

# First Peoples Tourism Growth Program Guidelines

**December 2025**

## Acknowledgement of Country

The diverse landscapes of Victoria have been the home of, and of significance to, diverse Nations for more than 60,000 years. The First Peoples in Victoria have cared for and nurtured Country throughout this time. The lands and waters on which Victorians and visitors draw enjoyment and inspiration continue to be a living cultural landscape.

We proudly acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the lands and waters throughout Victoria, and we pay our respects to their Elders past and present.

We recognise the rights and aspirations of Victorian First Peoples and acknowledge that First Peoples' Self-Determination is a human right as enshrined in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Building on this and guided by the 11 principles of First Peoples' Self-Determination, we are working together to enable true self-determination for Victoria's First Peoples through work towards a treaty or treaties with Traditional Owners and Aboriginal Victorians.

## Indigenous Cultural Intellectual Property

In the spirit of preservation and continuation of Indigenous Cultural Intellectual Property this document recognises First Peoples as the primary guardians and interpreters of their culture and observes their right to full and proper attribution for, and ownership over, their heritage. We commit to seek free, prior and informed consent for the use of any Indigenous traditional knowledge from the custodians of that traditional knowledge.

## Language statement

We recognise the diversity of First Peoples living throughout Victoria. While the terms 'Koorie' or 'Koori' are commonly used to describe First Peoples of South-East Australia, we have used the term 'First Peoples' to include all Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people in Victoria.

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## 1. First Peoples Tourism Growth Program

### 1.1. Background

The Victorian Government is prioritising First Peoples and their voice across government policy and program implementation. This is evident with Victoria's progress towards Treaty, establishment of the First Peoples' Assembly of Victoria, a Self-Determination Fund and the Stolen Generations Redress Scheme.

### 1.2. Program Overview

The First Peoples Tourism Growth Program is a competitive program to support First Peoples businesses operating in the visitor economy in the areas of workforce development, industry excellence and planning and cultural heritage stewardship projects. The program also includes support for the purchase of tourism business related assets to help existing or newly developed tourism products.

The First Peoples Tourism Growth Program is one element of a \$10 million investment into Aboriginal Cultural Tourism Initiatives in regional Victoria, which is being delivered as part of the broader \$20 million Aboriginal Economic Development Fund (AED Fund) managed by the Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions (the department).

The program will be rolled out in 2 stages - Expressions of interest, followed by a targeted invitation to submit an application based on outcomes of the expression of interest stage.

### 1.3. Yuma Yirramboi, Invest in Tomorrow

Yuma Yirramboi Strategy (Invest in Tomorrow) is the Victorian Government and Aboriginal Victorians' shared vision to generate greater individual and collective wealth for Aboriginal Victorians. It celebrates the economic and entrepreneurial success of Aboriginal Victorians and ensures parity is considered in all government activities.

Yuma Yirramboi commits to support Aboriginal communities to achieve economic growth and economic independence. It is underpinned by six strategic pillars:

- culture – Aboriginal culture is our greatest asset
- people – nurture a strong and ready talent pool
- business – grow in size, scale, diversity and maturity
- wealth creation – accelerate the growth of the Aboriginal Estate and opportunities for wealth generation
- jobs – generate jobs and careers to reach employment parity
- accountability – transparent reporting against commitments.

Yuma Yirramboi identifies cultural tourism as an area of competitive advantage for Aboriginal businesses to deliver on the six strategic pillars. The First Peoples Tourism Growth Program will support First Peoples-led businesses operating in the visitor economy to develop and grow cultural tourism products and services in alignment with these pillars.

### 1.4. Experience Victoria 2033

Experience Victoria 2033 (EV33) is the state's strategic plan to shape the future of Victoria's visitor economy over the next 9 years. The plan will strengthen Victoria's enviable tourism offering by leveraging the state's competitive advantages. The plan has five product priorities which includes First Peoples-led experiences, wellness, arts and culture, food and drink and nature. This program primarily aligns with the First Peoples pillar.

