Aquaculture Industry Development Program Guidelines

The NSW Government has established the Aquaculture Industry Development Program, a $20 million investment that aims to enable regional industries to grow and adapt with structural and environmental change.

Message from the Minister

The NSW Aquaculture Vision Statement, developed in partnership with industry, sets out the Government's goal to grow aquaculture farm-gate production to $300 million by 2030, boosting food security, supporting new products and helping the sector adapt to climate change.

Aquaculture already contributes millions to the NSW economy each year and is vital to meeting our future food security needs.

The $20 million Aquaculture Industry Development Program, delivered through the Regional Development Trust, will back priority projects that strengthen and modernise the sector.

Through this program, we are supporting the long-term health and growth of the industry and promoting sustainable development across marine, estuarine and land-based operations to ensure Australians can continue to enjoy high-quality, responsibly produced seafood — both at home and in export markets.

Successful applicants will be better equipped to enter new and growing markets, address supply chain pressures and take advantage of opportunities created by environmental and market shifts.

Supporting regional aquaculture and commercial fishing is a key part of our plan to position NSW as a leader in sustainable seafood, freshwater fish and marine bioproducts.

This program is funded through the Regional Development Trust, which is dedicated to helping regional communities grow and thrive.

The Trust focuses on the needs of regional NSW, delivering strategic investments that make a real, positive difference for people, communities, businesses and industry.

The Honourable Tara Moriarty, MLC
Minister for Agriculture
Minister for Regional New South Wales
Minister for Western New South Wales

Key information

| Opening date and time | 24 November 2025, 11am |

Key information

Closing date and time	18 January 2026, 4pm
Application outcome date	Applicants will be notified confidentially from 29 May 2026 or as soon as possible after a decision has been made.
Project delivery timeframe (estimated) (for successful applications)	Projects must commence within 6 months of the commencement date of the funding deed and be completed within 4 years from the commencement date of the funding deed. (These timeframes are subject to the terms and conditions of an executed funding deed).
Decision-maker	Minister for Regional NSW
NSW Government source agency	Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development ("the department")
Type of grant opportunity	Open, non-competitive
Total program funding	$20 million
Grant amounts	Between $100,000 and $2 million (GST exclusive).

Key information

| Enquiries / Getting Support

Please use only these details. To maintain the integrity of the grant process, do not contact any other NSW Government staff.	Website	**Aquaculture Industry Development Program (/grants-and-funding/aquaculture-industry-development-program)**
	Email	regionaldevelopmenttrust@dpird.nsw.gov.au
	Resources	Online information session, **Frequently Asked Questions (/regional-and-primary-industries/regional-development-roadmap/regional-development-trust-fund/aquaculture-industry-development-program-frequently-asked-questions)**, **Project Management Plan Template (XLSX 27.6KB) (/sites/default/files/noindex/2025-11/aquaculture-industry-development-program-project-management-plan-template.XLSX)**, **Sample Funding Deed (PDF 498.88KB) (/sites/default/files/noindex/2025-11/sample-funding-deed-aquaculture-industry-development-program.PDF)**, **Landowners Consent Template Form (DOCX 69.44KB) (/sites/default/files/noindex/2025-11/aquaculture-industry-development-program-landowners-consent-form.DOCX)**

Program purpose and objectives

The NSW Government has established the Aquaculture Industry Development Program (the program). The program aims to:

- support the NSW Aquaculture Vision Statement to increase farmgate production in the aquaculture sector by 2030 and drive productivity in commercial fishing
- support regional businesses to modernise to increase productivity, exports, resilience to climate change impacts, contribution to net zero and/or circular economy targets
- build regional capability in sustainable seafood and marine bioproducts.

The program is a $20 million investment from the Regional Development Trust (the Trust) and aligns to the sustainable regional industries key focus area that aims to enable regional industries to grow and adapt with structural and environmental change.

The objective of the program is to:

- increase regional aquaculture and commercial fishing industries access to new and expanding markets

- leverage opportunities associated with environmental and market changes to position NSW as the market leader in sustainable seafood and marine bioproducts.

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| Intended recipients | ⌄ |

| Source agency | ⌄ |

| Delivery of program | ⌄ |

| Type of grant opportunity | ⌄ |

| Value for money | ⌄ |

| Program delivery timeframe | ⌄ |

Grant value

The total available program funding amount is $20 million.

The range of individual grant amounts is from $100,000 to $2 million.

Funding is available across 2 streams of projects.

- **Stream 1: Productivity improvements**
  Infrastructure and equipment improvements and upgrades that enable growth or productivity improvements.

- **Stream 2: Sustainability**
  Projects that lower carbon outputs, increase resilience to climate change impacts or deliver circular economy outcomes.

Eligible applicants may only apply for funding under one stream within their application. Applicants should select the stream most appropriate for their project.

Information on what is eligible in each stream is available in **Eligible Projects.**

Co-contributions ⌄

Selection criteria

The selection criteria comprise **compliance, eligibility and project feasibility criteria** and **merit-based assessment criteria**.

All applications will be assessed for compliance and eligibility criteria. Applications assessed as compliant and eligible will be assessed for project feasibility.

Applications that are assessed as compliant, eligible and feasible will progress to merit-based assessment.

