

OFFICIAL

BUSINESS BUSHFIRE  
RECOVERY GRANT  
PROGRAM GUIDELINES

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## 1. Program Overview

The **Business Bushfire Recovery Grant program** is jointly funded by the Commonwealth and Victorian Governments under the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements for the Western Victoria Bushfires which commenced in December 2024 (AGRN 1166).

Grants of \$5,000 are available to support eligible small businesses (including primary producers) located in the Ararat, Hindmarsh, Horsham, Northern Grampians, Southern Grampians and West Wimmera local government areas that suffered a decline in their ordinary revenue as a result of the 2024-25 Western Victoria Bushfires where:

1. there is a decline in ordinary revenue of at least \$10,000 over a three consecutive month period (as outlined in these guidelines); and
2. that decline represents at least 40 per cent of ordinary revenue (measured from the benchmark period as outlined in these guidelines)

The applicant is required to obtain a letter from a Qualified Agent (e.g. a qualified accountant, registered tax agent, registered BAS agent) in the approved form in support of their application (Clause 5.3.3).

This assistance will go towards building resilient businesses and supporting business recovery in impacted areas.

The expected primary outcomes of this program are:

- businesses owners have increased capability and capacity to recover and/or restart business operations and meet essential costs
- improved resilience of small businesses
- strengthened local economy.

The program is administered by the Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions (department) on behalf of the Victorian Government in accordance with these Guidelines.

Eligibility will be assessed through various verification means, including with other government departments, agencies, regulatory and other bodies.

The small business must be located in an eligible Local Government Area (see Clause 4).

## 2. Program Application Dates

The program opened for applications on 13 May 2025 and will close on 13 November 2025 at 4:00 pm unless funds are allocated earlier. Please note that late applications will not be accepted.

## 3. Available Funding (and Expenditure)

The amount available is one \$5,000 grant per eligible applicant (as defined by its ABN). The department will not pay GST in addition to the \$5,000 grant amount.

The grant is assessable income and taxable. Grants under this program may result in financial, taxation, legal or other implications for the Applicant. Businesses may be able to claim tax deductions for appropriate expenditure funded by the grant. It is strongly

recommended applicants seek independent financial advice in regard to these possible impacts. Applicants may also seek advice from the Australian Tax Office on 1800 806 218 if they have further questions about their individual situation.

A grant awarded under this program may impact access to other bushfire financial supports from the Commonwealth Government. Before applying for this program, applicants should:

- check the eligibility requirements of the Commonwealth Government's Disaster Payment ([Bushfires in Western Victoria, December 2024 - Services Australia](#)) to determine if a grant under the 2024-25 Western Victoria Business Bushfire Recovery Grant affects eligibility for the Commonwealth Disaster Payment; and
- review clause 5.3 of these guidelines regarding how Commonwealth Disaster Recovery Payments for this bushfire event must be treated as part of the decline in revenue calculation for the purposes of this Victorian Business Bushfire Recovery Grant program.

Approved grant recipients must spend all funding provided under this program by 30 January 2026 on business related activities and retain records of this expenditure until 13 May 2029 in accordance with these guidelines.

## 4. Eligible Local Government Areas

This program is for businesses located in the six eligible Local Government areas (LGA) noted below:

- Ararat, Northern Grampians, Southern Grampians and Horsham, affected by the 2024-25 Grampians (Gariwerd) National Park bushfires
- Hindmarsh, Horsham and West Wimmera, affected the 2025 Little Desert bushfires

Note: Horsham LGA may have been affected by either the 2024-25 Grampians National Park bushfires and/or the 2025 Little Desert bushfire.

## 5. Applicant Eligibility

### 5.1 Eligible applicants

To be eligible for the grant, the applicant must:

- a. be an employing business with fewer than 20 full-time equivalent (FTE) employees<sup>1</sup> on payroll and be currently registered with WorkSafe Victoria<sup>2</sup>;

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<sup>1</sup> This means a minimum of 0.1 FTE but less than 20 FTE at the time of application. Casual employee FTE calculations are to be averaged over a 12-month period prior to the date of application. For sole traders, an employee who is the owner of the business must not be included in the employee FTE calculations, meaning that the business must employ someone other than the sole trader themselves.

<sup>2</sup> The department may verify payroll data held by the State Revenue Office and that the employer is registered as an employer with WorkSafe Victoria.

