

Program Guidelines

Prawn Fishers Financial Guidance and Training Support grant program

28 January 2026

The NSW Government is supporting prawn fishers in the Clarence, Evans and Richmond River areas affected by the white spot biosecurity control order. The Financial Guidance and Training Support program will help fishing businesses transition to the long-term management of white spot virus with financial guidance and training funding to assist with decision making.

Please read the guidelines below in full before submitting your application.

Key information

Opening date and time	4 February 2026, 9am	
Closing date and time	11 June 2026, 4pm	
Application outcome date	18 June 2026	
Project delivery timeframe (estimated) (for successful applications)	The Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD) will use best endeavours to inform applicants of the outcome of their application within 30 business days following receipt of a complete application.	
Decision-maker	Director Fisheries Management, Fisheries and Forestry	
NSW Government source agency	Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (“the department”)	
Type of grant opportunity	Open, non-competitive	
Total program funding	Up to \$1,000 (GST inclusive) for Financial Guidance Up to \$9,000 (GST inclusive) for Training	
Grant amounts	Up to \$10,000 (GST inclusive).	
Enquiries and getting support Please use only these details. To maintain the integrity of the grant process, do not contact any other NSW Government staff.	Phone number/ Hotline	1300 726 488
	Person/Position	DPIRD Commercial Fisheries Management and Project Assessment Team
	Email	commercialfisheries@dpiird.nsw.gov.au
	Resources	FAQs

Overview of program

Program purpose and objectives

Purpose

In December 2025, the NSW Government announced an additional financial assistance package of \$4.5 million to support prawn fishers in the Clarence, Evans and Richmond Rivers affected by the detection of white spot in wild prawns.

White spot is now considered established in wild prawn populations within the existing control zones that has led to a new biosecurity control order enlarging the impacted area being declared and dated until 2030.

The package will assist impacted fishers to exit the industry and includes support payments conditional on the surrender of shares and funding for business training to support those fishers in the region who decide to exit.

Administration of the program, projects and funds distribution will be managed by the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD).

The objective of the program is to help fishing businesses transition to the long-term management of white spot virus with financial guidance and training funding to assist with decision making.

Objectives and outcomes

The objectives of the program are to support commercial fishing business owners to transition to the long-term management of white spot virus and assist them to make decisions regarding their future in the commercial fishing industry.

The required outcomes of the program are for commercial fishing business owners to have the opportunity to seek financial guidance and training in transitioning to the long-term management of white spot virus in the Clarence, Evans and Richmond River areas.

The scope and types of initiatives which this grant opportunity is aimed at, include funding for both financial guidance and training support.

Intended recipients

The intended recipients of grants under the program are commercial fishing business owners that hold Estuary General Prawning – Region 1, Estuary General Prawning – Region 2 and Estuary Prawn Trawl – Clarence River shares.

Source agency

The source agency for the program is the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (“the Department”).

Delivery of program

The Department is administering the program.

Type of grant opportunity

This grant opportunity is for up to \$1,000 (including GST) per impacted prawn fisher for financial guidance and up to \$9,000 (including GST) per impacted prawn fisher for training.

Value for money

A key principle of any grant program is to achieve value for money. This is important to ensure that the benefits of the grants are maximised for the people of NSW. Ways in which applicants may contribute to delivering value for money include, for example:

- consider the most efficient and innovative means of carrying out grant activities
- consider how government objectives and the applicant’s identified needs can be mutually achieved
- adopt an effective approach to identifying and managing risks
- collaborate with officials in monitoring and evaluation processes.

The program is designed to deliver value for money by supporting commercial fishing business owners to transition to the long-term management of white spot virus in the Clarence, Evans and Richmond River areas.

Program delivery timeframe

Each project funded under the program must be completed, with the best endeavours, within 30 business days following receipt of a complete application.

This program is targeted. Applicants who do not meet the eligibility criteria may be interested in applying for alternative NSW Government grants available at [Grants and funding | NSW Government](#).

Grant value

The range of individual grant amounts is up to \$1,000 for financial guidance and \$9,000 for training.

Selection criteria

All applications will be assessed for eligibility against the eligibility criteria. Only applications that meet the eligibility criteria will be considered for approval.

Eligibility criteria

The eligibility criteria cover:

- eligible applicants
- eligible activities
- eligible costs

Eligible applicants for Financial Guidance Grants (up to \$1,000)

To be eligible for grant funding, an applicant must meet all of the following requirements:

- have an Australian Business Number (ABN)
- be one of the following:
 - a company incorporated in Australia
 - an incorporated association or co-operative
 - a partnership
 - a sole trader
- be registered for GST
- declare in the application form that the applicant is not aware of any issues which could cause reputational or other risks to the NSW Government
- Shares: Provide evidence of ownership of a fishing business component of which are Estuary General Prawning – Region 1, Estuary General Prawning – Region 2 or Estuary Prawn Trawl – Clarence River shares.

