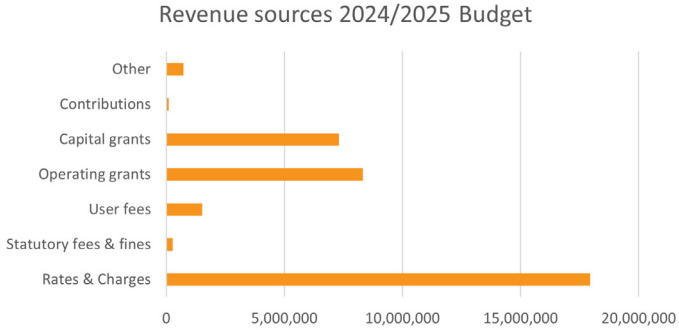
This plan will set out decisions that Council has made in relation to its available rating options under the *Local Government Act 1989* and the *Local Government Act 2020* to ensure the fair and equitable distribution of rates across property owners. It will also set out principles that are used in decision-making for other revenue sources such as fees and charges.

It is important to note that the approach to rating equity utilised in this plan is heavily influenced by the deliberations of the Rating Strategy Advisory Group (RSAG) during 2017 and 2018 and endorsed by the subsequent Citizen's Jury convened in 2018.

It must also be noted that this plan does not set revenue targets for Council. Rather, it outlines the strategic framework and decisions which inform how Council will go about calculating and collecting its revenue.

Background

Council provides several services to the community that are funded through a range of different mechanisms. The revenue to maintain Ararat Rural City Council's activity is funded from a range of different sources. The graph below indicates sources of revenue from the 2024/2025 Budget.



Council's revenue sources identified in the 2024-2025 Budget were:

Source	Value ($)
Rates and charges	17,950,000
Operating grants	8,323,000
Capital grants	7,304,000
Statutory fees and fines	272,000
User fees	1,515,000
Contributions	100,000
Other	722,000
TOTAL	**36,186,000**

As indicated above, Council relies heavily on rates as a revenue source, representing 49.6% of total revenue in the 2024/2025 Budget. It must be understood that a small rural council has few other significant revenue sources open to it beyond rates and government grants. Increasing the levels of statutory fines and fees or user fees only continues to levy revenue from the municipal community, albeit through a different mechanism to rates and charges.

Council's Community Plan 2025-2029 identifies maintenance of Council service provision, development of community assets and enabling infrastructure, circular economy outcomes and economic growth as key outcomes.

Council have a strong commitment to driving organisational efficiencies and returning ongoing savings as a dividend to the community. In the last seven financial years this has yielded a net rate increase of 0% compared to an increase of 16.25% available under the Fair Go Rates System (FGRS).

Council proposes a 1.5% increase in the 2025/2026 budget compared to an increase of 3% available under FGRS, as seen in the table below.

Year	ARCC Rate increase	FGRS increase
2018/2019	0.00%	2.25%
2019/2020	2.50%	2.50%
2020/2021	-1.00%	2.00%
2021/2022	-1.50%	1.50%
2022/2023	0.00%	1.75%
2023/2024	0.00%	3.50%
2024/2025	0.00%	2.75%
2025/2026	1.50%	3.00%
TOTAL	**1.50%**	**19.25%**

Community Engagement

The Revenue and Rating Plan outlines Ararat Rural City Council's decision-making process on how revenues are calculated and collected. The following public consultation processes will be followed for the Revenue and Rating Plan 2025-2029:

- Draft Revenue and Rating Plan developed by CEO, Councillors and Council officers.
- Draft Revenue and Rating Plan posted to engage.ararat.vic.gov.au on 11 April 2025 for community engagement, suggested inclusions and public comment. Online engagement and submission process ends on Friday 9 May 2025.
- Face-to-face community engagement sessions will be held in Ararat, Buangor, Elmhurst, Tatyoon, Lake Bolac, Moyston, Pomonal, Tatyoon and Willaura to seek feedback on the Plan in the week commencing 28 April 2025.
- Final Revenue and Rating Plan adopted by Council on Tuesday 24 June 2025.

It is important to acknowledge that the underpinning philosophy of Council's Revenue and Rating Plan rests in the outcomes of extensive deliberative engagement processes undertaken through the RSAG and the Citizen's Jury in 2017 and 2018. These processes established a very clear model of rating fairness based on consistent sharing of the rate burden among the four rating sectors established through Council's differential rating model. These four rating sectors are General, Industrial, Commercial and Farm. The model for distribution of the rating burden is colloquially named the "pie model", and will be discussed in more detail later in this document.

Rates and Charges

Rates are essentially property taxes that allow Ararat Rural City Council to raise revenue to fund delivery of a range of services for the municipal community. Importantly, it is a taxation system that includes flexibility for councils to utilise different tools in its rating structure to accommodate issues of equity and to ensure fairness in rating for all ratepayers. Councils can use these tools in different ways to yield results seen as fair by their communities.

Council utilises a rating structure comprised of three key elements. These are:

- ***General Rates*** – Based on property values (using the Capital Improved Valuation methodology), which are indicative of capacity to pay and form the central basis of rating under the *Local Government Act 1989*. Within the general rating model are four differentiated rating sectors: General, Industrial, Commercial and Farm.

- ***Service Charges*** – A 'user pays' a component of Council services to reflect benefits provided by Council to ratepayers who benefit from a service. The only Service Charge applied by Council is the Waste Charge, applied to domestic waste management.

- ***Municipal Charge*** – Council applies a Municipal Charge as a 'fixed rate' portion per property or single farm enterprise to cover some of the fixed administrative costs of Council.

GENERAL RATES

The formula for calculating General Rates, excluding any additional charges, arrears or additional supplementary rates is:

Valuation (Capital Improved Value) x Rate in the Dollar (Differential Rate Type)

The rate in the dollar for each rating differential category is included in Council's annual Budget and represents Council's key mechanism for building a rating model which shares rating burden predictably and fairly between the four rating sectors.

Rates and charges are an important source of revenue, accounting for 49.6% of the budgeted operating revenue for 2024/25. The collection of rates is a considerable factor in funding Council services. Planning for future rate increases is therefore an essential component of the long-term financial planning process and plays a significant role in funding both additional service delivery and the increasing costs related to providing Council services.

Council makes a further distinction when administering General Rates by applying a rating differential based on the purpose for which the property is used; that is, whether the property is used for general, commercial, industrial, or farming purposes. This distinction is based on the concept that different property categories should pay a fair and equitable contribution, taking into account the benefits those properties derive from the local community.

