

Farm Debt Mediator Accreditation Grant Program 2025

Program Guidelines



Contents

1. Aim	1
2. Funding available	1
3. Eligibility	2
3.1. Eligible applicants	2
3.2. Ineligible applicants	2
4. Expenditure	3
4.1. Eligible Expenditure	3
4.2. Ineligible Expenditure	3
5. Assessment	3
6. Timeframes	4
7. Contact details	4
8. How to apply	4
9. Grant funding agreement	5
10. Appealing a decision	5
11. Grant payments	6
11.1. Instalment one	6
11.2. Instalment two	6
12. Taxation and financial implications	6
13. Acquittal	7
13.1. How to acquit your grant	7
13.2. Failure to complete an acquittal	7
14. Publicity of grant assistance	8
15. True and accurate information	8
16. Right to information	8
17. Information collection and usage	8
18. Disclaimer	8

1. Aim

The Tasmanian Government recognises the important role of primary producers in Tasmania. The *Farm Debt Mediation Act 2024* (FDM Act) provides a legislative framework for farm debt mediation, helping farmers in financial stress negotiate with creditors early. It aims to provide an efficient, affordable, and fair resolution to farm debt disputes through structured negotiations.

The Farm Debt Mediator Accreditation Grant Program is designed to ensure there is a sufficient pool of affordable, locally based mediators accredited under the FDM Act to support the successful operation of the Farm Debt Scheme. To become accredited under the FDM Act, an individual is required to hold a national mediator accreditation certificate. This grant program will provide financial support to encourage individuals living in Tasmania obtain accreditation as a mediator under the Australian Mediator and Dispute Resolution Accreditation Standards (AMDRAS).

Applications for the program open on 10 April 2025 and the first round of applications will close on 20 June 2025, or once the program funds have been fully allocated (whichever comes first). This program may open with a second round in the future subject to demand and funding.

This program will be administered by the Department of State Growth on behalf of the Crown in Right of Tasmania.

2. Funding available

Up to \$30,000 in funding is available under this grant program.

Six eligible applicants will receive grants of up to \$5,000 each to support them becoming an accredited mediator under AMDRAS. Grant funds must be spent on completing a mediator course run by a Recognised Accreditation Provider, resulting in the applicant obtaining AMDRAS mediator accreditation and becoming an accredited mediator under the FDM Act. Successful applicants must complete their course and obtain their accreditation by 30 June 2025.

50 per cent (50%) of the amount of the total grant funding will be paid on the approval of the grant application. The remaining 50 per cent (50%) will be paid on the submission and acceptance of a satisfactory acquittal.

Funds may be expended on a mediation course and mediator assessment associated with obtaining AMDRAS mediator certification. When completing the application form, applicants are required to:

- Provide details on the expected expenditure, by uploading evidence of these costs from the course provider.
- Provide details on the course dates, and an estimated completion date upon which the accreditation certificate will be obtained.

Applications will be assessed in order of receipt and are subject to meeting the eligibility criteria. To allow time for an application to be assessed, applicants are advised to allow a minimum of 14 calendar days for notification of outcome.

Applicants can only apply once for this program. Grant funding will be paid on a pro-rata basis, based on the expected course costs as provided in the application.

3. Eligibility

3.1. Eligible applicants

To be eligible for a grant an applicant must:

- 3.1.1 Be registered for tax purposes in Australia with an active Australian Business Number (ABN) and be registered for Goods and Services Tax (GST) at the time of applying for the grant, or be an employee of a business in Australia with an active ABN that is registered for GST.
- 3.1.2 Be conditionally accredited by the Farm Debt Mediation Commissioner (FDM Commissioner) to become an accredited mediator under the FDM Act. Conditional accreditation can be obtained by applying to become an accredited Farm Debt Mediator to the FDM Commissioner.
- 3.1.3 Be an individual located in Tasmania. Individuals must reside and be available to conduct face to face mediation services in Tasmania.
- 3.1.4 Provide the following:
 - a. Evidence of conditional accreditation received from the FDM Commissioner.
 - b. Evidence that the applicant is enrolled in a mediation course run by a Recognised Accreditation Provider, that will result in the applicant obtaining AMDRAS accreditation by 30 June 2025.
 - c. A commitment to providing face-to-face mediation services across Tasmania upon receiving accreditation under the FDM Act.
 - d. If applying as an employee, written confirmation from the employer to confirm the employment relationship, the employers support of the application and agreeing the terms and conditions of this program guidelines.

An applicant may be asked to provide further information or documentation to support eligibility claims, either as part of the application process, or after an application has been submitted.

The information provided may be subject to third party authenticity checks.

This program has limited funding, so not all eligible applications may receive a grant.

3.2. Ineligible applicants

- 3.2.1 Individuals not conditionally accredited as a Farm Debt Mediator in Tasmania by the FDM Commissioner.
- 3.2.2 Individuals not located in Tasmania.
- 3.2.3 Any public company as defined in the *Corporations Act 2001*.
- 3.2.4 Local, State or Australian Government entities.

- 3.2.5 Third party submissions, unless the applicant has provided the third party with written permission to do so on their behalf, and this permission is submitted as evidence with the application.
- 3.2.6 Any application without the required supporting evidence.