- b. hold an active Australian Business Number (ABN) and have held that ABN on and continuously from 16 December 2023;<sup>3</sup>
- c. be registered for Goods and Services Tax (GST) and have held GST registration on and continuously from 16 December 2024, the commencement of the impacted period (refer to Clause 5.3);<sup>4 5</sup>
- d. be located<sup>6</sup> in an eligible LGA: Ararat, Hindmarsh, Horsham, Northern Grampians, Southern Grampians and West Wimmera (refer to Clause 4);
- e. have experienced a decline in ordinary revenue of at least \$10,000 over a three consecutive month period as a result of the 2024-25 Western Victoria Bushfires and that decline represents at least 40 per cent of ordinary revenue measured from the benchmark period (refer to Clause 5.3);
- f. have been operational immediately before being affected by the 2024-25 Western Victoria Bushfires and be intending to continue operating the small business in an eligible LGA; and
- g. not be insolvent or have owners/directors that are an undischarged bankrupt.

Additionally:

- h. A **not-for-profit organisation** must be registered with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profit Commission (ACNC).

## 5.2 Exceptional Circumstances

In exceptional circumstances, consideration may be given to applicants who do not meet all the eligibility criteria outlined in clause 5.1.

The applicant will be responsible for providing sufficient reasons and evidence in support of an application under this part.

The following exceptional circumstances may be considered on application from a business that otherwise meets all eligibility criteria in clause 5.1, except:

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<sup>3</sup> Businesses that registered after 16 December 2023 but have backdated their ABN registration date to an earlier date will not be eligible, unless an exceptional circumstances application under clause 5.2 is approved for a business registered before 16 December 2024.

<sup>4</sup> Businesses that registered after 16 December 2024 but have backdated their GST registration date to an earlier date will not be eligible.

<sup>5</sup> A business or enterprise must register for GST if it has an annual GST turnover of \$75,000 or more. Incorporated Associations, registered with Consumer Affairs Victoria, with an annual turnover between \$75,000 and \$150,000 that are not registered for GST and charities, registered with the Australian Charities and Not-for-Profit Commission, that are exempt from GST registration are eligible to apply. Businesses with annual 2023-2024 turnover of \$75,000 or more that are not required by relevant taxation legislation to be registered for GST are eligible to apply. A statutory declaration from a registered tax agent may be required.

<sup>6</sup> As evidenced by registration of business location at the Australian Business Register and/or WorkSafe Victoria.

- a. **Clause 5.1d** - is located outside the eligible LGAs but operates part-time or on a regular basis<sup>7</sup> within an eligible LGA; and/or
- b. **Clause 5.1b** - commenced operations and therefore registered their ABN after 16 December 2023 but before 16 December 2024; and/or<sup>8</sup>
- c. **Clause 5.1a or e** - is a primary producer<sup>9</sup> business (employing or non-employing that has not incurred a 40 per cent revenue decline) located within the defined burn area of the 2024-25 Grampians (Gariwerd) National Park and/or 2025 Little Desert National Park bushfires [use this [LINK](#) to confirm location is within the noted burn area in the map], who can:
  - a) demonstrate evidence<sup>10</sup> of direct damage to one or more business assets as a direct result of the 2024-25 Western Victoria Bushfires during the impacted period, and
  - b) has incurred expenditure of at least \$10,000<sup>11</sup> to repair or replace the directly damaged business assets (as per clause 5.2c(a)) before 30 June 2025.

Eligibility of the primary producer business location in the defined burn area<sup>12</sup> will be verified by the State Control Centre maps including the burn area, and Agriculture Victoria and Regional Development Victoria bushfire impact data.

A primary producer seeking consideration under this part is not required to provide a letter from a Qualified Agent but must provide evidence of direct damage and evidence of incurred expenditure as a direct result of the 2024-25 Western Victoria Bushfires.

Consideration may be given at the department's discretion for evidence requirements, e.g. where evidence has been destroyed due to the business being located in the burn area of the 2024-25 Western Victoria Bushfires.

You can apply for exceptional circumstances by entering your details and following the prompts through the [Pre-Application Eligibility Checker](#).

