

A practical and comprehensive
guide to assist businesses apply
for business grants

Business grants writing handbook



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Introduction

About this guide

If you run a business in Tasmania and are looking for grant funding to help you grow or strengthen your business, this guide is for you. While it focuses on grants offered by the Tasmanian Government, the approach it outlines also applies to grants offered by local government, the Australian Government, and private organisations.

While this guide has been developed to help people who run for-profit businesses, it is also useful for people in community and not-for-profit organisations.

There are many different grants available. Each one will have its own specific requirements, but the steps involved are usually the same.

This guide will help you:

- find out about available grants
- decide if a grant is right for your business
- learn how to apply for a grant
- improve your chances of obtaining a grant
- understand what is expected of you if you receive a grant.

The guide also includes tips to help you write a great grant application.

See the Glossary at the end of this document for explanations of common terms used in this guide.



Business grants in Tasmania

About grants and why the Tasmanian Government offers them

Grants are specified amounts of money given to businesses to help them achieve a particular goal or do a particular thing. They include one-off grants and ongoing grant programs. They are subject to specific conditions and may be required to be repaid if these conditions are not met.

The Tasmanian Government funds grants to benefit businesses and at the same time help it achieve its policy objectives. This might relate to increasing local employment, building and maintaining infrastructure, attracting visitors to the state, promoting the arts, raising education levels, or improving the wellbeing of the community.

Government grants are available to help businesses expand, innovate, export, do research, and employ more staff. There are also grants to help promote Tasmania, such as through events or film and television projects. Grants are rarely offered to start a business.

The size of grants ranges from small amounts for one-off activities through to large sums for major projects or developments.

Many government agencies offer grant programs. Some are for specific industries or regions. Others are for any industry but may have a particular focus, such as employment or economic growth.

Grant funding is public money and the government has stringent processes to ensure funds are spent fairly and equitably. Each grant will have a rigorous assessment process.

Who is eligible to apply for a grant?

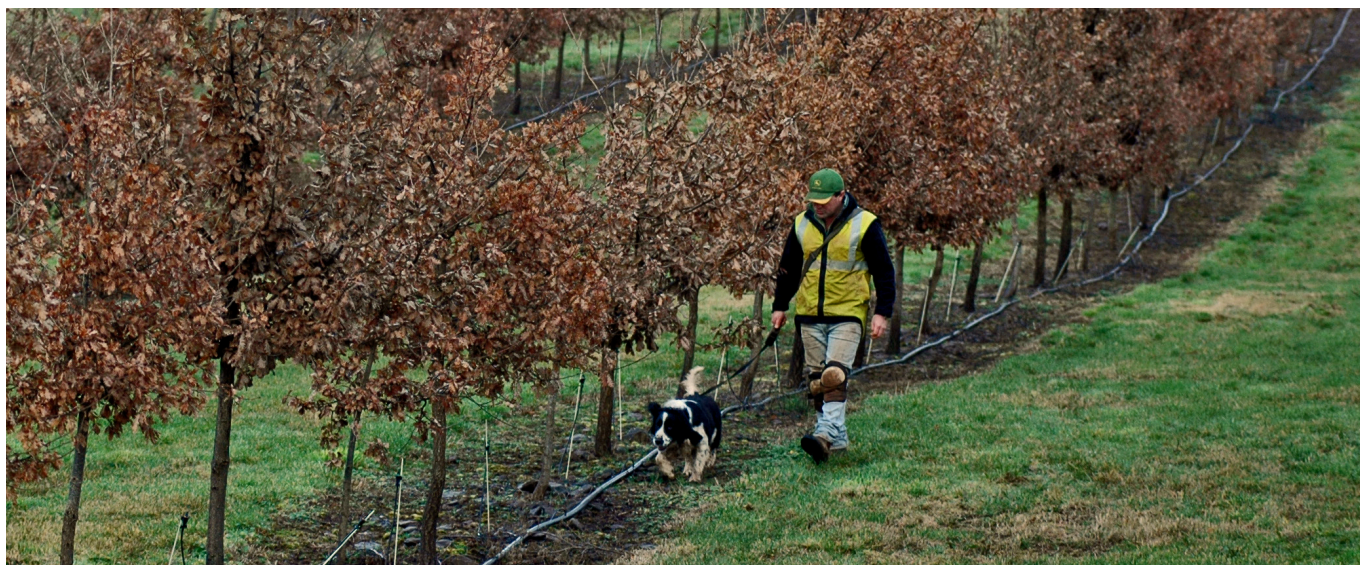
In general, to be eligible for a Tasmanian Government business grant you must:

- have an Australian Business Number (ABN)
- have a Tasmanian-based operation
- be in a sound trading position and able to meet debts when they fall due
- not be subject to any legal constraint, such as bankruptcy or liquidation.

Each grant also has its own eligibility criteria depending on the purpose of the grant program. These criteria might include:

- a minimum sales turnover
- being able to provide matching funds
- the industry your business operates within
- the location of your business operations
- whether your business has previously received grant funding from the Australian or Tasmanian governments
- competitive neutrality; that is, whether the project competes directly with an existing Tasmanian Business. Projects can be funded when an unmet demand for a product can be demonstrated.

For more information on eligibility criteria, refer to the section ***Read the grant guidelines*** on page 8.



Before you start

First things first – assess the capacity of your business

When distributing funding, the government is looking for businesses that can demonstrate both the value of their proposal and that they have the capacity to deliver. The first step towards this is being a business that has a clear sense of purpose and a good track record of achievement.

Before applying for a grant, assess the capacity of your business to take on a project. Do you have a business plan? Make sure you are clear about:

- the purpose of your business (mission)
- the direction you are headed towards (vision)
- the underlying principles that drive your business (values)
- your business objectives (strategy)
- the intended recipients or buyers of your products and services (market)
- similar businesses and what they offer (competitors)
- your management and team capacity to deliver the project (human resources)
- your financial capacity (finances).

