Snowy Valley Skills Development Service (SVSDS)

Program Guidelines

Introduction

The Snowy Valley Skills Development Service (SVSDS) program is a program to support rebuilding and reskilling the forest industry under the Bushfire Local Economic Recovery (BLER) Package.

The program will be delivered by ForestWorks to provide support to forest and timber businesses and workers in the Snowy Valley, with most activity occurring in and around Tumut and Tumburumba. SVSDS will provide support to forest and timber businesses and workers to recognise and adapt to new opportunities in the region through workforce development planning, skills recognition, upskilling and training.

This will involve holding regional roundtables, providing skills audits and training support to at least 40 businesses and at least 400 workers to support this crucial local industry and ensure a more sustainable economic future. The SVSDS is funded by the BLER Package which is part of the bushfire support program co-funded by the Commonwealth and NSW governments for bushfire recovery, response and preparedness in NSW.

ForestWorks is a not-for-profit organisation supporting the development of the forest, wood, paper and timber products industries and the people who work in them. ForestWorks works with industry, government and the education and training sector to improve skills standards and qualifications and support the development of specific industries, their people and enterprises.

Program Objective

The overarching objective of the project is to retain jobs and skills in the Snowy Valley region that could be lost as a result of the bushfire impact.

The SVSDS will support forest and timber businesses and their highly skilled workforces to remain in the Snowy Valley region.

The project seeks to support the industry to upskill and train workers for current and emerging opportunities in the region, including in the forest and timber industry. In doing so it will support sustainable jobs for forestry and timber workers in the Snowy Valley region. The project will contribute to recovery priorities that will mitigate the impact of the fires by providing retraining support for at risk forestry workers post-salvage. The project will expedite training that is highly relevant to the opportunities available in the affected areas and which builds on existing workforce skills.

The project will also facilitate long-term recovery needs by supporting industry to diversify and innovate in response to long-term timber supply shortages. The project will prioritise the retention of existing businesses within the industry and existing employment within those businesses which are considered sustainable in the long term. New employment opportunities are also anticipated in areas such as resource assessment, plantation re-establishment, silviculture and fire and disaster prevention and preparedness.

The project will also prioritise the development of skills to support forest industry business investments that will facilitate greater value-add of the resource that remains available. Where sustainable job opportunities do not exist, priority will be given to training and reskilling for opportunities in the local area, making best alternative use of the technical knowledge that exists within the industry. This will mitigate the high risk of technical knowledge being lost in the period before supply starts to return to pre-bushfire levels.

This will occur by:
- Identifying the current and emerging opportunities in the region which might be suitable for forest and timber businesses and displaced workers;
- Linking businesses and workers with opportunities available in the region;
- Supporting businesses and workers to adapt to change and capitalise on opportunities through skills audits and workforce development planning; and
- Providing upskilling and training for forestry workers to access specific employment opportunities in the region.

Key Outcomes

Key outcomes of the Snowy Valley Skills Development Service (SVSDS) Program ("the Program") include:
- Identifying business and employment opportunities in the region which might be suitable for forest and timber industry businesses and workers;
- Supporting at least 40 businesses and at least 400 workers in the forest and timber industry understand the current and emerging employment opportunities in the region;
- Supporting at least 40 business and at least 400 workers in the forest and timber industry identify the skills needs to capitalise on new opportunities in the region; and
- Supporting at least 400 workers in the forest and timber industry to access employment-focused upskilling and training.

Definitions

Applicant – means an enterprise applying for financial support under the Program.

Application – means the SVSDS Application Form as can be downloaded from www.forestworks.com.au/services/svsds.

Approved projects – are projects already approved by ForestWorks for Funding in accordance with the procedure outlined in these Program Guidelines.

Cash/In-kind – means a direct resource to support the skills development and could include a combination of cash, consumables, teaching space on site, access to plant and equipment, on site experts or access to facilities for best practice operating scenarios, learner work time.

Current employee – an employee who is currently employed by the Applicant

Department – means Regional New South Wales

Eligible Qualification, Skills Set, Unit of Competency or industry training – a nationally endorsed Qualification or a Training Package Skills Set or Unit of Competency recognised under the Australian Qualifications Framework, or recognised by Industry, and is of benefit to the Snowy Valley Forest and Timber Industry.

Enrolment – means the registration of a Learner with an RTO on approved training provider for the purpose of undertaking a course or module as set out in an Approved Project.

Enterprise Contribution – means a contribution to the cost of training of an Approved Project by an employer to the RTO or approved training provider by way of cash or in-kind contribution.

Government Contribution – means the amount of money contributed to the cost of the Approved Project by the Department, as administered by ForestWorks.

Industry training – training recognised by the Snowy Valley forest and timber industry to be of importance.

Learner – means a current, new or potential worker to whom training is provided under the Program.

