

Small Business Recovery Assistance Grant - 2025 North and Far North Tropical Low

Program Guidelines

1. About the Program

- 1.1. The Small Business Recovery Assistance Grant program has been established by the Australian and Queensland Governments to provide crucial financial support to small businesses in defined disaster areas that have experienced significant disruptions and losses associated with the 2025 North and Far North Tropical Low 29 January – 28 February 2025.
- 1.2. This program is intended to help small businesses that either couldn't trade or experienced at least a 60 per cent drop in revenue compared to the same time last year. To be eligible, the downturn must have lasted at least 14 consecutive days and must be entirely due to the 2025 North and Far North Tropical Low. The goal is to support small businesses in getting back on their feet and keeping people employed after significant trading disruptions.

2. Program Outcomes

- 2.1. The primary outcomes of this program are to:
 - Provide financial assistance to help small businesses resume operations following a disaster.
 - Support business owners to meet essential costs, including wages, salaries, and operational expenses.
 - Maintain employment levels and ensure business continuity.
 - Enhance the financial stability and resilience of small businesses.
 - Encourage innovation and business adaptability.
 - Improve the well-being of business owners by reducing stress related to financial uncertainty.
 - Strengthen community and economic recovery.
 - Strengthen local economies and preserve local cultural identity.

3. Program Details

Business size	Small businesses with less than 20 employees (headcount) and a turnover of less than \$10 million per annum
Opening date	9 am, 14 May 2025
Closing date	Earlier of 5 pm, 14 May 2026 or until funds are fully allocated
Application process	Online application
Grant type	Competitive – <i>not all applications may be funded</i>
Available funding	Up to \$15,000 (excluding GST)
Payment	On acceptance of a funding agreement

4. Available Funding

- 4.1. The program has received \$15 million in funding, providing approved businesses with grants of up to \$15,000 each (excluding GST) until funds are fully allocated.
- 4.2. Grant funding is paid directly to the business on acceptance of a funding agreement.
- 4.3. Most grants are considered assessable income for taxation purposes unless exempted by a taxation law. It is recommended that grant recipients seek independent professional advice on their taxation obligations or seek assistance from the Australian Taxation Office, as CDSB does not provide taxation advice.

5. Eligibility Criteria

- 5.1. To be eligible for this grant, the business must:
 - a) have less than 20 employees (by headcount) at both the time of the disaster and the time of application. Employee headcount refers to the number of individuals employed by the business, including full-time, part-time, and casual employees. Each person is counted as one, regardless of the number of hours worked
 - b) a turnover of less than \$10 million per annum
 - c) have an active Australian Business Number (ABN) and be registered for GST at both the time of the disaster and the time of application
 - d) be located in one of the defined disaster areas for the North and Far North Tropical listed below
 - e) demonstrate that, for a consecutive period of at least 14 days due to the impact of the specified disaster event, the business either:
 - i. was completely unable to conduct trading activities or
 - ii. experienced a decrease in revenue of at least 60% compared to the same 14-day period in the preceding year (or 2023 if impacted by Tropical Cyclone Jasper)
 - f) if the business has been actively trading for less than 12 months and is therefore unable to compare revenue to the same 14-day period in the previous year – the business will need to provide copies of a Business Activity Statement (BAS) for Q2 and Q3 for the 2024-25 Financial Year that evidences a 60% reduction in revenue as a result of the disaster. If a business has been trading for less than a year and has not submitted a BAS for Q2, it will not be eligible for this grant
 - g) have been actively trading immediately prior to being affected by the disaster event
 - h) demonstrate an intent to continue or have continued the business operation after the disaster event
 - i) not be insolvent or have owners/directors that are an undischarged bankrupt.
- 5.2. To be eligible for assistance, your business must have been affected by the North and Far North Tropical Low disaster event and be located within one of the following local government areas:

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| • Burdekin Shire Council | • Hinchinbrook Shire Council |
| • Cairns Regional Council | • Palm Island Aboriginal Shire Council |
| • Cassowary Coast Regional Council | • Townsville City Council |
| • Charters Towers Regional Council | • Yarrabah Aboriginal Shire Council. |

6. Eligible separate business

- 6.1. Applicants who operate more than one small business, for example, under a single ABN at separate locations, may apply for assistance for each eligible separate business up to the maximum amount of assistance available.
- 6.2. When determining an application on this basis, CDSB may consider (but is not limited to):
 - a) the staffing arrangement of the separate business
 - b) whether the separate business has its own plant, equipment or stock
 - c) the accounting and insurance arrangements of the separate business
 - d) whether the separate business operates under its own trading name
 - e) the commercial viability and autonomy of each business.

