

OFFICIAL

**BUSINESS GROUPS
FLOOD RECOVERY
GRANTS**

GUIDELINES



OFFICIAL

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Summary	1
2. Objectives	1
3. Grants	2
4. Eligibility	2
5. Projects	3
5.1. Use of funds	3
5.2. Suitable project examples	3
5.3. Eligible project expenses	3
6. How to apply	4
7. Assessment process	4
7.1. Assessment and outcome	4
7.2. Assessment framework	4
7.3. Due diligence assessments	5
8. Funding conditions	6
8.1. Applicable terms	6
8.2. Publicity/Acknowledgement	7
8.3. Privacy and confidentiality	7
8.4. Post project evaluation	8
8.5. Compliance and audit	8
9. Other information	8
10. Definitions	9

Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions, 121 Exhibition Street Melbourne Victoria 3000
Telephone (03) 9651 9999

© Copyright State of Victoria,

Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions 2023

Except for any logos, emblems, trademarks, artwork, and photography this document is made available under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 Australia license.



Business Groups Flood Recovery Grants are jointly funded by the Australian and Victorian Governments under the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements in relation to the Victorian floods beginning in October 2022 (AGRN 1037).

1. Summary

Business Groups Flood Recovery Grants provide funding for eligible locally led projects to reactivate business activity in local government areas impacted by the Victorian floods.

Grants of up to \$50,000 (excl GST) are available to Business Groups.

Business Groups must support a membership of businesses impacted by the Victorian floods and deliver a project that reflects the severity of local impact.

Victorian multicultural Business Groups and Aboriginal Business Groups are encouraged to apply.

The program will open for applications on 18 May 2023 and close on 31 October 2023 at midnight, or earlier if funds are exhausted. Applications are assessed on a first-in, first-served basis.

Successful applicants will have up to 12 months to deliver the funded project.

2. Objectives

The overarching purpose of this grant program is to reactivate the small business sector in local government areas which have been impacted by the Victorian floods, and which are designated for assistance under Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements.¹

Objectives for the program are to:

- enable local business recovery, restart, and collaboration
- educate, inform, and empower small businesses
- support small businesses to rebuild capability
- rebuild the resilience of small business owners.

¹ Refer to the [Australian Government Disaster Assist website](#) for disaster recovery funding arrangements.

3. Grants

There are 2 grant amounts:

- a. Grants of up to \$20,000 (excl GST) are available to eligible Business Groups that make a successful application.
- b. Grants of up to \$50,000 (excl GST) are available to eligible Business Groups that support a membership of businesses acutely impacted by the Victorian floods.

The department may give Acute Impact consideration where the applicant is a Business Group that has attested:

- a. more than half of its member businesses have been Severely or Extremely Impacted by the Victorian floods, or
- b. its proposed project will be delivered in a geographic area where more than half of local businesses have been Severely or Extremely Impacted by the Victorian Floods.

See [Section 10. Definitions](#) for more information.

An eligible Business Group as defined by its ABN can only receive one grant. Business Groups may apply more than once to the program but are limited to one grant.

4. Eligibility

To be eligible for a grant under this program, a Business Group must:

- a. represent a membership of Victorian businesses located in [local government areas](#) deemed eligible for assistance under the [Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangement²](#)
- b. be based in Victoria or be the Victorian chapter of a national organisation
- c. be a not-for-profit member organisation with the core purpose of acting for its members
- d. hold a current Australian Business Number (ABN)
- e. be registered with the responsible federal or state regulator.

Unincorporated Business Groups and organisations with an ABN registered after 1 November 2021 will be required to have a local council enter into the grant agreement on their behalf.

Business Groups that have received funding under the [Business Chambers and Trader Groups program](#) may apply. Applicants must be compliant with all obligations under the prior grant agreement(s), including funds acquittal and final report submission, to be eligible.

² Regional Tourism Boards, Visitor Economy Partnerships and formal groupings of non-networked Local Government Areas as recognised by the Department's Sport, Tourism and Events Group are eligible to apply.

5. Projects

5.1. Use of funds

Grant funds must be used solely to support flood-related recovery activities for members. Funds are designed to enable reactivation of small business located within [eligible local government areas](#) impacted by the Victorian floods.

Projects and activities that align with the grant program objectives may include:

- supporting and encouraging flood-impacted businesses to collaborate on business activities
- reactivation and rebuilding of the local economy in flood-affected areas
- enabling flood-impacted businesses to build capacity and resilience
- business skill development, networking, and resource sharing
- upgrading digital channels to better connect with flood-impacted members
- helping members adapt to a flood-recovery operating environment
- support or advancement of flood-impacted Victorian business communities
- collaboration between tourism organisations or other business groups.

