

# Enabling Tourism Fund 2024

Program Guidelines



Authorised by the Victorian Government, Melbourne.  
Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions

1 Spring Street, Melbourne, Victoria 3000  
Telephone (03) 9651 9999

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### **Acknowledgement**

We acknowledge and respect the Traditional Owners of Country throughout Victoria, their ongoing connection to lands and waterways upon which we depend, and we pay respects to their culture and their Elders past, present, and future.

We acknowledge that Aboriginal self-determination is a human right enshrined in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and we are committed to working towards social, economic, and cultural equity for Aboriginal Victorians.

We acknowledge the diversity of Aboriginal Victorians, and we acknowledge all other people of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander descent living in Victoria.

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# Message from the Minister

From the picture postcard scenery along the Great Ocean Road to the snowy peaks of the Alpine Ranges, Victoria is home to some of the best tourism experiences in Australia.

Our world-class tourism attractions, accommodation, bars and restaurants, perfectly complement our packed major events calendar that attracts hundreds of thousands of visitors each year.

The latest Tourism Research Australia data for the year ending June 2022 showed that tourism in Victoria was estimated to be worth \$16 billion to the state's economy in Gross State Product.

With visitor numbers and spending continuing to increase, a strong pipeline of infrastructure projects is vital for our state's tourism sector to grow and strengthen Victoria's reputation as a global tourism destination.

Then *Enabling Tourism Fund 2024* will back tourism projects to become investment-ready by supporting planning activities such as feasibility studies, master planning and design.

By supporting the pipeline of demand-driven tourism infrastructure, the fund will create more tourism experiences, attracting more visitors and employing more people across every corner of the state.

Earlier this year, we released *Experience Victoria 2033*, our strategic plan to shape the future of Victoria's visitor economy towards the projected \$58 billion over the next 10 years.

The fund will focus on the five product priorities identified in the plan – First Peoples-led experiences, wellness, arts and culture, food and drink and nature.

We are excited to continue to help our tourism industry plan for the future through the *Enabling Tourism Fund*.



**Steve Dimopoulos**

Minister for Tourism, Sport and Major Events

# 1. The Regional Tourism and Events Fund

## 1.1. Regional Tourism and Events Fund

The \$170 million Regional Tourism and Events Fund will ensure our regional tourism offering continues to be the very best by supporting new events, new attractions and more accommodation for visitors.

This new fund will help build tourism infrastructure projects that improve visitor experience and increase visitor spending across our great state – creating new jobs, benefiting tourism operators and regional communities.

The fund will attract visitors to key destinations and support tourism businesses across the state with a focus on the five product priorities identified in Experience Victoria 2033 – First Peoples-led experiences, wellness, arts and culture, food and drink and nature.

The fund includes support for regional events that will help attract the biggest and best events to our regions, bringing visitors and dollars to communities right across the state.

## 1.2. Experience Victoria 2033

Experience Victoria 2033 (EV33) is the State's strategic plan to shape the future of Victoria's visitor economy over the next 10 years. The plan will strengthen Victoria's enviable tourism offering by leveraging the state's competitive advantages.



Photo credit: Great Victorian Rail Trail Art Installations

The plan has five product priorities and their relevance to the Enabling Tourism Fund is:

Product priorities	Examples
<p><b>First Peoples-led experiences</b> – prioritising the world’s oldest continuous living culture that will contribute to the future of Victorian tourism driven by Aboriginal self-determination.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• immersive experiences</li> <li>• story telling</li> <li>• art and heritage trails.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Wellness</b> – experiences and products that broaden Victoria’s wellness offering.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• mindfulness retreats</li> <li>• wellness resorts</li> <li>• geothermal and natural springs.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Arts and culture</b> – experiences and products that enable the visitor to engage with art and culture in new and innovative ways.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• museums</li> <li>• storytelling</li> <li>• multicultural centres</li> <li>• art and heritage trails</li> <li>• public art installations</li> <li>• galleries</li> <li>• creative venues.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Food and Drink</b> – culinary and gastronomic experiences and products that highlight provenance and demonstrate innovation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• agricultural and regenerative farming experiences</li> <li>• cellar doors</li> <li>• distilleries</li> <li>• breweries.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Nature</b> – experiences, products and accommodation that activate regional Victoria’s natural assets and contribute to a healthy and resilient environment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• forests</li> <li>• parks</li> <li>• alpine areas</li> <li>• wildlife</li> <li>• coastlines</li> <li>• rivers</li> <li>• lakes</li> <li>• oceans.</li> </ul>

The examples provided above are not intended to be prescriptive.



