

Regional Industry Groups and Chambers of Commerce Program

Program Guidelines

The Regional Industry Groups and Chambers of Commerce Program is part of the \$64 million Victorian Government Recovery Package announced by the Victorian Government in response to the 2019/20 Bushfires.

The program provides support to regional industry groups and chambers of commerce to ensure local economies have increased capacity to respond and adapt to any future disaster.

Program Purpose

The program aims to address specific challenges identified in the 2019-2020 Bushfires State Recovery Plan of the business community being disconnected and overwhelmed; and the need to ensure local community and business networks are connected, organised and collaborative as a recovery priority.

Activities supported under the program will deliver on measures identified in the State Recovery Plan identified Business and Economy actions- Local Community and Business Networks Priority Action.

Program Outcomes

The program provides support to regional industry groups and chambers of commerce to ensure local economies have increased capacity to respond and adapt to any future disaster.

Program outcomes are consistent with Business & Economy outcomes identified in the SRP, in that long-term business and economy outcomes seek to ensure industries and businesses recover and are stronger.

- **Business and Economy**

- *Local community and business networks are becoming more connected, organised and collaborative.*

Program Funding

The program provides direct funding of up to \$10,000 to identified Regional Industry Groups and local Chambers of Commerce in the 18 local government areas affected by the 2019-20 Victorian Bushfires.

The funding is to support the hosting of local/regional business networking event/s that bring businesses together to plan for recovery from the Victorian Bushfires and subsequent events (for example, COVID-19 restrictions) with a focus on the most impacted communities.

The types of projects that will be supported include:

- business events that bring people together and enhance wellbeing, including supporting the hiring of guest speakers, and/ or subsidizing accommodation costs of participants incurred in attending the event/s
- local and regional events that provide business networking opportunities, including best practice workshops, seminars, conferences and industry award events
- promotional marketing of local and/or regional business networking events
- offsetting of salaries or operating costs for staff or contractors specifically incurred in the hosting of local and/or regional business networking events.

What will not be funded:

- feasibility studies, business plans, cost benefit analysis and economic impact studies
- projects that may have a negative impact on existing businesses/ services.

Funding toward ongoing salaries for existing staff or contractors, as well as infrastructure projects or ongoing operating costs, will also not be funded through this program.

Funding Conditions

Organisations must enter into a funding agreement with the Victorian Government. The funding should be fully expended and activities completed by 30 June 2022.

Within the funding agreement, an Activity Schedule is to be negotiated which sets out the following:

- activity details
- funding amounts
- agreed actions and payments
- activity budget
- reporting requirements
- acknowledgement and publicity requirements
- other activity specific requirements, and
- notices.

Due to the outbreak of coronavirus disease (COVID-19), any activities undertaken as part of the agreement must follow the criteria established by the Department of Health for social distancing and other transmission reduction measures available at:

<https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/hygiene-physical-distancing#actions-for-an-organisation-workplace-or-employer>

Recipients must provide details on how they will ensure the safety and well-being of all participants for COVID-19.

Activities must align with the Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions policies on inclusion and diversity in relation to speakers and attendees at sponsored events.

The Department has adopted the panel pledge as part of its gender equality strategy, available at:

<https://malechampionsofchange.com/wp->

[content/uploads/2016/04/The-Panel-Pledge.pdf](#) (the Panel Pledge).

The funding recipient must commit to the Panel Pledge regarding gender balance at professional conferences, events, public taskforces and forums.

The funding recipient must provide a post-event evaluation report on completion of the event.

Process

Regional Development Victoria (RDV) will notify identified Regional Industry Groups and local Chambers of Commerce that direct funding of up to \$10,000 (excl. GST) will be available to each of them for the purpose of hosting local networking events and/or regional business networking events.

Acceptance of the funding is to be submitted to RDV, along with a project plan setting out the planned activity/ies of the individual industry group or chamber of commerce.

Recipients are highly encouraged to reach out to their respective Economic Development department within their local Council to ensure the proposed event/s align with the Economic Development Strategy and Recovery Plan.

Eligibility

The Minister for Regional Development will advise identified regional industry groups and chambers of commerce located within each of the 18 local government areas listed in Table 1 of the funding available under this program.

The decision to provide funding to any additional organisations that express an interest in accessing funding through this program will be at the discretion of the Minister and dependent on funding availability.

To be eligible for funding, the regional industry group or chamber of commerce must:

- be based in one of the identified 18 local government areas and alpine resort areas identified under Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA) for business recovery, as listed in Table 1 below
- be a non-profit, business membership-based organisation (with a membership of businesses) that services a specific geographic area within one of the 18 local government areas listed in Table 1

- have the core purpose of acting for its members and promoting commerce in a specific geographic area
- hold a current Australian Business Number (ABN) and have held that ABN as at 1 November 2021
- be registered with the responsible federal or state regulator or with the relevant local council.

Table 1: Eligible Local Government Areas

Alpine
Ararat
Ballarat
East Gippsland
Glenelg
Golden Plains
Greater Bendigo
Indigo
Mansfield
Moyne
Northern Grampians
Pyrenees
Southern Grampians
Strathbogie
Towong
Wangaratta
Wellington
Wodonga
Alpine Resort Areas
Falls Creek
Mount Buller
Mount Hotham
Mount Stirling

Contacts

East Gippsland and Wellington should contact Regional Development Victoria - Traralgon. Phone: (03) 5116 7300 or email: information.traralgon@rdv.vic.gov.au

Alpine, Indigo, Mansfield, Towong and Wangaratta should contact Regional Development Victoria – Wangaratta. Phone: (03) 5722 7101 or email: information.wangaratta@rdv.vic.gov.au

Strathbogie should contact Regional Development Victoria – Shepparton: Phone (03) 5895 4100 or email: information.shepparton@rdv.vic.gov.au

Wodonga should contact Regional Development Victoria – Wodonga: Phone: (02) 6059 0200 or email: information.wodonga@rdv.vic.gov.au

Ararat, Ballarat, Golden Plains and Pyrenees should contact Regional Development Victoria – Ballarat. Phone: (03) 5327 2800 or email: information.ballarat@rdv.vic.gov.au

Northern Grampians should contact Regional Development Victoria – Horsham. Phone: (03) 4344 3111 or email: information.horsham@rdv.vic.gov.au

Glenelg, Moyne and Southern Grampians should contact Regional Development Victoria – Warrnambool. Phone: (03) 5561 4135 or email: information.warrnambool@rdv.vic.gov.au

Greater Bendigo should contact Regional Development Victoria – Bendigo. Phone: (03) 4433 8000 or email: information.bendigo@rdv.vic.gov.au

Authorised by the Hon. Mary-Anne Thomas, Minister for Regional Development

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