

Queensland

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BIG4 Adventure Whitsunday Resort, image courtesy of Tourism and Events Queensland

Building Bush Tourism

Program Guidelines

November 2023



Queensland
Government



The Department of Tourism, Innovation and Sport (the department) will provide and pay for qualified interpreting services for customers who are hearing impaired or have difficulties communicating in English. Please [contact the department](#) if you require interpreting services.

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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1. Program overview

The Queensland Government is providing \$10 million for the Building Bush Tourism (BBT) Fund as part of the \$30 million *Backing Bush Communities* Fund and supports delivery of Queensland's long term tourism industry strategy *Towards Tourism 2032*.

The Department of Tourism, Innovation and Sport (DTIS) is responsible for administering the BBT Fund.

The objective of the BBT Fund is to support the development of new and enhanced tourism products or supporting infrastructure that will increase visitation to Queensland's regions outside South-East Queensland, generating economic and employment opportunities.

The BBT Fund will support projects that will improve amenity and accessibility of social, community and tourism infrastructure to support regional communities and grow visitation, or that support the delivery of community and cultural experiences (new and continuing) that will attract both regional participation and visitors to the region.

2. Available funding

Funding of between \$50,000 and \$200,000 (excluding GST) is available for eligible and approved projects and activities.

There is no matched funding requirement, however successful applicants will be required to cover expenses above the approved funding amount, and all ineligible costs.

If other government funding has been received for this project (including funding from Tourism and Events Queensland), the BBT funding must be used for different and distinct elements of the project.

Submitting an application is no guarantee of funding being approved.

3. Eligibility

To be eligible to apply for funding, your organisation must:

- have an established tourism-related operating base in Queensland
- have an Australian Business Number (ABN)
- be registered for GST
- be located outside South-East Queensland and in one of the below Local Government Areas. These are:

Aurukun Shire Council	Douglas Shire Council	Napranum Aboriginal Shire Council
Balonne Shire Council	Etheridge Shire Council	North Burnett Regional Council
Banana Shire Council	Flinders Shire Council	Northern Peninsula Area Regional Council
Barcaldine Regional Council	Fraser Coast Regional Council	Palm Island Aboriginal Shire Council
Barcoo Shire Council	Gladstone Regional Council	Paroo Shire Council
Blackall-Tambo Regional Council	Goondiwindi Regional Council	Pormpuraaw Aboriginal Shire Council
Boulia Shire Council	Gympie Regional Council	Quilpie Shire Council
Bulloo Shire Council	Hinchinbrook Shire Council	Richmond Shire Council
Bundaberg Regional Council	Hope Vale Aboriginal Shire Council	Rockhampton Regional Council
Burdekin Shire Council	Isaac Regional Council	South Burnett Regional Council
Burke Shire Council	Kowanyama Aboriginal Shire Council	Southern Downs Regional Council
Cairns Regional Council	Livingstone Shire Council	Tablelands Regional Council
Carpentaria Shire Council	Lockhart River Aboriginal Shire Council	Toowoomba Regional Council
		Torres Shire Council
Cassowary Coast Regional Council	Longreach Regional Council	Torres Strait Island Regional Council
Central Highlands Regional Council	Mackay Regional Council	Townsville City Council
Charters Towers Regional Council	Mapoon Aboriginal Shire Council	Weipa Town
Cherbourg Aboriginal Shire Council	Maranoa Regional Council	Western Downs Regional Council
Cloncurry Shire Council	Mareeba Shire Council	Whitsunday Regional Council
Cook Shire Council	McKinlay Shire Council	Winton Shire Council
Croydon Shire Council	Mornington Shire Council	Woorabinda Aboriginal Shire Council
Diamantina Shire Council	Mount Isa City Council	Wujal Wujal Aboriginal Shire Council
Doomadgee Aboriginal Shire Council	Murweh Shire Council	Yarrabah Aboriginal Shire Council

In addition, your organisation must be one of the following:

- a local government authority
- a for-profit organisation with tourism as an objective
- a not-for-profit organisation with tourism as an objective.