## 2. The Enabling Tourism Fund 2024 (ETF)

### 2.1. Objectives

The ETF will invest in high-potential tourism initiatives from the market-testing phase, through to the planning and design phases towards investment-ready status.

The objectives of the ETF are:

- Build a strong pipeline of demand-driving public and private tourism infrastructure projects and progress them towards investment-ready status
- Develop strategic tourism infrastructure projects that will increase visitation, improve quality of customer experience, and increase visitor yield and length of stay
- Develop projects that broaden Victoria's tourism offering, and support and encourage year-round visitation and dispersal across regional Victoria
- Leverage and facilitate private sector investment, including through strengthening public tourism infrastructure.

### 2.2. Outcomes

The ETF reflects the Victorian Government's commitment to strengthening the visitor experience in Regional Victoria. The ETF will invest in proposals that can demonstrate commitment to the following outcomes:

- Regional Victoria has a strengthened pipeline of experience products and accommodation
- Regions are developing a more compelling visitor offering
- Regional accommodation is more attractive to visitors
- Regional accommodation is more accessible.

### 2.3. Investment priorities

Activities funded through ETF must support the delivery of the outcomes identified in Experience Victoria 2033, which has seven outcome metrics:

- **Driving economic growth** – Victoria's visitor economy attracts more visitors to our state who stay longer, produce higher yield, and be more likely to return.
- **Innovative and outstanding** – Victoria pushes the boundaries and transforms original ideas into brilliant businesses, exciting products and events and ultimately, a richer experience for visitors.
- **Sustainable and regenerative** – Victoria's visitor economy creates experiences that stand the test of time by protecting and enhancing our extraordinary landscapes and biodiversity.
- **Inclusive and welcoming** – Victoria's visitor economy delivers meaningful experiences and employment for people of all identities, cultures and abilities.
- **First Peoples focused** – Victoria's First Peoples are self-determining their priorities for tourism development, creating wealth and contributing to positive outcomes for their communities and Country.
- **Valuable for our communities** – Our tourism investments align with the plans and aspirations of local communities and generate positive benefits for local communities.
- **Unique to place** – Our tourism products build on the different signature personalities of our suburbs, towns, cities and regions.

### 2.4. Program timelines

<b>Applications Open</b>	19 January 2024
<b>Closing date</b>	28 March 2024
<b>Outcomes Announced</b>	Mid 2024
<b>Grant Agreements Executed</b>	July 2024 onwards

## 3. Eligibility

### 3.1. Eligible applicants

Applicants must be one of the following types of entities to apply:

- Private sector proponents (defined as a privately-owned or commercial organisation that has overall control and responsibility for a project that is predominantly funded through private capital)
- Local and State Government entities, based in Victoria including:
  - Public Land Managers
  - Land Management Authorities and Committees of Management
  - Local Government Authorities
  - A Victorian Alpine Resort<sup>1</sup>
- State or Local Government owned entities
- Incorporated associations
- Not-for-profit organisations, including community groups that are an incorporated body, cooperative or association or
- Traditional Owner Corporations, organisations and groups, and Aboriginal-owned businesses.

In addition, to be eligible for funding applicants must:

- Possess an Australian Business Number (ABN) and
- Be financially solvent.

Where an entity is not incorporated, an auspicing arrangement may be considered. The applicant is still required to meet all other eligibility criteria.

Six alpine resorts are legally incorporated under the *Alpine Resorts (Management) Act 1997* and managed by [Alpine Resorts Victoria](#).

### 3.2. Eligible applications

The ETF is open to:

- Projects delivered in locations covered by existing Regional Tourism Boards and Visitor Economy Partnerships as listed on the webpage, [Industry partners | Tourism and Events](#); and specific interim entities that are recognised by DJSIR – Tourism and Events as being part of the regional tourism network

- Projects in regional and rural Victoria and
- Projects that provide tourism benefit in Victoria.

### 3.3. Ineligible applicants

The following entities are not eligible to apply:

- Unincorporated organisations or joint ventures (unless under an auspicing arrangement)
- Individuals
- Utility and services providers
- Water corporations or
- Commonwealth Government owned entities.

