

# Portland Diversification Fund

## Program Guidelines

October 2023

# Portland Diversification Fund

## 1. Context

In recent years, the Portland and Great South Coast community and businesses have worked in collaboration with a wide range of stakeholders including the Glenelg Shire Council, Great South Coast Regional Partnership, Barwon South West Regional Development Australia Committee, and Committee for Portland to develop regional community resilience and increase local economic opportunities.

The region continues to have low industry diversity and is reliant on commodity-based drivers. The COVID-19 pandemic has presented additional challenges.

The Victorian State Budget 2021-2022 provided funding to build on these stakeholder relationships by supporting the implementation of a Portland Economic Diversification Plan which includes the Portland Diversification Fund (PDF). The fund supports projects in a place-based approach to diversification which will facilitate growth and resilience in the Portland/Glenelg Shire economy.

This initiative is consistent with the principle of place-based structural adjustment support; will be delivered in collaboration with the local government, local industry, business, and the community; and has the following strategic objectives:

- Improved economic resilience of the Glenelg Shire;
- Reduced impediments to economic diversification in the Glenelg Shire;
- Increased diversity of employment opportunities in the Glenelg Shire;
- Increased business investment confidence in the Glenelg Shire; and
- Drive long-term economic growth in the Glenelg Shire through support of key economic development projects and the delivery of community-led responses to social and economic challenges.

A new dedicated Portland unit within Regional Development Victoria (RDV) will work to actively identify and facilitate business growth and new jobs through the new Portland Diversification Fund (PDF), other funding streams and other non-financial means of support. The new team will work with proponents to fast track and realise investment opportunities.

## 2. Information only

These Guidelines and any discussions you may have with an RDV office representative are for information only, and do not constitute advice. Applicants should seek independent advice before making an application or entering into a Grant Agreement.

Applications are at the cost of the applicant.

RDV makes no representation that a grant of funds will be made to any applicant and reserves the right to make no funds available under the PDF.

All grant applicants, as applicable, must operate under an appropriate [COVIDSafe Plan](#) to govern operations.

## 3. Assessment of non-financial risks

Applications to the PDF must include information to enable RDV to assess financial and other non-financial risks associated with the proposal as part of its due diligence. This includes consideration of elements that may pose a reputational risk to the State, such as:

- Whether the applicant has already received grants from the Victorian Government;
- Whether the applicant has failed to meet key contractual obligations for previous grant agreements with the State. **Note:** as appropriate, delays due to COVID-19 restrictions and responses will be taken into consideration at the Department's discretion;
- Where the proposal has already been fully funded by the applicant through other means (e.g. capital raising on the Australian Stock Exchange); and
- Where due diligence (probity checks) uncovers adverse findings.

## 4. Portland Diversification Fund

The \$7.5 million Portland Diversification Fund (PDF) will support activities to strengthen economic diversification, growth, and resilience of the Glenelg Shire. Types of projects supported are shovel ready capital projects and planning activities that accelerate projects to investment ready.

## Types of eligible activities

Activities will only be considered where they will support economic diversification in the Glenelg Shire. Eligible activities include:

- Strategic planning focusing on economic diversification of the Glenelg Shire.
- Investigations into potential barriers to, or opportunities for, economic diversification in the Glenelg Shire (including, but not limited to, business cases and feasibility studies).
- Implementation activities targeted at removing barriers to, or capitalising on opportunities for, economic diversification in the Glenelg Shire (including, but not limited to, program or service delivery, or infrastructure works).
- Investment in existing businesses that will expand operations to support growth and create diversity in new jobs.
- Targeted investment assistance and incentives for businesses to move to or expand into the Glenelg Shire involving new capital investment and job creation.
- Investing in workforce skills and development to support economic diversification in business or industry, including addressing housing supply for workers that support economic diversification, existing business or industry.

## Available funding

The funding ratio for planning activities is Victorian Government \$4 : \$1 Other.

To note: planning/feasibility activities will be required to be completed within a 12-month period.

The funding ratio for capital projects is Victorian Government \$2 : \$1 Other.

Funding available is capped at \$500,000 excluding GST per activity, however applications will be accepted for larger funding requests and will be considered on a case-by-case basis considering the level of strategic importance of the resultant project for Glenelg Shire in driving economic growth and prosperity.

Applications that have high applicant contributions would be considered more favourably.

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 assessing the requested PDF funding level, the total Victorian Government contribution will be taken into consideration.

