



# COVID-19 ECONOMIC STIMULUS PROGRAM

## Business Advice Grant

# GUIDELINES

Fraser Coast Regional Council is committed to driving economic recovery and vitality via a range of projects that are designed to help build business capability within the region. The region benefits from improving the capacity and capability of local businesses and their staff.

The Fraser Coast Business Advice Grant program will provide up to a total of \$100,000 to assist business owners and operators to engage with local business advisors to increase their business capability.

The COVID-19 Economic Stimulus Program supports the Goals outlined in Council's Corporate Plan 2018-2023:

- To be a diverse, strong and well governed region of vibrant places, with an innovative and diverse economy and connected as a whole by our community spirit and respect for our natural environment.
- To make a positive difference for the region and the lives of our community members by ensuring we provide a service that is forward looking and well managed.

as well as the Theme of Prosperity: A strong, diversified and resilient economy that supports growth and long term employment. <https://www.frasercoast.qld.gov.au/corporate-plan>

Funding for the Business Advice Grant sits within the COVID-19 Economic Stimulus Program included in Council's 2020-2021 Budget.

## Purpose

The purpose of the Fraser Coast Business Advice Grant program is to assist Fraser Coast businesses in accessing and engaging local professional business advisors and specialists to improve their financial management, inventory management, human resource management, digital capability and marketing of their business.

This Program is intended to:

- Encourage business resilience and development.
- Access digital technologies to build business operations and transition to a new way of doing business.
- Respond to online opportunities, where possible, to sustain employment and maintain potential for longer term growth.
- Embrace business diversification to adapt, sustain and develop operations.
- Create or retain employment.
- Align with Council's Corporate Plan 2018-2023.

## Grant available

Assistance to be provided as a cash contribution, or through the provision of in-kind Council services.

The maximum grant available per application is \$5,000 (total grant value awarded). A total of \$100,000 is available through the Business Advice Grant program.

Applicants should be aware that applications will be assessed as part of a competitive process. As funding is limited, not every eligible application will necessarily receive a grant or the maximum grant amount requested.

## Logistics

This grant will be an open round that is continually assessed and will close 30 June 2021, or until the funding pool expires. Grants up to \$5,000 will be available. Applicants and grant projects must comply with the program guidelines.

Projects and activities are to be completed within six months of the approval date (unless a variation has been approved) and no later than 31 December 2021.

By applying for this grant, recipients agree that they will participate in marketing and promotional activities of Council in relation to the program. This may include but is not limited to acknowledging Council's contribution to the shopfront improvement, case studies, feedback, surveys and providing information about the benefits of participating following conclusion of the program

## Assistance, assessment and approval responsibilities

Council's Economic Development unit is available to provide general guidance to business owners and operators when developing their applications. It should be noted however that there is no capacity for Council Officers to write and submit applications on behalf of the applicant.

A panel of Council Officers will assess and score each application according to the assessment criteria and provide recommendations to the Executive Manager Tourism, Economic Development & Partnerships for endorsement, before they are provided to the Chief Executive Officer (or their delegate) for final sign off.

## Eligibility

### Eligible applications

Applicants must be:

- Small to medium sized businesses (less than 100 employees) registered and located within the Fraser Coast local government area
- Made by the business owner and or manager.
- Holders of an appropriate business registration (ABN), including that of a sole trader, and active as at 29 March 2021
- Not be insolvent or have owners or directors that are an undischarged bankrupt
- Appropriately insured

### Ineligible applications

The following are ineligible to apply:

- Business units owned or managed by Fraser Coast Regional Council or a State or Federal Government agency
- Businesses owned by employees or contracted staff of Fraser Coast Regional Council
- Applicants with overdue debts owing to Fraser Coast Regional Council
- Applicants who have not met acquittal conditions for any previous Council grants

### Council will not consider applications that:

- Are incomplete or applications that do not include all the required supporting documentation as provided for in these guidelines or the application form
- Do not support council's Corporate Plan 2018-2023
- Do not comply with any applicable legislative requirements
- Cause offence to disadvantaged or minority groups
- Promote gambling, smoking and/or consumption of other addictive substances

