

+ Remote Communities Freight Assistance Scheme Guidelines

1. About the Scheme

- 1.1. The objective of the Scheme is to reduce the amount of freight costs on *essential goods* that are passed on to consumers in remote communities.
- 1.2. The Remote Communities Freight Assistance Scheme funding is \$10 million per annum (indexed) over five financial years, ending on 30 June 2028.

2. Purpose of assistance

- 2.1. The purpose of assistance under the Scheme is to wholly or partly reimburse owners of *eligible businesses* carried on at *approved premises* for:
 - (a) *discount shortfalls* and compliance costs for the businesses; and
 - (b) for owners of *eligible businesses* who are entitled to receive the establishment assistance—establishment activities for the businesses.

3. Amount of assistance

Establishment Assistance

- 3.1. The establishment assistance is a one-off reimbursement payment to help offset costs incurred in carrying out one or more establishment activities for an *eligible business*.
- 3.2. The amount of establishment assistance in relation to an *eligible business* is the total of:
 - (a) the cost of all establishment activities for the business; and
 - (b) the amount of any GST payable by QRIDA in relation to the assistance mentioned in paragraph (a).
- 3.3. However, the maximum amount of establishment assistance is the total of:
 - (a) the lesser of the following amounts:
 - i. \$14,000 for each of the *approved premises* of the *eligible business*;
 - ii. \$110,000; and
 - (b) the amount of any GST payable by QRIDA in relation to the assistance mentioned in paragraph (a).
- 3.4. The establishment assistance *application period* will be for two years starting on the day the Scheme opens.
- 3.5. *Establishment activity* for an *eligible business* means:
 - (a) buying, or installing on computer hardware used by an *eligible business*, digital stock management software, if:
 - i. the purchase or installation is carried out for each *approved premises* of the business; and

- ii. the business did not, at any time before the installation, use digital stock management software; and
 - iii. the software will allow an owner of the business to comply with the *digital discount reporting requirements* in relation to the business;
 - (b) upgrading or adjusting stock management software being used by an *eligible business*, if the upgrade or adjustment is:
 - i. carried out for each *approved premises* of the business; and
 - ii. necessary to allow an owner of the business to comply with the *digital discount reporting requirements* in relation to the business;
 - (c) engaging a person, other than an excluded person for the business, to provide training or a service in relation to the establishment activity in (a) or (b).
- 3.6. However, an *establishment activity* does not include buying, installing or upgrading computer hardware for an *eligible business*.
- 3.7. For the purposes of clause 3.5(c):

Excluded person, for an *eligible business*, means any of the following persons –

- (a) an owner or employee of the business;
- (b) a relative, other than a qualified relative, of an owner or employee of the business;
- (c) a related body corporate of an owner of the business;
- (d) another body corporate, if an owner of the business is a director, or holds at least 10% of the issued shares, of the body corporate;
- (e) a beneficiary of a trust of which a person mentioned above or a qualified relative of an owner or employee of the business, is trustee.

Qualified relative of an owner or employee of an *eligible business*, means a relative of the owner or employee who carries on, and has for a continuous period of at least 2 years carried on, a business providing training and services in relation to the establishment activities in clauses 3.5(a) and 3.5(b).

Related body corporate see the Corporations Act, section 50.

Relative of an owner or employee of an *eligible business*, means a spouse, child, step-child, parent, step-parent, sibling, step-sibling, grandparent, step-grandparent or legal guardian of the owner or employee.

Discount Assistance

- 3.8. The discount assistance, in relation to an *eligible business*, is monthly payments to wholly reimburse the *applicant* for amounts of revenue forgone by the business that QRIDA is satisfied are monthly *discount shortfalls* for the business.
- 3.9. The amount of discount assistance in relation to an *eligible business*, for a particular month, is the total of the following amounts for the month:
- (a) the amount QRIDA is satisfied is the discount shortfall for the business; and
 - (b) the amount of any GST payable by QRIDA in relation to the assistance mentioned in paragraph (a).

