

OFFICIAL

Tourism and Events



**SMALL AND
MEDIUM EVENTS
PROGRAM
GUIDELINES**

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1 Program Summary

1.1 Program context

Events are important for building community cohesion and creating jobs. However, many small to medium community events have encountered significant obstacles in their return to operation following COVID-19.

The Victorian Government committed \$3 million in the 2022-23 Victorian State Budget to support the return and recovery of small and medium sized community events in Greater Melbourne.

The Small and Medium Events (SME) Program will support a range of creative, cultural and community sporting events across Greater Melbourne to rebuild capacity in the sector and improve community connection.

1.2 Program objectives and outcomes

The objectives of the Small and Medium Events Program are to:

- Support small and medium events across Greater Melbourne that provide value to their local communities
- Aid recovery of Victoria's events sector
- Encourage an active events ecosystem that supports events and supply chain businesses to attract and retain volunteers and staff
- Ensure that Victoria continues to be a vibrant capital for events of every scale.

The intended outcomes of this program are:

- Small and medium community events have the confidence to return to pre pandemic capacity, if not stronger
- Ongoing viability of community events is supported
- Events sector knowledge and experience is retained through staff retention.

2 Program dates

Key dates:

- Applications open on 31 January 2023 at 10:00am
- Applications close on 28 February 2023 at 4:00 PM (late applications will not be accepted).
- Applicants will be notified of the application outcome in April 2023.
- Events must be staged between 1 June 2023 and 31 December 2023.

3 Available Funding

Applicants can request grant funding between \$5,000 and \$50,000 (exclusive of GST) based on the estimated number of attendees (see Table 1 below). Attendance numbers are to be based on previous event attendance or an attendance estimate if this is a new.

Table 1: Grant value tiers

SME Grant Tiers	Estimated in-person attendees	Value of grant funding
Tier 1 – Smaller Events	1,000 – 4,999	Between \$5,000 and \$25,000
Tier 2 – Medium Events	5,000 – 10,000	Between \$25,000 and \$50,000

Successful applicants will receive 50 per cent of awarded funding upon signing the grant agreement. The remaining 50 per cent will be provided upon successful delivery of the event and completion of any post-event reporting requirements.

An applicant (as defined by its ABN) may only apply for one grant and only one grant is available per event.

3.1 Funding from other sources and the grant amount

If the event has been successful in receiving any other State Government funding for your event, then it is ineligible for further funding under the SME program.

Funding from the SME program may be used to complement other non-Victorian Government investment in an event. Applicants will need to match the funding requested to at least a 1:1 ratio. Grants are capped based on event size and estimated attendance.

All income that does not come from the Victorian State Government can be counted towards the applicant contribution, including Federal or Local Government funding, ticket sales and sponsorships.

Example 1: If your event is expected to have 3000 people, and you request \$15,000 in grant funding from the SME program, you must contribute at least \$15,000. This contribution can come from funding sources including but not limited to Federal or Local Government grants, sponsorship or ticketing sales revenue.

Example 2: If your event is expected to have 8500 people, and you request \$30,000 in grant funding from the SME program, you must contribute at least \$30,000. This contribution can come from funding sources including but not limited to Federal or Local Government grants, sponsorship or ticketing sales revenue.

4 Eligibility Criteria

4.1 Eligible applicants

Applicant organisations must meet the following criteria to be eligible:

- be the event organiser with the right to hold, collect the proceeds from ticket sales, and/or re-schedule the event that is the subject of the application
- hold an active Australian Business Number (ABN) registered in Victoria and have held that ABN on and from 1 July 2022¹
- agree to participate in an evaluation of the program.

Applicants can be the following entity types:

- a private sector company
- a not-for-profit or registered charitable organisation that is an incorporated body or association
- an incorporated trustee on behalf of a trust provided that the trustee:
 - a) under the trust deed, has the ability to enter into the grant agreement in its capacity as trustee and
 - b) is entitled to be indemnified from the trust funds in connection with performance of the grant agreement.

4.2 Ineligible applicants

The following applicant organisations are not eligible to apply for funding:

- a Commonwealth department, agency or body
- a State department, agency, entity or other body established under the *Public Administration Act 2004 (VIC)* or equivalent legislation of another Australian jurisdiction
- a Local Government Authority

4.3 Event eligibility

The event must be publicly accessible. It must be able to be demonstrated that the event is of significant economic, social or community value to the local area or to Victoria and is a creative, cultural or community sporting event.

