

**Regional Jobs and  
Infrastructure Fund**

**Stronger Regional  
Communities Plan**  
Application Guidelines

## 1. Context

### 1.1 Regional Jobs and Infrastructure Fund

The Regional Jobs and Infrastructure Fund (RJIF) is the Victorian Government's overarching regional development package. It focuses on major projects, employment and communities. More details on the RJIF are available at [www.rdv.vic.gov.au](http://www.rdv.vic.gov.au).

The RJIF has five strategic objectives:

1. create jobs of the future and diversify the regional employment base
2. improve productivity and enhance long-term competitiveness of regional Victoria through innovation and a transition to new growth opportunities
3. create the conditions for business growth by enhancing work force skills, providing enabling economic infrastructure and facilitating expansion into new markets
4. improve the liveability of our cities, centres and towns to attract and retain families and young people to live and work
5. enhance community capacity through collaboration, leadership development and regional planning.

The RJIF was established by the *Regional Development Victoria Act 2002* as a trust fund in the public account. The Act describes the activities for which the trust is to be applied:

- providing better infrastructure, facilities and services in rural and regional Victoria
- strengthening the economic, social and environmental base of communities in rural and regional Victoria
- creating jobs and improving career opportunities in rural and regional Victoria
- supporting the development and planning of local projects in rural and regional Victoria.

Regional Development Victoria (RDV) will administer the RJIF's three programs:

- Regional Infrastructure Fund
- Regional Jobs Fund
- Stronger Regional Communities plan.

## 2. Description and objectives of fund

### 2.1 Stronger Regional Communities Plan

The SRCP aims to support rural and regional towns in attracting families and young people to live and work. It will do so by investing in community-led initiatives and partnerships that create or enhance the conditions for economic growth and build resilient, diversified and sustainable economies.

Strong communities are characterised by high levels of social and economic participation.

They demonstrate effective decision-making and strong networks and are attractive to people considering moving to live and work.

The SRCP will support initiatives under the following two program streams:

- Community Capacity Building
- Population Attraction.

### 2.2 Program streams

#### 2.2.1 Community capacity building

This program stream aims to develop and strengthen local people's capacity to make a difference in their communities. It will do this by increasing participation and diversity in priority projects, processes and planning that address local challenges.

Activities that may be considered include, but are not limited to:

- Supporting locally-led partnerships to address economic development challenges and grow opportunities
- Establishing or growing community and small enterprise projects
- Community strengthening projects which may have a small infrastructure component
- Increase local civic and economic development skills
- Collaborations that result in local economic development, planning or community resilience initiatives activities to flourish
- Increasing local community participation, diversity and collaboration in planning, decision making and regional priority projects

#### 2.2.2 Population attraction

This program stream aims to attract groups, such as professionals and skilled labour, businesses, families and young people to regional Victoria. It will do this by supporting priority projects that promote relevant lifestyles and employment opportunities.

Activities that may be considered include, but are not limited to:

- events designed to promote the benefits and abilities of the local area and industries
- engaging community groups to welcome new and potential families to the area
- developing marketing and promotion strategies for towns undergoing significant change
- using existing networks to identify and promote employment opportunities.

### 2.3 Activities that will generally not be funded

The following activities would generally not be considered:

- requests for retrospective funding, where projects have commenced (i.e. equipment purchased, contracts entered into or construction has begun) or have been completed prior to receiving funding approval
- projects requiring ongoing funding from the Victorian Government
- ongoing operating costs or salary subsidies except where a salary subsidy provides administrative and project management support for groups of local government authorities and project partners
- private sector projects undertaken as a result of a Victorian Government contract
- projects where funding is normally provided by other state, commonwealth and/or local government sources
- any costs to meet regulatory requirements
- the purchase of land.

