



**Australian Government**

**Department of Industry, Science and Resources**

**Department of the Treasury**

## Grant Opportunity Guidelines

# Australian Small Business Advisory Services – Digital Solutions Round 3

<b>Opening date:</b>	<b>19 September 2025</b>
<b>Closing date and time:</b>	5pm Australian Eastern Daylight Time on 5 December 2025 Please take account of time zone differences when submitting your application.
<b>Commonwealth policy entity:</b>	The Treasury
<b>Administering entity:</b>	Department of Industry, Science and Resources (DISR)
<b>Enquiries:</b>	If you have any questions, contact us on 13 28 46 or email <a href="mailto:digitalsolutions@industry.gov.au">digitalsolutions@industry.gov.au</a>
<b>Date guidelines released:</b>	19 September 2025
<b>Type of grant opportunity:</b>	Open competitive

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## 1. Australian Small Business Advisory Services: Digital Solutions Round 3 processes

### **The Australian Small Business Advisory Services is designed to achieve Australian Government objectives**

This grant opportunity is part of the above grant program which contributes to The Treasury's Outcome 1: Supporting and implementing informed decisions on policies for the good of the Australian people including for achieving strong, sustainable economic growth through the provision of advice to Treasury ministers and the efficient administration of Treasury's functions. The Treasury works with stakeholders to plan and design the grant program according to the [Commonwealth Grants Rules and Principles \(CGRPs\)](#).



### **The grant opportunity opens**

We publish the grant guidelines on [business.gov.au](https://business.gov.au) and [GrantConnect](#). Information session details will also be available on [business.gov.au](https://business.gov.au).



### **You complete and submit a grant application**

You complete the application form, addressing all the eligibility assessment criteria in order for your application to be considered.



### **We assess all grant applications**

We review the applications against eligibility criteria and notify you if you are not eligible. We assess eligible applications against the assessment criteria including an overall consideration of value with money and compare it to other eligible applications.



### **We make grant recommendations**

We provide advice to the decision maker on the merits of each application.



### **Grant decisions are made**

The decision maker decides which applications are successful.



### **We notify you of the outcome**

We advise you of the outcome of your application. We may not notify unsuccessful applicants until grant agreements have been executed with successful applicants.



### **We enter into a grant agreement**

We will enter into a grant agreement with successful applicants. The type of grant agreement is based on the nature of the grant and will be proportional to the risks involved.



### **Delivery of grant**

You complete the grant activity as set out in your grant agreement. We manage the grant by working with you, monitoring your progress and making payments.



### **Evaluation of the Digital Solutions Round 3 grant opportunity**

The Treasury will evaluate the specific grant activity and Digital Solutions Round 3 as a whole. We base this on information you provide to us and that we collect from various sources.

## 1.1. Introduction

These guidelines contain information for the Australian Small Business Advisory Services (ASBAS) Digital Solutions Round 3 grants.

This document sets out:

- the purpose of the grant program/grant opportunity
- the eligibility and assessment criteria
- how we consider and assess grant applications
- how we notify applicants and enter into grant agreements with grantees
- how we monitor and evaluate grantees' performance
- responsibilities and expectations in relation to the opportunity.

This grant opportunity and process will be administered by the Department of Industry, Science and Resources (we/the department/DISR) on behalf of The Treasury.

We have defined key terms used in these guidelines in the glossary at section 14.

You should read this document carefully before you fill out an application.

## 2. About the grant program

The ASBAS program (the program) is an ongoing program. The program supports the Australian Government's commitment to enhance the capabilities of business advisory service providers to deliver low cost, high quality advisory services to small businesses in metropolitan and regional areas.

Service providers deliver digital advisory workshops, webinars, online training courses and personalised mentoring sessions to small businesses to help improve their digital capabilities.

The objectives of the program are:

- to assist business advisory service providers in the conduct of their business advisory services
- to enhance the capabilities of business advisory service providers to deliver low cost, high quality advisory services to small businesses.

The intended outcomes of the program are that:

- small businesses nationally have access to low cost, high quality advisory services
- small businesses increase their uptake of advisory services.

We administer the program according to the [Commonwealth Grants Rules and Principles \(CGRPs\)](#)<sup>1</sup>.

### 2.1. About the ASBAS Digital Solutions Round 3 grant opportunity

This grant opportunity supports the Australian Government's ongoing focus to lift small business productivity through digital capability and adoption across the economy. Small businesses that digitalise their operations benefit from improved productivity, growth and resilience.

ASBAS Digital Solutions Round 3 will support service providers to offer low cost, high quality advisory services on digitalisation to Australian small businesses, across 5 priority capabilities:

- introduction to digitalising your small business

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.finance.gov.au/government/commonwealth-grants/commonwealth-grants-rules-and-principles-2024>

- social media, digital marketing and selling online
- using business software
- AI and emerging technologies
- cybersecurity and data privacy.

The objectives of the grant opportunity are to:

- assist business advisory service providers in the conduct of their digitalisation business advisory services
- enhance the capabilities of business advisory service providers to deliver low-cost, high quality digitalisation advisory services to small businesses

The intended outcomes of the grant opportunity are:

- increased access by small businesses to advisory services that support and enhance their digital competency
- increased number of small businesses digitalising their operations and using digital tools to increase their efficiency, productivity and resilience.

### 3. Grant amount and grant period

#### 3.1. Grants available

The Australian Government has announced a total of \$25.136 million over 5 years from 2025-26 to 2029-30 for the grant opportunity.

There are 3 grants available under this grant opportunity, each corresponding with a defined geographical service area. You may apply for one or more grants, to service multiple service areas. You must submit a separate application for each service area.

The maximum grant amount for each service area over 5 years is:

- \$8.819 million for Area 1 - New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory
- \$7.371 million for Area 2 - Queensland, the Northern Territory and Western Australia
- \$8.946 million for Area 3 - South Australia, Victoria and Tasmania.

The decision maker, who is the Minister for Small Business, will have discretion to move funding between service areas to ensure all funds are allocated to meritorious applications.

The program will fund one service provider to exclusively service the small businesses located in each service area. The program will not fund proposals that plan to cover only part of a service area.

A map of the service areas and a breakdown of the number and distribution of small businesses per service area is included at Appendix C.

You must offer advisory services across the metropolitan and regional areas of the service area. The Government expects that the delivery of advisory services within a service area will be broadly aligned to the metropolitan and regional distribution of the population of small businesses within each service area (based on ABS Remoteness Area classifications).

The grant amount will be up to 100 per cent of eligible project expenditure. Total grant funding cannot exceed the amount of available funds per service area.

You are responsible for the remaining eligible and ineligible project costs.

You cannot use funding from other Commonwealth, state, territory or local government grants to fund the balance of project expenditure not covered by the grant.

### 3.2. Project period

The maximum project period is 49 months.

You must provide digital advisory services between 1 July 2026 and 29 March 2030.

