

# Regional Growth — Environment and Tourism Fund

## Guidelines

August 2018

## Message from the Deputy Premier

Across NSW, I see the difference that investing in our regions can make: enhancing environmental attractions and strengthening regional economies.

Our government has worked hard to put NSW in a strong economic position. It has allowed us to invest back into communities and secure the economic future of regional NSW. The Rebuilding NSW plan is investing \$20 billion into new and upgraded infrastructure.

This includes \$6 billion dedicated to our regions. As part of Rebuilding NSW, we announced the Regional Growth – Environment and Tourism Fund, dedicated to investing \$300 million in the environmental and tourism assets that draw visitors to our unique regions.

In Round One, \$110 million in funding was committed. I was pleased to see such a wide range of projects, of such high calibre, were submitted for funding. Through Round One, we able to protect and enhance many of the attractions in our regions. We supported the development of iconic walks and arts projects. Exciting projects weaved together recreational activities, aboriginal heritage and natural wonder; others repurposed heritage farms. We were also able to fund the restoration of lighthouses, improvements to wharves, and the construction or upgrades to centres for science and botanica. All of these attractions lead tourists to stay longer and spend more in regional NSW.

Now I am pleased to announce our investment continues with the opening of Round Two. Another \$100 million is available in this round to support our continued drive to build new, and transform existing, environmental and tourism infrastructure in our regions. This is divided into two streams:

**Stream One:** Up to \$50 million for regionally iconic tourism activation projects, such as the Wagga Wagga Riverside Precinct Rejuvenation and the Jenolan Caves upgrade of visitor facilities

**Stream Two:** Up to \$50 million for projects from eligible applicants who were unsuccessful at the Expression of Interest stage during Round One.

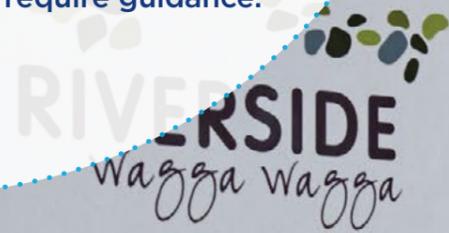
I look forward to seeing new, visionary projects coming forward. I know that innovative ideas from regional communities and businesses, with the funding support of their government, can make a significant difference. The investments we are making through the Regional Growth – Environment and Tourism Fund will help us share the natural wonders that make NSW unique with visitors and build stronger communities across the state.



**The Hon. John Barilaro**  
Deputy Premier  
Minister for Regional NSW  
Minister for Skills  
Minister for Small Business



In these guidelines, you will find the program objectives, eligibility criteria, application process and assessment criteria. Please also refer to the fact sheet and check the frequently asked questions. Contact [regionalsw.business@dpc.nsw.gov.au](mailto:regionalsw.business@dpc.nsw.gov.au) if you have questions or require guidance.



← Visitor Information Centre

← Civic Centre

- Wagga Wagga Art Gallery and National Art Glass Gallery
- Library
- Museum of the Riverina
- Civic Theatre

↑ Wagga Beach

↑ Wiradjuri Walking Track

## OVERVIEW

The NSW Government's Rebuilding NSW plan, announced in 2014, is funded from the Restart NSW Fund. Within the Rebuilding NSW plan, the Regional Growth — Environment and Tourism Fund aims to increase tourist visitation by investing in regional environment and tourism infrastructure, particularly focusing on fixed assets that will grow and further diversify NSW regional economies.

The NSW Government recognises that investment is needed in the environment and in tourism infrastructure that generates this wealth and increases tourism to regional NSW. The fund demonstrates the NSW Government's commitment to supporting these activities.

The NSW Government has committed \$300 million to the fund.

**\$110 million was committed in Round One of funding.**

### Regional Growth — Environment and Tourism Fund Round Two

**The NSW Government is allocating up to \$100 million for Round Two.**

This is divided into two streams:

- **Stream One:** Up to \$50 million for regionally iconic tourism activation projects, such as the Wagga Wagga Riverside Precinct Rejuvenation, the Jenolan Caves upgrade of visitor facilities and the Tamworth Astronomy/Science Centre, Planetarium and Café.
- **Stream Two:** Up to \$50 million for projects from eligible applicants with strong projects who were unsuccessful at the Expression of Interest stage during Round One.

Applications should clearly identify eligible environment and tourism infrastructure projects in regional local government areas that have the potential to create new jobs and regional growth from increased tourist visitation.