## 2.4 Who can apply

Applications will be considered from:

- private sector businesses and agencies
- business and industry groups including:
  - chambers of commerce and business associations
  - industry peak bodies
  - business and industry clusters and networks
- local government authorities
- government agencies
- not-for-profit organisations, including community groups that
  - are an incorporated body, cooperative or association
  - have an Australian Business Number (ABN) or can provide written advice from the Australian Tax Office that no withholding tax is required from the grant payment
- higher and other education institutions
- regional organisations e.g. regional strategic planning alliances.

Individuals are not eligible to apply.

## 2.5 Definition of rural and regional Victoria

Rural and regional Victoria is defined as the 48 local government areas including six alpine resort areas set out in Schedule 2 of the *Regional Development Victoria Act 2002* and available at [www.rdv.vic.gov.au](http://www.rdv.vic.gov.au).

The 10 regional city local government areas are Ballarat, Greater Bendigo, Greater Geelong, Greater Shepparton, Horsham, Latrobe, Mildura, Wangaratta, Warrnambool and Wodonga.

The remaining 38 local government areas including six alpine resort areas are referred to as the rural local government areas.

## 2.6 Funding details

Applicants are expected to make a financial contribution or source third-party funding. Projects should maximise their funding support from a range of sources, including commonwealth/ local government and community, private sector and regional organisations.

Priority may be given to projects that are considered as investment ready.

Funding will be available on the following basis:

Applicant	Funding available per project	Maximum funding ratios for co-contributions
Regional City Local Government Authority	Up to \$50,000	Up to RDV \$2: \$1 applicant
Rural Council Local Government Authority	Up to \$50,000	Up to RDV \$3: \$1 applicant
All Other - private sector, NGOs etc	Up to \$50,000	Up to RDV \$3: \$1 applicant

While joint investment with other Victorian Government program funding is encouraged, co-contributions from 'other' sources to meet the required funding ratio must be derived from non Victorian Government sources. In determining the RDV funding level, the total Victorian Government contribution will be taken into consideration.

In-kind contributions can be included as part of the total project costs in calculating the level of grant assistance.

In-kind contributions will be considered subject to the following requirements:

- no more than 75% of applicant (and partners) contribution can be in-kind
- professionals costed at \$80-150 per hour
- skilled labour costed at \$45 per hour
- unskilled labour costed at \$20 per hour
- equipment costed at standard commercial hire rate

### 3. Application and assessment process

The process for applying for funding under the program is briefly outlined below:

- contact your local RDV office to discuss your project
- RDV will undertake an initial assessment against program eligibility and assessment criteria and provide you with feedback
- after considering feedback, you may decide to apply for program funding
- RDV will assess your application against the assessment criteria
- RDV will make a recommendation to the Minister for Regional Development
- the Minister will consider the advice and determine whether or not to approve the application for funding
- you will receive a letter confirming the outcome of your application.

Applicants will be provided with an online application form to clearly and succinctly describe the project, expected outcomes and benefits as well as resource requirements

The assessment criteria will be based around the **'What, Why, How and Who'** of the project as follows:

#### ***What is the project seeking to achieve?***

- outlines clear objectives and proposed outcomes particularly demonstrating key elements of the relevant sub-program
- addresses an existing gap in these areas
- outlines a way to sustain project benefits once funding ceases.

#### ***Why is this project needed / of benefit to the community?***

- quantifies the scale and nature of the challenge the project is seeking to address
- is strongly supported at a community level and consistent with local Council Plans
- is identified by or consistent with the directions of Regional Strategic Plans
- is supported by local knowledge and information demonstrating the challenges being confronted by the community such as natural disasters, rapid economic change, population growth and/or decline
- for population attraction initiatives, the following additional criteria applies:
  - targeting specific markets to suit specific town characteristics and location
  - finding a balance between promotional strategies and realistic assessment of its local potential.

#### ***How will this project be delivered; project management, budget, timelines, resources?***

- is supported by a clear scope and realistic time-frames
- is viable and represents value for money.

#### ***Who will deliver the project and who else will be involved or benefit?***

- demonstrates a collaborative approach with a range of partners and resources required to undertake the project.

