

Social Enterprise Growth Grants

Funding Guidelines 2024-25

Introduction

The Queensland Social Enterprise Strategy is the Queensland Government's commitment to supporting the growth of the Queensland social enterprise sector.

In 2021, the Queensland Government committed \$8 million for the Social Enterprise Jobs Fund (SEJF) to support social enterprises to scale-up activities and create training and employment opportunities.

As part of the Queensland Small Business Strategy 2024–27, additional funding of \$1.9 million has been committed in 2024-25 to continue the SEJF, delivered through development and growth grant programs to build the capability and capacity of the sector.

The SEJF will continue to deliver on the Government's commitment under the Queensland Social Enterprise Strategy (QSES) released in September 2019 to support the growth and development of a sustainable social enterprise sector.

The Social Enterprise Growth Grants program is administered by the Department of Employment, Small Business and Training (DESBT).

The aim of this grant is to assist established social enterprises based in Queensland to grow their business and support increased employment and outcomes for the community.

Who can apply?

Eligible applicants for this program are small to medium sized Queensland businesses that meet the following agreed definition of a social enterprise (as per *Finding Australia's Social Enterprise Sector (FASES) 2016*):

- led by an economic, social, cultural or environmental mission consistent with a public or community benefit
- trade to fulfil their mission and derive a substantial portion of their income from trade, and
- reinvest the majority of their profit/surplus into the fulfilment of their mission.

To be eligible to apply for SEGG, applicants must provide evidence that their business meets the definition of a social enterprise by providing certification offered through Social Traders or People and Planet First (PPF) and have a mission aligned to Queensland Government priorities.

PPF Social Enterprise Verification can be applied for via the QSEC website at <https://www.qsec.org.au/verification>.

Verification of Social Enterprise status is assessed against the PPF global standards.

The five global standards are:

1. **Purpose:** Exists to solve a social and/or environmental problem.
2. **Operations:** Prioritises purpose, people, and planet over profit in operational decisions.
3. **Revenue:** Has a self-sustaining revenue model.
4. **Use of Surplus:** Reinvests the majority of any surplus towards its purpose.
5. **Structure:** Chooses legal structures and financing that protect and lock in purpose long term.

Eligibility criteria

To be eligible for this funding, applicants must:

- meet the agreed program definition of a social enterprise through documented evidence of PPF Social Enterprise Verification or Social Traders Certification.
- have traded for a minimum of one year in Queensland at the time of application
- have an active Australian Business Number (ABN) and be registered for GST
- have a Queensland headquarters or main business location
- have a mission aligned to Queensland Government priorities (e.g. supporting jobs, investing in skills, growing regions, protecting the environment), and
- not be insolvent or have owners/directors that are an undischarged bankrupt.

The social enterprise must have growth potential within the next two years to extend its reach and mission and increase employees.



Who cannot apply?

The following organisations are not eligible to apply:

- businesses that do not meet the program definition of a social enterprise i.e. do not have PPF Social Enterprise Verification or Social Traders Certification
- social enterprises that do not have a main business location in Queensland
- government departments or agencies.

Program funding

The Social Enterprise Growth Grants program will fund activities and/or expenditure to support the scalable growth and sustainability of an established social enterprise, including:

- Production equipment (e.g. catering, manufacturing)
- Digital equipment and systems (e.g. point of sale, 3D printers)
- Consumables, resources or materials (e.g. stock/inventory) specific to a growth opportunity
- Training or coaching programs to develop social enterprise business skills and knowledge (e.g. corporate governance, financial management, social impact measurement, investment readiness, expanding to new markets or products)
- Business and strategic planning (e.g. legal, accounting or financial advice/planning and industry advisors)
- Marketing strategies including branding and market research (content or implementation activities are permitted but no advertising costs)
- Website development or upgrades.

Funds cannot be used for:

- the purchase of significant assets (e.g. buildings or vehicles)
- staff salaries/wages
- overseas and/or interstate travel
- remuneration of executive officers
- utilities (e.g. gas, water, electricity)
- rent and other ongoing business costs

- services delivered in-kind
- retrospective payments for expenses incurred or for work undertaken, prior to funding approval
- any other recurrent costs such as established positions within the organisation or core functions of the organisation
- fees for any activities or equipment provided by related parties (such as companies with common shareholdings or directorship with the applicant, and employees or immediate family of the applicant)
- direct-selling businesses (where sales of goods or services from another business are made in the customer's home, work or other meeting place through methods such as party plans and network marketing).