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<sup>7</sup> Evidence must be available to demonstrate part-time operations within an eligible LGA (for example, a council notice, insurance, contract or lease arrangements). For the avoidance of doubt, the revenue decline attributable to operations in eligible LGA must be a minimum of \$10,000 and must be substantial enough to account for at least a 40% decline in revenue across the business' entire operations.

<sup>8</sup> ABN registration requests that were lodged after 16 December 2024 and backdated to an earlier date will not be accepted under exceptional circumstances applications. The business must still have been registered for GST on, as at and from 16 December 2024 as per Clause 5.1c.

<sup>9</sup> Refer to glossary for a definition of primary producer.

<sup>10</sup> Evidence of direct damage (i.e. photographs of burned business assets), however in the absence of photographic evidence (e.g. limited access to impacted property) quotations or estimates, advisory reports, or written inventory of lost/damaged assets). A statutory declaration (using the statutory declaration template for this program) is required. There may be longer processing and assessment times if photographic evidence is unable to be submitted.

<sup>11</sup> The applicant must provide tax invoices or official receipts (paid) for recovery activities that have already been paid for but not covered by insurance.

<sup>12</sup> Refer to glossary for definition of the defined burn area. The parameters of the defined burn area will be verified by the State Control Centre, Agriculture Victoria and Regional Development Victoria bushfire impact data.

### 5.3 How is the decline in revenue determined?

Applicants must be able to demonstrate that the business has experienced a decline in revenue<sup>13</sup> of at least \$10,000 over a three consecutive month period and that the decline represents at least 40 per cent of ordinary revenue (measured from a benchmark period).

The decline in revenue must be a result of the 2024-25 Western Victoria Bushfires, caused by one or more of the following:

- an evacuation order or tourism leave order;
- other supply chain interruptions or stock damage resulting in reduced sales, such as through road closures and utility disconnections
- significantly reduced customer numbers, due to factors such as formal visitation closures or restrictions,
- reduced trade due to reduced visitation to the region as a result of the bushfires.

The decline must be shown in a comparison of revenue periods and verified by a Qualified Agent – refer to clause 5.3.3.

#### 5.3.1 Comparison of revenue periods

The decline in revenue of 40 per cent or more must be shown over a three consecutive month period (the 'impacted period') following the 2024-25 Western Victoria bushfires, compared to the same three consecutive month period in the previous year (the 'benchmark period').

**Impacted Period** is a three consecutive month period chosen within the timeframe of 16 December 2024 to 26 April 2025 to demonstrate revenue decline.

**Benchmark Period** is the same three consecutive month period as the impacted period but within the timeframe 16 December 2023 to 26 April 2024 that demonstrates ordinary revenue.

#### 5.3.2 Revenue decline determination

**Step 1 - Revenue in Impacted Period** Choose a period of three consecutive months within the timeframe of 16 December 2024 to 26 April 2025 to demonstrate revenue decline. This becomes your 'impacted period'.

For example, some businesses may choose the Business Activity Statement period 1 January 2025 – 31 March 2025 as their 'impacted period'.

Note: for businesses that have accessed the Commonwealth Government's Disaster Payment ([Bushfires in Western Victoria, December 2024 - Services Australia](#)) this income must be included as revenue in the impacted period.

**Step 2 - Revenue in Benchmark Period** Identify revenue for the same three consecutive month period in the previous year to demonstrate ordinary revenue for the 'benchmark period'.

**Step 3 - Revenue decline calculation** Calculate the decline in revenue percentage using the formula below:

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<sup>13</sup> Refer to glossary for a definition of **revenue**.

**Revenue decline % = [1-(Revenue in Impacted Period/Revenue in Benchmark Period)] x 100**

If the decline in revenue (as calculated using the above formula) is less than \$10,000 or less than 40 per cent then the business is not eligible for this program.

Note: Businesses located in the Ararat LGA that can demonstrate impact from the 'February 2024 Pomonal bushfires' ([as defined by the State Control Centre burn area map](#) and commencing 13 February 2024) may choose a three consecutive month benchmarking period directly before the commencement of the February 2024 Pomonal bushfires (this means, 13 November 2023 - 13 February 2024), reflective of an ordinary period of trade not affected by the February 2024 Pomonal bushfires.

