



# Productivity Hubs

A targeted program for driving innovation in business



## Overview

Queensland’s industries have the opportunity to drive the future of the Australian economy. Queensland is set to reinforce Australia’s emerging reputation as the world’s ‘golden nation’, with renewed high growth driven by dynamic sectors including resources. This growth provides unprecedented new business opportunities for Queensland’s small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) with the ambition and commitment to access them.

Now is the time for Queensland SMEs to focus on investment in people, ideas and business innovation, and the Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation (DEEDI) has developed a new service to help companies capitalise.

The Queensland Government’s Productivity Hubs program is the State’s engine for building business capabilities across key industry sectors. It provides a new platform for business innovation activities that will be delivered direct to business through DEEDI’s regional service centres across Queensland.

The goal is to provide a pathway for Queensland businesses to structure their growth, plug into new supply chains, and compete more effectively on the world stage. The Productivity Hubs program has been designed to assist SMEs within targeted sectors to review key aspects of their business, and adopt processes to help drive innovation, productivity and improved performance.

The Productivity Hubs program will be the engine that helps regional businesses form clusters or consortia, or work together more effectively within a supply chain, and improve prospects for securing work packages on major projects.

Priority industry sectors eligible for focused Productivity Hubs assistance include:

- Tourism and related services
- Food processing
- Transport and logistics
- Information and communication technology.

Manufacturers have been able to access subsidised support for some time through business improvement specialists, QMI Solutions. Companies assisted by QMI have reported outcomes worth \$245 million in new sales revenue, efficiency savings and new investments in just the last four years. These results clearly indicate the kind of benefits that businesses more broadly will now be able to access through the Productivity Hubs program.

## How the Productivity Hubs program works

The program follows a targeted process whereby businesses with the desire and capacity to engage are taken through a free on-site benchmark diagnostic, which will assess their current performance against that of similar-sized organisations globally. A tailored action plan is developed from the results for each participating business, detailing areas for practical, real improvement.

Once this first stage is complete, SMEs are eligible to apply for financial assistance as part of the Hubs process. The funding available includes:

- mentoring assistance of up to \$5000 (fully subsidised) to implement identified actions
- specialist business support of up to \$20 000 (or \$15 000 if taking up mentoring assistance) on a dollar-for-dollar matched contribution basis, to implement the action plan.

Regionally based DEEDI staff will take SMEs through the program, step by step, to help structure and accelerate competitive growth.

## What Productivity Hubs mean for your business

The Queensland Government wants to focus specifically on the task at hand to gear your business for growth, provide a strong platform for improving performance

and get you successfully competing globally. The program is designed to be flexible and adapt to your unique business situation. To do this, we will support your business to use the services you need most to address your action plan.

### Business mentoring

Support is available for a mentor or coach to assist and guide a business in implementing activities identified in its action plan.

### Strategic and business planning

Support is available to review strategic and business planning processes and to assist in modifying a current strategy or direction. This could include reallocating resources, including capital and staff, to pursue a new strategy.

### Supply chain management

Support is available to map a supply chain and implement changes that improve customer satisfaction. Activities may include identifying and reducing unnecessary costs, increasing throughput and operational efficiency, removing bottlenecks and improving performance measurement and communication across the chain.

### Business and quality management system development

Support is available to review business systems and/or quality management systems and improve their effectiveness.

This could include proposing and implementing changes to operating procedures, processes and resource management.

### Resource management

Support is available to review resource management, which includes ways of efficiently and effectively redeploying resources when necessary. Such resources may include financial resources, inventory, staff, production resources or information technology.

### People and change management

Support is available to implement a structured approach to people and change management. Change management is an organisational process aimed at helping employees adjust to changes in their current business environment.

### Intellectual property management and protection

Support is available to help a business understand the options available to protect their intellectual property rights. Common types of intellectual property rights include copyrights, trademarks, patents, industrial design rights and trade secrets.

### New product/service development

Support is available to implement effective processes to bring a new product or service to market. These processes may include product design, detail engineering, market research and market analysis.

#### Tony O'Connor Kookaburra Tours and Charters Pty Ltd

*I have been impressed with the whole process and have been grateful to be included in the program. Too often we (as small business owner/operators) get bogged down in the day-to-day operation of our business and find ourselves working in the business. I have found this process to be a valuable tool in stepping back and looking at the big picture, looking closer at strategic planning and working with the facilitator to develop a plan to finetune my operations to improve my bottom line.*

*I highly recommend that all businesses take the time to participate in the benchmarking process.*



#### Warren O'Leary Rainforest Ranch

*I can see where the process can be of benefit to the tourism industry in general ... I initially had some reservations, but by the end of the day found the process gave us a better understanding of our business and the things we need to do to achieve the goals we were aiming at. I am sure we will achieve many positive results from it.*

*It can be hard at times for small businesses to find the time to participate in these sorts of programs, not through not wanting to, but just because of the time available. I can now say that this program is time well spent and would recommend it to any small business.*



#### Susan Irwin Bunya Mountains Accommodation Centre

*[The process] was all positive and has given me a new insight into my business and an understanding of where we are in relation to other similar businesses. This is invaluable. This benchmarking process has given me a workable action plan to improve, and more importantly, the tools and skills that will enable me to start this process and follow through with it. Thanks.*

*I am also impressed with the follow-up and re-evaluation in 12 months time. That gives me guidelines to follow through with this and to know that it is being tracked in a concise and quantitative way.*



## Market access education and development

Support is available to develop understanding of overseas markets and market access. This could include identifying the export capability issues that must be considered when entering overseas markets.

## Export strategy development

Support is available to develop a sound export strategy. This can include defining a business's export aims and matching its resources with those aims to provide quality responses and services to export customers.

## Process improvement

Support is available to introduce process changes to improve quality, reduce costs or accelerate schedules. Methods used to identify, analyse and improve existing processes may include process re-engineering, process redesign or lean manufacturing.

## Product improvement

Support is available to implement best practices for developing and maintaining products and services across their life cycles. This will improve product performance.



## Technology identification and adoption

Support is available to grow businesses through access to new technologies that can assist Queensland's industries improve their overall global competitiveness.

## Eligibility

The following criteria for Productivity Hubs applications apply:

- The business must be located in Queensland and have a registered ABN and GST registration.
- The management must possess the resources, commitment and focus to undertake and actively participate in the program.

- The business must be within the stated key priority sectors in a service environment or emerging priority sectors such as mining services and technologies.

To be successful, projects will be assessed on their ability to demonstrate that they make a significant contribution to their local economy. Manufacturing businesses are eligible to apply only if the business improvement activity is not already covered by QMI Solutions services. Project funds cannot be used for the purchase of capital equipment or off the shelf software, or payment of staff salaries.

### Ian Bent CAMit Pty Ltd

*Excellent process which led to a different approach to our strategy. Thank you!*



### Bernie Cooper Crane Wines

*The process was easy and clean to go through. It did not take too much time, but opened a lot of very real and manageable opportunities. It essentially has helped us produce the bones of a strategic plan, a process we have struggled with since arriving here.*

*We are very pumped about improving our business and very optimistic about achieving the outcomes decided upon.*



### Wendy Keller Tropic Sail

*The facilitator was great—easy to relate to, took an interest in us and our business and in turn made the whole process actually enjoyable and eye-opening. We have certainly learnt things about us and our business that we will be able to take away and turn into tangible KPIs.*

*Very worthwhile. Thank you for the opportunity.*





For further information on the Productivity Hubs Program, contact your local DEEDI service centre on 13 25 23.  
[www.business.qld.gov.au](http://www.business.qld.gov.au)

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