

Rates Grant for Landowners of Significant Natural Areas

Significant Natural Areas (SNAs) are areas where there is significant indigenous vegetation or a significant habitat for indigenous fauna. SNAs have substantial biodiversity value, are critical for ensuring our rare species don't become extinct and we don't lose our ecosystems and the essential services they provide.

Council RES Policy 002 provides landowners of SNAs with rates relief, via a rates grant, as an acknowledgement of their contribution to protecting and maintaining the District's indigenous biodiversity.

In many cases, there is an opportunity cost to landowners as SNAs cannot be developed for alternative uses.



Photo Credit: Environment Canterbury

- The annual rates grant for SNAs goes towards the rates on properties that contain part or all of a mapped SNA listed in the Partially Operative District Plan.

It is a flat rate per rating unit plus a rate per hectare of SNA (or part thereof) (including GST) calculated in accordance with Schedule A of the policy, which adjusts annually in line with the Local Government Cost Index.

In 2025, the grant was paid at a rate of \$176.74 per rating unit with SNA plus \$34.21 per hectare of SNA.

- The maximum rates grant for each rating unit is capped at the rating unit's maximum annual rates amount.
- The rates grant is applied annually and may not be credited, rolled over, or applied retrospectively.
- The rates grant cannot be applied to non-rateable land as per the Local Government (Rating) Act 2002.

However, where a SNA is located within non-rateable land due to it being subject to a Queen Elizabeth II National Trust covenant (QEII covenant), 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.

- Rates grants are paid directly into the rates account of each eligible rating unit prior to the issue of the first instalment (July) rates assessment.
- Council may choose to decline a rates grant if the SNA is found to have degraded since its previous monitoring assessment.
- SNA landowners can apply to the Council's Biodiversity Contestable Fund for assistance with protection, maintenance, and restoration costs.

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Examples of how this SNA rates grant is applied



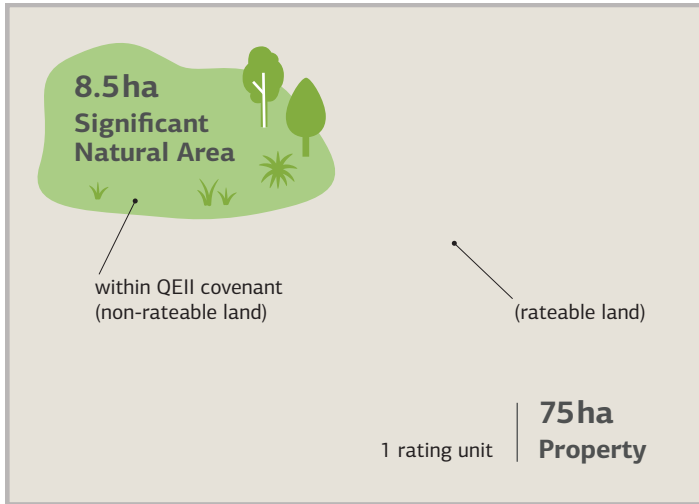
Example 1

A 4ha property contains a 2.5ha SNA upon two rating units.

The annual rates grant is:

$$\begin{aligned} & (\$176.74 \times 2 \text{ rating units} = \$353.48) \\ & + (\$34.21 \times 2.5\text{ha SNA} = \$85.53) \\ & = \text{Total rates grant: } \$439.01 \end{aligned}$$

Therefore a \$439.01 discount to annual rates is applied for this property.



Example 2

A 75ha property contains a 8.5ha SNA, on one rating unit, which is within a QEII covenant.

The annual rates grant is:

$$\begin{aligned} & (176.74 \times 1 \text{ rating unit} = \$176.74) \\ & + (\$34.21 \times 8.5\text{ha SNA} = \$290.79) \\ & = \text{Total rates grant: } \$467.53 \end{aligned}$$

Therefore a \$467.53 discount is applied to the annual rates invoice for the rateable portion of the property.



Example 3

A 47ha property contains an 11ha SNA upon two rating units.

The annual rates grant is:

$$\begin{aligned} & (\$176.74 \times 2 \text{ rating units} = \$353.48) \\ & + (\$34.21 \times 11\text{ha SNA} = \$376.31) \\ & = \text{Total rates grant: } \$729.79 \end{aligned}$$

Therefore a \$729.79 discount is applied to the annual rates for this property. However, if the annual rates for this property are \$650, then as the rates grant is capped at the rates amount, the discount applied is capped to \$650, and the annual rates for this property become nil.

Find out more at waimakariri.govt.nz, or contact Customer Services on 0800 965 468.