Council have made a clear decision, supported by the outcomes of the Rating Strategy Advisory Group (RSAG) and Citizen's Jury, and by the community more generally, that rating fairness is measured by a consistent sharing of "rates burden" between rating sectors from year to year. It has become known as the "pie model" through the RSAG process. The model mandates that each year, each rating sector should contribute a very similar amount of the rating "pie". This reflects the intent of Section 101(1)(c) of the *Local Government Act 2020* which requires that councils "seek to provide stability and predictability in the financial impact on the municipal community".

Within Ararat Rural City Council, the model's outcome describes a rating system which should support the following rating burden among the four sectors:

Rating Sectors	Rates "burden"
General	51.60%
Commercial	5.30%
Industrial	1.70%
Farm Land	41.40%
TOTAL	100.00%

These figures are based on the rates burden data from the 2024/2025 Budget, adjusted annually to uphold consistent equalisation of the rates burden.

To maintain consistency in the percentage of rating burden across the four rating sectors, it is critical to understand that the differential is not a "discount" or a fixed element which underpins rating fairness. Rather, it is an economic lever to be used to ensure that the current rates burden is maintained between rating sectors.

This equilibrium in burden between rating sectors is often disturbed through asymmetric changes in property valuations between rating sectors. If valuations in one sector increase or decrease disproportionately to the overall movement in valuations, the proportion of rates paid by one sector becomes skewed, requiring adjustment through alteration of one or more differentials.

Council will continue to attempt to minimise the impact of rating burden on the entire municipal community through seeking ongoing organisational efficiencies during the life of the Revenue and Rating Plan 2025-2029. These savings will be returned as a dividend to community.

There is a general "understanding" in the local government sector that forgoing the opportunity to increase rates to the maximum allowed under the FGRS results in significant losses in future revenue which undermines ongoing organisational sustainability, particularly in small rural councils. Council challenges this thinking on the basis that delivering ongoing and sustainable efficiencies has the same impact on long-term sustainability as increasing the rate base. There may be rate increases in the period 2025-2029 to meet increased costs, but the first option to be exercised will always be efficiency dividends.

RATING LEGISLATION

The legislative framework set out in the *Local Government Act 1989* determines Ararat Rural City Council's ability to develop a rating system. The framework provides significant flexibility for Council to tailor a system that suits its needs.

Section 155 of the *Local Government Act 1989* provides that a council may declare the following rates and charges on rateable land:

- General Rates under Section 158
- Municipal Charges under Section 159
- Service Rates and Charges under Section 162
- Special Rates and Charges under Section 163

The recommended strategy in relation to Municipal Charges, Service Rates and Charges, and Special Rates and Charges, is discussed later in this document.

In raising council rates, Council is required to primarily use the valuation of the rateable property to levy rates. Section 157 (1) of the *Local Government Act 1989* provides Council with three choices in terms of which valuation base to utilise: Site Value (SV), Capital Improved Value (CIV) and Net Annual Value (NAV).

The advantages and disadvantages of the respective valuation bases are discussed later in this document. Whilst this document outlines Council's strategy regarding rates revenue, rates data is contained in Council's Annual Budget as required by the *Local Government Act 2020*.

Section 94(2) of the *Local Government Act 2020* states that Council must adopt a budget by 30 June each year (or at another time fixed by the Minister) to include:

a) the total amount that the Council intends to raise by rates and charges.

b) a statement as to whether the rates will be raised by the application of a uniform rate or a differential rate.

c) a description of any fixed component of the rates, if applicable.

d) if the Council proposes to declare a uniform rate, the matters specified in section 160 of the *Local Government Act 1989*.

e) if the Council proposes to declare a differential rate for any land, the matters specified in section 161(2) of the *Local Government Act 1989*.

Section 94(3) of the *Local Government Act 2020* also states that Council must ensure that, if applicable, the Budget also contains a statement –

a) that the Council intends to apply for a special Order to increase the Council's average rate cap for the financial year or any other financial year; or
b) that the Council has made an application to the ESC for a special Order and is waiting for the outcome of the application; or
c) that a special Order has been made in respect of the Council and specifying the average rate cap that applies for the financial year or any other financial year.

This plan outlines the principles and strategic framework that Council will utilise in calculating and distributing the rating burden to property owners, however, the quantum of rate revenue and rating differential amounts will be determined in the annual Council Budget.

RATING PRINCIPLES

When developing differential rates within a Revenue and Rating Plan, Ararat Rural City Council gives consideration to the following good practice taxation principles:

- Wealth Tax
- Equity
- Efficiency
- Simplicity
- Benefit
- Capacity to Pay
- Diversity

Wealth Tax

The "wealth tax" principle implies that the rates paid are dependent upon the value of a ratepayer's real property and have no correlation to the individual ratepayer's consumption of services or the perceived benefits derived by individual ratepayers from the expenditures funded from rates.

Equity

Horizontal equity – posits that ratepayers in similar situations should pay similar amounts of rates, primarily ensured through accurate property valuations undertaken in a consistent manner, their classification into homogeneous property classes and the right of appeal against valuation.
Vertical equity – posits that those who are better off should pay greater rates than those worse off. The rationale applies for the use of progressive and proportional income taxation and implies a "relativity" dimension to the fairness of the tax burden.

Efficiency

Economic efficiency is measured by the extent to which rates are affected by residents' production and consumption decisions.

Simplicity

Simplicity denotes how easily a rates system can be understood by ratepayers alongside the practicality and ease of its administration.

Benefit

Benefit refers to the extent to which there is a nexus between consumption/benefit and the rate burden.

Capacity to Pay

Capacity refers to the capacity of ratepayers or groups of ratepayers to pay rates.

Diversity

Diversity denotes the capacity of ratepayers within a group to pay rates.

The rating challenge for Council is to determine the appropriate balancing of these competing considerations.

Rates and Charges Revenue Principles:

Property rates will:

- be reviewed annually.
- not change dramatically from one year to next; and
- be sufficient to fund current expenditure commitments and deliverables outlined in the Council Plan, Financial Plan and Asset Plan.

Differential rating will be applied as equitably as is practical and will comply with the *Ministerial Guidelines for Differential Rating 2013*.

PROPERTY VALUATION BASE

Under the *Local Government Act 1989*, Ararat Rural City Council has three options as to the valuation base it elects to use. They are:

- **Capital Improved Value (CIV)** – Value of land and improvements upon the land.
- **Site Value (SV**) – Value of land only.
- **Net Annual Value (NAV)** – Rental valuation based on CIV.