Community groups and social enterprises are eligible to claim in-kind contributions. The in-kind contribution will be capped at 25 per cent of the applicant's contribution. Interested parties are encouraged to speak with RDV Portland.

## Who can apply?

Grant applications will be considered from:

- Private sector businesses (note: Aboriginal businesses are encouraged to apply);
- Incorporated not-for-profit organisations operating businesses;
- Charities and incorporated not-for-profit organisations, including community groups;
- Business and industry groups including:
  - Chambers of commerce and business associations;
  - Industry peak bodies; and
  - Business and industry clusters and networks.
- Traditional Owner/Custodians groups;
- TAFE institutions and universities;
- Utility and services providers;
- Water corporations;
- Local Government Authorities;
- Start-up businesses in the abovementioned categories; and
- Other organisations agreed by Regional Development Victoria at its discretion.

Grant applications will not be considered from:

- Victorian Government departments and agencies;
- Government departments and agencies outside Victoria;

- Commonwealth Government departments and agencies;
- Unincorporated organisations or joint ventures, unless under an auspice arrangement where the auspice accepts legal responsibility for the project and any agreement entered into under the PDF, (see above); and
- Individuals (who are not eligible to apply either as a sole applicant or as an auspicee).

## 5. Activities that will generally not be funded

The following activities will generally not be considered for funding:

- projects in the aluminium supply chain
- projects primarily to meet regulatory requirements;
- requests for retrospective funding where projects have been completed or have commenced prior to receiving funding approval;
- ongoing operating costs or salary subsidies;
- purchase of property or land;
- projects undertaken by the private sector as a result of a Victorian Government contract;
- projects normally funded through commonwealth, state, or local government sources;
- projects requiring ongoing operational funding from the Victorian Government once completed;
- business investments that will result in no or minimal ongoing employment; and
- activities that are considered Local Government Authority core business.

All potential applicants are required to work with RDV to determine how the Victorian Government can help facilitate and support their growth and job creation. There are several pathways and sources of support available from the Victorian Government that may be more appropriate to particular projects and proponents.

## 6. Fund details

The PDF is a contestable fund with applications open until 2025, unless the funds are exhausted prior. Funded activities must be completed by 30 June 2025.

## 7. Application and assessment process for PDF

To ensure the suitability of projects, all grant applicants will need to go through the following process:

### Step 1: Prior to application

Prior to submitting a formal application, applicants are advised to:

- read these Program Guidelines to establish eligibility;
- read the terms and conditions for the funding offered; and
- Contact the Portland RDV office to discuss proposed project activity, aim, objectives and intended outcomes. If you wish to proceed with an application, RDV will supply an expression of interest form for the applicant to complete.

A positive assessment at this expression of interest stage is not approval of an application.

### Step 2: Prepare a full application

If the initial expression of interest assessment is supported to proceed, the applicant will be invited to apply for program grant funding and an application form will be sent to the applicant.

**Note:** an application form will be provided if the initial assessment of the expression of interest is successful. The initial assessment is no guarantee of funding, and the applicant makes a formal application at its own cost and risk.

Applicants should use the application form to clearly and succinctly describe the activity by detailing:

- The challenge or opportunity it is looking to address;
- The objectives of the activity and resultant project;
- The desired outcomes;
- The outputs to be delivered; and

- Any resource requirements.

Applicants should address the assessment criteria of the PDF program and provide the supporting documents required by the application form.

All applications must provide:

- A response to the assessment criteria;
- Cost estimates/quotes;
- Letters of support, as appropriate;
- Evidence confirming funding sources;
- Evidence of land ownership/tenure, as appropriate, for example when seeking funding to conduct statutory planning activities;
- Outline of planning and regulatory approvals that may be required, and any identified issues, as appropriate;
- Documentation to support the project such as a feasibility study, business case, or business plan;
- Where the applicant proposes to enter the funding agreement on behalf of a supported organisation the application must include written confirmation from the supported organisation that they have reviewed the application and agree to its content and that the activity will be delivered by the applicant on their behalf; and
- A copy of the applicant's COVIDSafe Plan (if applicable)A Fair Jobs Code Pre-Assessment Certificate (where applicable - see section 6, Compliance and Governance).

### Step 3: Assessment process

Applications will undergo a multi-stage assessment process.

RDV will determine the activity's eligibility against the applicant and activity eligibility criteria and undertake probity checks and financial risk assessments of the applicant organisation where necessary. Ineligible applications will not proceed to further assessment.

