

Performance of the Regional Investment Activation Fund and the Regional Job Creation Fund

Answers to Supplementary Questions

Australian Food and Pharmaceutical Industries

1. In your submission you touched on the fact that contractors increased their service charges after your application was approved. Did the Department of Regional NSW offer any assistance to you? If not, what kind of support would you have wanted from the Department?

I hadn't sought additional support, as I was content with the initial assistance received. However, this has led to budget constraints since much of the subsequent expenses were out-of-pocket. The consultant who aided me with the grant charged \$45,000, and through him, I incurred an extra \$30,000 on unnecessary services like accounting and building reports. Additionally, I invested in creating parking for extra staff and making fit-outs for TGA certification, which were not covered by the grant.

As of now, I'm yet to receive the final 10% of the grant, amounting to \$81,000, if this could be released along with half of the additional \$500,000 I've spent, it would significantly aid in completing the necessary tasks and would put me back on the track.

2. At the public hearing, you talked about the compulsory requirement to put up the NSW Government signage and the impact on contractor charges (page 15, uncorrected transcript). In your opinion, what changes should be made to the signage requirement to help grant recipients?

The requirement to display signage was indeed introduced towards the end of the project (you already have a part of solution in place). However, the local TV announcement by a government member about our receipt of the \$810,000 grant was sufficiently public. Despite this, I continue to face challenges with local tradespeople and traders. Keeping the sign displayed has led to us being consistently overcharged (the best solution is not to put it there at all and government support can be announced anonymously).