### Restart NSW Fund

The Restart NSW Fund was set up to improve the economic growth and productivity of the state. Restart NSW funds are used for major infrastructure projects that will improve the productivity and competitiveness of the state across all sectors. They also support investment in local infrastructure in regional areas.

## HOW CAN MY ORGANISATION APPLY?

Eligible applicants must use the form and templates provided on the website [nsw.gov.au/rgetf](https://nsw.gov.au/rgetf). Before submitting the form please ensure that all of the program criteria have been addressed.

### Eligibility

#### Who can apply?

Project applications are invited from:

- local government agencies
- community groups registered as incorporated associations
- non-government organisations.

The NSW Government encourages proponents to work together through their relevant Joint Organisation of Councils, Regional Organisation of Councils, Destination Networks and local tourism organisations to identify projects that involve more than one local government area and have been identified as regional priorities.

Applicants are also encouraged to work with private operators and industry organisations to identify potential projects. Applications that involve public-private partnerships are encouraged.

#### Eligible locations

Eligible projects must be located in an eligible regional local government area. For more information please visit [nsw.gov.au/rgetf](https://nsw.gov.au/rgetf).

Applications for projects from the Greater Sydney metropolitan area, and Newcastle and Wollongong local government areas will not be eligible.

#### Which projects are eligible for funding?

The Regional Growth — Environment and Tourism Fund is open to regional environment infrastructure projects on publicly owned land and on private land where there is a clear public benefit, and regional tourism projects.

Eligible projects must be for new or enhanced regional infrastructure that will drive growth in the visitor economy including growing regional visitor numbers, increasing overnight visitor expenditure and extending visitor overnight stays.

For Stream One regional iconic tourism activation projects, the government is seeking major tourism and environmental infrastructure projects that draw tourists from outside the region or cause them to stay longer and spend more money in a region.

Projects should demonstrate that they achieve the criteria (listed on page 8), meet the fund's objective to grow and further diversify NSW regional economies and also meet the purpose of the **Restart NSW Fund**. Projects will need to demonstrate that they:

- have the capacity to deliver jobs and economic growth
- have a Benefit to Cost Ratio higher than 1.0
- maximise other co-investment by the applicant and, potentially, by the Commonwealth or other industry contributions.

Applications must have a minimum financial co-contribution of 25 per cent of the total grant amount. The co-contribution must be from sources other than the NSW Government and commitments must be confirmed before detailed applications are assessed.

An exemption from the minimum 25 per cent co-contribution may be granted where a project is located in a disadvantaged area of NSW. Applicants must submit a case for the exemption with evidence demonstrating the disadvantage. The starting point for measuring disadvantage for this fund is the Socio-Economic Index for Areas, published by the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

Other considerations may include:

- impact of significant industry decline or business closure
- recovery from a significant natural disaster
- significant recent change in population or community demographics
- other exceptional circumstances.

### Is there a limit to the amount of funding?

This fund is targeting environment and tourism projects and is expected to deliver regional economic, tourism, environmental and social benefits.

- There is a minimum funding threshold of \$5 million for regionally iconic tourism activation projects submitted under Stream One, but no maximum.
- There is a minimum funding threshold of \$500,000 for projects submitted under Stream Two, but no maximum.



Shared Coastal Pathway, Ballina  
Photo | Destination NSW

## How to apply

Prospective Stream One applicants must download and lodge an Expression of Interest form and data sheet before the closing date. Late or incomplete applications, or applications that have used a form other than the prescribed form, will not be accepted.

The Expression of Interest form is located on the web page [nsw.gov.au/rgetf](http://nsw.gov.au/rgetf).

Please ensure that you have read these guidelines and other relevant documents, including the Fact Sheet and Frequently Asked Questions, to establish whether your project is eligible.

Applicants who submitted Expressions of Interest and were previously unsuccessful under Round One will be invited to proceed directly to Stage Two, the Detailed Application stage.

If you have a question or need assistance please contact your local Department of Premier and Cabinet Regional office, call **1300 679 673** or email [regionalnsw.business@dpc.nsw.gov.au](mailto:regionalnsw.business@dpc.nsw.gov.au).

The NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet may host information sessions and prospective applicants should attend any briefing session.

## Important milestones

All key dates will be published on the Regional Growth – Environment and Tourism Fund web page [nsw.gov.au/rgetf](http://nsw.gov.au/rgetf).

