

## 1. OBJECTIVES

- To encourage the establishment, growth and retention of sustainable businesses in the Council area.
- To create employment opportunities and increase the level of business investment in the municipality.
- To support innovative businesses that demonstrate solid market potential and a sound business model, including long-term financial viability.
- To foster new partnerships and collaboration between businesses and Council.
- To facilitate and streamline the processes to establish or expand a business.

## 2. POLICY

Council continues to encourage business development in the municipality, and offers incentives to new development through a range of assistance. The level of possible incentives available is influenced by the degree of economic, social and environmental benefits which the new development will bring to the municipality, and the business's ongoing and independent sustainability.

Of primary importance to Council, is the creation, retention and development of business and employment opportunities within the Municipality.

The level of assistance able to be offered is dependent on how any new project meets the Project Benefit Assessment Criteria.

Notwithstanding the Assessment Criteria, Council will decide at its discretion the level of assistance to be offered to any new development.

## 3. CONTACT

For information and enquiries about this scheme, contact:

Economic Development Unit  
Swan Hill Rural City Council  
Swan Hill Region Information Centre | Cnr McCrae & Curlewis Street  
PO Box 488 | Swan Hill VIC 3585  
P: (03) 5032 3033  
E: [ecodev@swanhill.vic.gov.au](mailto:ecodev@swanhill.vic.gov.au)

## 4. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

To be considered for assistance, either a cash amount or equivalent works to that amount, an applicant must demonstrate that the development will provide either

significant net economic benefits through employment creation or retention, direct financial benefits to Council through additional income or reduced costs, social benefits through the improvement of community infrastructure (such as roads or recreational facilities) or environmental benefits through reduced greenhouse gas emissions, improved drainage or waste management.

Please review the criteria to determine whether your business is eligible. Applicants who do not meet the requirements or do not provide the relevant documentation will not be considered.

- Are you located within the Swan Hill Rural City Council boundaries or are you planning to relocate within the municipality?
- Do you have an Australian Business Number (ABN)?
- Does your proposal create employment opportunities and/or increase the level of business investment?
- Does your proposal demonstrate solid market potential?
- Do you have a complete, up-to-date set of financial statements?
- Do you have a strong supply base or economic links in the local area?
- Do you have a demonstrated long-term commitment to the region?
- Can you contribute to the social, economic and environmental needs of the area?
- Is your project investment ready, that is will be able to commence within 6 months of signing the funding agreement?

## 5. WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO APPLY?

Businesses or investors who are located or intend to locate within the Council area

An eligible business is defined as land used to<sup>1</sup>:

- a) sell goods by retail, or by retail and wholesale;
- b) sell services; or
- c) hire goods.

## 6. WHO IS NOT ELIGIBLE TO APPLY?

- Religious or political organisations.
- Government departments or agencies.
- National retail and hospitality chain outlets and bank branches. (Independently owned franchise businesses may apply).
- Businesses without an ABN.
- Those who are not located in the Council area, or not considering relocation if successful in obtaining Council assistance.
- Businesses who vacate commercial premises within the Council area to set up in different premises unless significant expansion can be demonstrated.

<sup>1</sup> Definition of retail premises in Swan Hill Planning Scheme

- Gambling operations and producers and retailers of tobacco products.
- Only Australian permanent residents or citizens are eligible to be classified as employees for the purpose of this assistance

## 7. ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE

### a. Major Investment Assistance

This assistance is designed for businesses creating 10 or more positions Permanent Full Time Equivalent (“PFTE”).

The range of assistance that may be provided includes:

- A key point of contact to help facilitate:
  - Statutory Planning including rezoning and subdivision
  - Council infrastructure requirements
  - Public Health
  - Natural Resources Management
  - Compliance/ Local Laws
  - Waste and Wastewater Management
  - Meetings with Councillors and Council employees
  - Meetings with State and Federal MPs
  - Meetings with key State and Federal Government Departments
  - Contacts with key utility providers
  - Contacts with Property and Employment Agencies
  - Contacts with Business Networks
- Provision of relevant documentation and reports including regional and site-specific maps, plans and strategies
- Assistance with funding applications excluding Council-provided grants.
- Businesses may be eligible for an investment incentive equivalent to a maximum of 75% of any additional rates received by Council directly as the result of the development for a period of up to five years.

### b. Minor Investment Assistance

This assistance is designed for businesses creating up to 10 positions PFTE

The range of assistance that may be provided includes:

- A key point of contact to help facilitate:
  - Statutory Planning including rezoning and subdivision

- Council infrastructure requirements
  - Public Health
  - Natural Resources Management
  - Compliance/ Local Laws
  - Waste and Wastewater Management
  - Contacts with key utility providers
  - Contacts with Property and Employment Agencies
  - Contacts with Business Networks
- Provision of relevant documentation and reports including regional and site-specific maps, plans and strategies
  - Assistance with funding applications excluding Council-provided grants.
  - Businesses may be eligible for an investment incentive equivalent to a maximum of 50% of any additional rates received by Council directly as the result of the development for a period of up to three years.

### **c. RURAL INVESTMENT ASSISTANCE**

This assistance is designed for businesses setting up outside of the towns of Swan Hill and Robinvale.

The range of assistance that may be provided includes:

- A key point of contact to help facilitate:
  - Statutory Planning including rezoning and subdivision
  - Council infrastructure requirements
  - Public Health
  - Natural Resources Management
  - Compliance/ Local Laws
  - Waste and Wastewater Management
  - Contacts with key utility providers
  - Contacts with Property and Employment Agencies
  - Contacts with Business Networks
- Provision of relevant documentation and reports including regional and site-specific maps, plans and strategies
- Assistance with funding applications excluding Council-provided grants.
- Businesses may be eligible for an investment incentive equivalent to a maximum of 75% of any additional rates received by Council directly as the result of the development for a period of up to five years.

## **8. APPLICATION PROCESS**

To apply, read the guidelines and fill in the Investment Attraction APPLICATION

Make sure to provide all required documentation.

Applications are ongoing and can be submitted at any time. It is highly advisable to schedule a meeting with the Economic Development Unit prior to submit your application. Call (03)5032 3033 or e mail [ecodev@swanhill.vic.gov.au](mailto:ecodev@swanhill.vic.gov.au) for an appointment.

## **9. ASSESSMENT PROCESS:**

Each application will be assessed against the objectives and assessment criteria outlined in this document. Conforming applications will be assessed on a competitive and merit basis.

All applications will be referred to the Manager of Economic and Community Development and assessed as follows:

- Applications requesting an investment incentive of less than \$50,000 (cash or in kind) are assessed by the Executive Leadership Team.
- All other applications are determined by Council based on a recommendation from the Executive Leadership Team.

Applications are ranked using a quantitative and qualitative assessment matrix developed for this purpose. Each application is assigned a score out of 100 based on the degree of economic, direct financial, social and environmental benefit.

Any business considered eligible for the receipt of financial or in-kind works assistance is required to enter into a funding agreement with Council which commits the business to agreed targets relating to the benefits to be derived. Prior to incentive payments being provided, the recipient is required to provide evidence that the targets have been met.

Canvassing or lobbying Councillors or employees of the Council in relation to any assistance application is prohibited during the application process. No further consideration will be given to these applications.

All decisions are final. There will be no review or appeal process. However, unsuccessful applicants are eligible to re-apply.

On average, applicants will be notified of the assessment outcome six weeks from the lodging of the application.