

# + North Queensland Telecommunications and Energy Improvement Grants (North & Far North Queensland Monsoon Trough, 25 January - 14 February 2019) Guidelines

## 1. About the scheme

The Australian Government's 'After the flood: A strategy for long-term recovery' ([the Strategy](#)) sets out a blueprint for a prosperous and secure future for North and North-West Queensland.

The Strategy aims to guide investment in actions that support the long-term recovery and prosperity of the affected communities, strengthen their preparedness for future challenges and help the regions adapt and transform in an ever-changing environment.

The Strategy has five strategic pillars, underpinned by 19 actions, which reflect what communities, businesses and people said were essential to ensure future prosperity and resilience of the flood-affected regions.

This scheme aligns with the *building more resilient infrastructure* pillar which outlines opportunities to resolve some current telecommunications and electricity issues and reduce reliance on ageing and expensive infrastructure.

The objective of the scheme is to fund eligible projects that trial and adapt new technologies, or upgrade existing technologies, that improve access to reliable and cost-effective telecommunications connectivity or energy supply.

The scheme will be available over two rounds in 2021, provided funding is not fully committed in the first round. The opening and closing dates for rounds will be published on QRIDA's website at: [www.qrida.qld.gov.au](http://www.qrida.qld.gov.au).

The scheme is being run on a competitive basis, with projects selected based on project criteria set out in this guideline.

The funding is available in two streams (with no set amount of funding allocated to either stream): projects related to telecommunications and projects related to energy.

These guidelines contain information about the scheme including eligibility requirements, how to apply and your obligations as an applicant. Please read these guidelines before applying.



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## 2. Assistance available

- 2.1 Grants of not less than \$10,000 and up to \$1,000,000 are available under the scheme.
- 2.2 Applicants must provide a financial or in-kind co-contribution towards the project.
- 2.3 Grants are subject to the availability of funding and applying for a grant is no guarantee funding will be approved.

## 3. Required outcomes

- 3.1 Required outcomes for the scheme are:
  - a) provide infrastructure that delivers essential services (specifically telecommunications and energy services) to the community in the *eligible area*;
  - b) infrastructure is built in accord with current knowledge and practice for mitigating disaster impact in the *eligible area* (i.e. increased Wi-Fi coverage enables the use of remote access flood gauges);
  - c) businesses and industries in the *eligible area* can operate and trade in line with broader economic trends (due to improved telecommunications and energy services);
  - d) infrastructure (specifically telecommunication and energy services) is built in accord with the changing recovery needs of the *eligible area*.

## 4. Applicant criteria

- 4.1 To be eligible for a grant under the scheme an applicant must be one of the following:
  - a) a business or utility including telecommunications and energy providers;
  - b) an association incorporated under the *Associations Incorporation Act 1981*;
  - c) a cooperative registered under the *Cooperatives Act 1997*;
  - d) an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander corporation registered under the *Corporations (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) Act 2006* (Cwlth);
  - e) an industry organisation;
  - f) a tertiary institution including universities in Queensland;
  - g) a local government under the *Local Government Act 2009*;
  - h) a combination of the above including joint ventures and consortiums.

If an applicant is proposing a telecommunications project the applicant must also be:

- a) a licenced telecommunications carrier under the *Telecommunications Act 1997*; or
- b) owner of intended owner of the project infrastructure who holds or intends to hold a Nominated Carrier Declaration (NC) under the *Telecommunications Act 1997* in relation to the infrastructure to be built or improved/updated.

- 4.2 In general, to be eligible applicants must also:

- a) provide a financial or in-kind co-contribution (noting there is no set amount required), and demonstrate the availability of funds or in-kind support (this may include leveraging funding from other local, state or Commonwealth programs);
- b) co-contributions must be used for eligible purposes;
- c) financial co-contributions can include, but may not be limited to:
  - i. funds on hand including bank accounts, term deposits and other investments;

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- ii. finance raised from private or commercial sources on normal commercial credit terms; and
- iii. finance raised from government concessional loan sources;
- d) demonstrate sound prospects for medium-long term commercial viability (including guaranteed service delivery for a set period of time);
- e) be solely responsible for incurring the costs claimed in the application;
- f) have not previously received a grant under this scheme for a substantially similar project activity.

