



Accessible Tourism Elevate Fund - Access Project Grants

Program Guidelines

October 2023



Queensland
Government



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

The Department of Tourism, Innovation and Sport respectfully acknowledges and recognises Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the lands, winds and waters where we live, learn and work.

We pay our respects to the Elders past, present and emerging for they hold the memories, the traditions and the cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people across the nation.

We will walk together with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, communities and organisations in our journey to enrich lives and strengthen community connections.

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Contents

- 1.0 Program Overview4
 - 1.1 Objectives4
- 2.0 Key dates*5
- 3.0 Available funding5
- 4.0 Eligibility5
 - 4.1 Eligible applicants5
 - 4.2 Eligible projects6
 - 4.3 Eligible projects costs.....7
 - 4.4 Ineligible activities8
- 5.0 Application and assessment process.....9
 - 5.1 Application9
 - 5.2 Evaluation and assessment.....9
 - 5.3 Criteria10
 - 5.4 Decision and approval.....11
- 6.0 Funding agreement12
- 7.0 Reporting requirements12
- 8.0 Privacy13
- 9.0 Complaints13
- 10.0 More Information13
- Appendix 114
 - Definitions14

1.0 Program Overview

The 2023 Year of Accessible Tourism in Queensland is an opportunity to recognise the importance of accessible experiences for all, ignite change and create opportunities for Queensland tourism operators. This will enable everyone to participate in a tourism experience with choice and confidence and lays the foundations for making Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympics Games the world's most accessible and inclusive sporting event for athletes and spectators.

The Year of Accessible Tourism directly supports outcomes under the [*Towards Tourism 2032 – Transforming Queensland's visitor economy future, a tourism industry strategy*](#) (*Towards Tourism 2032*) that sets an ambitious target to more than double the state's tourism overnight expenditure to more than \$44 billion a year by 2032. *Towards Tourism 2032* is the new course for Queensland's government-industry partnership to transform and grow the visitor economy and position for success leading up to Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympics Games.

Under the 2023 Year of Accessible Tourism package of initiatives, a new \$5 million Accessible Tourism Elevate Fund (Fund) will support projects that elevate the accessible tourism experience and help the Queensland tourism industry better cater to visitors of all abilities, including people with physical, sensory (vision/ hearing), autism, intellectual disabilities, guide/assistance dogs and/or neurodiverse people. Projects must align to [*Queensland's Disability Plan*](#) and [*Towards Tourism 2032*](#).

The Accessible Tourism Elevate Fund (Fund) comprises two grant schemes:

- Access Starter Grant
- Access Project Grants.

These are the guidelines for the Access Project Grants.

1.1 Objectives

The key objectives of the Access Project Grants are to support projects that:

- demonstrate best practice accessibility and deliver tangible, high impact accessibility improvements.
- increase the number of tourism and events operators delivering universal design and accessible tourism experiences.

2.0 Key dates*

Activity	Date
Applications open	26 October 2023
Applications close	11.59pm (AEST), 21 December 2023
Outcome of applications advised	February/March 2024
Project completion date	30 June 2025

*Please note these dates are indicative only and may be subject to change.

3.0 Available funding

Funding of between \$50,000 and \$250,000 (excluding GST) is available for eligible projects that can have practical completion by 30 June 2025.

Eligible applicants do not have to co-contribute to the cost of approved activities, however preference may be given to projects where an applicant is providing co-contribution towards eligible costs.

Successful applicants will be required to cover eligible expenses above the approved funding amount, and all ineligible costs.

4.0 Eligibility

4.1 Eligible applicants

To be eligible for funding an applicant can be one of the following:

- for-profit organisation
- not-for-profit organisation
- regional or local tourism organisation
- visitor information centre
- local government authority.

Eligible applicants must also:

- be an **eligible business** or **eligible non-profit organisation** or **local government authority** (refer to definition in [Appendix 1](#)); and
- have an **established operating base in Queensland** (refer to definition in [Appendix 1](#)); and
- operate in the **tourism or events industry in Queensland** (refer to definition in [Appendix 1](#)).

Bodies not eligible for funding under the Access Project Grants include:

- State, Territory and Australian Government agencies or associated agencies such as statutory bodies or government owned corporations

One successful application per eligible applicant can be submitted.

Approved grant recipients from Boosting Accessible Tourism Experiences and Accessible Tourism Infrastructure grants can apply for a project that did not receive funding under these grants.

