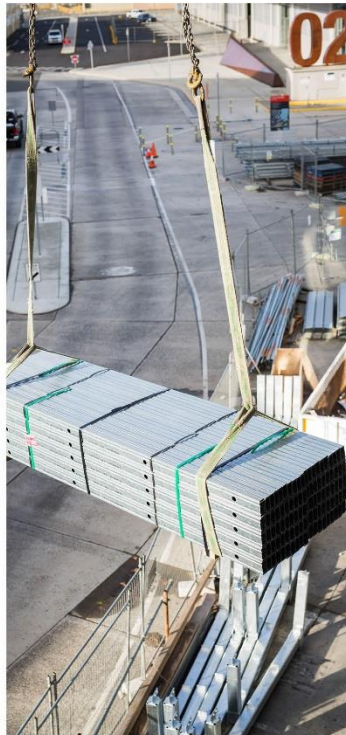
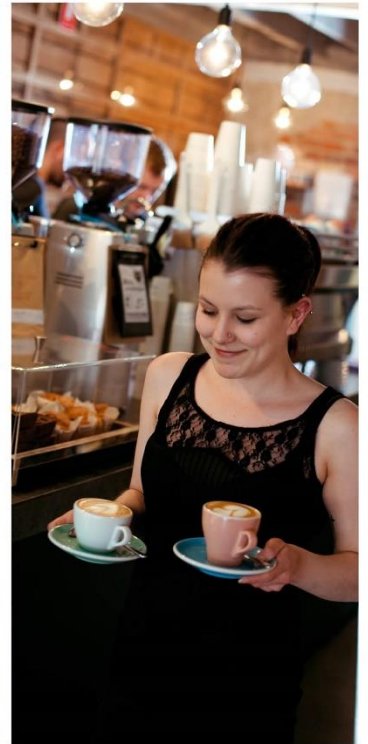


# Program Guidelines





## Contents

<b>Small Business Advice and Financial Guidance Program – round three</b>	<b>2</b>
1. <b>Aim</b>	<b>2</b>
2. <b>Eligibility criteria</b>	<b>4</b>
3. <b>Ineligible applicants/applications</b>	<b>5</b>
4. <b>Eligible grant expenditure</b>	<b>6</b>
5. <b>Ineligible grant expenditure</b>	<b>7</b>
6. <b>Assessment</b>	<b>8</b>
7. <b>Timeframes</b>	<b>8</b>
8. <b>Application process</b>	<b>9</b>
9. <b>Appealing a decision</b>	<b>10</b>
10. <b>Acquittal</b>	<b>10</b>
11. <b>Taxation and financial implications</b>	<b>11</b>
12. <b>Grant payments</b>	<b>11</b>
13. <b>Confidentiality</b>	<b>11</b>
14. <b>Administration and contact details</b>	<b>12</b>
15. <b>Publicity of grant assistance</b>	<b>12</b>
16. <b>Right to information</b>	<b>12</b>
17. <b>Personal information protection</b>	<b>12</b>
18. <b>Disclosure</b>	<b>12</b>
19. <b>Disclaimer</b>	<b>13</b>

# Small Business Advice and Financial Guidance Program – round three

## I. Aim

The Tasmanian Government recognises the significant role of small businesses in driving the Tasmanian economy. The [Small Business Growth Strategy 2026](#) sets out the priorities and objectives for government and the private sector to support small business growth in Tasmania. It aims to pursue the creation of a sophisticated and modern operating environment that supports Tasmanian businesses to be resilient, innovative, collaborative, and to achieve their goals.

The Small Business Growth Strategy 2026 was developed following a consultation process with individual businesses, industry representative organisations and communities across Tasmania. Feedback has been grouped under four key themes that provide an indication of what is important to Tasmanian businesses, where challenges and opportunities lie, and areas to focus on to enable growth in whatever form businesses choose. The four themes are:

1. People and connections
2. Place
3. Enabling business
4. Technology

The Small Business Advice and Financial Guidance Program is aligned with theme three and aims to support Tasmanian small businesses to be flexible, innovative and efficient. It aims to provide eligible small businesses with access to relevant and current specialist financial services or business support to assist in their growth, transition, business recovery from unexpected events or application of other management strategies.