For residential and farm properties, NAV is calculated at 5 per cent of the Capital Improved Value. For commercial and industrial properties, NAV is calculated as the greater of the estimated annual rental value or 5 per cent of the CIV.

Capital Improved Value (CIV)

Capital Improved Value is the valuation base most commonly used by local government, and Victorian councils. Based on the value of both land and all improvements on the land, it is generally easily understood by ratepayers as it equates to the market value of the property.

Section 161 of the *Local Government Act 1989* provides that a council may raise any General Rates by the application of a differential rate if –

a) it uses the capital improved value system of valuing land; and

b) it considers that a differential rate will contribute to the equitable and efficient carrying out of its functions.

Where a council does not utilise CIV, it may only apply limited differential rates in relation to farm land, urban farm land or residential use land.

Advantages of using Capital Improved Value (CIV)

- CIV includes all property improvements and is therefore often supported on the basis that it more closely reflects "capacity to pay". The CIV rating method considers the full development value of the property, and more closely meets the equity criteria than Site Value and NAV.

- The increased frequency of valuations (previously two-year intervals, now annual intervals) has resulted in more predictable market values, reducing the level of objections resulting from valuations.

- The concept of a property's market value is more easily understood under the CIV rather than NAV or SV.

- Most councils in Victoria have now adopted CIV making it simpler to compare relative movements in rates and valuations across councils.

- The use of CIV allows Council to apply differential rates which greatly improves Council's ability to equitably distribute the rating burden based on ability to afford Council rates. CIV allows Council to apply higher rating differentials to the commercial and industrial sectors, which offset residential rates.

Disadvantages of using CIV

- The main disadvantage of CIV is that rates are based on the total property value which may not necessarily reflect the income level of the property owner as with pensioners and low-income earners.

Site value (SV)

As the Site Value methodology is based solely on the valuation of land with only very limited ability to apply the differential rates, the implementation of Site Value within Ararat Rural City Council context would cause a shift in rate burden from the industrial/commercial sectors onto the residential sector, hindering Council's objective of a fair and equitable rating system.

SV would cause further rating movements away from modern townhouse style developments on relatively small land parcels to older established homes on quarter acre residential blocks. An equity argument would not be well served by the implementation of SV within Ararat Rural City Council.

Advantages of Site Value

- There is a perception that under SV, a uniform rate would promote development of land, particularly commercial and industrial developments. However, there is little evidence to support this case.

- SV provides scope for possible concessions for urban farmland and residential use land.

Disadvantages of using Site Value

- SV would prompt a significant shift of the rating burden from the industrial/commercial sector onto the residential sector. In many cases, the percentage increases would fall in the 'extreme' range.

- SV is a major burden on property owners who hold large areas of land. Some of these owners may have much smaller/older dwellings compared to those who own smaller land areas but well developed dwellings, though the former pay more rates. An A typical example is the owners of flats, units, or townhouses paying low rates compared to owners of traditional housing styles.

- The use of SV can place pressure on a council to give concessions to categories of landowners on whom the rating burden is seen to fall disproportionately (e.g., farming and residential use properties). Large landowners, such as farmers, are disadvantaged under the SV methodology.

- SV will reduce Council's rating flexibility and options to deal with any rating inequities due to the removal of the ability to levy differential rates.

- The community may have greater difficulty in understanding the SV valuation on their rate notices, as indicated by many inquiries from ratepayers on this issue handled by Council's customer service and property revenue staff each year.

Net Annual Value (NAV)

In concept, NAV represents the annual rental value of a property. However, in practice, NAV is loosely linked to Capital Improved Value for Residential and Farm properties. Valuers derive the NAV directly as 5 per cent of CIV.

In contrast to the treatment of Residential and Farm properties, the NAV for Commercial and Industrial properties is assessed against actual market rental. This differing treatment of commercial versus residential and farm properties has led to some suggestions that all properties should be valued on a rental basis.

Overall, the use of NAV is not largely supported. For Residential and Farm ratepayers, actual rental values pose problems, the artificial rental estimate used may not represent actual market value, and means the base is the same as CIV but is harder to understand.

Recommended valuation base

In choosing a valuation base, councils must decide whether they wish to adopt a differential rating system (different rates in the dollar for different property categories) or a uniform rating system (same rate in the dollar). If a council were to choose the former, under the *Local Government Act 1989* it must adopt either of the CIV or NAV methods of rating.

Ararat Rural City Council applies Capital Improved Value (CIV) to all properties within the municipality to take into account the fully developed value of the property. This basis of valuation considers the total market value of the land plus buildings and other improvements.

Under the CIV method, differential rating allows Council to shift part of the rate burden from some groups of ratepayers to others, through different "rates in the dollar" for each class of property.

Section 161(1) of the *Local Government Act 1989* outlines the requirements relating to differential rates, which include:

a) A council may raise any General Rates by the application of a differential rate, if Council considers that the differential rate will contribute to the equitable and efficient carrying out of its functions.

b) If a council declares a differential rate for any land, the council must specify the objectives of the differential rate, which must be consistent with the equitable and efficient carrying out of the council's functions and must include the following:

   (i) A definition of the types or classes of land which are subject to the rate and a statement of the reasons for the use and level of that rate.

   (ii) An identification of the type or classes of land which are subject to the rate in respect of the uses, geographic location (other than location based on whether the land is within a specific ward in the council's district).

   (iii) Specify the characteristics of the land, which are the criteria for declaring the differential rate.

Once the council has declared a differential rate for any land, the council must:

a) Specify the objectives of the differential rates;
b) Specify the characteristics of the land which are the criteria for declaring the differential rate.

The purpose is to ensure that a council has a sound basis on which to develop the various charging features when determining its revenue strategies and to ensure that these are consistent with the provisions of the *Local Government Act 1989.*

The general objectives of each of the differential rates are to ensure that all rateable land makes an equitable financial contribution to the cost of carrying out the functions of Council. There is no limit on the number or types of differential rates that can be levied, but the highest differential rate can be no more than four times the lowest differential rate.

Property Valuations

The *Valuation of Land Act 1960* is the principal legislation in determining property valuations. Under the V*aluation of Land Act 1960*, the Victorian Valuer-General conducts property valuations on an annual basis. Ararat Rural City Council applies a Capital Improved Value (CIV) to all properties within the municipality to take into account the full development value of the property. This basis of valuation considers the total market value of the land including buildings and other improvements.

The value of land is always derived by the principle of valuing land for its highest and best use at the relevant time of valuation.

Council must be mindful of the impacts of revaluations on the various property types in implementing the differential rating strategy outlined in the previous section to ensure that rises and falls in Council Rates remain affordable and that rating 'shocks' are mitigated to some degree.

