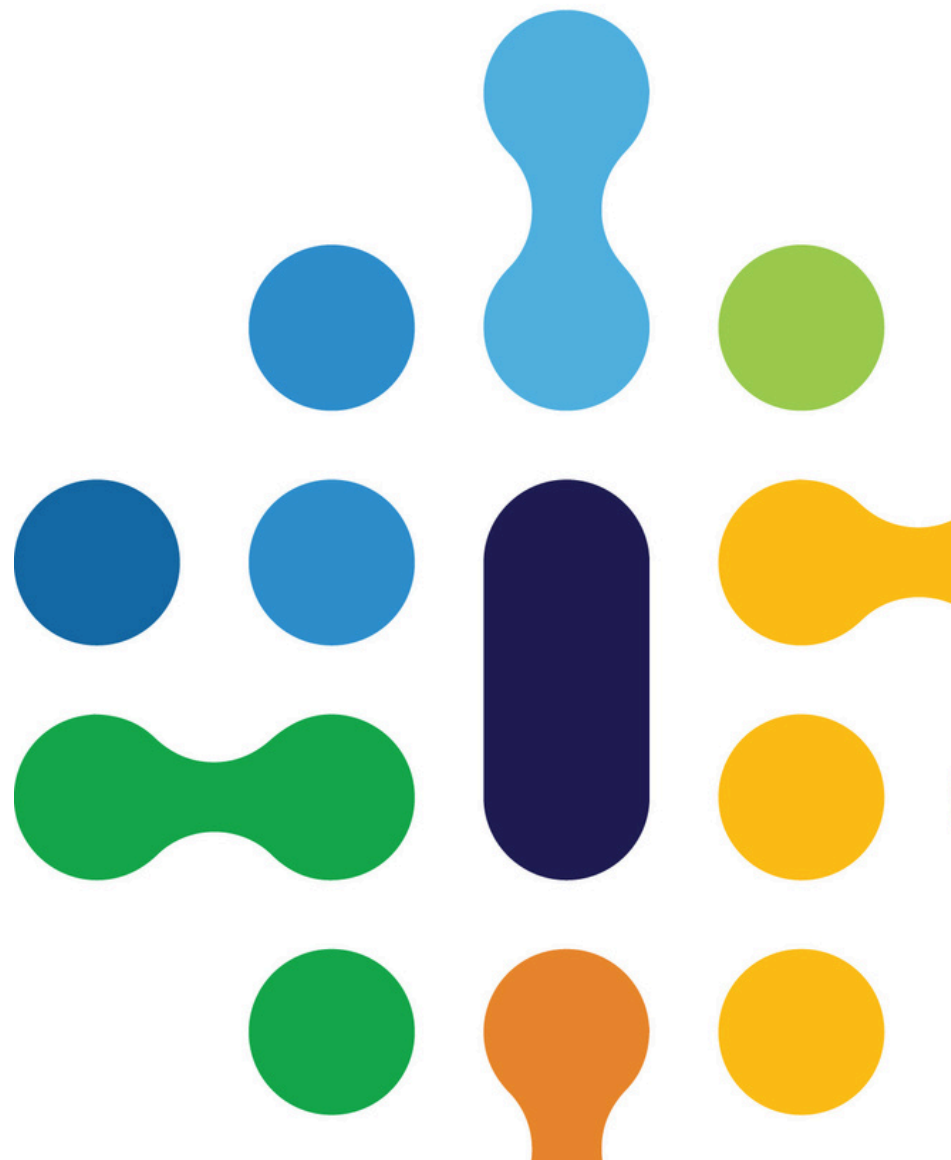


Grant Guidelines 2024



The Queensland
Circular Economy
Program



AgriBusiness Connect acknowledges the first and continuing custodians of the countries and the grounds upon which we collectively work, create, live and dream.

We recognise the unique and enduring relationship that exists between Indigenous Peoples and their traditional territories, and welcome their deep understanding of natural balance and 60,000 year history of circular wisdom.

An understanding of interconnectedness and continual regeneration has long informed Indigenous cultures, and the opportunity exists for all organisations to benefit from an Indigenous understanding of living systems, the passing down of knowledge through communities and the key elements of circular economy practice.

