

OFFICIAL

MULTICULTURAL BUSINESS PRECINCT REVITALISATION PROGRAM

PROGRAM GUIDELINES



Jobs, Skills,
Industry
and Regions

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1. Program Overview

1.1 About the Program

The Multicultural Business Precinct Revitalisation Program will provide grant funding to local councils across Victoria to support the revitalisation of multicultural business precincts, deliver tangible improvements for local businesses and celebrate the evolving cultural diversity of Victoria's multicultural traders in these precincts.

The program reflects the Victorian Government's commitment to support the upgrade and revitalisation of business and cultural hubs in Victoria's multicultural precincts under the *Supporting our Multicultural Traders and Precincts* commitment.

The program reinforces the intent of the *Good Practice Guide: Collaboration in Multicultural Business Precinct Planning & Activation* released in September 2025.

1.2 Program objectives

The objectives of the program are to:

- Promote and activate local economic activity in business precincts
- Encourage collaboration in precinct planning, activation and placemaking
- Celebrate the evolving cultural diversity of traders in a local business precinct
- Improve the quality of spaces in multicultural business precincts for the businesses and communities that use them.

1.3 Program outcomes

The program is expected to support the following outcomes:

- Increase visitation to multicultural business precincts
- Encourage collaboration between local councils, business associations and multicultural traders in precinct planning and activation processes
- Make available improved or new public spaces, infrastructure or other assets in multicultural business precincts.

1.4 Useful definitions

For the purposes of this program the following definitions apply:

- **Multicultural business** refers to businesses that identify as being of a specific ethnic, language or cultural community that has common needs, customs and traditions.
- **Business precincts** are centres of economic activity, located across Victoria. They typically include a variety of businesses – from retail and hospitality

through to a range of professional service offerings. They may also be referred to as activity centres or business districts.

- **Multicultural business precincts** are centres of economic activity where a substantial proportion of the business owners and operators are either from a specific culture or a diverse range of cultures or countries of origin. These include precincts that have a history of cultural diversity and continuing connections to diverse communities.

2. Available Funding

2.1 Grant funding

Local councils may apply for a minimum of \$50,000 and up to a maximum of \$250,000 (exclusive of GST) grant funding per application.

2.2 Co-contribution

Grants will be provided on a co-contribution basis, meaning the applicant must provide a financial contribution towards the proposed project. This financial co-contribution must be equivalent to at least 20% of the grant amount.

For example, the minimum grant of \$50,000 will require a cash contribution of \$10,000. The maximum grant of \$250,000 will require a cash contribution of \$50,000.

3. Applicant Eligibility

This program offers funding support to local councils in Victoria.

3.1 Eligible applicants

To be eligible, applicants must meet the following criteria:

- be a Victorian local government authority
- demonstrate support for the proposed project from the relevant business association or businesses operating in the precinct
- be able to provide a cash co-contribution of at least 20% of the grant value.

3.2 Number of applications

Local councils can submit **one application per business precinct** in their local government area.

Up to 3 applications will be accepted per local council, subject to each application relating to a different business precinct in the local government area.

4. What will be funded

The program will support projects that revitalise a business precinct and improve outcomes for multicultural businesses.

The Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions (Department) reserves the right to determine eligible activities and expenditure in alignment with the program objectives.

4.1 Project eligibility

Projects must be in a business precinct and demonstrate support from the relevant business association or from businesses operating in the precinct.

Applicants should refer to the Victorian Government's *Good Practice Guide on Collaborative Approaches to Multicultural Business Precinct & Activation* to help inform their approach to collaboration and the development of proposals with input from local businesses and/or associations.

4.2 Cultural inclusion and funding need considerations

Some business precincts have a long-standing history of multicultural businesses operating in these areas, such as Box Hill, Chinatown, Dandenong, Oakleigh, Footscray and Richmond, as referenced by the Victorian Government in the *Supporting our Multicultural Traders and Precincts* commitment.

Consistent with the Victorian Government's commitments, assessment processes will also take into account the following:

- historic and/or current business cultural diversity in a business precinct
- socio-economic attributes of businesses operating in the precinct
- level of government expenditure on precinct improvements over the last three years.