7. Eligible Expenses

- 7.1. Grant funds may be used for extraordinary costs related to re-establishing business operations and sustaining employment. Eligible expenses include, but are not limited to:
 - a) paying salaries or wages to employees
 - b) covering rent or rates associated with the business premises
 - c) replacement of stock that was lost, spoiled, or rendered unusable due to the disaster and is not eligible for funding under the Exceptional Disaster Assistance Recovery Grant (EDARG)
 - d) professional services related to disaster recovery
 - e) marketing expenses aimed at regaining lost customers and re-establishing the business post-disaster.
- 7.2. If the small business is entitled to receive an amount under a policy of insurance for the relevant costs claimed. The applicant may be eligible for a grant for the portion of costs that are not covered by their insurance, or for amounts more than the value insured.
- 7.3. CDSB will not reimburse expenses already claimed through other disaster grants or loans, such as the Exceptional Disaster Assistance Recovery Grant or the Disaster Assistance Loan, or damages or losses funded through insurance claims.

8. Ineligible Expenses

- 8.1. The following expenses are NOT eligible for funding:
 - a) costs that are reimbursed through insurance claims or compensated by other grants or loans, including but not limited to the Exceptional Disaster Assistance Recovery Grant.
 - b) loss of income
 - c) expenses for personal items or services
 - d) purchase of luxury or non-essential items that do not contribute to business recovery
 - e) repayment of existing loans, credit card debts, or financing costs not directly related to disaster recovery
 - f) items bought using crypto-currencies, cash, barter, or services in-kind
 - g) expenses associated with preparing funding applications, reports or associated supporting material
 - h) legal expenses
 - i) expenses incurred prior to the defined disaster event
 - j) expenses that do not align with the intent of the Grant.

- 8.2. CDSB will not reimburse goods, services, or fees from related parties. Related parties include companies with common shareholdings or directors, mutual employees, or immediate family members.

9. Application and assessment process

- 9.1. Applications are expected to be submitted through the SmartyGrants Portal.
- 9.2. Applicants are expected to provide the following supporting information and evidence as part of their application:
- a) A satisfactorily completed 100-point identification check form or provide certified copies of identification documents totalling 100 points, witnessed by an authorised person (e.g., Justice of the Peace, Commissioner for Declarations, or solicitor)
 - b) Bank statements supporting non-trading (closure) period or reduction in revenue:
 - i. If applying based on a non-trading (closure) period, statements must cover the disaster period to verify the absence of trading activity.
 - ii. If applying based on a reduction in revenue, bank statements must be provided for both the disaster period and the corresponding period in the previous year. Businesses affected by Tropical Cyclone Jasper, as well as this current event, may use statements from the same period two years prior for comparison. Statements must clearly show deposits and transactions to substantiate the claimed income loss.
 - c) If the business has been actively trading for less than 12 months and cannot provide a bank statement for the same 14-day period in the previous year, it must instead provide Business Activity Statements (BAS) for both Q2 and Q3 of the 2024–25 financial year. These must demonstrate a 60% reduction in revenue as a result of the disaster. Businesses that have not submitted a BAS for Q2 will not be eligible.
 - d) Evidence of disaster impact, such as five to ten photographs or other substantiating documentation.
 - e) While not mandatory, supporting materials such as social media posts, booking cancellations, or customer communications regarding business closure or trading impacts may assist in demonstrating the extent of the impact.
 - f) Bank statements and additional supporting documentation of eligible expenses incurred since the disaster, up to the amount applied for. Additional supporting documentation may include:
 - i. Insurance claim documents,
 - ii. Receipts for repairs and other disaster recovery assistance funding, and
 - iii. Tax invoices for eligible recovery expenses.
- 9.3. Lodging an application does not guarantee that funding will be approved. Applications will be assessed, and decisions will be made as soon as practicable, usually within 2-3 weeks of submission. Incomplete applications may be deemed ineligible if sufficient information and supporting documentation has not been provided at the time of application.
- 9.4. Only the business owner can submit the application. Applications or responses submitted by third parties will not be accepted. Only submit accurate and truthful answers and evidence in your application, noting that you may be required to provide this at any time at the discretion of CDSB.
- 9.5. Applications will be assessed on merit, and applicants will be notified of the outcome in writing. Successful applicants will be required to enter into a funding agreement with CDSB.
- 9.6. Applications are assessed for compliance against the eligibility criteria within these guidelines and their competitiveness with the program guidelines and assessment criteria; applicants must demonstrate the extent to which the grant-funded activity:

