



INFORMATION FOR LANDHOLDERS: COOK SHIRE COUNCIL'S PEST MANAGEMENT INCENTIVE SCHEME

Background

Cook Shire Council has both a legislative responsibility and operational commitment to pest and weed management activities across our local government area. The Cook Shire Council Pest Management Incentive Scheme has been developed as one of many measures to fulfill this commitment by providing landholders financial assistance to manage weeds and feral animals on their property. In addition, the scheme enables Council to collect data on various pest management activities to enhance the effectiveness and co-ordination of future strategies.

Scheme Details

This incentive scheme is fully funded by Cook Shire Council and is open to landholders within the Cook Shire local government area. To be eligible the applicant must:

- Be a Cook Shire rate payer
- Own and work on a property in excess of 28 hectares within the local government area
- Derive the majority of their income from primary production
- Have a current ABN
- Have a current and approved Property Pest Management Plan (developed or reviewed within the past 12 month) for the property the subject of the application
- Have had a Council Biosecurity Officer undertake a property pest assessment in the 12 months preceding any application
- Be prepared to allow a Council Biosecurity Officer to conduct a follow up assessment

How much and what can be applied for under the Incentive Scheme?

Up to \$1000 is available per property for the control of approved weeds and/or feral animals. This can include purchase of registered herbicides, purchase of minor equipment, purchase of organic weed control products (i.e Pine Oil), outlay for contractors to undertake mechanical removal, ammunition, traps or any other expense that the assessing officer considers will achieve the desired outcomes.

The amount that an individual property receives will be calculated using a set formula that will take in to account a variety of factors including property size, scale of pest problems on the property, participation in Council initiated schemes (i.e. the annual 1080 run), regional and strategic importance of the pest problem/s and whether the property has obtained funding from other agencies for pest management in the current financial year..

What does the assessment involve?

Before reimbursement is approved a Council Biosecurity Officer may attend the property to assess the pest issues and discuss potential action by the landholder. The assessment will generally involve a site visit, collection of GIS data and photographs relating to the problem, a discussion on the history of pest issues including past actions.

An agreement may then be finalised outlining future action and the types of control measures Council will be willing to reimburse under the Scheme. Agreed control measures will be listed on the application.

How do I complete a Property Pest Management Plan (PPMP)?

A digital PPMP template is available from Council. To aid the landholder a document, "How to complete a PPMP", is available to help you work through the process of developing a Property Pest Management Plan. Additionally, Council's Biosecurity Services team is available to provide assistance at any time during business hours.

What if I already have a PPMP?

Where a property already has an approved PPMP a review of this document may need to be conducted and amendments made to reflect previous control work and any changes in priority. This review may be made as part of the Incentive Scheme property assessment.

How do I receive payment?

Once an application has been approved reimbursement will be made following receipt of tax invoices for materials outlined in the application. Should the applicant have an Australian Business Number this should be provided to Council. Reimbursement will be made by either cheque or direct deposit to a nominated bank account.

I've received reimbursement, is there any other obligation?

Landholders who receive reimbursement through the Incentive Scheme may be required to submit GIS data, photographic evidence of control work or allow a member of Council's Biosecurity Services team to assess works undertaken. This decision will be made on a case by case basis and will take in to account factors such as location, the amount of data already collected from the property, strategic/regional importance of the pests being controlled and the value of the reimbursement.

How much money is available and is it there a competitive process?

In the 2015/16 financial year Council allocated \$20,000 to the Pest Management Incentive Scheme. Applications for the current round of reimbursements will be assessed in order of submission until such time as the allocated funds are fully expended.

Where do I get an application and assistance?

Cook Shire Council Incentive Scheme Application forms can be downloaded from Council's website or obtained from our administration office at 10 Furneaux Street, Cooktown. Should you require additional assistance please contact Cook Shire Council's Biosecurity Services team on (07) 4069 5444 or by email at biosecurity@cook.qld.gov.au.