**4.3** Ineligible applications or eligible applications submitted by ineligible applicants will not be assessed against the project assessment criteria.

### 5. Project assessment criteria

**5.1** Projects will be assessed independently under two streams:

- a) telecommunications projects; and
- b) energy projects.

**5.2** Projects will be assessed competitively on the following criteria:

**a) Public benefit**

- i. The extent to which the project will generate jobs in the *eligible area*.
- ii. In relation to telecommunications projects, the level of improved connectivity, related services and access to reliable, affordable services in the *eligible area*.
- iii. Improvements in productivity for businesses in the *eligible area* due to increased access to reliable telecommunications and/or energy solutions.

**b) Co-contribution and value for money**

- i. The level of financial co-contribution being contributed relative to project cost.
- ii. The reasonableness of costs with regard to quality and quantity of deliverables.

**c) Capability**

- i. The applicants demonstrated capability and capacity to successfully carry-out the project on time, on budget and to the required standard.

**d) Project attributes**

- i. Demonstration of how benefits will be sustained beyond the period of construction
- ii. Prospects for project success and medium to long-term viability.
- iii. The investment readiness of the project, that the project will commence within 12 months of entering into a funding agreement.
- iv. Appropriate planning, construction, zoning, environmental, heritage and/or native title approvals have been identified, are in place or will be in place within six months of execution of the funding agreement.
- iv. The assessed risk level of the project.
- v. The type of entity submitting an application with preference given to projects proposed by joint ventures and consortiums.

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### 6. Information required

6.1 Applications should include the following documents, noting that supporting information should be commensurate with the size, scope and nature of the project:

- a) financial statements for the past two financial years;
- b) a project plan including details of:
  - i. how the project will provide public benefit;
  - ii. project scope including technical information related to what service the project is delivering, implementation methodology, timeframes, proposed co-contribution and costings;
  - iii. risks and mitigation strategies including risks associated with project delivery and ongoing management;
  - iv. relevant approvals associated with the project;
  - v. the proposed procurement process for major items;
  - vi. evidence to demonstrate capability and capacity to deliver the project.

### 7. How funding may be used

7.1 Grants may be used for activities including, but not limited to:

- a) capital infrastructure to improve access to energy, mobile and/or broadband services for the exclusive use of the project;
- b) new or used infrastructure for the exclusive use of the project;
- c) consumables used for the project;
- d) salary and on-costs for staff and professionals working solely on activities for the funded project.

### 8. How funding may not be used

8.1 Grants may not be used for the following activities:

- a) travel and accommodation;
- b) funding a project which has already commenced;
- c) repairing or replacing existing capital infrastructure where need for improvement cannot be demonstrated;
- d) making payments towards debt;
- e) purchasing land;
- f) undertaking training and paying professional costs which are not related to the eligible project activity being applied for;
- g) conducting feasibility studies;
- h) paying administration costs (including operational costs).

8.2 For telecommunications related projects grants may not be used for the following activity:

- a) part of the participating telecommunications provider's forward build network or upgrade plans over the next three financial years.

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### 9. How to apply

- 9.1 To be considered for a grant you must submit an application available on QRIDA's website at [www.qrida.qld.gov.au](http://www.qrida.qld.gov.au) by email, post or fax before the application closing date.
- 9.2 Applications submitted after the closing date will not be considered.
- 9.3 QRIDA may request further information to help assess your application.
- 9.4 Goods or services being funded under the scheme should be purchased from properly accredited or qualified suppliers or contractors.
- 9.5 Suppliers or contractors of goods and services should not be employed by an entity owned or partially owned by the applicant.
- 9.6 Penalties may be applied under the *Rural and Regional Adjustment Act 1994* (Qld) if any information provided in an application is found to be untrue, false or misleading. Applicants should be aware that giving false or misleading information is a serious offence under the *Criminal Code Act 1995* (Cwth).