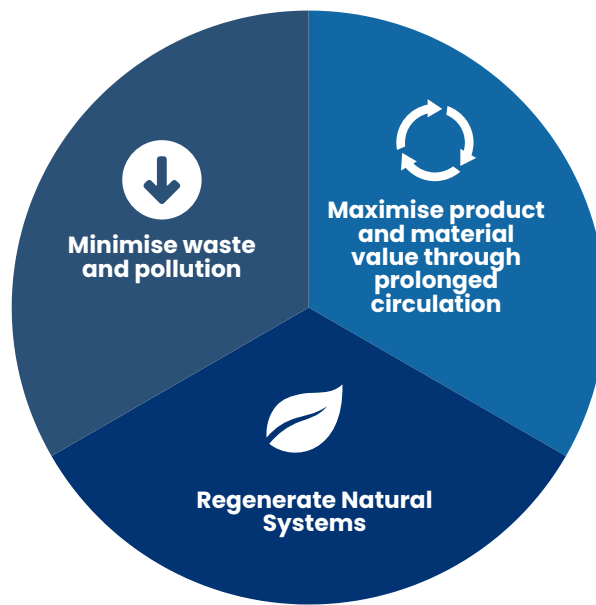


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1.0 Overview of Grants

The Queensland Circular Economy Program, referred to as the Grant, aims to empower industry-driven innovation toward transitioning from the traditional linear take-make-waste model to a more sustainable circular economy approach. This approach is centred on three key principles, driven by design:



1.1 Opportunities for Funding:

-  Grants of up to \$50,000 (excluding GST) are available for industry-driven innovation projects aimed at fostering a more sustainable and efficient circular economy model.
-  Each application requires a Project Partner.
-  Eligible entities must be based in Queensland.
-  Eligible entities must have an ABN.

1.2 Submission Guidelines:

- Proposals must adhere to the specified format and be submitted via AgriBusiness Connect’s online platform before the deadline of 31 May 2024.
- Submissions received after this deadline will not be considered unless under special circumstances.
- Each application will undergo a comprehensive and competitive evaluation process based on predefined assessment criteria as outlined in section 4.2 Assessment Criteria.



2.0 – About the Grant

In 2022, all Australian environment ministers collectively committed to collaborating with the private sector to eradicate waste and pollution, prolong material usage, and cultivate markets with the aim of achieving a circular economy by 2030.

The concept of the circular economy transcends simple material substitution or improved recycling practices; it entails devising interconnected solutions to address intertwined challenges such as climate change, biodiversity loss, waste, and pollution. AgriBusiness Connect endeavours to unite leading experts from various fields including research, technology, education, mining and industry recognising the circular economy as crucial for constructing a resilient future.

The funding for these grants has been allocated by the Department of Environment, Science, and Innovation (DESI) to foster collaboration between industry and research sectors, drive innovation toward circular economy objectives, and support Queensland's transition towards a zero-waste society, aligning with the goals outlined in the Queensland Waste Management and Resource Recovery Strategy.

2.1 Funding Available

Successful applicants who have devised innovative solutions aimed at eliminating waste from the regional economy will be eligible for grants of up to \$50,000 (excluding GST), in addition to receiving dedicated mentoring and networking opportunities within the circular economy realm. These solutions may involve pioneering processes, technologies, and/or the implementation of circular economy business models tailored to address specific business or regional challenges.

Upon selection, successful candidates will be tasked with advancing their projects through stages such as prototyping, piloting, trialling, pre-commercialisation, or commercialisation within a timeframe of four months.

At the conclusion of this four-month period, participating projects will be showcased during a technology demonstration event, providing an opportunity for innovators to present their advancements to key stakeholders and the community.

2.2 Fund Objectives

The main goal of the Queensland Circular Economy Program Program is to encourage and cultivate connections among industry, government, the research sector, and various stakeholders. It aims to facilitate collaborative efforts to create innovative solutions—whether through processes, technologies, or business models—that eliminate waste from regional economies and optimise the circulation of materials at their highest value. Specifically, its objectives include:



- Tackling urgent circular economy challenges in Queensland by emphasising three key principles, guided by design:
 - Minimise waste and pollution
 - Maximise the circulation of products and materials at their utmost value for prolonged durations
 - Restore natural systems
- Encouraging collaborative endeavours among industry experts, academic researchers, relevant stakeholders, and the community to develop practical and customised regional solutions.
- Facilitating the progression of circular economy initiatives from preliminary research or conceptual phases to practical implementation stages.

“The concept of the circular economy transcends simple material substitution or improved recycling practices; it entails devising interconnected solutions to address intertwined challenges such as climate change, biodiversity loss, waste, and pollution.”

