



# TQUAL GRANTS — TOURISM QUALITY PROJECTS FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



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Should you have a question that is not covered by these Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs), please email it to [tqualgrants@ret.gov.au](mailto:tqualgrants@ret.gov.au) or call 13 28 46. These FAQs will be updated regularly with additional questions and answers as they come to light during the application process so please check back regularly to keep informed.

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### **What are *TQUAL Grants - Tourism Quality Projects*?**

*TQUAL Grants - Tourism Quality Projects* provide funding from \$15,000 (plus GST) to \$100,000 (plus GST) for smaller scale projects to support collaborative community tourism industry development projects, particularly those which stimulate private sector investment.

### **How much funding can I apply for?**

Funding from \$15,000 (plus GST) to \$100,000 (plus GST) is available through *TQUAL Grants – Tourism Quality Projects*. Applications for grants of less than \$15,000 (plus GST) or more than \$100,000 (plus GST) cannot be considered. Funds are provided on a matched dollar for dollar basis.

### **What kind of projects will be funded?**

*TQUAL Grants – Tourism Quality Projects* is seeking to fund projects which are innovative and which refresh, upgrade or develop tourism products and experiences to support the Australian tourism industry to meet its potential and complement tourism marketing efforts.

The program will support the following types of tourism projects:

- Implementation projects such as innovative tourism product, service or experience refreshment or upgrade;



- Initiation projects such as feasibility studies; and
- Projects which support the industry's capacity to be innovative and productive, or that offer leadership to the industry (including those driven by national peak or sectoral tourism associations).

Applicants should note that it is anticipated successful applicants will be able to commence project activities in July 2011 and projects must be completed no later than March 2013.

### **Is this round of *TQUAL Grants* different to the previous *TQUAL Grants* round held in 2009?**

The arrangements for the *TQUAL Grants* program from 2011 are different from the 2009 round of the program and the former Australian Tourism Development Program. The changes include:

- The objectives of the *TQUAL Grant* Program align with the National Long-Term Tourism Strategy so projects must focus on improving the supply of tourism products and experiences available in Australia;
- *Strategic Tourism Investment Grants* of up to \$1 million (plus GST) have been introduced to fund a small number of larger scale projects to support Indigenous tourism, economic development and tourism employment;
- Competitive merit based grants for the smaller scale projects will be retained as *TQUAL Grants - Tourism Quality Projects* and arrangements have been streamlined following an evaluation of previous tourism grant programs. The application process has been simplified, and the assessment criteria will be clearer for applicants; and
- The requirements for the matching cash and in-kind contributions have been clarified.

### **What is the National Long-Term Tourism Strategy?**

The National Long-Term Tourism Strategy (the Strategy) has been developed by governments and industry as a plan for skills, infrastructure and the removal of investment barriers — providing investors greater confidence in the tourism industry's long-term prospects. The Strategy is not a marketing campaign; it focuses on the supply-side of the industry. It is about making sure Australia can meet the demands and expectations created by the current marketing of Australia as a tourist destination. A copy of the Strategy is available for download from [www.ret.gov.au/tourism](http://www.ret.gov.au/tourism)

### **What does 'supply-side' mean?**

Supply refers to the tourism product offering available to visitors in Australia including, but not limited to, accommodation, attractions, tours and activities, and transport. It complements but does not include 'demand-side' activities such as marketing efforts designed to attract visitors.

### **Who can apply?**

To be eligible for funding, the applicant must be a legal entity and one of the following:

- A private sector corporation, incorporated association or trust corporation;
- A non-profit corporation or incorporated association;
- A corporate regional tourism or economic development organisation;
- A local government body corporate;
- A corporate national peak or sectoral tourism association able to demonstrate sufficient representation of the industry through diversity in its membership; and
- A consortium of corporate partners (led by any of the above entity types).