Bodies not eligible for funding under the BBT Fund include:

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

If a consortium submits an application, the lead partner must be an eligible organisation and be responsible for executing and carrying out the terms and condition of the Funding Agreement, including managing project delivery, and submitting progress and financial acquittal reports to DTIS, if successful.

Documented evidence of involvement and support of consortium partners should be provided as part of the application.

Applicants or applications that do not meet eligibility requirements will be deemed ineligible and not assessed.

Applicants can submit multiple project proposals however projects cannot be linked (i.e. different stages of the same project). Applicants are encouraged to prioritise and submit the project they consider is best aligned with the BBT Fund objective of increasing visitation and generating economic and employment opportunities.

3.1 Eligible projects and activities

Projects that fall into one of the categories below that will create new or enhanced tourism related infrastructure, or improve amenity and/or accessibility of social, community and tourism infrastructure or experiences, and will attract and grow both regional participation and visitors to the region are considered eligible:

- local infrastructure for tourism attractions and city/town precincts, including (but not limited to) heritage railways / buildings, WWII bunkers / forts, accommodation, etc.
- cultural institutions (e.g. art galleries, museums)
- mixed-use facilities (e.g. community hubs and centres, tourism information centres)
- aquatic / sports / recreation centres and facilities
- entertainment facilities
- local infrastructure including recreation and community water supply facilities that support visitation growth (e.g. camping / visitor facilities / amenities / pontoons)
- local infrastructure to support new / ongoing community festivals, arts and music events, and other community events with a strong focus on visitor attraction to the region (e.g. community showgrounds)

- development or enhancement of natural assets, including (but not limited to) public spaces such as beaches, parks (e.g. BBQ /picnic facilities, boardwalks, lookouts, shelters, interpretive signage), rail and walking trails.

In addition, where relevant, a project must:

- be situated on freehold or leasehold land and have owner's consent for the project
- in-principle support from local government and Traditional Owners (where required)
- be substantially progressed towards gaining, or having gained, all relevant Local, State and Australian Government permits and approvals (including Development Approval where required)
- be substantially advanced towards Detailed Design for infrastructure projects
- be substantially advanced or in final planning stages
- reach practical completion no later than **30 June 2026**.

3.2 Eligible activities

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

Applicants will be responsible for all ineligible project costs and any 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:

- tech overlay – online, digital, foreign language capability, virtual and augmented reality capability enhancement of a destination, infrastructure product or experience to provide a higher quality experience to domestic and international visitors
- costs relating to offsite construction of tourism or festival / event related infrastructure, including transportation costs to project location
- capital construction costs (including site works required as part of construction)
- production of final 'for construction' designs or equivalent
- costs of construction-related labour (external contractors) that is directly related to developing and delivering the project
- project management costs (such as external contractors) for time directly related to managing the construction or festival / event of approved works but **excluding** executive duties and overhead charges
- vehicle leasing or hiring directly associated with construction of the project (such as excavators).

3.4 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 (or which otherwise form part of the local governments' or businesses' usual responsibilities)
- 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
- marketing, advertising and promotional activities including websites
- costs related to the delivery of established national and/or internationally recognised major, local and/or regional events
- soft infrastructure such as décor, furniture, linen, and removable fixtures, including removable fittings and equipment (e.g. fridges, microwaves, tables, chairs)
- engaging and hiring permanent employees (e.g. remuneration and entitlements)
- 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.
- infrastructure that is temporary in nature and/or with a limited installation period (e.g. travelling art exhibitions).

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

4. Application and assessment process

Applications will be assessed against the evaluation criteria and alignment with the government's strategic objectives by an appropriate Assessment Panel (chaired by DTIS).

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 may seek expert advice from other government agencies, regional tourism organisations or First Nations partners during the assessment process.

DTIS may also consult with key industry stakeholders as part of the assessment of the application.

The Assessment Panel will consider projects for funding consideration and will make recommendations to the delegate for final funding decision. All applicants will be notified in writing of the decision.

The application process framework will include the following stages:

- Application
- Assessment Panel Consideration
- Final Decision.

All decisions made in relation to applications are final.

