



Information correct as at June 2017

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Business Services

Support for Australian Business

AusIndustry, a division of the Department of Industry, Innovation and Science, is putting the needs of Australian businesses first by simplifying and streamlining access to information and advice.

Business can get information and help through one website, one contact centre and our national network to:

- Get a business up and running
- Develop and commercialise ideas and products
- Improve, innovate and grow a business
- Reach new markets.

business.gov.au

An online resource for the Australian business community, **business.gov.au** offers simple and convenient access to government information, forms and services. It's a whole-of-government service providing essential information on planning, starting and growing your business.

Subscribe to our news updates

business.gov.au news is full of relevant, easy-to-read business articles to keep you in the loop about:

- changes to business laws and regulations in Australia
- practical and useful resources to help you start and run a business
- news and updates about the latest government grants, programmes and assistance packages for business
- networking events and training opportunities

Sign up to receive business news, email updates and eBulletins at business.gov.au/subscribe

business.gov.au 13 28 46

business.gov.au 13 28 46 provides businesses, including independent contractors, with a first point of contact to access information and referral services.

National Outreach Network

The National Outreach Network encompasses a broad range of experienced Business Advisers and Facilitators; State, Territory and Regional Managers and Customer Service Managers in over 20 State and Regional locations. Members of our Network link businesses to relevant assistance programmes and work together with experts providing face-to-face advice tailored to the profile and needs of each business.

For information on how to contact us visit business.gov.au/contact

Entrepreneurs' Programme

The **Entrepreneurs' Programme** is the Australian Government's flagship initiative for competitiveness and productivity of individual businesses, and forms part of the National Innovation and Science Agenda. It provides practical advice and support for businesses, including advice from people with private sector experience; co-funded grants to commercialise novel products, processes and services; funding to take advantage of growth opportunities; and connection and collaboration opportunities. With a national network of more than 130 experienced private sector Advisers and Facilitators, the Entrepreneurs' Programme offers support to businesses through four elements:

Accelerating Commercialisation — provides expert guidance, connections and financial support to assist small and medium businesses, entrepreneurs and researchers to find the right commercialisation solutions for their novel products, process or service. Funding is through competitive matched grants of up to \$1 million over two years for commercialisation activities.

Businesses may be eligible for Accelerating Commercialisation if they:

- are an Eligible Corporation that is non-tax exempt and registered for GST or a Commercialisation Office or Eligible Partner Entity;
- have a combined turnover of less than \$20 million for each of the three years prior to applying;
- have a novel product, process or service to commercialise; and
- own or have beneficial use of the intellectual property of the novel product, process or service to commercialise.

For further information visit the [Accelerating Commercialisation](#) pages on business.gov.au.

Incubator Support — provides funding to new and existing incubators to deliver services aimed at improving the prospects of Australian start-ups achieving commercial success in international markets.

Funding is available to support the establishment of new incubators in regions or sectors with high innovation potential, and to expand the services of existing, high performing incubators.

Funding is provided through matched grants for:

- New and Existing Incubators — a minimum of \$10,000 and a maximum of \$500,000 per project for a maximum period of 24 months.
- Expert-in-Residence — a minimum of \$1,000 and a maximum of \$25,000 per project for a maximum period of 12 months.

Incubator Support is for business support organisations that foster innovative start-ups, focussed on international trade, through the provision of services such as seed funding, co-location, mentoring, professional services and access to networks. This can include accelerators and germinators.

To be eligible for Incubator Support, applicants must:

- be an existing Incubator or establishing a new Incubator that can foster and facilitate the development of innovative start-ups focussed on international trade;
- have an Australian Business Number (ABN); and
- be one of the following:
 - an entity incorporated in Australia;
 - an incorporated trustee on behalf of a trust;
 - a not-for-profit organisation;
 - a publically funded research organisation (PFRO), excluding government departments or agencies which undertake publicly funded research; or
 - local government.

For further information visit the [Incubator Support](#) pages on business.gov.au.