### 3.4. Types of activities that will not be funded

The following activities will not be funded:

- Capital and infrastructure projects and expenses
- Ongoing operating costs or salary subsidies
- Investigative work that is not part of a broader project
- Marketing, advertising, or product promotion including signage
- Retrospective funding, where activities have been completed or have started prior to receiving funding approval
- Projects where contributions from funding partners are not confirmed in writing and by bank statement/s or underwritten by the applicant or
- Projects previously funded through the Enabling Tourism Fund unless applicants can demonstrate additional or new outcomes.

### 3.5. Performance

An applicant's past performance and the organisation's capacity to deliver projects on-time based on recent performance or current project management capacity will be considered.

Compliance with past Grant Agreements, the number of overdue milestones for existing projects, and current projects with unresolved budget shortfalls will also be considered.

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<sup>1</sup> Six alpine resorts are legally incorporated under the *Alpine Resorts (Management) Act 1997* and managed by [Alpine Resorts Victoria](#)



## 4. Funding Details

### 4.1. Funding streams and eligible projects

Funding from the ETF is available under the following streams:

Funding stream	Stream 1 – Testing the Concept	Stream 2 – Preparing for Investment
<b>Number of applications</b>	Applicants can submit a maximum of one application. This may be one Testing the Concept Project or one Preparing for Investment project.	
<b>Minimum total grant per application</b>	\$20,000	\$20,000
<b>Maximum total grant per application</b>  Funding requests outside of this range will not be considered.	\$500,000	\$500,000
<b>Project types eligible for funding</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Business case development</li> <li>• Feasibility studies</li> <li>• Master planning including concept design</li> <li>• Market testing and assessments</li> <li>• Site analysis.</li> </ul>	<p>A combination of the following that delivers a project ready for infrastructure investment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Detailed design package</li> <li>• Quantity Surveying Report</li> <li>• Relevant technical investigations, plans and reports to progress the project for example; universal design, environmental and sustainability plans, Cultural Heritage Management Plans, quantity surveying, traffic management</li> <li>• Stakeholder and community engagement plan and implementation</li> <li>• Operational viability studies</li> <li>• Investment Prospectus development</li> <li>• Developing a funding strategy.</li> </ul>

## 4.2. Funding ratios and co-contribution requirements

Funding ratios applied to the ETF are outlined in the table below.

Applicants cannot use other State Government funding, such as funding from Regional Development Victoria, as part of their local contribution.

Projects that have received or will receive Victorian Government funding from other sources outside this Fund may apply, however any such funding will be considered as part of funding assessment criteria.

Local contributions may comprise of funding from other organisations including local government authorities, schools, educational institutions, Australian Government, and community organisations.

The following funding ratios and co-contributions apply:

Partner	Ratio
Private, public and not-for-profit applicants	Victorian Government = \$4 Local = \$1
Traditional Owner Corporations, organisations and groups, and Aboriginal-owned businesses	Not Required

## 4.3. GST

Applicants must confirm matched funding is consistent with the funding ratios. Ratios are calculated using total project cost (**exclusive of GST**).

Applicants should note that all project costs included in the application must be exclusive of GST. If successful, GST will be added to your grant payment.

If a successful applicant is registered for Goods and Services Tax (GST), we will add GST to your grant payment.

Example: *If the approved funding is \$100,000 GST exclusive, the department will process payments totalling \$110,000 (\$100,000 GST exclusive funding + \$10,000 GST).*

## 4.4. Traditional Owner Corporation and Aboriginal-owned Business contribution

Applications from Traditional Owner Corporations, organisations and groups, and Aboriginal-owned businesses are exempt from co-contributions, but must meet one of the following to be eligible:

- Registered with Consumer Affairs Victoria
- Registered with the Office of the Register of Indigenous Corporations
- Registered with the Australian Securities and Investment Commissions or
- A body corporate constituted under Section 8 of the of the Aboriginal lands act.

Applicant organisations must:

- Possess an Australian Business Number (ABN)
- Be financially solvent.

To discuss if your organisation or group meets the eligibility criteria, please contact – [tourism.projects@ecodev.vic.gov.au](mailto:tourism.projects@ecodev.vic.gov.au)

## 4.5. In-kind contributions

An in-kind contribution is a contribution of a good or service other than money. Examples include voluntary labour and donated services.