Eligible applicants for Training Grants (up to \$9,000)

To be eligible for grant funding, an applicant must meet all of the following requirements:

- have an Australian Business Number (ABN)
- be one of the following:
 - a company incorporated in Australia
 - an incorporated association or co-operative

- a partnership
- a sole trader
- be registered for GST
- declare in the application form that the applicant is not aware of any issues which could cause reputational or other risks to the NSW Government
- own a fishing business component of which are Estuary General Prawning – Region 1, Estuary General Prawning – Region 2 or Estuary Prawn Trawl – Clarence River shares. Provide evidence of ownership of a fishing business component of which are Estuary General Prawning – Region 1, Estuary General Prawning – Region 2 or Estuary Prawn Trawl – Clarence River shares, and the support payment conditional on the surrender of shares.

If an applicant's circumstances in relation to the above eligibility criteria change, the applicant should provide updated information by contacting the department using the Enquiries/Getting Support details in the Key information.

Eligible projects and activities

The project/activities must meet all of the following requirements to be eligible:

1. Timeframe: Apply for the grant funding by 11 June 2026.
2. Shares: Provide evidence of ownership of a fishing business component of which are Estuary General Prawning – Region 1, Estuary General Prawning – Region 2 or Estuary Prawn Trawl – Clarence River shares.
3. If applying for the Training Grants (up to \$9000) the support payment details on the surrender of shares for all the Estuary General Prawning – Region 1, Estuary General Prawning – Region 2 or Estuary Prawn Trawl – Clarence River shares must be provided.

Eligible costs

The project costs must support the objectives of the program.

The following types of project costs are eligible for funding:

- Financial guidance obtained via a suitably accredited advisor
- Training from a Registered Training Organisation (“RTO”)

Some examples of eligible project costs are as follows. They are listed as guidance only:

- Chartered Accountant consultation business transition guidance.
- Enrolment in training with an RTO

Ineligible Project Costs

The following project costs are ineligible for funding:

- Financial guidance from unqualified person

- Training from an organisation that it is non-registered
- Claims for software or hardware to assist with financial and training matters

Assessment Process

The DPIRD Fisheries & Forestry Project Assessment Team will assess each application to determine if the application meets the requirements outlined in the Prawn Fishers Financial Guidance and Training Support Program Guidelines eligibility criteria. The Project Assessment Team will consist of a Principal Policy Officer, DPIRD Fisheries and Forestry and a Senior Project Officer, DPIRD Fisheries and Forestry, along with the Decision Maker being the Director Fisheries Management, DPIRD Fisheries & Forestry.

How to apply

Parameters for applying

Applicants must complete and submit DPIRD's application form, which should be accompanied by the documentation stated on the form. Forms can be found on www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/fisheries.

Applicants can only submit one application per financial assistance offering.

Note: Applicants can apply for both financial guidance and training in one or separate applications, subject to their needs.

What to include

Each application must include the documents listed in the Application Form, which include your NSW DPIRD issued Fishing Business Determination Certificate.

If an application is missing information or is incomplete, DPIRD may, in its sole discretion, work with you to clarify or request any missing or incomplete information from you or any business or individual you have engaged. However, DPIRD will not start assessing the application until, in DPIRD's sole opinion, the application is complete.

DPIRD may withdraw an application once there has been no response to 3 attempts at contact with the applicant.

False and misleading information

You must not include false or misleading information in your application. If an application contains false or misleading information, DPIRD may deal with it as it determines in the circumstances and may, for example, determine that the application is ineligible.

Extensions of Time

All requests for extensions must be received in writing by 1pm on the application closing date and be approved by the Director Fisheries Management.

After submitting your application

Applicants will receive a notification of receipt by email.

DPIRD may contact you to verify information or seek further information. DPIRD may also carry out its own enquiries to validate any information provided in the course of assessing the application.

Applicants are expected to be notified of the assessment outcome by the 18/06/2026.

De-identified information on applicant funding per Local Government Area will be published on the NSW Government Grants and Funding Finder website.

If an application is not found suitable for funding, DPIRD will inform the applicant in writing of the outcome and provide the opportunity for feedback.

Getting support

If you have any questions regarding your eligibility or need assistance submitting your application, please contact DPIRD.

Phone: 1300 726 488

Email: commercialfisheries@dpi.nsw.gov.au

Website: www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/fisheries

If you need help understanding these guidelines or completing the application form, you should seek the assistance of your rural/financial counsellor, business advisor, accountant or a trusted family member/friend.

If you need assistance with interpreting or translating, please contact Multicultural NSW on 1300 651 500 or email languageservices@multicultural.nsw.gov.au.

Applications received after the advertised application closing date cannot be accepted, unless an extension has been agreed to.

