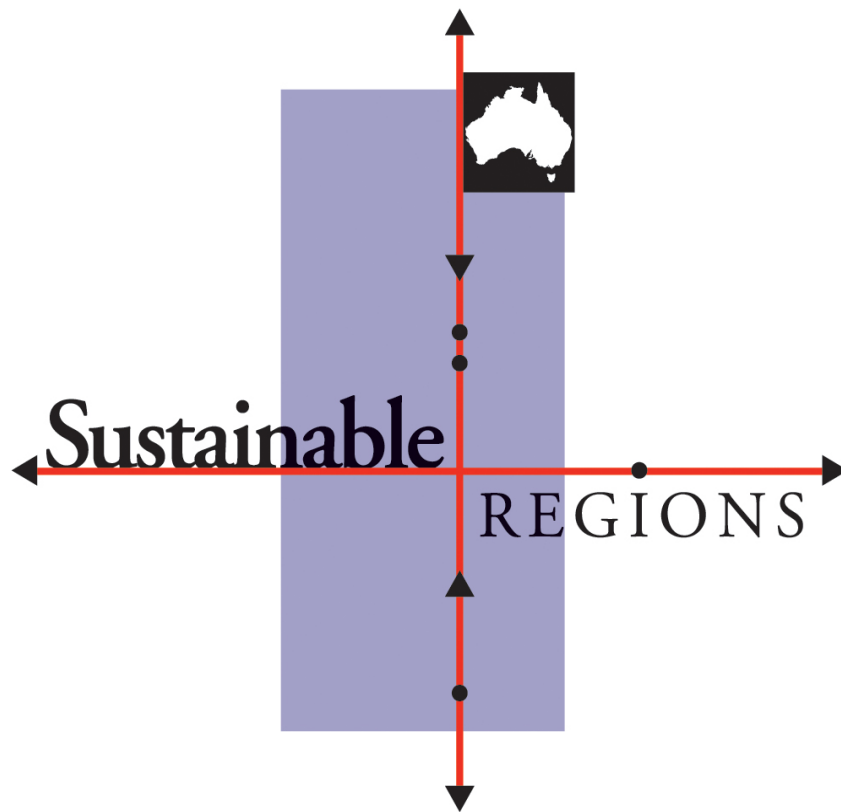




Australian Government

Department of Transport and Regional Services

SUSTAINABLE REGIONS PROGRAMME GUIDELINES



www.sustainableregions.gov.au

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GLOSSARY

DOTARS	Department of Transport and Regional Services
EO	Executive Officer
EoI	Expression of Interest
SRAC	Sustainable Region Advisory Committee

ATTACHMENTS

- A Sustainable Regions Programme - project assessment criteria
- B Priorities identified by the Sustainable Regions
- C List of useful websites and information for regional communities

WHAT IS THE SUSTAINABLE REGIONS PROGRAMME?

Background/rationale

The *Sustainable Regions Programme* is the major initiative under the *Stronger Regions, A Stronger Australia* Statement announced by the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Transport and Regional Services, the Hon John Anderson MP in August 2001.

The Government believes that Australia needs strong and prosperous regions - now and into the future and that regional Australia should be recognised for its contribution to the nation's economic and social wellbeing.

Rapid advances in technology, environmental issues, social change and changes in global markets are challenging regional communities. Regional, rural and remote communities have strongly indicated that they are in the best position to understand their needs and opportunities in responding to changing circumstances.

The *Sustainable Regions Programme* was established in late 2001 and runs until 30 June 2006. It assists selected regions plan for their future, build capacity for strategic and informed decision making at the regional level and contributes to the implementation of significant projects that can make a real difference to economic opportunity and quality of life.

The aims of the Programme are to:

- Provide a national approach to supporting designated regions across Australia to lead their own development in accordance with the locally established priorities;
- Assist regions undergoing major economic, social and environmental change to build a viable foundation for the future; and
- Promote a whole of government approach to regions by Commonwealth Government agencies and forge partnerships between the private sector and all three spheres of government.