Questions regarding the program can be directed to Business Tasmania by emailing [ask@business.tas.gov.au](mailto:ask@business.tas.gov.au) or calling 1800 440 026 before the program closing date and time.

Further information is also available in the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs), and Applicant Checklist available on the Business Tasmania website [here](#).

A total of \$525,000 has been allocated for round three of this program, across two streams:

1. General support grants - \$465,000
2. No Interest Loan Scheme (NILS) application support grants - \$60,000

### **Stream 1: General support grants**

Successful applicants will receive a grant of between \$1,000 and \$1,500 to obtain financial or business guidance services from a suitably qualified specialist/consultant to assist with (but not limited to):

- Advice, support, counselling, and the development of strategies to address financial/operational difficulties being experienced by the applicant business.
- The development of risk management strategies.
- Strategic analysis.

- Advice and analysis regarding the management of cash flow, preparation of cash flow budgets and projections.
- Profitability analysis.
- The formulation of financial/operational strategies to assist businesses to address the impacts of a disruptive event such as a pandemic, natural disaster, or other similar event.
- The development of business plans and governance frameworks.
- Advice regarding the management of debts and liabilities.
- Advice on pivoting, diversification, product innovation, marketing or online presence.

In order to receive grant funding, applicants will be required to:

- Nominate a suitably qualified service provider that will deliver specialist financial guidance or business support as part of their application.
- Provide an itemised quote confirming the services to be provided, as well as confirmation of an appointment made with the nominated service provider.

Applications for funding under this stream will open on Monday 17 July 2023 at 2:00 pm and close on Thursday 30 May 2024 at 2:00 pm, or when the available funding has been fully allocated, whichever occurs first.

### **Stream 2: No Interest Loan Scheme (NILS) application support grants**

Applications will be accepted to extend the support provided by business advisors under the [New Business Support Pilot Program](#) (NBS), to assist applicants complete their No Interest Loan Scheme (NILS) application.

The NBS provides up to two hours of free and independent advice from qualified business advisors across the state ([www.businessadvice.tas.gov.au](http://www.businessadvice.tas.gov.au)). One area that NBS advisors can assist with is in completing applications to the NILS. Completing a NILS application can take longer than two hours and, in that instance, additional support of up to three hours (to a maximum value of \$450.00) from the advisor is available through the Small Business Advice and Financial Guidance Program.

Applicants wanting to use grant funds to assist in completing a NILS application must speak to an NBS advisor about applying on their behalf. **Applications for this stream of funding will only be accepted from approved NBS business advisors.** Only one application per client can be submitted by the NBS advisor. To receive the grant payment, NBS advisors must submit an invoice detailing the services provided, and the number of hours utilised (to a maximum allocation of three hours).

All successful applicants, including client names, will be published on the Business Tasmania website.

If you need further information contact Business Tasmania on 1800 440 026 or by emailing [ask@business.tas.gov.au](mailto:ask@business.tas.gov.au)

Applications for funding under this stream will close on Thursday, 30 May 2024 at 2:00 pm, or when the available funding has been fully allocated, whichever occurs first.

**NOTE: All information that follows relates specifically to applicants for Stream 1 general support grants.**

## 2. Eligibility criteria

To be eligible for a grant, an applicant must meet all the eligibility criteria outlined below and will be required to supply evidence in support of the application.