Funding must have a direct link to increasing employment or enterprise sustainability.

Funding from other sources must also be disclosed to DESBT. To avoid duplication, funding is not available for the same equipment or services being funded through other initiatives or programs.

Any third-party contributions must be specified in the application to enable clear consideration of all funding, resources and in-kind support provided.

Outcomes

Funded organisations will be required to provide a final report detailing the outcomes achieved from grant funding, including the growth plans for the social enterprise over the next two years.

Level of funding

In 2024–25, \$1 million will be available for Social Enterprise Growth Grants.

Funding of between \$5,000 and \$25,000 (excluding GST) may be provided for eligible organisations to purchase equipment and resources, or access business services, to enable them to move their social enterprise to the next stage of growth.

Eligible organisations are only able to submit one application per social enterprise operation (only one application will be accepted for consideration from an individual ABN).

Application process

The Social Enterprise Growth Grants program is a limited life program. In 2024–25, applications will be considered through one competitive funding round under a transparent contestable application process. The application, selection process and assessment criteria may be varied or discontinued by DESBT as required at any time and for any reason, in its sole discretion. Without limitation, DESBT may, in its sole discretion:

- apply such criteria and weightings as DESBT sees fit
- for applications considered ambiguous, erroneous or incomplete, refuse to consider the application or request further information from the applicant, as DESBT sees fit
- not accept any application.

Applications will be assessed by a central panel convened by DESBT.

Applications will be assessed against the following criteria. Applicants should note that the list of assessment criteria is not necessarily exhaustive and DESBT may also consider such other criteria as it considers appropriate in its sole discretion.

Assessment criteria	How will this be assessed – including but not limited to:
Social enterprise eligibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • evidence of People and Planet First (PPF) Social Enterprise Verification or Social Traders Certification • period of operation – minimum of one (1) year • financial viability of the social enterprise • evidence of a Queensland headquarters or main business location.
Community benefit and outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • description of the project and how it will build the skills, capabilities and capacity of the social enterprise (<i>if using a consultant to deliver a service, the application should include a breakdown of the key activities to be undertaken by the consultant</i>) • details of how the project will contribute to the scalable growth and sustainability of the social enterprise • details of how the project will support the social enterprise to grow their workforce over the next two years and/or support other employment outcomes • details of how the project will support increased outcomes for the community aligned to the social enterprise’s mission • testimonials or letters of support from local employers, industry, networks or other stakeholders for operation of the social enterprise.
Cost/value for money	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cost effectiveness – cost of proposal and intended outcomes • scale of operations – grant funding as a proportion of annual turnover • ability to deliver proposed outcomes over the period being applied for, and any identified innovative ways to reduce the costs • level of complementary funding and assistance accessed from other sources and in-kind or direct contributions.

DESBT may also decide to accept, suspend or not proceed with, or carry out itself, all or any part of the project proposals included in an application, and may provide a revised offer based on the assessment.

To be considered for this program, organisations are required to complete and submit the online application form and supporting documents by the closing deadline. Incomplete applications and applications received after published closing dates will be ineligible for consideration.

DESBT may prioritise applications for fair distribution across geographic areas (DESBT regions).

Funding conditions

Successful applicants must enter into a formal Services Agreement with DESBT.

An upfront payment will be made once the Services Agreement has been executed, and no sooner than 30 days prior to the start of the project. Payments are GST inclusive.

DESBT may vary the payment schedule based on the individual assessment of the organisation and project.

Projects must be fully acquitted after completion and any unexpended or surplus funds returned to DESBT.

Appeals

Organisations may request a review of a decision made by DESBT in relation to the provision of funding under the Social Enterprise Growth Grants program.

The appeals process has been established to help identify any problems in the application process, ensuring these processes continue to improve, and to assist with future applications.

Appeals must be lodged in writing to:

Appeals Officer
Training and Skills Pathways, Investment Division
Department of Employment, Small Business and Training
PO Box 15483
CITY EAST QLD 4002

Organisations will be notified in writing of the appeal outcome within 21 business days from receipt of the appeal.

More information

For more information on the Social Enterprise Growth Grants program, please read the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) available on the DESBT website or contact sejf@desbt.qld.gov.au.

Policy Owner:	Director Investment Division
Approval Date:	5 August 2024
Related Documents:	1. Application Form 2. Frequently asked questions (FAQs)
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