If you already have a business plan, review it regularly and keep it up-to-date, so that when an opportunity for funding comes along you can see the big picture and how the grant might help you achieve your business goals.

For help in writing a business plan, go to www.business.tas.gov.au and type 'business plan' into the search box or phone Business Tasmania on 1800 440 026.

Even if you don't have a written business plan, considering the points above will help you be clear about your business when you write your grant application.

Use **Worksheet A – Assess your capacity to take on a grant** on page 29 in the Resources section to help you with this.

Come up with a project proposal

To clarify the project you are seeking funding for, start by considering these questions.

- What business opportunity are you trying to realise?
- How does it fit into your current business plan?
- What benefits will it bring to your business?
- How will this be of value to government and the broader Tasmanian community?

Use **Worksheet B – Assess a project you have in mind** on page 30 in the Resources section to help you with this.

Tip

A common mistake businesses make is to see an opportunity for government funding and try and come up with a project to fit, rather than already having a project in mind that is aligned with the grant objectives.

Look for a grant program to match your project

Once you are clear on your project – what it will achieve, how it fits with your business, and whether your business has the capacity to deliver it – you can start to look for grant programs that may be suitable.



Researching grant programs

Here are the main ways you can find out about business grants.

Tasmanian Government	<p>Business Tasmania</p> <p>www.business.tas.gov.au</p> <p>Phone Business Tasmania on 1800 440 026</p> <p>Email Business Tasmania on ask@business.tas.gov.au</p> <p>Business Tasmania can also help you find a business advisor in your area who can assist with finding grants suitable for your business.</p> <p>Communities Tasmania</p> <p>www.communities.tas.gov.au</p>
Australian Government	<p>www.business.gov.au</p> <p>www.grants.gov.au</p>
Local government	<p>www.lgat.tas.gov.au</p>
Newsletters and subscriptions	<p>Subscribe online to government and industry association newsletters, such as those from Business Tasmania, Skills Tasmania, Arts Tasmania, Tourism Tasmania, the Local Government Association of Tasmania and Regional Development Australia, Tasmania.</p> <p>Caution: While there are legitimate paid subscription services available, be cautious as some services charge for what is already freely available.</p>

Read the grant guidelines

The grant guidelines will help you work out if a grant is right for you. While the wording will vary across different programs, the table below common terms.

Terms	Important points
Grant program objectives	<p>What the government agency wants to achieve through the grant.</p> <p>This will help you work out whether your project is likely to fit within their guidelines.</p>
Eligibility criteria	<p>What requirements your business must meet to be eligible for funding.</p> <p>If your business isn't eligible, your application won't be considered, no matter how good your project or application is.</p> <p>Eligibility criteria are different to evaluation criteria (see below).</p> <p>It is highly recommended that you check with the contact officer to ensure that you are eligible before you start to apply.</p>
Eligible expenditure	<p>What will and won't be paid for under the particular grant program.</p> <p>For example, some grants will cover travel or marketing, while others won't. Most grants won't pay for expenses already incurred or for staffing or other operational costs.</p>
Evaluation criteria	<p>What standards will be used in assessing each application and deciding who will be awarded a grant.</p> <p>These may also be called qualitative criteria, assessment criteria or selection criteria.</p> <p>In your grant application, you will be asked to write about the extent to which your project meets each evaluation criterion. In a competitive grants process, the strength of your responses to these will determine how your application is ranked compared to other applicants.</p> <p>Ask yourself whether you are likely to be able to meet these. If yes, then read on.</p> <p>See page 15 for information on how to address evaluation criteria.</p>
Application process	<p>The steps in the process.</p> <p>Read this carefully so you know exactly what you need to do and by when.</p>
Timeline	<p>When the application is due to be submitted.</p> <p>Late applications are not accepted. Be realistic about whether you can meet the deadline.</p> <p>Also consider your ability to complete the project within the timeframe nominated in the grant guidelines if you are successful in being awarded a grant.</p>

Terms	Important points
Conditions of funding	<p>What the government agency requires you to do during the life of the project.</p> <p>This may include things like delivering your project within a specified timeframe and providing reports at regular intervals.</p>
Financial considerations	<p>What investment your business might be expected to make.</p> <p>With some grants, businesses will be expected to contribute a set amount to the overall funding, or demonstrate in-kind support.</p>
In-kind support	<p>A contribution, other than money, to a project to help it achieve its goal. It may be actual goods and services, or someone's time donated to manage aspects of the project. It reduces the amount of actual funds needed, and is considered to have an equivalent value to what would have otherwise had to be paid for.</p> <p>Check that the grant guidelines allow for in-kind support. Not all grants will accept in-kind support as part of the project budget.</p>
Financial statements	<p>The financial statements the government agency requires to assess your overall financial viability and capacity to fund co-contributions. This may include historical financial statements (including year-to-date management accounts), forward projections, cash flows and tax returns.</p>
Taxation implications	<p>How the grant income will be treated by the Australian Taxation Office.</p> <p>In most cases, a grant is treated as income and you will be required to pay the appropriate amount of tax. Talk to your accountant for specific advice.</p>
Contact officer	<p>Who you should speak to for advice and information.</p>

Speak to the contact officer or attend briefings

Government agencies usually have staff on hand to help people who are looking for funding. Usually referred to as the contact officer, they can tell you more about:

- what the government is trying to achieve
- your eligibility to apply
- government policies you need to know about.

They can also answer any specific questions or concerns you have. Government agencies generally welcome enquiry calls because establishing whether a project is relevant to their grant program can save time for them and for the potential applicant.

Some government agencies offer face to-face briefings and webinars.

Assess the match between your project and the grant

Writing a good grant application can take a great deal of time and effort, so once you have done your research, you should think carefully about whether you have found the right grant for your business.