4. Expenditure

4.1. Eligible Expenditure

Applicants can nominate estimated course fees within their application, with a maximum of \$5,000 in grant funding available.

Eligible expenditure includes, but is not limited to:

- 4.1.1 Course fees for an eligible AMDRAS mediator accreditation course run by a Registered Accreditation Provider.
- 4.1.2 Fees for an AMDRAS national mediator assessment to be completed following completion of an AMDRAS mediator accreditation course (if not included in the initial course fees).

4.2. Ineligible Expenditure

Ineligible expenditure includes, but is not limited to:

- 4.2.1 Usual or ongoing operating costs including rent, utilities, cleaning, wages, salaries, subscriptions and software licenses.
- 4.2.2 Purchase of any physical assets, including but not limited to mobile phones, laptops, tablets or other technology.
- 4.2.3 Professional development, including any training other than the specified AMDRAS mediator training for the applicant.
- 4.2.4 Legal fees including obtaining legal/professional advice in the execution and/or management of this funding agreement, the business, and/or fees associated with the administration of trusts.

5. Assessment

This grant program is not competitive. This means applications will be assessed in order of receipt from the date the program opens. Applications will be assessed using a consistent process using the eligibility criteria. Incomplete applications or applications that do not include all required supporting evidence will not be accepted.

State Growth may publish the number of grants approved and the remaining funds available on the State Growth website, until all funds are fully allocated.

Applicants that have commenced or have submitted an application that is yet to be assessed at the time funding is exhausted will be notified that all funding has been allocated.

Applications will be assessed against the applicant's ability to meet the eligibility criteria and additional information provided as part of the application process.

Applicants will be required to provide:

- details of the course they are enrolled in, including:
 - the details of the Registered Accreditation Provider running the course.
 - course costs in the form of an invoice.
 - the date course takes place.
 - an estimated course completion date.

State Growth may contact applicants during the assessment process to obtain further information. However, this may cause delays and may result in the application being assessed as ineligible due to the funding allocation running out prior to the information being provided. If further information is requested, this must be provided within seven (7) working days.

Applications will be assessed by a State Growth assessment team and approved by a senior State Growth representative.

All applicants will be notified of the assessment outcome via email from SmartyGrants.

The information provided may be subject to third party authenticity checks prior to being submitted to the assessment team.

6. Timeframes

Description	Date/time
Program opens for applications	Thursday 10 April 2025 10:00 am
Program closes (or when funding is fully allocated, which ever comes first)	Friday 20 June 2025 10:00 am
Applications will be assessed in order of receipt.	

Applications will not be accepted after the program closes.

7. Contact details

Questions regarding the program can be directed to State Growth by emailing FDMTasmania@stategrowth.tas.gov.au or calling 1800 440 026 before the program closes.

8. How to apply

Applications should be submitted using SmartyGrants.

For assistance with using SmartyGrants, please see the [applicant help guide](#).

Applicants without internet access should contact Business Tasmania on 1800 440 026 to discuss alternative methods for applying prior to the program closing, noting that the program will close early if funding is fully allocated prior to the nominated closing date.

- 8.1.1 Prepare:** Read the program guidelines before starting an application.
- 8.1.2 Start:** The application form is available on the Farm Debt Mediation website
- 8.1.3 Confirm:** Ensure all required information and documentation is accurate and attached. You may not be able to change an application or provide additional information after you submit your application.
- 8.1.4 Submit:** You will receive an email notification after you submit your application. Keep this notification as confirmation of your submission.
- 8.1.5 Assessment:** Applications will be assessed in order of receipt and will continue until the program closes or all funding allocated to the program is exhausted, whichever occurs first. Applicants that have commenced or have submitted an application that is yet to be assessed at the time funding is exhausted will be notified that all funding has been allocated and that the program has closed. Applications will be assessed by the Department of State Growth in order of receipt.
- 8.1.6 Further information:** During the assessment process the Department of State Growth may, at its discretion, require further information to support or clarify details provided in an application. In these instances, State Growth will re-open the application form and email the applicant with instructions about what is required.

Applicants who are required to provide further information forfeit their place in the queue.

An application will not be assessed under any circumstance until all required information, as outlined in the eligibility criteria, is fully submitted.
- 8.1.7 Notification:** We will notify you with the outcome of your application via email.

The information you provide may be subject to authenticity checks using third party software.

9. Grant funding agreement

If your application is successful, you will be required to enter a legally binding funding agreement.

The funding agreement, along with these program guidelines, provide the grant terms and conditions.

You will not receive payments until the funding agreement has been fully signed.

10. Appealing a decision

If your application is unsuccessful, you may appeal the decision.

The appeals process ensures that all applicants have been treated fairly.

We will consider appeals that relate to administrative process issues in grants management.

All appeal requests must be in writing and sent to FDMTasmania@stategrowth.tas.gov.au. Your request must be received within 28 days from the date of State Growth notifying you of the decision about your application.

11. Grant payments

Applicants will be asked to provide their bank account details on the application form at the time of applying so that grant payments can be processed once approved.