Compliance Assistance

- 3.10. Compliance assistance, in relation to an *eligible business*, is monthly payments to wholly or partly reimburse the *applicant* for costs that QRIDA is satisfied are monthly compliance costs of the business.

- 3.11. The amount of compliance assistance in relation to an *eligible business*, for a particular month, is the total of:
- (a) the lesser of the following amounts:
 - i. \$250 for each participating premises of the business for the month;
 - ii. \$2,900; and
 - (b) the amount of any GST payable by QRIDA in relation to the assistance mentioned in paragraph (a).
- 3.12. For the purposes of clause 3.11(a)i, **participating premises** of an *eligible business* for a month, means *approved premises* of the business in relation to which QRIDA is satisfied the usual retail prices of *essential goods* sold by the business are being discounted by the *published percentage* for the month and the owner of the business is complying with the digital discount reporting requirements.

4. Eligibility Criteria

- 4.1. An *applicant* is eligible to receive assistance under the scheme in relation to an *eligible business* if:
- (a) the *applicant* is an owner of the business with one or more premises located in a *remote community*; and
 - (b) the retail sale of *essential goods* by the business, during the most recently ended financial year when the application is made, accounted for:
 - i. for premises used primarily for the retail sale of fuel for vehicles during the year – at least 15 per cent of the revenue of the business at the premises for the year; or
 - ii. for all other premises – at least 50 per cent of the revenue of the business at the premises for the year; and
 - (c) the *applicant* applies for the assistance:
 - i. within the *application period* for the assistance; or
 - ii. within a further time, if QRIDA is satisfied that:
 - 4.1.c.ii.1. because of circumstances beyond the *applicant's* control, the further time is reasonably necessary for the *applicant* to make the application; or
 - 4.1.c.ii.2. it would be in the public interest to allow the *applicant* further time; and
 - (d) QRIDA has not previously approved an application for assistance under the scheme in relation to the business.

5. Conditions of assistance

- 5.1. If an application is successful, the *applicant* will be required to enter into a legally binding *funding agreement* with QRIDA. This agreement includes undertakings relevant to disclosure of the approval, reporting requirements, etc. A copy of the *funding agreement* template is available: qrda.qld.gov.au/program/remote-communities-freight-assistance-scheme.
- 5.2. *Applicants* must comply with the terms of the *funding agreement* relating to the assistance applied for.

Establishment Assistance

- 5.3. The *funding agreement* for the establishment assistance will require the relevant establishment activities to be completed and paid for within 90 days of an application being approved. If this requirement is not complied with, QRIDA's decision to approve the application for the

establishment assistance, or for assistance including the establishment assistance, is revoked and the application is taken to have been withdrawn.

- 5.4. Before receiving establishment assistance, the *applicant* must:
- (a) carry out, and pay for, each establishment activity for the *eligible business* in relation to which the application was approved; and
 - (b) give QRIDA a receipt for payment of the cost of each of the establishment activities, which includes:
 - i. the name and address of the entity that issued the receipt;
 - ii. the Australian Company Number or an Australian Business Number, or both (as applicable), for the entity;
 - iii. the date the cost was incurred;
 - iv. a description of each of the establishment activities including the *approved premises* of the *eligible business* at which the activity was carried out, and the cost of the activity;
 - (c) provide QRIDA with all other documentation or information required in accordance with the *funding agreement*.
- 5.5. The *applicant* must carry on the business, at each *approved premises* of the business, for a continuous period:
- (a) starting on the day after the establishment activity, or the last of the establishment activities, is carried out; and
 - (b) ending on the earlier of either the day that is 3 years after the period starts or the day the Scheme closes.
- 5.6. If the *applicant* stops complying with the term mentioned in clause 5.5 in relation to any of the premises (the *non-compliant premises*) during the period mentioned in clause 5.5, the *applicant* must, for the non-compliant premises, repay to the authority the amount worked out using the following formula:

$$EA \times \frac{1}{AP} \times P$$

Where

EA means the total amount of the establishment assistance paid to the *applicant*.