The application process has the following key dates:

**Stream One applicants: Expressions of Interest (EOI) due 21 September 2018**

Shortlisted Stream One applicants will subsequently be invited to submit a Detailed Application.

**Stream Two applicants: Detailed applications or business cases from Round One EOI applicants due 21 September 2018**

## HOW WILL PROJECTS BE ASSESSED?

Eligible applications will be assessed against four program criteria:

### Criterion 1: Strategic Assessment

All applications need to demonstrate that the project would meet the purpose of the **Restart NSW Fund**, achieve the objectives of the Regional Growth – Environment and Tourism Fund and the eligibility criteria set out in this document.

Applications for new or improved environment and tourism infrastructure will be assessed for their capacity to grow and further diversify NSW regional economies and increase visitor numbers and tourism spending in regional areas.

Proposals should show how:

- the project will contribute to increasing visitation in regional NSW
- the project will contribute to the advancement of the local government area and region
- the project will contribute to increased employment and business outcomes in the visitor economy
- the project's objectives align with NSW Government priorities, including the **Visitor Economy Industry Action Plan**, any **Destination Management Plans** relevant to the region, and other regional strategies and policies including the **Regional Development Framework**, **Regional Economic Development Strategies** and **Regional Plans**.

### Criterion 2: Economic Assessment

Applicants must demonstrate how projects will have a positive impact on productivity and economic growth in NSW through the creation or enhancement of publicly owned assets.

Examples include projects that:

- would have the capacity to deliver jobs and economic growth
- would have a positive impact on regional economies through investment in environment and tourism infrastructure.

### Restart NSW Fund requirements

All projects funded through the Restart NSW Fund must improve economic growth and productivity in NSW and have a positive impact on regional economies. In order to be funded, the estimated public benefits to NSW from projects must be greater than the forecasted costs.

### Criterion 3: Affordability

All applications will need to demonstrate that the project is financially viable into the future, taking into account net life cycle cost impacts and allowing for ongoing operating and maintenance requirements.

Project applications should include construction costs and operating and maintenance costs. The construction cost estimates should be supported by estimations or quotes, and include all margins and overheads, project and construction management costs, and an appropriate amount of contingency for the project stage and risks. Note that funding will not be provided for operating and maintenance costs.

The affordability criteria also considers whether the proposal maximises the value of co-contribution from the applicant and maximises the value of other regional investments by the state and Commonwealth – for example, the investments made under the **Regional Tourism Infrastructure Fund**, **Jobs for NSW** and the **Regional Visitor Economy Fund**.

Applicants should seek to maximise their co-contributions in their projects.

Applications must have a minimum financial co-contribution of 25 per cent of the total grant amount. The co-contribution must be from sources other than the NSW Government and commitments must be confirmed before detailed applications are assessed. An exemption from the minimum 25 per cent co-contribution may be granted where a project is located in a disadvantaged area of NSW or due to other factors. These will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

### Criterion 4: Deliverability

All applicants will need to demonstrate that they have the capacity and capability to deliver the project through robust strategies for procurement, project management and risk management.

Applicants should provide evidence of support from local stakeholders.

Infrastructure NSW will consider past performance on delivery of other NSW Government-funded projects when considering deliverability.



# Cultural Walk Trail →

## More information

[www.nsw.gov.au/rgetf](http://www.nsw.gov.au/rgetf)

## Contact us

**Email:** [regionalnsw.business@dpc.nsw.gov.au](mailto:regionalnsw.business@dpc.nsw.gov.au)

**Phone:** 1300 679 673

© State of NSW 2018

### Disclaimer

While every reasonable effort has been made to ensure that the facts contained within this document are correct at time of printing, the state of NSW, its agents and employees, disclaim any and all liability to any person in respect of anything or the consequences of anything done or omitted to be done in reliance upon the whole or any part of this document.

### Copyright notice

In keeping with the NSW Government's commitment to encourage the availability of information, you are welcome to reproduce the material that appears in this Regional Growth — Environment and Tourism Fund document for personal, in-house or non-commercial use without formal permission or charge. All other rights reserved. If you wish to reproduce, alter, store or transmit material appearing in this Regional Growth — Environment and Tourism Fund document for any other purpose, request for formal permission should be directed to the Department of Premier and Cabinet, 52 Martin Place, Sydney. You are required to acknowledge that the material is provided by this Regional Growth — Environment and Tourism Fund document or the owner of the copyright.