Eligible applicants can apply for funding under both Access Starter and Access Projects grant schemes.

4.2 Eligible projects

An eligible project must meet the objectives of the grant and may comprise of multiple activities from multiple priority areas.

Applicants must demonstrate that:

- the project has a fit-for-purpose approach that enhances existing tourism infrastructure and/or products through being co-designed and/or informed by people with disability
- the project incorporates universal design principles
- project will meet any applicable legislative or compliance requirements.

The types of activities that may be considered include (but are not limited to):

Priority Areas	Activity Examples
<p>Access improvements (where those upgrades are not an existing mandatory legislative or planning requirement for the existing infrastructure)</p>	<p>Accessibility upgrades to bathrooms, entryways, pathways Stair lifts Hoists</p>
<p>Accessible transport</p>	<p>Modification or purchase of purpose-designed accessible vehicles, vessels, pontoons or other transportation</p>
<p>Adaptive equipment and technology</p>	<p>All-terrain wheelchairs and mountain trikes and trail riders Aquatic/beach access wheelchairs Access matting Augmented reality, virtual reality or extended reality to improve accessibility Assistive listening devices technology incorporated into speakers/sound systems Sensor/voice/movement-controlled technology</p>

	Accessible paddling equipment (universal paddling seat, outriggers, kayaks, transfer benches, adaptive paddles, stand-up paddle boards)
Communication, signage and digital accessibility	<p>Accessible audio description and sensory audio guides</p> <p>Braille descriptions, signage, Easy English picture communication symbols, stories</p> <p>Interpretative and/or interactive tourism signage</p> <p>Improvements to websites, traditional and digital marketing materials to be more accessible and/or showcase accessibility information</p>
Sensory-friendly spaces and resources	<p>Creation of sensory-friendly spaces including resources</p> <p>Development of sensory maps and stories</p>

As evidence to support the need for the project, you should include relevant resources and/or materials available as part of the department’s [Accessible tourism toolkit](#) or similar justification in the application.

Projects should align with [Queensland’s Disability Plan](#) and [Towards Tourism 2032](#).

4.3 Eligible projects costs

Project costs usually include a combination of eligible and ineligible expenditure.

Applicants will be responsible for all ineligible project costs and any eligible costs over and above the approved funding amount; and must ensure they have adequate funds and resources to meet these costs.

Eligible costs include costs directly related to the delivery of the project, including but not limited to:

- infrastructure upgrades to enhance accessibility of the tourism service or experience for visitors
- upgrades to enhance existing buildings (e.g., accommodation, common use areas) to meet accessibility requirements under the National Construction Code (NCC) and the Disability (Access to Premises-Buildings) Standards, where those upgrades are not an existing mandatory legislative or planning requirement for the existing infrastructure
- new equipment and/or technology to enhance accessibility
- labour, materials and equipment purchase/ hire directly related to the project
- professional or specialist consultancy service
- value-adding to existing experiences with additional activities, e.g., interpretative, or interactive
- accessibility improvements to websites, signage, traditional and digital marketing materials, and content creation to support accessibility including written, audio and visual content
- training specifically related to the funded project’s implementation

- project management costs (external contractors) for time directly related to managing the construction of approved works but excluding executive duties and overhead charges.

4.4 Ineligible activities

Costs associated with the following activities (whether on their own or part of an otherwise eligible or approved project) are **NOT eligible** for funding:

- works deemed as repairs or maintenance for existing infrastructure or experience
- costs to meet any existing, mandatory legislative accessibility requirements for new construction or existing infrastructure under the [National Construction Code \(NCC\)](#) and relevant Australian Standards including the [Disability \(Access to Premises-Buildings\) Standards](#).
- activities that have commenced or been completed prior to approval for funding
- all preparatory work, such as planning, feasibility studies, conceptual design, obtaining regulatory approvals, permits and processes undertaken to comply with regulatory requirements, community and Traditional Owner consultation, cultural heritage management plans
- tender processes
- environmental offset costs
- general business marketing and promotional activities such as search engine optimisation, initial website set-up, traditional and digital marketing campaigns and advertisements
- engaging and hiring permanent employees (e.g. remuneration and entitlements), whether or not associated with the project
- equipment hire, vehicle leasing, purchasing or hiring not directly associated with the project for the purpose of construction
- buying or leasing real estate of any type, including the land on which the project is located
- administrative or operating costs (including legal or accounting fees, insurance premiums), whether or not associated with the project.