Supplementary Valuations

Supplementary valuations are carried out for a variety of reasons including rezoning, subdivisions, amalgamations, renovations, new constructions, extensions, occupancy changes and corrections. The Valuer-General Victoria is tasked with undertaking supplementary valuations and advises Council monthly of valuation and Australian Valuation Property Classification Code (AVPCC) changes.

Supplementary valuations bring the value of the affected property into line with the general valuation of other properties within the municipality. Objections to supplementary valuations can be lodged in accordance with Part 3 of the *Valuation of Land Act 1960*. Any objections must be lodged with Council within two months of the issue of the supplementary rate notice.

Objections to property valuations

Part 3 of the *Valuation of Land Act 1960* provides that a property owner may lodge an objection against the valuation of a property or the Australian Valuation Property Classification Code (AVPCC) within two months of the issue of the original or amended (supplementary) Rates and Valuation Charges Notice (Rates Notice), or within four months if the notice was not originally issued to the occupier of the land.

A property owner must lodge their objection to the valuation or the AVPCC in writing to Ararat Rural City Council, or via the rating valuation objections portal.

Property owners also have the ability to object to the site valuations on receipt of their Land Tax Assessment. Property owners can appeal their land valuation within two months of receipt of their Council Rate Notice (via Council) or within two months of receipt of their Land Tax Assessment (via the State Revenue Office).

RATING DIFFERENTIALS

Ararat Rural City Council believes each differential rate will contribute to the equitable and efficient carrying out of Council Functions. The application of the "pie model" in terms of a generally accepted community measure of rating equity has been discussed previously as a key driver of the rating sectors developed under Council's Revenue and Rating plan 2025-2029.

Details of the objectives of each differential rate, the classes of land which are subject to each differential rate and the uses of each differential rate, are set out below.

General Rate

Definition: General land is any rateable land which does not have the characteristics of Farm Rate land and Commercial/Industrial Rate land.

Objectives: The objectives are to ensure that Council has adequate funding to undertake its strategic, statutory, service provision and community services obligations and to ensure that the differential rate in the dollar declared for defined General Rate land properties is fair and equitable, having regard to the cost and the level of benefits derived from provision of Council services.

Characteristics: The characteristics of the planning scheme zoning are applicable to the determination of vacant land which will be subject to the rate of residential land. The vacant land affected by this rate is that which is zoned Residential under the Ararat Rural City Council Planning Scheme. The classification of the land will be determined by the occupation of that land for its best use and have reference to the planning scheme zoning.

Types and Classes: Rateable land having the relevant characteristics described below:

a) used primarily for residential purposes; or
b) any land that is not defined as Farm Land or Commercial/Industrial Land.

Use of Rate: The General Differential Rate is the default rate in instances where land does not meet the characteristics of any other differential rate. It will be used to fund items of expenditure described in the Budget adopted by Council. The level of the differential rate is the level which Council considers necessary to achieve the objectives specified above.

Level of Rate: 100% of General Rate.

Use of Land: Any use permitted under the Ararat Rural City Council Planning Scheme.

Geographic Location: Wherever located within the municipal district.

Planning Scheme Zoning: The zoning applicable to each rateable land within this category, as determined by consulting maps referenced in the relevant Ararat Rural City Council Planning Scheme.

Types of Buildings: All buildings which are already constructed on the land, or which are constructed prior to the end of the financial year.

Farm Rate

Definition: Farm Land means any rateable land within Council's municipal district defined as Farm Land under Section 2 of the Valuation of Land Act 1960, on the condition that the owner or occupier of the land is a person carrying on the activities defined by the *Valuation of Land Act 1960,* and who is regarded as a Primary Producer by the Australian Taxation Office.

Section 2(1) of the *Valuation of Land Act 1960* states:

a) Farm Land means any rateable land that is 2 or more hectares in area.
b) Used primarily for primary producing purposes from its activities on the land; 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; and
   That is used by a business –
   - That has a significant and substantial commercial purpose of character
   - That seeks to make a profit on a continuous or repetitive basis from its activities on the land; and
   - 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 operating.

Objectives: The objectives are to ensure that Council has adequate funding to undertake its strategic, statutory, service provision and community services obligations and to ensure that the differential rate in the dollar declared for defined Farm Rate land properties is fair and equitable, having regard to the cost and the level of benefits derived from provision of Council services with considerations to maintain agriculture as a major industry in the municipal district, to facilitate the longevity of the farm sector, and to achieve a balance between providing for municipal growth and retaining the important agricultural economic base.

Characteristics: The characteristics of the planning scheme zoning are applicable to the determination of Farm Land which will be subject to the rate of Farm Land. The classification of the land will be determined by the occupation of that land for its best use and have reference to the planning scheme zoning.

Types and Classes: Farm Land having the relevant characteristics described below:

a) used primarily for primary production purposes by an owner or occupier who is regarded as a Primary Producer by the Australian Taxation Office; or

b) any land that is not defined as General Land or Commercial/Industrial Land.

Use of Rate: The differential rate will be used to fund items of expenditure described in the Budget adopted by Council. The level of the differential rate is the level which the Council considers is necessary to achieve the objectives specified above.

Level of Rate: The level of the rate will be determined annually by Council and the community in preparation and adoption of Council's Budget. The Farm differential is an economic lever required to maintain consistency in rating burden between rating sectors. It is proposed to be 39% of the General Rate in 2025/26.

Use of Land: Any use permitted under the Ararat Rural City Council Planning Scheme.

Geographic Location: Wherever located within the municipal district.

Planning Scheme Zoning: The zoning applicable to each ratable land within this category, as determined by consulting maps referred to in the relevant Ararat Rural City Council Planning Scheme.

Types of Buildings: All buildings which are already constructed on the land, or which are constructed prior to the end of the financial year.

Ratepayers who wish to claim the Farm Rate are required to complete the Application for Farm Land Classification provided in Appendix 2.

Commercial/Industrial Rate

Although acknowledged as two separate rating sectors, the rationale for striking a Commercial/Industrial differential rate is the same and will be described as a single class in the Revenue and Rating Plan 2025-2029.

Definition: Commercial/Industrial Land is any land which is:

a) Used primarily for carrying out the manufacture or production of, or trade in goods or services (including tourist facilities and in the case of a business providing accommodation for tourists, is prescribed accommodation under the *Public Health and Wellbeing Act (Vic) 2008*; or

b) Unoccupied building erected which is zoned Commercial or Industrial under the Ararat Rural City Council Planning Scheme; or

c) Unoccupied land which is zoned Commercial or Industrial under the Ararat Rural City Council Planning Scheme.