### 5.3.3 Qualified Agent Verification

The decline in revenue must be verified by a Qualified Agent who must be a qualified accountant, registered Business Activity Statement (BAS) Agent or registered Tax Agent.<sup>14</sup>

The Qualified Agent must sign a 'Letter from the Qualified Agent', which states that based on the information provided to them from the applicant:

- the revenue decline satisfies the \$10,000 revenue reduction requirement, and that decline represents at least 40 per cent of ordinary revenue (measured against the benchmark period) for the impacted period;
- they have seen evidence that can be provided to demonstrate the revenue decline;
- the applicant has informed the Qualified Agent that the financial information provided is consistent with ordinary revenue calculations; and
- that the business has fewer than 20 full-time equivalent (FTE) employees.

The letter must be in the format specified in the application invitation email (and application form) and be submitted as part of the application.

The Qualified Agent cannot be an employee or director of the applicant, or an associated entity of the applicant, or a director or employee of an associated entity of the applicant.

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<sup>14</sup> A Qualified Agent is any of the following:

Qualified accountant who belongs to one of the following professional bodies at the declared membership classification i) CPA Australia (i.e. CPA and FCPA), ii) Chartered Accountants Australia and New Zealand (i.e. CA, ACA and FCA) and iii) Institute of Public Accountants (i.e. AIPA, MIPA and FIPA) and comply with the body's continuing professional education requirements; or

A registered BAS Agent who belongs to one of the following associations at the declared membership classification, including i) the Institute of Certified Bookkeepers (FICB, MICB, AICB), and ii) the Australian Bookkeepers Association (Member), and iii) Association of Accounting Technicians (Australia) Limited and comply with the body's continuing professional education requirements; or

A registered Tax Agent who belongs to one of the following professional bodies, including i) The Tax Institute, ii) National Tax Agents' Association (NTAA PLUS) and iii) Tax & Super Australia and comply with the body's continuing professional education requirements.

Additionally, where the department perceives a potential conflict of interest between an Applicant and their nominated Qualified Agent, the department may require that the Applicant use an alternative Qualified Agent.

Qualified Agents will be required to make a conflict of interest declaration as part of their attestation letter.

## 6 What the grant can be used for

Grants are provided to support eligible small businesses recover from the 2024-25 Western Victoria bushfires. This includes any of the following:

- meeting standard business costs, including utilities, rates, stock replacement and rent;
- seeking financial advice to support the recovery of the business;
- adjusting the business to be viable in the changed local context following the bushfires;
- developing the business and extending business reach through marketing and communications activities; or
- improvements to make the business more resilient to future disasters.

but excludes the ineligible activities and expenses set out below.

All grant funding must be spent in accordance with these guidelines by no later than 30 January 2026.

Applicants must be able to provide evidence of how grant funds were used, and grant expenditure may be subject to audit as per clauses 7, 8 and 9 of these guidelines.

Any expenditure must be in accordance with clause 6 of these guidelines. Upon request by the department, any unspent funds or funds spent not in accordance with these guidelines, either whole or in part, must be repaid.

### 6.1 Ineligible activities & expenses

Grants cannot be provided to help pay for costs associated with the following:

- where the applicant is entitled to, has received, or has been approved to receive, an amount under a policy of insurance for the relevant costs claimed
- wages or salaries
- expenses for personal items or services
- purchase of luxury or non-essential items that do not contribute to business recovery
- where the recipient has successfully received funding or assistance from any other government source or program or donation for the same costs in relation to the business;
- superannuation funds and personal investments; or
- any other expenditure as determined by the department that does not meet program eligibility.



## 7 How the program works

### Step 1 – Applicants submit an online Application

- a) Check whether your business is potentially eligible for the program by verifying your details online via the [Pre-Application Eligibility Checker](#). If your business is potentially eligible for the program, you will receive an email inviting you to submit an application.
- b) Use your unique application invitation link to apply for the program.
- c) Applications are submitted online via the Business Victoria website (business.vic.gov.au) application portal. The application must be submitted by an authorised representative of the business. An authorised representative is a person who can legally bind the Applicant. (Refer to clause 14 for examples of authorised representatives).
- d) All questions in the application need to be completed and requested information provided to ensure timely assessment.
- e) As part of the application process, the Applicant must accept and agree to be bound by the terms and conditions of the grant in the application form and these guidelines. By completing the application form the Applicant is making an offer to the department and will be bound by the terms of the offer if accepted by the department.
- f) At the time of applying, the Applicant must provide a signed copy of the “Letter from the Qualified Agent” and provide the contact information, including the qualification/professional membership details, of the Qualified Agent.
- g) The program will be open for applications until 4:00 pm 13 November 2025 or when funds are exhausted, whichever is earlier.
- h) The application information will be assessed against the eligibility criteria. If the business is found to be eligible, the Applicant will be advised of the outcome.

