

Regional Skills Relocation Grant

February 2023

Program Guidelines



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Dean Street, Albury

Message from the Deputy Premier



The NSW Government is committed to developing a strong and resilient regional NSW, by creating policies that help our regional centres to diversify, grow and thrive. I am incredibly proud to deliver this framework for relocating skilled workers and jobs to regional NSW.

Regional NSW businesses are the backbone of our economy, delivering employment, exports and wealth right across the state and providing the largest and most diverse regional economy in Australia. To continue the growth and prosperity of our regional centres we want to encourage more businesses and skilled workers to relocate to regional NSW.

The Regional Skills Relocation Grant has been created to assist regional businesses to attract skilled and specialised workers to our regional areas, and business owners to set up shop or expand their operations in regional NSW.

Creating more skilled and specialised employment in the regions will build a robust regional workforce providing opportunities now and in the future.

Whether you're a regional employer looking for skilled staff, or a business owner looking to relocate to regional NSW, I strongly encourage you to read these guidelines and contact the Department of Regional NSW to find out more about the Regional Skills Relocation Grant and how you can make regional NSW a home for you, your staff, or business.

Together we can continue to create opportunities for growth and prosperity, making regional NSW a truly great place to live, work, play and stay.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paul Toole". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

The Hon. Paul Toole MP
Deputy Premier
Minister for Regional NSW, and Minister for Police

Overview

The Regional Skills Relocation Grant has been created to assist regional NSW businesses in identified industries to attract skilled and specialised workers to relocate to a regional area.

Grants of up to \$12,500 are available for eligible regional NSW businesses to assist with recruitment services and relocation costs of eligible employees moving from NSW metropolitan areas, interstate or internationally, to regional NSW.

Woman riding horse in field.
Forbes, Central West



Program objective

The Regional Skills Relocation Grant aims to:

- support economic growth in regional NSW by supporting businesses and organisations to find and attract skilled workers to live and work in regional NSW
- fill regional job vacancies
- increase the strength, diversity and size of regional economies.



Narrabri, North West Slopes

Key dates

Business applications close:

5pm (AEDT) 15 December 2023

Employee activations close:

The earlier of 12-months from pre-approval or 27 January 2025

Reimbursement claims close:

6 months after employee commencement date

Notification of Business Application Outcome:

2-6 weeks from submitting a complete and correct business application form

Notification of Employee Activation Outcome:

2-6 weeks from submitting a complete and correct employee activation form

Reimbursement Claim Outcome:

Reimbursement payments will be paid electronically to the nominated business account within 6-8 weeks of submitting a complete and correct reimbursement claim form

Grant amounts

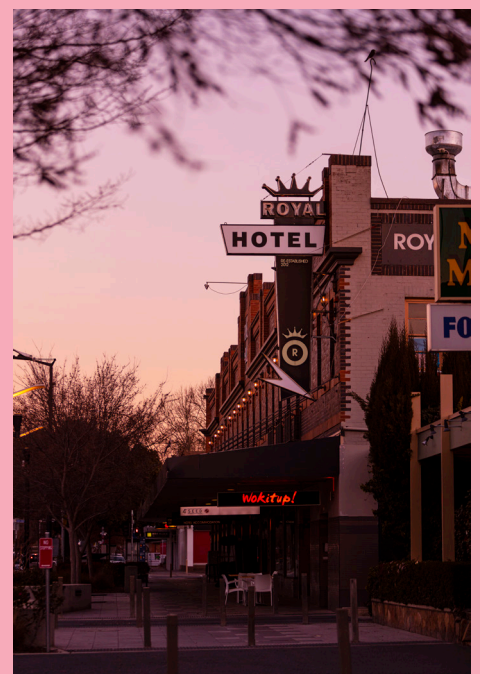
The NSW Government has made \$1.7 million available for grants of up to \$12,500 (GST exclusive) to eligible businesses and employers to recover costs associated with recruiting and relocating identified skilled workers to regional NSW.



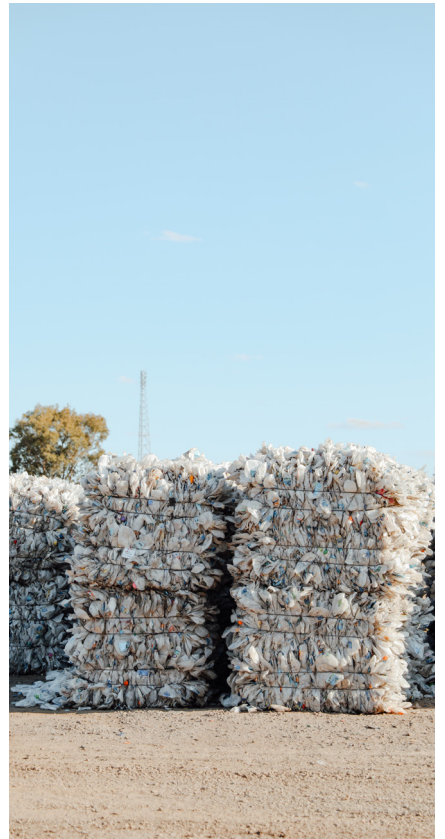
Eligible business must receive confirmation of Regional Skills Relocation Grant pre-approval prior to hiring an employee for eligible costs to be claimed in respect of that employee.