Things to consider in deciding whether to apply are:

- how your project would contribute to what the funder is trying to achieve
- how the grant would help you achieve your business objectives
- whether you have the business capacity to deliver the project (including both management capability and resources)
- whether you have the time and resources to write a quality application in the time available
- whether you can afford it if you are required to match funds (being mindful of any tax implications).



Allow enough time

Working backwards from the due date, work out a timeline for writing the application.

Consider:

- who will do what and when
- what information is required from others and by when, and who will request it
- who you will request a letter of support from and what they will need to know
- whether you need financials from your accountant and how much time they may need
- who will proofread your application and when they would need to have it
- who has to check or approve your application and when they would need it
- who needs to sign or witness the application
- the deadline and requirements for submitting your application.

Use **Worksheet C – Scheduling the work** on page 31 in the Resources section to help you with this.

Plan your project

Once you have decided to go ahead and write an application, it can be helpful to develop an initial project plan. A project plan is different to a business plan, which is for your business as a whole. A project plan has a start and end date and is quite specific to the project.

While you may not be required to submit this project plan as part of your grant application, thinking it through in this way can help you describe your ideas more clearly in the application form. Having a plan in place can also help the government agency see that you are serious about the project and have the management and financial capacity to carry it out.

It can also be helpful to give the project a name that is easy to remember and describes the project clearly and simply. This can help the assessors quickly understand what you are going to do and how the grant will help.

Use **Worksheet D – Working up your project** on page 32 in the Resources section to help you build a picture of your project. This will help you to write your application.

Planning for larger grants or projects

Generally, the larger the amount of funding and/or the longer the term of the funding, the more information you will be required to provide. In these instances, you will need to consider the following critical areas in more depth.

- Risk analysis – what might go wrong and how you plan to prevent or manage this. This is your opportunity to show that you understand any risks that might arise and have thought about how you will manage them.
- Stakeholder analysis – who might be affected by the project and how you plan to engage them and address any concerns they may have.
- Market analysis – the need for your project in the market, who your customers are, who your competitors are and what is unique about what you are doing.
- Financial analysis – more detailed documentation on cash flow and profit projections.

Go to www.business.tas.gov.au for more information on each of these areas.

Writing your application

Read the application form and the grant guidelines carefully before you start writing. This will help you work out exactly what information you need.

Gather the information needed for your application

Your business structure

If you don't have the information at hand, contact the Australian Securities and Investments Commission at www.asic.gov.au to find out:

- your business structure
- your ABN
- the correct name of your legal entity
- who can legally sign documents such as contracts.

It is essential that these details are correct and up-to-date in your application. Without them, the government agency is unable to pay you.

If you are an incorporated entity, you will also need to know whether you have a company constitution or replaceable rules as this will determine who has authority to enter into a legal contract and how the contract is executed.

Background information

Gather and analyse information relevant to your project.

This could include:

- statistics
- government reports
- strategies
- policies
- regional or sector plans.

These will provide valuable context and background for your application, as well as help you build your case by seeing how your project potentially supports government priorities.

The contact officer may be able to help with this. Local government officers are another good source of information about local strategies and plans.

Consider whether your project will support any strategies or fill any identified gaps and refer to this in your application.

Support material

Contact people and organisations to request other supporting material that is required for the application, such as:

- letters of support or testimonials from customers or other stakeholders
- photos or drawings that help to describe your project
- information from your bank such as bank statements or a letter confirming matching funds are available
- information from your accountant such as profit and loss statements, balance sheet and cash flow statements
- insurance certificates of currency.

If you are planning to provide details of referees, make sure you contact those people first and request their support.

Generally, the larger the funding request, the more evidence and detail you will need to provide to show that your project is viable.

If information has not been requested, think carefully about whether to include it in your application. Some grant programs won't let you provide additional information. If they do, you should only include it if you consider it adds to your application.

In deciding what information to include, be guided by what has been asked for in the grant guidelines.

For more information, refer to the section *Collating your support material* on page 17.

Write a first draft

Most grant programs expect you to submit your grant application using either a customised template document or an online form. Government agencies are increasingly using SmartyGrants – an online system.

If you are using an online template such as SmartyGrants, write your draft in a separate document so that is easier for you to edit and for other people to review. You can then cut and paste it into the application template or form when you're satisfied with the content. See page 15 of this guide for more about SmartyGrants.

While the specific information required will differ from grant to grant, there will be similarities. Use your project plan to guide you as you write your first draft. For more information, refer to the section, *Plan your project* on page 11.

Make your application clear, convincing and concise

When you are writing your application, your aim is to write it so well that the people assessing it can find the information they need easily and quickly. Keep them in mind through the writing process, remembering that they want to easily understand what you are proposing. Aim to make sure your application is clear, convincing and concise.

Clear

The document is easy to read and the assessors can easily see:

- what you will do
- how it connects with their objectives
- your ability to do it
- how much money you need and what it will pay for
- what the expected results will be at the end of the project.

Consider using the plain English style of writing. For more information, see Tasmania's 26TEN Communicate Clearly: A Guide to Plain English available at www.26ten.tas.gov.au



Convincing

The information you provide:

- is accurate and factual – both the content and the figures
- includes credible data to back up your proposal
- shows that key people have been consulted and their views are represented properly
- presents a strong case with clear links between the project, your business and the grant objectives
- includes all evidence and financial information requested
- is realistic and based on facts, not exaggerated or inflated, as you will be measured against this.

Concise

Your application:

- is not repetitive – each criterion is seeking different information, so don't keep repeating the same thing
- contains only information that adds to the quality of the application (rather than quantity). Remember, assessors are reading many applications, so if yours has unnecessary detail, it can make it harder to assess. This may result in you being ranked lower than a business with a more concise application.

SmartyGrants

SmartyGrants is an online grant application system used for many government grants. You need to already have, or create and account with SmartyGrants to enter your responses to the questions directly into an online form. The system allows you to save your information review and change it at any stage before submitting your application.

The particular grant you are applying for will tell you if you need to use SmartyGrants and it will give you a link to the online application form.

