

Small Business Ventilation Program – Ventilation Rebate Guidelines

Program Summary

The *Small Business Ventilation Program – Ventilation Rebate* supports small businesses that have commercial premises open to the public to reduce the spread of COVID-19 by providing a rebate of \$500 for ventilation improvement.

Program funds can be used to invest in equipment, building works and services to make improvements to ventilation and air filtration in areas that are physically open and accessible to the public.

The Victorian Government has released [guidance on building ventilation for workplaces](#) such as hospitality venues, shops and gyms to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission (coronavirus.vic.gov.au/ventilation#ventilation-guidance-for-businesses). Businesses are encouraged to use these guidance materials to assist in making informed decisions on how to improve ventilation in public-facing areas of their business and in line with their COVIDSafe Plan.

Businesses can apply for a \$500 rebate by submitting an application with evidence of eligible expenditure such as receipts and paid invoices. To receive a rebate, purchases of goods and services must be made between 1 January 2022 and 24 June 2022 inclusive.

Applications will be assessed for eligibility on a ‘first in’ basis until available funds are allocated.

A second stream of the Program offers up to \$5,000 in matched funding to eligible businesses; see separate [program guidelines](#) (business.vic.gov.au/grants-and-programs/small-business-ventilation-program/ventilation-grant#program-guidelines). Applicants can apply to both streams of the Program for separate and eligible expenditure.

1 Who is eligible for a rebate?

1.1 This Program is for businesses that operate from a Victorian fixed address commercial premises that is physically open to the public for in-person purchases or use of the business’s products and services.

1.2 The business must:

- a) hold an active Australian Business Number (ABN) and have held that ABN on and from 18 February 2022
- b) be registered for Goods and Services Tax (GST) on and from 18 February 2022¹

¹ A business or enterprise must register for GST if it has a GST turnover of \$75,000 or more. Not-for-profit entities with annual turnover between \$75,000 and \$150,000 that are not registered for GST and are registered with the Australian Charities and Not-for-Profit Commission are eligible to apply. Businesses with annual 2020-2021 turnover of \$75,000 or more that are not required by relevant taxation legislation to be registered for GST are eligible to apply, subject to provision of a statutory declaration from a registered tax agent. Businesses that backdate their GST registration date will not be eligible.

- c) have an annual Victorian payroll below \$10 million for the 2020-21 financial year on an ungrouped basis as determined by the State Revenue Office (SRO)
- d) hold public liability insurance sufficient to cover its operations.

2 Eligible Ventilation Expenditure

- 2.1 A business must spend \$500 or more on eligible expenditure to receive a rebate of \$500.
- 2.2 Expenditure is eligible if it supports the business' preferred ventilation strategy where:
 - a) it is used on work to improve ventilation and air filtration to reduce the spread of COVID-19 for areas in commercial premises that are physically open to the public;
 - b) the expenditure has been purchased and paid for in full between 1 January 2022 and 24 June 2022 inclusive; and
 - c) the ventilation upgrade will lead to an improvement in one or more of the following types of air ventilation:
 - **Natural ventilation** – that brings air from outside through and around an indoor occupied space, or to make airflow improvements to a covered outdoor space used by customers;
 - **Mechanical ventilation** – that uses mechanical equipment to increase airflow by replacing or diluting indoor air with outside air;
 - **Augmented ventilation** - that uses portable filtration units to catch particles in a filter to increase the clean air delivery rate and reduce the concentration of viral particles in the air.
- 2.3 The Victorian Government has provided resources and information about the types of ventilation listed above and guidance on ventilation for businesses, which can be found at [coronavirus.vic.gov.au](https://coronavirus.vic.gov.au/coronavirus.vic.gov.au/ventilation#ventilation-guidance-for-businesses) (coronavirus.vic.gov.au/ventilation#ventilation-guidance-for-businesses).
- 2.4 Applicants are encouraged to view this guidance which is designed for information only. Business owners must make their own judgement and take decisions about optimising air flow and ventilation appropriate for their business. This may involve seeking professional advice before committing to a purchase. The State of Victoria is not responsible or liable for the purchasing decision of a business, or any loss or

damage whatsoever arising from or in connection with the purchase or works which are the subject of the rebate assistance.

- 2.5 The rebate is a one-off payment. The State of Victoria will be not responsible or liable for the maintenance or replacement costs whatsoever arising from or in connection with the funded equipment or works beyond the provision of the Ventilation Rebate.