**Late applications will not be accepted.**

**Eligible applicants must:**

- 2.1 Be registered for tax purposes in Australia with an active Australian Business Number (ABN) on or before 17 July 2022 and submit only one application in this program round.
- 2.2 Be a small business with no more than 19 full time equivalent (FTE) employees and be able to demonstrate that the business is currently operating and located in Tasmania.
- 2.3 Be a majority-owned Tasmanian business.
- 2.4 Be able to demonstrate an annual business sales turnover of more than \$30,000 in financial year 2021-22 or financial year 2022-23.
- 2.5 Provide all the required supporting evidence at the time of submitting the application (note: applications submitted without the required supporting evidence will be assessed as ineligible).
- 2.6 For applicants who received funding in round two of this program, provide evidence of how the funds were used in round two. Examples of evidence may include:
  - A report outlining the work undertaken with your service provider.
  - A receipt of payment you made to your service provider detailing the work undertaken using your round two grant funds.
  - An email from your service provider detailing the work undertaken.
  - Any other relevant evidence that demonstrates how you used your grant funds from round two.

**The service provider that will be engaged by the applicant to provide the financial or business guidance services must be:**

- 2.7 A business that is located and registered for tax purposes in Australia with an active ABN on or before 17 July 2022.
- 2.8 Easily recognised as a business that regularly provides financial and/or business expertise and services, aligned to those to be funded under this program, to a range of businesses.

**NOTE:** A business funded by the Tasmanian Government to provide free financial or business advice services as part of the Enterprise Centres Tasmania (ECT) Program, the Tasmanian Business Advice Service (TBAS), or New Business Support Pilot Program can be nominated by the applicant as the service provider. However, the applicant must have used all the free service hours available to them under these programs prior to applying for this grant.

### Definitions

*Full-time Equivalent Employee (FTE):*

An FTE is one or more employees who work 38 hours each week, which is considered a full-time workload. For example, if one employee works 18 hours per week and another employee works 20 hours per week, the total FTE = 1. The nominated FTE number should exclude the business owner/s.



#### *Currently Operating:*

Currently operating refers to at the time the application is submitted. The type of evidence required must be linked to the business address stated on the application form. For example:

- A copy of the most recent business bank account statement highlighting recent business transactions.
- A copy of the most recent utility account (e.g. Aurora Energy).
- Evidence of recent sales of goods and/or services to customers in the last calendar week prior to submitting the application.
- A current business lease agreement.
- Evidence of recent online business activity within the last calendar week, showing business address and must be time-stamped.
- Any other relevant evidence that demonstrates the business is currently operating in Tasmania.

#### *Business Sales Turnover:*

Business sales turnover is the total sale of goods and/or services to customers by the applicant (exclusive of GST).

## 3. Ineligible applicants/applications

Applications will not be accepted from the following:

- 3.1 Not-for-profit organisations, incorporated associations, or charities UNLESS the organisation is operating as a business employing paid staff and selling goods and services to customers that make up more than 30 per cent of their income.
- 3.2 Any public company under the meaning as defined in the Corporations Act 2001.
- 3.3 Any business that is for sale, trading insolvent, under external administration or bankruptcy.
- 3.4 Investment entities that solely generate passive turnover from residential and commercial property investment and/or the passive renting of property.
- 3.5 Any government body, government agency or government business enterprise.
- 3.6 Applicants who have already been approved to receive a grant in this round of the program. Only one successful application per ABN and/or business operation per round of the program is permitted.
- 3.7 Applications made and submitted by the nominated service provider on behalf of the applicant business.
- 3.8 Applications for activities that have taken place prior to the applicant being notified of the outcome of their application.
- 3.9 Applications where the initial activity/appointment with the service provider is more than six months after the applicant is notified of the outcome of their application.
- 3.10 Applications where there is a conflict of interest between the business owner and the nominated service provider (for example, if a familial relationship exists between the business owner and the nominated service provider).
- 3.11 Third party submissions unless the applicant has provided the third party with written permission to do so on their behalf, and this permission is submitted as evidence with the application.
- 3.12 Any business that applies without the required supporting evidence.
- 3.13 Applications from any business that is up for sale at the time of submitting an application.

## 4. Eligible grant expenditure

An eligible activity is one where an external professional financial or business advice service provider assists the applicant business with plans for growth, transition, recovery or to apply other strategies to help manage the business.