The following tips will help you use SmartyGrants:

- Write your first draft in a document (using your preferred word processing system). This allows you to share information around more easily, and track changes for others to see. SmartyGrants allows you to preview the questions and you can then copy them into your document.
- SmartyGrants has limited formatting options. In your draft document, be cautious using formatting such as bold text or bullet points, as you may lose it when you cut and paste it into the online application. Capital letters for headings and dashes for bullet points are useful alternatives.
- Most grants will have a word limit for each section. SmartyGrants automatically calculates your word count. If you are preparing your draft in a separate document, do a test to check the word counter on your document calculates words, punctuation and spaces in the same way as that on the online form (because sometimes they don't).
- Once you have submitted your application, you can no longer edit your document online. If you have submitted it before the closing date and need to make amendments, you will need to phone the contact officer and ask for your application to be re-opened.
- SmartyGrants allows you to attach other documents. Make sure you name the documents so they are clearly identified as being part of your grant. If they are documents that have not been specifically requested, make sure you refer to them in the appropriate section of your grant application by name. For more information, refer to the section Collate your support material on page 17.

Address the evaluation criteria

Most grants require you to address evaluation criteria – also called assessment criteria or selection criteria. There are usually somewhere between three and eight of these criteria, and they provide a common standard that all applications are assessed against. This allows for consistency in how applications are assessed.

When you address the criteria, you are expected to make a strong statement for each one, showing how you meet that requirement. The assessment panel will refer to these statements as they determine the extent to which you can deliver your project and the outcomes they require. The strength of your responses will determine how your application is ranked against other applicants. Make sure your statement for each one is as clear and convincing as possible.

Tips for addressing evaluation criteria

- Read the criteria carefully and highlight the key points you need to address.
- Make sure you cover all aspects of a criterion.
- List each criterion as a heading in your application – or follow the headings in the template if they are already there.
- Demonstrate your ability to fulfil each criterion – don't just say you can do it. Provide examples of when and how your business has met this criterion. Add details such as how well you did it and what the result or outcome was.
- Offer examples, references and referees to support your statements. Don't make any claims that you cannot substantiate with evidence.
- If you are referring to your past performance, be specific about what you did or the issue you solved; don't just describe the problem or issue.
- Ensure your claims against each criterion are strong, clear and concise.
- Think about how you would evaluate your application against the criteria if you were assessing your response and knew nothing about your business.
- Highlight areas where you exceed the requirements and where you feel you can add value for government.

Example

An example of an evaluation criterion is: “Ability to deliver employment outcomes in southern Tasmania.”

A poor response is: “We have the ability to deliver employment outcomes and will employ a large number of people in Tasmania.” This response is not specific and lacks evidence.

A better response is: “Our project will employ five full-time employees in Hobart for six months to build the Acme Visitors Centre. Once it is built, we anticipate that two full-time and seven casual staff will be employed to work at the centre.”

See *Reference 1 – Sample evaluation criterion* on page 33 in the Resources section for a more detailed example.

Prove your claims

Back up any claims you make in your application with evidence that is tailored to the requirements of the grant. This could include:

- referring to census data and other information available from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (www.abs.gov.au)
- citing results from relevant surveys, interviews or other research conducted by you or by other organisations
- providing letters of support from industry associations, government agencies, or existing or potential customers or suppliers (these should be current, relevant to your project, and provide enough detail to support your application)
- referring to newspaper or other media reports.

When writing your draft, make sure you can refer to the best evidence possible to demonstrate the value of your project. Here are some suggestions.

What to write	Evidence you could provide
How the project will deliver the required outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • customer surveys, letters of support, statistics about demand • market research you or others have done • feasibility studies • community needs assessments done by local and state government agencies • forward projections. For example, you may be asked to anticipate job outcomes, including the number of full-time equivalent (FTE) staff you will employ
How your project will contribute to specific policies or plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a statement about how your project will help the government meet its objectives as outlined in a particular policy or plan, such as an economic development plan, a tourism plan, an export policy, or a local government strategy
Why your business is the best one to deliver this project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • graphs to show how your business has grown over a period of time • customer satisfaction surveys • an analysis of your competitors, how your business compares, and what your unique strength is • information about key staff, to show their competence to deliver the project (for larger grants, this could include resumes) • examples of previous relevant projects you have delivered
How the project will grow your business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • any forecasts you have done, including sales and other financial information, ensuring they are realistic

See *Reference 2 – Sources of information* on page 34 in the Resources section for places you can go to seek information to prove your claims.

Collate your support material

As you gather information to support your application, such as letters of support, financial information, graphs, photos, maps, and statistics, start to think about the best way to present this material.

Appendices are a good way to include additional support information. Check the guidelines to see if appendices are permitted and whether there are any specific requirements such as size and format. If you decide to use appendices, number each one in sequence and guide the assessor to each relevant one by referring to it in the appropriate place in your application.

Examples

Our prototype for a truffle-washing machine uses cutting-edge technology that enables the truffles to be cleaned without damaging the sensitive surface. The pictures provided at Appendix A show this technology in action.

Our project has the support of industry leaders and local businesses who have told us that they think the project has the capacity to rejuvenate our local area. See letters of support at Appendix B and Appendix C.

Detail the costs

Set out the costs of the project and include the level of detail required.