You must complete your project by 29 March 2030.

## 4. Eligibility criteria

We cannot consider your application if you do not satisfy all eligibility criteria.

### 4.1. Who is eligible to apply for a grant?

To be eligible you must:

- have an Australian Business Number (ABN) or Indigenous Corporation Number (ICN)
- be registered for the Goods and Services Tax (GST)
- be a trading corporation where your trading activities form a sufficiently significant proportion of the corporation's overall activities as to merit it being described as a trading corporation; or are a substantial and not merely peripheral activity of the corporation
- address all assessment criteria, including all sub-criteria, in section 6

and be one of the following entities:

- an entity incorporated in Australia (including incorporated not for profit organisations, registered charities and companies limited by guarantee)
- an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Corporation registered under the *Corporations (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) Act 2006* (Cth)
- an incorporated trustee on behalf of a trust.

Joint applications are acceptable, provided you have a lead organisation who is the main driver of the project and is eligible to apply. For further information on joint applications, refer to section 7.2.

### 4.2. Additional eligibility requirements

We can only accept applications that:

- provide advisory services on digitisation to small businesses:
  - in one of the selected service areas
  - that improve, support and enhance small businesses' digital competency and adoption including but not limited to the priority digital capabilities listed in section 5.3.
- meet the service requirements listed in section 5.2.

We cannot waive the eligibility criteria under any circumstances.

### 4.3. Who is not eligible to apply for a grant?

You are not eligible to apply if you are:

- any organisation not included in section 4.1
- an organisation, or your project partner is an organisation, included on the [National Redress Scheme's website](#) on the list of 'Institutions that have not joined or signified their intent to join the Scheme'
- an employer of 100 or more employees that has [not complied](#) with the *Workplace Gender Equality Act (2012)*

- an individual
- a partnership
- an unincorporated association
- a trust (however, an incorporated trustee may apply on behalf of a trust)
- a Commonwealth, state, territory or local government body (including government business enterprises)
- a non-corporate Commonwealth entity.

## 5. What the grant money can be used for

### 5.1. Eligible grant activities

To be eligible your project must provide advisory services on digitalisation to small businesses in the selected service area.

Eligible activities must be additional to any ongoing business as usual small business advisory activities undertaken by you.

Eligible activities may include:

- development of content
- development of communication channels for the delivery of advisory services
- promotional activities directed at driving small business participation in the program
- delivery of digital advisory services (one-on-one by face to face, phone, email, webchat, interactive webinars, workshops and online tutorials)
- development of client surveys to seek feedback on provided advisory services
- referral to other appropriate small business advisory services.

We may also approve other activities. Any additional activities must be in line with objectives and outcomes in section 2.

### 5.2. Service requirements

To be eligible you must agree to meet the following service requirements throughout the duration of the program:

- offer and deliver digitalisation advisory services to small businesses, covering the 5 priority digital capabilities identified at section 5.3
- recruit qualified and experienced small business advisors to deliver the digital advisory services
- meet agreed service delivery targets as described in Appendix D
- deliver services to small business clients in the form of:
  - direct one-on-one advisory support, delivered via the channel that best meets the needs of the client, whether that be face-to-face, online or over the phone
  - interactive workshops, delivered face-to-face wherever possible
  - webinars
  - tailored digital action plans, with priority actions (guided development via one-on-one advisory support).

You will also need to make available self-directed tutorials in an online learning management system.



Each small business has the flexibility to determine the extent of their participation by choosing how many or how few services they utilise.

Services must cater for a range of skill levels (such as beginner, intermediate, advanced) and improve access for First Nations and Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) small business owners.

The number of workshops, webinars or online tutorial services that any one small business can participate in over the life of the program is unlimited, and the services are to be provided at no charge to the small businesses that use these services. In recognition of the impact of non-attendance at face-to-face events, providers may initiate a cost recovery method such as a refundable deposit or discounted mentoring costs to incentivise attendance.

For one-to-one advisory support, 5 hours must be offered to each small business (identified by unique ABN) over the life of the program. Small businesses may choose to use as little or as much of the 5 hours as they would like. These services are to be offered to each small business:

- at a one-off upfront cost of \$110 (including GST), or
- at no cost, in the case of demonstrated financial hardship.<sup>2</sup>

If more than 5 hours of one-to-one advisory service is required, providers may negotiate with the small business to supply this at market rates, outside of the program.

All services must be promoted and available to small businesses located in all parts of the service area (i.e. regional and metropolitan areas). The needs of CALD and First Nations small business owners are to be catered for when promoting and delivering the services.

A phone booking service as well as an online booking service must be available for small businesses to register for the services.

You are to monitor the quality and effectiveness of all the services you provide, and the advisors delivering them, through surveys of your clients' satisfaction. Periodically, the Department will also survey your clients to gauge the quality and effectiveness of the services you provided, and your clients' satisfaction with them. You must advise clients before they utilise the service that they will be sent a survey after the service has been provided.

Other government service offerings outside of the program which could support small businesses on their pathway to digitalisation should be identified and shared with small businesses.

You will be required to meet the data collection and reporting obligations of the program (see section 12).

### 5.3. Priority digital capabilities

Your project must deliver services to small businesses to build skills and competencies across the 5 priority digital capabilities:

1. Introduction to Digitalising Your Small Business; for example:

- what is digitalisation and how can it help your small business?
- how to align digital needs with your small business goals
- is there a digital solution to your small business problem?
- types of digital tools and benefits to your small business
- overview of the other 4 digital capabilities.

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<sup>2</sup> See glossary for explanation of 'financial hardship'.

2. Social media, digital marketing and selling online; for example:

- choosing an appropriate online presence
- creating and managing a website
- creating a social media account and content
- assessing opportunities for online sales
- developing an online sales strategy
- developing digital marketing strategies for social media and web-based advertising.

3. Using business software; for example:

- choosing the right software for managing sales, accounts and payroll, inventory, and customer relationships
- maximising the benefits of business software.

4. AI and emerging technologies; for example:

- writing and content generation
- automating tasks
- customer service engagement using chatbots
- cash flow projections and analytics.

5. Cybersecurity and data privacy; for example:

- assessing and managing cyber security threats
- meeting customer data privacy obligations, and protecting customer data.

## 5.4. Branding

In promoting the services, you must identify them as being provided under the program, funded by the Australian Government. In delivering the services, your clients must clearly understand that they are participating in the program. You must promote services in line with Branding Guidelines, that will be made available to you prior to commencement of your project.

## 5.5. Eligible expenditure

You can only spend grant funds on eligible expenditure incurred on agreed projects as defined in your grant agreement.

- For guidance on eligible expenditure, see appendix A
- For guidance on ineligible expenditure, see appendix B.

We may update the guidance on eligible and ineligible expenditure from time to time. If your application is successful, the version in place when you submitted your application applies to your project.

