



Government
Services

Department of Government Services

Eligible Volunteers Rebate Scheme Guidelines

25 July 2025

Contents

1.	Background	3
2.	The Volunteers Rebate dates	3
3.	Eligibility and Application criteria	4
3.1	Who is eligible for the rebate?	4
3.2	What property can you claim for?	5
3.3	Further property considerations	6
4.	How the Volunteers Rebate works	8
4.1	How to apply	8
4.2	Required documents and information	8
4.3	Assessment	10
4.4	Notification of application outcome	10
4.5	Payment	11
5.	Privacy statement	12
6.	Additional information	13
6.1	Tax advice	13
6.2	Application outcome review	13
6.3	Contact information	13
7.	Appendices	14
7.1	Appendix 1: Key terms and definitions	14

1. Background

From 1 July 2025, the Fire Services Property Levy (FSPL) is being replaced by the Emergency Services and Volunteers Fund (ESVF) levy.

To recognise the contributions of our emergency service volunteers, the Victorian Government is introducing the Eligible Volunteers Rebate Scheme (Volunteers Rebate). Under the Volunteers Rebate, eligible Country Fire Authority, Victoria State Emergency Service, and Shepparton Search and Rescue Squad volunteers and eligible life members are entitled to a rebate on their ESVF liability for their principal place of residence or farmland.

The Volunteers Rebate is administered by the Victorian Government through the Department of Government Services.

Further details about the ESVF and the Volunteers Rebate are published in the Emergency Services and Volunteers Fund Act 2012 (Vic) and the Victorian Government Gazette.

These guidelines should be read in full before applying for a rebate. They contain information about the Volunteers Rebate and explain how it will work, including:

- the rebate value
- the eligibility and application criteria
- how to apply
- the payment process.

These guidelines also include a privacy statement.

Appendix 1 includes key terms and definitions.

2. The Volunteers Rebate dates

The Volunteers Rebate opens for applications on 25 July 2025.

An application for a rebate in relation to a particular levy year must be submitted no later than 30 June of the following financial year. For example: if you submit a rebate application for the 2025–26 financial year, a completed application needs to be submitted no later than 30 June 2027.

You cannot claim a Volunteers Rebate for amounts due under the Fire Services Property Levy, which were applied in 2024–25 or prior financial years.

3. Eligibility and Application criteria

3.1 Who is eligible for the rebate?

To be eligible for a rebate you must be an eligible volunteer or eligible life member of the:

- Country Fire Authority (CFA);
- Victoria State Emergency Service (VICSES); or
- Shepparton Search and Rescue Squad (SSRS).

Volunteers and life members **must meet the criteria below on 31 May** of the financial year before the financial year being claimed. For example: to claim a rebate for the 2025–26 ESVF levy, volunteers and life members must meet the criteria below on 31 May 2025. To claim a rebate for the 2026–27 ESVF levy, volunteers and life members must meet the criteria below on 31 May 2026.

Eligible volunteers:

To be an eligible volunteer, a volunteer must meet all of these conditions:

- be a current volunteer member;
- is not inactive or suspended due to disciplinary action;
- have served for at least 12 months, including any probationary period required to become a volunteer member;
- have not been on leave of absence for the entire duration of the last 12 months; and
- have not been paid in their capacity as a volunteer (except reimbursement for any out-of-pocket expenses).

Eligible life members:

A person who has been declared a life member of one of the following emergency services is eligible. This includes:

- CFA life members who have been awarded by the Authority;
- VICSES Service life members; or
- SSRS Service life members.

Members who have been declared a life member by a brigade or unit only are not eligible for a rebate, however, they may be eligible if they meet the eligible volunteer criteria above.

3.2 What property can you claim for?

Property you claim must be leviable land located in Victoria. You can choose one property per financial year under the three categories listed below:

1. Principal place of residence

You can apply for a rebate on your principal place of residence (PPR). If eligible, the rebate you receive will be equivalent to the full amount of your ESVF liability that is written on your rates notice.

a. For a PPR on residential land, the land must:

- be owned in your personal name;
- be used exclusively for residential purposes;
- include a building designed and constructed primarily for residential purposes and lawfully used as your principal place of residence; and
- have a residential Australian Valuation Property Classification Code (AVPCC, specified in section 3.3), as indicated on your rates notice.

b. For a PPR on primary production land, the land must:

- be owned in your personal name;
- include a building designed and constructed primarily for residential purposes that is used as your principal place of residence;
- have a primary production AVPCC (specified in section 3.3), as indicated on your rates notice; and
- be the only parcel of land (lot) on your rates notice.