### 10. How applications will be assessed and decided

- 10.1 Upon receiving applications, QRIDA will acknowledge receipt in writing and advise if any further information is required to commence assessment of the application.
- 10.2 Applications will be assessed on a competitive basis and there is no guarantee of approval at any stage of the assessment process.
- 10.3 In assessing applications QRIDA may seek expert or additional advice on any grant application.
- 10.4 Funding amounts offered will be determined by QRIDA and offers may not be to the full amount requested.
- 10.5 QRIDA will provide outcomes of the assessment process to the National Drought and North Queensland Flood Response and Recovery Agency and may also provide copies of application information to this agency.
- 10.6 QRIDA will be the final decision maker on grant applications and make a grant offer in writing to approved applicants.

### 11. Funding arrangements

- 11.1 Approved applicants will be required to enter into a funding agreement with QRIDA. This agreement includes undertakings relevant to disclosure of the approval, agreed set of milestones and reporting requirements, including a completion report.
- 11.2 Payments towards the project will be made to agreed milestones with the funding agreement.
- 11.3 Projects should commence within 90 days of entering into a funding agreement (unless agreed otherwise in writing by QRIDA). All projects must be completed, and available funding must be fully drawn by 30 June 2023 for both rounds one and two.
- 11.4 To draw on approved grant, grant recipients may either:
  - a) submit official invoices and QRIDA will pay the invoice amount to suppliers; or
  - b) submit fully paid invoices and official receipts and QRIDA will reimburse the receipt amount to the grant recipient.
- 11.5 Grant recipients are able to make multiple requests to draw against the approved amount of monies until such time as the cumulative grant funding totals the grant amount approved.

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### 12. Late applications

**12.1** Late applications will not be accepted under the Scheme unless an applicant can demonstrate to QRIDA's satisfaction Exceptional Circumstances prevented submitting an application by the closing date.

**12.2** Exceptional Circumstances are events characterised by at least one of the following:

- a) reasonably unforeseeable;
- b) beyond the applicant's control;
- c) unable to be managed or resolved within the application period.

### 13. Terms and conditions

**13.1** Successful applicants will be required to agree to subsequent audits under the scheme to confirm that grant funding has been expended on approved purposes.

**13.2** These guidelines may be reviewed or varied by the National Partnership Agreement Steering Committee at any time. Any revised guidelines will be published on QRIDA's website at [www.qrida.qld.gov.au](http://www.qrida.qld.gov.au).

### 14. Your privacy

QRIDA's Privacy Policy available at: [www.qrida.qld.gov.au/privacy](http://www.qrida.qld.gov.au/privacy), sets out general information on how QRIDA collects, uses and discloses individuals' personal information.

### 15. More information

For more information on the Telecommunications and Energy Improvement Scheme contact QRIDA on **Freecall 1800 623 946** or email [contact\\_us@qrida.qld.gov.au](mailto:contact_us@qrida.qld.gov.au).

### 16. Public acknowledgement of Australian Government assistance

The announcement of successful projects under this Scheme will occur as an Australian Government media statement unless otherwise agreed by the Australian Government. In addition, prior agreement must be reached with the Australian Government on the nature and content of any subsequent events, announcements, promotional material or publicity relating to an eligible measure under the arrangements. This includes but is not limited to: media releases, events, social media, signage and advertising.

### 17. Evaluation and review

Evaluation and review activities will be undertaken by the National Drought and North Queensland Flood Response and Recovery Agency.

### 18. Definitions

**Eligible area** means the areas covered by the Queensland local government authorities of Burdekin Shire Council, Burke Shire Council, Carpentaria Shire Council, Charters Towers Regional Council, Cloncurry Shire Council, Douglas Shire Council, Etheridge Shire Council, Flinders Shire Council, Hinchinbrook Shire Council, McKinlay Shire Council, Richmond Shire Council, Townsville City Council, Whitsunday Regional Council and Winton Shire Council.

**Official invoice** means an invoice including the name, address and ABN (if applicable) of the entity that issued the invoice and a description of each item to which the invoice relates which is clearly identifiable as being related to approved expenditure for the applicant.

**Official receipt** means a receipt including the name and address and ABN (if applicable) of the entity that issued the receipt and a description of each item to which the receipt relates.