The desired outcomes in the selected regions are:

- Improved understanding of the characteristics of the region
- Identification of future directions
- Creation of employment
- Establishment of businesses
- Provision of key resourcing for sustainable development
- Closer community interaction
- Partnerships between the private sector and government for the sustainable development of the region
- Develop the leadership and capacity to address regional priority issues and develop local solutions

Funding for the *Sustainable Regions Programme* totals up to \$100 million. Assistance under the Programme is being provided to eight selected 'prototype' regions.

WHAT ARE THE EIGHT 'PROTOTYPE' REGIONS?

The eight 'prototype' regions that will receive funding until 30 June 2006 are:

- **Far North East NSW** (funding of up to \$12 million)
Local Government Areas – Tweed, Ballina, Byron, Lismore and Kyogle
- **Campbelltown/Camden, NSW** (up to \$12 million)
Local Government Areas – Campbelltown and Camden
- **Gippsland, VIC** (up to \$12 million)
Local Government Areas – Latrobe, Bass Coast Shire, Baw Baw (eastern portion), South Gippsland, Wellington and East Gippsland
- **Atherton Tablelands, QLD** (up to \$18 million)
Local Government Areas - Atherton, Eacham, Herberton and Mareeba
- **Wide Bay Burnett, QLD** (up to \$8 million*)
Local Government Areas – Biggenden, Bundaberg, Burnett, Cherbourg Community Council, Cooloola, Eidsvold, Gayndah, Hervey Bay, Isis, Kilkivan, Kingaroy, Kolan, Maryborough, Miriam Vale, Monto, Mundubbera, Murgon, Nanango, Perry, Tiaro, Wondai, Woocoo and Yarraman District of Rosalie Shire.
[* in addition to \$4 million allocated under the Wide Bay Burnett Structural Adjustment Package]
- **Kimberley, WA** (up to \$12 million)
Local Government Areas - Broome, Halls Creek, Derby West Kimberley and Wyndham East Kimberley
- **Playford/Salisbury, SA** (up to \$12 million)
Local Government Areas – Playford and Salisbury
- **Cradle Coast (North West & West Coast Tasmania) -** (up to \$12 million)
Local Government Areas – King Island, Circular Head, Waratah/Wynyard, Burnie, Central Coast, Devonport, Latrobe, Kentish and West Coast

HOW WERE THE EIGHT PROTOTYPE REGIONS SELECTED?

A range of indicators were considered in the selection of designated regions such as socio-economic data, levels of disadvantage, remoteness, unemployment, family income and structural change indices. The unique and particular characteristics and nature of the region were important factors in the selection process. This included factors such as innovative regional thinking to address local problems, significant changes to major industries, demographic structure and trends and the impact of national competition policy.

HOW ARE SUCCESSFUL PROJECTS DETERMINED?

Sustainable Region Advisory Committees

Each region is led by a locally based Sustainable Region Advisory Committee (SRAC) comprising business, community and local government representatives. Their role is to advise the Minister on matters relating to the implementation and management of the *Sustainable Regions Programme*, including assessment and recommendation of projects.

Each Committee conducted a community consultation process to establish priority areas for action for their region. Applications under the Programme must address one or more of these priority areas.

While each region has differing priorities, some common themes to emerge across the regions include job creation opportunities, a regional identity, education and training at all levels, community development, sustaining the environment, value adding to existing and growing industry, and establishment of new industry.

The SRACs assess each application against the regional priorities and the project assessment criteria. They then recommend projects to the Minister for Transport and Regional Services.

The Department attends SRAC meetings, provides advice to the Committee and the Minister for Transport and Regional Services on the recommended projects and seeks input from other Australian Government Departments.

The *Sustainable Regions Programme* is a discretionary grants programme. The funding of projects is at the discretion of the Minister for Transport and Regional Services. Therefore, meeting the assessment criteria and addressing one or more regional priorities does not guarantee funding.

Executive Officer to Advisory Committees

Each SRAC is supported by an Executive Officer who reports to the SRAC Chair. The Executive Officer provides information on the *Sustainable Regions Programme* to the local community and assists applicants with developing and preparing project proposals.

WHAT PROJECTS ARE ELIGIBLE FOR SUSTAINABLE REGIONS FUNDING?