Business Management

- *Business Evaluations* — provides an analysis of the eligible business carried out on-site by skilled and experienced Business Advisers. This service may include advice, referrals and recommendations for improvement which is based on the customer's capacity, commitment and need to undertake significant improvements to their business.
- *Supply Chain Facilitation* — helps small and medium businesses to better understand the specific needs of their buyers and develop the capabilities needed to access additional supply chain opportunities.
- *Growth Services* — advisers assist businesses to develop strategies and execute processes to grow. They introduce new thinking, drive innovation and provide guidance and mentoring including access to external expertise, networks and other assistance to deliver transformative growth.
- *Tourism Partnership Plans* — brings together tourism businesses that offer complementary products or services. It assists businesses to realise the substantial benefits from collaboration and alliances. Businesses must be located and/or have their main operations in northern Australia.
- *Business Growth Grants* — small, co-funded grants to engage external expertise to assist businesses with implementing improvements recommended by their Business Evaluation, Supply Chain Facilitation, Growth Service or Tourism Partnership.

For further information visit the [Business Management](#) pages on business.gov.au.

Innovation Connections — encourages and facilitates small and medium-sized businesses to access knowledge, engage with researchers and foster innovation. Innovation Facilitators help businesses assess the gaps in their knowledge and provide specialist support through the following services:

- IT Facilitation — helps business to find solutions to their information technology needs.
- Technology and Knowledge Facilitation — helps business to find expertise, technology and advice.
- Research Facilitation — identifies critical and strategic research needs for business.

Following completion of a Research Facilitation, a business may apply for matched funding grants of up to \$50,000 to engage and collaborate with a publicly funded research organisation, or \$30,000 to employ a recent graduate to work on a research project within the business.

For further information visit the [Innovation Connections](#) pages on business.gov.au.

Business Management and Innovation Connections is for an established business that may be eligible if it:

- is an Eligible Corporation that is non-tax exempt and registered for GST;
- operates in, or have the skills, ability, expertise or intellectual property to work in or with one or more of the Growth Sectors in the future, or are an enabling technology or service of, one of the following Industry Growth Sectors:
 - Advanced Manufacturing
 - Food and Agribusiness
 - Medical Technologies and Pharmaceuticals
 - Mining Equipment, Technology and Services
 - Oil, Gas and Energy Resources
- is a tourism business operating in northern Australia (Business Management only);
- operates in Australia and filed BAS for the last three consecutive years; and
- has an annual turnover or operating expense between \$1.5 and \$100 million OR between \$750,000 and \$100 million if operating a business in remote or northern Australia.

Businesses should check the full eligibility guidelines on business.gov.au.

Australian Small Business Advisory Services

The **Australian Small Business Advisory Services (ASBAS)** programme funds eligible established not-for-profit organisations to enhance their capacity to provide low cost business advisory and information services to small business. This advice includes financial, business and team management, digital engagement, diagnostics, business systems, mentoring, benchmarking and training. The ASBAS funding is provided following competitive, merit based funding rounds. The next round is scheduled to be conducted in the 2017-18 financial year.

The government provides up to \$6 million per year and funding available is limited by appropriation. Grants of up to \$200,000 per year are awarded over three (3) years (up to \$600,000 in total, excluding GST).

There are currently two initiatives under the ASBAS programme:

- **ASBAS Business Solutions 2014** focussing on five business solution streams:
 1. Funding avenues and financial analysis
 2. Building your business
 3. Making the most of your talent and team
 4. Management capabilities
 5. Digital engagement implementation.

The 2014 funding round aims to improve the accessibility, volume and quality of low cost business advisory services across the five business solution streams.

There are 33 ASBAS Business Solutions 2014 projects, which run until 31 March 2018.

- **ASBAS Northern Australia Tourism Initiative (NATI)** – The \$13.6 million Northern Australia Tourism Initiative is one of a suite of new programmes announced in response to *Our North, Our Future: White Paper on Developing Northern Australia*. The initiative combines the Entrepreneurs' Programme (\$9.4 million) with the Australian Small Business Advisory Services (ASBAS) programme (\$4.2 million) to meet the needs of tourism businesses in northern Australia. ASBAS NATI focusses on six tourism advisory streams. These are:
 1. Funding avenues and financial analysis
 2. Building your business
 3. Making the most of your talent and team
 4. Management capabilities
 5. Digital engagement implementation
 6. Tourism ready.