If your application is successful, we may ask you to verify project costs that you provided in your application. You may need to provide evidence such as quotes for major costs.<sup>3</sup>

Not all expenditure on your project may be eligible for grant funding. The Program Delegate (who is a manager within the department with responsibility for administering the program) makes the final decision on what is eligible expenditure and may give additional guidance on eligible expenditure if required.

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<sup>3</sup> See glossary for an explanation of 'major costs'.

To be eligible, expenditure must:

- be a direct cost of the project
- be incurred by you for required project audit activities.

You must incur the project expenditure between the project start and end date for it to be eligible unless stated otherwise.

You must not commence your project until you execute a grant agreement with the Commonwealth.

You must fund any project expenditure that is not covered by the grant. You cannot use funding from other Commonwealth, State, Territory or local government sources to fund your share of project expenditure.

## 5.6. What the grant money cannot be used for

For guidance on ineligible expenditure, refer to appendix B.

## 6. The assessment criteria

You must address all assessment criteria in your application, including all sub-criteria. We will assess your application based on the weighting given to each criterion.

The application form asks questions that relate to the assessment criteria below. The amount of detail and supporting evidence you provide in your application should be relative to the project size, complexity and grant amount requested. You should provide evidence to support your answers. The application form displays character limits for each response.

We will only award funding to applications that address all assessment criteria (including all sub-criteria) and score at least 50 per cent against each assessment criterion.

### 6.1. Assessment criterion 1

**Extent that your proposed advisory services will improve the digital capability of, and digital adoption by, small businesses in the selected service area (40 points).**

You should demonstrate this through identifying:

- a. how your proposed service mix (advice topics and delivery format) will meet demand and improve digital capability of, and adoption by, small businesses in the selected service area
- b. the customer journey for a small business accessing your services including how they will discover, access and participate in the services
- c. your strategy to meet the targets described in Appendix D for:
  - unique small businesses serviced
  - hours of direct one-on-one advisory support, delivered via the channel that best meets the needs of the client
  - interactive workshops delivered face-to-face or online
  - webinars
  - self-directed tutorials in an online management system.
- d. how you will reach CALD and First Nations small business owners
- e. your strategy to achieve the reach of your services across metropolitan and regional small businesses

- f. your strategy to achieve client satisfaction in line with the target described in Appendix D
- g. your strategy to promote and market your services to small businesses in the selected service area.

## 6.2. Assessment criterion 2

### **Capacity, capability and resources to deliver the project (40 points).**

You should demonstrate this through identifying:

- a. use of current and emerging digital technologies in daily operational processes and client service delivery
- b. your track record managing similar projects, including contact details for other organisations you have provided services for, so that your track record can be verified
- c. your access to personnel with the right skills and experience, including management, technical staff and partner organisations to the lead applicant
- d. your access to any capital equipment, technology, intellectual property, administrative systems, including record keeping practices, data collection, information sharing and reporting and required regulatory or other approvals
- e. your ability to comply with relevant policies and laws to ensure the privacy and security of client data
- f. a sound project plan to manage and monitor the project and risks, including how you plan to have the service established and operational by 1 July 2026.

## 6.3. Assessment criterion 3

### **Financial capability and governance (20 points).**

You must demonstrate this through identifying:

- a. a detailed project budget broken down by financial year that identifies the costs of all key project activities/services, including the costs of promotional activities, the development of content, travel and annual financial audit, and demonstrates that costs are commensurate with the level of service to be provided
- b. your ability to fund the running costs of your organisation external to the project and any project costs that are not covered by the grant
- c. how your organisation meets appropriate governance standards, including but not limited to ISO27001 – international information security standard or similar.

## 7. How to apply

Before applying you should read and understand these guidelines, the [sample application form](#), the [sample grant agreement](#) and the branding guidelines published on [business.gov.au](#) and GrantConnect.

Applicants should read all eligibility and assessment criteria closely and attach detailed evidence that supports the assessment criteria.

You will need to set up an account to access our online [portal](#). You can only submit an application during a funding round.

To apply, you must:

- complete and submit the application through the online [portal](#)

- provide all the information requested
- address all eligibility and assessment criteria
- include all necessary attachments.

You are responsible for making sure your application is complete and accurate. Giving false or misleading information is a serious offence under the [Criminal Code Act 1995](#). If we consider that you have provided false or misleading information we may not progress your application. If you find an error in your application after submitting it, you should call us immediately on 13 28 46.

After submitting your application, we may contact you for clarification if we find an error or any missing information, including evidence that supports your eligibility/merit. The acceptance of any additional information provided after the submission of your application is at the discretion of the Program Delegate. Additional information should not materially change your application at the time it was submitted and therefore may be refused if deemed to be purely supplementary.

You can view and print a copy of your submitted application on the portal for your own records.

If you need further guidance around the application process, or if you have any issues with the portal, [contact us](#) at business.gov.au or by calling 13 28 46.

### 7.1. Attachments to the application

You must provide the following documents with your application:

- a project plan, including risk management plan
- a detailed project budget broken down by financial year
- marketing strategy for the service area
- a letter of reference with referee contact details from at least one organisation you have provided services for, to verify your track record
- trust deed (where applicable).

You must attach supporting documentation to the application form in line with the instructions provided within the form. You should only attach requested documents. Individual file sizes cannot be greater than 2MB, while the total of all attachments cannot exceed 20MB. We will not consider information in attachments that we do not request.

### 7.2. Joint (consortia) applications

We recognise that some organisations may want to join together as a group to deliver a project. In these circumstances, you must appoint a lead organisation. Only the lead organisation can submit the application form and enter into the grant agreement with the Commonwealth. The application must identify all other members of the proposed group. If your application is deemed meritorious you will be required to provide a letter of support from each of the project partners. Each letter of support must include:

- details of the project partner
- an overview of how the project partner will work with the lead organisation and any other project partners in the group to successfully complete the project
- an outline of the relevant experience and/or expertise the project partner will bring to the group
- the roles/responsibilities the project partner will undertake, and the resources it will contribute (if any)
- details of a nominated management level contact officer.

You must have a formal arrangement in place with all parties prior to 1 July 2026.

### 7.3. Timing of grant opportunity processes

You can only submit an application between the published opening and closing dates. We cannot accept late applications.

If you are successful, we expect you will be able to commence your project around March 2026.

Table 1: Expected timing for this grant opportunity

Activity	Timeframe
Assessment of applications	Approx. 6 weeks
Approval and announcement of successful applicants	Approx. 2 weeks
Negotiations and award of grant agreements	Approx. 4 weeks
Notification to unsuccessful applicants	2 weeks
Earliest start date of project	March 2026
Digital advisory services/project completion date	29 March 2030
End date of grant commitment	28 June 2030

### 7.4. Questions during the application process

If you have any questions during the application period, [contact us](#) at business.gov.au or by calling 13 28 46.

