

GUIDELINES

Victorian Accommodation Support Program

COVID-19 assistance to businesses

Program Summary

The *Victorian Accommodation Support Program* (the Program) is part of the Victorian Government's \$143.2 million Circuit Breaker Action Business Support Package. The Program assists tourism accommodation providers in Greater Melbourne and Regional Victoria that experienced cancellations for bookings at eligible tourist accommodation premises (**Accommodation Premises**) within the period 1.30 pm 12 February to 11.59 pm 17 February 2021 as a result of the circuit breaker restrictions announced on 12 February 2021¹.

The \$16.2 million Program supports tourism accommodation providers with a grant of one of two tiers of support:

- a) Tier 1: Funding of \$2,250 (ex GST) per Accommodation Premises experiencing 10 or fewer cancelled nights.
- b) Tier 2: Funding of \$4,500 (ex GST) per Accommodation Premises with 11 or more cancelled nights.

One application may be made for each eligible Accommodation Premises at a unique property address (i.e. geographically distinct premises) owned or operated by the accommodation provider.

1 Program Eligibility Criteria

- 1.1 To be eligible for the Program, the applicant must be an accommodation provider business and it (or the accommodation booking/ Real Estate Agent acting on its behalf) must have an active ABN held before 12 February 2021 and provide one or more Accommodation Premises as described in paragraph 1.2 to 1.6 below.
- 1.2 For the Accommodation Premises to be eligible under the Program:
 - a) it must be located within Victoria (refer to paragraph 5);
 - b) it must be bookable to the public and advertised on an online booking platform, a website or managed through an accommodation booking agent², including a registered Real Estate Agent³;
 - c) the applicant must have:
 - (i) incurred cancelled nights for the Accommodation Premises within the period from 1.30 pm 12 February to 11.59 pm 17 February 2021 as a result of the circuit breaker restrictions announced on 12 February 2021; and
 - (ii) refunded 100 per cent of any payment made for the booking of the Accommodation Premises including taxes (if any), and not charged any

¹ <https://www.premier.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/2021-02/210212%20-%20Table%20of%20restrictions.pdf>

² An accommodation booking agents is a business that provides property management and booking services on behalf of accommodation providers.

³ A Real Estate Agent who is licensed and registered with Victoria's Business Licensing Authority.

cancellation fee or other tariff to cancel the booking other than standard credit card fees.

- 1.3 Eligible Accommodation Premises types are one of the following:
- a) A private holiday house/flat rental (regardless of number of rooms)
 - b) A room in a bed and breakfast
 - c) A self-contained apartment
 - d) A room in a motel or hotel
 - e) A cabin (regardless of number of rooms)
 - f) A room in a lodge that is available to the general public
 - g) A cabin or a caravan in a caravan park
 - h) A bookable campsite, including in a caravan park
 - i) A houseboat
 - j) A guest room in a guesthouse
 - k) A bed or room in a hostel
 - l) A school camp or large group accommodation
 - m) A farm stay
 - n) Defined camping sites
 - o) Other types of accommodation at the discretion of the Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions.
- 1.4 Accommodation Premises that are operated by a Local Government or State Agency are ineligible for funding under this Program (although lessees for their accommodation premises are allowed to apply).
- 1.5 The hire out of caravans, camp trailers or tents and similar businesses that hire out movable accommodation are ineligible for funding under this Program.
- 1.6 Providers of kennels, catteries, pet resorts and other solely non-human accommodation are ineligible to apply.

2 Demonstration of eligibility

- 2.1 Applicants must attest that they meet the eligibility criteria at the time of application and are continuing to trade in providing accommodation premises for tourists.
- 2.2 Identity Documents: applicants must provide details of a current proof of identity document for the registered contact of the business. This can be a driver licence issued in any Australian jurisdictions, an Australian Passport, a Medicare Card, or foreign passport for those issued with an Australian Visa.
- 2.3 Applicants must provide evidence of the location of the Accommodation Premises through the most recent:
- a) Utility bill (gas, electricity, telecommunications, water); or
 - b) Business licence or other registration identifying the location of the accommodation provider's business; or
 - c) Council Rate Notice.

- 2.4 Applicants must provide evidence of the cancelled booking through the provision of the following:
- a) Occupancy report; and
 - b) Cancellation report, or other record of cancellation.

3 Grant Funding

3.1 Subject to section 4.2, the total grant available in this Program to the accommodation provider is as follows:

- a) Tier 1: Funding of \$2,250 (ex GST) per Accommodation Premises experiencing 10 or fewer cancelled nights.
- b) Tier 2: Funding of \$4,500 (ex GST) per Accommodation Premises with 11 or more cancelled nights.