The objective of the ASBAS NATI is to improve the capacity of established, not-for-profit small business advisory service providers to deliver low cost small business advisory and information services to tourism small businesses and tourism small business intenders in northern Australia, whose products and/or services are or will be used by tourists. There are seven ASBAS NATI projects, which run until 30 June 2019.

There is also one ASBAS National Interest project (Central Queensland).

Total current ASBAS projects – 41.

ASBAS is delivered on behalf of The Treasury and the responsible minister is the Minister for Small Business.

For further information visit the [Australian Business Advisory Services](#) pages on business.gov.au.

Tradex

The **Tradex** Scheme provides an upfront exemption from Customs Duty and GST on eligible imported goods that are intended for direct export or incorporated in other goods that are exported. This upfront exemption can provide significant cash flow advantages that can also assist the competitiveness of Australian business in developing their export markets.

For further information visit the [Tradex Scheme](#) pages on business.gov.au.

International Trade Remedies Advisory Service

The **International Trade Remedies Advisory Service** (ITRA Service) provides assistance to Australian small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) to help them access Australia's anti-dumping and countervailing (anti-subsidy) system (the anti-dumping system).

The anti-dumping system aims to provide protection to Australian producers and manufacturers who have been materially injured by imported products that have been dumped (sold to Australia at a price below the domestic market price) or received certain subsidies. This protection is provided through 'anti-dumping measures' (additional import duties on goods or undertakings to export above a set price).

The anti-dumping system affects not only Australian producers or manufacturers, but also importers and end users of foreign goods. The ITRA Service assists all users of the anti-dumping system who are SMEs.

The anti-dumping system is administered by the Anti-Dumping Commission (the Commission). The ITRA Service operates independently from the Commission.

The ITRA Service helps SMEs by advising on the operation of the anti-dumping system and options available to them, as well as assisting to complete applications and submissions to the Commission. The ITRA Service can also facilitate cooperation between SMEs where they are required to collaborate to meet the Commission's threshold requirements for applications.

The ITRA Service provides objective advice and assistance, but does not fill the role of an advocate or consultant for SMEs.

Priority is given to SMEs who wish to lodge applications to the Commission for anti-dumping measures, but the ITRA Service also assists other SMEs involved in anti-dumping matters where possible (e.g. importers of investigated goods or goods subject to anti-dumping measures).

For further information visit the [International Trade Remedies Advisory Service](#) pages on business.gov.au.

Certain Inputs to Manufacture

The **Certain Inputs to Manufacture** (CIM) programme aims to improve the competitiveness of Australian industry. CIM does this by providing import duty concessions on certain imported raw materials and intermediate goods such as:

- chemicals
- plastics
- paper goods or
- metal materials and goods used in food packaging.

The CIM programme removes the 5% tariff on a range of raw materials and intermediate goods where those materials or goods have a substantial and demonstrable performance advantage in producing a specific end product over substitutable goods produced in Australia. This lowers input costs for Australian producers relying on these inputs, and encourages Australian producers of substitutable goods to continually improve the products they supply.

The goods to be imported must be intended for use in the production of particular end products where that good would generate a quantifiable and significant benefit to enhancing Australian competitiveness.

For further information visit the [Certain Inputs to Manufacture](#) pages on business.gov.au.

Textile, Clothing and Footwear Corporatewear Register

If your business employs staff and they wear a non-compulsory uniform your employees are eligible for tax deductions for expenses incurred in the rental, purchase or maintenance of approved non-compulsory occupational clothing. You may also be shielded from FBT on any contributions you make towards their uniform.

Non-compulsory corporate uniforms are a set of clothing and accessory items (not protective or occupation-specific) which:

- distinctly identify a particular employer, product or service; and
- are not compulsory for employees to wear to work.

The Australian Taxation Office (ATO) determines the level of tax deductions.

For further information visit the [Textile, Clothing and Footwear Corporatewear Register](#) pages on business.gov.au.

Innovation and Venture Capital

R&D Tax Incentive

The **R&D Tax Incentive** is the Australian Government's principal measure to encourage industry investment in research and development (R&D) which it does by providing tax offsets to eligible entities that undertake eligible R&D activities. It is a self-assessment programme open to all industry sectors, companies assess for themselves whether they are eligible for the programme and whether the activities they are undertaking are eligible.