## Types of activities applicable

Grants are available to access and engage professional business services. These can include:

- Financial, legal or other professional advice to support business sustainability, development and diversification
- Strategic planning, financial counselling or business coaching aligned to business development and diversification
- Building the business through marketing and communications activities (eg content development for web pages, mobile apps, visual and audio media etc)
- Digital/technological strategy development
- Digital training or re-training and upskilling employees to adapt to new business models
- Specialised digital equipment or business specific software to move business operations online (eg logistics program for online ordering, etc)
- Inventory management systems
- Human Resource management systems and strategy

Applicants are welcome to contact Council if there are alternate activities that you would like to discuss.

The Business Advice Grant is **NOT** available for:

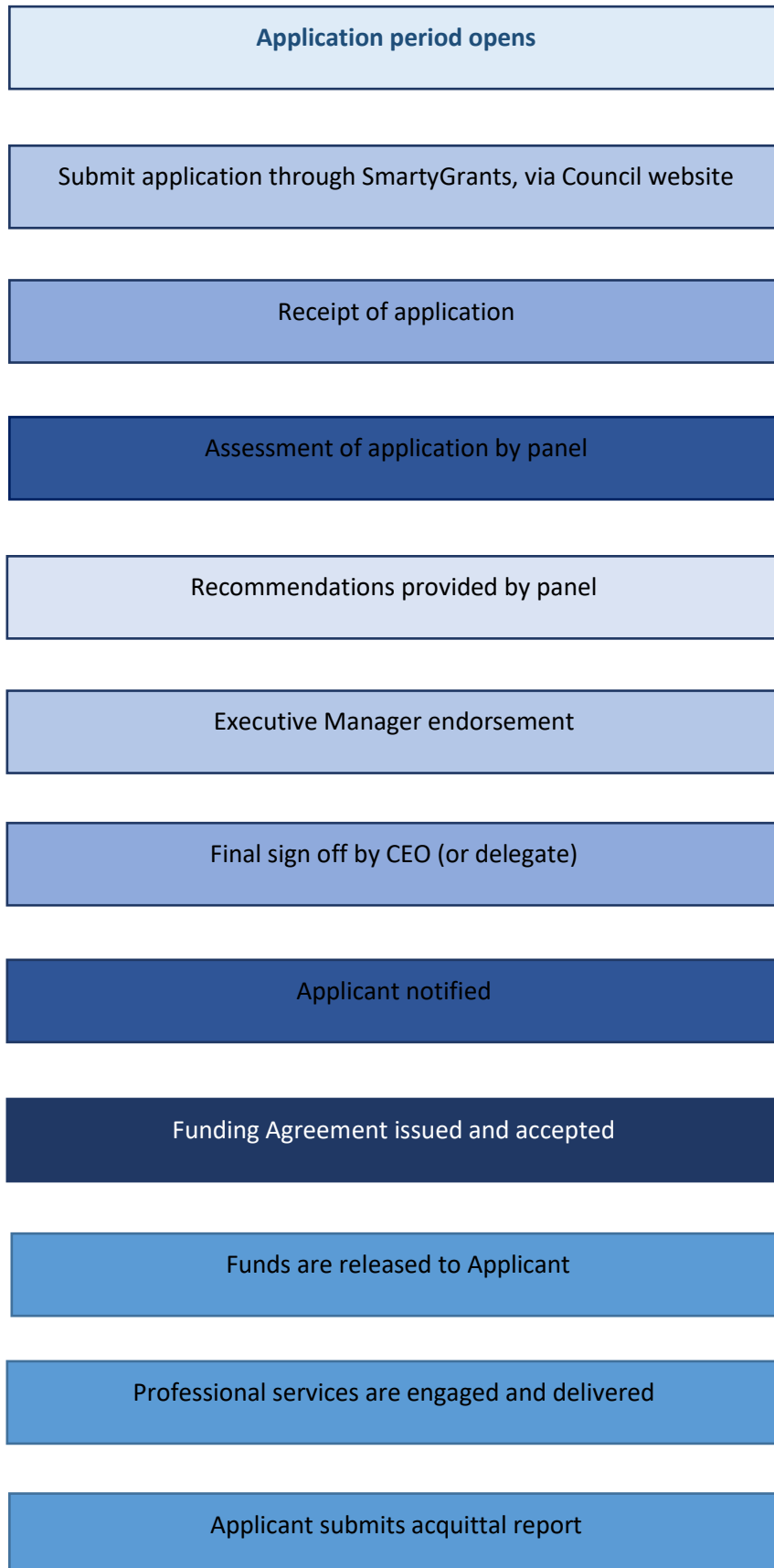
- Activities that have already commenced or been completed
- Routine/recurrent professional services already engaged (eg bookkeeping, taxation management, etc)
- Salaries or wage expenses for your employees, including superannuation or WorkCover
- Purchase of business assets, such as stock or fleet/machinery/equipment
- Fees for services and/or goods provided by related parties (such as companies with common shareholdings or directorship with the applicant, and employees or immediate family of the applicant)
- Business selling through methods such as party plan and network marketing
- Goods or services purchased, or any payments made, prior to 29 March 2021
- Development application or other statutory fees
- Remission of rates
- Retrospective payments or deficit funding