### Step 2 – Payment of grant of \$5,000

- a) If the application is successful, the Applicant (i.e. authorised representative) will receive a Successful Email.
- b) The Applicant is required to acknowledge the Successful Email by completing and submitting an acceptance form to receive the grant of \$5,000. This will create an agreement between the Applicant and the Department on the terms and conditions of the grant contained in the application form and your application, the Successful Email and these guidelines. The Applicant may also withdraw the application at this point, if desired.
- c) The Department will aim to pay the business within 10 working days of receipt of the completed acceptance form.

### Step 3 – Applicants demonstrate eligibility and grant expenditure

- a) Applicants must spend the funds on eligible expenditure by 30 January 2026.
- b) Applicants must keep evidence of eligibility and evidence of how their grant funds were spent.

- c) Applicants will be asked to participate in a program evaluation survey in early 2026, which will include a request for information on how grant funds were spent.
- d) The department reserves the right to audit the grant (refer to Clause 9). The Applicant must retain their evidence documents for a minimum period of 4 years from the program open date (until 13 May 2029), for audit purposes (refer to Clause 9).

Successful applicants will be provided further information on how this process works and what is required of them.

## 8 Assessment

### 8.1 Assessment process

Applications will be assessed against the eligibility criteria, attestations and evidence provided.

When assessing your application, the department reserves the right to request further information to verify the application. Failure to provide further information may result in the department refusing the application.

Applicants must ensure that the information listed with the ABR as part of their ABN registration is current and accurate at the time of application.

Applications will be assessed using the information and evidence provided in that application. As part assessment, any information provided by an applicant may be shared and subject to verification with other government agencies (Local, State and Commonwealth) including (but not limited to) the Australian Taxation Office, Australian Securities and Investments Commission, Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission, Consumer Affairs Victoria, WorkSafe Victoria, the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action, State Revenue Office, the Australian Business Register (ABR), local government and the Australian Government Department of Home Affairs.<sup>15</sup>

The department reserves in its absolute discretion the right to refuse an application where eligibility criteria are not met, or where the applicant does not or cannot provide sufficient information for the department to assess whether eligibility criteria have been met.

Applicants 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.

### 8.2 Evidence that may be requested

Evidence that must be provided upon request includes the following, or any other document that the department considers necessary to make an assessment, review, acquittal or audit determination.

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<sup>15</sup> The department is not responsible for delays caused by third party validation of eligibility. By making an application, the applicant consents to the assessment and verification process.

### 8.2.1 Evidence of revenue decline

Evidence for both the Benchmark and Impacted Periods, or any other period the department specifies:

- Business Activity Statements
- evidence of:
  - total sales
  - invoices issued
  - cancellations of bookings
  - lost production or harvest as a result of the bushfire
- financial statements; and
- bank statements

### 8.2.2 Other eligibility evidence requirements

- evidence of where the applicant's business operates and the relevant property details;
- ABN and GST registration of the business;
- banking and financial information relating to the business; and
- evidence of the number of full-time equivalent employees employed by the business.

### 8.2.3 Evidence of how grant funds were used

Applicants must keep evidence of expenditure to verify that grant funds have been expended on business related activities (refer to clause 6) as demonstrated by paid tax invoices linked to proof of payment e.g. official receipt<sup>16</sup> and/or associated bank transfer(s) and/or bank statement(s). This evidence must be produced upon request.

## 8.3 Due Diligence checks

Without limiting the department's assessment, the following circumstances may be taken into consideration in any decision whether to award a grant:

- a. duplicate applications including by a trustee and a trust
- b. misleading amendments to information provided to public registers describing the organisation
- c. any adverse findings by a government agency or local council regarding an organisation or its operation
- d. The Department considers that the organisation is insolvent, a notice has been given that it will be, placed under external administration, there is an application for liquidation or bankruptcy or to wind up a company or organisation, or a step has been taken to deregister the company or organisation (including cancellation or lapse in registration or any relevant permit)
- e. whether the applicant has received funding for the same costs through other means

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<sup>16</sup> **Official receipt:** means a receipt including the name and address and ABN (if applicable) of the entity that issued the receipt and a description of each item to which the receipt relates.

