



Regional Economic Development Grants

Groundswell Drive Thru



The Regional Economic Development Grants program, commonly known as RED Grants, is a \$45.8 million (over eight years) State Government initiative that invests in locally-driven projects to stimulate economic growth and development in regional Western Australia.

Groundswell Drive Thru was one of 10 recipients for Round 3 Peel RED Grants in 2020-2021. The grant funds of \$33,000 enabled the business to establish a Bean to Bar Chocolate operation in Mandurah through the purchase of equipment required to wood fire roast fermented chocolate beans into nibs for the supply to local chocolate makers. This project supports the region's goals for growth in both food production and the tourism sector.

Being a recipient of the grant funds enabled the hospitality business to grow, thrive and expand their business. When interviewed, the owner of Groundswell, Lynne, said the overwhelming response to receiving the grant was "very grateful".

The grant funds have kickstarted and enabled many projects that would not have otherwise become a reality. For example, the funds have helped source equipment including a grinder and grinding equipment, secure a cocoa bean supplier (Honduras) and upgrade café premises. Local contractors were utilised to undertake the works for the café revitalisation creating economic benefit to the broader community.

Expanding Industry

Through diversification of their business, Groundswell was able to retain all jobs during the peak height of the COVID pandemic; as well as providing opportunities for trainees. The business expanded adding two new full-time members to their team and shifted some staff from casual employment to more permanent positions.

The business has been able to provide staff members opportunities to develop their skills and capabilities through the establishment of an in-house training program which focusses on improving four key skills:

- Roasting and packaging coffee and cocoa products
- Barista and café services
- Sales and customer service
- Baking and chocolate making



Diversifying Industry

With the help of the grant, the business has achieved its goal of creating a Bean to Bar chocolate industry within Mandurah. This involved sourcing the Cocoa beans from sustainable plantations, purchasing specialised equipment and roasting beans in a wood-fired coffee roaster. The new equipment has enabled cracking and winnowing of the beans to make them into nibs. The cocoa nibs are supplied to chocolate makers to refine, conch, temper and form organic milk and dark chocolate bars.

Many positive opportunities came from the development of the Bean to Bar chocolates, including the opportunity to explore new markets, such as sending the Bean to Bar chocolates to Singapore and a very upmarket Japanese retailer. This occurred during the pre-Christmas period and the Bean to Bar chocolates were available for purchase within a department store in Singapore. Groundswell are continuing to ship bars to Singapore and have also sent samples for coffee, chocolate nibs, cocoa tea husks and ceremonial cocoa. They have recently signed a distributor agreement with GrowHub and products will be on display at the Food Hotel Asia (FHA) Food & Beverage expo in Singapore. FHA Food & Beverage expo is the largest gathering of leading F&B manufacturers and emerging brands in a single platform. The 2022 FHA Food & Beverage is the event of the year for Asia's food & hospitality industry to discover top trends and innovations from across the globe.

Local restaurant Flics Kitchen have been using a range of the cocoa products in their menu offerings and held a chocolate degustation dinner which was well attended and received. This is just one example of how the expansion of Groundswell's offerings through the grant funding are supporting other local businesses. Groundswell are proud to provide local products through their café including locally sourced milk, Pinjarra Bakery pies and WA based juices and kombucha.



The objectives of the Round 3 RED Grants Program included:

- Sustainable jobs
- Expanding or diversifying industry
- Developing skills or capabilities
- Attracting new investment in the region
- Maximising recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic impacts

For more information about Peel Regional Economic Development Grants, please visit our website – www.peel.wa.gov.au or contact us on 9535 4140.

For further information about Groundswell head to groundswelldrivethru.com.au

Future Plans

Groundswell have several exciting long-term goals in the pipeline, such as the expansion of the business to a new local location future proofing for when they outgrow the current facility. The vision of this new building development is to establish “a custom or a purpose-built drive-through space, which is undercover.” The aims of this additional space would be focused on scaling up the roasting with a 60-kilogram wood fire roaster, plus a 30-kilogram wood fire roaster located within the area.

Overall, the Peel Development Commission is pleased to see the RED grant providing opportunities for Groundswell Drive Thru to expand and diversify their business and establish a thriving Bean to Bar chocolate industry in Mandurah, supporting the region's goals in the food production and tourism sectors.

Outcomes Achieved

RED Objective	Project Outcomes
Sustainable Jobs	4 FTE created, 6 FTE retained.
Expanding or diversifying industry	The opportunity to explore new markets due to the development of the Bean to Bar chocolates. Producing 50 kg of chocolate per month, on target to produce 6,000 kg of cocoa nibs in 2022.
Developing skills and capabilities	Providing opportunities for staff skill development through the establishment of an in-house training program which focusses on improving four key skills: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Roasting and packaging coffee and cocoa products 2. Barista and café services 3. Sales and customer service 4. Baking and chocolate making 10 trainees including leadership & management, food processing & food sales.
Increasing productivity	17% increase in turnover 5% trade and market connection
Local content	48% local content in project expenditure. Increased purchase of consumables from local suppliers.

**Strong economy
Creating jobs
Diverse industries**