The R&D Tax Incentive offers:

For income years from 1 July 2016

- a 43.5 per cent refundable tax offset to eligible entities with an aggregated turnover of less than \$20 million per annum (unless controlled by tax exempt entities)
- a 38.5 per cent non-refundable tax offset to all other eligible entities. Unused offsets may be able to be carried forward for use in future income years.

For income years before 1 July 2016

- a 45 per cent refundable tax offset to eligible entities with an aggregated turnover of less than \$20 million per annum (unless controlled by tax exempt entities)
- a 40 per cent non-refundable tax offset to all other eligible entities. Unused offsets may be able to be carried forward for use in future income years.

A \$100 million threshold applies to the R&D expenditure for which companies can claim a tax offset under the R&D Tax Incentive. For any R&D expenditure amounts above \$100 million, companies will still be able to claim a tax offset at the company tax rate.

For further information visit the [R&D Tax Incentive](#) pages on business.gov.au.

Cooperative Research Centres Programme

The **Cooperative Research Centres (CRC)** Programme is a competitive, merit based grant programme that supports industry-led and outcome-focused collaborative research partnerships. The programme aims to improve the competitiveness, productivity and sustainability of Australian industries; foster high quality research to solve industry-identified problems; and facilitate SME participation in collaborative research. More broadly, the programme assists in supporting science, research, and commercialisation to and enabling growth and productivity for industries where Australia has a competitive strength. The CRC Programme has two funding streams:

- **Cooperative Research Centres (CRCs)** — Support medium to long term industry-led collaborations for varying periods of up to 10 years. There is no limit set on funding for CRCs.
- **Cooperative Research Centre-Projects (CRC-Ps)** — Support short term, industry-led collaborative research up to a maximum of three years. CRC-P grants are capped at a maximum of \$3 million.

For further information visit the [Cooperative Research Centres Programme](#) pages on business.gov.au.

Venture Capital Programmes

Venture Capital Limited Partnerships (VCLP) aim to stimulate Australia's venture capital sector by attracting foreign investors. They are open to domestic investors. Generally, a VCLP can invest in Australian businesses with total assets of not more than \$250 million by acquiring shares, options or units.

The advantage of VCLP registration is via tax exemptions. Registration entitles a partnership to flow-through tax treatment including, in some cases, a complete tax exemption for investors on their share of the partnership's income.

Early Stage Venture Capital Limited Partnerships (ESVCLP) aim to stimulate the Australian early stage venture capital sector. The programme provides the fund manager flow-through tax treatment, and for investors, tax exemptions on their share of returns.

For further information visit the [Venture Capital](#) pages on business.gov.au.

Significant and Premium Investor Visa Programmes

Significant and Premium Investor Visas — high net worth migrant investors can apply for permanent residence if they make a minimum investment of \$5 million across mandated investments. Includes at least \$500,000 in an ESVCLP, VCLP or an Australian Venture Capital Fund or Funds.

The new complying investment framework for the Significant Investor Visa (SIV) and introduction of the Premium Investor Visa (PIV) are aimed at attracting applicants with business and entrepreneurial skills and capital to invest into innovative Australian businesses and the commercialisation of Australian ideas, research and development.

The SIV and PIV are part of a suite of Government policy initiatives which aim to promote investment, innovation and commercialisation of Australian ideas, research and development which are important to our economic future.

SIV and PIV provide a pathway to permanent residency in Australia, while ensuring a balance between investment migration and economic benefit to the Australian economy.

- The SIV is for individuals investing \$5 million over four years
- The PIV is for individuals investing \$15 million over 12 months.

The visas are administered by the Department of Immigration and Border Protection, which provides information and advice about making an application for SIV and PIV.

For further information visit the [Significant and Premium Investor Visas](#) pages on the Australian Trade and Investment Commission website.

Global Innovation Linkages

The Global Innovation Linkages (GIL) Programme is a key initiative of the National Innovation and Science Agenda (NISA) and provides funding to assist Australian businesses and researchers to collaborate with global partners on projects with a strategic focus and leading-edge research and development.

