

GUIDELINES

Business Support Fund

COVID-19 assistance to small businesses

Program summary

The Victorian Government has announced a \$500 million package, the Business Support Fund (the Fund), to support small businesses that employ staff and have been highly impacted by COVID-19 restrictions.

The Business Support Fund operates through two Streams:

- **Stream One** targets small businesses that meet the standard eligibility criteria (refer to Section 1 below) and operate in industry sectors that have been subject to closure or highly impacted by COVID-19 shutdown restrictions announced by the Victorian Government.
- **Stream Two** provides support to small businesses in any other sectors that meet the standard eligibility criteria and are enrolled as eligible participants registered to receive support through the Commonwealth Government's JobKeeper Payment scheme.

Businesses will be required to attest to their eligibility and provide supporting documentation (including a Business Activity Statement) through the application process. Applicants will be subject to audit by the Victorian Government or its representatives.

Eligible businesses will be provided with a grant to support them to manage in these unprecedented circumstances.

These guidelines provide the basis for program eligibility - please read this document before completing the application form.

Completed application forms are to be submitted to the Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions.

1. Expanded Eligibility Criteria

1.1 To be eligible for a grant, businesses¹ must meet the following eligibility criteria:

- Employ people; and

¹ Businesses are those entities where a business name is registered with the Australian Securities and Investment Commission (ASIC). In the case of a charity it is registered with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC); incorporated associations are registered with Consumers Affairs Victoria (CAV); and sole traders are identified by ABN registration. Note that any adverse findings against a business will be taken into consideration.

- Have a turnover of more than \$75,000²; and
- Have a payroll of less than \$650,000³; and
- Hold an Australian Business Number (ABN) and have held that ABN at 16 March 2020 (date of the State of Emergency declaration); and
- Have been engaged in carrying out the operation of the business in the Australian State of Victoria on 16 March 2020; and
- Operate in an industry sector that has been subject to closure or highly impacted by shutdown restrictions announced by the Victorian Government⁴; **OR**
- Be enrolled as eligible participants in the Commonwealth Government's JobKeeper Payment scheme⁵.

2. Other application information

- 2.1 While owners of businesses that do not employ people (non-employing businesses) are not eligible for funding through this program, they may seek support through the Commonwealth Government's JobKeeper Payment scheme.
- 2.2 Funding will be allocated through a grant process, through which businesses are invited to apply for a grant of \$10,000.
- 2.3 Applicants are required to submit an application online via the Business Victoria website (business.vic.gov.au). All questions in the application need to be completed to ensure timely assessment and grant payment.
- 2.4 Applicants are required to provide a copy of their most recent Business Activity Statement (BAS)⁶.
- 2.5 Applicants to Stream 2 will be required to supply the business' JobKeeper Payment scheme registration number⁷.

² Generally \$75,000 in annual turnover is the threshold for quarterly submission of a Business Activity Statement (BAS) and is evidence that your business is registered for GST. Note for not-for-profit businesses, alternative evidence of turnover can be provided. For further information go to the Australian Tax Office website [link](#).

³ Victorian businesses do not have to pay payroll tax if their total annual payroll is under \$650,000. Note that Victorian Government is providing full payroll refunds for the 2019-20 financial year to small and medium businesses with a payroll of less than \$3 million.

If your company is part of a group of companies that is registered for payroll tax and will receive the payroll tax refund [announced as part of Government's \$1.7 billion Economic Survival Package], your company is ineligible for this funding program.

⁴ These reflect the Restricted Activity Directions of the Deputy Chief Health Officer [link](#) and additional business types identified in the Premier's media release of 21 March. Further information is available on the Business Support Fund [web page](#). Your industry Australian Business Number (ABN) Registration includes your self-nominated industry classification and this will be used to determine your eligibility for this criterion. For information on how to update your ABN, go to the Australian Business Register website [link](#).

⁵ The JobKeeper Payment scheme (JobKeeper) is a Commonwealth Government program to support businesses significantly affected by the coronavirus to help keep more Australians in work ([Link JobKeeper](#)). JobKeeper supports small businesses that have had (or are expected to have) their turnover reduced by 30 per cent or more. To demonstrate that your business is enrolled as an eligible participant in JobKeeper you must supply your JobKeeper registration receipt.

⁶ See footnote 2.

⁷ See footnote 5.

3. Available funding

- 3.1 The grant amount is \$10,000 per business.
- 3.2 A business as defined by its ABN can only receive one grant under the Fund, for either Stream 1 or Stream 2.

4. How the funding may be used

- 4.1 Grants are provided to support eligible businesses that have been impacted by the shutdown restrictions enacted by Government, due to COVID-19. Grant funds could be used for example on:
 - Meeting business costs, including utilities, salaries, rent
 - Seeking financial, legal or other advice to support business continuity planning
 - Developing the business through marketing and communications activities
 - Other supporting activities related to the operation of the business.

5. Evidence of eligibility and compliance

- 5.1 Applicants must certify that they meet the eligibility criteria.
- 5.2 Applicants will be subject to audit by the Victorian Government or its representatives and will be required to produce evidence (such as payroll reports to demonstrate impact) at the request of the Victorian Government for a period of four years after the grant has been approved.
- 5.3 If any information in the application is found to be false or misleading, or grants are not applied for the purposes of the business in accordance with the terms of funding as set out in these guidelines and attached application, the grant will be repayable on demand.

6. Other information about this program

- 6.1 The Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions reserves the right to amend these guidelines and application terms as required.
- 6.2 Further information may be found at business.vic.gov.au or through the Business Victoria Hotline at 13 22 15.
- 6.3 Applications will be accepted until 1 June 2020.
- 6.4 The Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions will endeavour to notify all applicants on the outcome of their submitted application within five business days.