2. Farmland

If you are applying for the rebate on your farmland, the land must:

- be farmland in which you have a qualifying ownership interest (specified in section 3.3);
- have a primary production AVPCC (specified in section 3.3), as indicated on your rates notice; and
- be the only parcel of land (lot) on your rates notice.

If your farm has a capital improved value of \$5 million or more, the rebate you receive will be capped at \$1,710. If your farm has a capital improved value under \$5 million, you will receive the full amount of your ESVF liability on your rates notice.

Please refer to Appendix 1 for the definition of farmland.

3. Single Farm Enterprise (SFE)

You can apply for the rebate for multiple parcels of land within the same rates notice or across multiple rates notices if you meet the criteria of a single farm enterprise. **You do not need to have received a SFE exemption from your council(s).**

If you are applying for the rebate for multiple parcels of land, the lands must:

- all be farmland, in which you have a qualifying ownership interest (specified in [section 3.3](#));
- be farmed together as a single farming business – it doesn't matter if they are next to each other or in different council areas;
- have a [primary production](#) AVPCC code (specified in [section 3.3](#)), as indicated on your rates notice(s); and
- be occupied by the same person or people.

The rebate may also apply if one parcel of land is a principal place of residence and is contiguous (next) to at least one of the other farmlands. This land can either have a residential or primary production AVPCC code.

You can apply with multiple rates notices if you meet the criteria above. If you apply for farmland(s) with a cumulative capital improved value of \$5 million or more, the rebate you receive will be capped at \$1,710.

If a single farm enterprise has multiple property owners, each owner can apply for a rebate using individual rates notices. However, the same rates notice cannot be used as part of an application for a rebate by more than one owner in the same financial year.

Please refer to Appendix 1 for the definition of single farm enterprise.

3.3 Further property considerations

Council rates notices

Multiple parcels of land can be valued as part of one rates notice. The ESVF levy is calculated on all parcels of land within a single rates notice.

Each volunteer can receive one rebate per financial year. Additionally, each rates notice – covering all parcels of land levied on that notice – can only be used as part of an application for a rebate once by one person through a single application, in a given financial year.

If you think your property will receive a supplementary valuation and you will receive a supplementary rates notice during the financial year, please apply after you receive the supplementary notice.

Australian Valuation Property Classification Code (AVPCC)

The Australian Valuation Property Classification Code (AVPCC) is a classification system that ascribes a code to land, based on its existing use. This classification is used for various purposes, including calculating the ESVF. The code and/or code description is listed on your rates notice.

You can apply for the Volunteers Rebate using these AVPCC codes:

Residential	Primary production
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 100–199 Residential• 729 Defence forces residential quarters• 742 Religious residence	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 500–599 Primary production

Qualifying ownership interest

A qualifying ownership interest in land means having either direct or indirect ownership in it. You can apply for a Volunteers Rebate for farmland or a single farm enterprise if you:

- own the land in your personal name;
- own shares in a company that owns the land; or
- have an interest in the land as:
 - a beneficiary of a trust (other than a discretionary trust), or
 - a specified beneficiary of a discretionary trust.

In relation to a discretionary trust, a specified beneficiary is a person who is specifically:

- named in the trust deed as a beneficiary of the trust; or
- recognised as a beneficiary through a written declaration that follows the trust deed's rules.

Arrears

If you are in arrears (debt) on your rates notice of more than \$50 from prior financial years, you will not be eligible for the rebate.

If your rates notice shows any arrears, you must pay any outstanding amounts to bring your debt to under \$50 before you apply. You will need to provide proof of payment in your application (see [section 4.2. Required documents and information](#)).

Eligible cardholders discount

If you receive a \$50 concession discount against your ESVF liability as outlined on your rates notice, this same amount will be deducted from your rebate entitlement. For example, if your ESVF liability is \$254 and you receive a \$50 concession discount for the liability on your rates notice, you would receive a rebate of \$204.

4. How the Volunteers Rebate works

4.1 How to apply

You can access the application form link from your volunteer organisation's member portal once your organisation has confirmed you are an eligible volunteer or life member, based on the eligibility criteria published in the Victorian Government Gazette. Once you receive your financial year rates notice from your council you can apply for the rebate.

You may claim your rebate either before or after you make your rates payment to your council.

You must apply on your own behalf.