- a) meets a genuine financial need
 - b) aligns with the program's objectives, such as re-establishing business operations, maintaining employment, and covering extraordinary costs related to recovery
 - c) contributes to community stability and recovery
 - d) demonstrates value for money.
- 9.7. Funding decisions are at the discretion of CDSB. To ensure support reaches a broad cross-section of Queensland's economy, the department may prioritise applications from a range of disaster-affected regions, industry sectors (including priority sectors), and priority areas as determined by the government.
- 9.8. CDSB has a zero-tolerance approach towards fraud within its grant program administration. Instances of suspected fraud or non-compliance with the funding agreement will be thoroughly investigated, and appropriate action will be taken, including terminating funding agreements, recovering grant funds, and referring to the relevant law enforcement authority.

10. Funding agreement and payment

- 10.1. Successful grant applicants will be required to enter into a funding agreement with CDSB to receive funding of up to \$15,000 (excluding GST). Funding is paid on acceptance of the funding agreement.
- 10.2. The funding agreement consists of:
- 1. the Letter of Agreement
 - 2. any other terms agreed in writing between the parties
 - 3. the Terms and Conditions
 - 4. these Guidelines, and
 - 5. the submitted application.
- 10.3. Successful applicants must advise CDSB of any proposed variations to their funding agreement.

11. Acquittal

- 11.1. Successful applicants must provide an acquittal of the grant three months after receiving funding. The acquittal report requires details of the grant implementation and impact on the business, including the results and outcomes received.
- 11.2. In conjunction with the acquittal process, CDSB may also audit grants under the program.
- 11.3. Approved applicants must retain all evidence of tax invoices, receipts, bank statements or other similar records to verify that the amounts provided have been used in accordance with approvals for seven years.

12. Review of decisions

- 12.1. Small businesses may request a review of a decision made by the Queensland Government regarding the outcome of grant applications within 28 business days of receiving a decision. If you wish to have the decision reviewed, you must provide detailed reasons for overturning the original decision and include any information in your original application that you believe was overlooked. You can find more information regarding the Review of Decisions at www.business.qld.gov.au/starting-business/advice-support/grants/review.

13. Survey

- 13.1. CDSB may survey recipients within six months of completing the grant (we'd like to know how you are getting on).

14. Further information

- 14.1. For more information about grants or your application, call the CDSB Small Business Hotline on 1300 654 687 or email disastergrants@desbt.qld.gov.au.

15. Disclaimer

- 15.1. This publication is to be used as a guide only. The authors have taken reasonable steps to ensure the publication is accurate at the time of publication. The State of Queensland accepts no responsibility and gives no warranty, guarantee or representation about the accuracy, reliability, timeliness or otherwise of the information contained within the publication. The State of Queensland expressly excludes legal liability in all jurisdictions concerning the use or reliance of any information included in this publication. Any direct or consequential loss or damage suffered because of reliance on this information is the user's sole responsibility. Persons using information contained in this publication should conduct their own enquiries and rely on independent professional advice. This exclusion shall extend to all users and related parties who may suffer loss because of the use of information contained in this publication and applies despite any negligence on the part of the State of Queensland.