## 4. Conditions of funding

### 4.1 Funding agreements

Successful applicants will be required to enter into a funding agreement with RDV detailing all funding obligations and conditions. The standard terms and conditions on which the funding is offered are available from the RDV website at [www.rdv.vic.gov.au](http://www.rdv.vic.gov.au) or contacting RDV on **13 22 15**.

The funding agreement is a legally enforceable document that clearly defines the obligations of both parties. The funding agreement aims to protect the Victorian Government's interests and to ensure the efficient and effective use of public money. It also ensures there is appropriate recognition of Victorian Government support on project related publications, media releases and promotional material.

Funding agreements must be signed by the organisation's Chief Executive Officer (or equivalent) and will:

- describe the purpose for which the funding must be used
- set out any requirements or conditions that must be met prior to the payment of a grant instalment
- outline agreed milestones and project outcomes that must be achieved before payment of a grant instalment.

Once the funding agreement has been executed, the applicant will be required to actively manage and deliver the project, and provide progress reports to RDV. During the course of the project, RDV may conduct site visits as necessary.

In some instances, based on project size, complexity and the amount of funding being provided, a project control group (or equivalent) may need to be established with regular meetings and reports. RDV may be either a participant or observer in these meetings.

Successful applicants must enter into a funding agreement and commence the project within one year from the date of offer of the funding. If a project does not commence within this timeframe, the grant will be reviewed by RDV.

### 4.2 Evaluation and reporting

Applicants must submit a completion and evaluation report assessing the success of the project in meeting its stated objectives. Subsequent evaluation reports may be required for up to three years following the completion of the funded project.

Successful applicants will generally be required to submit progress and completion reporting, assess progress of the project against milestones, outputs and outcomes, and provide evidence of project completion. This will be dependent on the scope of initiative and funding milestones.

Successful applicants may be required to contribute information on project outcomes, including longer-term impacts beyond project completion, for use in program evaluation reviews and/or RDV marketing materials. It is the responsibility of successful applicants to put in place adequate data collection arrangements to capture the appropriate data in relation to outputs and outcomes. These arrangements will assist RDV to undertake robust evaluation of the RJIF.

### 4.3 Competitive neutrality

All successful applications to the RJIF from a government body, including local government authorities and government agencies, will be required to comply with the Competitive Neutrality Policy Victoria, in respect of any commercial goods or services offered by the body as a result of the grant.

#### 4.4 Privacy

Any personal information about you or a third party in your application will be collected by RDV, a statutory body within the Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources (DEDJTR) for the purpose of grant administration.

This information may be provided to other Victorian Government agencies for the purposes of assessing your application. If you intend to include personal information about third parties in your application, please ensure they are aware of the contents of this privacy statement.

Any personal information about you or a third party in your correspondence will be collected, held, managed, used, disclosed or transferred in accordance with the provisions of the *Information Privacy Act 2000 (Vic)* and other applicable laws. DEDJTR is committed to protecting the privacy of personal information.

The Department's privacy policy is available from:

**Privacy Officer**  
**Department of Economic Development,**  
**Jobs, Transport and Resources**

GPO Box 2392  
Melbourne, VIC, 3001  
Tel: (+ 61 3) 9665 9535  
Email: [privacy@ecodev.vic.gov.au](mailto:privacy@ecodev.vic.gov.au)

Enquiries about access to information about you held by DEDJTR should be directed to:

**Freedom of Information Manager**  
**Department of Economic Development,**  
**Jobs, Transport and Resources**

GPO Box 2392  
Melbourne, VIC, 3001  
Tel: (+61 3) 9208 3112  
Email: [foi@ecodev.vic.gov.au](mailto:foi@ecodev.vic.gov.au)

#### 4.5 Acknowledgement

Successful applicants need to acknowledge the Victorian Government's support through the provision of a grant from the RJIF. Promotional guidelines form part of the funding agreement and include the requirement that all activities acknowledge Victorian Government support through logo presentation on any activity-related publications, media releases and promotional material. A Victorian Government endorsed sign must also be placed at the site of infrastructure activities.