### 1.5. Objectives

The objectives of the program are to:

- protect and respect First Peoples culture and autonomy in determining priorities for regional tourism development
- empower First Peoples within the tourism sector in Victoria and increase the capacity of First Peoples-led tourism businesses to pursue economic development activities as they relate to tourism

- prioritise protecting and promoting First Peoples' Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property, heritage and history in mainstream tourism
- strengthen connections and equitable partnerships to grow First Peoples tourism offerings and support sustainable business growth
- invest in the long-term sustainability of First Peoples tourism and careers to foster economic prosperity and strengthen communities.

### 1.6. Outcomes

The following are the intended outcomes of the program:

- New regional tourism initiatives and experiences representing culture and traditions, are respectful to family, community, culture and Country
- First Peoples have identified and promoted co-investment opportunities with First Peoples communities
- First Peoples have autonomy over visitors' experiences of Country, heritage, stories, and culture
- First Peoples have greater access to capital, workforce development, and skilled professionals to support delivery of authentic and culturally respectful tourism experiences
- First Peoples are enabled to protect, preserve and tell their stories

The following are the anticipated longer-term outcomes of the program:

- First Peoples are empowered to enhance visitors experience through sharing of culture and Country
- Victoria is attracting a greater share of visitors participating in First Peoples Tourism experiences
- A connected tourism sector is sharing knowledge and supports the growth and resilience of First Peoples tourism businesses and experiences
- Robust, thriving First Peoples businesses and communities in Victoria are creating wealth and contributing to positive outcomes for communities and Country
- First Peoples in Victoria are generating greater individual and collective wealth
- Visitors have more opportunities to connect with and learn from First Peoples' culture and knowledge, including truth telling

### 1.7. Indicative Program Timeline

<b>Expressions of interest open</b>	11 July 2025
<b>Expressions of interest close</b>	8 August 2025
<b>Expression of interest assessments</b>	August 2025 – October 2025
<b>Expression of interest applicants notified of result</b>	1 December 2025
<b>Invitations to apply open</b>	1 December 2025
<b>Closing date</b>	6 February 2026
<b>Assessment and approvals</b>	February 2026 – May 2026
<b>Applicants notified of result</b>	May – June 2026
<b>Contracting</b>	May – June 2026
<b>Project delivery period</b>	June 2026 – June 2027

The above indicative timeline is subject to change at the sole discretion of the department.

## 2. Funding Details

### 2.1. Available funding

Grant funding of up to \$125,000 (exclusive of GST) is available to each eligible entity (refer section 3.1).

#### 2.1.1 Co-contribution

Co-contribution is not mandatory. If the total project value is greater than the grant amount requested, applicants will be required to demonstrate how the full costs of the project will be funded.

#### 2.1.2 Project costing treatment of GST

Applicants should note that costs included in the application and activity documentation (i.e. budget) must be exclusive of GST.

### 2.2. Project timing

Funding may be spent over a period of up to 12 months from June 2026.

As noted in **Section 6.2**, 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.

## 3. Eligibility

### 3.1. Eligible Applicants

This is a targeted program, and funding is only available to recognised Victorian First Peoples-led businesses that are either already operating in the tourism sector or plan to explore opportunities in tourism.

Applicants applying to this program must meet all the following criteria:

- be an Aboriginal owned and operated business\*
- be based in Victoria
- hold a current Australian Business Number (ABN)
- be registered for GST
- be registered with the responsible federal or state regulator\*\*
- comply with applicable child safety requirements (refer section 6.8)

\*An Aboriginal business is one where it is majority Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander-owned and operated. Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people must own and operate at least 51% of the business.

Verification that the business is an Aboriginal business may be undertaken with Aboriginal organisations, such as Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations, Traditional Owner Groups and organisations such as the Kinaway Chamber of Commerce and Supply Nation.

Aboriginal owned and operated evidence required:

Document Type	Description	Requirement
Aboriginal-owned business	Attest to being a member of Kinaway Chamber of Commerce or Supply Nation  <b>OR</b> A letter of support from an Aboriginal-led organisation – confirming the applicant is a Victorian based Aboriginal business.	Mandatory

\*\*Verification of business details provided may be undertaken with the Australian Business Register, Australian Securities and Investment Commission, Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission, Consumer Affairs Victoria and/or other applicable regulators.

