

## Regional Jobs Fund Innovation and Productivity – Information Sheet

### 1. Context

#### 1.1 Regional Jobs Fund

The primary aim of the Regional Jobs Fund (RJF) is to facilitate job creation and retain existing jobs. It is targeted at assisting regional businesses to grow their workforce, expand markets and create jobs of the future. It will attract and facilitate investment with a focus on regional competitive advantage or high growth potential businesses.

It will also assist to diversify the regional employment base. The fund aims to improve regional capabilities to innovate and capitalise on the potential of emerging industry sectors and new export markets.

The RJF will provide support for strategic projects and infrastructure in the following five program streams:

- Investment Attraction
- Innovation and Productivity
- Market Access
- Employment Precincts
- Skills Development.

### 2. Innovation and Productivity

Investments in new technologies, improved processes and collaboration provide a critical foundation for enhancing productivity and building a competitive edge. These investments can transform businesses.

Businesses can change the way products are designed and produced, how products are acquired and how information, knowledge and resources are used.

This program stream aims to improve regional industry and business productivity to ensure the long-term sustainability of employment and business growth. It will provide funding to enable the adoption of new technology and innovative processes. It also supports the introduction of equipment that drives more efficient use of assets and greater supply chain integration.

The Innovation and Productivity program stream will support activities linked to business innovation or technological commercialisation and provide support for collaboration between industry clusters and research centres that strengthen competitiveness.

The Victorian Government's Back to Work plan has identified a number of high-growth sectors which will be targeted for future job growth.

The Innovation and Productivity program stream will focus on areas of regional competitive advantage and give preference to those proposals which seek to create jobs in emerging sectors including but not limited to:

- food and fibre
- professional services
- new energy technology
- medical technology, life sciences and healthcare
- transport, defence and construction technology
- international education
- the visitor economy.

#### 2.1 Activities that will be considered

Through the Innovation and Productivity program stream support may be available for:

- integration of new technology and/or processes designed to improve productivity and competitiveness, strengthen capabilities and have a transformative impact on business models through encouraging wider and ongoing innovation
- specific infrastructure, plant or equipment that improves the efficiency and competitiveness of regional businesses
- common infrastructure projects that aim to address known regional infrastructure challenges that impact on industry sustainability and limit expansion
- industry clusters/networks that bring together representatives of regional businesses, research centres and government to strengthen regional supply chains and competitiveness through collaboration and innovation
- enhance workforce capabilities to support investment in new technologies and processes that improve the productivity of businesses.

#### 2.2 Activities that will generally not be funded

The following activities will generally not be considered for funding:

- routine replacement or upgrades of plant and equipment using standard technologies

- activities that would be undertaken in the normal course of business such as maintenance and upgrades
- offsetting costs associated with various forms of accreditation
- purchase of capital equipment not directly linked to an innovation opportunity or the development of new strategic capability
- industry events and workshops without an innovation and productivity focus.

### 3. Application process

All project applications will be considered on an individual basis.

Applicants will be required to demonstrate the project's ability to address each of the core RJF criteria outlined in the application guidelines.

Applications will also need to address distinct criteria which include how the project will:

- improve potential growth and productivity of a regional business to sustain existing operations in regional locations and retain or create jobs
- involve the application of innovative ideas or technology that have the potential to increase efficiencies or productivity
- introduce new technology or skills that have additional benefits for the region
- improve supply chain efficiencies and linkages
- enhance the effectiveness of existing regional industry clusters/networks.

Prior to submitting an application, applicants are advised to:

- read the RJF application guidelines and the relevant RJF program stream information sheet carefully to establish eligibility
- read the terms and conditions for the funding offered
- discuss the proposed project with your local RDV office.

### 4. Contact details for Regional Offices

For further information and details on the application process please contact your local RDV office. RDV regional offices are located across Victoria.

#### Ballarat

111 Armstrong Street Nth. Ballarat 3350  
**Tel:** (+61 3) 5327 2800  
**Fax:** (+61 3) 5327 2830  
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#### Bendigo

Level 1, 56-60 King Street, Bendigo 3550  
**Tel:** (+61 3) 4433 8000  
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#### Geelong

Level 2, Harrison Place, 237 Ryrie Street, Geelong 3220  
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#### Horsham

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#### Mildura

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#### Wangaratta

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#### Warrnambool

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 South West TAFE  
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