5. Evaluation criteria

The BBT Fund is a competitive, merit-based program. Funding will only be provided to projects to undertake activities that meet the following evaluation criteria.

Criteria 1: Support Bush Boost and Towards Tourism 2032 outcomes (30 per cent)

The application must demonstrate that the proposed project will support the Queensland Government's \$160 million *Bush Boost* and [Towards Tourism 2032](#) outcomes. For example, the project:

- a) will create new or enhanced tourism related infrastructure, or improve amenity and/or accessibility of social, community and tourism infrastructure or experiences
- b) will attract both regional participation and visitors to the region
- c) will lift Queensland's profile nationally and internationally
- d) will increase visitation and overnight visitor expenditure
- e) is identified as a priority project in, or aligns with, the relevant regional destination tourism plan (more information can be found at [Tourism and Events Queensland](#)), and / or local government's destination strategic plan
- f) is supported by the local government, and/or Traditional Owners, and/or an industry body such as the Queensland Tourism Industry Council (QTIC).

Criteria 2: Drive demand and tourism growth (30 per cent)

The application must demonstrate the demand for the proposed infrastructure and / or community event / festival and its ability to drive tourism growth to the region.

Criteria 3: Promote economic growth in the destination (20 per cent)

The application must demonstrate the proposed project will:

- a) create and support jobs in tourism and other supply chains (e.g. number of full-time equivalent positions to be created and supported during planning, construction and operation)
- b) have flow-on benefits for supply chains (e.g. accommodation, retail, hospitality, transport etc).

Criteria 4: Commencement / Construction-ready project (20 per cent)

The application must demonstrate the proposed project is able to commence / be construction-ready within six months of funding approval and the following activities completed, or substantial progress has been made, where required.

The degree of risk, planning and preparedness that can be demonstrated and considered acceptable, includes:

- feasibility study/ies
- business plan (including project plan and risk/management plan)
- extensive plans (including for infrastructure projects, any sections and elevations of each element of the proposal in the context of a functional layout of the overall facility)
- architectural sketches and/or detailed design
- engineer design
- development and / or permit approvals and other relevant approvals
- environmental approvals
- compliance with cultural heritage duty of care
- owner's consent.

6. Funding agreement

Successful applicants will receive a written offer of financial assistance.

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 in upfront instalments of eligible costs
- c) If full expenditure on eligible expenses has not occurred at time of milestone acquittal, the next upfront 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 www.publications.qld.gov.au/dataset.

Successful recipients are required to commence no later than six (6) months from the date of funding approval and reach practical project completion no later than **30 June 2026**.

Application form

The application form is available at www.ditidtourism.smartygrants.com.au.

All applications must be submitted by 11.59pm on the closing date.

7. Key dates*

Applications open: 30 November 2023

Applications close: 1 February 2024

Funding Announcement: April 2024

* Dates are indicative only and subject to change as required by DTIS. Changes to these dates are found on the [DTIS website](#).

8. Privacy

The Queensland Government, via its online application portal (Smartygrants), collects and collates information from the application form to assess applications for the BBT Fund. DTIS recognises that some of this information may be personal information as defined in the *Information Privacy Act 2009* (the IP Act). Only authorised DTIS officers and approved grant assessors will have immediate access to this information.

DTIS may also consult with key industry stakeholders as part of the assessment of the application which require DTIS disclosing some or all of the information obtained to the key industry stakeholders. Where possible, DTIS will discuss this information with key industry stakeholders without disclosing personal information. Personal information will not be disclosed to any other third party without consent, unless required by law or for the purposes of IP Act.

The Assessment Panel will consider projects for funding consideration and will make recommendations to the delegate for final funding decision. All applicants will be notified in writing of the decision.

Applicants should note that broad details of successful projects, agreed outcomes, project progress and the level of funding awarded may be disclosed to our Minister/Minister's Office or published by the Queensland Government. This information may be used to promote the funded project(s) or other funding programs administered by DTIS.

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

Applicants are reminded that the provisions of the *Right to Information Act 2009* may also apply to information provided to or created in the course of assessing the BBT Fund.

9. 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 DTIS by emailing GrowingTI@dtis.qld.gov.au.

10. Further information

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