Compliance criteria

The project must demonstrate compliance with the Regional Development Act 2004 (the Act). Applicants must detail how the project is compliant with the Act (see below) and identify which of the purposes (a-g) the project delivers.

Purposes for which funding will be provided ⌄

Eligibility criteria

The eligibility criteria include:

- eligible applicants
- eligible projects/activities
- eligible locations
- eligible costs.

<u>**Expand all**</u>　　Collapse all

Eligible applicants ⌄

Ineligible applicants ⌄

Eligible projects ⌄

Ineligible projects ⌄

Eligible locations ⌄

Eligible costs ⌄

Ineligible project costs ⌄

Due diligence and probity ⌄

Project feasibility ⌄

Assessment criteria

Applications that have met the compliance, eligibility and project feasibility criteria will be assessed based on the following merit-based assessment criteria:

- Strategic alignment
- Value for money
- Economic benefit

This assessment process will also consider the project's ability to facilitate a balanced approach to regional economic development and contribute to a diversity of project types across rural and regional NSW.

Expand all   Collapse all

Strategic alignment ⌄

Value for money ⌄

Economic benefit ⌄

Balanced approach to regional economic development ⌄

Application process

The program is a single stage application process.

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Parameters ⌄

Where to apply ⌄

When to apply ⌄

What to include ⌄

False and misleading information ⌄

After submitting application ⌄

Getting support ⌄

Assessment process

Determining which applications are successful involves these stages:

- Stage 1: Preliminary assessment
- Stage 2: Merit-based assessment
- Stage 3: Decision making.

Applicants are not guaranteed funding even if the application is of high merit. Further, successful applications may not be funded to the full amount requested.

At any stage, applicants may be referred to other, more suitable NSW Government programs. Applicants may need to update their applications to meet the criteria of the referred program.

The department may seek advice from other NSW Government agencies and other sources such as subject matter experts and/or technical advisors during the assessment process. Confidentiality will be maintained throughout the process.

The department may contact applicants seeking clarification or further information.

Probity advice

Probity advisors will provide guidance and advice to the department to ensure decisions are made with integrity, fairness and accountability.

Expand all   Collapse all

Preliminary assessment   ⌄

Merit-based assessment   ⌄

Decision making   ⌄

Notification of application outcome   ⌄

Feedback and appeal   ⌄

Announcements   ⌄

Publication of grants information   ⌄

Successful grant applications

Successful applicants must execute a funding deed with the department.

There is no promise of funding until both the applicant and the department have executed a funding deed (and the applicant has met any other funding conditions).

Importantly, this means that successful applicants must not make financial commitments for the funded activities until both the applicant and the department have executed a funding deed.

Expand all   Collapse all

Funding deed ⌄

Grant payment ⌄

Unspent funds ⌄

Indicative reporting and acquittal requirements ⌄

Evaluation ⌄

Additional information and resources

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Complaint handling ⌄

Access to information ⌄

Conflict of interest management ⌄

Confidentiality ⌄

Conduct ⌄

Discretion ⌄

Changes and publication ⌄

Appendix A

Eligible NSW Local Government Areas (and eligible non-LGAs)

Albury City	Forbes Shire	Narromine Shire
Armidale Regional	Gilgandra Shire	Newcastle City
Ballina Shire	Glen Innes Severn	Oberon
Balranald Shire	Goulburn Mulwaree	Orange City
Bathurst Regional	Greater Hume Shire	Parkes Shire
Bega Valley Shire	Griffith City	Port Macquarie-Hastings
Bellingen Shire	Gunnedah Shire	Port Stephens
Berrigan Shire	Gwydir Shire	Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional
Bland Shire	Hay Shire	Richmond Valley
Blayney Shire	Hilltops	Shellharbour City
Bogan Shire	Inverell Shire	Shoalhaven City
Bourke Shire	Junee Shire	Singleton
Brewarrina Shire	Kempsey Shire	Snowy Monaro Regional
Broken Hill City	Kiama Municipality	Snowy Valleys
Byron Shire	Kyogle	Tamworth Regional
Cabonne	Lachlan Shire	Temora Shire

Carrathool Shire	Lake Macquarie City	Tenterfield Shire
Central Coast	Leeton Shire	Tweed Shire
Central Darling Shire	Lismore City	Upper Hunter Shire
Cessnock City	Lithgow City	Upper Lachlan Shire
Clarence Valley	Liverpool Plains Shire	Uralla Shire
Cobar Shire	Lockhart Shire	Wagga Wagga City
Coffs Harbour City	Lord Howe Island	Walcha
Coolamon Shire	Maitland City	Walgett Shire
Coonamble Shire	Mid-Coast	Warren Shire
Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional	Mid-Western Regional	Warrumbungle Shire
Cowra Shire	Moree Plains Shire	Weddin Shire
Dubbo Regional	Murray River	Wentworth Shire
Dungog Shire	Murrumbidgee	Wingecarribee Shire
Edward River	Muswellbrook Shire	Wollongong City
Eurobodalla Shire	Nambucca Valley	Yass Valley
Unincorporated Far West NSW	Narrabri Shire	
Federation	Narrandera Shire	

The above information can be downloaded to PDF by selecting 'Print this page' at the top right-hand corner of this page. Ease of downloading allows for a user-friendly version of Program Guidelines that applicants and grantees can have on-hand. Please note the PDF that generates will not be tagged for accessibility.