## 8. The grant selection process

### 8.1. Assessment of grant applications

We first review your application against the eligibility criteria.

If eligible, your application will be assessed against the assessment criteria. Only eligible applications will proceed to the assessment stage.

We consider your application on its merits, based on:

- how well it meets the criteria
- how it compares to other applications
- whether it provides value with relevant money.<sup>4</sup>

When assessing the extent to which the application represents value with relevant money, we will have regard to:

- the overall objectives of the grant opportunity
- the evidence provided to demonstrate how your project contributes to meeting those objectives
- the relative value of the grant sought.

If applications are scored the same, the Program Delegate will consider value with relevant money and alignment to the program objectives and reach across selected service area to recommend applications for funding.

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<sup>4</sup> See glossary for an explanation of 'value with money'.

We also consider any national interest, financial, legal/regulatory, governance or other issue or risk that we identify during any due diligence process that we conduct in respect of the applicant. This includes its directors, officers, senior managers, key personnel, its related bodies corporate (as defined in the *Corporations Act*) or its application that could bring the Australian Government into disrepute if it were to fund the applicant. Such issues and risks include where we consider that funding the application under this grant opportunity is likely to directly conflict with Australian Government policy. Where possible<sup>5</sup>, we will provide you with an opportunity to comment on any material risks identified during this due diligence process prior to our determining the extent (if any) to which those issues or risks affect our assessment of the application and, if so, whether they are sufficient to warrant the exclusion of your application from the assessment process.

## 8.2. Who will assess applications?

DISR assess your application against the selection criteria.

## 8.3. Who will approve grants?

The Minister for Small Business decides which grants to approve taking into account the application assessment and the availability of grant funds.

The Minister's decision is final in all matters, including:

- the grant approval
- the grant funding to be awarded
- any conditions attached to the offer of grant funding.

We cannot review decisions about the merits of your application.

The Minister will not approve funding if there are insufficient program funds available across relevant financial years for the program.

# 9. Notification of application outcomes

We will advise you of the outcome of your application in writing. If you are successful, we advise you of any specific conditions attached to the grant.

## 9.1. Feedback on your application

If you are unsuccessful, we will give you an opportunity to discuss the outcome with us.

# 10. Successful grant applications

## 10.1. The grant agreement

You must enter into a legally binding grant agreement with the Commonwealth. The grant agreement has general terms and conditions that cannot be changed. A [sample grant agreement](#) is available on [business.gov.au](http://business.gov.au) and GrantConnect.

We will manage the grant agreement through the online portal. This includes issuing and executing the grant agreement. Execute means both you and the Commonwealth have accepted the agreement. We are not responsible for any expenditure you incur and cannot make any payments until a grant agreement is executed.

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<sup>5</sup> Subject to national security and other considerations.

The approval of your grant may have specific conditions determined by the assessment process or other considerations made by the Minister. We will identify these in the offer of grant funding.

If you enter an agreement under the ASBAS Digital Solutions Round 3, you cannot receive other grants for the same activities from other Commonwealth, state or territory granting programs.

The Commonwealth may recover grant funds if there is a breach of the grant agreement.

You will have 30 days from the date of a written offer to execute this grant agreement with the Commonwealth. During this time, we will work with you to finalise details.

The offer may lapse if both parties do not sign the grant agreement within this time. Under certain circumstances, we may extend this period. We base the approval of your grant on the information you provide in your application. We will review any required changes to these details to ensure they do not impact the project as approved by the Minister.

## 10.2. Specific legislation, policies and industry standards

You must comply with all relevant laws, regulations and Australian Government sanctions in undertaking your project. You must also comply with the specific legislation/policies/industry standards that follow. It is a condition of the grant funding that you meet these requirements. We will include these requirements in your grant agreement.

In particular, you will be required to comply with State/territory legislation in relation to working with children.

## 10.3. How we pay the grant

The grant agreement will state the:

- maximum grant amount we will pay
- any financial contribution provided by you or a third party.

We will not exceed the maximum grant amount under any circumstances. If you incur extra costs, you must meet them yourself.

We will make payments according to an agreed schedule set out in the grant agreement. Payments are subject to satisfactory progress on the project. We reserve the right to withhold or reduce payments if the required milestones for the reporting period are not met.

We set aside \$250,000 of the total grant funding for the final payment. We will pay this when you submit a satisfactory end of project report demonstrating you have completed outstanding obligations for the project. We may need to adjust your progress payments to align with available program funds across financial years and/or to ensure we retain a minimum \$250,000 of grant funding for the final payment.

## 10.4. Grant Payments and GST

If you are registered for the Goods and Services Tax (GST), where applicable we will add GST to your grant payment and provide you with a recipient created tax invoice. You are required to notify us if your GST registration status changes during the project period. GST does not apply to grant payments to government related entities<sup>6</sup>.

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<sup>6</sup> See Australian Taxation Office ruling GSTR 2012/2 available at [ato.gov.au](http://ato.gov.au)



Grants are assessable income for taxation purposes, unless exempted by a taxation law. We recommend you seek independent professional advice on your taxation obligations or seek assistance from the [Australian Taxation Office](#). We do not provide advice on tax.

## 11. Announcement of grants

If successful, your grant will be listed on the GrantConnect website 21 calendar days after the date of execution.

We will publish non-sensitive details of successful projects on GrantConnect. We are required to do this by the [Commonwealth Grants Rules and Principles \(CGRPs\)](#), Section 5.4. We may also publish this information on business.gov.au. This information may include:

- name of your organisation
- title of the project
- description of the project and its aims
- amount of grant funding awarded
- Australian Business Number
- business location
- your organisation's industry sector.

## 12. How we monitor your grant activity

### 12.1. Keeping us informed

You should let us know if anything is likely to affect your project or organisation.

We need to know of any key changes to your organisation or its business activities, particularly if they affect your ability to complete your project, carry on business and pay debts due.

You must also inform us of any changes to your:

- name
- addresses
- nominated contact details
- bank account details
- joint/consortia partners and related arrangements (if applicable).

If you become aware of a breach of terms and conditions under the grant agreement, you must contact us immediately.

You must notify us of events relating to your project and provide an opportunity for the Minister or their representative to attend.

### 12.2. Reporting

You must submit reports in line with the grant agreement. We will provide the requirements for these reports as appendices in the grant agreement. We will remind you of your reporting obligations before a report is due. We will expect you to report on:

- progress against agreed project milestones and outcomes
- project expenditure, including expenditure of grant funds
- service data metrics and progress against key performance indicators.

The amount of detail you provide in your reports should be relative to the project size, complexity and grant amount.

We will monitor the progress of your project by assessing reports you submit and may conduct site visits to confirm details of your reports if necessary. Occasionally we may need to re-examine claims, seek further information or request an independent audit of claims and payments.

