

+ Horticultural Netting Program—Trial Expansion Guidelines

1. About the Program

The Australian Government's Horticultural Netting Program—Trial Expansion aims at helping primary producers of commercial horticulture crops offset the cost of purchasing and installing horticultural netting to increase crop productivity and reduce the adverse impacts of weather events and animal predation on commercial horticulture crops.

The grant amount available is 50 per cent of the cost of purchasing and installing horticultural netting on existing horticulture produce, or on horticulture produce to be established on areas with crop growing history, up to a maximum amount of \$300,000.

The maximum cumulative level of assistance that may be received from this program and the Horticultural Netting Program—Trial (for Apple and Pear Growers) administered by the Queensland Department of Agriculture and Fisheries is \$300,000.

2. Eligibility

To be eligible for funding applicants must be a primary producer and:

- (a) protective netting must be purchased and installed after 16 December 2019 for apple and pear crops and after 14 December 2021 for all other horticultural crops;
- (b) the land on which netting is to be installed must have an established use of horticultural production prior to 16 December 2019 for apple and pear crops, and prior to 14 December 2021 for all other horticultural crops; and
- (c) protective netting must be purchased and installed to increase horticultural productivity, by reducing the impacts of adverse weather events or animal predation, and to reduce water usage.

3. How funding may be used

3.1 Horticultural Netting Grants may be used for:

- (a) the purchase cost of permanent protective netting (including shade cloth), throw over netting and associated infrastructure such as poles (either new infrastructure or replacement of existing infrastructure that has been damaged or requires replacing);
- (b) costs associated with engaging contractors to install the permanent protective netting and associated infrastructure; and
- (c) costs directly associated with engaging contractors to conduct preparatory activities directly necessary for the installation of permanent protective netting (e.g. costs of removing existing netting).



4. How funding may not be used

4.1 Horticultural Netting Grants may not be used for:

- (a) projects that have already received assistance from State or Commonwealth grants to achieve the same objectives;
- (b) projects where the netting and/or associated support structures have been damaged by the bushfire of 2019-2020 and the applicant received financial assistance for the same objectives;
- (c) projects where insurance has been claimed for damaged netting and/or associated support structures;
- (d) retrospective funding for purchase or works carried out prior to 16 December 2019 for apple and pear crops and/or 14 December 2021 for all other horticultural crops;
- (e) feasibility studies, business cases, reports and development plans; costs associated with preparing applications for funding;
- (f) operational expenditure, including wages other than contractors, utilities, self-installation, repairs and maintenance; and
- (g) grapes used for production within viticulture.

5. How to apply

5.1 To apply for a grant under the program please complete and submit your application form and supporting information via the QRIDA online portal: <https://applyonline.qrida.qld.gov.au/>.

5.2 Applications must be submitted to QRIDA accompanied by:

- (a) quotes or invoices associated with costs for new permanent netting infrastructure. (These quotes or invoices should reflect current market prices for goods and services being purchased. QRIDA may request further quotations be provided to substantiate requests); and
- (b) evidence of payment for the tax invoice(s) i.e. an *official receipt(s)* from the provider or a copy of the applicant's bank transfer(s) or bank statement(s);
- (c) any additional documents stated in the application form.

5.3 The program will close to applications on 30 April 2024 or when available funds have been allocated.

5.4 QRIDA can only approve and fund applications subject to the availability of Australian Government funding for this program. The Queensland Government is unable to fund applications after available Australian Government funds have been exhausted.

5.5 Penalties apply for providing false and misleading information.

6. How applications will be assessed and decided

6.1 Upon receiving applications, QRIDA will acknowledge receipt by email or post and advise if any further information is required to commence assessment of the application.

6.2 QRIDA will assess complete applications in order of receipt. Incomplete applications will not be assessed until all required information is received.

