



Aquaculture Industry Development Program

Aquaculture Industry Development Program

The NSW Government has established the Aquaculture Industry Development Program, with funding of up to \$20 million available to support the NSW aquaculture sector.

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Key information

- **Status:** Open
- **Grant amount:** From \$100,000 to \$2,000,000
- **Application opened:** 24 November 2025
- **Application closes:** 18 January 2026, 4:00 pm

Program objective

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.

We recommend you read the **[Program Guidelines \(/grants-and-funding/aquaculture-industry-development-program/aquaculture-industry-development-program-guidelines\)](#)** and **[Frequent Asked Questions. \(/grants-and-funding/aquaculture-industry-development-program/aquaculture-industry-development-program-frequently-asked-questions\)](#)**

Supporting documents for applicants include a project management plan template and landowner consent form template.

This program is administered by the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development.

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Eligibility

Who can apply

Stream-specific criteria

Applicants for Stream 1 funding: commercial fishing endorsement holders, aquaculture permit holders, relevant natural resource management organisations, Aboriginal organisations and businesses, key associations or peak bodies, research organisations including Australian universities, post-harvest sector organisations whose primary income is from sale of aquaculture and commercial fishing products

Applicants for Stream 2 funding: same as Stream 1, with the addition of private sector entities that can demonstrate activities that service a market for aquaculture waste products in the circular economy.

General criteria

To be eligible for grant funding, an applicant must be one of the following:

- a company incorporated in Australia (under the *Corporations Act 2001*)
- an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Corporation (under the *Corporations (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) Act 2006*)
- an incorporated trustee of an Australian-based trust
- an incorporated association (under the *NSW Associations Incorporation Act 2009*) or co-operative (under the *NSW Co-operatives Act 1992*)
- an Australian university (higher education provider registered under the *Higher Education Support Act 2003*)

To be eligible for grant funding, an applicant must meet all of the following requirements:

- have an Australian Business Number (ABN)
- be financially viable and able to demonstrate that
- hold or commit to obtaining public liability insurance of not less than \$20 million per occurrence
- be a fit and proper person/legal entity
- not be insolvent, bankrupt or subject to ongoing legal proceedings
- declare in the application form that the applicant is not aware of any issues which could cause reputational or other risks to the NSW Government
- have previous project delivery experience (or ability to access the necessary expertise and support)
- if applicable, provide evidence of capacity to make the minimum co-contribution if successful
- be registered in one of the following Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification (ANZSIC) codes:
 - 02 Aquaculture (or any sub-category or class within this code)
 - 041 Fishing (or any sub-category or class within this code)
 - 0529 Other Agriculture and Fishing Support Services
 - 691 Scientific Research Services or 699 Other Professional, Scientific and Technical Services
 - 81 Tertiary Education (or any sub-category or class within this code)

Where an applicant is not registered in one of the above ANZSIC codes, the applicant must provide further information in their application to support their suitability for funding under this program. Eligibility of applicants with ANZSIC registration other than the above will be considered at the discretion of the department.

Aboriginal businesses and organisations, including Aboriginal Community-Controlled Organisations, are strongly encouraged to apply.

Location that are eligible include Albury City, Armidale Regional, Ballina, Balranald, Bathurst Regional, Bega Valley, Bellingen, Berrigan, Bland, Blayney, Bogan, Bourke, Brewarrina, Broken Hill, Byron, Cabonne, Carrathool, Central Coast, Central Darling, Cessnock, Clarence Valley, Cobar, Coffs Harbour, Coolamon, Coonamble, Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional, Cowra, Dubbo Regional, Dungog, Edward River, Eurobodalla, Federation, Forbes, Gilgandra, Glen Innes Severn, Goulburn Mulwaree, Greater Hume Shire, Griffith, Gunnedah, Gwydir, Hay, Hilltops, Inverell, Junee, Kempsey, Kiama, Kyogle, Lachlan, Lake Macquarie, Leeton, Lismore, Lithgow City, Liverpool Plains, Lockhart, Lord Howe Island - Unincorporated Area, Maitland, Mid-Coast, Mid-Western Regional, Moree Plains, Murray River, Murrumbidgee, Muswellbrook, Nambucca Valley, Narrabri, Narrandera, Narromine, Newcastle, Oberon, Orange, Parkes, Port Macquarie-Hastings, Port Stephens, Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional, Richmond Valley, Shellharbour, Shoalhaven, Singleton, Snowy Monaro Regional, Snowy Valleys, Tamworth Regional, Temora, Tenterfield, Tweed, Unincorporated Far West, Upper Hunter, Upper Lachlan Shire, Uralla, Wagga Wagga, Walcha, Walgett, Warren, Warrumbungle, Weddin, Wentworth, Wingecarribee, Wollongong, Yass Valley