4.3 Eligible activities & expenses

Eligible activities include construction and works to upgrade a business precinct/s:

- **Visitor spaces** for people to gather and spend time, such as outdoor furniture, outdoor dining, stages, recreational pop-up spaces
- **Public infrastructure** important to businesses and visitors, such as greening and beautification works, lighting, walking and cycling paths, pergolas and shade over public areas
- **Wayfinding signage** to help people navigate the precinct and reflect the unique character and strengths of the precinct

- **Public art installations** that add to the atmosphere and look of a precinct, or promote the identity and cultural heritage of businesses, such as murals and sculptures
- **Shopfront exteriors** to improve the visual appeal, character and representation of businesses and create visual cohesiveness across the precinct.

Pilot projects are also eligible under the program, where these aim to inform a larger construction or works investment.

For case study examples, refer to the *Good Practice Guide: Collaboration in Multicultural Business Precinct Planning & Activation*.

Applicants are encouraged to consult with Small Business Victoria to discuss their project proposal prior to submission via multicultural@business.vic.gov.au.

4.4 Ineligible activities & expenses

Activities that will not be funded include:

- projects or expenses incurred prior to a grant agreement being executed
- projects on land that is not appropriately zoned for the proposed activity and may be subject to a planning scheme amendment or complex land use planning, heritage or environmental approval processes
- infrastructure that is fully scoped and funded through a Development Contribution Plan (DCP), Infrastructure Contributions Plan (ICP) or infrastructure which is subject to an agreement under section 173 of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*
- the purchase of:
 - land, property and buildings
 - unfixed, mobile or transferable assets such as sporting or gardening equipment
 - assets, materials and products from overseas suppliers (i.e. contractors must be based in Victoria)
- ongoing or routine maintenance activities, cosmetic works, repair of facilities damaged by vandalism, fire or other natural disasters where the damage should be covered by insurance.
- service connections (while these elements may form part of the project, council contributions should be used for these purposes)

- projects requiring additional ongoing funding from the Victorian Government
- project management, planning, design and consultation costs that are greater than 20% of the total grant value
- any other expenditure as determined by the Department that does not meet program objectives.

4.5 Project duration

Projects are expected to be **completed by 30 March 2027**.

Applicants will be required to supply project specific dates that fit within this timeframe, as part of their application.

5. How to apply

5.1 Key dates

Key dates are as follows:

- **Applications open:** Monday 1 September 2025
- **Applications close:** 3:00pm on Thursday 16 October 2025.

Please note that late applications will not be accepted.

5.2 Submitting an application

Applicants should complete the following steps to apply:

1. Carefully read these Program Guidelines and the 'Frequently Asked Questions' found on the program website.

It is also recommended that you read the *Good Practice Guide: Collaboration in Multicultural Business Precinct Planning & Activation* prior to applying.
2. Compile all necessary application supporting documents as detailed in the 'Documentation Requirements' section below.
3. Submit the application online via the 'Apply now' button on the Program webpage.
4. Ensure you receive an email confirmation of application submission. Please check spam/junk mail if the confirmation email cannot be seen in your inbox.

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

Applicants will be required to declare in the application form that all information in their application is true and correct.

5.3 Documentation requirements

All questions in the application form must be completed and required supporting documentation provided to enable timely assessment.

Supporting documentation can be provided as part of the application, noting:

- you can upload and submit up to 5 files
- attached files can be no more than 5MB in size each
- it may be necessary to combine supporting material into one document if additional documents are intended to be provided (e.g. letters of support from multiple parties).

The Department may contact applicants to seek further details to inform the assessment of project proposals.

Supporting Documentation Checklist	Requirement
A project plan in the format provided by the Department that includes: • a project description, including activities to be delivered • key precinct stakeholders and profile of business cultural diversity and other socio-economic attributes • project timeline and milestones • images and/or plans showing the location of the project • description of the ownership and zoning of the land that the project will be located on • disclosure of any land use planning implications that may impact the delivery of the project in a timely manner, such as: permits, approvals and reports/plans that will be required to be obtained or completed to deliver the project • details of the status of all council approvals required to deliver the project • itemised project budget, inclusive of grant and co-contributions (note: all values must be GST exclusive) • government expenditure on improvements to the precinct in the last 3 years • approach to project governance, monitoring, assessment and reporting • identified project risks and mitigation strategies • communications plan, including approach to business and visitor engagement, promotional campaigns	Mandatory (note this plan will be incorporated into the grant agreement)