Note: applications for Acute Impact consideration must demonstrate the direct benefit that will flow to small business communities that have been Severely or Extremely impacted by the Victorian floods.

5.2. Suitable project examples

Project activities may be delivered virtually or face-to-face and take any format, including:

- 'buy local' campaign or event
- success story networking
- workshops and short courses
- online training and webinars
- employee skill and capability development
- in-language business events
- app licensing or website development
- cyber security scenarios exercise
- jobs summit or business expo.

Note: applications to extend or repeat a project funded under the Business Chambers and Trader Groups Program must demonstrate the additional benefit that will be provided for small businesses impacted by the Victorian floods.

5.3. Eligible project expenses

Eligible expenses include:

- outsourced supplier costs
- new software subscription
- equipment hire
- speaker engagement

- marketing and advertising
- website developer costs.

Note: capital expenditure and day-to-day operating costs, including staff wages, are not considered project expenditure under this grant.

6. How to apply

Business Groups must apply online at the [Business Victoria website](#).

The program will open for applications on 18 May 2023 and close on 31 October 2023 at midnight, or earlier if funds are exhausted. Applications are assessed on a 'first-in, first-served' basis.

All questions in the application form must be answered to enable timely assessment. Applicants must address assessment criteria and provide a project budget and timeline. Applicants may add attachments to the application form, such as letters of support or project plans.

7. Assessment process

An internal panel from the Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions (the Department) will consider applications using the assessment framework shown at 7.2 below.

Applications will be scored against the assessment framework and how well the proposed project demonstrates alignment with the program objectives.

Attachments and additional information provided as part of the application will be reviewed during the assessment process.

7.1. Assessment and outcome

Assessments will take place in June, September, and November 2023 for applications lodged before 10 June, 20 August, and 31 October 2023 (program close).

Only final applications submitted to the Department will be accepted and assessed. Applications in 'draft' stage (as shown in the Business Victoria grants portal) that have not been submitted will not be accepted or considered.

The Department will endeavour to advise Business Groups of their application outcome in July, September, and November 2023.

7.2. Assessment framework

Eligible applications will be assessed on how well they meet the assessment criteria as outlined below.

1- Impacts and objectives	
Category	The extent to which the project can meet the following objectives of the program: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • enable local business recovery, restart, and collaboration • educate, inform, and empower small businesses • support small businesses to rebuild capability

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> rebuild the resilience of small business owners
Description	<p>Project details that should be included in the application:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> explain how the project will help reactive flood-impacted small businesses and what benefits businesses will gain submission of a detailed plan showing project activities, cost, resourcing, and timing identify how many program objectives the project aims to address, and which program objectives are the focus show an estimate of how many flood-affected small businesses the project may benefit provide a detailed marketing plan that shows tactics, timing, spend and describe how you will maximise reach explain if project activities are targeted to one particular type(s) of business, such as industry sector, culturally and linguistically diverse populations, or Aboriginal-owned.
Score	<p>This category is worth 60% of the application score:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 0-2 poor potential to meet program objectives 3-4 low potential to meet program objectives 5 may deliver program objectives 6-7 will deliver program objectives 8-10 strong alignment with program objectives
2 – Project Delivery	
Category	The capability and capacity of the applicant to deliver the project.
Description	<p>The below project details should be included in the application:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> briefly cover the number, size, and value of projects your business group has successfully delivered who are the key people identified to take responsibility for project activities and what is their availability what opportunities are there to attract added sponsorship funding or in-kind support submission of an itemised budget that shows how the grant funding will be used.
Score	<p>This category is worth 40% of the application score:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 0-2 poor capability and resources identified; no budget breakdown provided 3-4 limited resourcing; gaps in planning and budgeting 5 adequate resourcing and capability (including budget) to deliver program outcomes 6-7 considerable experience and resourcing (including budget) identified to deliver the project 8-10 strong resourcing and experience (including budget) identified to deliver the project

7.3. Due diligence assessments

The Business Group registration details are subject to a risk assessment that verifies the organisation details provided with those held by the Australian Business Register, Australian Securities and

Investment Commission, Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commissioner, Consumer Affairs Victoria and/or other applicable regulators.

Any of the following circumstances may be taken into consideration in any decision to award a grant:

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

Business Groups must attest that they meet the eligibility criteria at the time of application. They will also need to meet the eligibility criteria at the time the application is assessed by the Department.

8. Funding conditions

8.1. Applicable terms

The person lodging an application on behalf of a Business Group must accept and agree to be bound by the terms and conditions of the grant as stated in the application form and these guidelines.

The Department will notify successful applicants by email. Successful applicants must enter into a grant agreement provided by the Department. The grant agreement outlines the commitments, outcomes, milestones, conditions of payment, and obligations under the grant, as well as the general funding terms and conditions.