-CEO Guide to Circular Economy

3.0 – Applying for the Grant

3.1 Applicant Eligibility

- Whether you're an innovator, inventor, or catalyst for change, whether operating within an established enterprise, launching a startup, operating as a sole trader, or conducting research within a university.
- Your focus is on addressing a particular and substantial byproduct, waste, or resource challenge within Queensland.
- You have pinpointed a circular economy concept or notion that ignites your passion and are prepared to collaborate in its development, testing, and/or validation.
- You have an ABN and your operations are based in Queensland.

Each organisation and its affiliated entities may submit only one application per funding cycle. This stipulation is implemented to guarantee an impartial and fair allocation of resources and opportunities among all prospective applicants.

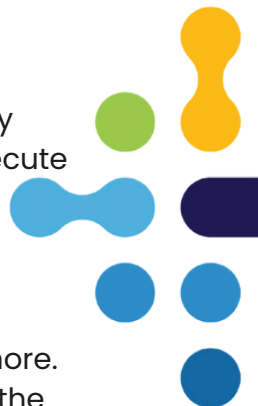
3.2 Partnerships and Collaborations

Effective circular economy initiatives frequently rely on robust collaboration. To optimise the impact of their initiatives through the Queensland Circular Economy Programs, applicants must establish partnerships with other stakeholders to execute their projects successfully.

- Each project must include at least one collaborative partnership.
- Collaborators may span various sectors, including industry, academia, government, First Nations, non-profit organisations, social enterprises, and more.
- The collaborative partnership must be supported by a letter of support from the industry partner.
- Applicants must delineate the roles and commitments of their Project Partners and Project Participants (refer to Glossary for explanation of Project Partner and Project Participant).

By articulating a transparent and strategic partnership framework, applicants will not only strengthen their proposals but also improve the potential for long-term success and stimulate regional economic development.

**Effective circular economy initiatives
frequently rely on robust collaboration**



3.0 – Applying for the Grant (continued)

3.3 What Will and Won't Be Funded

Eligible Projects	Ineligible Projects
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Align with the Queensland Waste Management and Resource Recovery Strategy's concept of the circular economy, characterised by:<ul style="list-style-type: none">◦ Products and materials circulating within the economy at their highest value through reuse, recycling, remanufacturing, product-as-a-service models, and sharing.◦ Initiatives focused on waste avoidance.• Projects showcasing collaboration and innovation to drive circular economy principles.• Activities involving proof of concept development, prototyping, and/or trialling.• Efforts aimed at pre-commercialisation and commercialisation of project outputs.• Information sharing and communication endeavours pertaining to the project.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Water and energy-only projects• Waste to energy, waste to biochar (unless regeneration project)• Projects continuing existing circular projects or businesses without significant innovation. The program aims to instigate new processes, business models, or technologies to catalyse a circular economy in Queensland.• Projects undertaken solely for regulatory compliance or to comply with a regulatory notice or order• Projects not clearly demonstrating a need for government support• Projects lacking a demonstration of good value for money

3.0 – Applying for the Grant (continued)

