

Summary of Council criteria applied when deciding qualification for the “Remote Rural (Farming & Forestry)” differential for general rates

Pre-requisite qualifying criteria published in the 2013-16 Three Year Plan (all must be satisfied):

- Zoned residential or rural in the City Plan,
- Located outside the geographic area serviced by Council’s sewer network,
- Used principally for rural purposes (or vacant land not otherwise used), and
- Not used principally for industrial, commercial, or residential purposes.

Published rationale: “to reflect generally the remote location from services and the assumed lower consumption of services for each rating unit.”

Operational criteria (used to determine whether properties outside the sewered area are used “principally for rural purposes”):

- Size of the rating unit.
 - Rating units less than 1 Ha will need to have significant horticulture structures to be regarded as Rural eg Glass houses in a state of practical occupancy (ie not in a derelict/ abandoned state),
 - Rating units less than 2 Ha need substantial areas set aside exclusively for farming (horticulture, pastoral, agricultural),
- Area devoted to the dwelling and portion percentage of the whole
 - For rating units less than 2 Ha the portion used for the dwelling, garage and access should be less than 50% and for less than 4 Ha, less than 30%, for these to stay Rural.
- Situation of the dwelling on the property, where say, if the dwelling is in one corner of the rating unit, and not landscaped into the whole. If integrated into the whole there is a presumption that the balance of the land is to support a residential use.
- Use of the balance:
 - If the dwelling is landscaped into the balance of the land and this materially restricts farming use of the land then the principal purpose of the rating unit is residential, if not the land can be used for all the normal types of farming use without restriction.
 - Significance of the investment in agriculture production, with examples including:
 - Farm fencing,
 - Glasshouses,
 - Horticulture & crop plantings etc.
 - Merely grazing the balance of the land with a few stock to keep the grass or weeds down does not constitute farming. There has to be evidence of active farming practice.
 - If the balance of the land is not useable for farming because say slope, lack of soil etc, then notwithstanding a larger area, the principal use may be residential.
- How would the property be marketed in the event of sale –
 - If as a production farm with a dwelling – more likely to be Rural.
 - If as a lifestyle dwelling with space to expand – more likely to be Residential (ie. charged at the standard rate).