The programme will support projects focussed on developing high quality products, services or processes that will respond to industry challenges.

Eligible participants will be able to apply for grants of up to \$1 million over a grant period of up to four years. \$8 million in funding was available in the first round, with approximately \$10m proposed to be available for Round 2. Round 2 is planned to open in 2018.

Each round of the programme will focus on specific priority areas aligned with the Australian Government's Industry Growth Centres of research and specific priority economies. The fact sheet contains information about the priority areas and priority economies for round one.

For further information visit [Global Innovation Linkages](#) pages on business.gov.au.

Business Research and Innovation Initiative

The **Business Research and Innovation Initiative (BRII)** drives innovation within both SMEs (small and medium-sized enterprises) and government by offering competitive grants to encourage SMEs to develop innovative solutions to public policy and service delivery challenges nominated by Government. Eligible businesses can apply for a competitive grant to undertake a feasibility study on their proposed solution to a challenge. Successful applicants will receive grants of up to \$100,000 to develop their idea and test feasibility over three months. The most successful ideas may then be eligible for a further grant of up to \$1 million to develop a prototype or proof of concept over the following 18 months which may be purchased by government. Businesses retain the intellectual property and right to commercialise their ideas in Australia and overseas.

The five challenges are:

- [On-the-spot technology for measuring pyrethroid surface residue](#)
- [Tracking the effect and value of information products](#)
- [Digitally enabled community engagement in policy and programme design](#)
- [Improve transparency and reliability of water market information](#)
- [Sharing of information nationally to ensure child safety](#)

The application period for the first round of Feasibility Study grants closed in November 2016. 20 Feasibility Study grants to address the five challenges were announced in March 2017.

Future rounds of BRII will be announced on [business.gov.au](#).

Biomedical Translation Fund

The **Biomedical Translation Fund (BTF)** is a \$500 million co-investment venture capital programme that will support biomedical ventures in Australia. The BTF will help translate biomedical discoveries into high growth potential companies to deliver long term health benefits and national economic outcomes. The Government has licensed three Australian based private sector fund managers, Brandon Capital Partners, BioScience Managers and OneVentures Management, who will manage

\$250 million in Commonwealth capital, which has been matched by a further \$250 million from private sector investors.

For further information visit the [Biomedical Translation Fund](#) pages on business.gov.au.

Women in STEM and Entrepreneurship

The **Women in STEM and Entrepreneurship** (WISE) Programme is an \$8 million rounds based, competitive grant programme that will fund activities that support women in STEM, and eliminate barriers for women's participation in STEM education and careers, including entrepreneurship. Funding will support outreach programmes that target girls and women and foster their interest in STEM studies and careers, including entrepreneurship; develop their innovation and entrepreneurial skills; and build their professional networks. The programme also provides funding to identify and celebrate STEM role models in science and research, entrepreneurship and corporate leadership to inspire school age girls.

The programme will award grants from a minimum of \$5,000 to a maximum of \$250,000 for activities that address discrimination against or inequality for girls and women in STEM and entrepreneurship. Funding will be made available from 2016-17 to 2019-20.

The programme is part of the broader 'Expanding Opportunities for Women in STEM and Entrepreneurship' initiative, which is also supporting two major projects: an expansion of the Science in Australia Gender Equity project (SAGE), led by the Australian Academy of Science and the Australian Academy of Technological Science and Engineering, and a new project based on the Male Champions of Change model and aimed at STEM-based and entrepreneurial industries. Together, they will help drive greater gender equity across the professions and increase the number of women in leadership positions in universities, research organisations, and in key industries like mining, engineering and ICT.

For further information visit the [Women in STEM and Entrepreneurship](#) pages on business.gov.au.

Structural Adjustment and Industry Capability

Industry Growth Centres

The **Industry Growth Centres** Initiative is an industry-led approach driving innovation, productivity and competitiveness by focussing on areas of competitive strength and strategic priority. This will help Australia transition into smart, high value and export focussed industries.

The Initiative is ongoing with \$250 million in Australian Government funding over the four years from 2016/17 to 2019/20.