Here are some questions to consider when setting out your costs

Project budget	What is the total budget for the project you are applying for?
Funds you are seeking	<p>What is the exact amount of money you are seeking for the project from this grant? You should consider this in the context of the pool of funds available. Make sure the amount of funds you seek is realistic and aligned with your project. Be realistic about what you need rather than what you think might be available.</p> <p>Be clear about whether or not you have included GST in your figures and stick to the format asked for in the grant guidelines.</p>
What the funds are for	<p>Provide enough detail to make it clear how the budget relates to the project.</p> <p>If the project you are seeking funding for is part of a larger project you may want to include the entire project budget. However, if you do, make sure it is clear which part of the budget relates to the project you are seeking funding for, and that it matches.</p>
How the project will be funded	<p>You should clearly state how the project will be funded outside of any grant funds. Are you contributing funds to the project and, if so, how much? You will need to provide evidence of your ability to provide matching funds, such as bank statements, a letter from your bank or evidence of any other funding source.</p>
In-kind contributions	<p>Are you or others providing in-kind contributions; that is, services or goods rather than dollars?</p>
Any special requirements of the funders	<p>Do the grant funders require you to host a launch or provide any other publicity? If so, factor this into your costs.</p>

See **Reference 3 – Sample budget** on page 35 in the Resources section.

Review and seek feedback

Read your draft and try to see it from the perspective of someone who knows nothing about your project idea or your business. Would it make sense to them?

Is there a word limit or page limit to the application? If so, make sure you are within it, as exceeding it can go against you during the assessment.

You may also wish to seek advice from the contact officer to see if you are on the right track. While they might not read your draft, they may be able to guide you on whether the level of information you have provided is right.

Once you are satisfied with your draft, ask other people to read it and give you feedback. Be clear about the feedback you are seeking. You may want their views about the application as a whole, or just about aspects relevant to their experience or expertise.

Write a second draft

Once you have received feedback from the people you have asked to review it, work on a second draft. Weigh up the feedback you have received – some may be very useful, and some less so. The final decision about what to include and exclude needs to be yours.

You might also like to ask a colleague who doesn't have much to do with your proposed project to read your second draft. See if they understand what you have proposed. They may be able to highlight gaps, point out any weaknesses in your claims, or make suggestions to tighten up the writing.

This is also an opportunity to check that:

- your budget is clear and aligns with your project
- your risk assessment is detailed enough and shows that you understand all the potential risks and have strategies to manage them
- your letters of support are current and relevant
- all the information you have provided relates to this grant application and not a previous one
- you have referenced any appendices or attachments.

Refer back to the section, *Make your application clear, convincing and concise* on page 13.



Do a final check

Grant guidelines often include a checklist of information and supporting material that must be included in an application. Use that checklist to make sure that you have provided everything the grant program requires.

This could include:

- correct ABN
- legal entity and trading name
- names of trustees and appropriate signature pages (if you are a trust)
- supporting financial information such as financial statements (your most recent statements are best), cash flows, forecasts
- insurance certificates of currency
- resumes for key staff
- signatures of an authorising person and witness
- photos, drawings or plans
- market research or statistics.

Organise for someone to proofread your application for spelling, grammar, punctuation and format. There are professional services available for this, or you could also ask a colleague who has good writing skills.



Submitting your application

Submit in the right format

Most grant programs will require you to submit information in a particular way. Some may require you to submit online using a system such as SmartyGrants (see page 15). Others may accept your application by email.

You should note, and make sure you comply with, any specific requirements for your application such as those outlined in the following table.

Requirement	Description
Identifying your application	Instructions for: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• naming your email when you send your application• naming your application documents.
Formatting your application	Instructions for: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• naming or numbering your support material• formatting your application and support material, for example:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• application form, other supporting or requested documents (for example, PDF or MS Word)• images such as photos, plans and maps (for example, PDF, MS PowerPoint, PNG, JPG, JPEG)• video files (for example, MP4)• audio files (for example, MP3, M4a, WMA, WAV).
Number of copies	Instructions for: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• number and type of copies to be submitted. For example, you may be asked for a particular number of copies or to provide one hard copy and an electronic copy.
Sending your application	Instructions for: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the subject line of the email• the size of attachments• the number of attachments per email.