New employee – an employee who has been employed for less than 3 months by the Applicant

Program – the Snowy Valley Skills Development Service (SVSDS) program

Project – employer's SVSDS application and associated activities related to the application

Recognition of Prior Learning – means a process whereby Learners are provided with an opportunity to have the skills and knowledge they have developed outside the formal education system assessed and valued (credited) towards their training under the Program.

RTO – Registered Training Organisation, providers and assessors of nationally recognised qualifications as defined by the Australian Skills Quality Authority.

Skills Set – a nationally endorsed Training Package Skills Set recognised under the Australian Qualifications Framework.

Training Cost – means the cost of providing Eligible Training

Unit of competency – means a module of learning which is a discrete section or part of a qualification that relates to a particular competency or cluster of related competencies.

Workforce Development Plan – means a written plan to help organisations identify gaps in their workforce capacity and capability to meet strategic and operational objectives.

Eligibility Requirements to Access Training Funds

To be eligible for financial assistance from the Program, the Applicant must:
- operate in the Snowy Valley, or adjoining NSW LGAs, Forest and Timber Industry
- agree to make a cash and/or in-kind contribution
- agree to provide documentation as detailed in the Application, in a timely manner.

To be eligible a Project must:
- be of benefit to the Snowy Valley Forest and Timber Industry
- provide nationally recognised training to current or potential employees, or be training recognised by the Snowy Valley Forest and Timber Industry as appropriate and relevant to the industry
- use an RTO or approved provider to deliver the training specified in the Application
- provide value for money.

To be eligible a Learner must be:
- be currently employed by the Applicant
- working in the Snowy Valley LGA or adjoining NSW LGAs
- or be a potential employee to the industry.

Training funds available

The SVSDS Project Team will assist Applicants to understand and access existing State or Federal Government training funding availability. If there is a financial barrier or State or Federal Government funding is not available, applicants can apply for up to $50,000 in SVSDS funding support for training, workforce development planning or skills audits per project. Applications for projects above $50,000 will be subjected to additional assessment processing stages and will be approved on a case-by-case basis.

To access the training fund, Applicants will be required to agree to make a cash or in-kind contribution of 50 per cent or to seek an exemption from the Project Steering Committee. The co-contribution may be met in whole or in part by accessing State or Federal Government funding. Exemptions may be considered on a case-by-case basis to ensure the financial resource situation of a company is not a barrier to receiving training support through this fund.

Application and Approval Process

The application and approval process will consist of the following steps:

Step 1: Assessment of training requirements
With the assistance of an RTO or approved provider, the Applicant conducts a Workforce Training Needs Assessment to identify training requirements. As part of this process it may be determined that a Workforce Development Plan is required for the Applicant.

Step 2: Gather information
The Applicant and RTO work together to gather all relevant employee information required to progress. The RTO will then determine State or Federal Government fund source eligibility. When confirmed the Applicant and RTO or approved provider need to work together to complete the Application Form and compile the required documentation.

Step 3: Submission of application
Applications are to be submitted to ForestWorks using the SVSDS Application Form.

Applications can be submitted via email to svsds@forestworks.com.au.

Applications must include fully completed and signed;
1. SVSDS Application form; and
2. Skills Audit/Training Needs Analysis; and
3. Justification and evidence of the cost of training.

Step 4: Assessment
The eligibility of all applicants will be assessed by the SVSDS Project Team. The Project Team may refer to the Project Steering Committee to assist them in the assessment of applications if necessary.

Applicants and Projects will be assessed according to the Program Eligibility Requirements outlined in this document.

Both an Applicant and their Project must be deemed eligible by the Panel in order to receive funding under this Program.

Step 5: Contract
A contract must be agreed and signed between ForestWorks, the Applicant and the RTO or approved provider to proceed with the Project.

Learner data for all eligible Learners must be submitted by the RTO or approved provider to ForestWorks electronically.

A signed SVSDS Privacy Notice for all Learners must also be submitted to ForestWorks via email to svsds@forestworks.com.au.

Communications

The RTO or training provider must provide ForestWorks with feedback on project progress and any issues or problems with training delivery on a quarterly basis.

The Applicant must submit satisfaction surveys and case study information to ForestWorks as specified in the Contract.

Administration

This Program will be administered by ForestWorks for and on behalf of the Department.

Any person requiring any further advice or seeking further information on the Snowy Valley Skills Development Service Program is asked to direct those enquiries to:

Local Assistance Coordinator – SVSDS
ForestWorks
Address: 60 Wynyard Street, Tumut, NSW, 2720
Ph: 0407 467 891
Email: svsds@forestworks.com.au

Timeframes

Applications will be received on a rolling basis between March 2022 and March 2023, or until the funding is exhausted.

Industry training that is not nationally recognised must be completed by April 2023.

Nationally recognised training must commence by, but does not have to be completed by, April 2023.