Growth Centres operate in six sectors:

- Advanced Manufacturing
- Cyber Security
- Food and Agribusiness
- Medical Technologies and Pharmaceuticals
- Mining Equipment, Technology and Services
- Oil, Gas and Energy Resources.

A Growth Centre is an independent not-for-profit company with an industry-led Board, recognising that industry is best placed to drive cultural change and overcome barriers to innovation, productivity and growth.

Growth Centres focus on four key areas:

1. Increasing collaboration and commercialisation

2. Lifting management capability and workforce skills
3. Shaping fit-for-purpose regulation that enhances productivity and competitiveness
4. Improving access to international opportunities.

For further information visit the [Industry Growth Centres](#) pages on the Department of Industry, Innovation and Science website.

Centre for Defence Industry Capability

The **Centre for Defence Industry Capability (CDIC)** is an initiative of the Defence Industry Policy Statement. Its purpose is to facilitate engagement between industry and Defence including funding defence industry development, skilling and export initiatives. The CDIC will partner with industry, Defence and state-territory governments to build a world class, globally competitive Australian industry that is sustainable for future generations.

The CDIC provides advisory services to Australian SMEs with funding through matched grants of up to \$250,000 to implement recommended business capability improvements.

CDIC's services cover:

- **Industry Development** – business advice and sector wide initiatives.
- **Facilitating Innovation** – connecting business, academia and research organisations with innovative ideas to Defence.
- **Defence Business Competitiveness and Exports** – enabling expert business advisers to provide defence specific advice to help grow prosperous Australian businesses.

For further information visit the [Centre for Defence Industry Capability](#) pages on business.gov.au.

US-Australia International Multidisciplinary University Research Initiative

The **US-Australia International Multidisciplinary University Research Initiative (AUSMURI)** forms part of the Next Generation Technologies Fund that was announced as part of the 2016 Defence White Paper. The program offers grant funding to Australian higher education providers (universities) collaborating on US Multidisciplinary University Research Initiative (MURI) research projects on topics determined by the Australian Department of Defence as having high potential for significant future Defence capability (designated topics).

AUSMURI is a non-competitive program open only to Australian universities involved in a successful MURI submission on a designated topic. MURI is a competitive grant program accepting submissions led by US universities on behalf of collaborative multi-disciplinary teams. For each annual round of MURI, designated topics will be announced that will attract grant funding for Australian universities through AUSMURI.

Grant funding will be 100 per cent of eligible project costs up to \$1 million per year over 3 years. There is potential to seek a project extension in the third year of up to \$1 million per year for an additional 2 years.

To be eligible for an AUSMURI grant, the Australian portion of your MURI project must:

- be approved through MURI on a designated topic
- include eligible expenditure
- be undertaken in Australia.

For further information visit the [US-Australia Multidisciplinary University Research Initiative](#) page on business.gov.au.

Regional Jobs and Investment Packages

The Regional Jobs and Investment Packages (RJIP) is a \$220 million competitive grant program that will run over four years to 2019/20. RJIP will help diversify regional economies, stimulate economic growth and deliver sustainable employment in ten pilot regions.

There are three streams of funding available to all RJIP regions under the program:

- Local infrastructure grants. This stream is for local government bodies and not-for-profit organisations to invest in new or upgraded infrastructure. Projects will capitalise on opportunities for growth, deliver long-term economic benefits to regional communities and create jobs;
- Business innovation grants. This stream will enable business to build scale and capability to be competitive in new or growing markets that create sustainable employment; and
- Skills and training grants. This stream will provide funding to local government bodies and agencies and not for profit organisations. These projects will support training and upskilling of the regional workforce to meet regional priorities, take advantage of emerging opportunities and withstand major labour market changes.

For further information visit the [Regional Jobs and Investment Packages](#) pages on business.gov.au.

Automotive Transformation Scheme

The **Automotive Transformation Scheme** (ATS) is an entitlement programme that commenced on 1 January 2011 and runs until 31 December 2020. It aims to encourage competitive investment, innovation and economic sustainability in the Australian automotive industry. The ATS will achieve this in a way that improves environmental outcomes and promotes the development of workforce skills.