The event must:

- be a primarily in-person event with estimated in-person attendees between 1,000 - 10,000 over its full duration. Any online attendees cannot be counted towards the overall attendance number of the event
- be held between 1 June 2023 and 31 December 2023

¹ Businesses that backdate their ABN registration or re-activate an ABN after 1 July 2022 will not be eligible.

- comply with all event planning requirements of the host Local Government, including obtaining appropriate event permits (as required)
- have a minimum of \$20 million public liability insurance and other relevant insurances.

A publicly accessible event is defined by:

- a temporary, organised public gathering where people physically gather for a common purpose. Hybrid (in-person plus online) events are eligible for accessibility reasons, but the event cannot be completely virtual
- available to the public and publicly advertised, whether ticketed or not
- held as a standalone event across one day or held as a series of two or more event days across a weekend or month
- the event has a positive impact on the surrounding community e.g., by supporting local businesses.

4.4 Eligible areas

The event must be held in one (or more) of the following 31 Local Government Areas (LGAs) in Greater Melbourne:

Banyule City Council	Greater Dandenong City Council	Mitchell Shire Council
Bayside City Council	Hobsons Bay City Council	Monash City Council
Boroondara City Council	Hume City Council	Moonee Valley City Council
Brimbank City Council	Kingston City Council	Mornington Peninsula Shire Council
Cardinia Shire Council	Knox City Council	Nillumbik Shire Council
Casey City Council	Manningham City Council	Stonnington City Council
City of Port Phillip	Maribyrnong City Council	Whitehorse City Council
City of Yarra	Maroondah City Council	Whittlesea City Council
Darebin City Council	Melton City Council	Wyndham City Council
Frankston City Council	Merri-bek City Council	Yarra Ranges Shire Council
Glen Eira City Council		

4.5 Ineligible event types

The following is a non-exhaustive list of activities that are ineligible under the SME program:

- Membership based activities, that are exclusively for members of a club or organisation e.g. business conference for paid members only
- Private or invitation only events and functions e.g., wedding, sporting club awards night
- Activations, temporary installations or experiences to energise a specific area for patrons already in the area e.g., sausage sizzle at shopping centre
- Teaching programs and lectures or university open days
- Trade shows or trade festivals
- School fetes
- Public relations (PR) opportunities or commercial brand activations
- Sporting matches that are:
 - Community sport matches/games, which are part of a regularly fixtured season (e.g., under 11's basketball game)
 - Professional sporting events (where professional sports people are employed as their primary form of income)

- Events held solely online or virtually (hybrid face-to-face events with a virtual component are permitted e.g., for accessibility reasons)
- Events expected to have more than 10,000 in-person attendees
- Events that rely solely on Government funding to deliver
- Events taking place in the City of Melbourne or regional Victoria (i.e. not one of the 31 Local Government Areas listed in section 4.4 “Eligible areas”).

4.6 Eligible activities/expenses

Grant funding provided through the SME program will support the following event expenditure:

- artist and performer fees
- catering
- venue hire
- short-term staffing costs associated with the staging of the event (event and project management)
- advertising, publicity, promotion, marketing, stationery, printing, and publishing that is directly related to the event
- equipment hire and cleaning
- worker transport costs directly related to the event (e.g., bus hire or public transport costs for local travel within Victoria)
- COVIDSafe-related costs for event staff (e.g., rapid antigen tests for staff and volunteers, and hand sanitiser).

Not all expenditure on your event may be eligible for grant funding. The Department makes the final decision on what is eligible expenditure.

4.7 Ineligible activities/expenses

Grant funding delivered through the SME program will **not** support the following expenditure items:

- ongoing business-as-usual administrative or staffing costs
- ongoing operating costs or salary subsidies
- digital capability and website development costs not directly related to the event
- purchase of alcohol
- purchase of equipment for ongoing use (such as laptops)
- travel outside Victoria, or funding for people or organisations that are interstate or from overseas to visit Victoria (for example, international flights and visas)
- gift packages, prizes or awards
- costs for preparing an application for a grant under this Program
- any costs to meet regulatory requirements (such as permit application fees).