### 3.2. Ineligible Applicants

The following are not eligible to apply:

- not-for-profit organisation, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Department prior to an application being made for support under this program
- a Commonwealth, state or local government agency or body
- a company not incorporated in Australia
- an unincorporated association

### What will be funded

Applicants will be asked to identify a project in regional Victoria that will progress First People's tourism businesses to grow their existing offerings or enable First Peoples businesses to enter the tourism sector and develop new tourism offerings.

Projects delivered in locations covered by the Regional Tourism Network (RTN) are considered to be in regional Victoria for the purposes of the program. Areas covered by the RTN are listed on the webpage, [Tourism Industry Support](#).

To be invited to apply for funding through the program an Expression of interest (EOI) must be submitted for assessment. An EOI template is available and prospective program applicants are required to provide a pitch for their tourism project idea. (see section 4.1 Submitting an EOI)

Applicants should consider potential tourism market and demand to support the viability of their idea. Project benefits must be to Regional Victoria.

All initiatives should deliver tourism outcomes and align with one or more existing strategies i.e. Country Plan, Destination Management Plan/s, Yuma Yirramboi Strategy and/or Experience Victoria 2033.

Grant funds may be expended on eligible activities under **4 Activity Categories**: Workforce Development, Industry Excellence and Planning, Cultural Heritage Stewardship and Asset Investment.

Eligible activities under each stream include:

**Activities A - Workforce Development** undertake accredited and non-accredited tourism training for owners and staff/tourism skills training and membership/certification supported by a brief explanation of how the activity will grow existing tourism offerings or capture a new market segment:

- micro-credentials, accredited and non-accredited training
- tourism certification e.g. Quality Tourism Framework, Ecotourism or Strive4Sustainability
- tourism and/or business Memberships e.g. Kinaway, Supply Nation or Victoria Tourism Industry Council
- other

**Activities B – Industry Excellence and Planning** support business for tourism product development and growth, undertaking strategic planning and progressing investment readiness:

- meeting, gathering place and cultural centre concept design
- product development
- business case development
- funding strategy development
- pre-feasibility and operational viability studies
- tourism asset and equipment requirement assessments
- relevant technical investigations, plans and reports to progress initiatives
- strategic asset management plans
- tourism marketing plans and website development

**Activities C – Cultural Heritage Stewardship** cultural practice projects, language and intergenerational knowledge transfer initiatives, amalgamation of sense of place, history and protocols as they pertain to tourism:

- digitising and archiving of knowledge
- legal costs for ICIP strategies



- placemaking, including wayfinding and interpretive signage
- video production and cultural practice recording and documentation of traditional songs, dances, and ceremonies
- cultural mentorship programs
- initiatives that preserve significant cultural sites and artifacts including revitalisation of Indigenous languages, oral histories, and cultural practices

**Activities D – Asset Investment\*** purchase or lease of fixed assets, plant and equipment to expand or deliver a new tourism product:

- commercial leases for the term and purpose of the project
- purchase of assets and equipment for the purpose of the project e.g. vehicles, watercraft, boats and kayaks, outdoor equipment for hiking and camping\*\*
- traditional instruments and artifacts
- craft workshop tools, supplies and equipment
- hospitality plant, equipment and fit out
- display cabinets and shopfitting
- furnishings and lighting

The department reserves the right to determine eligible activities in alignment with program objectives and outcomes.

\*Assets must be evidenced as to be used for tourism purposes only and supported by a strategic asset management plan and/or operational plan to ensure ongoing viability. Assets must be used solely or predominantly for the purposes of the project (e.g. not for personal use). Ownership and use of those assets must be maintained for a set period and applicants must provide evidence how the asset would support the growth of their tourism business. All asset associated costs including ongoing lease costs, maintenance and other to be incurred post the funded project completion date is solely covered by the business.

\*\* Support for vehicle and watercraft asset funding will only be considered if the applicant has evidenced prior asset specific operational experience in tourism operations and/or supplies a detailed asset specific operational and tourism business plan.

### 3.3. Eligible expenses

Funding received under this program may be expended on the following project costs:

- costs directly associated with delivering the growth projects
- reasonable administration and overhead costs up to 10% of the total budget that relate to and/or benefit the project which have been demonstrated to the satisfaction of the department
- external professional services/consultant fees directly associated with delivering the project

The department reserves the right to determine eligible activities and expenditure in alignment with program objectives and outcomes.