3 Types of Eligible Expenditure

- 3.1 Eligible expenditure must meet the requirements in Section 2.
- 3.2 Expenditure can include equipment and works that improve air ventilation and/or purification for the installation, upgrade, maintenance and repair of building infrastructure and ventilation systems.
- 3.3 Expenditure may cover direct costs to deliver the ventilation project such as labour, regulatory approvals or cost of building modification directly related to and required to accommodate the ventilation strategy.
- 3.4 The following are examples of types of eligible expenditure:

Natural ventilation:

- Works to the building to maximise ventilation, for example fixing windows to ensure they open or adding additional windows or doors to create greater air flow.

Mechanical ventilation:

- Purchase and installation of spare parts to ensure the existing ventilation system operates effectively,
- Upgrading or replacing filters in a ventilation system, such as installing a HEPA filter capable of 4-6 Air Changes per hour (ACH),
- Repairs, servicing or cleaning of an existing heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) system or air conditioning unit,

Augmented ventilation:

- Purchasing an air purifier using a high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filter for the premises.

Other measures:

- Inspection by a qualified professional service provider for the purpose of a ventilation audit, HVAC health check or assistance with items identified in the self-assessment ventilation guidance,
- Whirlybirds or extractor fans to enhance the effects of other ventilation strategies,
- Electric fans to promote air movement if there are existing ventilation strategies in place,
- Wall mounted split systems and cassette units that do not have a function to bring fresh air into a space are only eligible if they are used in conjunction with other natural and mechanical ventilation.

4 Ineligible Expenditure

4.1 The rebate cannot be claimed for the following expense types:

- a) Expenditure incurred prior to 1 January 2022,
- b) Works where the primary intention is not to maximise air ventilation or purification in public facing business spaces,
- c) Project components that are not related to the improvement of natural, mechanical or augmented ventilation,
- d) Exhaust/ventilation works in non-customer-facing areas (e.g. kitchen spaces in a non-public facing area),
- e) Equipment using ultraviolet (UV) radiation technology and air ionisation devices,
- f) Where relevant, works where recipients did not receive necessary building or planning permits, permission from the building owner and/or landlord before completing the project,
- g) Where applicable, expenditure that does not comply with local council and state government laws and regulations,
- h) Business operating expenses,
- i) Running costs of equipment, including but not limited to energy costs,
- j) Costs associated with obtaining quotes, where the work has not been contracted with the quote provider (e.g. Call out fee),
- k) Project delivered by a provider not qualified as a licensed service provider to undertake the contracted services,
- l) Electrical installation work undertaken without a certificate of electrical safety or compliance report where applicable– as demonstration of compliance to electrical standards, occupational health and safety requirements,
- m) Equipment that is not compliant with Australian standards,
- n) Loss of income due to premise’s inability to operate as normal whilst the work is being undertaken.
- o) Expenses paid for using the funding received under the Small Business Ventilation Program – Ventilation Grant.

4.2 Expenditure that does not comply with section 2 of these Guidelines is considered ineligible, as determined by the Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions (the Department) at the Department’s discretion.

5 Rebate Amount

5.1 Eligible businesses will receive a rebate payment of \$500.²

² These grant funds are categorised as a non-taxable supply, meaning GST is not applicable.

- 5.2 A business as defined by its ABN can only claim one rebate.
- 5.3 Rebates to successful applicants will be paid into the bank account nominated on the application form.

6 Who can make an application and claim?

- 6.1 The business owner or an authorised person for that business can apply for a rebate on behalf of the business. This individual must be listed on the Australian Business Register (ABR)³ as either the owner, co-owner, associate or authorised contact of the business.
- 6.2 To confirm the identity of the business owner or authorised person as listed on the ABR, one of the following current proof of identity document must be provided:
- a driver's licence or learner permit issued in any Australian jurisdiction; or
 - an Australian Passport; or
 - a Medicare Card; or
 - a foreign passport for those issued with an Australian Visa.

7 How to apply for and claim a rebate

- 7.1 Applications are submitted online via the Business Victoria website (business.vic.gov.au). All questions in the application need to be completed and requested information is to be provided to ensure timely assessment and grant payment.
- 7.2 Applicants are required to submit evidence of purchase with the application, such as dated receipts or paid invoices, that verify how they have spent \$500 or more on eligible expenditure between 1 January 2022 and the date they applied-
- 7.3 The person making the application for the rebate must attest to the following on behalf of the business, that:
- a) the business has reviewed the information on ventilation guidance for businesses available on the Victorian Government [Coronavirus website](#) and made an assessment or secured professional advice as to the appropriate improvements being made (www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/ventilation#ventilation-guidance-for-businesses);
 - b) the business has complied with all relevant permits, laws and regulations as applicable (for example, using licensed electricians);
 - c) the business holds public liability insurance sufficient to cover its operations;
 - d) if the business is a tenant of the relevant premises, that any necessary approvals from the landlord have been obtained;
 - e) the business will take part in any evaluation surveys for the program as required.

