

# Council Support Package

Regional and Rural Council Guidelines



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## Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the traditional Aboriginal owners of country throughout Victoria, their ongoing connection to this land and we pay our respects to their culture and their Elders past, present and future.

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# 1. Fund Overview

## 1.1. About the Fund

The Council Support Package is part of the Victorian Government's \$2 billion Regional Investment Package and will support local government organisations to undertake projects that will create the types of legacy outcomes that may have been generated by the hosting of the 2026 Commonwealth Games in Regional Victoria.

The Fund has two types of support:

- set funding for 'Hub Cities' Councils for Greater Geelong, Greater Bendigo, Ballarat, Latrobe and Shepparton.
- competitive funding open to all other 'Regional and Rural Councils'.

These guidelines are for the funding to 'Regional and Rural Councils' stream of support.

## 1.2. Fund Objectives

Funding will support projects and activities identified, planned or commenced during Commonwealth Games planning and preparation that will create legacy benefits aligned with the 6 Commonwealth Games Legacy Pillars, including:

- celebrating the rich culture of Victoria's First Peoples. Boost opportunity and capacity for Traditional Owners (TO) corporations and businesses, and supporting long term social and economic outcomes for Aboriginal Victorians.
- embedding accessibility and inclusion practices to achieve long-term benefits for regional communities. Includes accessible and inclusive infrastructure and workforce programs.
- boosting regional economic outcomes by backing local jobs, business and manufacturing, and enhance ongoing trade and investment in regional Victoria.
- building community cohesion and civic pride and support social development, particularly for those experiencing hardship or disadvantage.
- utilising sustainable practices to invest in climate adaptation and support climate resilient regional communities.
- increasing Victorian regional community sport and volunteering participation across all abilities and age groups, through education and promotion of healthy lifestyles.

## 1.3. Fund Outcomes

The Fund seeks to support projects that can generate outputs and outcomes that will deliver lasting economic, social, environmental, and sporting and / or wellbeing benefits for regional Victorians.

# 2. Grant Funding

Regional and Rural Councils can apply for multiple projects, ranging from \$20,000 to \$100,000 (ex. GST) per project.

Each project must be submitted in a separate application process.

Maximum funding per Council is \$100,000 (ex. GST) with no co-contribution required.

# 3. Projects – how the funding can be used

Each council may apply for multiple projects up to \$100,000 (ex. GST) to on objectives and outcomes of the Funding Program.

The focus of each project should be on realising the ideas and opportunities identified and / or continuing the work that commenced during the Commonwealth Games planning and preparation phase.

Building on previous planning work, projects should address place-based needs and deliver benefits linked to Legacy pillars.

See [Section 3.2](#) for project examples.

## 3.1. Activities and Projects

Projects should, where possible, utilise previous planning, consultation or other activities undertaken by the applicant in readiness for the Commonwealth Games.

Project funding requests should:

- clearly identify community benefits and outcomes linked to the six pillars, listed at [1.2](#), and how impact will be demonstrated
- identify the place-based beneficiaries (community cohorts, industry sectors, visitors) of the project aligned with the longer-term outcomes
- demonstrate the need and / or demand for the project through stakeholder consultation, previous analysis or a plan for undertaking further consultation
- demonstrate any engagement with First Peoples
- consider accessibility and inclusion principles in engagement, planning and implementation
- consider the sustainability of the activity or project demonstrated by analysis of future use, future funding avenues and / or future management resourcing
- have no constraints in evidence that would stop the project being implemented or outcomes from being achieved, e.g. issues with permits, labour supply or community concerns
- show planning for implementation, including budgeting, time frames and resourcing in line with anticipated completion in 2026, and
- identify any further planning required for implementation, including stage of development and consultation.

The Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions (the Department) will make the final decision on eligible projects, activities or expenditure.

## 3.2. Example projects

Projects are not limited to the following examples and applicants should consider their previous planning and engagement with stakeholders to develop their application.