Note this list is not exhaustive. Other costs may be ineligible where it is determined they do not directly support project outcomes or the Access Project objectives.

5.0 Application and assessment process

The application and assessment framework will include the following stages:

- Application
- Evaluation and assessment
- Decision and approval.

5.1 Application

The lodgement of an application does not guarantee that funding will be approved.

To apply for this funding, applicants must:

- complete the online application form via the [SmartyGrants portal](#)
- provide all necessary supporting information/evidence
- address all eligibility criteria
- submit the application by the closing date and time (Refer to [Section 2.0 - Key Dates](#)).

5.2 Evaluation and assessment

Applications will be assessed for eligibility and competitively assessed against the evaluation criteria and alignment with the government's strategic objectives by an appropriate evaluation panel chaired by the Department of Tourism, Innovation and Sport (DTIS).

The Assessment Panel may seek expert advice during the assessment process.

To be considered under this grant scheme, applicants will need to address eligibility and assessment criteria and provide financial statements for the previous two years of operation or all available financial statements if operating less than this period.

Organisation eligibility

- Organisation is eligible as outlined in [Section 4.1- Eligible Applicants](#).

Project eligibility

Eligible projects will be determined based on the following:

- project is eligible based on project description provided (Refer to [Section 4.2- Eligible Projects](#))
- project will be delivered in the outlined timeframes – ready and able to commence within three months of approval and practical completion by 30 June 2025
- project will be available and delivered in Queensland
- requested grant funding is no more than the maximum grant funding amount available.

An Assessment Panel will be formed and chaired by DTIS to assess projects and evidence against the scheme's objectives, eligibility and assessment criteria. The assessment process will include a representative with lived experience of having a disability.

5.3 Criteria

Criteria 1: Grant Objectives (weighting 50%)

The application must demonstrate the proposed project will deliver on key grant objectives and develop more accessible tourism experiences/businesses in Queensland. Consideration will include the extent the proposed project:

- demonstrates the improvements and or enhancements in accessibility of tourism product and service delivery, including universal design principles
- demonstrates the project has been co-designed with people with disability and incorporates co-design principles throughout the project life.
- demonstrates how the project will improve the visitor experience through support by the approved project; and/or improvements to accessibility for visitors and tourism workers with disability
- shows how the project aligns to [Queensland's Disability Plan](#) and [Towards Tourism 2032](#)

Criteria 2: Project readiness and completion (weighting 30%)

The applicant must demonstrate the proposed project will be ready to commence within three months of the date of approval and be fully complete by 30 June 2025. Consideration will include, where relevant:

- evidence that suppliers have the capacity to deliver the project within the required timeframes
- the project is technically, commercially and practically feasible and viable with evidence that supports project delivery such as:
 - detailed project plan, Gantt chart and/or schedule showing timeframes up to and including project completion
 - has sound project risk assessment and mitigation strategies
- consideration of environmental impacts, including approvals where applicable to the project
- compliance with cultural heritage duty of care, where applicable, including support of Traditional Owners and any native title agreement with relevant stakeholders as required.
- for built activities:
 - evidence of land tenure: organisation is the owner of the site; or has a head lease/right to occupy the site and has permission to undertake the works (if applicable)
 - detailed plans, sections and elevations of each element of the proposal in the context of a functional layout of the overall facility (where required)
 - quantity surveyor quote/s (where required)
 - development approval (where required) or evidence it can be quickly obtained (within 3 months of project approval)

- risk assessment to demonstrate a development will not impact on any neighbouring properties or businesses
- demonstration of compliance with any legislated accessibility requirements and all other relevant approvals.

Criteria 3: Value for money (weighting 20%)

The application must demonstrate significant benefits to the State, in proportion to the grant funding requested, project risks and cost taken on. The Assessment Panel will determine whether a project presents an acceptable proposition to the State.