• approach to managing the project once it is delivered and how its benefits will be sustained.	
Designs (minimum schematic) and/or Quantity Surveyor and/or Technical or Specialised Reports for the project.	Desirable, if applicable
Evidence of support for the proposal from the relevant business association for the precinct or local businesses, such as: • letter(s) of support from the relevant business association or equivalent • findings from a survey of businesses in a precinct • priorities identified in a local business association's strategic and/or annual plan.	Mandatory

6. Assessment

6.1 Assessment process

The following assessment process will be followed:

1. Applications will be assessed against the eligibility and assessment criteria (at sections 3.1 and 6.2).
2. Eligible applications will be assessed by an assessment panel comprising departmental staff and will be scored against the assessment criteria to create a ranking of project proposals.
3. All required and supplementary attachments and information provided as part of the application will be taken into consideration during the assessment process.
4. Applications may undergo due diligence checks, including with other Victorian Government departments as required.
5. Final review will be undertaken by a review panel to consider due diligence findings, cultural inclusion and funding need considerations as outlined at 4.2 and determine recommended applicants subject to funding available. The panel includes departmental representatives and government infrastructure experts.
6. Funding recommendations will be made by the Department to the Minister for Small Business and Employment for final decision.

The Minister's and Department's decisions on all matters pertaining to the award of funding under this program are at the Minister's and Department's absolute discretion. All decisions made under this program are final, including:

- decisions on any aspect of the funding application, eligibility and assessment process

- any decision to offer or award a grant under this program
- approving a lower amount than that applied for and amending funding conditions without notice
- any decision to withdraw the offer or cancel the grant funding agreement.

6.2 Assessment criteria

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

Applicants will be asked to respond to the criteria and considerations (columns 1 and 2) and keep in mind the relative weighting and importance of the criteria (column 3).

To be competitive, an application must address each assessment criterion and make a case for funding that can be substantiated. Any underlying risks and assumptions should be clearly stated.

Further information may be sought from applicants if required.

Assessment criteria	Considerations	Weighting
1. Project alignment	Applications will be required to demonstrate the extent to which the proposal aligns with the program objectives (section 1.2) and outcomes (section 1.3).	20%
2. Project need	Applications must: • clearly describe the project, what will be delivered and why it is a priority • demonstrate how the project will improve the business precinct for businesses and visitors • demonstrate the project is consistent with key council plans and/or policy documents, and its relationship with other works or activities to boost the precinct • address cultural inclusion and funding need considerations as described in section 4.2.	20%
3. Business support & engagement	Applications must: • provide evidence of local business support for the project, including multicultural businesses	20%

	• demonstrate an understanding of the evolving cultural composition of businesses in the precinct, including current and historical connections • show how the project will contribute or celebrate the diversity of businesses in the precinct • identify the approach to communication and engagement with stakeholder groups on the project and its delivery, including business associations and/or local businesses and the broader community.	
4. Project feasibility and delivery	Applications must: • demonstrate a sound approach to deliver the project, with realistic deliverables and milestones to complete the project no later than March 2027 • provide a detailed and complete project plan • provide a realistic project budget, with reliable cost estimates for all activities, including identification of potential suppliers • clearly identify potential project risks and strategies to manage these • identify governance / oversight arrangements that will be applied • demonstrate a good track-record in delivering previously funded state government projects.	40%

6.3 Due Diligence checks

Applications may be subject to due diligence checks to enable the Department to assess the risks associated with the application.

Such checks may include:

- whether the proposal has received funding through other Victorian Government programs
- applicant's track-record in delivering similar projects
- external stakeholder support for the proposal.

Outcomes from such assessments may be taken into account in any decision to recommend or award a grant and in contracting with successful applicants.

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.

7. Notification of Outcomes

Applicants will be advised of the outcome of their grant application via email.

The Department will endeavour to notify applicants of the outcome of their application within 10 weeks of program close.

8. Conditions of Funding

8.1 Funding offer

Applicants will be advised in writing if they are successful and if they are required to accept the funding offer in writing 10 days from the date of the offer.