Applications for funding under the Programme must be a good fit with the locally determined regional priorities and the project assessment criteria, have significant regional support and impact and demonstrate that they are likely to achieve sustainable outcomes.

Please see [Attachment A](#) for the project assessment criteria and [Attachment B](#) for the priorities identified by each region.

Funding is available for a range of projects including minor local infrastructure, skills building, encouraging businesses and local enterprises, as well as addressing social development and environmental and cultural issues.

THE SUSTAINABLE REGIONS PROGRAMME EXPRESSION OF INTEREST AND APPLICATION PROCESS: (note this may vary slightly from region to region):

- The SRAC calls for Expressions of Interest (eg, newspaper ad). The Executive Officer (EO) is available to answer inquiries from interested applicants.
- The EoI is broadly assessed against the project assessment criteria and regional priorities by the EO and a recommendation is made to the SRAC.
- The SRAC determines which EoIs should be invited to submit a full application.
- The EO works with the proponents to develop and finalise a detailed formal application. DOTARS is available to assist where broader whole of government issues are relevant to the application.
- The EO provides advice to the SRAC to assist it in objectively analysing and assessing funding applications received from the community
- The applications are fully and competitively assessed by the SRAC against the Sustainable Regions criteria and the region's priorities.
- The SRAC provides its recommendations to the Minister for Transport and Regional Services.
- DOTARS confirms the recommended project proposals match the selection criteria and conducts any required due diligence checks.
- The SRAC recommendations and the Department's recommendations are then presented to the Minister for decision.

A few points to note:

- The process ensures a filtering in the region so that only the high priority and most significant project proposals are recommended for funding.
- The EoI process avoids the need for proponents to prepare extensive applications until the SRAC has endorsed a proposal as meeting a regional priority and as having potential to deliver significant regional benefit.
- Retrospective funding is not permitted.

WHO CAN APPLY FOR SUSTAINABLE REGIONS FUNDING?

Entities registered under State or Commonwealth legislation eg Corporations Act 2001, can apply for *Sustainable Regions Programme* funding. This includes:

- Non-profit organisations;
- Private Sector;
- Local Government;
- Community Councils (Indigenous Councils);
- Co-operatives;
- Associations; and
- Registered Charities.

All entities must have an Australian Business Number (ABN) or an Australian Company Number (ACN) to apply for Sustainable Regions funding.

ADMINISTRATION

GST and ABN/ACN

You are required to provide your Australian Business Number (ABN)/Australian Company Number (ACN) in the application. For further information about obtaining an ABN/ACN please contact the Australian Taxation Office (ATO) on 132 478.

Grants to GST registered organisations will be supplied on a GST inclusive basis and GST is payable on the grant amount.

GST payable on any goods and services purchased by grantees in undertaking their projects must be met by the grantee. Grantees who are GST registered will be able to reclaim these amounts from the ATO as input tax credits.

All applicants are advised to seek their own advice from a qualified professional on the tax implications of grants under the *Sustainable Regions Programme*.

Funding Agreement management

The Australian Government uses a simple standard funding agreement for approved projects, including a schedule tailored to meet the needs of specific projects. The schedule includes agreed milestones, performance targets, reporting arrangements and arrangements for payment. No funding of project activity is permitted before the agreement is signed.

What are the budgeting and reporting requirements?

You will need to provide a detailed budget in accordance with the application form. The Executive Officer in your region can assist you with the development of the budget.

This budget, once finalised, will form part of the Funding Agreement. The approved budget may be different from the proposed budget in the application form. It is important

that you provide a detailed and accurate budget in the application form, as this will be the basis for determining the final approved budget.

Successful applicants will receive funding for the agreed period of the project, subject to satisfactory compliance with the terms of the Funding Agreement. This will include achieving any agreed milestones and outcomes detailed in the application form, and providing reports as specified in the Funding Agreement. Key reports are:

- a satisfactory independent audit of accounts in accordance with the Australian Government's requirements;
- an acquittal of expenditure against the approved budget for the project; and
- evidence of satisfactory performance and achievement of milestones.

The Department may arrange for an evaluation of your project. The milestones, outcomes and performance information detailed in the funding agreement will form a basis for the evaluation.