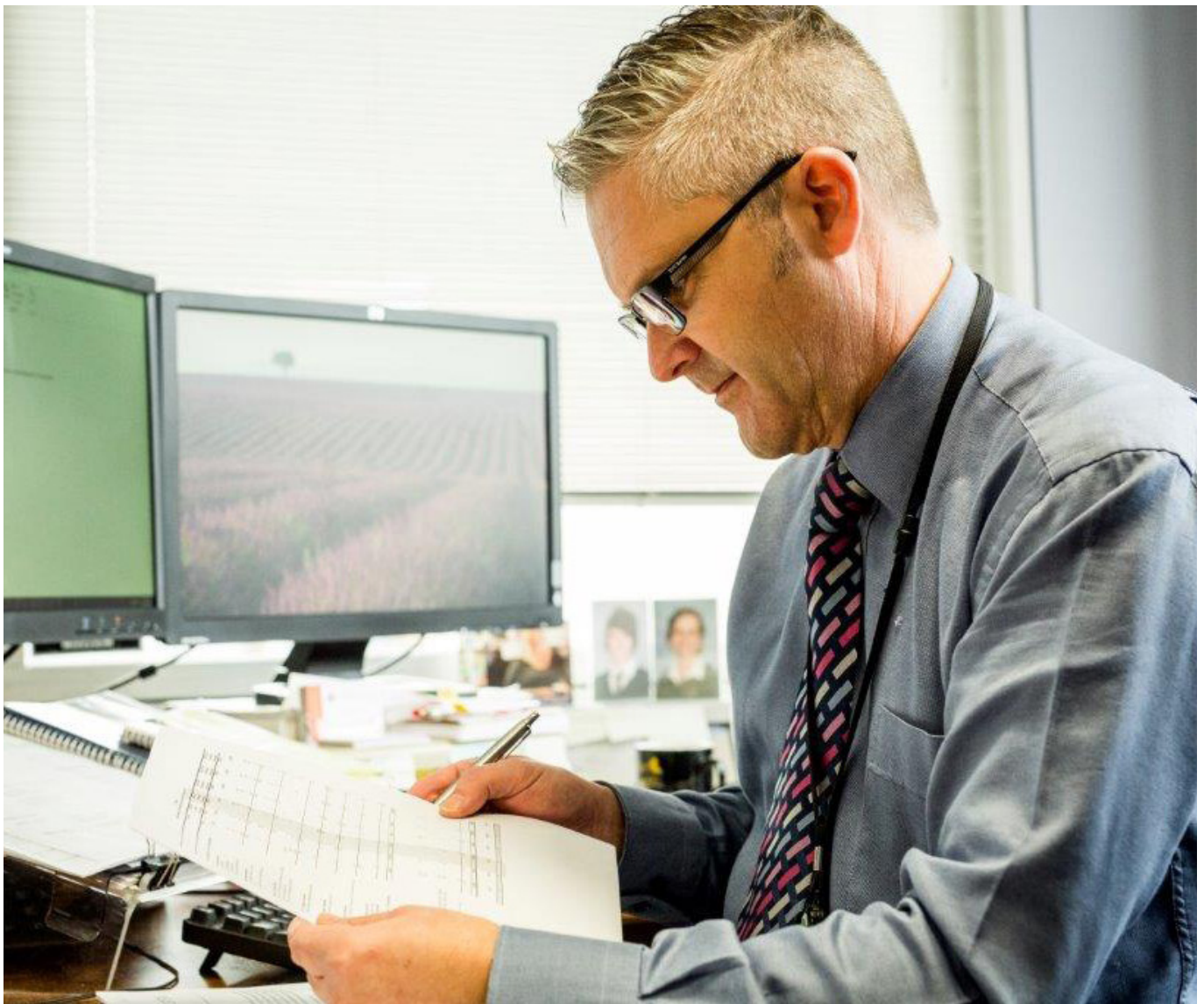
Submit on time

Make sure you give yourself plenty of time to submit your application by the closing date. Late applications are not accepted.

Don't leave submitting your application until the last minute – a technology failure or other emergency could mean that your application is not submitted on time and your project is not considered for funding.

Tip

Always double-check that you have provided everything requested. Applications can be rejected on the basis that the necessary information has not been provided. Once the grant has been submitted, there is usually no opportunity to update your application.



What happens next?

You will receive an acknowledgment of receipt

After the closing date has passed, you will usually receive a letter or email acknowledging that your application has been received.

If you are not sure, ring the contact officer to check if your application was received.

Your application will be assessed

Specific assessment procedures will vary from grant to grant, but there are usually some similarities.

Your application will initially be assessed for eligibility. If it is found not to meet the eligibility criteria – for example, that your project does not fit the grant guidelines, that you don't have a particular annual turnover, or that you don't operate in the region or industry that is the focus of this grant – your application will not be considered any further.

A panel of people with expertise in the area will then undertake a more detailed assessment of the applications. They will use an agreed system, for example a score out of five for each of the criteria. The focus at this stage is on the extent to which applicants meet the evaluation criteria and the program objectives, as well as their capacity to carry out the project and achieve the project outcomes.

The panel will also assess the financial information provided by each applicant. Based on the total pool of funds available, they can then establish how many grants they are able to distribute. If more funds have been requested than are available, the panel will distribute the funding according to the order in which they have rated the applications.

During the assessment process, you may be contacted for more information. Make sure you provide this information within the timeframe given.

After assessing all the applications, the panel will recommend which ones will receive funds. You will be notified about the outcome of your application.

If your application is successful

Generally, you will receive a letter, email or phone call from the government agency advising you that your application was successful.

The following table describes what is likely to happen after you and the government agency have reached agreement as to what you will deliver.

Stage	Details
Respond to the offer	<p>You will be provided with a grant agreement or grant deed that you must read carefully and, if you are comfortable with the requirements, then sign. This will outline:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• exactly what the project is, the amount of funds that will be made available to you, and how they must be spent• your reporting obligations• any acknowledgments you must make when speaking publicly about the grant, for example that you must acknowledge the government as the source of the funds• the timeframe in which the project must be completed. Make sure you are comfortable with the timeframe. You need to be able to acquit the funding before the grant agreement or grant deed expires.
Receive the funds	<p>You will receive the funds at a time that has been agreed. It is really important that you do not spend any money until the grant agreement is signed. There have been occasions where a funding program has been cancelled when a new government was elected.</p> <p>Be clear about any GST liabilities you may have to pay.</p> <p>In order to receive the funds, you may need to submit a valid tax invoice to the relevant agency within a specified timeframe. Instructions for developing a tax invoice and a sample invoice are provided at Reference 4 – Sample tax invoice on page 35 of the <i>Resources</i> section of this guide.</p>
Carry out the project	<p>You will work on the project and complete it within the nominated timeframe.</p> <p>If you don't fulfil the requirements of the deed, the government agency may ask you to repay some of or all the grant funds.</p> <p>If you are having difficulty completing the project (for whatever reason), it is important to contact the government agency as soon as possible. Remember, the government wants to see the project completed successfully and you may be able to negotiate some adjustments in special circumstances.</p>

Stage	Details
Reporting	<p>You will provide reports during and on completion of the project. These reports may be required at certain stages (or milestones).</p> <p>These reports may also require you to provide particular data throughout the project, for example, the figures you anticipated in your application (such as attendees, income, employment outcomes). It is a good idea to set up systems before you start so that you can easily provide the data when required.</p>
Acquit the grant	<p>Most grants require you to submit a final report with details of what was achieved and an acquittal of how the funds were spent. This is likely to include copies of all receipts and proof of payment, for example, a bank statement.</p>
Launch the project	<p>Some grants programs may require you to hold an official launch of your project. Others may distribute a media release at the completion of your project and you may be required to be involved in this.</p>

If your application is unsuccessful

If you find out you weren't successful, don't be discouraged. See it as a learning opportunity for next time. Be active in this learning and consider the following:

Action	Description
Seek feedback	<p>Most grant programs encourage you to seek feedback about why your application wasn't successful. Take every opportunity you can to see how you can improve future applications.</p>
Review your application	<p>Make notes on your application about aspects you can improve on next time.</p>
Be on the front foot for future opportunities	<p>Keep an eye out for other grants that may offer the same – or an even better – opportunity to bring your project to life.</p> <p>Continue to keep your project plan and business plan up-to-date so you are ready to act quickly as opportunities arise.</p>

For more information

For more information about finding grants and writing a competitive grant submission:

- go to www.business.tas.gov.au or ring Business Tasmania on 1800 440 026
- talk to your industry association
- go to www.business.gov.au

Glossary

Term	Definition
agency	The different sections within the Tasmanian Government. While this often refers to departments, it also refers to government bodies that sit outside the departmental structure, such as Tourism Tasmania.
application form	The form that businesses must complete to apply for a grant. This could be an online template, an MS Word or PDF template, or sometimes just instructions about the information that needs to be provided.
assessment criteria	See 'evaluation criteria'.
contact officer	The person nominated by the government to provide information about the grant.
budget	An itemised list of planned expenses for the project being proposed.
business plan	A written plan that outlines key points about your business including its purpose, current position, future direction, competitive advantage, and financial position. For information on how to write a business plan, go to www.business.tas.gov.au and type 'business plan' into the search box.
competitive advantage	The thing that makes your business stand out from your competitors.
competitor analysis	A comparison of your business and others that enables you to identify what it is about your business that makes it stand out. What is the unique thing you do that the Tasmanian community benefits from or values?
eligibility criteria	The criteria used to assess whether you are eligible to apply for the grant. This could include the location of your business, your annual business turnover, or your ability to provide matching funding. Not to be confused with 'evaluation criteria' (see below).
employment outcomes	The additional jobs that will result directly from the project, presented as full-time equivalents.
evaluation criteria	The criteria by which the merit of an application is assessed. In most cases, applicants are required to write a statement for each of the criteria to demonstrate the extent to which their idea or business meets them. See page 15 for information on addressing evaluation criteria. Not to be confused with 'eligibility criteria' (see above).

Term	Definition
evaluation panel	The group of people who assess applications for a particular grant program.
evaluation process	The steps taken to assess grant applications and decide which applicants will receive funding.
full-time equivalent (FTE)	An FTE is the hours worked by one employee on a full-time basis. The concept is used to convert the hours worked by several part-time employees into the hours worked by full-time employees. On an annual basis, an FTE is considered to be 2 080 hours, which is calculated as: 8 hours per day x 5 work days per week.
government	While the focus of this guide is on the Tasmanian Government, it also provides information that is useful for Australian Government and local government grants.
government agency	See 'agency'.
grant agreement or grant deed	The document or contract provided by the government agency that outlines the terms of the funding. This is a legally binding document.
grant guidelines	The document provided to businesses that outlines the purpose and requirements of a particular grant so applicants know what they need to do to apply.
KPIs (Key Performance Indicators)	The indicators of how well your project has performed. This could be data such as sales, attendees or time savings.
milestones	The points at which you expect certain things to be done.
outcome	The benefits you will realise through your project.
output	The things you will produce as a result of your project.
performance measures	See 'KPIs'.
project plan	A document that outlines the who, what, where, when and why of your project.
qualitative criteria	See 'evaluation criteria'.

Term	Definition
risk analysis	A list of any risks you have identified for your project and how you will manage them.
SmartyGrants	An online grant application and administration system that is used by several government agencies.
success measures	See 'KPIs'.
webinar	An online presentation that you can join via your computer.



Resources

Worksheet A – Assess your capacity to take on a grant

For the following areas, rate **HOW CLEAR YOU ARE**, where 0 = **not clear at all** and 10 = **very clear**.

You'll find the common term used for each area in brackets.

1. The purpose of your business or community group (mission)

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

2. The direction you are headed towards (vision)

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

3. The underlying beliefs or principles that drive your business or community group (values)

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

4. Your objectives (strategy)

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

5. The intended buyers or receivers of your services or products (market)

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

6. Similar businesses or community groups and what they offer (competitors)

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

7. Your organisational capacity to do the project (people and skill sets)

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

8. Your organisational capacity to afford the project and its results (finances)

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Look back over your ratings. What do they suggest to you about how ready you are to apply for grants?

This tool was originally developed by Lea McInerney of Clear Steps Consulting and is used with permission.

Worksheet B – Assess a project you have in mind

In coming up with a specific project to seek funding for, start by considering these questions:

What opportunity are you trying to realise? Or what problem are you trying to solve?	
How does the project fit into your current plan for your organisation?	
What benefits will the project bring to your organisation?	
How will this project be of value beyond your own organisation – that is, to government objectives or the needs of the wider Tasmanian community?	

This tool was originally developed by Lea McInerney of Clear Steps Consulting and is used with permission.

Worksheet C – Scheduling the work

A simple way to schedule tasks is to use a Gantt chart like this one. The sample here is based on a six-week period from when the grant opens to the date when applications are due. Aim to complete your application at least one day before the due date, so you are not racing against the clock at the last minute.

Suggested tasks you'll need to do in putting together an application	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6
Read guidelines carefully and set up template						
Work out what information is needed						
Collect information						
Request letters of support						
Do deeper analysis if needed						
Write first draft						
Review first draft with colleagues						
Revise and write second draft						
Proofread all documents						
Get sign-off						
Collate application and supporting documents						
Submit application						

This tool was originally developed by Lea McInerney of Clear Steps Consulting and is used with permission.

Worksheet D – Working up your project

Name of your project	
A brief description of your project (How would you summarise it in one sentence?)	
The goal of your project (What main result do you want to achieve?)	
Why you are doing it (What's the opportunity or problem you're responding to?)	
How you'll measure the success of your project (How will you know you've achieved what you wanted to?)	
How you'll make sure the project doesn't fail (What risks to success do you face and how will you prevent or manage them?)	
What tasks you'll need to do <i>(What are the main steps you'll need to take to reach your goal?)</i>	
Budget <i>(What will all the costs of the project be – including the funds you're seeking a grant for?)</i>	

Reference I – Sample evaluation criterion

Criterion: The project must demonstrate involvement of young people in project planning and delivery. Youth Week Tasmania is for young people, by young people. The annual program provides opportunities to build the capacity of young people to engage with the broader community. The application must show how young people will be involved in the planning and delivery of the project. It should also demonstrate how the project will support young people in the development of practical skills.

