**Wakool Innovation Fund**

**Background:**

Western Murray Land Improvement Group are calling for applications from residents of the Wakool Irrigation Footprint to apply for the Wakool Innovation Fund.

Up to $25,000 is available for project/projects that contribute to an increase of on-farm efficiencies and demonstrate diversification or value adding potential or implement a new innovative technology.

This project is supported by the Australian Government’s Murray-Darling Basin Economic Development Program.

**Key Selection Criteria:**

The funding will be assessed on four key selection criteria based on the below:

1. Increase in on-farm efficiencies
2. Diversification or value adding potential
3. Implementation of innovative on-farm technology
4. Broader positive impact of the project/activity on other businesses and farmers in the Wakool Irrigation District

You will be asked to outline in your application how each of the criterion are met.

**Funding details:**

Up to $25,000 in funding is available with the total pool of funding being $25,000

The Wakool Innovation Fund Panel reserve the right to allocate funding as they choose to applicants.

For example, one successful applicant may receive the entire $25,000 or five recipients may receive $5,000 each.

Funding cannot be used to:

* Pay wages (contractors for installation of technology excepted)
* Pay lease costs
* Purchase livestock
* Performing “business as usual” maintenance work
* Purchase land

By submitting your application, you are agreeing to:

* Host an on-farm demonstration or workshop to demonstrate efficiencies or new technology open to the community to attend.
* Provide project information and results to WMLIG to produce a case study which will be supplied to the Australian Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment.

**Application Process:**

There are two application stages

1. Written Application (Applications Open midnight 1st October 2021 – 31st October 2021 midnight)

2. Presentation to Wakool Innovation Fund Panel (Presentations to occur between 14th November 2021 – 28th November 2021)

**Stage 1: Written application**

What does it involve:

Submitting a written application addressing the below criteria and questions.

Your application include:

You will be required to include the below in your initial written application

* Overview of your project
* Budget
* Desired outcomes
* Benef­­­it to local community

A shortlist of applicants will be contacted to progress to Stage 2.

**Stage 2: Presentation to Wakool Innovation Fund Panel**

What does it involve:

Presenting your project/concept face-to-face to the Wakool Innovation Fund Panel (please see below for panellists)

This will include time for Q&A from the panellists to further scope out your project.

Please note in the case of Covid-19 restrictions in place presentations may occur via video presentation.

**Example Projects:**

Some broad examples of projects include:

Example 1: Implementing Spray technology

Example 2: Improvements and efficiencies in irrigation infrastructure

Example 3: Investment in innovative equipment to increase livestock production

**Wakool Innovation Fund Panel**

The panel will be made up of 3 community members/board representatives. The decision made by the panel is final.

**Timeline:**

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| --- | --- |
| 1st October 2021 | Stage 1 written application open |
| 31st October 2021 | Stage 1 written application close |
| 1st November 2021 – 14th November 2021 | Panel to review applications and create Stage 2 shortlist.  Successful applicants will be contacted by the 14th November |
| 14th November 2021– 28th November 2021 | Stage 2 Presentations  (Contingency plan due to covid restrictions will be further assessment of the Stage 1 written submission and interview via video meeting) |
| 29th November 2021 – 6th December 2021 | Panellists to assess the applications |
| December 7th 2021 | Wakool Innovation Fund successful applicant(s) announced |

For successful applicant(s) only:

* All purchases must be made prior to 1st January 2022
* On-farm demonstration/workshop to be scheduled prior to February 15th 2022 (covid-restrictions permitting)
* Case Study to be produced by WMLIG in cooperation with the successful applicant(s) prior to March 15th 2022

**Terms and Conditions:**

* Please refer to the map on our website to check that you qualify as a Wakool Irrigation District. This includes any farmers, workers, landholders. This includes businesses that currently own or lease property.
* Payment will be made once the successful applicant(s) have produced receipts for their purchase(s)
* WMLIG staff members, board members and contractors will not be eligible to apply for this funding
* Any conflict of interest must be declared at the time of the application
* One application per business may be submitted

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