An offer of funding is not binding on the Department unless and until both the Department and the applicant execute the grant agreement.

The Department requires that any offer remain confidential until after an agreement has been executed and the funding formally announced, or as otherwise advised by the Department.

8.2 Grant agreements

Successful applicants will be invited to enter into a legally binding grant agreement with the State of Victoria as represented by the Department. The grant agreement will be prepared and provided by the Department and will be based on the Department's template.

The applicant will be required to sign the grant agreement as specified in the letter of offer from the Department. The funding offer may lapse or be withdrawn if the grant agreement is not signed by the applicant within the timeframe given. The Department is the final signatory to the grant agreement.

The project, and any expenditure of funds associated with the project, must not commence until the grant agreement has been executed. Agreement execution means the grant agreement has been signed by both the Department and the applicant.

Once the agreement has been executed, the grant recipient (successful applicant) will be required to commence the project by the Commencement Date and within the agreed timeframe.

The grant agreement details all funding obligations and conditions such as:

- the project and project outcomes
- payments/payment milestones
- funding use
- grant activity/milestone deliverables and due dates
- reporting on project activity, spend and project outcomes
- accounting and audit
- publicity and acknowledgement
- refund events
- termination rights
- compliance with policies and laws (as applicable).

8.3 Grant payments

Grant recipients will be required to actively manage and deliver projects.

Payments will be made in instalments, subject to the grant recipient meeting milestone requirements to the satisfaction of the Department.

Project delivery reporting will include progress and final reports and other supporting documentation at each milestone.

8.3.1 Eftsure bank account verification

Prior to grant payments being issued, the Department will use Eftsure software for verification of bank details. Eftsure is an Australian digital software company that delivers real time payment verification assurance to payment issuers. It is used to help reduce payment fraud and errors by ensuring electronic funds transfers go to the right payees. For more information on Eftsure and how it securely verifies bank details, please visit the Eftsure website.

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

8.4 Publicity/acknowledgement of support

Grant recipients must co-operate with the Department in relation to all publicity and promotion of the grant and project.

The Department requires grant recipients to acknowledge the Victorian Government's support of the project on marketing and promotional materials, publications, media releases and appropriate signage, as specified and approved in advance by the Department.

The Department will supply the grant recipient instructions and guidance on the use of logos, associated brand guidelines, and the acknowledging the funding support. Supporting information for grant recipients from this program can be found [here](#).

Grant recipients must obtain written approval from the Department before making public announcements about the grant.

The Department may publicise the project and benefits accruing to a grant recipient associated with the grant and the State's support for the project. The Department may include the name of the grant recipient and the amount of funding granted in any publicity material and in the Department's annual report.

8.5 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, 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 grant program outcomes for Victoria.

9. Privacy Statement

Any personal information provided for this program will be collected and used by the Department for the purposes of assessing eligibility, program administration, 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 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 or correction to your personal information can be emailed to multicultural@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. The Department's privacy policy is also available by emailing the Department's Privacy Unit.

10. 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 Department's 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.

10.1 Conflicts of interest

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.

Similar obligations apply to councillors, members of council staff and external members of delegated committees under the *Local Government Act 2020* (Vic). In addition disclosure and management requirements apply, including as required by each council's Governance Rules.

10.2 Complaints

If an applicant would like 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](#) or by sending a written request to multicultural@business.vic.gov.au.

Requests can be made in relation to the application process and adherence to these guidelines. Re-assessment of an application or overturning of a funding decision for a merit-based grant, will not be considered through the complaints process.

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 28 business days unless further investigation is required. If further investigation is required, you may be contacted by phone or email asking for additional information.

11. No payment of GST on grant funding

Goods and Services Tax (GST) will not be added to the grant payment.

12. Record keeping for recipients and Audit

Grant recipients must keep proper accounts as required by law and in accordance with the terms and conditions of the grant agreement.

Recipients may be subject to audit and will be required to retain records following completion of the project and provide access and produce evidence (such as financial reports, invoices and documentation to demonstrate impact) and assist the Department, its representatives, and the Auditor General of Victoria with the conduct of the audit, as required.

13. Further information

Further information regarding this program can be found [here](#).

If you have any questions during the application period, please email multicultural@business.vic.gov.au.