

# Regional and Industry Partnerships Program

## Program Guidelines



Government  
of South Australia  
Department of  
State Development

# Introduction

The Regional and Industry Partnerships Program supports the operation of the Spencer Gulf Jobs and Skills Hub and is part of the State Government package to support South Australian workers and businesses in Whyalla and the wider Upper Spencer Gulf region.

Grants will be available to support place-based and place-focused solutions to workforce opportunities and challenges in the region, driven by regional employers and key organisations or networks in partnership with the South Australian government.

The Department of State Development (DSD) will administer the Regional and Industry Partnerships Program from March 2025 to 30 June 2027. DSD may also work directly with some industry sectors, businesses and regional stakeholders to deliver strategic projects, particularly where it responds to a specific issue, priority or service gap.

## What are the objectives of the Regional and Industry Partnerships Program?

The Regional and Industry Partnerships Program is designed to focus on workforce development objectives and complement activity delivered under the National Skills Agreement, as well as Australian Government services.

The program has three core objectives:

- **Connecting workers with employment:** creating opportunities to connect workers and job seekers with employment, including supporting workers who have lost their jobs at the Whyalla Steelworks, mines or in the supply chain into new roles.
- **Improving workforce outcomes for disengaged and disadvantaged people:** ensuring everyone benefits from the growth and new opportunities in the region, with a particular focus on supporting long-term unemployed, Aboriginal people, and young people in the region.
- **Building the workforce in priority sectors:** supporting workforce planning and development to ensure the region and its workforce is ready and has the right skills to take advantage of opportunities in mining, green iron, steelmaking, construction, manufacturing and renewable energy, and respond to growth in sectors such as health care and social assistance.

While the sectors above will be prioritised, applications for projects in all sectors are welcome where benefits against the objectives can be demonstrated.

## What does the Regional and Industry Partnerships Program fund?

The types of activities that can be funded through the program include:

- Job matching functions, including services and platforms
- Building job-ready experience of workers
- Wrap around supports (eg mentoring and pastoral care)
- Career advice services

- Work readiness and work hardening programs
- Programs and supports tailored to address specific needs of disengaged people
- Innovative business practices to improve development and retention of staff
- Workforce planning for small and medium businesses
- Supply-chain wide workforce planning for multiple businesses, which can be driven or supported by a larger business in the supply chain.
- Non-accredited training
- Occupational tickets and licenses
- New models of training connected to employment pathways
- Professional development programs for businesses and workers
- Workforce and employment events
- Internships, cadetships and scholarships that connect graduates and students to industry and employment opportunities.

Project activities that the Regional and Industry Partnerships Program will generally not fund include:

- Substitution of existing industry funded programs, recruitment costs or other services.
- Project activities that can be funded through existing state or Commonwealth programs, projects or initiatives.
- Employer specific training that is not transferrable to wider industry.
- Legislative or regulatory activity that is the responsibility of employers.
- Activities that commence prior to execution of the contract.
- Costs of catering and alcohol.
- Purchase of capital equipment.
- Core business operations or business as usual activities.
- Any activities not directly and wholly related to the delivery of services under this program.
- Any other costs as determined by the Department.

## Who is the program for?

Local partners are the focus of the Regional and Industry Partnerships Program, including through:

- Employer partnerships, which focuses on projects led by employers in partnership with the State Government.
- Network and system partnerships, which focuses on projects led by organisations or collectives of organisations in the region (which may include employers) and the State Government.

The workforce (or prospective workforce) targeted through proposals must have Australian residency or citizenship status, be on a state or employer sponsored visa and/or pathway to permanent residency, or be temporary skilled migrants working in a priority sector.

## Who can apply?

Applications will be considered from organisations that are a legal entity established in Australia, have their principal place of business registered at a place within the Upper Spencer Gulf region and hold an active Australian Business Number (ABN).

This can include:

- South Australian businesses
- Industry bodies
- Not-for-profit organisations
- Aboriginal corporations
- Regional development authorities.

Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) and state and local government agencies are not eligible to apply for funding directly, however are encouraged to partner with business and industry to develop proposals and support delivery.

Applications from industry and employers, or as part of a partnership arrangement with industry or employers, will be prioritised.