Objectives: The objectives are to ensure that Council has adequate funding to undertake its strategic, statutory, service provision and community services obligations and to ensure that the differential rate in the dollar declared for defined Commercial/Industrial Rate land properties is fair and equitable, having regard to the cost and the level of benefits derived from provision of Council services.

The commercial businesses of Council benefit from significant ongoing investment by Council in services and infrastructure. Council also notes the tax deductibility of Council rates for commercial properties which is not available to the residential sector, and the income generating capability of commercial based properties.

The Commercial differential rate is applied to promote the economic development objectives for Ararat Rural City Council as outlined in the Council Plan. These objectives include a significant ongoing investment to create a vibrant economy and include the maintenance and improvement of tourism infrastructure, construction and maintenance of public infrastructure, development and provision of health and community services, and the general provision of support services and promotion of business in the municipality.

Characteristics: The characteristics of the planning scheme zoning are applicable to the determination of vacant land which will be subject to the rate applicable to Commercial/Industrial Land. The classification of the land will be determined by the occupation of that land for its best use and have reference to the planning scheme zoning.

Types and Classes: Commercial/Industrial having the relevant characteristics described below:

a) used primarily for commercial purposes; or
b) any land that is not defined as General Land or Farm Land.

Use of Rate: The differential rate will be used to fund items of expenditure described in the Budget adopted by Council. The level of the differential rate is the level which Council considers necessary to achieve the objectives specified above.

Level of Rate: The level of the rate will be determined annually by Council and the community in preparation and adoption of Council's Budget. The differential rate is an economic lever required to maintain consistency in rating burden between rating sectors. It is proposed to be 135% of the General Rate in 2025/26. It is less likely that the Commercial/Industrial differential will need to be altered significantly from Budget to Budget as there are much less volatile property markets in these two rating sectors.

Use of Land: Any use permitted under the Ararat Rural City Council Planning Scheme.

Geographic Location: Wherever located within the municipal district.

Planning Scheme Zoning: The zoning applicable to each rateable land within this category, as determined by consulting maps referred to in the relevant Ararat Rural City Council Planning Scheme.

Types of Buildings: All buildings which are already constructed on the land, or which are constructed prior to the end of the financial year.

MUNICIPAL CHARGE

Another principal rating option available to Council is the application of a Municipal Charge. Under Section 159 of the *Local Government Act 1989*, Council may declare a Municipal Charge to cover some of the administrative costs of Council. The legislation is not definitive on what comprises administrative costs and does not require Council to specify what is covered by the charge. The application of a Municipal Charge represents a choice to raise a portion of the rates by a flat fee for all properties and farm enterprises, rather than sole use of the CIV valuation method.

Under the *Local Government Act 1989*, a council's total revenue from a Municipal Charge in a financial year must not exceed 20 per cent of Council's total revenue from the Municipal Charge and the revenue from General Rates (total rates).

The Municipal Charge is based on the recovery of a fixed cost of providing administrative services irrespective of valuation. The same contribution amount per assessment to cover a portion of Council's administrative costs can be seen as an equitable method of recovering these costs.

SPECIAL CHARGE SCHEMES

The *Local Government Act 1989* recognises that councils need help to provide improved infrastructure for their local communities. Legislation allows councils to pass on the cost of capital infrastructure to the owner of a property that generally receives a unique benefit from the construction works. The technical explanation of a Special Charge comes from legislation (under the *Local Government Act 1989*) which allows councils to recover the cost of works from property owners who will gain special benefit from that work.

The purposes for which Special Rates and Special Charges may be used include road construction, kerb and channelling, footpath provision, drainage, and other capital improvement projects.

The Special Rate or Special Charges may be declared based on any criteria specified by the council in the rate (Section 163 (2)). In accordance with Section 163 (3), council must specify:

a) the wards, groups, uses or areas for which the special rate or charge is declared; and
b) the land in relation to which the Special Rate or Special Charge is declared;
c) the way the Special Rate or Special Charge will be assessed and levied; and
d) details of the period for which the Special Rate or Special Charge remains in force.

The Special Rates and Charges provisions are flexible and can be used to achieve a wide range of community objectives. The fundamental principle of Special Rates and Charges is proof "special benefit" applies to those being levied. For example, these charges could be used to fund the construction of footpaths for specific properties.

SERVICE RATES AND CHARGES

Section 162 of the *Local Government Act 1989* provides Ararat Rural City Council with the opportunity to raise service rates and charges for any of the following services:

- The provision of a water supply.
- The collection and disposal of refuse.
- The provision of sewage services.
- Any other prescribed service.

Council currently applies a service charge for the collection and disposal of garbage, recycling, glass, and organics for residences located on both urban and rural properties. Council retains the objective of setting the service charge for waste at a level that fully recovers the cost of the waste services, including providing for future landfill rehabilitation costs. Waste charges are not capped under the Fair Go Rates System, however, Council will continue to minimise future increases in waste and recycling charges based on efficiencies, services review, and effective implementation of Circular Economy Policy.

Collection and Administration of Rates

Ararat Rural City Council is committed to providing the most flexible, fair, and equitable approach to collection of rates and charges that is reasonably possible. The purpose of this section is to outline the rate payment options, processes, and the support provided to ratepayers facing financial hardship. A recent Ombudsman's inquiry into ratepayers facing financial hardship highlighted ARCC as one of the more responsive councils in managing these issues.

Payment options

In accordance with section 167(1) of the *Local Government Act 1989* ratepayers must be allowed to pay rates and charges by way of four instalments. Payments are due on the prescribed dates below:

- 1st Instalment: 30 September
- 2nd Instalment: 30 November
- 3rd Instalment: 28 February
- 4th Instalment: 31 May

Council also allows payment in a lump sum on 15 February each year.

Should any person pay an amount equivalent to their first instalment on or before 20 October each year, Council will consider the payment as an instalment payment. Should any person pay an amount equivalent to their first instalment after 20 October each year, Council will consider the payment as an amount towards the lump sum option and the rates will then be due by 15 February.

Council offers a range of payment options including:

- In person at Council offices via cheque, money order, EFTPOS, credit/debit card or cash,
- Direct debit – Ratepayers have the option to pay rates and charges by monthly, fortnightly or weekly payments, free of interest. Ratepayers can also pay by lump sum or by instalments,
- BPAY,
- Australia Post – over the counter, over the phone via credit card and on the internet,
- Mail – cheque and money order only,
- Online – on Councils website (ararat.vic.gov.au), or
- Online – directly from an eNotices email or by using the QR Code on rate notices.