#### 12.2.1. Service delivery data collection and reporting

You must have a system in place that collects data including but not limited to:

- services provided, by delivery format (section 5.2) and digital advice topic (section 5.3)
- program clients that receive (rather than register to receive) services under the program, including unique ABN, contact details, individual participants, and details of services received
- number of First Nations, CALD, metropolitan and regional small businesses serviced
- client satisfaction levels with services received.

The reporting templates in the grant agreement will specify the data collection metrics and the level of detail required in biannual progress reports.

#### 12.2.2. Key performance indicators

Your grant agreement will specify targets to be met in the delivery of the services. These will align with the service delivery targets described in Appendix D.

The Program Delegate may set additional performance indicators.

#### 12.2.3. Progress reports

Progress reports must:

- include details of your progress towards completion of agreed project activities
- show the total eligible expenditure incurred to date
- present final metrics measured throughout the project
- include a declaration that the grant money was spent in accordance with the grant agreement and to report on any underspends of the grant money
- be submitted by the report due date (you can submit reports ahead of time if you have completed relevant project activities).

We will only make grant payments when satisfactory progress against the agreed milestones is demonstrated in satisfactory progress reports.

You must discuss any project or milestone reporting delays with us as soon as you become aware of them.

#### 12.2.4. Ad-hoc reports

We may ask you for ad-hoc reports on your project. This may be to provide an update on progress, or any significant delays or difficulties in completing the project.

#### 12.2.5. End of project report

When you complete the project, you must submit an end of project report.

End of project reports must:

- include the agreed evidence as specified in the grant agreement
- identify the total eligible expenditure incurred for the project

- include a declaration that the grant money was spent in accordance with the grant agreement and to report on any underspends of the grant money
- be submitted by the report due date.

### 12.3. Audited financial acquittal report

We will ask you to provide an independent audit report at the end of each financial year. An audit report will verify that you spent the grant in accordance with the grant agreement. The audit report requires you to prepare a statement of grant income and expenditure.

### 12.4. Grant agreement variations

We recognise that unexpected events may affect project progress. In these circumstances, you can request a variation to your grant agreement, including:

- changing project milestones
- changing project activities.

The program does not allow for an increase of grant funds.

If you want to propose changes to the grant agreement, you must put them in writing before the grant agreement end date. You can submit a variation request via our online portal.

If a delay in the project causes milestone achievement and payment dates to move to a different financial year, you will need a variation to the grant agreement. We can only move funds between financial years if there is enough program funding in the relevant year to allow for the revised payment schedule. If we cannot move the funds, you may lose some grant funding.

You should not assume that a variation request will be successful. We will consider your request based on factors such as:

- how it affects the project outcome
- consistency with the program policy objective, grant opportunity guidelines and any relevant policies of the department
- changes to the timing of grant payments
- availability of program funds.

### 12.5. Compliance visits

We may visit you during the project period to review your compliance with the grant agreement. We will provide you with reasonable notice of any compliance visit.

### 12.6. Record keeping

We may also inspect the records you are required to keep under the grant agreement.

### 12.7. Evaluation

The Treasury will evaluate the grant opportunity to measure how well the outcomes and objectives have been achieved. We may use information from your application and project reports for this purpose. We may request grantees undertake interviews or provide information to help us understand how the grant impacted you and evaluate how effective the program was in achieving its outcomes.

We may also request grantees engage in testing and other activities to assist with continuous improvement. This could include, for example, providing modified versions of content to different groups to test which material is most effective at driving outcomes.

We may contact you up to 2 years after you finish your project for more information to assist with this evaluation.

## 12.8. Acknowledgement

If you make a public statement about a project funded under the program, including in a brochure or publication, you must acknowledge the grant by using the following:

- 'This project received grant funding from the Australian Government.'

If you erect signage in relation to the project, the signage must contain an acknowledgement of the grant.

In promoting the program, you must identify it as being funded by the Australian Government. Branding Guidelines will be provided to successful applicants.

## 13. Probity

We will make sure that the grant opportunity process is fair, according to the published guidelines, incorporates appropriate safeguards against fraud, unlawful activities and other inappropriate conduct and is consistent with the CGRPs.

### 13.1. Enquiries and feedback

For further information or clarification, you can contact us on 13 28 46 or by [web chat](#) or through our [online enquiry form](#) on business.gov.au.

We may publish answers to your questions on our website as Frequently Asked Questions.

Our [Customer Service Charter](#) is available at business.gov.au. We use customer satisfaction surveys to improve our business operations and service.

If you have a complaint, call us on 13 28 46. We will refer your complaint to the appropriate manager.

If you are not satisfied with the way we handle your complaint, you can contact:

General Manager  
Business Grants Hub  
Department of Industry, Science and Resources  
GPO Box 2013  
CANBERRA ACT 2601

You can also contact the [Commonwealth Ombudsman](#) with your complaint (call 1300 362 072). There is no fee for making a complaint, and the Ombudsman may conduct an independent investigation.

### 13.2. Conflicts of interest

Any conflicts of interest could affect the performance of the grant opportunity. There may be a conflict of interest, or perceived conflict of interest, if our staff, any member of a committee or advisor and/or you or any of your personnel:

- has a professional, commercial or personal relationship with a party who is able to influence the application selection process, such as an Australian Government officer or member of an external panel
- has a relationship with or interest in, an organisation, which is likely to interfere with or restrict the applicants from carrying out the proposed activities fairly and independently, or

- has a relationship with, or interest in, an organisation from which they will receive personal gain because the organisation receives a grant under the grant program/grant opportunity.

As part of your application, we will ask you to declare any perceived or existing conflicts of interests or confirm that, to the best of your knowledge, there is no conflict of interest.

If you later identify an actual, apparent, or perceived conflict of interest, you must inform us in writing immediately.

Conflicts of interest for Australian Government staff are handled as set out in the Australian [Public Service Code of Conduct \(Section 13\(7\)\)](#) of the [Public Service Act 1999](#). Committee members and other officials including the decision maker must also declare any conflicts of interest.

We publish our [conflict of interest policy](#)<sup>7</sup> on the department's website. The Commonwealth policy entity also publishes a conflict of interest policy on its website.

### 13.3. Privacy

Unless the information you provide to us is:

- confidential information as per below, or
- personal information as per below.

We may share the information with other government agencies for a relevant Commonwealth purpose such as:

- to improve the effective administration, monitoring and evaluation of Australian Government programs
- for research
- to announce the awarding of grants.

We must treat your personal information according to the Australian Privacy Principles (APPs) and the *Privacy Act 1988* (Cth). This includes letting you know:

- what personal information we collect
- why we collect your personal information
- to whom we give your personal information.

We may give the personal information we collect from you to our employees and contractors, and other Commonwealth employees and contractors, so we can:

- manage the program
- research, assess, monitor and analyse our programs and activities.

We, or the Minister, may:

- announce the names of successful applicants to the public
- publish personal information on the department's websites.