## Assessment criteria

Once eligibility criteria are checked, applications will be assessed against the following criteria. Council's delegate makes the final decision regarding funding allocation.

<p><b>THE PROJECT</b></p> <p><i>What services would you like to engage?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide information of the proposed professional services to be engaged and expected outcomes.</li> <li>• Outline the proposed timeline</li> </ul> <p><b>Note:</b> Applicants will need to demonstrate that the services can be completed within the acquittal process timeframe.</p>
<p><b>THE BUDGET</b></p> <p><i>How much will the project cost?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide a minimum of two quotes for the proposed services, unless specialised services are required that have limited providers</li> <li>• Where an accepted quote is greater than \$5,000, the balance is payable by the applicant.</li> </ul>
<p><b>LOCAL BUY</b></p>	<p>Does the contractor / provider delivering the proposed services have their registered business address within the Fraser Coast Regional Council local government area?</p> <p><b>Note:</b> Location of the proposed contractor / provider will be verified by the assessment team.</p>

## Application process



## Successful applicants

All successful applicants will be required to enter into a funding agreement with Council and acquit funds within the allocated timeframes.

The formal funding agreement will be sent to successful applicants to be signed and returned within 14 days of receiving the offer.

Inability to comply with the conditions of the funding agreement may result in withdrawal of support.

## Unsuccessful applicants

Unsuccessful applicants will be formally advised of the outcome. If your application is unsuccessful, the decision does not necessarily reflect the worthiness of your proposal. Please note that this is a one-off, stimulus program only with limited funds available.

Unsuccessful applicants can seek feedback on how they can strengthen future applications. Advice on how to seek this feedback will be provided with the outcome advice.

## Grant acquittal process

Acquittal forms will be available to successful applicants through the SmartyGrants portal.

All questions must be completed on the acquittal form and evidence supplied including:

- Outline of overall services engaged and delivered;
- Invoices/Receipts for all providers engaged;
- Links to any marketing platforms, if applicable;
- Evidence of Council acknowledgement (program window decal placement, social media, advertisements, etc).

Businesses/property owners that do not satisfactorily acquit their funding may not be eligible for future funding and may be required to return the funds allocated to the project.

All projects must be completed no later than 31 December 2021.

Unspent grant funds must be returned to Council within 30 days of project completion.

Changes must not be made to the approved project without the prior agreement of Council. Council will endeavour to approve changes where the level of benefit is maintained as per the application.

Any purchases associated with the project must be transacted with a Fraser Coast business where possible.

## Recording of funds provided and acquitted

A register of all funds will be kept within the Smarty Grants software.

## Program enquiries

For program enquires please contact:

Economic Development

[economic.development@frasercoast.qld.gov.au](mailto:economic.development@frasercoast.qld.gov.au)

1300 79 49 29