Interest on arrears and overdue rates

Interest is charged on all overdue rates in accordance with Section 172 of the *Local Government Act 1989*. The maximum interest rate applied is determined by the Minister and published by notice in the Government Gazette.

Council may exempt any person from paying the whole or part of any interest amount generally or specifically under Section 172 (3).

To assist ratepayers further in the payment of rates and charges, Council will allow a grace period of 30 days before interest is applied to late installments and late lump sum payments. This will allow reminder notices to be sent free of interest which will assist in the administration of payments.

Council officers have the authority to write off property balances of $10 or less if the balance is related to interest now being calculated daily.

Pensioner rebates

Holders of a Centrelink or Veterans' Affairs Pension Concession card or a Veterans' Affairs Gold card which stipulates TPI or War Widow may claim a rebate on their sole or principal place of residence. Upon initial application, ongoing eligibility is maintained, unless rejected by Centrelink or the Department of Veterans' Affairs during the annual verification procedure. Upon confirmation of an eligible pensioner concession status, the pensioner rebate is deducted from the rate account before payment is required by the ratepayer.

New pensioner applicants may, after being granted a Pensioner Concession Card (PCC), apply for the rebate at any time throughout the rating year. Retrospective claims up to a maximum of one previous financial year can be approved by Council on verification of eligibility criteria. For periods prior to this, claims may be approved by the relevant government department.

Trust for Nature Rebate

A conservation covenant is a voluntary agreement between Trust for Nature and a property owner. It is placed on the title of the land to ensure that the natural bushland is permanently protected.

In 2025/2026, in accordance with section 169(1) (c) of the *Local Government Act 1989*, Council has proposed to offer a rate rebate to property owners who register a Trust for Nature conservation covenant on their property. The rebate acknowledges the long-term commitment of these property owners to conserving the biodiversity of their land. Landowners will receive a rebate of up to $20 per hectare of land placed under covenant, with a maximum payment of $500.

Rates Assistance, Waivers and Deferrals

Council acknowledges that ratepayers may experience financial hardship for a wide range of issues and that meeting rate obligations constitutes just one element of several difficulties that a ratepayer may face. The simplest description of hardship is "a customer or ratepayer who wants to pay but cannot".

Any ratepayer who is experiencing financial difficulty is advised that Council is sympathetic to their financial situation and that flexible repayment plans can be developed based on their ability to pay.

Pursuant to the provisions of Section 171A of the *Local Government Act 1989*, a person who is suffering financial hardship or would suffer financial hardship if that person had to pay the full rate may apply to Council for the waiver of the whole or part of the rates or interest charged for late payment.

Council may require the person to give further details or to verify particulars. An application form to facilitate consideration of a request for deferral or waiver of rates is required to be completed [Appendix 1].

Applications for the waiver of rates will only be considered based on genuine hardship, supported by another government agency, welfare group or financial counsellor. The intent of providing a waiver will be to allow the ratepayer to overcome immediate financial difficulties with a supported financial plan to ensure that future commitments to rates and other household payments can be accommodated.

Waiver of rates will only apply to rates on the ratepayer's primary residence. This excludes commercial properties, industrial properties, residential investment properties - and in most cases - farm properties. Applications for waiver will be considered as a confidential report to Council.

Applications for the deferral of rates will be considered based on genuine hardship. The deferred payment option means rates, charges and interest will still be charged, but the ratepayer does not have to pay the amount until Council considers the payment will not cause the ratepayer financial hardship, or the ratepayer no longer owns or occupies the land. Deferral of rates will apply to all classes of property.

Debt recovery

Council makes every effort to contact ratepayers at their correct address, but it is the ratepayers' responsibility to properly advise Council of their contact details. The *Local Government Act 2020* Section 122 requires the purchaser of property, or their agents (e.g., solicitors and/or conveyancers), to notify Council by way of notice of acquisition of an interest in land.

If an account becomes overdue, Council will issue an overdue reminder notice. If the account remains unpaid, and a payment plan has not been established, Council may take legal action without further notice to recover the overdue amount. All fees and court costs incurred will be recoverable from the ratepayer.

If an amount payable by way of rates in respect to land has been in arrears for three years or more, Council may take action to sell the property in accordance with the *Local Government Act 1989* Section 181.

Payment Plans

Any ratepayer who is experiencing financial difficulty is advised that Council is sympathetic to their financial situation and that flexible payment plans can be developed based on their ability to pay. Ratepayers wishing to make a payment plan are required to make application.

Council will consider all reasonable payment plan applications. However, efforts should be made to negotiate full payment of overdue debts by the end of the current financial year or before the issuance of the next annual rates and valuation notices.

A payment plan for overdue rates older than one financial year should aim to settle all outstanding balances, including current and arrears, within a maximum period of four (4) years. Council Officers can provide assistance in calculating appropriate payment amounts to achieve this objective.

After agreeing to a suitable payment plan, Council will send an acceptance letter to the applicant outlining the terms of the arrangement. A waiver of interest will then apply to the account.

If rates remain outstanding or if there is a default in an agreed payment plan, interest will be reinstated, and the account may be referred to Council's debt collection agency for further action.

Additional information is available in Council's Rate Collection Policy.

Emergency Services and Volunteers Fund

In 2012 the Victorian State Government passed legislation requiring the Fire Services Property Levy (FSPL) to be collected from ratepayers. This levy was previously collected through building and property insurance premiums. From 1 July 2025, the FSPL will be replaced by the Emergency Services and Volunteers Fund (ESVF). Like the FSPL, the ESVF will be calculated based on a fixed charge that varies by property type, and a variable charge based on property value.

The ESVF will fund up to 95% of the annual budgets for VICSES, Triple Zero Victoria, Emergency Management Victoria and Forest Fire Management Victoria, and all levies collected by Council will be passed through to the State Government.

This levy is not included in the rate cap and increases in the levy are at the discretion of the State Government. However, at the time of publication the changes have not yet been adopted as legislation.

Other Revenue Sources

User Fees and Charges

User fees and charges are those that Ararat Rural City Council will charge for the delivery of services and the use of community infrastructure. Examples of Council's user fees and charges include:

- Waste management fees
- Fitness Centre, gym, and pool visitation and membership fees
- Facility income – Ararat Town Hall, Great Hall, Alexandra Oval Community Centre, Gordon Street Recreation Reserve
- Building Services
- Registration fees – health, animal

The provision of infrastructure and services form a key part of Council's role in supporting the local community. In providing these facilities, Council must consider a range of principles including service cost and quality standards, value for money, and community expectations and values. Council must also balance the affordability and accessibility of infrastructure and services with its financial capacity and the interests of long-term financial sustainability.