The Department makes the final decision on what is ineligible expenditure.

5 Assessment Process

This is a competitive grant process and as such not all eligible applicants will receive funding. Applications will be assessed using the following process:

1. Applications are received and assessed for applicant and event eligibility
2. Applications will be competitively assessed against the Program assessment criteria by DJSIR representatives
3. Funding recommendations will be made to the Minister for Tourism, Sport and Major Events for final decision.

Decisions on all matters pertaining to the recommendation of grant funding under this Program is at the Department's and the Minister's absolute discretion.

5.1 Assessment criteria

Eligible applications will be assessed on how well they meet the assessment criteria. All supplementary attachments and information provided as part of the application will be taken into consideration during the assessment process.

Assessment Criteria	Considerations
Criterion 1 – Significance of the event (40%)	
Assessed on the significance of the event to the LGA, greater Melbourne and/or Victoria	Considerations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • number of estimated attendees • previous times the event has been run, if applicable • significance of the event to the community • uniqueness of the event • contribution to the calendar of events for the LGA, Melbourne and Victoria • how the event aligns with and supports state tourism brands and attributes
Criterion 2 – Economic, social and community benefits of the event (30%)	
Assessed based on the economic, social and community impact proportionate to event size	Considerations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • number of suppliers and contractors to be engaged • additional internal staff employed for the purposes of the event • potential economic, social and community flow on benefits to local area, including visitation numbers beyond the local area, contribution to social cohesion and inclusivity • number of volunteers who will support the event
Criterion 3 – Implementation planning (10%)	
Assessed on the capability of the applicant organisation to run the event	Considerations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • evidence of event feasibility and delivery planning • marketing and communication planning showing how attendees will be attracted to the event • staffing and resource management planning (staff have been allocated to work on the event, including volunteer planning) • track record of running this event and/or similar events • status of event permit requirements (if applicable)

Assessment Criteria	Considerations
Criterion 4 – Extent of need for funding (20%)	
How would SME funding improve the outcomes of the event?	<p>Considerations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • will the funding allow the event to proceed? • how will the event be improved with government funding? e.g. reach a particular cohort, expansion of offering, purchase of expertise, more accessible, longer hours of operation • is the event receiving other funding? • if applicable, will SME funding enable or support the event to occur again in the future?

5.2 Due Diligence Assessments

Applicants may be subject to a risk assessment which verifies business details lodged with the Australian Business Register, Australian Securities and Investment Commission, Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commissioner, Consumer Affairs Victoria and/or another applicable regulator.

Any of the following circumstances may be taken into consideration in any decision whether to recommend or award a grant and in contracting with successful applicants.

- the veracity of the information provided in the application
- any adverse findings by a regulator regarding an applicant
- an applicant is placed under external administration
- there is a petition to wind up or deregister the applicant
- the applicant is or becomes deregistered or unregistered (including cancellation or lapse in registration).

The Department may at any time, remove an applicant from the application process, if in the Department's opinion association with the applicant may bring the Department, a Minister or the State of Victoria in disrepute.

6 Application Process

The person submitting the application must be authorised by the organisation to make the application.

6.1 Prepare an application

Applicants must undertake the following steps to apply:

- Carefully read Program Guidelines
- Compile all necessary supporting documents as detailed in the Program Guidelines
- Submit application online via the Business Victoria website - business.vic.gov.au/small-and-medium-events-program
- Check spam/junk mail if confirmation email cannot be seen in your inbox

Only final applications that are lodged with the Department by the closing date will be considered and assessed. Applications that are still 'in draft' and have not been submitted upon program close will not be assessed.

6.2 Application requirements

Applicants will be asked to include the following details in their application:

- Description of the event
- Projected and (if relevant) past attendance, including any available information of split of local, interstate and international visitors
- Staffing and resourcing requirements
- Detailed revenue and expenditure budget, including any financial support beyond the State Government
- Any existing event website details.

6.3 Supporting documentation

The following supporting documentation is mandatory to provide and will be requested as part of the application form:

- Event plan (including scope of event, planning and preparation milestones, governance arrangements and risk management plan)
- Marketing plan (including details relating to tourism marketing targeting intrastate audiences, description of target markets, proposed marketing activity and timelines)
- Detailed budget breakdown (including income sources and expenditure)
- Public liability insurance Certificate of Currency demonstrating compliance with the insurance requirements in these Guidelines.