In-kind contributions will not be considered as part of the funding co-contribution, however in-kind contributions will be taken into account during the assessment process.

Applicants that include an in-kind contribution must provide a completed in-kind and voluntary support form as outlined in the supporting documentation.

## 4.6. Other considerations

Projects requesting funding outside the grant gap or lower than the stated applicant co-contribution ratios will be considered on a case-by-case basis and subject to Ministerial discretion.

## 5. Assessment Criteria

### 5.1. Criteria assessment of applicants

All attachments and information provided as part of the application will be taken into consideration during the assessment phase. The Department reserves the right to request the applicant provide further details should it be deemed necessary. Eligible applications will be assessed by a department assessment panel and moderation panel, and recommendations will be determined based on assessment score, spread of projects across the State and the five product priorities, and available budget

Funding for the ETF is available under the following streams:

### 5.2. Stream 1. Testing the Concept

Criteria	Weighting	Stream 1. Testing the Concept Questions / Points to Consider
1. Project need and alignment with program objectives	35%	<p>Why is the project needed?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The degree to which the project meets at least one of the objectives of the program (see <a href="#">Section 2.1</a>)</li> <li>Provide a clear rationale for why the proposed project is needed and why the future infrastructure project has been identified as important to the organisation</li> <li>Include details about how the project is anticipated to support the future of the organisation</li> <li>Explain the gap in the tourism offering that is driving the project</li> <li>Describe who will benefit from the project.</li> </ul>
2. Project deliverability and alignment with program outcomes	25%	<p>What will be delivered?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How does the project align with at least one of the ETF program outcomes (see <a href="#">Section 2.2</a>)</li> <li>Applications must clearly articulate the scope of the proposed project</li> <li>What work has been undertaken already to support the project and what else is required</li> <li>Provide details about the purpose of the future infrastructure project to be explored, designed, costed, and the site, if a site is already selected.</li> </ul>
3. Strategic Alignment - how does the project align with EV33 priorities	25%	<p>How likely is the project to result in infrastructure delivery, investment prioritisation that support EV33?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The degree to which the project contributes to the EV33 outcomes (<a href="#">Section 2.3</a>) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>First Peoples-led experiences</li> <li>Wellness</li> <li>Nature</li> <li>Arts and Culture</li> <li>Food and Drink</li> </ul> </li> <li>How does the project align with other relevant strategies and plans (for example, Regional Tourism Board, Regional Partnerships and Local Government)?</li> <li>Explain what consultation has occurred regarding the project and with who?</li> </ul>

Criteria	Weighting	Stream 1. Testing the Concept Questions / Points to Consider
4. Capability and Expertise	10%	<p>Describe the key steps the organisation will take to deliver the proposed project. Include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Who will oversee and manage the day-to-day processes of the project? (Who is the project manager?)</li> <li>Details of third parties to be appointed to contribute to the project, such as architects, designers, engineers or quantity surveyors</li> <li>Outline what steps will be taken to ensure the project will be delivered within 18 months</li> <li>What are the risk mitigation strategies to ensure that the project is delivered?</li> <li>What experience has the organisation had in delivering successful projects?</li> </ul> <p><i>Details provided in this section should be evidenced through the activity schedule and governance structure in the project plan template.</i></p>
5. Budget	5%	<p>Outline funding details for the project.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Has the project received other funds from State, Local or Australian Government?</li> <li>Provide details of the organisation's financial health in the supporting documentation</li> <li>How will the organisation ensure the funded project scope will be delivered in budget? What are the risk mitigation strategies for the project?</li> </ul> <p><i>Details provided in this section should be evidenced in the mandatory documentation and project plan template.</i></p>

### 5.3. Stream 2. Preparing for Investment

Criteria	Weighting	Stream 2. Preparing for Investment Questions / Points to Consider
1. Project need and alignment to program objectives	35%	<p>Why is the project needed?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The degree to which the project meets at least one of the objectives of the program (see <a href="#">Section 2.1</a>)</li> <li>Applications must provide details on why the project deliverables are needed</li> <li>Include details about how the infrastructure project is anticipated to support the future of the organisation</li> <li>What is the evidence of the current tourism gap driving the project?</li> <li>Describe who will benefit from the project</li> </ul> <p><i>Outline details in the Project Plan Template.</i></p>
2. Project deliverability and alignment with program outcomes	25%	<p>What will be delivered?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How does the project align with at least one of the ETF program outcomes (see <a href="#">Section 2.2</a>)</li> <li>Applications must clearly articulate the scope of the project</li> <li>What works have been undertaken already to support the project and what else is required to ensure the project is investment ready? (Should be evidenced by the master plan, feasibility study/business cases where relevant)</li> <li>How will the proposed activities support project readiness? This may include schematic designs, QS, technical and specialised reports.</li> </ul>