Eligible applications will be considered by Assessment Panels against the assessment criteria outlined in section 8 (below). The Assessment Panels will make recommendations for funding to the Minister for Regional Development.

Where relevant, comments and advice will be sought from other Victorian Government departments and agencies.

### Step 4: Approval process

All eligible applications will be considered by the Minister for Regional Development for funding under the PDF criteria. The Minister may grant funding at their absolute discretion.

Applicants will be advised of the outcome of their application in writing. Successful applicants will receive a letter of offer from the Minister for Regional Development. The letter of offer will outline the funding obligations attached to the offer of funding.

## 8. Assessment Criteria

In preparing the application, applicants will be asked to provide relevant supporting documents to demonstrate the project's ability to address each of the following criteria:

### a) Strength of supporting diversification in the of Glenelg Shire economy - 25% weighting

To what extent would the project deliver economic or community development outcomes against one or more of the following:

- Facilitate new investment that supports economic diversification in Glenelg Shire;
- Facilitate the diversification of an operation or growth of existing businesses and/or supply chain in Glenelg Shire;
- Facilitate the creation of jobs in the private or public sector in Glenelg Shire;
- Support infrastructure development that supports economic diversification in Glenelg Shire; and
- Generate long-term benefits that remain after funding has ceased.

- For grant applications over \$500,000 excluding GST, also consider the level of strategic importance of the resultant project for Glenelg Shire in driving economic growth and prosperity.

**b) Project Need - 25% weighting**

- Addresses an existing identified gap or issue;
- Has an identified need for the project supported by evidence of previously undertaken investigations;
- Requires Victorian Government support such as funding, facilitation, other interventions, or approvals to proceed, or bring investment forward;
- Details the risk to the project without Victorian Government support from this source;
- Is supported by local, regional, state or commonwealth strategy or plan, knowledge and information demonstrating the challenges being confronted by the community such as drought, rapid economic change, population growth and decline; and
- Is supported by the [regional partnership](#), local government authority, the community and is consistent with regional plans, shared priorities and the direction of local, regional state or commonwealth strategic plans.

**c) Project Delivery - 25% weighting**

To what extent does the project meet the following:

- Demonstrates project feasibility (i.e. how the project benefits will be sustained once funding ceases);
- Is investment ready, supported by a clear project management approach, relevant approvals, and realistic timeframes and able to be delivered within required timeframe, within budget;
- Is financially viable, based on sound cost estimates and represents value for money;
- That all legal, land tenure, planning, and environmental issues have been identified and resolved or satisfactory resolution strategies are in place;
- Access to suitable project management in both the developmental and operational phases of the project;
- That project risks have been identified and strategies are in place to manage them;
- Detailed preliminary project implementation plan demonstrating how the project can be successfully delivered within anticipated timeframes;
- Incorporates principles of environmentally sustainable design and addresses Universal Design while complying with relevant anti-discrimination legislation;
- Is consistent with good heritage practice, i.e. The Burra Charter (if heritage listed);
- Sources materials and resources to deliver the project which strengthen the regional community and economy; and
- Applicant's ability to co-contribute a higher amount.

**d) Capability, Capacity and Track Record - 25% weighting**

To what extent does the applicant/project meet the following:

- Has undertaken thorough project consultation in developing the project including project partners, other funding bodies, sponsors, other Government Departments and Agencies, community etc.;
- Is financially viable and has the capacity to manage and complete the project;
- Where appropriate, demonstrates experience in relevant project delivery, including on-time on-budget track record; and
- If relevant, demonstrates successful application of previous funding received from the Victorian Government.

## Compliance and Governance

### 1. Project costing treatment of GST

Applicants should note that all project costs included in the application must be exclusive of GST. Applicants must have an Australian Business Number (ABN) and be registered for GST or provide written advice from the Australian Taxation Office that no withholding tax is required to be withheld from the grant payment.

### 2. Who signs the application?

Applications from Local Government Authorities must be signed by the Chief Executive Officer.

Applications from other proponents must be signed by the Chief Executive Officer (or person authorised to bind the organisation).

### 3. Conditions of funding

Successful applicants will be required to enter into a Grant Agreement with RDV, detailing all funding obligations and conditions.

The standard terms and conditions on which the funding is offered for each program are available by contacting their local RDV representative.

Grant Agreements are legally enforceable documents that clearly set out the obligations of both parties. The Grant Agreement aims to protect the Victorian Government's interests and the efficient and effective use of public money.

It also ensures there is appropriate recognition of Victorian Government support in project-related publications, media releases and promotional material.