Commonwealth and state government entities are ineligible to apply however, they can be part of a consortium if the lead applicant meets the eligibility criteria. Further information on eligibility requirements is outlined in Section 2.1 of the *TQUAL Grants – Tourism Quality Projects Program Guidelines for 2011-12* available at [www.ret.gov.au/tqual](http://www.ret.gov.au/tqual). Please also refer to the 'Self Pre-Application Checklist' in the *TQUAL Grants – Tourism Quality Projects Program Guidelines for 2011-12* to help determine your eligibility. This is available at [www.ret.gov.au/tqual](http://www.ret.gov.au/tqual) or by calling 13 28 46.

### **I received *TQUAL Grants* funding in 2009, can I apply again?**

Yes, however some program details have changed since 2009 so you should ensure you check eligibility and project requirements in the *TQUAL Grants – Tourism Quality Projects 2011-12 Program Guidelines* available from [www.ret.gov.au/tqual](http://www.ret.gov.au/tqual) or by calling 13 28 46.



### **How do I apply?**

To be considered, complete the Application Form that is available at [www.ret.gov.au](http://www.ret.gov.au) or by calling 13 28 46. All sections of the Application Form must be completed including providing an accurate and well developed budget and submitting the required attachments. You will need to provide a hard copy application and a compact disc containing a copy of the application in Microsoft Word format (not in PDF format). Applications must be submitted by 5pm AEST on Friday 15 April 2011 or be postmarked by the closing date of Friday 15 April 2011.

### **Can I complete an application not using the Application Form?**

No. To be considered, applications must be submitted on the *TQUAL Grants – Tourism Quality Projects 2011-12 Application Form*. This form is available from the Department's website at [www.ret.gov.au/tqual](http://www.ret.gov.au/tqual) or by calling 13 28 46.

### **Do I have to complete the Application Form electronically?**

No. The Application Form can be completed by hand if required. You can request a hard copy of the Application Form be posted to you by calling 13 28 46.

### **What is matching cash?**

Applicants must provide at least dollar for dollar matching cash for the project equivalent to the amount of funding (including GST) being sought from *TQUAL Grants*. For example, if the applicant requests \$100,000 (plus GST) of *TQUAL Grants* funding, they will need to commit \$100,000 (plus GST) in matching cash to the project. The value of any in-kind support is not taken into account to assist in satisfying matching cash requirements.

The matching cash must be available at the start of the project. Further information on matching cash is available in Section 2.4 of the *TQUAL Grants – Tourism Quality Projects Program Guidelines for 2011-12* available at [www.ret.gov.au/tqual](http://www.ret.gov.au/tqual).

### **Where can the matching cash come from?**

The matching cash can be sourced from your own resources or through contributions from others (including state or local governments) but cannot include funding from any other Australian Government program. Matching cash cannot include any money already spend on the project, any in-kind contributions, the value of land, existing buildings or other assets. It also cannot come from contributions in superannuation accounts unless they can be accessed at the time your application is submitted.

### **When do I need to have the matching cash?**

The matching cash must be available at the start of the project and you will be required to provide evidence of this if your application is successful.

### **What tax implications do I need to be aware of?**

Applicants are strongly advised to seek professional advice on the taxation impacts on your business or organisation from receiving funding from this program, including whether the grant:

- Will be considered income for the purpose of paying income tax;
- Will have additional GST implications; and
- Will have any other taxation implications.

See also information on GST implications below.

### **What GST implications do I need to be aware of?**

Recipients may have a GST liability associated with the grants they receive where they make a taxable supply in accordance with the *A New Tax System (Goods and Services Tax) Act 1999*. More information on possible GST implications is outlined in Section 3.1 of the *TQUAL Grants – Tourism Quality Projects Program Guidelines for 2011-12* available at [www.ret.gov.au/tqual](http://www.ret.gov.au/tqual) or by calling 13 28 46.