You may read our [Privacy Policy](#)<sup>8</sup> on the department's website for more information on:

- what is personal information
- how we collect, use, disclose and store your personal information
- how you can access and correct your personal information.

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<sup>7</sup> <https://www.industry.gov.au/publications/conflict-interest-policy>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.industry.gov.au/data-and-publications/privacy-policy>

### 13.4. Confidential information

Other than information available in the public domain, you agree not to disclose to any person, other than us, any confidential information relating to the grant application and/or agreement, without our prior written approval. The obligation will not be breached where you are required by law, Parliament or a stock exchange to disclose the relevant information or where the relevant information is publicly available (other than through breach of a confidentiality or non-disclosure obligation).

We may at any time, require you to arrange for you; or your employees, agents or subcontractors to give a written undertaking relating to nondisclosure of our confidential information in a form we consider acceptable.

We will treat the information you give us as sensitive and therefore confidential if it meets all of the following conditions:

- you clearly identify the information as confidential and explain why we should treat it as confidential
- the information is commercially sensitive
- disclosing the information would cause unreasonable harm to you or someone else
- you provide the information with an understanding that it will stay confidential.

We may disclose confidential information:

- to our Commonwealth employees and contractors, to help us manage the program effectively
- to the Auditor-General, Ombudsman or Privacy Commissioner
- to the responsible Minister or Assistant Minister
- to a House or a Committee of the Australian Parliament.

We may also disclose confidential information if:

- we are required or authorised by law to disclose it
- you agree to the information being disclosed, or
- someone other than us has made the confidential information public.

### 13.5. Freedom of information

All documents in the possession of the Australian Government, including those about the program, are subject to the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* (Cth) (FOI Act).

The purpose of the FOI Act is to give members of the public rights of access to information held by the Australian Government and its entities. Under the FOI Act, members of the public can seek access to documents held by the Australian Government. This right of access is limited only by the exceptions and exemptions necessary to protect essential public interests and private and business affairs of persons in respect of whom the information relates.

If someone requests a document under the FOI Act, we will release it (though we may need to consult with you and/or other parties first) unless it meets one of the exemptions set out in the FOI Act.

## 14. Glossary

Term	Definition
administering entity	When an entity that is not responsible for the policy, is responsible for the administration of part or all of the grant administration processes.
application form	The document issued by the Program Delegate that applicants use to apply for funding under the program.
assessment criteria	The specified principles or standards, against which applications will be judged. These criteria are also used to assess the merits of proposals and, in the case of a competitive grant opportunity, to determine application ranking.
business as usual	Advisory services provided to small businesses either free or charged and the day-to-day operations of the organisation that are not funded by the program.
client	For profit small businesses across Australia including sole traders, who have a registered ABN and are trading.
<a href="#"><u>Commonwealth Grants Rules and Principles (CGRPs)</u></a>	Establish the overarching Commonwealth grants policy framework and articulate the expectations for all non-corporate Commonwealth entities in relation to grants administration. Under this overarching framework, non-corporate Commonwealth entities undertake grants administration based on the mandatory requirements and key principles of grants administration.
completion date	The expected date that the grant activity must be completed and the grant spent by.
culturally and linguistically diverse	Program clients that speak a language other than English at home.
Department	The Department of Industry, Science and Resources.
decision maker	The person who makes a decision to award a grant.
eligible activities	The activities undertaken by a grantee in relation to a project that are eligible for funding support as set out in 5.1.
eligible application	An application or proposal for grant funding under the program that the Program Delegate has determined is eligible for assessment in accordance with these guidelines.
eligibility criteria	Refer to the mandatory criteria which must be met to qualify for a grant. Assessment criteria may apply in addition to eligibility criteria.
eligible expenditure	The expenditure incurred by a grantee on a project and which is eligible for funding support as set out in 5.3.

Term	Definition
financial hardship	<p>For the purposes of waiving fees where the small business self-declares a significant reduction of revenue in the past 12 months, or the owner is in receipt of a Centrelink <a href="#">income support payment</a>, or the client shows evidence of continued reduced revenue of more than 12 months duration.</p> <p>Financial hardship exemptions may also be applied in circumstances of natural disasters and declared states of emergency.</p> <p>Other exceptional circumstances may apply.</p>
full time employees	Employees who usually work 35 hours or more per week.
General Manager	Position title for Senior Executive Service level staff within DISR.
grant	<p>For the purposes of the CGRPs, a 'grant' is an arrangement for the provision of financial assistance by the Commonwealth or on behalf of the Commonwealth:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. under which relevant money<sup>9</sup> or other <a href="#">Consolidated Revenue Fund</a> (CRF) money<sup>10</sup> is to be paid to a grantee other than the Commonwealth; and</li> <li>b. which is intended to help address one or more of the Australian Government's policy outcomes while assisting the grantee achieve its objectives.</li> </ul>
grant activity/activities	Refers to the project/tasks/services that the grantee is required to undertake
grant agreement	A legally binding contract that sets out the relationship between the Commonwealth and a grantee for the grant funding, and specifies the details of the grant.
grant funding or grant funds	The funding made available by the Commonwealth to grantees under the program.
grant opportunity	Refers to the specific grant round or process where a Commonwealth grant is made available to potential grantees. Grant opportunities may be open or targeted, and will reflect the relevant grant selection process.
grant program	A 'program' carries its natural meaning and is intended to cover a potentially wide range of related activities aimed at achieving government policy outcomes. A grant program is a group of one or more grant opportunities under a single Portfolio Budget Statement Program.

<sup>9</sup> Relevant money is defined in the PGPA Act. See section 8, Dictionary.

<sup>10</sup> Other CRF money is defined in the PGPA Act. See section 105, Rules in relation to other CRF money.



Term	Definition
<a href="#">GrantConnect</a>	The Australian Government's whole-of-government grants information system, which centralises the publication and reporting of Commonwealth grants in accordance with the CGRPs.
grantee	The individual/organisation which has been selected to receive a grant.
guidelines	Guidelines that the Minister gives to the department to provide the framework for the administration of the program, as in force from time to time.
First Nations business	A business that is 50 per cent or more owned by a person, or persons, of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander background.
major costs	Expenditure on major items typically refers to significant spending on high-value items that have a significant financial, operational or strategic impact. A major item is typically high in cost, essential to the project's success, represents a long-term investment, and has a significant impact on the project's overall operations and outcomes. For example, IT infrastructure or equipment.
metropolitan service area	Businesses situated in capital cities and surrounding suburbs and includes areas of outer suburban expansion.  Areas defined in the ABS Remoteness Area (RA) classifications as RA1 – Major cities of Australia.
Minister	The Minister for Small Business.
non-income-tax-exempt	Not exempt from income tax under Division 50 of the <i>Income Tax Assessment Act 1997</i> (Cth) or under Division 1AB of Part III of the <i>Income Tax Assessment Act 1936</i> (Cth).
personal information	Has the same meaning as in the <i>Privacy Act 1988</i> (Cth) which is:  Information or an opinion about an identified individual, or an individual who is reasonably identifiable:  a. whether the information or opinion is true or not; and  b. whether the information or opinion is recorded in a material form or not.
program delegate	A Manager within the Business Grants Hub in DISR with responsibility for administering the program.
program funding or program funds	The funding made available by the Commonwealth for the program.

