

On Farm Connectivity Program Round 3 – Public Consultation

Hello

I have completed the survey but found that the 150 characters available in the feedback areas was largely inadequate to properly reflect my thoughts on the questions.

Last round our business was successful in receiving a large number of approved applications. We are a telemetry reseller providing equipment such as tank level sensors, weather stations and flow monitoring equipment.

My primary concern after reading the guidelines for round three was about how potentially broad sweeping the list of non-eligible equipment could be. To me the descriptions are very much open to interpretations and leaves me wondering whether any of our equipment will be eligible this round, or is it all eligible?

Reading the guidelines I could interpret that the telemetry units on my weather stations is eligible but all of the sensors (wind, temp, rain, soil moisture etc) would be ineligible. As a supplier we really need clarity around the in-eligible equipment list.

I would really appreciate a phone call from someone to discuss the in-eligible items.

I welcome changes to the eligibility criteria as I believe that there was a lot of equipment funded in round 2 which shouldn't have been eligible. As suppliers need to be very clear about whether our equipment will be included in round 3 as we need to make changes in our business to accommodate the potential upcoming workload.

As a supplier I had initially underestimated the amount of work there was going to be in administering all the applications on behalf of my clients. By the end of it however I was quite pleased with the way it ran and think it is a far more efficient mechanism for undertaking the program. I understand the rationale behind the changes after being one of the business' that missed out on being involved in round 1 but I think that the rest of the system worked too well to abandon it at this stage. Perhaps just allowing other business to register at any time rather than having a hard cutoff would achieve the same result. I feel that the admin from your end would benefit greatly by maintaining the current system. After navigating through the first couple of applications the process is quite straightforward. Farmers who are only doing one application don't have that benefit and would end up relying on your support team a lot more than business who are doing multiple applications.

Running the system the way it was in round 2 had the advantage in my business of maintaining control of when applications were lodged, getting notified when they were accepted and being able to track their progress. When trying to implement the installation of a large amount of equipment it was quite useful being able to group the installs together rather than wait on notifications from the farmers.

We have had the opportunity to experience the process the way you are proposing with the PIRSA On-farm Drought Infrastructure Grants in South Australia. As a supplier the system hasn't worked nearly as well as the OFCP program did.

One of the changes I would request in round 3 is around the remittance slips. All the way through the application the key identifying number was the application number. When the payment was made there was no longer any reference the application number. I would request that the application ID be clearly visible on the adjoining documentation. We had quite a few invoices for the same amount, and it became quite a forensic task to match up which payment was for which client.

Regards [REDACTED]