Eligible costs can be claimed once an eligible employee has been employed by the business for a minimum of three months.



From top: Australian Recycled Plastics, Narrabri, North West Slopes. Queanbeyan, Tablelands. Photo credit: QPR Council.



AGT Foods
Narrabri, North West Slopes



Eligibility criteria



To be eligible for funding, eligible businesses must be operating within an eligible industry aligned with key NSW Government policies, priorities, and strategies, including:

- 20-Year Economic Vision for Regional NSW
- 2040 Economic Blueprint
- the relevant Regional Economic Development Strategy (REDS).

Eligible industries

Eligible industries are key industries that drive growth in regional economies and are typically categorised as ‘engine industries’, ‘emerging engine industries’, and ‘enabling industries’.

Examples of eligible industries include:

- agribusiness and forestry
- resources and mining
- tourism (where regionally significant and/or iconic)
- health and aged care (where serving populations from out of region)
- freight and logistics
- advanced manufacturing
- renewable energy
- technology-enabled primary industry.

Further information on eligible industries is available at:

nsw.gov.au/regional-nsw/regional-economic-development-strategies

In reviewing applications, the impact of a business on local competition is considered in order to avoid advantaging or disadvantaging businesses legitimately competing in the same immediate market.

Ineligible Industries

Businesses whose primary operation is in the below industries are considered population serving, are not considered to be operating in an eligible industry, and will not be eligible for funding under this program:

- hospitality, except where the business is unique to the existing market and considered regionally significant and/or iconic
- retail
- localised trades
- administrative services that serve only the local or regional community.

Eligible Employees	Eligible Businesses
<p>Eligible employees are skilled workers that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • are relocating from a metropolitan area within NSW, or from another location outside NSW to regional NSW, to a residence that is at least 50 kilometres from the original residence, and is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – within the same Functional Economic Region as the eligible business <p style="text-align: center;">OR</p> – within 100 kilometres of the eligible business <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • are Australian citizens or permanent residents on the date they start employment • have an occupation on the Commonwealth Skilled Occupation List for the Skilled Work Regional (Provisional) visa (subclass 491 and 489). This list of occupations is specifically designed to meet the needs of regional Australia. At the Department’s discretion, other occupations may be considered if there is a demonstrated need. 	<p>An eligible business must be a private business, or co-operative operating as a legal entity.</p> <p>To apply for a Regional Skills Relocation Grant, eligible businesses must be operating within an eligible industry and:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be relocating to, or setting up in, regional NSW and creating at least five new ongoing full-time equivalent (FTE) jobs (a mix of skilled and unskilled positions) in the local community, or • already operating in regional NSW and seeking to recruit eligible employees. <p>Eligible business must be seeking eligible employees.</p>

Eligible businesses must not employ an Eligible Employee until after receiving pre-approval for the role/s under the RSRG.

To check if an occupation appears on the skilled occupation list:

1. Go to immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/visas/working-in-australia/skill-occupation-list and scroll down to the shaded Skilled occupation list search box.
2. From the drop-down menu, check:
 - 491 – Skilled Work Regional (Provisional) visa (subclass 491) State or Territory nominated, and
 - 489 – Skilled Regional (Provisional) visa (subclass 489) State or Territory nominated
3. The list of skilled occupations will appear in alphabetical order. You may also search for an occupation using key words in the Search field.

Location definitions

For the purpose of this program:

- ‘regional NSW’ is defined as all of NSW excluding Greater Sydney, Newcastle and Wollongong
- ‘metropolitan areas in NSW’ are defined as Greater Sydney (including Blue Mountains, Hawkesbury and Wollondilly LGAs), Wollongong LGA and Newcastle LGA.
- ‘outside NSW’ refers to a location outside of NSW i.e. suburb located in Perth or Queensland, or an international location.

Eligible costs



Eligible businesses can claim a reimbursement to assist with recruitment services and relocation costs for eligible employees, once they have been employed by the eligible business for a minimum of three months.

Eligible costs covered by this grant, include the following relocation expenses:

- furniture removal including removalist services or trailer/truck or ute hire to relocate the employee's home/residence
- pet boarding for up to three months
- travel for employee and immediate family to relocate
- temporary accommodation for up to three months, including hotel, motel, Airbnb and boarding house accommodation
- furniture storage for up to three months

Up to \$1000 of the grant may be accessed to support an in-person candidate interview, or pre-employment site-visit (payable if candidate is successfully employed).

Eligible businesses can also claim up to \$2500, as part of their total grant, to access qualified recruitment services, or HR professionals, to provide tailored recruitment assistance for the pre-approved role/s. The business can apply to be reimbursed once a candidate has been successfully employed.