Each year, Council develops a table of fees and charges as part of its annual Budget. Pricing changes are included in the Budget and are available for community engagement before the Budget is adopted, giving stakeholders the chance to review and provide feedback before the fees are finalised.

In determining charges for community services, Council must determine if the extent of cost recovery for services is consistent with the individual and collective benefit that the service provides and the community's expectations.

Services are provided based on one of the following pricing methods:

a) Zero cost recovery – This service is provided at no cost. The costs are met entirely from rates and general-purpose income.

b) Partial cost recovery – Pricing for this service is set as a mix of user contribution and subsidy from Council revenue.

c) Full cost recovery – The full cost of the service is paid by the user.

d) Market Price – The price is set by comparisons with like services delivered by like Councils or competitors.

Statutory Fees and Fines

Statutory fees and fines are those which Council collects where price is set through legislative or regulatory mechanisms. Pricing is generally established through penalty units or fee units.

Examples of statutory fees and fines include:

- Planning and subdivision fees
- Building and inspection fees
- Infringements and fines
- Waste management fees
- Land Information Certificate fees

Penalty units

Penalty units are used to define the amount payable for fines for many offences. The rate for penalty units is indexed each financial year. One penalty unit is currently $197.59, from 1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025.

Fee units

Fee units are used to calculate the cost of a certificate, registration or licence that is set in legislation or regulation. The value of one fee unit is currently $16.33 and is reviewed each financial year.

The cost of fees and penalties is calculated by multiplying the number of units by the current value of the fee or unit. The exact cost may be rounded up or down. For example, the Building Request for Information fee for 2024-25 is based on 3.19 units x $16.33 per unit = $52.10 (rounded).

Grants

Grant revenue represents income usually received from other levels of government. Some grants are singular and attached to the delivery of specific projects, whilst others can be of a recurrent nature and may or may not be linked to the delivery of projects.

Council will pro-actively advocate for grant funding support to deliver important infrastructure and service outcomes for the community. Council may use its own funds to leverage higher grant funding and maximise external funding opportunities.

Contributions

Contributions represent funds received by Council, usually from non-government sources, and are usually linked to projects.

Contributions can be made to Council in the form of either cash payments or asset handovers.

Examples of contributions include:

- Monies collected from developers under planning and development agreements.
- Contributions from user groups towards upgrade of facilities.
- Assets handed over to Council from developers at the completion of a subdivision, such as roads, drainage, and public open space.

Interest on investments

Council receives interest on funds managed as part of its investment portfolio, where funds are held in advance of expenditure, or for special purposes. The investment portfolio is managed per Council's investment policy, which seeks to earn the best return on funds, whilst minimising risk.

Appendix 1
Application for Waiver/Deferral of Rates and Interest

The *Local Government Act 1989* specifies Council's obligations for deferring payment of rates and the waiver of rates and interest:

Section 170. Deferred payment

1. A Council may defer in whole or in part the payment by a person of any rate or charge which is due and payable for a specified period and subject to any conditions determined by the Council if it considers that an application by that person shows that the payment would cause hardship to the person.

2. On deferral of the payment the person who is liable to make the payment is not liable until the Council sends the person a notice under sub-section (3).

3. A Council may by a notice sent to a person—
   (a) require that person to pay the whole or part of any deferred rate or charge by a specified date if —
      (i) it considers that the person's circumstances have so changed that the payment would no longer cause hardship to the person; or
      (ii) the person no longer owns or occupies the land in relation to which the rate or charge was levied; and
   (b) requires the payment of interest for the late payment of the rate or charge, as if the deferral had not occurred.

Note: The deferred payment option means rates, charges and interest are still charged, but the ratepayer does not have to pay the amount until Council considers the payment will not cause the ratepayer financial hardship, or the ratepayer no longer owns or occupies the land.

Section 171A. Waiver

1. A person who—
   (a) is suffering financial hardship; or
   (b) would suffer financial hardship if that person paid the full amount of a rate or charge for which he or she is liable— may apply to a

Council for the waiver of the whole or part of any rate or charge or of any interest imposed for late payment.

2. The Council may require the applicant—
   (a) to give further particulars; or
   (b) to verify particulars— in relation to the application.

3. The Council may waive the whole or part of any rate or charge or interest.

Note: The waiver option means Council reduces the whole or part of any rate, charge, or interest.

External resources that may assist ratepayers who cannot afford to pay their rates include:

- Consumer Action Law Centre - https://consumeraction.org.au/
- Financial Counselling Australia - https://www.debtselfhelp.org.au/
- CAFS - https://www.cafs.org.au/Listing/Category/financial-counselling

If you are a ratepayer and you wish to have your rates deferred or waived, please complete the following questions and submit to Ararat Rural City Council offices at 59 Vincent St, Ararat VIC 3377:

	Questions	Answers
1	What is the amount of rates-interest you owe?	
2	What is the amount of rates-arrears you owe?	
3	What is the amount of rates–current you owe?	
4	Are you seeking a waiver of rates and interest? If so, how much? (A waiver means Council reduces the whole or part of any rate, charge or interest and the ratepayer does not need to pay the amount waived)	
5	Are you seeking a deferral of rates? If so, until when? (A deferral of rates means rates, charges and interest are still charged, but the ratepayer does not have to pay the amount until an appropriate time in the future determined by Council)	
6	What is your full name?	
7	What is your phone number?	
8	What is the address of the property on which you are seeking a waiver/deferral of rates?	
9	Is the property used exclusively for residential purposes and is it your sole or principal place of residence?	
Financial Assessment		
10	What income do you receive each month?	
11	What expenses do you have each month?	
12	What is the difference between income and expenses each month?	
13	Can you provide a financial statement that details your monthly income and expenses if we require this?	
14	How much money do you have in the bank, including any investments?	
15	Do you have any other assets? e.g., investment properties	
16	Are you owed any money? If yes, give details	
17	What other moneys do you owe, not previously mentioned? E.g., mortgage, car loans	

18	Please provide the reason/s why you cannot pay your rates.	
19	Do you have an offer to pay this debt?	
20	Do you believe you would suffer financial hardship if you had to pay the full amount of the rates for which you are liable? Hardship does not generally apply to ratepayers who have short-term cash flow problems.	
Signature of applicant:		Dated:
Signature of witness:		Dated:

External resources that may assist ratepayers who cannot afford to pay their rates include:

- Consumer Action Law Centre - https://consumeraction.org.au/
- Financial Counselling Australia - https://www.debtselfhelp.org.au/
- CAFS - https://www.cafs.org.au/Listing/Category/financial-counselling

Appendix 2
Application for Farm Land Classification

Farm Land Eligibility Criteria

In 2018 as part of the recommendation from the Rating Strategy Advisory Group and the Citizen's Jury, Council resolved to make a change to eligibility of properties which can claim the farming differential rate.