## Available funding and timing

Total grant funding of up to \$2 million (excluding GST) is available for round one.

Round one of the program will be open from 26 March 2025 to 5pm Friday, 28 November 2025, Australian Central Daylight Time (ACDT). Applications can be made throughout this period, and will be assessed on a monthly basis. It is anticipated a second round will run in 2026.

Maximum project duration is 24 months, with all project delivery to be completed by 30 June 2027 unless otherwise negotiated, and subject to budget availability.

Applications that include business or industry financial contribution will be viewed favourably in assessment. In addition, applications above \$100,000 (excluding GST) will need to demonstrate partnership with, or benefit for, multiple industries, businesses, or cohorts in the Upper Spencer Gulf.

Payment of funds for successful proposals will be attached to milestones agreed through the contract negotiation process.

Applicants who qualify as a 'not-for-profit entity' (as set out in [Premier and Cabinet Circular PC 044 – South Australian Funding Policy for not for profit sector](#)) must ensure their request for funding in their application is inclusive of indexation as required by the [Department of Treasury and Finance](#).

## Outcomes and benefits

The Regional and Industry Partnerships Program has a focus on building workforce supply, through building skills and work readiness across existing and emerging industry. This includes getting more jobseekers into work, building the capability and skills of the existing workforce, and better connecting workers (or prospective workers) with opportunities.

Applicants will be expected to estimate, and provide evidence of one or more of the following, delivered through their project:

- employment outcomes (i.e. new workers entering part-time or full-time employment)
- upskilling of existing workers (i.e. tickets and licenses issued, training units delivered)
- reach of employment and industry information (i.e. participation in events, online activity).
- creation of pathways in areas of skills or workforce shortage, fast growing sectors or emerging occupations.

Applications that can demonstrate clear pathways to employment will be prioritised in project assessment.

All projects approved for funding will be required to deliver a final report of key lessons and outlining rationale that can be tested and evaluated to inform future policy and contribute to systemic change.

## Assessment criteria

Applications will be assessed against the following eligibility criteria:

- **Project design and delivery**, which includes factors such as:
  - Capacity and capability of the applicant (including past experience delivering similar initiatives, capability of key personnel identified, and financial position)
  - Coherence and practicality of the proposal
  - Attractiveness and value of proposal to intended participants (including usability and accessibility)
  - Project duration and timing meet industry and employer, and participant needs
  - Relevant partners critical to success are involved.
- **Value for money**, which includes factors such as:
  - Project complexity
  - Participant and/or employer needs
  - Scope and scale of the project
  - Outcomes to be delivered
  - Project partners and/or proponent financial and/or in-kind contribution.
- **Identified workforce need**, which includes factors such as:
  - clear definition and evidence of the scale and impact of the employer or industry workforce need
  - clear definition of how the proposal addresses that need, and the evidence that the proposed project design and delivery addresses need.
  - anticipated benefits and outcomes of implementing the solution
  - new employment opportunities created
  - Alignment to target sectors
    - Focus on priority industries such as construction, mining, manufacturing, renewable energy
    - Focus on growth industries for the region, including health care and social assistance.
- **Innovation**, which includes factors such as:
  - new ideas or methods will be implemented through the project
  - description of how the project differs from normal (or business as usual) skills and workforce development activity
  - elements that make the innovative project likely to succeed, and what might negatively affect success.
- **Approach to project insights and evaluation**, which includes factors such as:
  - How the project will measure its outcomes
  - How the project will build new insights and evidence to support design, development, and adoption of interventions which meet industry, business, and workforce need.

## How to apply

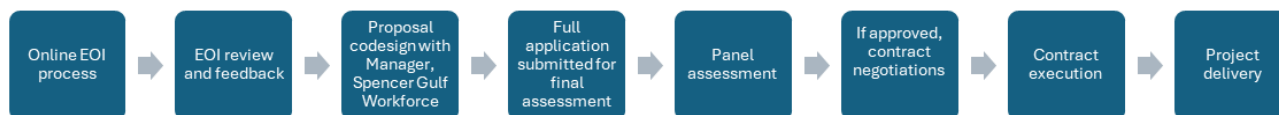
All proponents are asked to submit a short expression of interest (EOI) via the online form [<http://statedevelopment.sa.gov.au/regional-and-industry-partnerships-program/EOI>] which will ask for detail on:

- The proponent and key partners
- The type of activity to be implemented and high-level evidence for why it is needed.
- Outcomes to be achieved
- Quantum of funding sought.