### **How are applications assessed?**

All eligible applications will be assessed on how well they address each of the following Assessment Criteria:

- Innovative approach that provides a quality tourism product or experience in the region, or to support the industry's capacity to be innovative and productive or adopt world's best practice;
- Contribution to strategic priorities as outlined in the National Long-Term Tourism Strategy, and state/territory or regional economic development/tourism plans (in particular for the project's demonstrated alignment with tourism quality principles and demonstrated commitment to environmental sustainability);
- Demonstrated need for the project and evidence of the long term financial viability of the project (in particular after the grant period);
- Clear plan for sharing project outcomes and learnings with the tourism industry and broader regional and community stakeholders;
- Capacity to deliver the project and sound project methodology including budget, timeline and community involvement; and
- Value for money including a need for funding (i.e. the project would not proceed without the grant) and any additional investment committed to the project.

*TQUAL Grants – Tourism Quality Projects* is a highly competitive merit based program. Meeting the eligibility and assessment criteria does not guarantee that an offer of funding will be made.

### **Who decides which applications receive funding?**

The Minister for Tourism has delegated decision making power to a senior officer in the Department, called the Program Delegate. The Program Delegate will make decisions on successful projects taking into account assessment recommendations.

### **How long will it take before a decision on which applications will receive funding is made?**

It will take approximately six weeks for all applications to be assessed. During this time the Department will be unable to provide advice on the status of applications.

### **Can I start my project before a decision on which applications will receive funding is made?**

*TQUAL Grants – Tourism Quality Projects* funding and matching cash cannot be used to pay for any project activity undertaken prior to the execution of a Funding Agreement with the Commonwealth. This means that should you start your project prior to a decision on successful projects being made, you will need to cover the cost of those activities. You would also need to consider whether this would reduce the competitiveness of your application.

### **What do I do if any applicant or project details change before a decision is made on which applications will receive funding?**

You should notify the Department of any change to applicant or project details by emailing [tqualgrants@ret.gov.au](mailto:tqualgrants@ret.gov.au) or by calling 13 28 46.

### **How do I demonstrate that my project has an innovative approach that provides a quality tourism product or experience in the region?**

You may like to consider explaining the level of innovation, uniqueness or difference of the idea, how it meets a demonstrated gap in market, and/or how the project improves the quality of the visitor services or experiences in Australia. You may like to support your claims by providing extracts or references to relevant research, statistics or studies or relevant letters of support.

For national projects, you may like to consider explaining how the project will encourage tourism operators to be innovative and/or outlining the expected project outcomes including increases in tourism industry efficiency and visitor yield. You may like to provide extracts or references to relevant research, statistics or studies as evidence to support these claims.



**How do I demonstrate that my project contributes to the strategic priorities as outlined in the National Long-Term Tourism Strategy and state/territory or regional economic development/tourism plans?**

You may like to consider including details of the extent that the project aligns with the National Long-Term Tourism Strategy including its consistency with continuous quality improvement and environmental sustainability and the extent that the project meets state/territory tourism plans/policies. In doing this you may like to outline the economic benefits of the project, visitor numbers, length of stay, yield, employment, visitor spend and/or any collaborating organisations and their role in the project.

You may like to support your claims by providing copies of extracts of relevant policies and plans, relevant letters of support from collaborating organisations, and/or copies of accreditation certificates if any.

**How do I show that there is a demonstrated need for my project and provide evidence of the long term financial viability of the project (in particular after the grant period)?**

You may like to include details of any plans, research, feasibility studies, or other information supporting the need for the project, details on the project target market and how it will fill a gap in this market. You may also like to outline the level of support for the project from the community and others, and outline your plan for the longevity of the project including plans for ongoing funding sources and management. You may like to support your claims with extracts or references to relevant research, statistics or studies, relevant letters of support and/or letters or approvals (such as in Board minutes) confirming future management plan.

**How do I demonstrate that my project includes a clear plan for sharing project outcomes and learnings with the tourism industry and broader regional and community stakeholders?**

You may like to include details of any systems or processes in place to measure and record information throughout and after the project, any relevant project or applicant relationships with industry organisations, business and communities and an ability to leverage relationships to share success stories, and your strategy for communicating project successes, new processes, and lessons learnt (what worked and what didn't). You may choose to support your claims with copies of strategies or relevant membership certificates or memorandums of understandings (MOUs) where applicable.