Successful applicants must sign and return the grant agreement to the Department within 10 days, or the Department may withdraw the offer. Successful applicants should only incur project expenditure after the Department has signed the grant agreement. Funding will not be provided for retrospective activities or purchases made before execution of the grant agreement.

Grant funds will be released after the grant agreement has been signed by both parties under the following milestone payments:

- 80% on the grant agreement being fully executed
- 20% on receipt of the final project report, to the satisfaction of the Department.

Grant recipients will be required to complete delivery of the approved project within 12 months of entering into the grant agreement.

Grant recipients will be required to report on the outcomes of their project and contribute information and data about the funded project to the Department for evaluation of the program.

Grant recipients may be required to provide copies of supporting documentation to evidence reported project expenditure and to return any unspent funds.

The Department reserves the right to request the applicant provide further information if deemed necessary.

All decisions on matters pertaining to the award of funding under this program are at the absolute discretion of the Department.

The Department makes no representation that funding will be granted to any applicant and reserves its right to make no funds available under the Business Groups Flood Recovery Grants program.

8.2. Publicity/Acknowledgement

Successful applicants must acknowledge Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements funding contribution in public materials, which includes but is not limited to:

- a. media releases, social media, posters, advertising, and signage associated with the approved project
- b. acknowledgement or statements in project publications and materials
- c. events that use or include reference to the approved project.

To comply with this requirement, all public advice and media releases should refer to the relevant funding source, as being 'jointly funded by the Australian and Victorian governments under the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements.'

All publications must also include both the Australian and Victorian government logos and the following disclaimer: 'Although funding for this product has been provided by both the Australian and Victorian Governments, the material contained herein does not necessarily represent the views of either Government.'

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

All promotional materials and appropriate signage must be consistent with the [Guidelines for Victorian Government Advertising and Communications](#) (available at vic.gov.au) or as otherwise specified by the Department.

8.3. Privacy and confidentiality

Information provided by the Business Group for the purpose of its application will be collected and used by the Department for the purposes of assessment of applications and eligibility, program administration, program review, program compliance and ensuring compliance with other Victorian floods programs. The Department may audit and monitor applications including checking eligibility and may contact you for clarification, program review and evaluation.

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.

The Department may share application information with the Australian and Victorian Government departments and agencies in the assessment of an application, administration of the program or for compliance and audit purposes.

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 Privacy Unit of the Department by emailing privacy@ecodev.vic.gov.au. The Department's privacy policy is also available by emailing the Privacy Unit, or on our website — see: [Privacy](#)

8.4. Post project evaluation

Grant recipients agree to participate in and comply with the department's performance monitoring and evaluation processes. Grant recipients may receive an evaluation survey from the Department and may be required to participate in program evaluation activities.

8.5. Compliance and audit

Grant recipients may be subject to audit by the Australian Government, the Victorian Government, or their representatives on the accuracy of their application and use of government funds.

If any information in the application is found to be false, misleading, or fraudulent (as determined by the Department in its discretion), or the grant payment is not applied in accordance with the terms of funding as set out in these guidelines, the application, and grant agreement, then the grant payment will be repayable on demand and the Department reserves the right to take further action.

Joint Australian / Victorian government obligations

For assurance purposes, the Australian Government may at any time request documentation from state agencies to evidence compliance with any aspect of the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements. This may include, but not be limited to, access to project level information, to confirm acquittal in accordance with the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements.

Progress updates and broader recovery metrics will be shared with the Australian Government on a quarterly basis. A final Program Completion Report, summarising the total recovery grants provided will be submitted within two months of the completion of the Grant Program.

Assurance and acquittal will be in accordance with existing requirements established under the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements. All State expenditure on this program will be captured in the relevant financial years in which the expenditure was incurred.

9. Other information

The Department reserves the right to amend these guidelines and application terms at any time as it deems appropriate.

There may be delays in assessing and processing your application if the application:

- does not meet all the eligibility criteria
- is incomplete

- does not have correct evidence or documentation
- has incorrect information, such as ABN or bank details (for successful applicants).

Further information is available at business.vic.gov.au or by emailing businessrecovery@business.vic.gov.au

10. Definitions

Acute Impact	means Extremely Impacted or Severely Impacted.
Business Group	means a not-for-profit member-based organisation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • whose purpose is representing, servicing and advocating for its business members • which may be a chamber of commerce, trader group, industry association, business council, networking group or other registered business collective.
Extremely Impacted	means completely inundated or forced to close, with total disruption to its regular business operations and inability to operate its usual activities.
Severely Impacted	means significantly disrupted in its everyday business, with most business operations impacted but with an ability to continue some of its usual activities.
Victorian floods	means the Victorian floods commencing on 6 October 2022 (Australian Government Reference Number 1037).