Other supporting documentation may be provided where relevant or appropriate and can include:

- Letter/s of support from the LGA where the event is taking place and/or other stakeholders or partners
- Evidence of previous attendee numbers
- Letter providing evidence of other successful funding
- Other documents as required

6.4 Outcome notification

Successful and unsuccessful applicants will be notified of their application outcome in writing in April 2023. The successful applicant's name, event name and the funding amount may be made publicly available, including publication on the department's website and media releases.

7 Grant agreements

Successful applicants will be required to enter into a legally binding grant agreement with the Department on its standard terms and conditions.

The grant agreement details all funding obligations and conditions. Grant agreements must be signed by an authorised representative with the requisite authority to bind the organisation. Successful applicants will be required to accept the department's payment schedule noting payments will be made according to set milestone deliverables, detailed in the grant agreement.

Successful applicants will have 15 calendar days from the date of the Letter of Offer to accept and to sign the grant agreement with the Department. The offer may be withdrawn if the grant agreement is not executed within the timeframe.

The event must not commence until a grant agreement has been duly executed by both the successful applicant and the Department.

Fifty per cent of awarded funding will be provided upon signing of the grant agreement, and the remaining 50 per cent will be provided upon successful delivery of the event and completion of any reporting requirements.

The department reserves the right to withhold the balance of the funding, if the organiser fails to comply with the obligations outlined in the funding agreement.

The department will not be responsible for shortfalls in event budgets if the successful applicant is unable to meet event costs.

8 Publicity/Acknowledgement

Successful applicants must agree to cooperate with the Department in the promotion of the Program. This may include involvement in media releases, case studies or promotional events and activities.

Successful applicants must not make any public announcement or issue any press release regarding the receipt of a grant without prior written approval from the Department.

The Department may publicise the benefits accruing to the successful applicant and/or the State associated with the provision of the grant and the State's support for the event. The Department may include the name of the successful applicant and/or grant amount in any publicity material and in the Department's annual report.

The Department may request successful applicant fact checks any text and seeks approval to use any owned imagery associated with the activity prior to the publication of any such promotional materials.

If requested by the Department, the successful applicant must ensure that the State's support for the grant is acknowledged on all promotional materials and appropriate signage consistent with the Guidelines for Victorian Government Advertising and Communications or as otherwise specified by the Department.

9 Reporting for Program Evaluation

As a condition of funding, successful applicants will be required to participate in any program monitoring and evaluation activities initiated by the Department. This may include completing surveys throughout the Program to measure progress to achieving outcomes, and for up to three years after program completion.

Reporting is critical to the Department in understanding program impact, supporting continuous improvement in program design and delivery, and delivering more effective grant programs to the people of Victoria.

10 Privacy and confidentiality

Information provided by the applicant for the purpose of this application will be used by the Department for the purposes of assessment of applications, program administration and program review. In making an application, the applicant consents to the provision of their information to State and Commonwealth Government departments and agencies for the purpose of assessing applications. If there is an intention to include personal information about third parties in the application, please ensure they are aware of and consent to the contents of this privacy statement.

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.

Enquiries about access to personal information, or for other concerns regarding the privacy of personal information, can be emailed to the Department's Privacy Unit by emailing privacy@ecodev.vic.gov.au. The Department's privacy policy is also available by emailing the Department's Privacy Unit.

11 General terms of applying

11.1 Further information

The Department reserves the right to request the applicant provide further information in connection with its application should it be deemed necessary.

11.2 Amendments

The Department reserves the right to amend these guidelines and the application process at any time as it deems appropriate and without notice.

If any changes need to be made to the style, date, or location of an event which has successfully received a grant under this program, the Department must be advised in writing promptly via email to SMEprogram@ecodev.vic.gov.au.

Any amendments to event details will be considered on a case-by-case basis and in such event the event cannot proceed, the Department may require the refund of the whole or part of the Grant as deemed appropriate.

11.3 Further Resources

Further information regarding this program can be found here: business.vic.gov.au/small-and-medium-events-program.

If you have any questions during the application period, please email SMEprogram@ecodev.vic.gov.au or visit the Business Victoria website's Contact Us page at <https://business.vic.gov.au/contact-us>.