The bank account must be in your name. You may be asked to provide a copy of your bank statement or a letter from your bank as confirmation.

Providing incorrect bank account details may result in significant delays or not receiving your grant payment. We cannot guarantee the recovery of funds paid to an incorrect bank account.

You may be required to return some or all the funds if:

- you do not complete the mediator course and obtain accreditation as a mediator under AMDRAS prior to 30 June 2025;
- you are ineligible to be accredited as a mediator under the FDM Act;
- you do not use any or all of the funding provided;
- your situation changes in a way that prevents acquittal of the grant; or
- we find that the information provided to us is false or misleading.

Grant payments will be made in two equal instalments. Each instalment will be half (50 per cent) of the total grant request amount.

11.1. Instalment one

The first instalment will be paid upon signing on behalf of the Grantor of the grant funding agreement. The first instalment will be paid as 50 per cent of the total grant request amount.

11.2. Instalment two

The second instalment will be paid upon successful acquittal of the grant. The second instalment will be paid as a grant payment of the remaining 50 per cent of the total grant request amount. Evidence required for the second instalment is:

- 11.2.1 Evidence that you have completed the AMDRAS mediation course, and successfully obtained AMDRAS accreditation
- 11.2.2 evidence of expenditure such as invoices, receipts and images.

12. Taxation and financial implications

Grants distributed under this program may be treated as income by the Australian Tax Office (ATO).

We strongly recommend that, prior to applying, you seek independent advice from a tax advisor, financial advisor and/or the ATO, about the possible tax implications for receiving the grant.

Information on invoices can be found on our Business Tasmania website:
www.business.tas.gov.au/manage_a_business/invoices

13. Acquittal

An acquittal is a statement that is requested from successful grant recipients, confirming that the grant funding provided was used as it was intended and as per the statements made on the application form. It is a requirement that all grant recipients under this program acquit their grant.

When successful applicants are notified, they will automatically receive their acquittal form. This will be via an email from SmartyGrants. The email will include a link to the acquittal form and detail the due date for completion.

If a grant recipient cannot meet the expected acquittal due date, they must contact State Growth to discuss their individual circumstances well before the due date by phoning 1800 440 026 or via email at FDMTasmania@stategrowth.tas.gov.au.

13.1. How to acquit your grant

We will send you an acquittal form using SmartyGrants.

Your acquittal must include:

- your AMDRAS Mediator accreditation certificate; and
- evidence of expenditure such as invoices, receipts and images.

We may ask you to provide a Statement of Expenditure certified by an independent, professional auditor. You will be responsible for the cost of obtaining the certified Statement of Expenditure.

13.2. Failure to complete an acquittal

If you do not satisfactorily acquit your grant by the due date:

- you may be required to return the funding to State Growth; and
- you may be ineligible for other grants from State Growth.

Contact us to discuss any issue preventing you from acquitting your grant.

State Growth has a requirement and responsibility to ensure that the public funding administered is allocated fairly and spent responsibly. As such, the outcomes of grant funding are reviewed to ensure they align to the intended approved purpose.

At its discretion, State Growth may contact you at a later date and request evidence to demonstrate how you used your grant. Failure to provide this information by the required date will result in you having to repay the full grant funds to State Growth. Additional information on the outcomes of the activity may be requested up to 18 months after payment.

14. Publicity of grant assistance

State Growth is accountable for its spending of public funds, including providing grants. As part of the accountability process, State Growth may publicise, without further notice, information about the grants provided, including the level of financial assistance, the identity of the recipient, and the purpose of the financial assistance.

If you have received a grant from State Growth:

14.1 despite any confidentiality or intellectual property right subsisting in the grant funding agreement or deed, a party may publish all or any part of the grant funding agreement or deed without reference to another party, and you consent to the disclosure of your name in this context.

14.2 all obligations under the *Personal Information Protection Act 2004* still apply.

15. True and accurate information

You must take care to provide true and accurate information. Any information that is found to be false or misleading may result in action being taken and grant funds, if already provided, may be required to be repaid to State Growth.

16. Right to information

Information provided to State Growth may be subject to disclosure in accordance with the *Right to Information Act 2009*.

17. Information collection and usage

Personal information will be managed in accordance with the *Personal Information Protection Act 2004*. This information may be accessed by the individual to whom it relates, on request to State Growth.

State Growth may use and disclose the information you provide for the purposes of discharging its functions under the Program Guidelines and otherwise for the purposes of the program and related uses. State Growth may also use information received in applications and during the delivery of the project for reporting purposes.

18. Disclaimer

Although care has been taken in the preparation of this document, no warranty, express or implied, is given by the Crown in Right of Tasmania, as to the accuracy or completeness of the information it contains.

The Crown in Right of Tasmania accepts no responsibility for any loss or damage that may arise from anything contained in or omitted from or that may arise from the use of this document, and any person relying on this document and the information it contains does so at their own risk absolutely.

The Crown in Right of Tasmania does not accept liability or responsibility for any loss incurred by an applicant that are in any way related to the program.



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Section 3. Eligibility was amended to clarify that applicants may apply through an employer (with employer endorsement).