Grant Agreements must be signed by the organisation's Chief Executive Officer (or equivalent person with authority to bind the organisation) 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; and
- outline agreed milestones and project outcomes that must be achieved before payment of a grant instalment.

Once the Grant Agreement has been signed, the applicant will be required to actively manage and deliver the project and provide accurate progress reports to RDV. During a 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. At its discretion, RDV may be either a participant or observer in these meetings.

Successful applicants must enter into a Grant Agreement and commence the project within three months from the date of the funding offer.

If a project does not commence within this timeframe, the grant will be reviewed by RDV.

Projects with a grant amount of \$1 million or more are required to meet the Local Jobs First Policy requirements: <https://localjobsfirst.vic.gov.au>.

Where the Fair Jobs Code (FJC) applies, additional conditions will be included in the Grant Agreement to meet the requirements of the FJC (see section 6, Compliance and Governance).

### 4. Monitoring, evaluation, and reporting

Successful applicants will be required to cooperate with an evaluation which is undertaken during and/or after completion of the project. Successful applicants will also 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.

After completion of the project, applicants must submit annual evaluation reports assessing the project's success in meeting its stated objectives, outputs, and outcomes. Depending on the significance of the project, these evaluation reports may be required for up to three years following completion of the funded project.

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 RDV marketing materials. It is the responsibility of successful applicants to put in place adequate collection arrangements to capture the appropriate data in relation to outputs and outcomes.

These arrangements will assist RDV to undertake a robust evaluation of the PDF.

RDV reports on grants and programs it administers. The reporting includes the identity of successful applicants and projects and, where applicable, deviations from or exceptions to the assessment and approvals processes set out in these guidelines.

### 5. Competitive neutrality

All successful applications to the PDF from a Government body, including Local Government Authorities and

Government agencies will be required to comply with the Competitive Neutrality Policy Victoria (if applicable) in respect of any commercial goods or services offered by the body as a result of the grant.

## 6. Fair Jobs Code

The Fair Jobs Code (FJC) is implemented by Victorian Government departments, agencies and public bodies to support and promote fair labour standards and ensure compliance with employment law. The FJC aims to improve employment outcomes for people employed by businesses that receive funding from the Victorian Government.

The FJC will apply to grants valued at \$500,000 or more (exclusive of GST) with a key milestone to deliver new jobs in Victoria. Where the FJC applies:

- grant applicants must hold a Fair Jobs Code Pre-Assessment Certificate (Certificate). This Certificate must be obtained prior to an application being submitted to the relevant grant program; and
- grant recipients must submit a Fair Jobs Code Plan in accordance with the specific requirements of their grant agreement.

For further information and full details of the requirements of the FJC, grant applicants should refer to the FJC and FJC Guidelines which can be found at: <https://www.buyingfor.vic.gov.au/fair-jobs-code-suppliers-and-businesses>

## 7. Acknowledgement

Successful applicants need to acknowledge the Victorian Government's support through the provision of a grant from the PDF. The Grant Agreement includes a requirement that all activities acknowledge Victorian Government support through logo presentation on any activity-related publications, media releases and promotional material in accordance with the Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions (DJPR) guidelines.

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 the state to use in communications materials.

## 8. Privacy

Any personal information about the applicant or a third party in the application will be collected by RDV, a statutory body within DJPR for the purpose of grant administration. This information may be provided to other Victorian Government agencies for the purposes of assessing applications. If personal information about third parties is included in the application, ensure third parties are aware of the contents of this privacy statement and the contents of the DJPR Privacy Policy available from the Privacy Officer (details below).

Any personal information about the applicant or a third party in correspondence will be collected, held, managed, used, disclosed, or transferred in accordance with the provisions of the *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014 (Vic)*, *Health Records Act 2001 (Vic)* and other applicable laws. DJPR is committed to protecting the privacy of personal information.

The department's privacy policy is available from:

### ***Privacy Officer***

Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions GPO Box 2392  
Melbourne, VIC, 3001, AUS  
Email: [privacy@ecodev.vic.gov.au](mailto:privacy@ecodev.vic.gov.au)

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

### ***Freedom of Information Manager***

Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions GPO Box 2392  
Melbourne, VIC, 3001, AUS Email: [foi@ecodev.vic.gov.au](mailto:foi@ecodev.vic.gov.au)

## Contact Details

Regional Development Victoria  
Portland

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Note. RDV Portland does not have a reception and enquiries are encouraged to phone or email staff to arrange an appointment.