### 3.4. Ineligible expenses

Funding received under this program may not be expended on the following:

- costs not directly associated with delivering the growth projects
- usual operational expenditure, including existing staff wages that do not relate to or benefit the project
- requests for retrospective project funding, where projects have been completed prior to receiving funding approval
- costs related to preparing the grant application
- any ongoing expenses, leases and other expenses after the program completion date as agreed in the funding agreement
- projects previously funded through the *First Peoples Tourism Industry Strengthening Program* unless applicants can demonstrate additional or new outcomes.

The department reserves the right to determine any other ineligible activities and expenditure.

## 4. Application process

The program will be conducted in two stages:

1. Expression of interest
2. Grant application (invite only)

### 4.1. Submitting an expression of interest (EOI) proposal

EOI's will include a "concept pitch" type format along with a simple eligibility checklist to assist applicants to communicate their eligibility, concept and readiness to proceed to a formal application process. The EOI template will have a generic example of a pitch to assist and streamline the process.

EOI's will be competitively assessed to determine suitability to be invited by the department to submit a final grant application for competitive assessment\*. Unsuccessful EOI proposals will be notified once the EOI assessment process has been completed.

Applicants must undertake the following steps to submit an EOI:

1. Carefully read these Program Guidelines
2. Access the project proposal EOI template via the Business Victoria website
3. Complete the concept pitch and checklist within the EOI template
4. Submit the online EOI proposal via the Business Victoria Grants Portal

EOI proposals will be accepted up until 8 August 2025.

The EOI template will outline the information, and any documentation required to express interest for the program. EOIs will be word limited and only accepted via the online template.

The EOI form will include the following:

- applicant details
- opportunity - brief business idea outline
- solution - benefits and impacts
- market analysis - competitive landscape
- business model – to progress the idea
- team – directly related to the project
- investment ask – funding required, need and use
- evidence of eligibility (see section 3.1)

\*An invitation to apply for grant funding following the EOI does not guarantee project funding, all applications will be assessed as detailed in section 5 of these guidelines.

### 4.2. Submitting a grant application proposal following an invitation to apply

Successful EOI proposals will be invited to submit a grant application to the First Peoples Tourism Growth Program. Applications must be closely aligned to the EOI submitted and under the same entity details.

An invitation to apply does not guarantee funding through the First Peoples Tourism Growth Program. The program is competitive and will be assessed as outlined in **Section 5**.

Applicants can submit one application per entity and will be invited to apply for grant funding in December 2025.

Applicants must undertake the following steps to apply:

1. Have submitted an EOI that was competitively assessed by the department to determine suitability to be invited by the department to submit a full application for funding
2. Carefully read these Program Guidelines
3. Ensure the application proposal aligns with the EOI that was previously submitted
4. Complete the application form via the link sent to apply

## 5. Complete all necessary supporting documents as detailed below

The application form will outline the information and documentation required to apply for the program. This will include the following:

- applicant details
- project description
- project objectives and outcomes
- stakeholder engagement plan
- project budget
- risks and mitigation
- financial reports

### 4.3. Grant Application Stage Documentation and Information Requirements

Specific information you may need to provide as part of your invited application is listed in the table below.

Document Type	Description	Requirement
Co-contribution of funds evidence	<p>Where the applicant decides to include a co-contribution, details confirming co-contribution, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• written confirmation from the applicant organisation's board or authorised representative that the organisation can undertake the project and meet the required co-contribution amount <b>and</b>,</li> <li>• a bank statement showing sufficient cash in the organisation's bank account to cover the co-contribution.</li> </ul>	Mandatory for projects with a financial co-contribution
Financial Information	<p>Unless exempt, applications over \$50,000 MUST provide the following:</p> <p>The following outlines the standard documentation required to be submitted with this application for due diligence assessments.</p> <p><b>Audited Financial Reports* for the last three financial years** This should be the 'final accounts' with Directors' Report and Declaration and should include:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Profit and Loss Statement</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Balance Sheet</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Cash Flow Statement</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Notes to the accounts (if applicable)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Parent Company Financial Statements (if applicable)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Ownership Structure (Corporate Tree)</li> </ul> <p><i>*If the applicant's financial reports are not audited, unaudited financial reports, can only be accepted if they have been prepared by an accountant registered on the Tax Practitioner Board</i></p> <p><i>**We do not accept comparative figures within another Final Report</i></p> <p><b>Where the Audited or Accountant prepared financials for the most recent reporting period is more than six months, the following are required:</b></p>	Mandatory for grants over \$50,000