Term	Definition
Project	A project described in an application for grant funding under the program.
regional service area	<p>Businesses located outside metropolitan areas that may be clustered in regional cities and towns or spread throughout other rural and remote localities.</p> <p>Areas defined in the ABS Remoteness Area (RA) classifications as:</p> <p>RA2 – Inner regional Australia</p> <p>RA3 – Outer regional Australia</p> <p>RA4 – Remote Australia</p> <p>RA5 – Very Remote Australia</p>
small business	A business with 19 or less full time (or equivalent) employees, including sole traders.
selection criteria	Comprises of eligibility criteria and assessment criteria.
value with money	<p>Value with money in this document refers to ‘value with relevant money’ which is a judgement based on the grant proposal representing an efficient, effective, economical and ethical use of public resources and determined from a variety of considerations.</p> <p>When administering a grant opportunity, an official should consider the relevant financial and non-financial costs and benefits of each proposal including, but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the quality of the project proposal and activities;</li> <li>fitness for purpose of the proposal in contributing to government objectives;</li> <li>that the absence of a grant is likely to prevent the grantee and government’s outcomes being achieved; and</li> <li>the potential grantee’s relevant experience and performance history.</li> </ul>

## Appendix A. Eligible expenditure

This section provides guidance on the eligibility of expenditure. We may update this guidance from time to time; check you are referring to the most current version from the [business.gov.au](https://business.gov.au) website before preparing your application.

The Program Delegate makes the final decision on what is eligible expenditure and may give additional guidance on eligible expenditure if required.

To be eligible, expenditure must:

- be incurred by you within the project period
- be a direct cost of the project
- be incurred by you to undertake required project audit activities (where applicable)
- meet the eligible expenditure guidelines.

### A.1 How we verify eligible expenditure

If your application is successful, we may ask you to verify the project budget that you provided in your application when we negotiate your grant agreement. You may need to provide evidence such as quotes for major costs.

The grant agreement will include details of the evidence you may need to provide when you achieve certain milestones in your project. This may include evidence related to eligible expenditure.

If requested, you will need to provide the agreed evidence along with your progress reports.

You must keep payment records of all eligible expenditure and be able to explain how the costs relate to the agreed project activities. At any time, we may ask you to provide records of the expenditure you have paid. If you do not provide these records when requested, the expense may not qualify as eligible expenditure.

At the end of the project, you will be required to provide an independent financial audit of all eligible expenditure from the project.

### A.2 Labour expenditure

Eligible labour expenditure for the grant covers the direct labour costs of employees you directly employ on the core elements of the project. We consider a person an employee when you pay them a regular salary or wage, out of which you make regular tax instalment deductions.

We consider direct project costs for technical, administrative and project management activities eligible labour expenditure.

Eligible salary expenditure includes an employee's total remuneration package as stated on their Pay As You Go (PAYG) Annual Payment Summary submitted to the ATO. We consider salary-sacrificed superannuation contributions as part of an employee's salary package if the amount is more than what the Superannuation Guarantee requires.

The maximum salary for an employee, director or shareholder, including packaged components that you can claim through the grant is \$175,000 per financial year.

For periods of the project that do not make a full financial year, you must reduce the maximum salary amount you claim proportionally.

You can only claim eligible salary costs when an employee is working directly on agreed project activities during the agreed project period.

### A.3 Labour on-costs and administrative overhead

You may increase eligible salary costs by an additional 30 per cent allowance to cover on-costs such as employer paid superannuation, payroll tax, workers compensation insurance, and overheads such as office rent and the purchase or provision of computing equipment directly required or related to the delivery of the project

You should calculate eligible salary costs using the formula below:

$$\text{Eligible salary costs} = \text{Annual salary package} \times \frac{\text{Weeks spent on project}}{52 \text{ weeks}} \times \text{percentage of time spent on project}$$

You cannot calculate labour costs by estimating the employee's worth. If you have not exchanged money (either by cash or bank transactions) we will not consider the cost eligible.

Evidence you will need to provide can include:

- details of all personnel working on the project, including name, title, function, time spent on the project and salary
- ATO payment summaries, pay slips and employment contracts.

### A.4 Contract expenditure

Eligible contract expenditure is the cost of any agreed project activities that you contract others to do. These can include contracting:

- another organisation
- an individual who is not an employee but engaged under a separate contract.

All contractors must have a written contract prior to starting any project work—for example, a formal agreement, letter or purchase order which specifies:

- the nature of the work they perform
- the applicable fees, charges and other costs payable.

Invoices from contractors must contain:

- a detailed description of the nature of the work
- the hours and hourly rates involved
- any specific plant expenses paid.

Invoices must directly relate to the agreed project, and the work must qualify as an eligible expense. The costs must also be reasonable and appropriate for the activities performed.

We will require evidence of contractor expenditure that may include:

- an exchange of letters (including email) setting out the terms and conditions of the proposed contract work
- purchase orders
- supply agreements
- invoices and payment documents.

You must ensure all project contractors keep a record of the costs of their work on the project. We may require you to provide a contractor's records of their costs of doing project work. If you cannot provide these records, the relevant contract expense may not qualify as eligible expenditure.

## A.5 Travel expenditure

Eligible travel expenditure may include domestic travel limited to the reasonable cost of accommodation and transportation required to conduct agreed project and collaboration activities in Australia.

Eligible air transportation is limited to the economy class fare for each sector travelled; where non-economy class air transport is used only the equivalent of an economy fare for that sector is eligible expenditure. Where non-economy class air transport is used, the grantee will require evidence showing what an economy airfare costs at the time of travel.

## A.6 Other eligible expenditure

Other eligible expenditures for the project may include:

- purchase of minor infrastructure equipment relevant to the delivery of the program such as computers, laptops and phones
- costs involved in the purchase or upgrade/hire of software (including user licences) and ICT hardware that directly relates to the delivery of the project or to project support such as online booking and data collection systems
- costs involved in translating and adapting project materials to ensure accessibility for clients and to meet client needs
- communication and promotional materials directly related to the delivery of the program
- staff training that directly supports the achievement of project outcomes
- financial auditing of project expenditure, the cost of an independent audit of project expenditure (where we request one) up to a maximum of 1 per cent of total eligible project expenditure
- job advertising and costs for recruiting that directly relates to delivering the services outlined in section 2
- preparing any project reports and preparing any project variation requests.

Other specific expenditures may be eligible as determined by the Program Delegate.

Evidence you need to supply can include supplier contracts, purchase orders, invoices and supplier confirmation of payments.

