

### **What is the levy used for?**

Levies collected across the SA Arid Lands (SAAL) region are invested back in our region to manage our natural resources sustainably and look after our environment. The board invests according to the entire region's needs, defined by community input, environmental conditions and areas of high priority, in accordance with the objects of the *Landscape South Australia Act*. Members of the community can be involved in the board's business delivery through many events, training and education opportunities, forums, the local landscape groups and through applying for grants and sponsorship in line with the board's strategic priorities.

Take a look at the activities funded in 21/22 in our [Your Levy at Work](#) document and read our latest [Across the Outback](#)

### **What is levy equalisation?**

The SA Arid Lands Landscape (SAAL) Board is introducing a landscape levy equalisation process to ensure there is a common, consistent levy basis across council areas in the region. The Board is proposing a landscape levy of a fixed charge that depends on the purpose for which land is used.

### **Why is it needed?**

In 2019, the boundaries for the former SAAL Natural Resources Management Board changed with transition from the *Natural Resources Management Act 2004* to the *Landscape South Australia Act 2019*. Port Augusta City Council and The Flinders Ranges Council moved into the SAAL region, alongside Coober Pedy District Council and Roxby Downs Municipal Council. There was no change to Out of Council (OOC) areas.

Until 1 July 2023, the two councils based within SAAL were levied on a different basis to the Port Augusta and Flinders Ranges councils. There has been a fixed charge per rateable property in Coober Pedy and Roxby Downs council areas, a different fixed charge in Port Augusta, and a levy determined by capital value in The Flinders Ranges Council area. This saw landholders in the four council areas paying different amounts for the same types of properties.

It was a requirement of the *Landscape South Australia Act* that the regional landscape levy is applied on a common basis across council areas in a landscape region.

### **Who does it affect?**

It affects landscape levy payers in the Port Augusta and the Flinders Ranges council areas, along with those in the Roxby Downs and Coober Pedy council areas. Across the state, the SAAL board is one of three boards who had legislated boundary changes and who are required to equalise levies to a common basis across new and existing council areas. The other two landscape regions are Hills and Fleurieu and Northern and Yorke.

### **How is the Landscape Levy changing?**

From 2023/24, in council areas, the regional landscape levy will be a fixed charge based on the purpose for which land is used. The land use categories are primary production, commercial, industrial, residential, vacant land and other.

Primary production properties - which receive the greatest benefits from natural resources management and the board's programs – will pay more than other land use types.

A base rate will be paid by residential/vacant/other; with commercial/industrial paying 2x the base rate; and primary production paying 5 x the base rate. This aligns with a '*beneficiary-pays*' principle, and reflects the way in which our community uses and benefits from the sustainable use of natural resources.

The levy basis will be applied consistently across all council areas, and better align with the rating method for out-of-council areas.

The levy collected across all council areas will be redistributed across the land use categories for all four within-council areas, which will see some council contributions increase and others decrease. For instance, the board needs to raise \$626,000 from Council levies (2022/23 figure plus CPI).

Levies within council areas for 23/24 under the new basis (charge by land use) are as follows:

\$45.35 per rateable property for residential, vacant or other land uses

\$90.69 per rateable property for commercial or industrial land uses

\$226.73 per rateable property for primary production land use

\* The figures presented are based on the rateable property information according to land use type that is currently available. This may change from year to year and may result in small variations.

### **What if I am a primary producer with more than one property in a council area?**

If you are a primary producer with more than two pieces of non-adjointing rateable land in a council area within the SA Arid Lands, you may be eligible to apply to have your 'farm' classified as a '**Single Farm Enterprise**'. This means that your enterprise would be charged landscape levy once annually. Please contact your council to determine your eligibility.

If you own land in more than one council area, the landscape levy may be payable in each council area.

### **What if I own adjoining pieces of land in a council area?**

Contiguous land refers to parcels of land which touch one another or are separated only by a road, railway or thoroughfare or an open space dedicated for public purposes. To be classed as contiguous property, all parcels of land share the same owner or occupier, are used for the same purpose and are all contained within the same area. Please contact your council to determine your eligibility.

### **Who determines the land use of my property?**

Land use codes are assigned by the Valuer General. For more information on how these are determined, see <https://www.valuergeneral.sa.gov.au/valuation/land-use-codes>

**Will this see the board raise additional revenue from the equalisation?**

No. The board will not raise any additional revenue from the equalisation. The total rates to be collected from the four councils remains the same as the 2022/23 financial year, plus CPI.

**When will it come into effect?**

The transition scheme requires the equalisation to occur for the 2023/24 rating period.

**Did I have an opportunity to express my views on the levy equalisation?**

A community consultation process was open from 14 November 2022 until 5 December 2022.

**What has changed for the Port Augusta and Flinders Ranges council areas since becoming part of the SA Arid Lands?**

There is now a dedicated community engagement officer supported by SAAL staff to service the Port Augusta - Quorn district, and the Hawker community which is now part of the North Flinders Landscape Group. A community Landscape Group has also been established for Port Augusta - Quorn with six members representing the community views on natural resource management issues and designing workshops and activities for the district. Landholders can access the Board's technical staff for advice on pest and weed control, and land management issues. The annual grassroots grants program provides grants for local projects of up to \$10,000 and the board offers other grant programs at different times.

**Who collects the Landscape Levy?**

Councils collect the regional landscape levy on behalf of the Landscape Board. Local councils each pay a share of the total regional landscape levy, based on the number of rateable properties of each land use they contain. Councils reimburse themselves through the collection of the Landscape Levy from their ratepayers. The levy is shown separately on council rate notices.

**Will the Out of Council area levy change?**

No change to out-of-council levy is proposed (the landscape levy will continue to be paid according to property size categories, which reflects land use). These arrangements mean those with more land pay more than those with less land – so a pastoral lessee pays more than a township property owner.