**How do I demonstrate there is capacity to deliver the project and sound project methodology including budget, timeline and community involvement?**

You may like to explain the relevant skills and experience of people working on project, the track record of your organisation, and any available resources including any infrastructure or systems that will assist undertaking the project. You will need to include your project plan showing timeframes as well as a realistic detailed project budget. You may choose to support your claims by providing the names of people to be working on project, list of qualifications attained, dates of similar activities worked on and any details of the length of organisation existence, and copies of approvals gained if relevant.

**How do I demonstrate that my project represents value for money including a need for funding (i.e. the project will not proceed without the grant) and any additional investment committed to the project?**

You may wish to outline the necessity of government funding for the project to proceed and detail other project contributions (cash or in-kind) apart from the matching cash that will be contributed to the project. You may wish to support your claims with relevant letters of support committing funds or in kind support to the project and/or copies of quotes received detailed in budget.

**How do I fill out the Project Budget in Section E5.1 of the Application Form?**

An example Project Budget is provided below. Please note all amounts should include GST. Remember to include a budget line for the Financial Audit at the end of the project.

EXPANSION OF XYZ MUSEUM

This hypothetical example is for a construction type project where a total of \$110,000 (including GST) was sought from *TQUAL Grants – Tourism Quality Projects*. The applicant has provided the required matching cash of \$110,000 (including GST) bringing the total project value up to \$220,000 (including GST).



<b>Budget Item(s)</b>	<b>TQUAL Grants Funds (incl GST)</b>	<b>Matching Cash (incl GST)</b>	<b>Total (incl GST)</b>
Community consultation	\$1000	\$500	\$1500
Concept Plans	\$2000	—	\$2000
Construction Design Plans		\$2000	\$2000
Heritage, Planning, Building approvals		\$1000	\$1000
Building materials	\$57,700	\$70,000	\$127,700
Labour for building, including electricians, plumbers	\$12,000	—	\$12,000
Internal fit-out including plumbing and electrical - materials	\$13,000	\$2,000	\$15,000
Internal fittings including cladding, flooring, windows, doors, decking-materials	\$10,000	\$12,000	\$22,000
Outdoor landscaping including plans, materials, labour	\$8,000	\$8,500	\$16,500
Interpretative display	\$2,000	\$9,500	\$12,000
Certificate of Occupancy	\$300	—	\$300
Event costs	—	\$500	500
Administration costs	\$3500	\$3500	\$7000
Financial Audit	\$500	\$500	\$1000
<b>TOTAL (incl. GST)</b>	<b>\$110,000</b>	<b>\$110,000</b>	<b>\$220,000</b>

Note: All applicants are required to provide matching cash on a dollar for dollar basis to their project. The Project Budget should cover the grant funds sought and the matching cash contributions.



### Other Contributions

Please list additional cash and/or in-kind contributions (if any) to the project. These amounts are contributions to the project in addition to *TQUAL Grants* funding and matching cash requirements. If there are no Other Contributions, insert 'not applicable'.

Source	Additional Cash/In Kind	Contribution (incl GST)	Contribution used towards:
XYZ Pty Ltd	Additional Cash	\$16,500	Building materials
123 Group	Additional Cash	\$2,000	Interpretive signage
ABC Community group	In-Kind contribution	\$5,000	Landscaping work
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>\$23,500</b>	

### **How do I fill out the Milestones template in Section E5.2 of the Application Form?**

An example of a completed Milestone Template is below. Milestones should cover all aspects of the project and reflect the project's critical path, for example (but not limited to):

- a. Key stages of project works (e.g. concrete poured, decking laid, internal fit out completed, etc.);
- b. Approvals received/submitted;
- c. Contractors/consultants engaged/completed work;
- d. Research commence/completed;
- e. Community consultation plan developed/commenced/completed;
- f. Key meetings held.