The activity the applicant wishes to undertake, and the service provider for that activity, need to be detailed in the application form and approved for grant funding prior to the activity taking place.

To allow time for application assessment and grant notification, applicants are advised to allow a minimum of two calendar weeks between the date of applying and the initial activity/appointment with the nominated service provider.

### **Examples of what the funding can be used for includes (but is not limited to):**

- 4.1 Advice, support, counselling, and the development of strategies to address financial/operational difficulties being experienced by the applicant business.
- 4.2 The development of risk management strategies.
- 4.3 Strategic analysis.
- 4.4 Advice and analysis regarding the management of cash flow, preparation of cash flow budgets and projections.
- 4.5 Profitability analysis.
- 4.6 The formulation of financial/operational strategies to assist businesses address the impacts of disruptive events such as a pandemic, natural disaster, or other similar events.
- 4.7 The development of business plans and governance frameworks.
- 4.8 Advice regarding the management of debts and liabilities.
- 4.9 Advice on pivoting, diversification, product innovation, marketing or online presence.

### **Note**

If you have any questions about what the funding can be used for, please contact Business Tasmania before submitting your application on 1800 440 026 or via email at [ask@business.tas.gov.au](mailto:ask@business.tas.gov.au)



## 5. Ineligible grant expenditure

### **Examples of what funding cannot be used for includes (but is not limited to):**

- 5.1 Servicing creditors or personal debts and expenses.
- 5.2 Eligible services or activities that have concluded or commenced prior to applying and receiving confirmation of funding from this round of the grant program.
- 5.3 Annual, quarterly or regular business tax or accounting services (such as BAS, PAYG, all Tax and Annual returns, and data input entry) and IT services such as day to day operations including installing software or fixing computer hardware.
- 5.4 The purchase, hire or lease of physical goods, equipment and licenses.
- 5.5 Activities that could ordinarily be described as expenses incurred in the normal course of business such as operating expenses, stock purchases, utility payments, subscriptions and/or membership fees associated with ongoing services such as web hosting, salaries/wages.
- 5.6 Payment of fines/regulatory charges.
- 5.7 Payments and costs related to opening a new business or relocating/expanding business operations to Tasmania.
- 5.8 Assistance in obtaining other government assistance packages including grants and loans.
- 5.9 Rental property reviews and advice (for residential, commercial, and shared accommodation services).
- 5.10 Any fees associated with entering into administration/bankruptcy.
- 5.11 Legal services that do not meet the intent and objectives of the program.
- 5.12 Administration of trusts and investment entities.
- 5.13 Advice and activities relating to brokerage, negotiation and dispute resolution.
- 5.14 Activities that do not meet the intent and objectives of the program.

## 6. Assessment

Applications will be assessed against all eligibility criteria, evidence submitted, and acceptable expenditure as identified in these guidelines.

Applications will be assessed in order of receipt and will continue until the program closes or all funding allocated to this round of the program is exhausted, whichever occurs first. Applicants that have commenced or have submitted an application that is yet to be assessed at the time funding is exhausted will be notified that all funding has been allocated.

Typically applicants will be notified about the outcome of their application quickly, however applicants are advised this may take up to two calendar weeks.

## 7. Timeframes

Activity	Date
Round three stream 1 opens	17 July 2023, 2:00 pm
Round three stream 2 opens	2 October 2023, 2:00 pm
Round three closes (*as per closing date or when the annual funding has been fully allocated, whichever occurs first)	30 May 2024*, 2:00 pm
Application assessment	In order of receipt of applications
Application approval	In order of completed assessment  Notifications of grant outcomes may take up to two weeks from when the application is received
Payment to successful applicants	Within five days of notification that an application has been approved
Successful applications (business name and grant amount) published on Business Tasmania website*  *as per Item 15 of the Program Guidelines	Within two weeks of notification that application has been approved

During the assessment process the Department of State Growth (State Growth) may, at its discretion, require further information to support or clarify an application. This information must be provided within a calendar week, unless otherwise advised. Failure to provide the requested information within the required timeframe will result in the application being assessed as unsuccessful.