Proposals which present a lower risk proposition to government will have a greater likelihood of successfully satisfying this criterion. Consideration will include:

- evidence of the applicant's viability through organisational financials
- cash co-contribution by the applicant towards eligible project costs and evidence of ability to fund (through bank statements or accountant's letter), including evidence confirming any financial or in-kind contributions from third parties
- demonstration of how the project will deliver measurable outcomes to the State through the creation of new jobs during the product and experience development and operational phases, as well as how it will deliver regional economic, community impact and sustainability benefits.
- evidence of completion of an accessibility self-assessment ([Accessible tourism toolkit](#)) or another industry assessment framework, or any other evidence that the project will improve accessibility of the tourism or events business.
- details of any accessible/ inclusive tourism accreditation
- details of how the project will be maintained for its useable life after the funded project is complete, for example, how any new equipment can be safely stored; ongoing maintenance, repairs or updating are conducted; ongoing staff training is provided to operate any funded equipment and/or modifications.
- letter/s of support from key industry stakeholders, for example, from organisations/ representatives of the disability sector.
- past performance in the delivery of projects funded through prior tourism grant programs (if applicable).

Note: Applicants will need to clearly define what measurable impacts/ benefits will be generated from the funded project and, if the application is successful, report on these outcomes to determine its success.

5.4 Decision and approval

All applicants and projects will be subject to appropriate due diligence proportionate to the nature of the project and level of funding sought — including financial and economic assessments.

The Assessment Panel will evaluate projects for funding consideration and will make recommendations to the delegate for final decision and approval.

All applicants will be notified in writing of the decision.

6.0 Funding agreement

Successful applicants will receive a written offer of funding.

If the applicant accepts the offer, they will be required to enter into a legally binding funding agreement with DTIS.

The agreement will provide details on general and specific conditions associated with delivery of the approved project.

Key features of the agreement will include:

- the scope of the approved project
- milestone deliverables and dates
- funding amount and payment terms
- eligible and ineligible costs
- applicant's obligation to acknowledge Queensland Government support
- record-keeping requirements
- reporting requirements.

NOTE:

- a) Payments will be made in alignment with negotiated and agreed milestones inclusive of GST
- b) Payments may be made as a combination of upfront and reimbursement of eligible costs on the basis that full acquittal has occurred at the time of payment claim
- c) If full expenditure on eligible expenses has not occurred, the instalment amount in the agreement will be reduced accordingly by the dollar amount not acquitted.

An example of the terms and conditions of a standard DTIS contract funding agreement is available at <https://www.publications.qld.gov.au/dataset/?organization=tourism-innovation-and-sport> .

Successful recipients are required to commence no later than three (3) months from the date of funding approval and reach practical project completion no later than **30 June 2025**.

DTIS reserves the right to vary grant funding payments on a project-by-project basis having regard of risk to Government.

Note: Grants are subject to the Goods and Services Tax (GST). DTIS will increase grant recipient's grant payments to pay for GST.

Some grants are considered assessable income for taxation purposes, unless exempted by a taxation law. It is recommended that grant recipients seek independent professional advice on their taxation obligations or seek assistance from the Australian Taxation Office as DTIS does not provide advice on tax.

7.0 Reporting requirements

Projects are monitored through progress and financial reporting in line with the Funding Agreement. In addition, photographic evidence may be requested to support claims made.

Templates are provided for these reports and when due will be generated through the SmartyGrants online portal for grant recipients to complete and submit.

Grant recipients will be notified by email of reporting requirements one month prior to the agreed milestone date. Grant recipients will be expected to report on:

- outcomes that deliver accessibility benefits to Queensland tourism and events businesses, and/or employment of people with disability including measurable impacts/benefits generated from the project,
- progress against agreed project milestones
- project risks and risk mitigation
- contributions directly related to the project
- expenditure of grant funds and the grant recipient's agreed financial contribution. Grant recipients are required to keep all project related invoices and provide evidence of payments.
- A final project report after project completion will also be required.

8.0 Privacy

The Queensland Government collects and collates information from the application form to assess applications for the Access Projects. Only authorised departmental officers and approved grant assessors have access to this information for the purposes of assessing the grant applications and administering the grant. Information may be shared on a commercial-in-confidence basis with partner Queensland government departments and agencies and the Minister(s) responsible for the Grant.

Applicants should note that broad details of successful projects, agreed outcomes, project progress and the level of funding awarded may be published by the Queensland Government. Some information may be used to promote funded projects.

Personal information will not be disclosed to any other third party without consent, unless required by law or for the purposes of [Information Privacy Act 2009](#).

For audit purposes, the Queensland Government is required to retain the applications and other supplied supporting material.

The provisions of the [Right to Information Act 2009](#) apply to documents in the possession of the Queensland Government.