The Department complies with or exceeds the minimum standards required for grants management, based on the Australian National Audit Office (ANAO) *Better Practice Guide - Administration of Grants* and the ANAO *Better Practice Principles for Performance Information*. Further information is available from the ANAO website <http://www.anao.gov.au>.

HOW DO I APPLY?

If you would like to apply for *Sustainable Regions Programme* funding, please contact the Executive Officer in your region. Contact details for the Executive Officers are on the Sustainable Regions website at www.sustainableregions.gov.au

WHO CAN I CONTACT FOR FURTHER INFORMATION?

More specific information about the Programme can be obtained by contacting:

- Mr Bill Dejong, Director, Sustainable Regions Programme on telephone (02) 6274 8152 or by e-mail at Bill.Dejong@dotars.gov.au

or by emailing: sustainableregions@dotars.gov.au

**SUSTAINABLE REGIONS PROGRAMME
PROJECT ASSESSMENT CRITERIA**

General Assessment Criteria

1. Consistency of proposal with identified regional priorities as determined by the futures planning process and other planning processes.
2. The sustainability of the project and the extent to which it will be of benefit to the region.
3. The extent to which Australian Government funding is needed to realise the project and the absence of relevant programmes from other Australian Government agencies and other tiers of Government to fund the project.
4. The provision of sufficient funds and other involvement by the proponent to ensure success of the project.
5. The level of support for the proposal from within the Region, and support from other sources including other spheres of government and the private sector.
6. Demonstrated project management experience to undertake the project including the provision of a project budget and ability to meet Government reporting requirements.
7. The project does not compete directly with existing businesses, unless it can be shown that there is an unsatisfied demand for the product/service or the product/service can be provided in a new way.

Mandatory Requirements

8. Retrospective funding will not be permitted for any projects.
9. The project should not be inconsistent with other Australian Government policy objectives and relevant law.
10. Proposals must comply with relevant planning and environment laws.

PRIORITIES IDENTIFIED BY THE SUSTAINABLE REGIONS

Atherton Tablelands, Queensland

The Atherton Tablelands Advisory Committee developed an Action Plan which states that it will support projects that:

- Have clear long term outcomes that are sustainable;
- Clear objectives that address local priorities and for which progress can be measured;
- Encourage the development and retention of intellectual property within the Region;
- Encourage the local development of Tourism;
- Contribute to the development and maintenance of a "Tableland" brand;
- Improving community wellbeing;
- Build on earlier projects (ie, from the former Taskforce);
- Are synergistic with parallel projects;
- Lead to new job creation;
- See projects as a capital investment leading to enduring benefits of that will be sustained and retained within the Region;
- Develop the enthusiasm, skills and optimism of the Region's youth;
- Address gaps in community capacity in areas of community need;
- Build youth enterprise in the Region;
- Utilise and enhance the Region's amenity and modern life style choices; and
- Consider large projects in the context of the 2010 Regional Plan for Far North Queensland.

Wide Bay Burnett, Queensland

The Wide Bay Burnett Sustainable Region Advisory Committee (the Committee) is conscious of the opportunity provided by the Sustainable Regions Programme to best position the region for the 21st Century.

The Committee wants to see the region take advantage of the rich natural and human resources and infrastructure to grow industry that is in tune with the environment.

The Committee has developed a set of priorities to complement the Federal Government's general criteria for project assessment and believes that projects which address these priorities will be best placed to future proof the Wide Bay Burnett region.

Projects considered for funding should satisfy one or more of the following:

Should create 21st Century jobs and enterprises

- Industries that are growing and address a demand in the Australian and global market places are seen as advantageous to the region.

- Enterprises which incorporate or foster innovation, research and education and increase knowledge within the region will be critical to a sustainable future.
- Identifying and servicing market niches where a commercial return is made for the region will contribute to creating 21st Century jobs.

Enhances social infrastructure

- Community leadership, community cohesiveness, individual opportunity and inherent social justice should be improved by projects supported by the Sustainable Regions Programme.

Supports the sustainable use of the regions natural resources in perpetuity

- The region is rich in natural resources, maintaining those resources or reversing past degradations will ensure they exist for future generations.