- f. the delivery or performance of other grants contracted with the Victorian Government and whether the applicant has failed to meet contractual obligations;
- g. whether the applicant has or is reasonably suspected of having provided false or misleading information in relation to this or any other grant program, including under a grant application or attestation;
- h. the Applicant has engaged or may engage in any conduct which affects or may adversely affect the goodwill or reputation of the Recipient, the Department, a Minister, or the State;
- i. whether the Applicant has or is likely to have engaged in any unlawful conduct.

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 into disrepute.

## 9 Audit and Review

Applications and grant expenditure may be subject to audit by the department, the Victorian Government, its representatives or agents, or the relevant Auditor-General for a period of four years commencing from program open date (until 13 May 2029).

Audits may be conducted either before or after the provision of grant funding, and may be used to review eligibility, to determine whether information provided in the grant application was accurate, and/or to determine whether expenditure of the grant funds was in accordance with the program guidelines.

Evidence of eligibility and, if a grant is received, evidence of expenditure of the grant, must be kept for the entire duration of the audit period and be produced on request by the Applicant. The department may also contact your nominated Qualified Agent in relation to any audit or review. Refer to clause 8.2 above, 'evidence that may be requested'.

### 9.1 Right to demand repayment

The grant will be repayable on demand if:

- The grant recipient fails to participate in any acquittal or audit process or to provide any evidence requested by the department; or
- The department deems, following an audit or review process, that the recipient was ineligible for the grant; or
- Any information provided by any person in the application, during the application process or during an audit or review process is found to be inaccurate, false or misleading; or
- Any grant funds are not spent or are not applied, either in whole or in part, for the purposes of the business in accordance with the terms of funding as set out in these Guidelines and any attached application.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Where only part of the grant funding has not been spent or has not been spent in accordance with the terms of funding, the department may request repayment of that part of the funds.

Failure to repay the grant upon demand may result in the department taking action to recover the funds.

## 10 Program Evaluation

Grant recipients may be required to provide additional information to the department in relation to the evaluation of the program or participate in program evaluation activities initiated by the department, including evaluation surveys during the period of the program, or for a nominated period after program completion.

Program evaluation is critical to the department in understanding program impact, supporting continuous improvement in program design and delivery, and delivering effective emergency recovery support to Victorians.

## 11 Privacy Statement

Any personal information provided for this program will be collected and used by the Department for the purposes of assessing eligibility, comparing eligibility and compliance with other Victorian grant programs you have previously received (if any), program administration, auditing, 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 assessing an application for the program as well as in any audit or evaluation of a successful grant, it may be necessary to share and verify 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 departmental 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 or correction to your personal information, can be emailed to [info@business.vic.gov.au](mailto:info@business.vic.gov.au).

Other concerns regarding the privacy of personal information, can be emailed to the Department's Privacy Unit at [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.

## 12 Department 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.

Decisions in recommending and awarding grant funding under this program are at the minister's and department discretion. This includes not making any funding available or approving a lesser amount than that applied for.

These guidelines and application terms may be changed from time to time, within the discretion of the department and the changes will apply to your application.

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 are required to act in accord with the Code of Conduct for Victorian Public Sector Employees (Section 61) issued under the *Public Administration Act 2004* (Vic). This includes an obligation to avoid conflicts of interest wherever possible and declare and manage any conflicts of interest that cannot be avoided.

### 12.1 Complaints and decision reviews

If an applicant wants to lodge a complaint or provide feedback to the department about the process for a grant application, requests can be made via this online [form](#), by sending a written request to [info@business.vic.gov.au](mailto:info@business.vic.gov.au) or by calling 1800 878 969.

Once your complaint has been received by the department, it will be acknowledged within 2 working days and provided to the review team to be resolved.

Your complaint will be resolved within 14 days unless further investigation is required. If further investigation is required, you may be contacted by phone or email asking for additional information.

#### **Requests to review an outcome**

Applicants may request a review of the decision not to approve a grant application up to 30 days after the department notifies the applicant of the outcome. Requests to review an outcome decision will not be accepted after this timeframe.