## 8. Application process

Applicants should complete and lodge an application online via SmartyGrants from the Business Tasmania website [www.business.tas.gov.au](http://www.business.tas.gov.au)

SmartyGrants is an online grants management system which is easy to use and accessible via mobile phones, tablets, laptops, and personal computers.

Applicants without internet access should contact Business Tasmania at [ask@business.tas.gov.au](mailto:ask@business.tas.gov.au) or on 1800 440 026 to discuss alternative methods for applying prior to the program closing.

Before submitting an application, applicants are encouraged to refer the Applicant Check List, available on the Business Tasmania website [here](#).

### **Late submissions will not be accepted.**

The initial activity/appointment with the service provider must occur after the date of being notified of the grant application outcome, so applicants should be mindful of allowing sufficient time for the Department to process their application once submitted. All activities/appointments must occur within six months.

- 8.1 Applicants should read the guidelines carefully before starting an application. The application form will help structure applicant's responses.
- 8.2 Applicants should ensure that all supporting documentation provided is accurate and has been attached correctly before submitting.
- 8.3 Following the submission of your application via SmartyGrants, you will receive an automatic receipt of your application. This receipt will include details of the application and a unique application ID.
- 8.4 Applications will be assessed by a State Growth assessment team.
- 8.5 Applicants will be advised of the outcome of their application once the assessment and approval process has been completed.
- 8.6 Applicants will need to:
  - Obtain an itemised quote from their nominated service provider, including the GST amount payable.
  - Include the quote from the nominated service provider within the application.
  - Provide evidence of a confirmed appointment made with the nominated service provider. At a minimum, the initial activity/appointment must be at least two calendar weeks into the future from the date of submission of the grant application.
  - Provide a tax invoice of between \$1,000 to \$1,500, addressed to the Department of State Growth detailing how the grant will be spent as per the quote received from the nominated service provider (a sample tax invoice is available [here](#))
  - Please note that GST is not applicable to grants paid within this program. You can claim the amount inclusive of GST to a maximum of \$1,500 as quoted by your service provider, but your invoice to the State Growth should not have GST added.
  - Provide a detailed description about the scope of work being provided by the nominated service provider.
- 8.7 If assessed as eligible, the evidence outlined above will demonstrate to State Growth that the grant has been acquitted.

### **What does a successful application look like?**

A successful application:

- Is submitted before the closing date and time. Late submissions will not be accepted.
- Meets all eligibility criteria.
- Demonstrates a good understanding of the purpose of the grant program.
- Shows that the activity to be undertaken with the grant funding aligns to the purpose of the program.
- Provides clear and well-structured answers to all questions.
- Contains, where requested, quality documented evidence to support all claims made within the application.

## **9. Appealing a decision**

The appeals process is designed to ensure that all applicants have been treated fairly and consistently in applying for State Growth grants. State Growth will consider appeals relating to administrative process issues.

All requests must be in writing and should be addressed to the Director of the business unit where the application was assessed.

Your request must be received within 28 days from the date State Growth notifies you of the decision about your application. For further information about the process, contact Business Tasmania by emailing [ask@business.tas.gov.au](mailto:ask@business.tas.gov.au) or phoning 1800 440 026.

## **10. Acquittal**

### **What is an acquittal?**

An acquittal is a statement that may be requested from successful grant recipients, confirming that the grant funding provided was used as it was intended and as per the statements made on the application form and funding agreement. Unless otherwise stated, it is a requirement that all State Growth grants are acquitted.

For this program, at the time of application you will be required to submit evidence of a confirmed appointment made with a suitably qualified consultant or service provider and a valid tax invoice made out to the Department of State Growth prior to payment of any funding.

State Growth has a requirement and responsibility to ensure that the public funding administered is allocated fairly and spent responsibly. As such, the outcomes of grant funding are reviewed to ensure they align to the intended original approved purpose.