Builds on the culture of the region

- The heritage, culture and nature of the region all have much to offer in generating economic activity.
- Building on the regions strengths ensures that Wide Bay Burnett enterprises and residents have the opportunity to share in a sustainable future.

Makes the region a place in which young people will thrive and want to live

- Young people are the ones who will help this region to embrace change and innovation as pathways to a sustainable future.

Links

Projects that interlink these priorities will create sustainable, healthy lifestyles for the residents of the Wide Bay Burnett region.

The Committee has deliberately not nominated any particular industries or activities; however the committee acknowledges the value of existing industries and activities to the present economy of the Wide Bay Burnett region. Therefore the Committee will welcome proposals based around both existing and new enterprise which will contribute to a more sustainable future for the region.

These Regional Priorities draws on existing strategies and plans in the Wide Bay Burnett region and will be used to assist the Advisory Committee to determine which grants will be made available under the Sustainable Regions Programme.

Far North East New South Wales

Regional Priorities	Further description of Priority
Business development	Training, facilitate e-commerce and e-trading, whole-of-government approaches to economic development, access to capital, indigenous employment & economic development. <i>Addresses several industry sectors and seen as creating employment outcomes.</i>
Community development	Redress numbers of 'working poor', unemployed and under-employed, enhance small villages and small towns, community cohesion, reconciliation with indigenous community, older aged population, better communication across the community re. Government programs, youth issues, disability issues, "local" employment, social isolation, community involvement in development. <i>Strengthens social capital and sense of community & addresses social disadvantage.</i>
Environment related industries and issues	Encompasses services and products relating to catchment, estuarine and coastal management, covering environmental restoration technologies and services, clean energy technologies and products and a wide range of issues associated with environmentally friendly living such as housing, waste and designs, weed eradication, environmental improvement, sustainable organic agriculture, biodiversity. <i>Protecting and enhancing the environment, with environment related industries being a source of new opportunities.</i>
Knowledge and learning industries	Developing and using existing research capability, commercialising R&D results, support the opportunity for skilled components of the workforce and broader community, enhance access to new technologies such as specialist manufacturing.
Multi media, cultural and related creative industries	Includes the arts, entertainment, multi-media, design, cultural festivals, IT production, direction and management, training, broadcasting, indigenous community. <i>Strong links to existing strengths in the region, tourism and culture.</i>
New rural industries	These industries are associated with the less familiar plants and animals both native to Australia and international. These products tend to align with the RIRDC new products guide and so include aquaculture, for example, even though it is being carried out in various places already. <i>Lifting agricultural incomes to avoid erosion of lifestyles and values.</i>

Population growth service industries	These industries are tied to the high population growth rate of the region and include low cost and environmental housing, public & community housing, construction, home wares, health and lifestyle products and services, retail, leisure activities, services for retirees and the elderly, effects of population decline.
Soft and hard infrastructure	Road transport, both local and regional, financial services, communication and IT, better air transport, public transport, cycleways, rail, shipping, water supply, sewerage treatment. <i>An important enabler of development.</i>
Tourism	Includes eco-tourism, agritourism, other specialist tourism, regional cuisine, cultural tourism, and related industry support such as education and professional development, impact of tourism, MICE (meetings, incentives, conferences & exhibitions). <i>Maximising the yield from tourism and the quality of tourism development.</i>
Value-add to existing and traditional industries	Traditional crops and animals (dairy, beef, forestry), established horticulture, farm forestry, secondary processing of local produce, niche and export marketing, e-trading, e-commerce, local growers markets, organic production, assistance with marketing. <i>Building on the region's existing industries and links with other industry sectors.</i>

The creation of local employment (including youth and indigenous employment) and proposals that impact positively on the environment are high on the region's agenda. The need to work as a region is also seen as an important factor, as is the recognition that individual sectors of the economy do not work in isolation from one-another.

Campbelltown-Camden, New South Wales

Priorities of the Campbelltown Camden Region are:

- Recognise and address the major social issues in the region;
- Improving regional employment opportunities for local people;
- Develop and support local industry and attract new sustainable, environmentally friendly industry;
- Identify and address youth needs;
- Education and training at all levels;
- Sustainability of natural and built environments;
- Improved local and regional transport infrastructure networks for all users.