³ Before applying, businesses should check that the person applying is listed on the business's ABR record and update this information if required. If the person applying is not listed, this will delay the outcome of the application.

- 7.4 Once the applicant and the expenditure has been assessed as eligible the rebate funds will be paid.
- 7.5 The Program will be open for applications until program funds are allocated or 11.59 pm **24 June 2022**, whichever is earlier.

8 Assessment of Eligibility

- 8.1 Rebates will be allocated on a 'first-in' basis to applicants assessed as eligible until the Program's available funding is exhausted.
- 8.2 Applications will be assessed using the information and evidence provided in their application form and through verification with other data sources. As part of this process, any information provided by Applicants may be shared and subject to verification with other government agencies (state and federal) including the Victorian State Revenue Office, the Valuer-General Victoria, the Australian Business Register and the Commonwealth Department of Home Affairs.⁴
- 8.3 Businesses must ensure that the information listed with the Australian Business Register (ABR) as part of their ABN registration is current and accurate at the time of application.
- 8.4 Evidence of expenditure (including invoices and receipts) must be to the department's satisfaction that the expenditure is paid and is eligible.
- 8.5 Businesses registration details filed with the Australian Securities and Investment Commission, Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commissioner, Consumer Affairs Victoria and/or other applicable regulators will be checked. Without limiting the

⁴ The Department is not responsible for any delays caused by third party validation of an Applicant's eligibility. By making an application the Applicant consents to the assessment and verification process.

Department's assessment, the following circumstances may be taken into consideration in any decision whether to award a grant:

- duplicate applications by a trustee and a trust;
- misleading amendments to information provided to public registers describing the business;
- any adverse findings by a Government agency or local council regarding a business or its operation;
- a business is, or notice has been given that it will be, placed under external administration;
- there is a petition for bankruptcy or to wind up or deregister a company or business; and
- a step is being taken to deregister the company or business (including cancellation or lapse in registration or any relevant permit).

8.6 Each application will be carefully considered and assessed against the eligibility criteria. The Department's decisions on all matters pertaining to the award of funding under this Program is at the Department's absolute discretion.

8.7 Only final applications that are lodged with the Department will be considered and assessed, and applications in draft stage that have not been submitted will not be considered.

9 Outcome notification

9.1 The Department will endeavour to notify all Applicants of the successful outcome of their complete application within 20 business days.

9.2 There may be longer processing times and delays in notification of the outcome of the application if it:

- a) does not meet the eligibility criteria;
- b) is incomplete;
- c) has incorrect information, such as ABN (Australian Business Number) or bank details (for successful Applicants);
- d) does not include current or accurate information registered with relevant regulators or partner agencies, such as the State Revenue Office or Australian Business Register; or
- e) requires further information to verify or validate the application and claim for funding.

10 Post Program Evaluation

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

11 Applicable regulations and insurance

- 11.1 The business must comply with all relevant laws and obtain all planning, environmental, regulatory and other approvals and permits (as applicable) related to the improvements undertaken in connection with the rebate assistance, including meeting all relevant health and safety and building standards.
- 11.2 Rebate payment recipients must hold public liability insurance sufficient to cover its operations.

12 Compliance and Audit

- 12.1 The business provided with a rebate 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.
- 12.2 If any information in the application is found to be false or misleading, or the rebate payment is not applied for the purposes in accordance with the terms of funding as set out in these guidelines and the application, the rebate payment will be repayable on demand.

13 Privacy Statement

- 13.1 Information provided for this program will be used by the Department for the purposes of assessment of eligibility, program administration and program review. In registering for a rebate, the applicant applying on behalf of the entity consents to the sharing of information as outlined in Section 8 above.
- 13.2 If there is an intention to include personal information about a third party in the application, the applicant applying must ensure the third party is aware of and consents to the contents of this privacy statement.
- 13.3 Any personal information about the applicant applying 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 the privacy of personal information and the Department's privacy policy can be emailed to the Department's Privacy Unit at: privacy@ecodev.vic.gov.au.

14 Other Information about this Program

- 14.1 The Department reserves the right to amend these guidelines and application terms at any time as it deems appropriate.
- 14.2 If an unsuccessful Applicant considers that their application has been incorrectly assessed, they can lodge a complaint. More information can be found at <https://business.vic.gov.au/contact-us/complaints>.
- 14.3 If you have any queries about your application or require further information on the program visit business.vic.gov.au or contact the Business Victoria Hotline at 13 22 15.