Information regarding the department's privacy policy can be found at www.dtis.qld.gov.au

9.0 Complaints

All decisions made in relation to applications are final. Under the department's Complaints Management Policy, DTIS has established processes for dealing with complaints and is committed to effectively managing concerns in a fair, transparent and timely manner.

If an applicant has any concerns in relation to the application or assessment process, a formal complaint may be submitted to the department by emailing GrowingTI@dtis.qld.gov.au.

10.0 More Information

If you require further information or clarification of these guidelines, please email GrowingTI@dtis.qld.gov.au.

Appendix 1

Definitions

Established operating base in Queensland means a business that is trading from premises located in Queensland which primarily delivers activities and services in the tourism and events industry in Queensland.

Tourism and events industry in Queensland means an industry classified under ANZSIC within the following class codes:

- (a) souvenir shops, duty free stores and travel good retailers (ANZSIC code 4279);
- (b) accommodation providers (ANZSIC code 4400);
- (c) food and beverage services including cafes, restaurants, taverns and clubs (ANZSIC codes 4511, 4513, 4520, 4530);
- (d) interurban and rural bus transport – tour bus, scenic and sightseeing operation, shopping tours, long distance (ANZSIC code 4621);
- (e) other road transport – hire car service with driver only (ANZSIC code 4623);
- (f) water passenger transport - boat charter, lease or rental (without crew), ferry, water taxi, water launch, cruise (ANZSIC code 4820);
- (g) road and water transport, including sightseeing (ANZSIC codes 4623, 4820, 5010);
- (h) aviation - airport operations and other air transport support services (ANZSIC code 5220);
- (i) rental and hiring services (ANZSIC code 6611);
- (j) transport rental and hiring – aviation, boats, buses, caravans, houseboats, motorcycles, motorhomes without crew (ANZSIC code 6619);
- (k) travel agencies (ANZSIC code 7220);
- (l) event management (ANZSIC code 7299);
- (m) heritage activities including museums, parks and gardens (ANZSIC codes 8910, 8921, 8922);
- (n) performing arts venues (ANZSIC code 9003);
- (o) amusement and other recreational services (ANZSIC codes 9131, 9139);
- (p) tourism development consulting service (ANZSIC code 69629);
- (q) performing arts operation – ballet, chamber, choir, choral group, circus, dance, musicals, musicians, opera, orchestra, performing arts, rock bands, ensembles, fireworks display, music and theatre productions, theatre restaurants, stage shows (ANZSIC code 90010);
- (r) musicians and entertainers (ANZSIC code 90021).

Note: A Local Government Authority will not be required to be classified under the above listed ANZSIC codes but must demonstrate how the project is primarily supporting visitors with accessibility needs in their regions.

ANZSIC means the document called 'Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification (ANZSIC)' published by the Australian Bureau of Statistics, as amended from time to time.

Note— ANZSIC is available on the Australian Bureau of Statistics' website.

Eligible Business

A business is an eligible business if:

- (a) the business
 - (i) holds an Australian Business Number for the business; and
 - (ii) has continuously held the same valid Australian Business Number since 1 July 2023; and
- (b) the business is registered for GST; and
- (c) the business has an **established operating base in Queensland**; and
- (d) immediately on or from 1 July 2023 the business primarily operated for the domestic or international tourism market; and
- (e) on 1 July 2023, the business had:
- (f) none of the following businesses is an insolvent under administration or an externally administered business—
 - (i) the business;
 - (ii) if the owner of the business is a sole trader—the owner;
 - (iii) if an owner of the business is a partnership—the partners in the partnership;
 - (iv) if an owner of the business is a trust—the trustees of the trust;
 - (v) if an owner of the business is a company—the company or the directors of the company.

Eligible non-profit organisation

A non-profit organisation is an eligible non-profit organisation if the organisation:

- (a) is a charity or other not-for-profit entity that is incorporated under a law of the Commonwealth or a State; and
- (b) holds an Australian Business Number for the organisation; and
- (c) has continuously held the same Australian Business Number since 1 July 2023; and
- (d) the organisation is registered for GST; and
- (e) the organisation has an **established operating base in Queensland**; and
- (f) immediately on or from 1 July 2023 the business primarily operated for the domestic or international tourism market; and
- (g) neither the organisation, nor a member of the organisation's governing body, is an insolvent under administration or an externally administered entity.

Queensland Local Government Authority

A Queensland Local Government Authority means local government authority as defined under the *Local Government Act 2009* (Qld).