AP means the total number of *approved premises* of the business.

P means

- if the *applicant* stops complying within 6 months after the assistance is paid – 90%
- if the *applicant* stops complying more than 6 months, but not more than 1 year, after the assistance is paid – 80%
- if the *applicant* stops complying more than 1 year, but not more than 18 months, after the assistance is paid – 70%
- if the *applicant* stops complying more than 18 months, but not more than 2 years, after the assistance is paid – 60%
- if the *applicant* stops complying more than 2 years, but not more than 30 months, after the assistance is paid – 50%
- if the *applicant* stops complying more than 30 months, but not more than 3 years, after the assistance is paid – 40%

6. How to apply

- 6.1. To apply for financial assistance under this Scheme, complete and submit an application and supporting information via the QRIDA website: qrda.qld.gov.au.

- 6.2. Applications must be submitted to QRIDA accompanied by the documents stated in the application form.
- 6.3. If QRIDA asks the *applicant* to provide further information to decide the application, the *applicant* must provide the information.

7. Applications may be withdrawn

- 7.1. If the *applicant* does not comply with a request made by QRIDA to provide further information, the *applicant's* application is taken to be withdrawn.

8. How applications will be assessed and decided

- 8.1. Upon receiving applications, QRIDA will acknowledge receipt by email and advise if any further information is required to commence assessment of the application.
- 8.2. QRIDA will assess applications in order of receipt. Incomplete applications will not be assessed until all required information is received.
- 8.3. QRIDA will refuse an application if—
 - (a) the application is for assistance that is, or includes, the discount assistance; and
 - (b) QRIDA is aware that its discount assistance funds for the financial year in which the application is made will be insufficient to pay the discount assistance to the *applicant* for the year.
- 8.4. Approved financial assistance will be deposited to the *applicant's* nominated bank account.

9. Scheme Conditions

- 9.1. Only one application will be accepted per *Eligible business*. However, a single application can include multiple *Eligible premises*.
- 9.2. Discount assistance will be available until the Scheme funding is exhausted or until the closing date stated on QRIDA's website.
- 9.3. QRIDA may request further information to determine an application.
- 9.4. Penalties apply for providing false and misleading information in accordance with the *Rural and Regional Adjustment Act 1994*.
- 9.5. If discount assistance funds for a financial year become insufficient to pay the discount assistance to an approved *applicant* for the assistance for a period in the year, QRIDA will provide the *applicant* at least 2 months' written notice that it will stop paying the discount assistance to the *applicant* for the period.
- 9.6. Financial assistance is subject to the Goods and Services Tax (GST). QRIDA will issue a Recipient Created Tax Invoice with assistance amounts paid which will include a grossed-up amount of GST to comply with applicable taxation rules. Some financial assistance is considered assessable income for taxation purposes, unless exempted by a taxation law. It is recommended that recipients seek independent professional advice on their taxation obligations or seek assistance from the Australian Taxation Office as QRIDA does not provide advice on tax.

10. Conflict of Interest

- 10.1. A conflict of interest may arise due to a business dealing with QRIDA or if an *applicant's* private interests conflict with their obligations under the Scheme. Conflicts of interest could affect an *applicant's* eligibility for conditional approval. A conflict of interest can be:
 - real (or actual);
 - apparent (or perceived); or

- potential.

10.2. QRIDA will ask *applicants* to declare, as part of their application, any business dealings that may be considered an actual, perceived or potential conflict of interest or that, to the best of an *applicant's* knowledge, there is no conflict of interest. If an *applicant* later identifies that there is an actual, apparent, or potential conflict of interest or that one might arise in relation to their application, they must inform QRIDA in writing immediately.

11. Fraudulent Applications

11.1. QRIDA takes fraud and corruption seriously. Suspected fraud will be referred to Queensland Police Services (QPS) and/or the Crime and Corruption Commission (CCC).