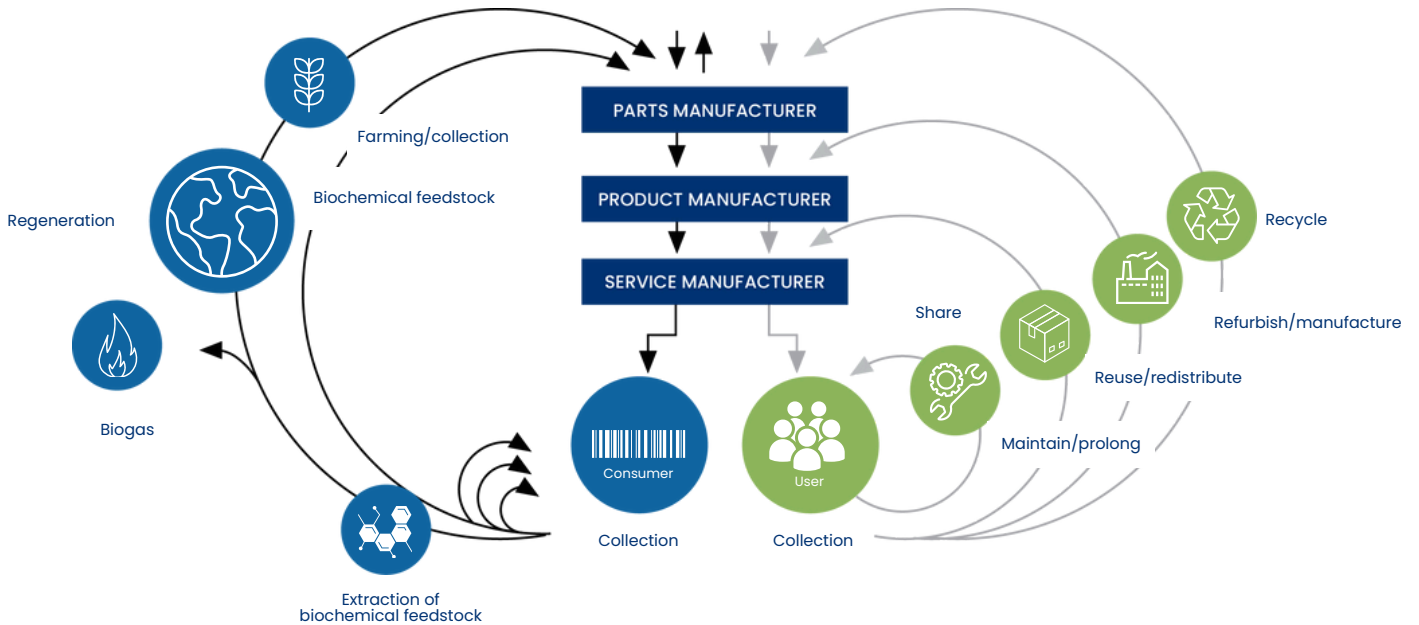
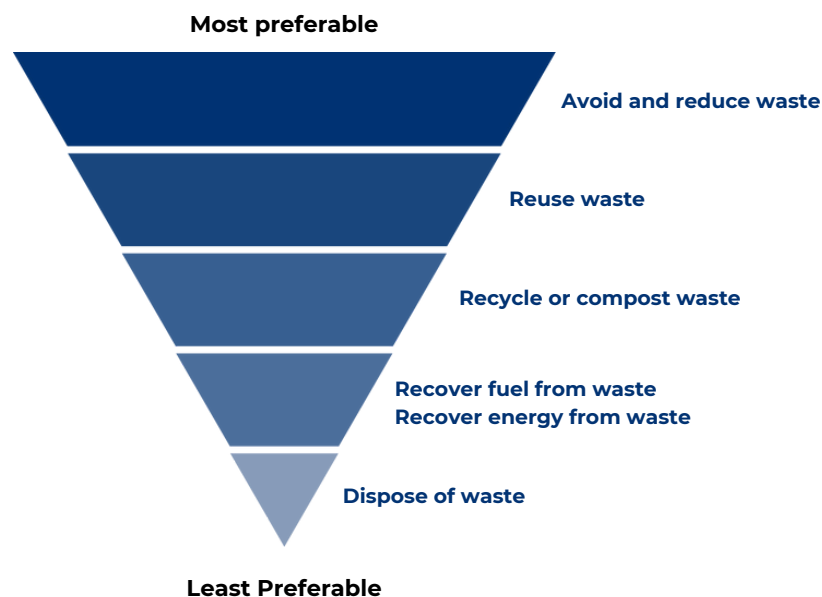


Figure 1: Waste and resource management hierarchy

The waste and resource management hierarchy is a framework that guides the order of preference for managing waste. Waste should be avoided as a first priority, after which options for reuse and recycling should be explored. The options of fuel production, energy production or disposal should be reserved for residual waste that is unsuitable for higher order options. The hierarchy shapes the Strategy’s priorities and provides the basis for the development of actions.



3.0 – Applying for the Grant (continued)

3.4 Expenditure not covered by the Grant

- Flights, accommodation, conference, and other travel expenses
- Capital works and physical infrastructure, including buildings, vehicles, telecommunications, and IT networks
- Venue hire
- Costs associated with securing and managing Grant funding (e.g., grant writers and bookkeeping costs)
- General business operating costs such as rent, rates, electricity, water, internet, insurance, software, and accounting fees
- FDA/TGA or other regulatory approval costs
- Employee allowances, bonuses, and fringe benefits
- Entertainment expenses
- Ongoing compliance fees and licenses
- Inventory and warehousing expenses
- Wages or salaries for existing staff (though these can be in-kind contributions to the project)
- Project outcomes not directly attributable to this Grant funding
- Requests for retrospective funding for projects completed or commenced before signing a funding agreement with AgriBusiness Connect
- Purchase of vehicles (e.g., front-end loaders, forklifts)
- Pre-construction (site preparation) such as site clearing, earthworks, or site accessibility works
- Litter or illegal dumping projects solely focused on clean-up and/or enforcement activities. These projects should primarily aim at litter prevention.
- Infrastructure or assets owned and serviced by entities managing public land (e.g., local government, government organisations, or businesses)
- Purchase of land
- Routine or cyclical maintenance works
- Repair of facilities damaged by vandalism, fire, or other natural disasters where insurance should cover the damage.



