

GUIDELINES

Business Chambers and Trader Groups Grants Round Three

1 Program summary

Business Chambers and Trader Groups Round Three grants will provide funding for locally led initiatives to support metropolitan and regional business chambers and trader groups.

Up to 60 grants of \$20,000 each are available for business chambers and trader groups to deliver activities or programs that advance business community participation across Victoria.

1.1 Program objectives

Key objectives of Round Three of the grants program are to support business chambers and trader groups to run locally led initiatives between October 2022 and 30 April 2023 that:

- enable local business collaboration
- educate, inform and empower small businesses
- support small businesses to build digital capability
- help members transition into recovery and restart.

2 Available funding

Grants of \$20,000 are available to successful applicants.

A business chamber or trader group is eligible for one grant under Round Three of the program.

Recipients of grants under Round One and Two of the 2020 Business Chambers and Trader Groups program are eligible to apply for a grant under Round Three, subject to having performed all obligations under prior grant agreements, including the acquittal of funds and the delivery of any Final Report to the department. Applications to extend or repeat a previously funded initiative must demonstrate appropriate benefits of the new activity.

3 Eligibility criteria

To be eligible to apply for a grant, the business chamber or trader group must:

- a) be based in Victoria¹
- b) be a not-for-profit member organisation with a membership of businesses that operate in Victoria

¹ Business chambers and trader groups that operate Australia-wide but with operations in Victoria are not eligible. The business chambers and trading groups must operate solely in Victoria for Victorian businesses.

- c) service a specific Victorian geographic area (examples: statewide, region, shopping strip) or specific Victorian multicultural or Aboriginal business communities²
- d) have the core purpose of acting for its members
- e) hold a current Australian Business Number (ABN)
- f) be registered with the responsible federal or state regulator or local council
- g) completed all contractual obligations under prior rounds of the program (if applicable).

Unincorporated organisations and organisations with an ABN registered after 30 June 2021 will be required to have a local council enter into the grant agreement on their behalf.

4 Project eligibility

4.1 Use of funds

Grant funds must be used by business chambers and trader groups to support their members by undertaking activities that support the program objectives such as:

- supporting and encouraging local business collaboration activities
- business skill development, networking and resource sharing
- upgrading digital channels to better support members
- helping members adapt to a COVID operating environment
- support or advancement of the community.

4.2 Examples of eligible projects

The program of activities may be virtual or face-to-face and take any format, including:

- 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
- digital business expo.

4.3 Eligible project expenses

Eligible expenses include:

- technology costs
- equipment hire
- speaker engagement
- advertising
- developer costs.

² Business chambers and trader groups that represent Victorian multicultural or Aboriginal owned businesses in multiple locations in Victoria are eligible.

Note: Expenses incurred on business as usual operating expenses and staff wages are not considered program expenditure.

5 Assessment process

Applications will be assessed by an internal panel of representatives of the Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions (the Department) against assessment criteria listed below. Eligible applications will be assessed on how well they meet the assessment criteria as outlined below. All supplementary attachments and information provided as part of the application will be taken into consideration during the assessment process.

Only final applications that are lodged with the Department will be accepted and assessed. Applications in draft stage will not be accepted or considered.

The Department’s decisions on all matters pertaining to the award of funding under this Program is at the Department’s absolute discretion. This includes approving a lower amount than that applied for and amending funding conditions without notice.

5.1 Assessment criteria

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

Assessment criteria	Description	Weighting
Criterion 1 – Impacts and objectives		60 per cent
<p>The extent to which the project can meet the following objectives of the program:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - enable local business collaboration. - support business education and enablement. - build digital capability. - help members transition to recovery and restart. - structured to support the particular identified needs and requirements of the target group/s. 	<p>Evidence of how well the proposal will support Victorian businesses to build capability.</p> <p>Evidence of how well the activity will support or advance the community.</p> <p>Evidence of geographic reach and ability to maximise numbers of participant businesses.</p> <p>A basic marketing plan for the project supporting the communication of online safety and security to participants.</p> <p>Outline activities to be implemented and target group/s (e.g., particular industries, culturally and linguistically diverse and/or Aboriginal owned businesses).</p> <p>Applications to extend or repeat a previously funded initiative must demonstrate appropriate benefits of the new activity.</p>	