4.2 Required documents and information

You will be required to provide the following documents and information with your application to demonstrate your eligibility:

Document type	Description
Proof of identity	Submit <u>one</u> of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Australian passport,• Medicare card,• Australian driver licence or learner permit, or• Foreign passport for those issued with an Australian visa.
Volunteer organisation information	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Member number.
Proof of property ownership	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Council rates notice or levy assessment notice/s. <p>(This is your first rates or levy assessment notice of the financial year, issued by your council between July and September, outlining</p>

your payable rates and levy. Subsequent instalment notices cannot be accepted as they do not show the full year's ESVF liability).¹

If you are applying for the rebate on a single farm enterprise, you must submit each rates notice you are claiming on. If the total capital improved value (CIV) of all parcels of land is more than \$5 million (which is the limit for the rebate), you only need to submit the notices that bring you up to this \$5 million value. Providing any further notices will not increase the rebate you receive.

Property
qualifying
ownership interest
information (if
applicable)

If the farmland you are applying for is not owned in your own name but is owned by another entity in which you have a qualifying ownership interest, you will be required to provide the following:

- Entity name
- Australian Business Number (ABN) (if relevant)
- Australian Company Number (ACN) (if relevant).

Proof of property
ownership interest
information (if
applicable and
optional to
provide)

While not mandatory, if you have a qualifying ownership interest in the farmland or single farm enterprise you are applying for, including the following information with your application may help expedite your application assessment.

To evidence company ownership please provide one of the following naming you as a shareholder:

- an ASIC current company extract; or
- a recent share certificate.

If you do not provide the evidence above and we cannot verify your company ownership, we may request the evidence during the assessment process.

To evidence your interest in the land as a beneficiary of a trust, we may request further evidence if we cannot verify your ownership interest.

Proof of payment
for overdue rates
(if applicable)

If your rates notice shows you have rates in arrears (including interest in arrears) of more than \$50, you will be required to provide proof that you have paid the overdue amount, to bring your debt to under \$50.

Acceptable forms of evidence include:

- copy of a bank statement and/or bank transfer, or
- receipt from your council, or
- receipt from post office, or
- subsequently-issued rates or instalment notice.

¹ If you live in Victoria's Alpine region or French Island and are liable for the ESVF levy but you don't receive a rates notice, you will instead receive a levy assessment notice from one of the four Victorian councils that administer the levy for non-municipal land. You will need to submit the levy assessment notice as part of your application rather than a rates notice.

Australian bank
account details

- Account name
 - BSB, and
 - Account number.
-

4.3 Assessment

Applications will be assessed by the Department of Government Services using the information and evidence provided in your application. See the 'Privacy statement' section in these guidelines for more details.

Applications will be assessed against the criteria set out in section 3.3 of these guidelines, the [Emergency Services and Volunteers Fund Act 2012 \(Vic\)](#) and the [Victorian Government Gazette](#). You will be required to confirm and attest you meet the eligibility and application criteria as part of the application form.

If we are unable to validate your details and eligibility, you may be contacted by email to provide clarification or additional documentation to assist with the assessment of your application.

4.3.1. How applications will be assessed

Applications will be assessed in the following order. We will:

- 1) validate your volunteer or life member eligibility with your volunteer organisation
- 2) verify that the property you are applying for is eligible for a rebate
- 3) verify your ownership interest in the property
- 4) check you are not in arrears (debt) of more than \$50 on your rates notice
- 5) verify your rebate entitlement
- 6) confirm you have not already received a rebate for the given financial year
- 7) check that the rebate entitlement on the property you are applying for has not already been claimed and/or paid.

Then, if your application meets the application criteria set out in these guidelines, and is assessed as eligible under the [Emergency Services and Volunteers Fund Act 2012 \(Vic\)](#) and the [Victorian Government Gazette](#), we will pay you the rebate.

Note: when multiple applications are submitted for the same property/rates notice, the rebate will be given to the first eligible application submitted. Once a rebate is approved, any application submitted for the same property/rates notice will be ineligible.

4.4 Notification of application outcome

It is expected that most applicants will either receive notification of an outcome or a request for further information within 30 days.

For complete applications relating to volunteers claiming a rebate on their principal place of residence, it is anticipated that notification of successful outcome will be received within a shorter timeframe. For more complex applications relating to farmland, single farm enterprises or complex qualifying ownership interests, it is anticipated that applications may take longer than 30 days to receive an outcome.