Gippsland, Victoria

- Priorities of the Gippsland Region are:
- Development of local leadership capabilities;
- Support to existing and traditional industries;
- Development and promotion of a regional identity;
- Identification of the consequences of an ageing population;
- Facilitation of investment and access to capital;
- Education and training at all levels;
- Assistance to small business including management skill development;
- Provision of reticulated water and sewerage (especially to developing areas);
- Development of key transport infrastructure (including ports and rail);
- Sustainable management of natural resources;
- Access to appropriate competitively priced sources of energy; and
- Development of telecommunications capabilities.

NB. This list may vary as the Programme evolves.

Cradle Coast (North West & West Coast Tasmania)

The Cradle Coast Sustainable Region Advisory Committee has identified the following core priorities for the region based on previous research and strategic planning, community consultations and current opportunities:

Priority	Outcomes Sought
Participation in education, training and employment	Stronger Learning Pathways
Investment in existing growth industries	Tourism industry capacity-building & infrastructure
Value-adding of traditional industries	Food industry business incubator & industry clusters
Creation of new long-term industries	Windfarm-related industry clusters
Protection of the natural environment	Natural Resource Management career pathways
Reversing population decline	Family and business migration

Playford-Salisbury, South Australia

The goal of the *Sustainable Regions Programme* in Playford/Salisbury is to involve the community in laying the foundation to realise the region's long-term potential to be economically vibrant, socially inclusive and environmentally sustainable, building on its natural advantages.

The consultative process that has commenced in the region has identified the following regional priorities:

- enhancing the region's core economic base by promoting growth in key industry sectors and encouraging networks and clustering;
- improving the skills and systems of small businesses;
- strategically linking education and training with industry growth;
- increasing the relevance of education and training in the community;
- developing the region as a leader in life-long learning;
- advancing social inclusion and community involvement;
- improving the social and physical character of residential neighbourhoods;
- promoting the region's growth through integrated solutions to infrastructure provision;
- improving transport and access;
- promoting alternative energy solutions for the region;
- developing the capacity for the region to become self-sustaining in water use;
- developing productive alternatives for waste;
- enhancing regional biodiversity; and
- building community health and well-being.

The Playford/Salisbury Sustainable Region Advisory Committee will also seek to ensure all projects have the ability to strengthen community capacity building in the region.

Kimberley, Western Australia

Priorities of the Kimberley Region are:

- Regional infrastructure;
- Local cooperative projects;
- Indigenous enterprise and economic development;
- Regional marketing; and
- New sustainable industry.

List of useful web sites for regional communities

- GrantsLINK – Provides information on Australian Government grants
<http://www.grantslink.gov.au>
- Regional Partnerships
<http://www.regionalpartnerships.gov.au>
- Area Consultative Committees
<http://www.acc.gov.au/>
- Regional Entry Point – Provides access to Australian Government programmes and services available to people living in regional and rural Australia.
<http://www.regionalaustralia.gov.au/index.cfm>
- Commonwealth Regional Information Service (CRIS) – Provides people living outside of the capital cities with information about Australian Government programs, agencies and services.
<http://www.dotars.gov.au/cris/index.htm>
- Prime Ministers Community Business Partnership Initiative
<http://www.partnership.zip.com.au/whatsnew.html>
- Environment Australia *National Heritage Trust II* <http://www.nht.gov.au/>
- Department of Family and Community Services, *Stronger Families and Communities Strategy: Can Do Community initiative*
<http://www.facs.gov.au/cando/>
- Department of Education, Science and Training, *Rural and Regional New Apprenticeships* http://www.newapprenticeships.gov.au/rural_regional/default.asp
- Department of Education, Science and Training, *National Industry Skills Initiative*
<http://www.skillsinitiative.gov.au>
- Department of Health and Ageing *Office of Rural Health*
<http://www.health.gov.au/ruralhealth/index.htm>
- Department of Industry Tourism and Resources
Invest Australia <http://www.investaustralia.gov.au/>