Types of projects funded under this grant

The following types of projects are eligible for funding:

Stream 1: Productivity improvements

Infrastructure and equipment improvements and upgrades that enable growth or productivity improvements. Eligible projects include (but are not limited to):

- development or upgrade of assets and equipment (or other assets) to deliver new capacity, efficiency, sustainability or quality improvements
- supply chain innovation to support productivity or quality improvements which may benefit multiple entities
- new product development including new species, value-adding under-utilised species, or purchasing equipment to commence commercial production of new valued-added lines.

Stream 2: Sustainability

Projects which lower carbon outputs and deliver circular economy outcomes. Eligible projects include (but are not limited to):

- conversion of plant and equipment to systems with lower carbon outputs and contribute towards achieving net zero emissions
- research and development into new products such as bioproducts and utilising seafood industry waste streams.

Projects must meet all of the following requirements to be eligible.

- 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.
- Projects can be located on publicly owned land or on private land where there is a clear public benefit. If the applicant is not the owner of the land where the project will be located, landowner's consent will be required as part of the application.
- Applicants must identify all necessary approvals, advise their status, provide a planning pathways assessment demonstrating that the approvals can be obtained within 6 months of the commencement date of the funding deed and that they have been factored into the overall project delivery timeframes.
- For research-based or supply chain innovation projects, the project must conclude with outputs that can be directly applied by industry.

Applicants will need to plan for and meet all regulatory requirements. A successful funding application does not guarantee approval from the relevant regulatory, government or planning decision-making body.

What costs you can apply for

To be eligible, project costs must support the objectives of the program and meet direct costs of the project.

Applicants must not incur costs to be funded by the program until an executed funding deed is in place.

Eligible costs include (but are not limited to):

- construction costs for infrastructure development, expansion or upgrades that would not be considered business-as-usual activities and operations
- the purchase of equipment that relates specifically to the project
- research and development costs for projects leading to outputs that can be directly applied by industry
- asset commissioning and/or decommissioning
- staff training costs directly attributable to the project.

Applicants should contact the department on regionaldevelopmenttrust@dpird.nsw.gov.au with any questions regarding the eligibility of certain costs.

Contingency, project management and administration

Eligible projects costs include:

- project management and administration totalling no more than 10% of the requested funding amount
- contingency of no more than 20% of the requested funding amount.

Who can't apply

Applicants will be assessed as ineligible if they cannot provide sufficient evidence to meet the requirements of the eligible applicant criteria.

Sole traders, partnerships under Australian taxation law, and NSW Government or other government entities are ineligible applicants under the program.

What costs you can't apply for

The following project costs are ineligible for funding:

- any costs for works or improvements that are not directly related to delivering the **Eligible project**
- costs that are not essential to the success of the project
- costs relating to the purchase of non-fixed equipment such as mobile equipment and vehicles, boats, trailers, motorhomes, with the exception of equipment or vehicles that are essential to the success of the project
- purchase of land or buildings
- financing, including interest and debt financing
- costs relating to depreciation of plant and equipment
- staff training costs not directly related to the project
- funding for ongoing staff or operational costs beyond the scope and timeframe of the funded project
- marketing campaigns
- business cases, plans or strategies
- general maintenance, repairs or business as usual activity not directly related to the project
- retrospective costs for the project
- project management or contingency costs that exceed the eligibility requirements.