Outcome notification is subject to all attachments and information being sufficiently provided by the applicant. We may require additional time to provide an outcome if further evidence or additional information is needed to assess your application or during periods of peak demand.

After the rebate payment has been processed, you will not be able to:

- withdraw your application
- make any changes to your application
- apply for a different property.

4.5 Payment

Once you receive a successful outcome via email, depending on your bank it may take up to 10 business days for payment to reach the account you nominate in your application.

Additionally, any changes required to the nominated bank account may result in a delay to payment.

Please note, if incorrect bank details are provided and the rebate has already been processed, the department will be under no obligation to make any repayment.

5. Privacy statement

1. To apply for the Volunteers Rebate, applicants are required to provide personal information. As the Volunteers Rebate administrator, DGS will collect and use this information to:
 - assess applications
 - administer payments
 - communicate with you about your application
 - undertake other activities such as program monitoring and evaluation
 - make referrals to law enforcement where fraud or other illegal activity is suspected
 - support Victorian Government evaluation and reporting (where collected personal data will be de-identified).
2. DGS may share and receive your personal information, information provided in the application form, and other data with third parties and other Commonwealth and Victorian Government departments and agencies for verification and program administration. These include, but are not limited to:
 - Attorney-General's Department
 - Australian Taxation Office
 - Country Fire Authority
 - Department of Treasury and Finance
 - Land Use Victoria
 - Shepparton Search and Rescue Squad
 - Valuer-General Victoria
 - Victoria State Emergency Service.
3. You have the right to request access to your personal information that is collected at any time. If you identify information that is incorrect, you may request its correction.
4. If you do not provide all the information asked of you, your application may not be accepted.
5. A copy of our privacy statement is located at: <https://www.vic.gov.au/privacy-policy-department-government-services>. If you have concerns about your privacy and/or how your personal information has been used, please contact us at <https://service.vic.gov.au/contact/send-us-a-message>.

6. Additional information

6.1 Tax advice

The rebate is a 'non-taxable supply' and is not subject to GST.

Tax is not deducted from rebates at the time of payment. Please obtain independent tax advice regarding the rebate and its impact on your personal tax liability or visit www.ato.gov.au.

6.2 Application outcome review

If you believe your application has been incorrectly assessed or paid, you can request a review of your outcome by the department. Requests will be assessed on their merits against the eligibility criteria, provided for in the Victorian Government Gazette and the Act, as described in these guidelines. The request must be received within 60 days from the date the department notifies you of the outcome of your application. This does not limit any other legal rights an applicant may have.

Contact the department via the contact details provided in your application outcome notification or see section 6.3 below for general Volunteers Rebate contact information.

6.3 Contact information

For general information about the Volunteers Rebate, please contact us at <https://service.vic.gov.au/contact/send-us-a-message>.

7. Appendices

7.1 Appendix 1: Key terms and definitions

Key term	Definition
Arrears	Outstanding liabilities – amounts of money that are both unpaid and past the due date for payment to your council on any prior years' rates notice. Arrears are also known as debt.
Capital Improved Value (CIV)	This value is used by councils to calculate your property rates and your ESVF liability. The CIV is the value of the land plus the buildings on it and any other capital improvements.
Emergency Services and Volunteers Fund (ESVF)	<p>The Emergency Services and Volunteers Fund (ESVF) replaced the Fire Services Property Levy on 1 July 2025 to support a broader range of emergency services.</p> <p>The ESVF is an annual levy collected by councils via rates notices. The levy ensures that Victorian property owners make an annual contribution to the State's emergency and disaster response services.</p> <p>The ESVF levy comprises two charges:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. A fixed charge – based on your property type; and2. A variable charge – based on your property type and its capital improved value.
Farmland	<p>Land 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 that is used by a business:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• that has a significant and substantial commercial purpose or character; and• 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.
Financial Year (FY)	<p>A 12-month period that runs from 1 July to 30 June.</p> <p>For example, the 2025–26 FY refers to 1 July 2025 to 30 June 2026.</p>

Single farm enterprise

Two or more parcels of leviable land which:

- are farmland; and
- are farmed as a single enterprise; and
- are occupied by the same person or persons;

whether or not the parcels of land are contiguous or are located in the same municipal district; or which

- as to all the parcels except one, are farmland farmed as a single enterprise occupied by the same person or persons; and
 - as to one parcel contiguous with at least one of the other parcels, is the principal place of residence of that person or one of those persons.
-