Criteria	Weighting	Stream 2. Preparing for Investment Questions / Points to Consider
3. Strategic Alignment - how does the project align with EV33 priorities	25%	<p>How likely is the project to result in infrastructure delivery, investment prioritisation that support EV33?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The degree to which the project contributes to the EV33 outcomes (<a href="#">Section 2.3</a>) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>First Peoples-led experiences</li> <li>Wellness</li> <li>Nature</li> <li>Arts and Culture</li> <li>Food and Drink</li> </ul> </li> <li>How does the project align with other relevant strategies and plans (for example, Regional Tourism Board, Regional Partnerships and Local Government)?</li> <li>Explain what consultation has occurred regarding the project and with who?</li> </ul>
4. Capability and Expertise	10%	<p>Describe the key steps the organisation will take to ensure the project is delivered. Include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Who will oversee and manage the day-to-day processes of the project? (Who is the project manager?)</li> <li>Details of third parties to be appointed such as architects, designers, engineers or quantity surveyors</li> <li>Outline what steps will be taken to ensure the project will be delivered within 18 months</li> <li>What are the risk mitigation strategies to ensure that the project is delivered?</li> <li>What experience has the organisation had in delivering successful projects?</li> </ul> <p><i>Details provided in this section should be evidenced through project plan template.</i></p>
5. Budget	5%	<p>Outline funding details for the project.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Has the project received other funds from State, Local or Australian Government?</li> <li>Why is the funding for this activity required?</li> <li>Provide details of the organisation's financial health in the supporting documentation</li> <li>How will the organisation ensure the funded project scope will be delivered in budget? What are the risk mitigation strategies for the project?</li> </ul> <p><i>Details provided in this section should be evidenced in the mandatory documentation and project plan template.</i></p>

## 6. Supporting Documentation

### 6.1. Documentation and information requirements

The table below outlines the mandatory and desired supporting documentation for each stream. Please submit all documentation with your application to ensure eligibility and demonstrate project readiness. Desired supporting documentation is not a requirement however it will further demonstrate project readiness, if applicable.

The quality of the documentation will be assessed in conjunction with the applicant's responses to the assessment criteria for the funding stream outlined in [Section 5](#), Assessment Criteria.

Applications must demonstrate how projects will be finished within 18 months of an executed Grant Agreement through a detailed Activity Schedule in the Project Plan Template and other supporting documents evidencing project readiness.

Supporting documentation	Mandatory	Document / Evidence
Comprehensive draft project brief and / or request for quote and / or project proposal	Mandatory	<a href="#">Project Plan Template</a>
Project costings	Mandatory	Quotes for each deliverable no more than 6 month old, are to be provided and detailed in the Project Plan Template.
Evidence confirming the organisation's ability to finance the co-contribution	Mandatory	<p>Where the funding is from a private entity a letter from a CEO or person authorised to bind the organisation confirming contribution and evidence of available funding through a bank statement should be provided.</p> <p>Where funding is from an LGA a Council resolution or Letter from CEO confirming funding amount requested and applicant's funding commitment to the project.</p> <p>Where funding is from another government department, evidence of this funding via letter or funding agreement must be provided. Where funding from the applicant (non-LGA) is indicated:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A letter from the relevant organisation's authorised officer, stating the funding amount committed</li> <li>• Current bank statement/s demonstrating the funding amount is held by the organisation.</li> </ul>
For grants of \$50,001 or more evidence of financial stability*  <i>* Not required for Local Government Authorities, Alpine Resort Management Boards, State Government Departments and statutory agencies.</i>	Mandatory	<p>Audited Financial Reports for the last three financial years. Including the 'final accounts' with Directors' Report and Declaration and should include Profit and Loss Statement, Balance Sheet, Cash Flows, and notes to the accounts.</p> <p>*If accounts are not audited, unaudited accounts from an Accountant will be accepted.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If the latest financial report is more than six months old, up-to-date Management or Interim Accounts for the current year including Profit and Loss statement and Balance Sheet, and, in the case of public listed corporations, a half yearly financial report.</li> </ul>

