

COVID-19 ECONOMIC RECOVERY

COVID-19 Marine Tourism Rebate

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1. Fund overview

The Queensland Government recently announced a \$2 million COVID-19 Marine Tourism Rebate program (the Program) as part of the North Queensland Tourism and Events Recovery Package. The Program will directly support North Queensland based marine tourism businesses operating vessels, in eligible local government areas, focussing on those operating vessels in the Bundaberg, Burdekin, Cassowary Coast, Cairns, Cook, Douglas, Fraser Coast, Gladstone, Hinchinbrook, Isaac, Livingstone, Mackay, Townsville and Whitsundays local government areas. The tourism business headquarters must be located in Queensland.

The Program aims to support tourism vessel operators that have suffered losses of income because of the COVID-19 travel restrictions and is designed to assist eligible applicants by offsetting the cost of berthing fees at privately-owned marina in an eligible local government area.

Applications open for the eligible local government areas of Douglas and Whitsunday from 7 September, of Livingstone and Townsville from 25 September and of Bundaberg, Burdekin, Cassowary Coast, Cairns, Cook, Fraser Coast, Gladstone, Hinchinbrook, Isaac and Mackay from 27 November 2020. The Program will close once all funding has been allocated.

2. Available funding

The assistance available under this program is a rebate up to a maximum amount of \$20 000 (excluding GST) per operator towards the cost of offsetting eligible privately-owned marina berthing fees.

Only one rebate may be paid to an applicant under the Program. The amount of a rebate cannot exceed total berthing fees at privately-owned marinas incurred by the operator.

3. Eligibility

3.1 Eligibility criteria

An applicant must own an eligible Marine tourism* **business** that meets the following eligibility criteria:

- a) have an established marine tourism operation that includes the use of at least one commercial vessel utilising a private marina berth in an eligible local government area, as at 1 February 2020
- b) have a valid Australian Business Number (ABN) active as at 1 February 2020
- c) be registered for GST
- d) have suffered a loss of income because of the COVID-19 travel restrictions
- e) have fewer than 200 full time equivalent employees as at 1 February 2020
- f) have an annual turnover of more than \$75,000 for the 2018/19 or 2019/20 financial year, or for recently commenced businesses that hadn't worked for the full financial year, be able to provide financial records to show that a proportionate amount of the annual turnover was met for the period of the financial year they operated
- g) not be insolvent or have owners or directors that are an undischarged bankrupt.

*Note: Licensed marine tourism operators must possess a Vessel Certificate of Operation from the Australian Maritime Safety Authority, and a Permit to Operate on the Great Barrier Reef from the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority.

3.2 Ineligibility

An application will not be eligible if the applicant does not meet the eligibility criteria identified in these guidelines.

3.3 Eligible costs

The only eligible costs for a rebate are berthing fees at privately-owned marinas incurred in an eligible local government area for the financial year period from 1 July 2020 to 30 June 2021.

3.4 Ineligible costs

- a) for marine tourism business that own their berth/s – all related charges and fees are ineligible
- b) costs not related to berth fees at privately-owned marinas are not eligible for this rebate.

4. Application assessment

4.1 Assessment criteria

In addition to meeting the eligibility criteria, applications will be assessed against:

- a) funding availability – applications will be processed on a first come, first serve basis, and therefore not all applications will be successful
- b) submission of a complete application form, with all requested supporting documentation included
- c) value for money, as determined by the Queensland Government.

A final decision will be made based on the assessment criteria and the information contained within the submitted application. Failure to submit all required documents will result in an application being declined.

The administration of this Rebate program allows the Queensland Government to validate and check the authenticity of applications and the applicant's details at any time. Applicants who are awarded the rebate must refund this to the Queensland Government if the rebate is subsequently found to be based on an invalid application.

4.2 Documentation required

The applicant will need to complete the application and attach evidence that the business is paying for berthing fees at a privately-owned marina in an eligible local government area in 2020/21. The applicant will also need to attach a copy of their Vessel Certificate of Operation from the Australian Maritime Safety Authority.

5. Application process

5.1 Online application

Applicants are required to complete an application form online and attach the required documentation as outlined in the Application Assessment section.

The guidelines with frequently asked questions will be available on the Department of State Development, Tourism and Innovation's (DSDTI) website at www.dsdti.qld.gov.au.

Online applications open for the eligible local government areas of Douglas and Whitsunday from 7 September, of Livingstone and Townsville from 25 September, and of Bundaberg, Burdekin, Cassowary Coast, Cairns, Cook, Fraser Coast, Gladstone, Hinchinbrook, Isaac and Mackay from 27 November 2020, with applications via a link on the DSDTI website to the Queensland Rural and Industry Development Authority's (QRIDA) application portal.

5.2 Eligibility check

All applications will be reviewed against the eligibility criteria to determine compliant applications.

5.3 Assessment

Compliant applications will be assessed to determine the amount of funding allocated to the applicant. The delegate will then consider the applications and approve applications against the available funding.

5.4 Applicants notified of outcome

All applicants will receive formal notification of the outcome of the application as soon as possible following assessments.

Successful applicants will receive an approval letter advising the application has been approved. The letter will also confirm the terms and conditions of funding.

After approval, successful applicants will receive 100 per cent of the eligible funding amount approved as a rebate.

5.5 Audit Requirements

Approved applicants must complete and submit documented evidence of paid berthing fees at a privately-owned marina in an eligible local government area before any reimbursement of these fees will be paid. Note berthing fees applied for are to represent the usual market rates for berthing in the eligible local government area. Approved applicants will need to retain documentation for rebate audit purposes.

Businesses may be surveyed six months after the completion of the Program.

6. Further information

6.1 Definitions

Domestic Tourism Market – intrastate and interstate visitor segments a business may wish to target.

International Visitors – people visiting Australia from another country for business or leisure.

Loss of Income – ability to demonstrate that a tourism-related business has experienced a loss of income since 1 February 2020 as a result of travel restrictions and Australia's borders being closed to international visitors.

Marine Tourism Business – business primarily providing goods and services to or for which the primary/majority target market is domestic or international visitors to Queensland. This may include bareboats, rigid inflatable boats, sailboats and motor vessels.

Privately-owned Marina – Privately-owned commercial marinas that are not owned by government.

6.2 Frequently Asked Questions

Please refer to our Frequently Asked Questions section on DSDTI's website at www.dsdti.qld.gov.au.

For more information about the grants or general advice on applications, please contact the COVID19 Hotline on 13 42 68 or email tourismresponse@ditid.qld.gov.au.

6.3 Appeal

- Applicants may request a review of a decision made by QRIDA in relation to the provision of funding or a declined application under the Program.
- Requests for appeal must be received by QRIDA within 20 business days after receipt of a decision advice.
- Applicants will be notified in writing of appeal outcomes within 30 business days from receipt of the appeal.

The Program is referenced as the scheme described in the *Rural and Regional Adjustment Regulation 2011*.

6.4 Privacy

QRIDA's Privacy Policy, available at www.qrida.qld.gov.au/privacy, sets out general information on how QRIDA collects, uses, and discloses individuals' personal information. The application form for this program contains specific information on how personal information will be collected, used, and disclosed.

Some information may be used by the Queensland Government to promote funded projects. Personal information will not be disclosed to any other third party without consent, unless required by law or for the purposes of *Information Privacy Act 2009*.

For audit purposes, the Queensland Government is required to retain the applications and other supplied supporting material. The provisions of the *Right to Information Act 2009* apply to documents in the possession of the Queensland Government.

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