Criterion 2 – Project implementation and organisational capability		40 per cent
The capability and capacity of the applicant to deliver the project.	<p>Evidence of in-house capability to develop and deliver a capability building project.</p> <p>Extent of record in the delivery of projects to members and the community.</p> <p>Quality of implementation planning, such as budget information, timing, resourcing, and identification of contracting support.</p> <p>Available co-funding or potential to attract extra sponsorship funding.</p>	

5.2 Due diligence assessments

Applicants are subject to a risk assessment which verifies business details provided with 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 whether to award a grant:

- The veracity of the information provided;
- Any adverse findings by a regulator regarding an applicant;
- An applicant is placed under external administration;
- There is a petition to wind up or deregister the applicant;
- The applicant is or becomes deregistered or unregistered (including cancellation or lapse in registration).

6 How to apply

Business chamber and trader groups will apply online at the [Business Victoria website](#).

Applications will be open from 2 August 2022 until 11:59pm on 11 September 2022.

All questions in the application form must be answered to enable timely assessment. Applicants must address selection criteria and provide a project budget and timeline. Applicants may add attachments to the application form.

7 Conditions of funding

Successful applicants must enter into a grant agreement with the Department. The grant agreement outlines the commitments and obligations under the grant, as well as the general funding terms and conditions.

Grant funds will be released under agreed milestone payments after the grant agreement has been executed by both parties, anticipated as follows:

- 80 per cent upon grant agreement being executed
- 20 per cent upon receipt of the final project report, to the satisfaction of the department.

Grant recipients will be required to report by 15 May 2023 on the outcomes of their project and contribute information and data about the funded project to the Department for the 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 to provide further information should it be deemed necessary.

The State makes no representation that funding will be granted to any applicant and the State reserves its right to make no funds available under the Business Chambers and Trader Groups Grants Round Three.

As the Victorian State election will be held on Saturday 26 November 2022, the Victorian Government will assume a caretaker role from 6.00pm on 1 November 2022 until such time that either it becomes clear that the incumbent government will be returned, or when a new government is commissioned. In line with the caretaker conventions, the incoming government will determine whether to proceed with this grant process and enter into grant agreements after the caretaker period.

Applicants should be aware that:

- all information about this grant process represents the position of the current government only, and is subject to change; and
- the incoming government may decide to not proceed with this grant process.

7.1 Publicity/Acknowledgement

Successful applicants must not make any public announcement or issue any press release regarding the receipt of a grant without prior written approval from the Department.

The Department may publicise the benefits accruing to the successful applicant and/or the State associated with the provision of the grant and the State'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.

The Recipient must ensure that the State's support for the Project is acknowledged on all promotional materials and appropriate signage consistent with the Guidelines for Victorian Government Advertising and Communications (available at www.dpc.vic.gov.au) or as otherwise specified by the Department.

7.2 Privacy and confidentiality

Information provided by the applicant for the purpose of this application will be used by the Department for the purposes of assessment of applications, program administration and program review. In making an application, the applicant consents to the provision of their information to State and Commonwealth Government departments and agencies for the purpose of assessing applications.

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 privacy policy of the Department is also available by emailing the Privacy Unit. The Department's privacy policy can be viewed on the website at www.djpr.vic.gov.au/privacy

7.3 Post Project Evaluation

By receiving a grant payment, all recipients agree to comply with the Department's performance monitoring and evaluation processes. The grant recipient may receive an evaluation survey from the Department and may be required to participate in program evaluation activities.

7.4 Compliance and Audit

The organisation provided with a grant may be subject to audit by the Victorian Government or its representatives on the veracity of their application and use of government funds at the request of the Victorian Government, for a period of one year from receipt of payment.

If any information in the application is found to be 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.

8 Other information

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

The Department will endeavour to notify all applicants of the outcome of their fully completed and submitted application by October 2022. There may be delays if your application:

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

Further information may be obtained at business.vic.gov.au or by contacting Business Victoria at bctg@business.vic.gov.au or by phoning 13 22 15.