3.2 The grant amount is calculated upon the number of cancelled nights at the Accommodation Premises. For example:

- Case A: a hotel has cancelled bookings for 10 rooms for 2 nights each = 20 cancelled nights (eligible for \$4,500)
- Case B: a bed and breakfast has cancelled bookings for 2 rooms for 3 nights each = 6 cancelled nights (eligible for \$2,250)
- Case C: a caravan park has cancelled bookings for 8 sites for 2 nights each = 16 cancelled nights (eligible for \$4,500)
- Case D: a private holiday rental house (regardless of the number of rooms) has 1 cancelled booking for 3 nights = 3 cancelled nights (eligible for \$2,250)
- Case E: a school camp or large group booking for 75 beds for 2 nights = 150 cancelled nights (eligible for \$4,500).

4 Relationship with other programs available under the Circuit Breaker Action Business

4.1 Businesses that receive a Victorian Licensed Hospitality Venue Fund circuit breaker grant are eligible to apply for a grant under this *Victorian Accommodation Support Program* (ie are eligible to receive grants under both programs)

4.2 If businesses apply for and receive funding under the *Business Cost Assistance Program*, their grant funding under this *Victorian Accommodation Support Program* will be reduced to:

- a) Tier 1: Funding of \$250 (ex GST) per tourism accommodation business experiencing 10 or fewer cancelled nights; or
- b) Tier 2: Funding of \$2,500 (ex GST) per tourism accommodation business with 11 or more cancelled nights.

5 Conditions of Applying

- 5.1 One application may be made for each eligible Accommodation Premises located at a unique property address (geographically distinct location) in Victoria.
- 5.2 An eligible accommodation provider with multiple Accommodation Premises at geographically distinct locations in Victoria must make separate applications for each.
- 5.3 Each application must include all associated cancelled booking claims for that geographical location (see section 2.4). For example: a motel premises with five rooms should submit one application for all cancelled bookings for each of the five rooms.
- 5.4 An accommodation booking agency or Real Estate Agent managing multiple properties would need to provide separate applications for each property they manage.
- 5.5 Accommodation booking agencies and Real Estate Agents who apply for the grant and receive grant funds on behalf of an Accommodation Provider must ensure that the funds are passed through to the Accommodation Provider.

6 How the funding may be used

- 6.1 Grant funds may be used to assist the accommodation provider to continue in its operations following the circuit breaker action announced on 12 February 2021.

7 Assessment Process

- 7.1 Funding will be allocated through a grant assessment process.
- 7.2 As part of the assessment process, any information provided by applicants will be subject to verification with other government agencies (State and Federal) including the Australian Business Register. By making an application (including through an agent), accommodation providers consent to their information being collected and disclosed for the purpose of verification, eligibility assessment, grant administration and review.
- 7.3 Any of the following circumstances may be taken into consideration in any decision whether to award a grant:
 - a) Any adverse findings by a regulator regarding a business;
 - b) Personal bankruptcy or a business is placed under external administration;
 - c) There is a petition to wind up or deregister a company or business; and
 - d) The business is or becomes deregistered or unregistered (including cancellation or lapse in registration).
- 7.4 Each application will be carefully considered and assessed against the eligibility criteria. If an unsuccessful applicant considers that their application has been incorrectly assessed against the eligibility criteria, they will have the opportunity to

lodge a complaint with Business Victoria and to request a review of their application.

8 Compliance and Audit

- 8.1 Applicants may be subject to audit by the Victorian Government or its representatives and will be required to produce evidence in connection with the application, including the Approved Premises, cancelled bookings and booking amounts at the request of the Victorian Government, for a period of one year after the grant payment has been approved.
- 8.2 If any information in the application is found to be false or misleading, or applications for payment are not in accordance with the terms of funding as set out in these guidelines and attached application, the grant payment is repayable in full on demand.

9 Other information about this Program

- 9.1 The Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions reserves the right to amend these guidelines and application terms at any time as it deems appropriate.
- 9.2 The Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions will endeavour to notify all applicants of the outcome of their submitted application within 20 business days after the Program closes on 16 March 2021. It may take longer to process your application if:
 - a) you submit incorrect documentation; or
 - b) your application needs to be returned to you for amendments; or
 - c) you submit more than one application for the same Accommodation Premises; or
 - d) you entered incorrect details on the application form – for example, an incorrect ABN or banking details; or
 - e) you applied for other grants through the Circuit Breaker Action Business Support Package.

10 Closing date and how to apply

- 10.1 The Program will be open for applications from 2 pm Tuesday 2 March 2021 until 11.59 pm Tuesday 16 March 2021.
- 10.2 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 and requested information provided to ensure timely assessment and grant payment.
- 10.3 Further information may be found at business.vic.gov.au or through the Business Victoria Hotline at 13 22 15.