EOIs considered to have merit for further investigation will progress to codesign and application development with the proponent and Manager, Spencer Gulf Workforce.

Full applications will be submitted to an independent panel for final assessment. Panel members may also contact key partners at this stage to independently verify their involvement and contribution.

The panel will determine whether applications progress to contract negotiations and advise the proponent of the outcome of the assessment.



## Definitions

### Aboriginal corporations

Means companies incorporated under the *Corporations (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) Act 2006* (Cth).

### Industry associations

Means organisations providing a collective voice for individual businesses within an industry.

### Non accredited training

Means endorsed micro credentials that include non-accredited components, industry-specific and/or foundation skills training, particularly where there is clear alignment or mapping to accredited VET learning outcomes or an identified skill gap in an industry or sector workforce development plan.

### Not-for-profit organisation

Means:

- a charity registered with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission; or
- a not-for-profit organisation which provides services to the community and doesn't operate for the profit or personal gain of its individual members, such that profits made must go back into the services the organisation provides, and mustn't be distributed to owners, members or other private people, e.g. most sporting and recreational clubs, community service organisations, professional and business associations and social organisations.

### Regional development authorities

Means committees established and operating in line with the Regional Development Australia Charter (July 2023).

### South Australian businesses

Means businesses that:

- Have a majority of shareholders/owners that reside in South Australia and are not publicly listed; and
- Are currently conducting business operations in South Australia; and
- When aggregated as a whole with its related bodies corporate and associated entities, conducts business predominantly in South Australia; and
- Have its principal place of business and head office registered at a premises within South Australia; and
- Have greater than fifty percent (50%) of its workforce, excluding temporary staff, are residents in South Australia.

### State Government

Means the South Australian Government.

### State or employer sponsored visas, pathways to permanent residency or temporary skilled migrants in a priority sector

Means people holding one of the following:

- Skilled Work Regional (Provisional) visa (subclass 491)

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- Skilled Regional (Provisional) visa (subclass 489)
- Skills in Demand visa / Temporary Skill Shortage visa (subclass 482)
- Skilled Employer Sponsored Regional (Provisional) visa (subclass 494)

Other employer sponsored visas may be considered on a case-by-case basis, at the Department of State Development's discretion.

### Whyalla and the broader Upper Spencer Gulf

Means the following suburbs that comprise the Whyalla, Port Pirie and Port Augusta.

City of Whyalla		Port Pirie Regional Council		Port Augusta City Council	
Suburb	Postcode	Suburb	Postcode	Suburb	Postcode
Backy Point	5601	Bungama	5540	Blanche Harbor	5700
Cowleds Landing	5609	Collinsfield	5555	Commissariat Point	5700
Douglas Point	5601	Coonamia	5540	Davenport	5700
Douglas Point South	5601	Crystal Brook	5523	Miranda	5700
False Bay	5601	Koolunga	5464	Port Augusta	5700
Fitzgerald Bay	5601	Lower Broughton	5540	Port Augusta	5701
Middleback Range	5609	Merriton	5523	Port Augusta West	5700
Mullaquana	5608	Napperby	5540	Port Augusta North	5700
Murninnie Beach	5609	Nelshaby	5540	Port Paterson	5700
Point Lowly	5601	Nurom	5523	Stirling North	5710
Point Lowly North	5601	Pirie East	5540	Wami Kata	5700
Whyalla	5600	Port Davis	5540	Winninowie	5700
Whyalla Jenkins	5609	Port Pirie	5540		
Whyalla Norrie	5608	Port Pirie South	5540		
Whyalla Playford	5600	Port Pirie West	5540		
Whyalla Stuart	5608	Redhill	5521		
		Risdon Park	5540		
		Risdon Park South	5540		
		Solomontown	5540		
		Wandearah East	5523		
		Wandearah West	5523		
		Warnertown	5540		