#### Milestones for *TQUAL Grants* to be completed per quarter:

Quarter 1: July 2011- September 2011

Milestone	Action
1	Funding Agreement signed
2	Community consultation completed
3	Risk plan completed
4	Concept Plans finalised

Quarter 2: October 2011-December 2011

Milestone	Action
1	Construction Design Plans finalised
2	Heritage approvals obtained
3	Planning Permit approved
4	Building Permit approved



Quarter 3: January 2012- March 2012

Milestone	Action
1	Concrete foundation laid
2	Erection of main structural framing
3	Walls completed

Quarter 4: April 2012- June 2012

Milestone	Action
1	Roofing complete
2	Undertake internal fit out including plumbing fixtures and electrical fit-out

Quarter 5: July 2012- September 2012

Milestone	Action
1	Complete construction of building to lock-up stage
2	Picnic area upgrade completed
3	Landscaping and welcome signage completed

Quarter 6: October 2012- December 2012

Milestone	Action
1	Complete internal finishes, including all final electrical, plumbing, plastering and painting
2	Interpretive signage designed and installed
3	Certificate of occupancy obtained and project completed

Quarter 7: January 2013- March 2013

Milestone	Action

**Are there are preconditions to receiving TQUAL Grants - Tourism Quality Project funding?**

If you are successful, you will be required to enter into a legally binding funding agreement with the Commonwealth. This agreement will set out:

- The rights and obligations of the Commonwealth and the grantee;
- The agreed work plan, timetable for completion, and the budget for the project;
- Staged payments that will be made following the successful completion of milestones;
- How funds are to be acquitted;
- Reporting and accountability obligations;
- Requirements for recognising Australian Government support through project events and on advertising material and other documentation; and
- Penalties for failing to meet obligations.



Before any *TQUAL Grants* funds are paid, successful applicants must provide evidence that they have all necessary planning approvals for their project, including local government planning approvals and the permission of the landowner or land manager for any project on private or public land.

Successful applicants must have public liability insurance for the period of the grant.

Successful applicants must have a discrete bank account with a financial institution authorised under the *Banking Act 1959* into which the *TQUAL Grants* funding and matching funding are to be deposited. This account must not be used for any other project.

Further information on what will be required of successful applicants will be available by viewing the draft Funding Agreement. A copy of the draft Funding Agreement will soon be made available at [www.ret.gov.au/tqual](http://www.ret.gov.au/tqual) or by calling 13 28 46. Should you wish for the Department to send you a copy when it becomes available, please email [tqualgrants@ret.gov.au](mailto:tqualgrants@ret.gov.au).

### **When do applications for *TQUAL Grants - Tourism Quality Projects* close?**

Applications for *Tourism Quality Projects* opened on 7 February 2011 and will close on 15 April 2011. Applications must be submitted in hard copy by 5pm AEST on 15 April 2011 or be postmarked by the closing date of 15 April 2011. The Department will acknowledge receipt of all applications by email.

### **Will late applications be accepted?**

Late applications will not be accepted except under extreme circumstances, e.g. wide spread natural disasters. Approval must first be sought by phoning 13 28 46 or emailing [tqualgrants@ret.gov.au](mailto:tqualgrants@ret.gov.au).

### **Can I email my application?**

No, applications must be submitted in hard copy by 5pm AEST on Friday 15 April 2011 or be postmarked by the closing date of Friday 15 April 2011. You will also need to provide with the hard copy application, a compact disc containing a copy of the application in Microsoft Word format (not in PDF format). This will be used to prepare documentation including the funding agreement if your application is successful.

### **Can I apply for *TQUAL Grants* funding to repair recent flood damage to my existing tourism business?**

*TQUAL Grants - Tourism Quality Projects* is seeking to fund projects which are innovative and which refresh, upgrade or develop tourism products and experiences to support the Australian tourism industry to meet its potential and complement tourism marketing efforts. The program will support the following types of tourism projects:

- Implementation projects such as innovative tourism product, service or experience refreshment or upgrade;
- Initiation projects such as feasibility studies; and
- Projects which support the industry's capacity to be innovative and productive, or that offer leadership to the industry (driven by national peak or sectoral tourism associations).