## Appendix B. Ineligible expenditure

This section provides guidance on what we consider ineligible expenditure. We may update this guidance from time to time; check you are referring to the most current version from the [business.gov.au](https://business.gov.au) website before preparing your application.

The Program Delegate may impose limitations or exclude expenditure, or further include some ineligible expenditure listed in these guidelines in a grant agreement or otherwise by notice to you.

Examples of ineligible expenditure include:

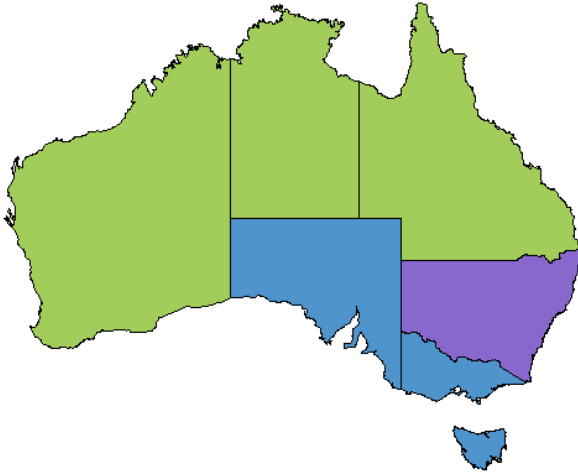
- research not directly supporting eligible activities
- activities, equipment or supplies that are already being supported through other sources
- costs incurred prior to us notifying you that the application is eligible and complete
- any in-kind contributions
- financing costs, including interest
- capital expenditure for the purchase of assets such as office furniture and equipment, motor vehicles, printers or photocopiers and the construction, renovation or extension of facilities
- costs involved in the purchase or upgrade/hire of software (including user licences) and ICT hardware (unless it directly relates to the project)
- costs such as rental, renovations and utilities
- non-project-related staff training and development costs
- insurance costs (the participants must effect and maintain adequate insurance or similar coverage for any liability arising as a result of its participation in funded activities)
- debt financing
- costs related to contract negotiations
- depreciation of plant and equipment beyond the life of the project
- maintenance costs
- costs of purchasing, leasing, depreciation of, or development of land
- routine operating expenses not accounted as labour on-costs – including communications, accommodation, overheads and consumables, e.g. paper, printer cartridges, office supplies
- ongoing upgrades, updates and maintenance of existing ICT systems and computing facilities, including websites, customer relationship management systems, databases, the cost of ongoing subscription-based software and IT support memberships, and warranties for purchases that are not directly related to the project
- recurring or ongoing operational expenditure (including annual maintenance, rent, water and rates, postage, legal and accounting fees and bank charges)
- costs related to preparing the grant application
- overseas travel costs
- travel costs that exceed 10 per cent of total project costs except where otherwise approved by the Program Delegate.

This list is not exhaustive and applies only to the expenditure of the grant funds. Other costs may be ineligible where we decide that they do not directly support the achievement of the planned outcomes for the project or that they are contrary to the objective of the program.

You must ensure you have adequate funds to meet the costs of any ineligible expenditure associated with the project.

## Appendix C. Breakdown of small businesses across service areas

### Service areas



**Area 1: NSW and ACT** – 908,200 small businesses (35.1 per cent) (includes Jervis Bay Territory)

**Area 2: QLD, NT, WA** – 758,400 small businesses (29.3 per cent) (includes Christmas Island, Cocos [Keeling] Island, and Norfolk Island)

**Area 3: SA, VIC, TAS** – 921,500 small businesses (35.6 per cent)

Estimated number of small businesses from ABS Counts of Australian Businesses, including Entries and Exits (2023-24).

#### Number of small businesses by metropolitan and regional parts of service areas

Area	Metro (no.)	Metro (%)	Regional (no.)	Regional (%)
Area 1 (NSW/ACT)	653,300	72	254,900	28
Area 2 (QLD/NT/WA)	439,600	58	318,800	42
Area 3 (SA/VIC/TAS)	714,400	78	207,100	22

**Source:** Counts of Australian Businesses, Including Entries and Exits (2024); Datacube 1 and Datacube 8.

**Note:** Metro represents business operating in a [Greater Capital City Statistical Area](#) (GCCSA) such as 'Greater Sydney'. Regional denotes businesses outside of these areas.

**Note:** 'Metro' and 'regional' totals presented are indicative as there is variation in aggregates across ABS geographical classifications. The percentages are the most accurate figures to cite.

**Note:** Estimates may not add up to state and territory totals due to rounding.



Number and proportion of First Nation small business **owners** in each of the service areas

Area	Small business owners (no.)	First Nation small business owners (no.)	Proportion of all small business owners (%)
Area 1 (NSW/ACT)	513,016	7,035	1.4
Area 2 (QLD/NT/WA)	496,430	6,397	1.3
Area 3 (SA/VIC/TAS)	565,036	3,378	0.6

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (2021), Census Table Builder, accessed 9 July 2025

Number and proportion of small business owners that speak a language other than English at home

Area	Small business owners (no.)	Small business owners that speak a language other than English (no.)	Proportion of all small business owners (%)
Area 1 (NSW/ACT)	513,016	132,900	26
Area 2 (QLD/NT/WA)	496,430	84,000	17
Area 3 (SA/VIC/TAS)	565,036	143,400	25

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (2021), Census Table Builder, accessed 9 July 2025

## Appendix D. Service Delivery Targets

Listed below are the service delivery targets for Digital Solutions Round 3. Grantees are expected to meet these target ranges. These targets will be included in your grant agreement.

The Government expects grantees will offer advisory services to both metropolitan and regional areas in your service area, broadly aligned to the distribution of the population of small businesses within each service area as described in Appendix C.

The Government also expects you will offer advisory services to CALD and First Nations small businesses to address the need across your service area.

### Total Clients

The number of unique small businesses that you anticipate assisting over the life of the program. The range per service area is:

- Area 1: 4,725 to 6,300 unique small businesses
- Area 2: 3,975 to 5,300 unique small businesses
- Area 3: 4,800 to 6,400 unique small businesses.

### Service Supports

The target number of service supports to be delivered over the life of the project period are as follows:

- hours of direct one-on-one advisory support, delivered via the channel that best meets the needs of the client. The range per service area is:
  - Area 1: 15,825 to 21,100 hours
  - Area 2: 13,310 to 17,750 hours
  - Area 3: 16,080 to 21,440 hours.
- number of interactive workshops delivered face-to-face or online. The range is 200 to 400 workshops per service area.
- number of webinars offered. The range is 200 to 400 webinars per service area.
- number of self-directed tutorials available and uploaded in an online learning management system. The range is 50 to 100 tutorials per service area.

### Client satisfaction

The target is 80 per cent of completed client satisfaction surveys rate the services satisfactory or above (a satisfactory score would be a rating of 7 or more out of 10).