Types of projects not funded under this grant

A project will be assessed as ineligible if:

- it does not meet the compliance, eligibility and project feasibility criteria or provide information required to assess these criteria
- it is not located in an eligible LGA
- it does not meet the minimum and maximum funding amount requirements
- it has received funding from the NSW or Australian Government for any part of the project scope that duplicates deliverables to be funded by this program
- it has more than 50% of the funding request allocated to ineligible project costs
- it is for planning purposes only
- it requires ongoing funding from the NSW or Australian Government to be financially viable.

Example projects

Stream 1: Productivity improvements

Infrastructure and equipment improvements and upgrades that enable growth or productivity improvements

- Marine shellfish hatchery capacity building

- Shellfish meat processing for powdered Omega-3 supply

Stream 2: Sustainability

Lower carbon outputs, contribute towards net zero emissions, increase resilience to climate change impacts and deliver circular economy outcomes

- Algae production for replacement plastic materials
- Value adding mussel/oyster shell

What co-contributions are required

Co-contributions

Eligible applicants must make a financial contribution towards the project of at least 20 per cent of the total project cost.

- Project delivery or viability should not be dependent on co-contributions or other grant funding that has not been secured.
- Evidence of the co-contribution and applicant entity type must be provided as part of the application.
- Financial contributions from other grants received from the Australian Government can be included, however grants from the NSW Government cannot be included in the minimum required amount. Grants not secured should not be relied on as co-contribution

Exemptions from mandatory co-contribution

Requests for an exemption from part or all of the 20 per cent financial co-contribution requirement may be considered for reasons related to exceptional circumstances.

Exceptional circumstances that may be considered include, but are not limited to, impacts from natural disasters and major weather events, recent investment in infrastructure and/or equipment that is related to the project proposed within the funding application, other financial circumstances.

Applicants wishing to apply for an exemption will be required to provide details of their request as part of the application process and identify in-kind contributions (see below for details on in-kind contributions) that may help to cover some or all of the value of the exemption being requested. Exemption requests will be considered at the discretion of the department.

Important: Before making an exemption request, applicants must be aware that applications supplying the mandatory 20 per cent financial co-contribution will be preferred through the assessment process.

In-kind contributions

In-kind contributions may be included as part of an exemption request from the mandatory 20 per cent financial co-contribution requirement. In-kind contributions include donated materials, applicant-owned equipment or direct internal staff time to deliver the project.

Applicants must provide itemised details of any in-kind contributions in their application, including:

- the value of an in-kind contribution, for example \$1,400 project management cost
- a short description of the in-kind contribution and how it has been calculated, for example 20 hours of project manager wages at \$70 per hour.

In-kind contributions must be eligible costs. Applicants with approved in-kind contributions will be required to report on and acquit these expenses during project delivery.

What your application needs to include

[Expand all](#) [Collapse all](#)

1	Prepare your application with this checklist	▼
2	Address the eligibility criteria	▼
3	Address the assessment criteria	▼

Start the application

The program is a single stage application process.

Applicants must submit their applications and supporting documents through the program's online application portal on SmartyGrants. See **Grant program details** section for link to the program's webpage.

Note: If you are a new applicant to SmartyGrants, you will need to register and create a password. If you are already registered, you can log in with your existing username and password.

Apply now

After the application is submitted

Successful applications will be decided by: Minister for Regional NSW

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.

Other subject matter experts and/or technical advisors may be consulted to assist in the assessment of projects (if required). Confidentiality will be maintained throughout the process.

An assessment panel will meet to consider and determine the preliminary and merit-based assessment outcomes for each application.

The assessment outcomes determined by the assessment panel will be provided to the Regional Development Advisory Council (the Advisory Council) for review.

The Regional Development Advisory Council will review the merit-based assessments and can provide advice to the Minister for Regional NSW if required.

The final decision maker is the Minister for Regional NSW.

Anticipated assessment outcome date is Anticipated assessment outcome date - Applicants will be notified confidentially from 29 May 2026 or as soon as possible after a decision has been made.

Anticipated date for funding deed execution with successful applicants is After the department has received a signed letter of offer and confidentiality agreement.

Support and contact

Please contact regionaldevelopmenttrust@dpird.nsw.gov.au