Successful grant applications

Payments

Approved applicants will need to complete and submit DPIRD's claims form, which should be accompanied by the documentation stated on the form and listed in the section Eligible Costs. Forms can be found on www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/fisheries

DPIRD will pay successful applicants up to \$9,000 (GST inclusive) for training. Applicants will be required to submit valid tax invoices to access payment.

DPIRD will pay successful applicants up to \$1000 (GST inclusive) for financial guidance costs upon submission of valid tax invoices.

Applicants will be asked for their banking details (BSB and account number) on the application form for the payment to be made.

Payments will generally be made within 15 business days.

Tax

DPIRD recommends individuals seek independent professional advice on their specific taxation obligations.

Audit

DPIRD, NSW Government agencies or their agents may audit applications to determine compliance with these Program Guidelines.

The NSW Government may conduct audit and assurance activities to determine compliance with these Program Guidelines.

Your application, personal information and supporting documentation may be disclosed between DPIRD and other NSW Government agencies and their agents for the purpose of these activities, or a directly related purpose, in accordance with the terms of the Privacy Collection Notice.

Additional information and resources

Access to information

The GIPA Act provides for the proactive release of government information by agencies and gives members of the public an enforceable right to access government information held by an agency (which includes Ministerial offices). Access to government information is only to be restricted if there is an overriding public interest against disclosure.

The NSW Legislative Council has the power to order the production of State papers by the Executive Government. Standing Order 52 provides that the House may order documents to be tabled by the Government in the House. The Cabinet Office coordinates the preparation of the papers – that is, the return to order. The return to order may contain privileged and public documents. Privileged documents are available only to members of the Legislative Council.

Note that documents submitted as part of a grant application may be subject to an application under the GIPA Act or an order for papers under Standing Order 52.

If applicants require further information about the GIPA Act and/or Standing Order 52, please contact the department using the contact information at Enquiries/Getting Support in the [Key information](#).

Evidence

You must consent to DPIRD conducting an audit of evidentiary records to verify the amounts given under the Program have been used in accordance with the claim.

Ethical conduct

Confidentiality

You must keep the outcome of the payment confidential until the NSW Government makes a public announcement, regardless of the outcome of your application.

Conduct

You must not offer any gifts, benefits or hospitality to any NSW Government employee at any time. Any inducement in contravention of this condition may result in your application not being considered.

Fraudulent claims

DPIRD takes fraud and corruption seriously. Suspected fraud will be assessed and investigated as appropriate, which may require the involvement of external parties such as the NSW Police Force or the NSW Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC).

By signing the application form, you declare that the information provided in your application form and supporting documentation is true and accurate.

Providing inaccurate, untrue or misleading information may be a breach of criminal law for which serious penalties may apply.

DPIRD responds to fraud by:

- i. audit and site validation of applications and claims that are of concern
- ii. referral to the NSW Police Force or ICAC of suspected fraud
- iii. recovery of any assistance provided under a fraudulent application.

An application approval may be delayed where the outcome of relevant legal or validation actions may impact the decision to grant further assistance.

DPIRD reserves the right to pursue and recover funding provided under fraudulent and dishonest circumstances.

Discretion

The NSW Government may, in its absolute discretion, and without limiting any other rights which it may have, do all or any of the following at any time without giving notice or reasons:

- require additional information from an applicant
 - change any of the requirements of these guidelines
 - alter or vary any process, procedure or timing related to the grant
 - suspend or terminate the grant opportunity
 - consider any non-conforming application
 - terminate an applicant's further participation in the grant opportunity for any reason (including if the department considers that an application contains false or misleading statements or may damage the reputation of the department or the program).
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These program guidelines

Changes and publication

While care has been taken in preparing these guidelines, DPIRD will not be liable in any way for any errors, omissions or variations to information in these Program Guidelines or for not advising you of any errors, omissions or variations to details in these Program Guidelines.

Version control

Version	Key changes	Approval Date
1.0	Final	28/01/2026

Definitions

Accredited financial representative: A representative of a firm that provides financial guidance to businesses and employs staff such as Chartered Accountants.

Approval: An application will be approved based on eligibility with the criteria listed in section Selection Criteria.

Impacted business: A prawn fishing business with shares held in the Clarence, Evans and/or Richmond River areas.

Proof of payment: Valid tax invoices from an RTO for training costs, and a valid tax invoice for financial costs. DPIRD reserves the right to obtain proof of payment for these tax invoices. If requested, you will be asked to provide a copy of your bank transfer(s) and/or bank statement(s) with any relevant valid tax invoice from suppliers or contractors.

Registered Training Organisation: An organisation that delivers nationally recognised training in the training and vocational education sector.

Valid tax invoice: An invoice including the name, address and ABN (if applicable) of the entity that issued the invoice and a description of each item to which the invoice relates, which is clearly identifiable as being related to approved expenditure for the applicant. DPIRD can ask for proof of payment of the invoice.

You and your: These terms refer to the applicant in the context of these guidelines and the related application process.