Supporting documentation	Mandatory	Document / Evidence
The company's financial projections for the next three financial years, including Profit and Loss and Cash Flow	Mandatory	Financial projections / Company's Profit and Loss
Evidence of an auspicating organisation where required	Mandatory	Statutory declaration confirming the auspicating organisation has agreed to the activity.
Aboriginal Organisation Registration	Mandatory	As identified in <a href="#">Section 4.4</a>
Activity Schedule	Mandatory	Complete table in the Project Plan Template.
Governance Structure	Mandatory	Complete table in the Project Plan Template.
In kind <i>* In kind will not be considered as part of the financial contribution.</i>	Mandatory	Completed and signed In kind form. (Template provided on Business Victoria Website)
Letters of Support	Mandatory	Letters of support, relevant to the project may include from Regional Tourism Boards, local councils, local business and tourism associations, Traditional Owner organisations
Landowner Consent (if applicable)	Mandatory	Letter from Landowner
Business plan and project proposal (if applying for Stream 2 – Preparing for Investment)	Mandatory	Copy of Business Plan / Project Proposal
Supporting documentation	Desirable	Document / Evidence
Evidence to support the potential for the project	Desirable	Economic Impact Assessment / Visitation Impact Assessment Project Modelling, data sources
Environmentally Sustainable Design (ESD) Reports	Desirable	ESD report



## 7. Application process

### 7.1. 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.

### 7.2. Prepare an application

Applicants should use the online application form (available on the Business Victoria website) to clearly and succinctly address the assessment criteria outlined in [Section 5.2](#) and [5.3](#).

Applications must have the approval of the Chief Executive Officer (or equivalent duly authorised representative with the requisite authority to bind the organisation), and the person submitting the application form will be required to attest to this as part of the application process.

Before applying for funding under this program or making any decision, applicants should seek advice from their legal, business and financial advisers to determine their eligibility and the terms of the funding.

Applicants should note that all activity costs included in the application and activity documentation must be exclusive of GST.

Any costs or risks associated with an application are the sole responsibility of the applicant.

Applicants should seek professional financial advice on the tax implications of receiving Government grants.

- The Department makes no representation that a grant of funds will be made to any applicant and reserves the right to amend, suspend or withdraw funding under the ETF
- Please check with a Department representative if you are unclear about any part of the application. To contact the Department, please email [tourism.projects@ecodev.vic.gov.au](mailto:tourism.projects@ecodev.vic.gov.au).

#### 7.2.1 Regional Tourism Boards

Applicants are encouraged to work with [Regional Tourism Boards \(RTBs\)](#) and industry organisations to identify and refine potential activities.

## 8. Assessment and approval process

### 8.1. Assessment process

- The Department will determine the project's eligibility against the relevant eligibility criteria
- Applications that are incomplete or deemed ineligible will not proceed to assessment
- To adhere to departmental processes, assessors will be required to declare any conflicts of interest prior to assessing applications
- Applications will be assessed by an assessment panel which will provide recommendations to the Minister for Tourism, Sport and Major Events for decision.

### 8.2. Due diligence assessments

Applicants will be subject to a risk assessment to verify business details provided by an applicant 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 award a grant:

- 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 or
- The applicant is or becomes deregistered or unregistered (including cancellation or lapse in registration).

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

For grants of \$50,001 or more and where applicants are not Local Government Authorities, Alpine Resort Management Boards, State Government Departments or statutory agencies, the Department will undertake a financial risk assessment of the applicant to assess the ability of the applicant to deliver the proposed activity.



This requires at a minimum, the provision of the following:

- Audited Financial Reports for the last three financial years. This should be the 'final accounts' with Directors' Report and Declaration and should include Profit and Loss Statement, Balance Sheet, Cash Flows, and notes to the accounts. If accounts are not audited, unaudited accounts from an Accountant will be accepted
- If the latest financial report is more than six months old, up-to-date Management or Interim Accounts for the current year including Profit and Loss Statement and Balance Sheet, and, in the case of public listed corporations, a half yearly financial report
- Current Business Plan, or project proposal
- The company's financial projections for the next three financial years, including Profit and Loss and Cash Flow
- An attestation of whether the applicant is or has been the subject of any investigations by the State Revenue Office (SRO) and / or Australian Taxation Office (ATO).