3.0 – Applying for the Grant (continued)

3.5 Examples of Eligible Projects

By way of example, the type of projects that may be supported:

- Digital tools or software applications that support AgriBusinesses and manufacturers in integrating circular design principles into product development processes. The software could provide lifecycle assessment tools, material selection guides, and design optimisation algorithms to minimise waste and enhance reuse.
- Biological nutrient recovery systems that capture and recycle nutrients from AgriFood production waste streams
- Circular supply chain logistics system that optimises the transportation and distribution of AgriFood products while minimising waste and emissions.

3.6 How to Apply

Step 1

Confirm your organisation's eligibility to apply (refer to Section 4.1 for Eligibility Criteria).

Step 2

Ensure your project aligns with the assessment criteria (refer to Section 4.3 Assessment Criteria).

Step 3

Fill out and submit the Queensland Circular Economy Program Application following the guidelines using instructions at <https://agribusinessconnect.com.au/ce-program/> by 31st May 2024.



3.0 – Applying for the Grant (continued)

3.7 Post-Application:

- No modifications can be made to your application once it's been submitted.
- A confirmation message will be sent upon successful submission of the application.

In case of any issues with submitting your online application, reach out to AgriBusiness Connect at hello@agribusinessconnect.com.au before the deadline.

4.0 – Assessment

4.1 Eligibility Criteria

Submit Application by 5pm (AEST) Friday 31 May 2024	✓
Execute project within Queensland	✓
Meet requirements in Section 3	✓
Do not initiate proposed project prior to signing funding agreement	✓
Achieve tangible outcome within 4 months of signing funding agreement	✓
Submit final project & financial acquittals report by 5pm (AEST) 28 February 2025	✓

4.0 – Assessment (continued)

4.2 Assessment Criteria

The Grants applications will be assessed based on the following criteria:

Assessment Criteria		
Circular Economy Principles	<p>What specific agrifood production waste challenge does your proposed project address?</p> <p>What innovative process, technology, or business model does your solution employ to tackle the identified challenge, and how does this innovation demonstrate scalability and adherence to circular economy principles?</p>	25%
Customer/s	<p>Explain how the target market segment consistently perceives the problem your solution addresses as significant and actively seeks solutions like the one you are proposing?</p>	20%
Delivery Channels	<p>What is your strategy to both raise awareness about your solution among the target audience and ensure efficient delivery of the solution with ongoing support to customers?</p>	20%
Value Proposition	<p>How effective do you believe your proposed solution is in addressing the challenges of customers regarding waste reduction, and how seamless do you anticipate the transition for customers from existing solutions or practices to adopting your solution will be?</p>	20%
Business Model	<p>What unique advantages does your solution offer compared to existing alternatives in the market, and to what extent does your idea rely on partnerships or complex value propositions to bring the solution to market?</p> <p>Have you identified any scalability challenges or limitations during your planning, and how do you plan to address them while bringing your solution to market?</p>	15%

4.0 – Assessment (continued)

4.3 Assessment Panel





The Evaluation Panel will comprise 6–8 individuals selected from industry, research, circular economy specialists, and government.

5.0 – Key Dates



6.0 – Post-Grant requirements and description of benefits to Grant recipients

6.1 Benefits

-  Grant funding of up to \$50,000 available
-  Guidance through mentoring sessions with circular economy specialists and local industry network specialists at AgriBusiness Connect
-  Networking opportunities and event access with industry and government
-  Increased visibility and promotion of the initiative

6.0 – Post-Grant requirements and description of benefits to Grant recipients (cont.)

6.2 Requirements of successful grant applicants

Within 14 days of the grant success notification:

- Execute funding agreement with AgriBusiness Connect
- Consent to milestone payments based on realistic evidence and performance

During the Project

- Adhere to the terms of the funding agreement
- Execute the project as described in the application
- Promptly inform AgriBusiness Connect of any project scope alterations or delays
- Maintain compliance with the financial and/or co-contribution stipulations (refer to Section 3.4)
- Submit progress reports to AgriBusiness Connect at designated milestones
- Furnish a final report on project outcomes by 28th February 2025
- Acknowledge the funding source in any material published in connection with the AgriBusiness Connect Queensland Circular Economy Program.