Successful applicants must liaise with RDV to coordinate any events or announcements related to the activity. Successful applicants may be required to contribute information on activity outcomes for use in communications materials.

### 5. Additional information and resources

Regional Strategic Plans and the Rural Councils Victoria Migration and Trends Analysis Toolkit may be useful in planning for delivering activities.

## 6. Contact details of regional offices:

Applicants requiring further information should contact your local RDV office or email: [rdv@rdv.vic.gov.au](mailto:rdv@rdv.vic.gov.au)

### Ballarat

111 Armstrong Street Nth. Ballarat 3350  
**Tel:** (+61 3) 5327 2800  
**Fax:** (+61 3) 5327 2830  
**Email:** [information.ballarat@rdv.vic.gov.au](mailto:information.ballarat@rdv.vic.gov.au)

### Bendigo

Level 1, 56-60 King Street, Bendigo 3550  
**Tel:** (+61 3) 4433 8000  
**Fax:** (+61 3) 4433 8099  
**Email:** [information.bendigo@rdv.vic.gov.au](mailto:information.bendigo@rdv.vic.gov.au)

### Geelong

Level 2, Harrison Place, 237 Ryrie Street, Geelong 3220  
**Tel:** (+61 3) 5215 6000  
**Fax:** (+61 3) 5215 6099  
**Email:** [information.geelong@rdv.vic.gov.au](mailto:information.geelong@rdv.vic.gov.au)

### Horsham

Wimmera Business Centre  
 62 Darlot Street, Horsham 3400  
**Tel:** (+61 3) 5381 2762  
**Fax:** (+61 3) 5381 2514  
**Email:** [information.horsham@rdv.vic.gov.au](mailto:information.horsham@rdv.vic.gov.au)

### Mildura

131 Langtree Avenue, Mildura VIC 3500  
**Tel:** (+61 3) 5051 2000  
**Fax:** (+61 3) 5051 2020  
**Email:** [information.mildura@rdv.vic.gov.au](mailto:information.mildura@rdv.vic.gov.au)

### Shepparton

79a Wyndham Street, Shepparton 3630  
**Tel:** (+61 3) 5895 4100  
**Fax:** (+61 3) 5822 2554  
**Email:** [information.shepparton@rdv.vic.gov.au](mailto:information.shepparton@rdv.vic.gov.au)

### Swan Hill

324 Campbell Street, Swan Hill 3585  
**Tel:** (+61 3) 5036 4823  
**Email:** [information.swanhill@rdv.vic.gov.au](mailto:information.swanhill@rdv.vic.gov.au)

### Traralgon

33 Breed Street, Traralgon 3844  
**Tel:** (+61 3) 5116 7300  
**Fax:** (+61 3) 5175 0324  
**Email:** [information.traralgon@rdv.vic.gov.au](mailto:information.traralgon@rdv.vic.gov.au)

### Wangaratta

Wangaratta Government Centre  
 1st Floor, 62 Ovens Street, Wangaratta 3677  
**Tel:** (+61 3) 5722 7101  
**Fax:** (+61 3) 5722 7109  
**Email:** [information.wangaratta@rdv.vic.gov.au](mailto:information.wangaratta@rdv.vic.gov.au)

### Warrnambool

Old Police Station  
 South West TAFE  
 9 Gilles Street, Warrnambool 3280  
**Tel:** (+61 3) 5561 4135  
**Fax:** (+61 3) 5561 3851  
**Email:** [information.warrnambool@rdv.vic.gov.au](mailto:information.warrnambool@rdv.vic.gov.au)

### Wodonga

111-113 Hume Street, Wodonga 3690  
**Tel:** (+61 2) 6059 0200  
**Fax:** (+61 2) 6059 0250  
**Email:** [information.wodonga@rdv.vic.gov.au](mailto:information.wodonga@rdv.vic.gov.au)