Outcomes from the financial risk assessment will be taken into consideration in any decision to recommend and award the grant.

### 8.3. Assessment of non-financial risks

Applications to the ETF must include sufficient information to enable the Department 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 failed to meet key contractual obligations for previous grant agreements with the State
- Where the proposal has already been fully funded by the applicant through other means (e.g. capital raising on the Australian Stock Exchange)
- Whether the applicant is or has been the subject of any investigations by the SRO and / or ATO.

### 8.4. Approval process

The Minister for Tourism, Sport and Major Events will consider the advice received from the Moderation Panel and determine whether to approve the granting of funds.

Applicants will be advised of the decision relating to their application in writing. Successful applicants will receive a Letter of Offer from the Minister for Tourism, Sport and Major Events.

### 8.5. Discretion in awarding grant funding

Decisions on all matters pertaining to the award of grant funding under this Fund are at the Department's and Minister's absolute discretion. This includes approving a lesser amount than that applied for, amending funding conditions or withdrawing the ETF without notice.



Photo credit: Raptor Rehabilitation Facility, Healesville Sanctuary

## 9. Conditions of funding

### 9.1. Acceptance of letter of offer

Successful applicants will have 10 business days from the date of the Letter of Offer to accept the offer in writing after which a Grant Agreement will be drawn up between the applicant and the Department.

### 9.2. Grant Agreements

Successful applicants will be required to enter into a legally binding Grant Agreement with the Department, outlining funding obligations and standard terms and conditions. The Grant Agreement details all funding obligations and conditions.

Grant Agreements must be signed by the organisation's Chief Executive Officer (or equivalent duly authorised representative with the requisite 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 activity outcomes that must be achieved before payment of a grant instalment.

Once the Grant Agreement has been duly executed by both the successful applicant and the Department, the applicant will be required to actively manage and deliver the activity and provide accurate progress reports to the Department.

The documents provided as part of the application and as outlined in [Section 6.1](#), will become addendums to the grant agreement and form part of the final executed agreement.

These Guidelines and any discussions you may have with representatives of the Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions (the Department) are for information only, and do not constitute advice.

Applicants should seek independent advice before making an application or entering into a Grant Agreement.

### 9.3. Program evaluation reporting

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.

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 activity.

Successful applicants may be required to contribute information on project outcomes, including longer-term impacts beyond activity completion, for use in program evaluation reviews and the Department 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. Non-compliance could impact future applications to the Department's programs.

### 9.4. Activity commencement

The activity and any expenditure of funds associated with the activity must not commence until after the Grant Agreement has been duly executed by both the Department and the successful applicant.

Once the Grant Agreement has been executed, the successful applicant will be required to commence the activity within the agreed timeframe. If a successful applicant does not commence the activity by the commencement date, the Department may terminate this agreement in its absolute discretion.

### 9.5. Project control groups

In some instances, based on activity 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, the Department may request to be either a participant or observer in these meetings.

## 9.6. Audit

The Department may conduct, or the Department may engage a third party to conduct, a performance review or audit of funding recipients. Funding recipients must:

- Actively cooperate with and provide assistance to the Department or any third party engaged by the Department to conduct an audit or performance review
- Make available to the Department or any third party engaged by the Department all information and records needed for the audit or performance review in accordance with any written request from the Department or third party engaged by the Department and
- Provide the Department or any third party engaged by the Department with access to the Organisation's premises or place of business to carry out the audit or performance review.



Photo credit: Maffco Brewery and Taphouse

## 9.7. Privacy and confidentiality

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

The Department completes a range of eligibility assessments that may include data matching to clarify the accuracy and quality of information supplied. This is part of our auditing and monitoring processes and for confirming eligibility across this program.

In the assessment of an application for the program, 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.

Enquiries about access to personal information, or other concerns regarding the privacy of personal information, can be emailed to the Department's Privacy Unit by emailing [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.

## 9.8. Competitive neutrality

All successful applications to the ETF 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.

# 10. Terms of applying

## 10.1. Probity and decision making

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

The decisions on all matters on recommending and awarding grant funding under this program are at the absolute discretion of the Minister and Department. This includes approving a lesser amount than that applied for.

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

The department may request the applicant provide further information should it be necessary to assess an application to the program's policy objectives.