After the Project

- Engage in promotional endeavours, such as producing videos or crafting publishable case studies, and share insights for potential publication about the project.
- Take part in and contribute to initiatives organised by AgriBusiness Connect aimed at disseminating findings to wider stakeholders, including government and industry.



7.0 – Notification of Outcomes

Grant applicants will receive notification of outcomes via email on or before 28th June 2024. Details regarding next steps, including Grant awards, funding agreements, and project check-ins, will be provided in the notification email to Grant recipients.

8.0 – Declarations

As part of the application submission process, applicants will be required to furnish a declaration.

Applicants (along with their Related Entities and, if applicable, their Project Partners and Project Participants) are expected to:

- Have no record of environmental, safety, or workplace violations within the past five years. In case of any breach, AgriBusiness Connect will evaluate the risk posed by the applicant's violation.
- Have not been subjected to an Enforceable Undertaking or successful litigation by the Fair Work Ombudsman for violations of the Fair Work Act 2009 or fair work instruments within the last five years.
- Possess or will obtain adequate insurance coverage before commencing the project, meeting the requirements specified in the funding agreement:
 - Public Liability: Minimum \$5 million
 - Professional Indemnity: Minimum \$250,000
 - WorkCover
- Have not failed to satisfactorily progress or complete previous projects funded by the Queensland Government within the designated program timelines and without valid justification.
- Effectively manage any conflicts of interest that may arise.

AgriBusiness Connect reserves the right to conduct due diligence checks on applications. Applicants must ensure that any Project Partners and Project Participant(s) consent to cooperate with this requirement and will furnish information upon AgriBusiness Connect's request. AgriBusiness Connect retains the discretion to withhold funding from applicants if the risk (including that associated with Project Partners and Project Participants) is deemed unsatisfactory or unmanageable.



9.0 – More Information

Details regarding the Grants, circular economy, and opportunities for industry-research collaboration will be available on the AgriBusiness Connect website at <https://agribusinessconnect.com.au/ce-program/>

For further inquiries, please contact us at hello@agribusinessconnect.com.au

A Circular Economy Benefits Us All



**Reduced Environmental
Impact**



**Economic Growth and
Job Creation**



Long-term Sustainability

10.0 – Glossary of terms

Circular Economy:

Under the Queensland Circular Economy (Industry-Research) program, supported initiatives must align with the Queensland Waste Management and Resource Recovery Strategy's definition of the circular economy. This entails ensuring that products and materials continually circulate within the economy at their highest value for as long as possible. This includes practices such as reuse, recycling, remanufacturing, delivering products as services, and sharing. Additionally, initiatives addressing the avoidance of product and material waste are eligible. The primary focus of supported initiatives should be on waste reduction and material value retention, with any resulting water and energy efficiency benefits considered supplementary. Ultimately, the aim is to contribute to Queensland's transition to a zero-waste society by minimising the volume of materials and products destined for landfill.

Collaborative Partnership:

An agreement between yourself (applicant) and a project partner, working together towards shared goals for the project.

Environmental, Safety, or Workplace Breach:

Any past or present violation, incident, investigation, penalty, warning, or regulatory action by relevant authorities such as the Environment Protection Authority (EPA), Queensland WorkCover Authority (WorkSafe), or Fair Work, or failure to comply with environmental, safety, and workplace laws.

Full-Time Equivalent Employees (FTE):

Refers to the hours worked by one employee on a full-time basis. It is used to convert the hours worked by part-time employees into the equivalent hours worked by full-time employees.

Indirect Jobs:

Employment opportunities generated by other businesses as a result of the economic growth of your own business.

Project Participants:

Organisations engaged by the applicant to assist in project delivery, such as suppliers, service providers, or community-based organisations.

10.0 – Glossary of terms

Project Partner:

Organisations in a Collaborative Partnership with the Applicant that play a critical role in the project's success, providing resources, expertise, venues, equipment, or other support.

Related Entities:

Entities related to the applicant, including holding companies, subsidiaries, companies with common directors or shareholders, or those conducting business at the same address.

Related Persons:

Individuals associated with the applicant or related entities, such as directors, officers, employees, or contractors.

Social Enterprises:

Organisations driven by a public or community cause that derive most of their income from trade and reinvest the majority of profits toward their social mission.

Workplace Laws:

Legislation, regulations, or standards governing fair and enforceable minimum terms and conditions for employees and preventing discrimination in the workplace.