11.2. Fraud and corruption is a criminal offence under sections 408C, 408D and 87 of the Criminal Code 1899 (Qld). For corporations, directors and company officials, sections 596 and 184 of the Australian Corporations Act 2001 (Clth) will also apply.

11.3. Providing false or misleading information or documents in the QRIDA application process is an offence. Penalties may apply under sections 41 and 42 of the Rural and Regional Adjustment Act 1994.

11.4. By signing the application form, *applicants* acknowledge that the information they provide is true and accurate, and agree to be bound by the Scheme's guidelines and provisions.

11.5. QRIDA reserves the right to pursue and recover funding provided under fraudulent and dishonest circumstances.

12. Privacy

12.1. QRIDA's Privacy Policy, available at www.qrida.qld.gov.au/privacy, sets out general information on how QRIDA collects, uses and discloses individuals' personal information.

12.2. The application portal for this Scheme contains specific information on how personal information will be collected, used, and disclosed.

13. More information

13.1. For more information on the Remote Communities Freight Assistance Scheme, contact QRIDA on Freecall 1800 623 946 or email contact_us@qrida.qld.gov.au

14. Definitions

Applicant means an entity applying for assistance under the Scheme.

Application period means—

- (a) for establishment assistance - the period of 2 years starting on the day the scheme opens; or
- (b) for discount assistance or compliance assistance—the period—
 - i. starting on the day the scheme opens; and
 - ii. ending on the day stated as the last day of the period on QRIDA's website.

Approved premises, of an *eligible business*, means premises of the business in relation to which QRIDA has approved an application for assistance under the scheme.

Compliance cost, for an *eligible business*, means a cost that is reasonably likely to be incurred by an approved *applicant* in complying with a stock management requirement.

Digital discount reporting requirement means a term of a *funding agreement* for discount assistance that requires an owner of an *eligible business* to provide digital evidence to QRIDA that the usual retail prices of *essential goods* sold by the business, at particular premises of the business, have been discounted.

Discount shortfall for an *eligible business*, means the amount of revenue the business has forgone because of discounting the usual retail prices of *essential goods* sold by the business, at approved premises of the business, by the *published percentage*.

Eligible business means a business for which an entity holds an Australian Business Number, is registered for GST and that has a bank account in the name of the business.

Essential good is food, drink or a household item used for domestic purposes, other than

- (a) an alcoholic beverage;
- (b) bathroom equipment;
- (c) confectionery;
- (d) clothing;
- (e) an electrical appliance;
- (f) a kitchen utensil;
- (g) manchester;
- (h) a soft drink containing sugar;
- (i) whitegoods;
- (j) fuel;
- (k) furniture or a furnishing;
- (l) hardware;
- (m) any of the following under the Tobacco and Other Smoking Products Act 1998
 - i. a tobacco product;
 - ii. a smokeless tobacco product;
 - iii. a personal vaporiser;
 - iv. a personal vaporiser related product.

Examples of a household item used for domestic purposes such as a household cleaning product, toothpaste, toilet paper.

Funding agreement means:

- (a) for a type of assistance under the scheme generally, means the standard form of written agreement by which QRIDA pays the assistance of that type to approved *applicants* for the assistance; and
- (b) for establishment assistance, includes the terms set out in clauses 5.3 to 5.6.

Published percentage means the percentage approved by the Transport Minister for the purposes of the discount assistance and published on QRIDA's website.

Remote Community means any of the following local government areas – Aurukun, Burke, Carpentaria, Cook, Doomadgee, Kowanyama, Hope Vale, Lockhart River, Mapoon, Mornington, Napranum, Northern Peninsula Area, Pormpuraaw, Torres, Torres Strait Island, Weipa Town Area and Wujal Wujal.

Stock management requirement means a requirement, relating to stock management for a business, stated in the funding agreement for compliance assistance.

Transport Minister means the Minister of the department administering the *Transport Infrastructure Act 1994*.