The ATS provides total funding up to \$2.5 billion, over two stages as follows:

- Stage 1 — Capped assistance of \$1.5 billion from 2011 to 2015 and
- Stage 2 — Capped assistance of \$1 billion from 2016 to 2020.

A further \$337 million is available in Uncapped assistance to Motor Vehicle Producers.

Applications for registration in the ATS is open to:

- Australian Motor Vehicle Producers (MVPs)
- Australian Automotive Component Producers (ACPs)
- Australian Automotive Machine Tool and Automotive Tooling Producers (AMTPs) and
- Australian Automotive Service Providers (ASPs).

Businesses including individual companies or a group of companies can apply. Minimum eligibility requirements apply. It provides Capped assistance on eligible R&D (50%) and P&E (15%) investment to all registered participants. It also provides Capped and Uncapped assistance on allowable motor vehicle/engine production to MVPs.

For further information visit the [Automotive Transformation Scheme](#) pages on business.gov.au.

The Major Projects Facilitation Agency

The **Major Projects Facilitation Agency** (Agency) is a single point of entry into the Australian Government for businesses considering major project investments.

Agency assistance includes:

- Integrated information and mapping of Commonwealth, State, Territory and Local government regulatory approval requirements and processes;

- Identification, in collaboration with responsible regulators, of the most effective and efficient project approvals pathway;
- Delivery of the Major Projects Facilitation Program which confers major project status on eligible projects and provides support services for a period of three years.

The Agency does not issue approvals, it provides services to ensure businesses are aware of all their regulatory approval requirements from all regulators across government. Agency services are confidential, free of charge and carry no ongoing obligation.

The Agency has two offices, one located in Darwin, Northern Territory, and the other in Launceston, Tasmania.

For further information visit the [Major Projects Facilitation Agency](#) pages on business.gov.au.

Community and Regional Investment

Building Better Regions Fund

The **Building Better Regions Fund** (BBRF) is a \$297.7 million rounds based, competitive grant program that will run over four years to 2019/20 and is open to eligible local governing bodies and not for profit organisations.

The program will fund projects in regional Australia outside the major capital cities of Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Perth, Adelaide, and Canberra that support the creation of jobs, drive economic growth and build stronger regional communities into the future.

There are two streams of funding available under the program, the:

- Infrastructure Projects Stream which will support projects that involve the construction of new infrastructure, or the upgrade or extension of existing infrastructure that provide economic and social benefits to regional and remote areas; and
- Community Investments Stream which will fund community building activities including, but not limited to, new or expanded local events, strategic regional plans, and leadership and capability building activities. These projects will deliver economic and social benefits to regional and remote communities.

For further information visit the [Building Better Regions Fund](#) pages on business.gov.au.

Improving Your Local Parks and Environment Program

The **Improving Your Local Parks and Environment Program** aims to build on environmental awareness and ensure communities have better and more accessible green spaces. Funding will help communities revitalise, maintain and improve local parks, nature reserves, rivers, coastal areas and community facilities. Support will be delivered through a single, non-competitive funding round worth \$14.35 million which is restricted to 24 projects the government identified during the 2016 election campaign.

The identified projects are listed in the [Improving Your Local Parks and Environment Program Guidelines](#) available on business.gov.au.

Inspiring Australia – Science Engagement Programme

The **Inspiring Australia – Science Engagement Programme** provides funding of \$29.8 million from 2016-17 to 2019-20 for a range of activities that will be delivered under the Inspiring Australia banner.

The programme contributes to the broader goals of science engagement in Australia. These are to inspire, motivate and cultivate a scientifically engaged community, optimistic about its future, in which Australians:

- value science and understand that it is essential to our personal and national wellbeing
- participate in public dialogue about science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM), their values, policies and priorities, and their ethical use in our society.

Funding is available for hands on learning activities, prizes and awards for STEM, opportunities to compete internationally in the STEM arena, and initiatives aimed at inspiring the broader community to develop digital literacy and public engagement with STEM.