6.3 Approved applicants will receive a written grant offer from QRIDA.

6.4 QRIDA may issue conditional approvals to applicants.

6.5 Payment will be made when the approved activity has been undertaken and evidence of payment is provided.

7. Funding arrangements

- 7.1 If your application is successful, you will be required to enter into a legally binding letter of offer with the Queensland Rural and Industry Development Authority (QRIDA). This agreement includes undertakings relevant to disclosure of the approval, agreed set of milestones and reporting requirements, including a completion report.
- 7.2 Approved funding should draw within twelve months from entering into a letter of offer. (QRIDA may grant extensions for grant draw downs in extenuating circumstances, for instance natural disaster events).
- 7.3 To draw on approved grants, you may either:
- (a) submit official invoices and QRIDA will pay 50 per cent of the invoice amount to suppliers; or
 - (b) submit fully paid official invoices and official receipts and QRIDA will reimburse 50 per cent of the receipt amount to the grant recipient.
- 7.4 You are able to make multiple requests to draw against the approved grant amount within the approved time frame.

8. Fraudulent applications

- 8.1 QRIDA takes fraud and corruption seriously. Suspected fraud will be assessed and investigated, which may require involvement of external parties such as Queensland Police Service (QPS) or Crime and Corruption Commission (CCC).
- 8.2 By signing the application form, you acknowledge the information provided in the application form is true and accurate.
- 8.3 The provision of false and misleading information and documents is an offence and penalties may be applied under the *Rural and Regional Adjustment Act 1994*.
- 8.4 QRIDA responds to fraud by:
- (a) inquiries and review of applications and funding that are suspicious
 - (b) referral to law enforcement agencies such as QPS or CCC of suspected fraud
 - (c) pursue the recovery of funds provided under a fraudulent application.

9. Conflict of interest

- 9.1 A conflict of interest may arise due to a business dealing with QRIDA, if your private interests' conflict with your obligations under the agreement. Conflicts of interest could affect the awarding or performance of your agreement. A conflict of interest can be:
- real (or actual);
 - apparent (or perceived); or
 - potential.
- 9.2 We will ask you to declare, as part of your application, any business dealings that may be considered an actual, perceived or potential conflict of interest or that, to the best of your knowledge, there is no conflict of interest. If you later identify that there is an actual, apparent, or potential conflict of interest or that one might arise in relation to your agreement, you must inform us in writing immediately.

10. More information

If you would like more information on the Horticultural Netting Grant Program—Trial Expansion, we are happy to answer any questions you may have. We can be contacted on **Freecall 1800 623 946** or email contact_us@qrida.qld.gov.au

Regional Area Managers located in Brisbane, Bundaberg, Townsville, Cloncurry, Innisfail, Kingaroy, Emerald (with an office in Longreach), Mackay, Rockhampton, Roma and Toowoomba are also available to assist you.

11. Definitions

Extraordinary bushfire disaster means a bushfire disaster that:

- (a) happened in the 2019 – 2020 financial year; and
- (b) is defined by the appropriate Minister for the purpose of activating the disaster funding recovery arrangements.

Horticultural crops for the purposes of the rebate includes the following activities:

- (a) nursery and floriculture production;
- (b) mushroom and vegetable growing;
- (c) fruit and tree nut growing excluding grapes used for production within viticulture.

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

Primary producer means:

- (a) a sole trader who
 - spends the majority of the person's labour on a primary production enterprise; and
 - derives the majority of the person's income from the primary production enterprise; or
- (b) a partnership, company or trust that carries on a primary production enterprise, any partners, shareholders, or beneficiaries
 - spend the majority of their labour on a primary production enterprise; and
 - derive the majority of their income from the primary production enterprise.

Primary production enterprise means an enterprise that:

- (a) is carried on by a sole trader, trust, partnership or proprietary company; and
- (b) that involves primary production, including the agricultural, apicultural, aqua cultural, forestry, grazing and horticultural industries; and
- (c) holds an Australian Business Number (ABN).