- Support to Traditional Owner communities and groups to enhance and promote culture, community and economic development, participation, and leadership.
- Support to Traditional Owner communities and groups to enhance and promote culture, community and economic development, participation, and leadership.
- Develop community activation spaces for gatherings and celebrations, such as theatres, soundshells, amphitheatres, and parks. May include infrastructure such as large screens, seating, shelters, and shade.
- Attract and retain unique visitation to the region, such as elite team training camps or targeted interest groups but is not a major event.
- Develop or improve shared pathways that connect event spaces to community or business centres and promote active transport, park and ride, and support liveability, community activation, tourism and major events.
- Support and activate volunteers, especially to enhance experience of visitors to the region and support the operation of major events.
- Build the capacity of local community groups to respond to community need and build liveability in the community.
- Support and activate the business sector to maximise benefit from major events and visitation, such as local procurement strategies
- Redevelop streetscapes in business or community settings, including public art, street furniture, drinking fountains etc,
- Integrate smart city technology, including wireless charging, free public Wi-Fi and people counting sensors to monitor activation of business district and community spaces.

- Install place-based way finder signage that connects spaces and places and celebrates Traditional Owner culture.
- Build an Event equipment pool that would be utilised by various community groups such as mobile staging, relocatable seating, and large screens.

Activities that may be funded through other funds such as major events, sport and recreation participation, and eligible Tiny Towns projects may not be considered.

### 3.3. Other Regional Package funding

Other Victorian Government programs, including programs under the Regional Package, may be more suitable sources of funding for some projects. If this is the case, the project may be referred to that Program.

## 4. Submission and approval of proposals

Councils need to submit project plan for how the funds would be utilised in line with [Section 3](#) above.

The application must clearly identify stakeholders, co-design strategies and delivery partners, and include a detailed budget and clear timelines.

Projects will be assessed in line with [Section 5](#) below and the Department may request further information during the assessment phase.

Successful projects over \$50,000 will be recommended to the Minister for Regional Development for approval.

Projects of \$50,000 or under will be eligible for approval by the Department.

Applications must be submitted by **25 February 2024**.

## 5. Project Assessment

The Department will consider projects submitted against the criteria in the table below. Project will be required to sufficiently meet each criterion to the department's satisfaction to be recommended for funding.

<b>Project Assessment Criteria (weighting)</b>	<b>Considerations</b>
<b>Project alignment (25%)</b>	<p>The project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>shows sufficient alignment with the Fund objectives and six pillars and how impact will be demonstrated</li> <li>the level of utilisation of any previous planning, consultation or other activities undertaken in readiness for the Commonwealth Games occurring in regional Victoria.</li> </ul>
<b>Engagement (15%)</b>	<p>The project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>shows an appropriate level of engagement with First Peoples and focus on Accessibility and Inclusion</li> <li>has demonstrated a level of consultation and stakeholder engagement or has incorporated further consultation into project.</li> </ul>
<b>Demand and need for the project (20%)</b>	<p>The project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>identifies and addresses an opportunity or need that benefits identified place-based cohorts (e.g. community members, industry sectors, visitors)</li> <li>demonstrates the need, for example through feasibility studies, reviews and reports, community engagement or has a plan to carry these out if required.</li> </ul> <p>Identifies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>likely future use and demand and</li> <li>future management and resourcing strategies and / or</li> <li>has a plan to determine future use and resourcing.</li> </ul>
<b>Community benefits (10%)</b>	<p>The project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>identifies local procurement benefits or</li> <li>identifies local employment and recruitment benefits or</li> <li>involves the activation and involvement of communities e.g. supports and partners with local groups, supports volunteering and skill development.</li> </ul>
<b>Project readiness (20%)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The project is ready to proceed and has identified outcomes, timelines, budget, and delivery risks.</li> <li>Sufficient resourcing has been identified to deliver the proposed project.</li> <li>Any required approvals are either in place or have an appropriate pathway to be achieved.</li> </ul>
<b>Value for money (10%)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Costings for the project are reasonable and based on sound estimates.</li> </ul>

## 6. Conditions of Funding

Successful applicants will enter into a legally binding grant agreement with the Department.

