

Rural and Regional Adjustment (Boosting Accessible Tourism Experiences Grants Scheme) Amendment Regulation 2023

Explanatory Notes for SL 2023 No. 35

made under the

Rural and Regional Adjustment Act 1994

General Outline

Short title

Rural and Regional Adjustment (Boosting Accessible Tourism Experiences Grants Scheme) Amendment Regulation 2023

Authorising law

Sections 3, 10, 11 and 44 of the *Rural and Regional Adjustment Act 1994* (the Act).

Policy objectives and the reasons for them

The 2023 Year of Accessible Tourism in Queensland is an opportunity to recognise the importance of accessible experiences for all, ignite change and create opportunities for Queensland tourism operators.

This will enable everyone to participate in a tourism experience with choice and confidence and lays the foundations for the Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympics Games.

The Year of Accessible Tourism directly supports outcomes under the Towards Tourism 2032 – Transforming Queensland’s visitor economy future (Towards Tourism 2032), a tourism industry strategy that sets an ambitious target to more than double the state’s tourism overnight expenditure to more than \$44 billion a year by 2032. Towards Tourism 2032 is the new course for Queensland’s government-industry partnership to transform and grow visitor economy future and position for success leading up to Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympics Games.

Targeted initiatives, including infrastructure and experience development, under the \$10 million Accessible Tourism Queensland Fund (the Fund), will help the Queensland tourism industry better cater to visitors of all abilities and provide greater destination experiences for all holidaymakers in Queensland. Projects must demonstrate their

alignment to Queensland's Disability Plan 2022-2027: Together, a better Queensland and Towards Tourism 2032.

Specifically, the objectives of the Fund are to:

- increase the number of tourism and events operators that are delivering exceptional customer experiences;
- increase initiatives that have a positive impact for the community through improved accessibility and experiences to visitors of all abilities;
- improvements to accessibility for visitors and workers with disability.

Achievement of policy objectives

The subordinate legislation achieves the policy objective of developing and enhancing accessibility for visitors and tourism workers, by establishing the Boosting Accessible Tourism Experiences Grant Scheme (the Scheme).

The Scheme will be administered by the Queensland Rural and Industry Development Authority (QRIDA) to provide grants from the Fund to sole traders and small businesses in the tourism and events industry. Grants to eligible businesses under the Scheme will be in the form of a dollar-for-dollar co-contribution between \$5 000 to a maximum of \$20 000 towards the cost of eligible projects.

Eligible projects under the Scheme include but are not limited to the following:

- upgrades or enhancements to existing tourism infrastructure or products to develop more accessible visitor experiences and/or enhance accessibility for tourism workers;
- modification of touring vehicles or vessels
- adaptive and assistive equipment and technology that can maximise the visitor experience through:
 - augmented reality, virtual reality or extended reality to improve accessibility
 - aquatic wheelchairs, beach access mats and/or supporting infrastructure
 - Braille descriptions, signage, Easy English picture communication symbols, stories or sensory friendly environments
 - keyless entry
 - sensor/voice/movement-controlled technology
 - stair lifts.

However generally, projects that meet the aims and objectives of the Scheme will be eligible.

The Scheme further provides eligible project costs to enhance accessibility, such as:

- improvements to websites, signage, traditional and digital marketing to be more accessible
- infrastructure upgrades to improve accessibility of the tourism service or experience for visitors or workers
- upgrades to existing buildings (e.g., accommodation, common use areas) to meet accessibility requirements under the National Construction Code and the Disability (Access to Premises-Buildings) Standards, where those upgrades are not an existing mandatory legislative or planning requirement for the existing infrastructure
- new equipment and/or technology to enhance accessibility

- value-adding to existing experiences with additional activities (e.g., interpretative or interactive tourism signage)
- improvements that enhance disability access (e.g., accessible features)
- labour, materials and equipment hire directly related to the project
- training specifically related to the funded project's implementation
- professional or specialist consultancy service.

Consistency with policy objectives of authorising law

The subordinate legislation is consistent with the objectives of the Act, which establishes QRIDA to 'administer assistance schemes that foster the development of a more productive and sustainable rural and regional sector in Queensland'.

Inconsistency with policy objectives of other legislation

This subordinate legislation is not inconsistent with the policy objectives of any other legislation.

Benefits and costs of implementation

The Scheme will provide grants from between \$5 000 to a maximum of \$20 000, with a matched co-contribution from eligible businesses, for activities that will enhance accessibility for visitors and tourism workers, particularly those with a disability. A total of \$1 million has been allocated to the Scheme.

Consistency with fundamental legislative principles

The subordinate legislation has been drafted with regard to, and is consistent with, the fundamental legislative principles as defined in section 4 of the *Legislative Standards Act 1992*.

Consultation

The Department of Agriculture and Fisheries consulted the Office of Best Practice Regulation (OBPR), on whether the amendment is excluded from further analysis under the Queensland Government Guide to Better Regulation. OBPR advised that it considered the proposal does not add to the burden of regulation and is unlikely to result in significant adverse impacts; and that no further regulatory impact analysis was required.

The Department of Tourism, Innovation and Sport has consulted the Queensland Disability Advisory Council; the Department of Seniors, Disability Services and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships; and the Regional Tourism Organisations network. It has also partnered with Get Skilled Access and Travability during 2022 to undertake audits of six Queensland tourism destinations with the information included in these audits used to inform an understanding of the requirements to enhance accessible tourism experiences in Queensland.