

# INFO SHEET

## FARM MANAGEMENT PLANS

The planning scheme requires the submission of a farm management plan for residential and other land uses and for subdivision in the Rural Zone or Agriculture Zone.



### PURPOSE

The following outlines the purpose and content of a farm management plan (FMP). A FMP may be used to assist in the preparation of any permit applications that may be required.

### WHAT IS A FARM MANAGEMENT PLAN

A FMP will show what the property is like now, how and when you intend to undertake farming or other rural activities, how potential impacts will be managed and what the likely financial return will be.

A FMP should describe the layout of the property, the physical characteristics of the land in terms of soil type, slope, drainage or streams and other physical features including dams, wood lots, scattered trees, fences and any physical improvements proposed.

A FMP should also describe the current and intended use of the land as a farm. The plan should also indicate the site, size and scope of any proposed developments. It should also give an indication as to the reason the proposed developments are thought to be necessary.

### THE PURPOSE OF THE FARM MANAGEMENT PLAN

A FMP may be required to assist in determining if a proposed use or development will meet Council's planning guidelines.

These guidelines include planning, environmental, land use, zoning, cultural heritage, infrastructure and community considerations.

Council is committed to maintain agricultural land for agricultural purposes and to ensure that inappropriate developments on agricultural land do not occur.

Activity on land which would diminish the aesthetic or environmental value of the land, or which would make it difficult for neighbouring landowners to carry out their own legal and permitted uses of the land, could be considered to be an inappropriate land use.

The FMP should demonstrate to Council what the landowner intends to do, what factors have been considered, what the potential impacts are and how they will be managed while also encourage the landowner to clearly communicate those intentions to interested parties.

### THE FARM MANAGEMENT PLAN IS A ROAD MAP FOR THE LANDOWNER

In addition to the planning process, the FMP is a road map for the landowner, similar to a detailed business case. Landowners who develop a comprehensive farm management plan are then able to go ahead with the development in a positive way and avoid unnecessary work or expenditure. A comprehensive farm management plan can help landowners avoid the pitfalls that can trap the unaware when taking on a new venture.

### WHAT SHOULD A FARM MANAGEMENT PLAN INCLUDE

The farm management plan will offer a detailed description of all of the land and describe:

- The soil type including variability in soil type across the land and any existing erosion
- Pasture species and condition

- Internal fencing, both current and intended
- Water sources, storage, distribution and any proposed irrigation
- Areas of trees and remnant vegetation and if livestock will be excluded
- Any soil damage or existing erosion
- The availability of power and other services
- Current and intended vehicle access to and through the property
- A description of the state of the property with regard to vermin and noxious weeds
- The intended use of the site
- A description of proposed buildings and other improvements,
- A description of farming and other rural enterprises in the locality,
- Biosecurity risks to the proposed enterprise and surrounding enterprises, and
- A detailed description of the farming enterprise(s), establishment costs and estimated return.

### **ECONOMIC OUTCOMES OF THE PROPOSED USE**

It is not an absolute requirement to be able to demonstrate that a farm will be profitable. However it is important to be able to demonstrate that the land will be used productively and that it will give an economic return both for the investment which is made, and for the annual expenditure.

In order to demonstrate the economic outcome it is necessary to show the total value of the investment on the intended enterprise, and to demonstrate annual costs and returns.

It is important that these costs and returns are realistic.

### **MANAGEMENT OF THE PROPERTY**

The farm management plan needs to demonstrate how, and by whom the property will be managed. It should demonstrate the current level of expertise and or knowledge of the manager and other people involved. Where the expertise or knowledge to carry out the tasks is insufficient, the plan should outline the actions, which will be taken in order to address that deficiency.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL OUTCOMES OF THE PROPOSED LAND USE**

It is important that landowners consider the environmental outcomes of the proposed land use. In particular the plan should address the removal and or minimisation of any vermin and noxious weeds.

The plan should also address any off-site effects of the intended land use, for instance nutrition loss, effluent management, smell, noise and other environmental aspects, which may be important in some specific sites. On some sites there could be rare species of plants or animals which Council and the community generally believe should be afforded some level of protection.

### **TIME FRAMES**

It is important that the farm management plan sets out the intended timing of any proposed

development and the order of the proposed development, so that a judgement can be made as to the state of the general appearance of the property during development.

### IS A HOUSE REQUIRED?

It is not automatically the case that a farmer must live on the land that is being farmed, and it is a requirement of the plan to build your case as to why you require a dwelling.

It is also necessary for individuals to provide real evidence to show that the property in question will be able to be developed, and then will be sustainable in the long term. It is also necessary to demonstrate that the proposed rural enterprise is compatible with existing land use and will not have a detrimental impact on adjoining properties.

### HOW TO DEVELOP YOUR PLAN

There are a lot of people who can help you with your plan.

A neighbour with a well laid out, tidy property will understand the balance of decisions surrounding soil, water, fencing and shelter.

An agronomist or agricultural consultants can provide you with specific advice on soils and pastures, weeds and vermin and can provide advice on the overall layout of the property. They can also provide advice on water supply, the position of dams, tree planting and vegetation protection.