An offer of funding is not binding on the Department unless and until both the Department and the applicant execute the grant agreement.

Further work on the project must not commence until the grant agreement has been executed (signed) by both the Department and the applicant.

The grant agreement details all funding obligations and conditions such as:

- payments
- funding use
- grant activity deliverables
- monitoring and milestones
- project outcomes
- reporting and acquittals
- audit and
- termination and refund conditions.

Once the grant agreement has been executed, the grant recipient (successful applicant) will be required to commence the project within the agreed timeframe. If a recipient does not commence the project by the commencement date, the Department may in its absolute discretion terminate the grant agreement.

### 6.1. Publicity / acknowledgement of support

The Department requires grant recipients to acknowledge the Victorian Government's support by using the Victoria State Government logo or relevant government entity logo under the title 'supported by' on promotional materials for the grant project.

Acknowledgement of the Victorian Government's support in promotional material will depend on the grant given and will be specified in the grant agreement, e.g., required representation on channels or collateral such as websites, signage, advertisements, and brochures.

The Department may include the name of the Recipient organisation in its annual report.

Recipients must obtain written approval from the Department before making public announcements about receiving the grant. The Department may promote the benefits of the grant and the State's support for the project, and recipients must cooperate with the Department in any promotion. These requirements will form part of the Grant Agreement with successful applicants.

### 6.2. Program Evaluation

As a condition of funding, grant recipients will be required to participate in evaluation activities initiated by the Department. This may include reporting on outputs and outcomes and completing surveys throughout the delivery of the funded project and for a nominated period after project completion to measure progress towards achieving outcomes.

Evaluation is critical to the Department in understanding the impact of funding, supporting continuous improvement in program design and delivery, and for delivering effective outcomes for Victoria.



## 7. Privacy Statement

Any personal information provided in an application for this program will be collected and used by the Department for the purposes of assessing eligibility, program administration, program review and evaluation.

In the assessment of an application, it may be necessary to share personal information with State and Commonwealth Government departments and agencies, as well as other external experts. If personal information about a third party is included in the application, the applicant must ensure the third party is aware of and consents to the contents of this privacy statement.

The Department collects demographic information for economic reporting purposes. No personal information is used in reporting; all reports are presented with aggregated data.

Any personal information about the applicant or a third party will be collected, held, managed, used, disclosed, or transferred in accordance with the provisions of the *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014* (Vic) and other applicable laws.

For enquiries about access or correction of personal information, contact the relevant Regional Development Victoria Office and Office for Suburban Development (Appendix 2). Other concerns regarding the privacy of personal information, can be emailed to the Department's Privacy Unit at [privacy@ecodev.vic.gov.au](mailto:privacy@ecodev.vic.gov.au). The Department's privacy policy is also available by emailing the Department's Privacy Unit.

## 8. Terms of Applying

### 8.1. Probity

The Victorian Government makes every effort to ensure the grant application and assessment process is fair and undertaken in line with the guidelines.

The decisions on all matters on recommending and awarding of the grant funding is at the absolute discretion of the relevant Minister and Department. This includes recommending for approval a lesser amount than that applied for.

These guidelines and the application terms may be changed from time to time, as appropriate.

Victorian Government staff work to the Code of Conduct for Victorian Public Service Employees (Section 61) of the *Public Administration Act 2004* (Vic), including processes set out to avoid conflicts of interest.

### 8.2. Complaints and feedback

Any complaints or feedback about this grant opportunity may be made in relation to the timeliness of the process, communication provided by the Department and adherence to the published program guidelines.

Written feedback should be sent to Regional Development Victoria.

### 8.3. Conflict of interest

A conflict of interest is a situation in which someone in a position of trust or influence has competing professional or personal interests.

Applicants must advise the Department of any real or perceived conflict of interest relating to a project for which it has applied for funding.

### 8.4. Information only

These guidelines and any discussions you may have with Regional Development Victoria representatives are for information only, and do not constitute advice.

[rdv.vic.gov.au](http://rdv.vic.gov.au)