To be eligible for the farm differential, Farm Land must meet the definition under the *Valuation of Land Act 1960* and be used for the carrying out of primary production by an owner or occupier who is regarded as a Primary Producer by the Australian Taxation Office.

Property owners who wish to claim the farming rate are asked to consider the eligibility information provided below and complete the Statutory Declaration if applicable.

Valuation Land Act 1960

Under the *Valuation of Land Act 1960* 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, beekeeping, viticulture, horticulture, fruit-growing, or the growing of crops of any kind or for any combination of those activities; and

(c) That is used by a business –

i. That has 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 operating.

For the purpose of differential rating as determined by Council, Farm Land must also be used for the carrying on of primary production by an owner or an occupier who is regarded as a Primary Producer by the Australian Taxation Office.

Australian Taxation Office

Summary of main indicators of carrying on a business of primary production:

- A significant commercial activity
- Purpose and intention of the taxpayer in engaging in the activity
- An intention to make a profit from the activity
- The activity is or will be profitable
- Repetition and regularity of activity
- Activity is carried on in a similar manner to that of the ordinary trade
- Activity organised in a businesslike manner with records kept
- Size and scale of the activity
- Not a hobby, recreation, or sporting activity
- A business plan exists
- Commercial sales of product
- Taxpayer has knowledge or skill in the business

Eligibility Checklist

The following questions are to assist you to determine if the land included is Farm Land and is eligible for the Farm Rate. Is each property listed on your property details form?	
Used for primary production activity as described by the ATO	Yes / No
Greater than 2 hectares (not including land devoted to domestic use or uncleared land)	Yes / No
Used to carry on a business of primary production that has a significant and substantial commercial purpose	Yes / No
Seeking to make a profit on a continuous basis from its activities on the land	Yes / No
Operating with a reasonable prospect of making a profit if it continues to operate in its current form.	Yes / No
If you answered yes to all of these questions you are eligible for the Farm Rate. If you answered no to any you will not be eligible.	

Farm Rate Statutory Declaration

After reading the Farm Rate Eligibility Criteria, please complete the table below and Statutory Declaration for all properties you deem eligible for the Farm Rate and return to PO Box 246, Ararat VIC 3377, or email: rates@ararat.vic.gov.au

Property Details

Assessment No	Property Address	Status – Owner, Occupier/ Rate Payer	Area in hectares
e.g., 618111.111	e.g., 1234 Ararat-Halls Gap Road	e.g., lease	e.g., 30.46ha

If space provided is insufficient, please attach a list of additional properties or complete additional application(s)

Instructions for completing a statutory declaration

Please complete the following form using the notes in the left-hand margin for guidance. More guidance on making statutory declarations can be found at www.justice.vic.gov.au.
When making the statutory declaration the declarant must say aloud:
I, [full name of person making declaration] of [address], declare that the contents of this statutory declaration are true and correct.

Statutory Declaration

Insert the name, address, and occupation (or alternatively, unemployed or retired or child) of person making the statutory declaration	I, make the following statutory declaration under the **Oaths and Affirmations Act 2018**:		
Set out matter declared to in numbered paragraphs. Add numbers, as necessary.	1. I have read the Farm Land Eligibility Criteria; 2. I believe that the land listed in the property details table can be defined as Farm Land and is used for farming purposes. 3. The land is used for these purposes by a Primary Producer as defined by the Australian Taxation Office. 4. I will advise Council if the circumstances relating to my land changes. 5. The information is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief;		
	I declare that the contents of this statutory declaration are true and correct and I make it knowing that making a statutory declaration that I know to be untrue is an offence.		
Signature of person making the declaration			
Place (City, town, or suburb)	**Declared at:**		***In the state of Victoria**
Date	on		
Signature of authorised statutory declaration witness Date	**I am an authorised statutory declaration witness and I sign this document in the presence of the person making the declaration:** on		
Name, capacity in which authorised person has authority to witness statutory declaration, and address (writing, typing or stamp)	A person authorised under section 30(2) of the **Oaths and Affirmations Act 2018** to witness the signing of a statutory declaration.		

Appendix 3
Equalising Rating Burden

2024/2025 Council Budget					
Rating segment	**Number of assessments**	**Total CIV ($)**	**Differential**	**Total rates (inc. MC) ($)**	**Rates "burden"**
General	5367	2,025,125,000	1.00	$7,617,345	51.6%
Commercial	307	153,962,000	1.40	$785,425	5.3%
Industrial	115	49,899,000	1.40	$256,044	1.7%
Farm Land	1610	4,468,650,500	0.385	$6,115,910	41.4%

SOME "SUPPLEMENTARY" RATES MAINLY IN GENERAL CATEGORY

2024/2025 Actuals					
Rating segment	**Number of assessments**	**Total CIV ($)**	**Differential**	**Total rates (inc. MC) ($)**	**Rates "burden"**
General	5413	2,057,525,000	1.00	$7,735,388	51.8%
Commercial	308	155,895,000	1.40	$795,012	5.3%
Industrial	114	51,370,000	1.40	$263,171	1.8%
Farm Land	1614	4,484,283,000	0.385	$6,136,918	41.1%

MINOR DECREASE IN GENERAL AND FARM LAND VALUATIONS

MOVE COMMERCIAL / INDUSTRIAL DIFFERENTIAL FROM 1.40 TO 1.35 AND FARM LAND DIFFERENTIAL FROM 0.385 TO 0.39 TO "EQUALISE" RATES BURDEN

PROPOSED 1.5% RATE INCREASE

2025/2026 Proposed Council Budget					
Rating segment	**Number of assessments**	**Total CIV ($)**	**Differential**	**Total rates (inc. MC) ($)**	**Rates "burden"**
General	5413	2,012,184,000	1.00	$7,852,047	51.80%
Commercial	308	159,240,000	1.35	$812,870	5.40%
Industrial	114	51,378,000	1.35	$263,672	1.70%
Farm Land	1614	4,323,546,000	0.39	$6,226,895	41.10%

Ararat Rural City

www.ararat.vic.gov.au