Activities that are not eligible are outlined in Section 2.3 of the *TQUAL Grants - Tourism Quality Projects Program Guidelines for 2011-12* available at [www.ret.gov.au/tqual](http://www.ret.gov.au/tqual).

Information on specific Australian Government flood assistance for small businesses is available at: [http://disasterassist.gov.au/www/disasterassist/disasterassist.nsf/Page/Currentdisasters\\_Smallbusinessandprimaryproducers](http://disasterassist.gov.au/www/disasterassist/disasterassist.nsf/Page/Currentdisasters_Smallbusinessandprimaryproducers).

### **How will I know if my application is successful?**

The Minister will announce the successful applicants. All applicants will be advised in writing whether their application is successful or unsuccessful. If your application is unsuccessful, you will receive a letter providing feedback on your application and a contact number for a Departmental officer who can provide further information if desired.



**If my application is successful, when will I receive the funding?**

Funding will be available from 1 July 2011 for each successful applicant once they have signed a Funding Agreement with the Commonwealth. Before any *TQUAL Grants* funds are paid, successful applicants must provide evidence that they have all necessary planning approvals for their project, including local government planning approvals and the permission of the landowner or land manager for any project on private or public land.

**If my application is successful, will I get the whole grant amount in one payment?**

No. Funding will be paid in instalments based on the agreed work schedule set out in the Funding Agreement. Before any *TQUAL Grants* funds are paid, successful applicants must provide evidence that they have all necessary planning approvals for their project, including local government planning approvals and the permission of the landowner or land manager for any project on private or public land.

**Why do I have to keep *TQUAL Grants – Tourism Quality Projects* funding and matching cash in a separate bank account?**

If successful, you will be required to keep *TQUAL Grants – Tourism Quality Projects* funding and your matching cash in a bank account held separately from other business and personal accounts. This is to ensure the ease of applicants to manage the grant and matching funds including fulfilling the Australian Governments auditing requirements. If there is a constitutional or other legal issue preventing this from occurring, the successful applicant can discuss this with the Australian Government during Funding agreement negotiations.

**If my application is successful, how will I manage the reporting requirements outlined in Schedule 3 of the draft Funding Agreement?**

The draft Funding Agreement outlines several intermittent reports that you will be required to complete and submit as part of fulfilling the requirements of receiving funding under *TQUAL Grants – Tourism Quality Projects*. These reports include Milestone Reports (due after the completion of key stages of the project), Financial Reports (due intermittently) and a Final Report (due after the completion of your project). If successful, you will be provided with reporting templates for the Milestone and Final Reports. Required content for the Financial Reports is outlined in Schedule 3.2 of the draft Funding Agreement however the format will be at the discretion of your auditor and qualified accountant. Due dates for all reports will be outlined in the Funding Agreement before it is executed by both parties.

**If my application is not successful, can I get feedback?**

Yes. If your application is unsuccessful, you will receive a letter providing feedback on your application and a contact number for a Departmental officer who can provide further information if desired.

**If my application is not successful, can I apply again?**

In the 2010 election context, \$40 million was committed to the *TQUAL Grants* program over 4 years from 2011-12. This funding will be delivered across several rounds during the 4 year period. This round of *TQUAL Grants – Tourism Quality Projects 2011-12* is the first such round. Should an applicant be deemed eligible but unsuccessful in the 2011-12 round of *TQUAL Grants – Tourism Quality Projects*, they will be able to apply for the next round of funding should they choose to do so.

**Is there someone who can comment on the merits of my project?**

To ensure a fair and transparent process, Departmental Officers cannot comment on the merits of any particular project during the application and assessment phase of the program. However, you could seek assistance from non Departmental persons such as stakeholders, colleagues or friends and family should you wish to do so. If your application is unsuccessful, you will receive a letter providing feedback on your application and a contact number for a Departmental officer who can provide further information on the merits of your application if desired.

