



King Island Regional Development Organisation



Who are we

The King Island Regional Development Organisation (KIRDO) is a not for profit, community-run business centre on King Island, Tasmania. Located in the middle of Bass Strait between the Tasmanian mainland and Victoria, it is a very isolated place which only obtained 4G service in 2022. The upgrade was a game changer for everyone the island, including the numerous agricultural businesses that generate most of King Island's economy. The Telstra Connected Communities Grant enabled KIRDO to purchase computers that now mean we can make the most of our faster connectivity.

What we needed

Having 4G on the island gave us the chance to improve KIRDO's service in all sorts of ways. Previously, we didn't have enough computers to make take full advantage of reliable connectivity. Getting two new laptops helped immensely. We use one for our volunteers to conduct digital literacy classes mostly, one to one sessions and the other for online meetings and training sessions in our boardroom.

How Telstra helped

The Telstra Connected Communities Grant enabled us to take full advantage of 4G connectivity. Many business, training and community services are now available to locals without having to leave the island. It's also given our tourism economy a boost because visitors have digital access to everything they take for granted at home.

Why it worked

The demand for online meetings has kept increasing since COVID. Before we had 4G and the available new computers with reliable connection, most residents travelled to mainland Tasmania to do many things – from business advice sessions and social service meetings to education. Now we can cater for all most kinds of local business and training needs. For example, Remote Services Australia uses the fast connectivity in our boardroom and other rooms to provide Centrelink, Medicare and other social services. KIRDO houses the King Island Online Access Centre, Visitor Information Centre, King Island Chamber of Commerce and with King Island Tourism and also using our meeting facilities. We host meetings of community groups like Landcare, private organisations and the not-for-profit employment agency, West Northwest Working. The new technology and connectivity also make it easier for TasTAFE to deliver its Chemical Certificate licence course for the cattle farmers who make up about 80 percent of businesses on the island.

Where to next

The popularity of our services means we'll keep accepting bookings for the KIRDO boardroom and organising workshops for our digital literacy program. We've recently partnered with the Study-King Island that with plans to open an office in our building to cater for students who are enrolled in advance education like University of Tasmania (UTAS) remote learning. It's early days, but we hope the arrangement will enable young people to stay on the island rather than having to move to Burnie, Hobart or Launceston. It will mean many students can continue working on their family farms while studying related courses like Ag' Science. We expect the Study-King Island to be up and running later this year.

The Telstra Connected Communities Grant Program

Applications for the 2024 Telstra Connected Communities grant program on Tuesday 27th of February and will close at 5pm on Wednesday 27th of March 2024. This round will make \$200,000 available for applications of up to \$10,000 each. Successful grants will be announced in June 2024 and successful applicants will have 12 months to complete funded projects.

Learn more about the 2024 Connected Communities grant round here

<https://frrr.org.au/funding/place/telstra-connected-communities-program/>