**Note: All organisation details and data in the two examples below are fictional.*

Example of poor response to criterion

Our organisation is committed to young people in Tasmania. We consider young people in all our programs and we will touch base with them through focus groups and other avenues to make sure they are involved in all aspects of this project. Our project will help many people in this demographic to contribute more fully to society by optimising opportunities for them to build a range of skills they will be able to use now and in the future. In developing the capacity of young people in this way, this project will have wide-reaching benefits both for Tasmanian youth and the broader Tasmanian community.

Example of good response to criterion

Acme Youth Company has involved young people in its programs for the past 10 years. Our youth employment policy (see Appendix A) states our commitment to developing the skills and abilities of young people between the ages of 17 and 21. We have run a very successful Youth Week Dance Project during Youth Week for the past five years (see photos at Appendix B).

ABS statistics show that in Tasmania's South East region, nearly 20 per cent of young people are unemployed, and only 50 per cent have completed education to the end of year 12. Participating in our Youth Week Dance Project for 2019 will give young people in the region the opportunity to be involved in their community while also developing practical skills they can use in a workplace or education setting.

We will involve young people in the planning and delivery of the Youth Week Dance Project as follows:

Planning

Our project team will consist of six volunteers aged between 17 and 20 (see Appendix C for a profile of the members of the team). We will provide the team with governance training and run training sessions to help them develop skills such as project planning, consultation techniques and project evaluation. The project team will meet weekly during the planning stage and secretariat duties will be rotated among members to encourage the building of minute-taking and meeting support skills.

One volunteer will also be chair of the team and this young person will be mentored by an experienced project manager from within our organisation (see Appendix D for training schedule and mentor details).

Delivery

Team members will undertake training in event management, to be provided – at a reduced fee – by Bright Sparks! a well-known and respected local training organisation (see Appendix E for evidence of the commitment of Bright Sparks! to the development of young people in Tasmania). The project team will meet more frequently (as required) in the two weeks before Youth Week. As they prepare for and deliver the event, team members will be supported with advice and feedback by the Bright Sparks! training officer and the team's project manager mentor.

Our project will support young people in the South East region to develop the practical skills outlined above. Over the past three years, 99 per cent of our team members have found employment in the region as a result of the training and experience they gained during participation in our Youth Week Dance Project (as identified by feedback from their employers).

Reference 2 – Sources of information

Who	What they can provide	How to contact
Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS)	Large range of data particularly related to demographics	www.abs.gov.au 1300 135 070
Business Tasmania	Current business grants available, business advice, support and referrals	www.business.tas.gov.au 1800 440 026 ask@business.tas.gov.au
Government departments – Australian, state and local	Data specific to their portfolio A large range of publications, including annual reports, statistical reports, regional strategies and economic development plans	Data Management Branches via their head office Internet access via their homepages
Regional Development Australia Tasmania (RDA Tasmania)	Local information on events, data and grants related to regional development Monthly e-newsletter	www.rdatasmania.org.au
Knowledgeable individuals	Letters of support	Local sources
Experts in the field	Supporting documentation	Will vary for different projects
Target markets or groups	Information about what they seek, via surveys, interviews, focus groups etc	Local sources
People with an interest or stake in the proposal	Minutes of meetings Write-ups of consultation processes Surveys Case studies	Local sources
Researchers and academics	Literature searches	Internet Local, state, national libraries
You and your business	Your records	
Google	A raft of information relevant to your topics. Be clear on your search terms and make sure information is current.	www.google.com

Reference 3 – Sample budget

This is a sample budget for a project where the applicant has applied for \$50,000 to buy the construction materials for their new communal facility and campground.

Budget for the School Camp Chalet project

Budget period from: _____ to _____

Revenue

Item	Amount
Government grant	\$50,000
Business contribution	\$250,000
In-kind contributions (itemised labour from community members)	\$30,000
TOTAL	\$330,000

Expenditure

Item	Amount
Build Chalets – construction materials	\$125,000
Build Chalets – labour	\$123,000
Communal meeting area – materials (see quote)	\$50,000
Communal meeting area – labour	\$30,000
Launch event	\$2,000
TOTAL	\$330,000

Reference 4 – Sample tax invoice

If you are asked to provide a valid tax invoice, it must include the following:

1. The words "Tax Invoice"
2. The business's name
3. The business's Australian Business Number (ABN)
4. The name of the Department the invoice is being issued to
5. The date the invoice is being issued
6. The name of the grant program
7. The amount of the grant (\$)
8. The GST amount (if any) payable – this can be shown separately or, if the GST amount is exactly one-eleventh of the total price, as a statement such as 'Total price includes GST'
9. Bank account details – the account into which the grant will be paid

TAX INVOICE			
Business name: Inglewood Progress Association			
ABN:		39 424 686 525	
Address:		PO Box 222, Inglewood, TAS 7700	
To		Department of State Growth GPO Box 536 Hobart TAS 7001	
Date of Issue:		29 May 2019	Invoice No G001
Grant program: Rural reconnection program			
Project Description The School Chalet Camp project: To buy construction materials for a new communal facility.			
Grant Amount:		Grant \$50,000 GST \$5,000 Total \$55,000	
Bank Account Details			
Bank:		AnyBank	
BSB:		611-000	
Account No:		111 444 999	
Account Name: Inglewood Progress Association			



Department of State Growth

Salamanca Building, 4 Salamanca Place
Hobart TAS 7000 Australia

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Web: www.business.tas.gov.au

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