The programme provides funding for grants and prizes, through the following open and closed application processes:

- **Targeted Science Communication** includes closed non-competitive grants, to address particular identified opportunities or needs that contribute to greater public engagement with the sciences.
- **National Science Week** runs annually as a nationwide celebration of science and technology. It highlights Australian science and provides opportunities for the community to participate in science engagement activities. This element includes funding for National Science Week Grants.
- **The Prime Minister's Prizes for Science** are Australia's pre-eminent annual awards for outstanding achievement in science and science teaching which include funding for monetary prizes.
- **Citizen Science Grants** are competitive grants to support community participation in scientific research projects that have a national impact. Participants will be able to take part in scientific research projects by a range of means, including collecting and analysing data, formulating questions and organising research teams.
- **Maker Projects** aims to foster creativity and inquiry based learning in Australian schools and communities through the establishment of maker spaces in schools where students can apply their STEM knowledge, develop entrepreneurial skills, and gain experience in working with emerging and advancing technologies. This element also includes funding for STEM-related events and education activities delivered in partnership with industry for youth under 18 years of age.
- **Sponsorship Grants for Student Science Engagement and International Competitions** provides grants to organisations, such as schools and community groups, to sponsor eligible young Australians to participate in conferences, competitions and other STEM-related events.

For further information visit the [Inspiring Australia – Science Engagement Programme](#) pages on business.gov.au.

Safer Communities Fund

The **Safer Communities Fund** was developed as part of the Government's objective to deliver crime prevention and security infrastructure initiatives.

The Safer Communities Fund aims to contribute to greater community resilience and well-being by supporting projects focussed on enhancing community safety and security by reducing street crime and violence through local security infrastructure.

The program will provide grants to:

- boost the efforts of identified local Councils and community organisations to address crime and anti-social behaviour by funding crime prevention and security initiatives (such as fixed and mobile CCTV and lighting) (round 1 and future round); and

- protect schools, pre-schools and community organisations that are facing security risks associated with racial or religious intolerance (future round).

The program will provide \$40 million over 4 years from 2016-17 to 2019-20. Applications for Round One closed on 10 February 2017 and are currently under consideration.

Details on future rounds will be provided on the [Safer Communities Fund](#) pages on business.gov.au.

Smart Cities and Suburbs Program

The **Smart Cities and Suburbs Program** supports the Australian Government's commitment to help local governments and communities use smart technology and increase the accessibility and use of public data so that:

- cities, suburbs and towns become more liveable, productive and sustainable; and
- urban service delivery becomes more efficient and effective.

The program will support projects that apply innovative smart technology solutions to urban challenges. Projects that involve collaboration with partners in multiple sectors are encouraged to help grow capability and better leverage program funding and outcomes. As a minimum, projects must have at least one local government and one industry partner.

The program will provide funding to eligible organisation to:

- improve the liveability of cities by applying smart technology solutions to urban issues, engaging citizens and opening access to public data; and
- build smart city and smart technology capability by encouraging stronger links and collaboration with industry, not-for-profit and research organisations.

The program will run over three years from 2017 to 2018-2019 and is expected to deliver \$50 million in grant funding. The first competitive funding round opened on 17 March 2017 and will close on 30 June 2017.

Any future rounds will be detailed on the [Smart Cities and Suburbs Program](#) pages on business.gov.au.

Stronger Communities Programme

The **Stronger Communities Programme** supports the Australian Government's commitment to deliver social benefits in communities across Australia.

The programme will fund small capital projects in each of the 150 federal electorates to improve local community participation and contribute to vibrant and viable communities.

A total of \$22.5 million is available in round 3 of the programme. Each electorate will receive \$150,000 for allocation to successful applications. A maximum of 20 projects will be funded in each electorate. For each project, the grant amount will be up to 50 per cent of eligible project costs.

- The minimum grant amount is \$2,500.
- The maximum grant amount is \$20,000.

The Local Member of Parliament (MP) may choose to participate in the programme. If they do, they must consult with either an existing consultation committee or establish a new consultation committee with representatives from the local community. The MP and the consultation committee identify potential applicants and projects in their electorate.

The MP will invite potential applicants to apply for a grant to deliver specific projects. The invitation will include a link to an online application form and details on how to apply. Applications for those nominated will open on 7 August 2017 and close on 28 September 2017.

For further information visit the [Stronger Communities Programme](#) pages on business.gov.au.