You may also, at a later date, be required to provide a copy of an invoice or confirmation of your attendance to that appointment, at the discretion of State Growth. Failure to provide this information by the required date will result in the applicant having to repay the grant funds to State Growth.

Additional information on the outcomes of the activity may be requested up to 18 months after payment.

# 11. Taxation and financial implications

Grants distributed under this program do not attract Goods and Services Tax (GST).

The receipt of funding from this program may be treated as income by the Australian Taxation Office (ATO). While grants are typically treated as assessable income for taxation purposes, how they are treated will depend on the recipient's particular circumstances.

It is strongly recommended that prior to applying, potential applicants seek independent advice from a tax advisor, financial advisor and/or the ATO, about the possible tax implication for receiving the grant.

## 12. Grant payments

Applicants will be asked for their bank account details at the time of applying so that grant payments can be processed once approved.

This bank account must be in the same name as the individual, business or organisation that applied for the grant. Applicants may be asked to provide a copy of their bank statement or a letter from their bank to confirm their bank account details.

Successful applicants who provide incorrect bank account details may have their funds paid to an incorrect account. These funds will need to be returned to us before we attempt another grant payment. This process may result in significant delays in funding being received. Additionally, we cannot guarantee that funds paid to an incorrect bank account will be returned to us.

If a grant recipient's

- Situation changes,
- Does not complete the approved activities or tasks,
- Does not use any or all of the funding provided, or
- The information provided to us is found to be false or misleading,

the recipient will be required to return some or all of the funds to State Growth.

## 13. Confidentiality

The Tasmanian Government may use and disclose the information provided by applicants for the purposes of discharging its respective functions under the Program Guidelines and otherwise for the purposes of the program and related uses.

State Growth may also:

1. Use information received in applications for any other departmental business.
2. Use information received in applications and during the delivery of the project for reporting purposes.
3. Use third party software to review information received in applications to confirm its authenticity.

## 14. Administration and contact details

The program will be administered by State Growth on behalf of the Crown in the Right of Tasmania.

Contact with State Growth for any of the following reasons can be directed to Business Tasmania at [ask@business.tas.gov.au](mailto:ask@business.tas.gov.au) or by phoning 1800 440 026:

- Further information or advice on the program.
- Assistance in making an application.
- Further feedback on the decision of an application.
- Request a review of the decision.

All applicants must take care to provide true and accurate information. Any information that is found to be false or misleading may result in action being taken and grant funds, if already provided, will have to be repaid to State Growth.

## 15. Publicity of grant assistance

State Growth disburses public funds and is therefore accountable for the distribution of those funds. As part of the accountability process, State Growth may publicise the level of financial assistance, the identity of the recipient, the purpose of the financial assistance, and any other details considered by the department to be appropriate.

## 16. Right to information

Information provided to State Growth may be subject to disclosure in accordance with the *Right to Information Act 2009*.

## 17. Personal information protection

Personal information will be managed in accordance with the *Personal Information Protection Act 2004*.

This information may be accessed by the individual to whom it relates, on request to State Growth. A fee for this service may be charged.

## 18. Disclosure

The following applies to all successful applicants:

- Despite any confidentiality or intellectual property right subsisting in the grant funding agreement or deed, a party may publish all or any part of the grant funding agreement or deed without reference to another party.



- Please note that all obligations under the *Personal Information Protection Act 2004* (Tas) and the *Privacy Act 1988* (Cwlth) still apply.

## 19. Disclaimer

Although care has been taken in the preparation of this document, no warranty, express or implied, is given by the Crown in Right of Tasmania, as to the accuracy or completeness of the information it contains.

The Crown in Right of Tasmania accepts no responsibility for any loss or damage that may arise from anything contained in or omitted from or that may arise from the use of this document, and any person relying on this document and the information it contains does so at their own risk absolutely.

The Crown in Right of Tasmania does not accept liability or responsibility for any loss incurred by an applicant that are in any way related to the program.



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