## 13 Inaccurate, false or misleading information

By signing the application form, you are declaring that the information provided in the application form and supporting documentation is true, accurate and not misleading about a material fact.

If any information in the application is found to be inaccurate, false or misleading (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 and the application, the grant payment will be repayable on demand and the department reserves the right to take further action, including referring the applicant to the relevant law enforcement agency.

Providing inaccurate, false or misleading information may result in an offence being committed and serious penalties may apply.

It is an offence under the Oaths and Affirmations Act 2018 (Vic) for a person to make a statement in a statutory declaration that they know to be untrue.

## 14 Glossary

**Applicant** is as defined by its Australian Business Number (ABN), which will become the recipient upon successful acceptance by the department of their application. It is the legal entity that has entered into a Grant Agreement with the department.

**Associated entity** has the meaning given to it by section 50AAA of the *Corporations Act 2001* (Cth).

**Authorised representative** the person applying for the grant must be authorised to submit the application and agree to the terms and conditions of the grant on behalf of the Applicant. This must be a person authorised to execute contracts and legally bind the applicant business.

Depending on the entity type, the following people are authorised representatives and can apply on behalf of their organisation:

- a. Companies: a director listed at the Australian Securities and Investments Commission (ASIC) or Register of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Corporations
- b. Incorporated associations: an authorised office holder
- c. Sole traders: the sole trader
- d. Partnerships: a partner.
- e. Trusts: an authorised representative of the trustee, being either the trustee (if an individual) or a director of the trustee (if a company)

**Defined Burn Area** refers to specified areas from the 2024-25 Grampians (Gariwerd) National Park bushfires, 2025 Little Desert bushfires that have been directly affected (burned) by the bushfire. Refer to the map of the defined burn area [here](#).

**Direct damage** means direct and material bushfire damage (from bushfire flames and/or embers) to the business asset within the defined burn area (as defined above) for the 2024-25 Grampians (Gariwerd) National Park bushfires, the 2025 Little Desert bushfires.

**Primary producer:** carries on a business that involves primary production as listed under the Australian New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification 2006 (ANZSIC) 1292.0 Codes 01-05, including the agricultural, apicultural, aqua-cultural, commercial wild-catch fishing, forestry, grazing and horticultural industries.

**Revenue:** is the gross income that arises during ordinary activities of a business and covers sales, fees, interest, dividends, and royalties. A revenue stream refers to the various sources from which a business earns money from the sale of goods or the provision of services. This represents the different ways a business generates income on an ongoing basis.

## Appendix 1

### Eligible entity types.

The applicant business must be a legal entity registered as a business in the state of Victoria and can be any of the following entity types (and provided it is not an Ineligible entity type as set out below):

- A company registered under the Corporations Act 2001 (Cth) with the Australian Securities and Investment Commission (ASIC)
- An incorporated association registered under the Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012 (Vic) with Consumer Affairs Victoria (CAV)
- An indigenous organisation incorporated under the Corporations (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) Act 2006 (Cth).
- Franchisees may be eligible if they are part of a chain and can demonstrate that they operate through a separate legal entity.
- An incorporated not-for-profit organisation registered with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission
- A sole trader
- Partnerships<sup>18</sup>
- A trustee on behalf of a trust<sup>19</sup>.

### Ineligible entity types

The following are not eligible to apply:

- A Commonwealth, state or local government agency or body, including
  - a State Body as defined in the State-Owned Enterprises Act 1992 (Vic)
  - A Crown land committee of management
  - a Victorian local government authority [located within the 48 municipalities in regional Victoria]
- Publicly funded research institutions
- A Public company within the meaning of the Corporations Act 2001.
- A company not incorporated in Australia
- An unincorporated association
- An unincorporated not-for-profit

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<sup>18</sup> Provided all individuals in the partnership will be legally liable for the performance of any agreement the individual signs.

<sup>19</sup> Trustees can apply on behalf of a Trust, provided the Trustee:

- remains sufficiently liable for the performance of any agreement it signs
- has a right to be indemnified from the assets of the Trust
- is indemnified from the assets of the Trust.
- Eligible incorporated trustees exclude self-managed super funds.



- A co-operative registered under the Co-operatives National Law
- A body corporate under the Local Government Act 2020 (Vic)
- A statutory corporation such as a university, hospital or TAFE
- Unincorporated community sporting and active recreation clubs and associations.