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.

## 10.2. Disrepute

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

## 10.3. 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.

Conflicts of interest for Victorian Government staff will be handled as set out in the Code of Conduct for Victorian Public Service Employees (Section 61) of the *Public Administration Act 2004* (Vic).

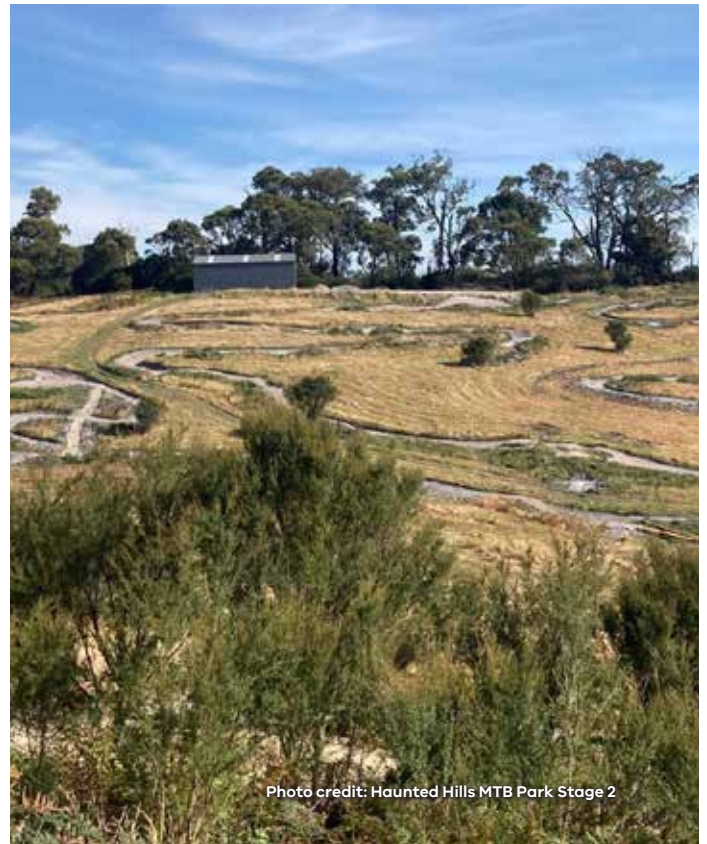


Photo credit: Haunted Hills MTB Park Stage 2

## 10.4. Related entities

The applicant cannot use grant funding available through this program to engage the services (including supplier or consultancy services) and / or purchase products from another entity that is wholly or partly owned or controlled by the applicant. Applicants and Service Providers must be entirely separate entities. They may not be owned by the same parent company, share governance or have common directors.

In the application, applicants are required to declare any existing governance relationships between themselves and the nominated service providers. Including whether any of the activity Service Providers are subsidiaries or related bodies corporate within the meaning of the *Corporations Act 2001* or share common directors, officers or senior managers.

The Department may apply this provision at any time to disqualify an applicant from receiving grant funding if a connection between the applicant and an associated entity is identified that is not in keeping with the purpose and objectives of the program.

# 11. Additional information and resources

## 11.1. Support for applications

Additional information and resources to prepare for the application are available on the Business Victoria [website](#), including relevant templates and frequently asked questions.

Please check with the Department representative prior to submitting if you are unclear about any part of the application.

To contact the Department regarding ETF, please contact – [tourism.projects@ecodev.vic.gov.au](mailto:tourism.projects@ecodev.vic.gov.au)

## 11.2. Complaints or feedback

Any complaints or feedback you have about this grant opportunity may be made in relation to:

- The timeliness of the process
- Communication provided by the Department
- Adherence to the published program guidelines.

You can send your written feedback to [tourism.projects@ecodev.vic.gov.au](mailto:tourism.projects@ecodev.vic.gov.au)

## 11.3. Links to online resources

[Experience Victoria 2033](#)

[Regional Tourism Boards](#)

[Visit Victoria](#)

[Tourism industry research and data](#)

[Creative Victoria](#)

[Tourism Australia](#)

[The Burra Charter](#)

[Australian Tourism Awards](#)

[Accessible Tourism – Tourism Accessibility Resource Kit](#)

[Regional Partnerships](#)

[Business Victoria](#)



[tourism.vic.gov.au](https://tourism.vic.gov.au)