Ineligible applicants

Grant applications will be deemed ineligible if the business:

- is not operating in an identified eligible industry for its Functional Economic Region
- fills the identified role with an employee:
- not relocating from a metropolitan area or outside NSW to regional NSW
- without any of the skills listed on the Commonwealth Skilled Work List
- who is not an Australian citizen or permanent resident
- who has received funding (full or partial) from any other person (including any government agency in Australia) for relocation assistance.
- has received any other funding (full or partial) from any other person (including any government agency in Australia) for relocation assistance.
- seeks reimbursement of costs not listed as eligible costs in these guidelines.
- employs the candidate prior to receiving pre-approval for the grant.

The relocation grants are not available to public sector organisations, including state and local governments.



From top: Forbes, Central West. Narrabri, North West Slopes. Armidale, Northern Tablelands.

How to apply



Eligible businesses register their interest by email, providing their business name, location, and industry, to regionalnsw.business@regional.nsw.gov.au. Registered businesses operating in eligible industries will then be invited to complete an eligibility form via SmartyGrants.

Stages

Regional Skills Relocation Grants are available until 15 December 2023.

Step 1:

Register by email with the Department of Regional NSW and complete an eligibility form

Once registered with the Department of Regional NSW, eligible businesses will be required to complete an eligibility form via SmartyGrants, providing information such as:

- organisation details including industry sector, business location and contact details;
- business bank account details;
- evidence of business relocation to/setting up in regional NSW (if applicable);
- business alignment with the NSW Government strategies, and;
- details of skilled occupation(s) to be recruited.

Step 2:

Receive confirmation of grant pre-approval

Once the eligibility form has been completed via SmartyGrants, the Department of Regional NSW will assess the eligibility of the business and roles they intend to fill. Eligible businesses will receive confirmation and a grant pre-approval ID for the role(s) they intend to fill, enabling them to include the relocation grant offer in their recruitment or relocation process.

Once pre-approval is received, eligible recruitment assistance can also be reimbursed once the role is filled. This pre-approval will be valid for 12 months from the date of issue.

Step 3:

Fill the role

To activate the grant, the role(s) must be filled by employee(s) relocating from a metropolitan area within NSW, or from another location outside of NSW, to regional NSW with an occupation listed on the Commonwealth Skilled Occupation List for the Skilled Work Regional (Provisional) visa (subclass 491/489).

Step 4:

Activate the grant

The eligible business must notify the Department of Regional NSW within five days of filling the pre-approved role and complete the Employee Activation form. The Department of Regional NSW will verify the eligibility of the employee and provide confirmation of Employee activation. To submit the Employee Activation form, Eligible Businesses are required to provide evidence that the new employee:

- is an Australian citizen or permanent resident (on their employee commencement date);
- is relocating to regional NSW from a metropolitan residence within

NSW, or from another location Outside of NSW (to a residence at least 50 kilometres from the original residence, and

- is within the same Functional Economic Region as the eligible business OR within 100 kilometres of the Eligible Business;
- commenced their role with the business after the business received RSRG pre-approval confirmation.

The business will also need to submit the following for consideration:

- letter of signed employment offer/contract confirming employees job title and official commencement date with the business
- the employee's:
 - contact details
 - date of birth
- proof of identity documents confirming Australian citizenship or permanent residency
- highest level of education
- number and details of immediate family members relocating to regional NSW
- current Metropolitan address or address from Outside of NSW and supporting evidence
- new Regional NSW address and supporting evidence

Step 5:***Claim reimbursement of relocation and recruitment assistance costs***

Employees must begin their employment in the regional location after the eligible business has received grant pre-approval for the role/s under the RSRG. They must also remain in the role for a minimum of three months before the eligible business can lodge a claim for eligible costs.

Eligible businesses may only claim eligible costs for candidates successfully recruited and relocated into the role/s that have received grant pre-approval.

To receive the grant payment the eligible business is required to submit a reimbursement form and evidence that relocation costs and recruitment assistance costs have been.

Step 6:***Grant evaluation***

As a condition of the grant, the eligible business and the employee agree to be contacted up to 12 months from the employee's start date to complete an evaluation survey. Should the employee cease employment with the eligible business for any reason within this 12-month period, the business is required to notify the Department of Regional NSW within 15 days.

Decision Making:

The Department of Regional NSW will assess all applications against the eligibility criteria outlined in these guidelines. Recommendations will be provided to the relevant Program Manager for approval.

Complaints

Any concerns about the program or individual applications should be submitted in writing to regionalnsw.business@regional.nsw.gov.au. If you do not agree with the way the Department of Regional NSW handled the issue, you may wish to contact the NSW Ombudsman via ombo.nsw.gov.au.

Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 (NSW)

Applicants should be aware that information submitted in applications and all related correspondence, attachments and other documents may be made publicly available under the Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 (NSW). Information that is deemed to be commercially sensitive will be withheld.

The Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 (NSW) makes government information accessible to the public by:

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- giving the public an enforceable right to make access applications for government information
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The guidelines are subject to change at any time at the sole discretion of the Department.

More Information

Visit the Regional Skills Relocation Grant website at nsw.gov.au/RSRG.

T 1300 679 673
E regionalnsw.business@regional.nsw.gov.au
W nsw.gov.au/RSRG

All initial enquiries should be directed to the Department of Regional NSW.

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