

COVID-19 ECONOMIC RECOVERY

COVID-19 International Tourism Adaptation Grant

September 2020

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1. Fund overview

The \$5 million COVID-19 International Tourism Adaptation Grant Program is a key element of Queensland's Economic Recovery Strategy: *Unite and Recover for Queensland Jobs* to help accelerate the State's recovery from COVID-19.

This funding boost aims to support regional Queensland tourism businesses that have suffered losses of income because of the international travel restrictions as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The tourism business headquarters must be located in Queensland and primarily operate outside the Greater Brisbane Area of Brisbane City Council, Redlands City Council, Logan City Council, Ipswich City Council and Moreton Bay Regional Council boundaries.

The funds are to be used to assist the business to pivot to a domestic market or hibernate until international markets reopen.

Applications will be open from 2 October 2020 and the program will close once all funding has been allocated.

The key objectives of the COVID-19 International Tourism Adaptation Grant Fund are to assist tourism businesses to:

- pivot their product, service and/or marketing to a domestic tourism market
- meet operating costs while the business hibernates until international markets reopen.

2. Available funding

A total funding pool of \$5 million (excluding GST) is available for regional tourism businesses that have suffered losses of income because of international travel restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Grants from a minimum of \$2,000 to a maximum of \$10,000 (excluding GST) are available to tourism businesses in Queensland that can demonstrate they have suffered losses of income because of the international travel restrictions.

Given the major impact COVID-19 has had on tourism businesses, a matched funding contribution under this Fund is not a requirement.

2.1 Who can apply

Tourism businesses in regional Queensland that can demonstrate they have suffered losses of income because of the international travel restrictions.

Applicants who have been approved to receive up to \$10,000 through the Queensland Government's Small Business Adaptation Grant Program are ineligible to receive a grant under this scheme.

Only one approved grant per applicant is available across the program.

2.2 What the grant funding can be applied to

The following activities are examples of how the grant funding can be spent:

- a) tourism experience design and development activities including training, which are aimed at enabling the business to respond to a new market (e.g. from an international to a domestic tourism market)
- b) pivoting of the tourism business focus from the international market to the domestic tourism market including tourism marketing and promotional activities, tourism trade engagement and retail partnerships
- c) contributing towards operational costs to hibernate the tourism business while Australia's borders are closed to international visitors.

2.3 What is ineligible for grant funding

The following are examples of activities that are ineligible for grant funding:

- a) an activity for which the applicant has received, or has been approved to receive, financial assistance or is otherwise supported by other Queensland and Australian Government financial assistance measures
- b) services delivered in-kind (grant funding will only cover services paid for via a financial transaction)
- c) purchase of business assets, such as stock or fleet vehicles/machinery
- d) fees for services and/or goods provided by related parties (such as companies with common shareholdings or directorship with the applicant, and employees or immediate family of the applicant)
- e) direct-selling businesses (where sales of another business's goods or services are made in the customer's home, work or other meeting place through methods such as party plan and network marketing)
- f) goods or services purchased, or any payments made, prior to 1 February 2020.

3. Eligibility

3.1 Eligibility Criteria

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

- a) have an established operating base in regional Queensland with an international tourism-related focus
- b) have a valid Australian Business Number (ABN) active as at 1 February 2020
- c) be registered for GST
- d) headquarters be located in Queensland and operate outside of the Brisbane City Council, Redlands City Council, Logan City Council, Ipswich City Council and Moreton Bay Regional Council boundaries
- e) have suffered losses of income because of international travel restrictions and border closures due to COVID-19. A short narrative of the impact on the business with supporting information will be required
- f) have fewer than 200 full time equivalent employees as at 1 February 2020
- g) 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.

- h) not be insolvent or have owners or directors that are an undischarged bankrupt.

3.2 Ineligibility

An application will not be eligible if:

- a) the applicant has been approved to receive or has received funding through the Small Business Adaption Grant from the Queensland Government
- b) the applicant does not meet the eligibility criteria identified in these guidelines.

Regional and local tourism organisations and non-profit organisations are deemed ineligible for the COVID-19 International Tourism Adaptation Grant Program.

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 Grant 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 grant must refund the grant to the Queensland Government if the grant is subsequently found to be based on an invalid application.

4.2 Documentation Required

The applicant will need to complete the application and attach any relevant documentation to the application as evidence that the business has suffered losses of income because of the international travel restrictions and as a result is planning or has commenced planning to undertake new activities to pivot the business or go into hibernation. This may include evidence of:

- a) cancelled bookings
- b) activity to pivot the business or develop new domestic products and experiences (e.g. marketing material, domestic promotional costs, social media campaigns/accounts)
- c) other costs required to hibernate business or develop the experience
- d) a statement describing how the funding will contribute to the small business pivoting its product, service and/or marketing to a domestic market, or meet operating costs while the business hibernates until international markets reopen
- e) evidence to demonstrate that business has suffered losses of income. For example, Business Activity Statements, dated accountant letter on letterhead from a member of CPA Australia, Chartered Accountants Australia & New Zealand or the Institute of Public Accountants

- f) declaration of employee head count
- g) evidence of annual turnover
- h) evidence of annual payroll.

The applicant will also need to provide details of other Queensland Government grants and support provided to the business, including grants received by related enterprises.

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 and 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 from 2 October 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 and confirming the terms and conditions of funding.

After approval, successful applicants will receive 100 per cent of the eligible funding amount approved as an up-front payment.

5.5 Audit Requirements

Approved applicants will have six months to spend the funding after receiving approval. Approved applicants will need to retain documentation for grant audit purposes. Note the Queensland Government, during the life of this grant Program, may conduct 'spot audits' of approved applicants' grant funding documentation.

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.

Small Business Adaption Grant – the grant supports small businesses subject to closure or highly impacted by COVID-19 shutdown restrictions announced by the Queensland Government, to adapt and sustain their operations, and build resilience - <https://www.business.qld.gov.au/starting-business/advice-support/grants/adaption>.

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:

- accommodation providers (ANZSIC code 4400)
- food and beverage services including cafes, restaurants, taverns and clubs (ANZSIC codes 4511, 4513, 4520, 4530)
- road and water transport, including sightseeing (ANZSIC codes 4623, 4820, 5010)
- rental and hiring services (ANZSIC code 6611)
- travel agencies (ANZSIC code 7220)
- heritage activities including museums, parks and gardens (ANZSIC codes 8910, 8921, 8922)
- performing Arts Venues (ANZSIC code 9003)
- amusement and Other Recreational Services (ANZSIC codes 9131, 9139).

6.2 Frequently Asked Questions

Please refer to our Frequently Asked Questions section on the Department of State Development, Tourism and Innovation's website at www.dsdti.qld.gov.au.

For more information about the grants or general advice on applications, please contact the COVID-19 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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