	<input type="checkbox"/> Management prepared Profit and Loss Statement and Balance Sheet  <b>Requirements for applicants without trading history:</b>  <input type="checkbox"/> Business Plan: Current business plan, including detailed projections for revenue, expenses, and cash flow for the next three years. This will help assess the business growth potential and the feasibility of its plans.  <input type="checkbox"/> Management and Key Personnel: including profiles of management and key personnel, including their experience and expertise that are crucial factors in assessing the start-up's ability to manage financial risks.  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Any other supporting documentation.</li> </ul>	
Approvals and permits	<p>For projects involving minor building works or upgrades the following <b>MUST</b> be provided:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Copy of all relevant approvals and permits (e.g. local council planning or building approvals) related to the project</li> <li>Evidence of land ownership/tenure or evidence of landowner consent if the applicant is not the owner of the land or building.</li> </ul>	Mandatory for projects involving building works
Other information	<p>Information related to the acquisition or lease of fixed and/or moveable assets:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Business plan as it relates to tourism and the asset to be acquired/leased</li> <li>Asset management/operational plans</li> </ul>	Mandatory for Activities D Asset acquisition

## 5. Assessment and approval process

### 5.1. EOI Assessment criteria

This is a competitive EOI process, eligible project proposals that are deemed by the department to be of sufficient quality will be invited to apply for grant funding.

Expression of Interest (EOI) assessment:

- EOIs are assessed for eligibility in accordance with the eligibility criteria outlined in Section 3 by representatives from the department.
- Eligible EOIs will be competitively assessed by representatives from the department on how well the project concept meets the objectives and outcomes of the program against the criteria outlined below:

Assessment Criteria	What will be taken into consideration as part of the assessment	Weighting
1. Opportunity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>how the project enables economic development among regional First Peoples and businesses and contributes to community, Country and culture as they relate to Tourism*</li> </ul>	20%

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>clarity and conciseness of the business opportunity as it relates to tourism including identification of the target customers</li> <li>identification of gaps in the market and unique selling propositions (USPs)</li> </ul>	
2. <i>Solution</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>clear description of the proposed solution and its major tourism benefits</li> <li>explanation of the positive impacts, job creation and improved wellbeing</li> </ul>	20%
3. <i>Market Analysis and competitive landscape</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>realistic assessment of market, product, and any major delivery risks</li> <li>demonstration of competitive advantage in the market</li> </ul>	20%
4. <i>Business Model</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>potential for consistent income generation and growth</li> <li>statutory planning - is it required, is it in place</li> </ul>	20%
5. <i>Team</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>introduction of team members and their expertise</li> <li>identification of the lead coordinator</li> </ul>	10%
6. <i>Investment ask</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>clear statement of the funding amount being requested appears commensurate with the concept</li> <li>explanation of how the funds will be used</li> </ul>	10%

Successful EOIs will be invited to apply.

## 5.2. Invited Applicants Grant Assessment criteria

Applications must be closely aligned to the EOI submitted and under the same entity details to remain eligible for recommendation for grant program funding.

Applications will be assessed using the following process:

- Applications will be considered and scored competitively against the assessment criteria by a panel of department staff.
- All supplementary attachments and information provided as part of the application will be taken into consideration during the assessment process. The department may request further information or detail about a proposal.
- Eligible applicants may undergo due diligence checks (Section 5.3) to enable the department to assess financial and non-financial risks associated with the proposed activities.
- The department will provide funding recommendations to the Minister for Tourism, Sport and Major Events for decisions.

Eligible applications will be assessed against the criteria outlined below.

Assessment Criteria	Considerations	Weighting
1. <i>Business Model</i>	<i>Viability and sustainability including:</i>	35%

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• clear explanation of how the business will generate ongoing, sustainable revenue</li> <li>• insights into the market size, trends, and target demographics</li> <li>• strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT analysis) have been considered</li> <li>• estimates of ongoing annual operating costs and revenue streams including details on the pricing strategy</li> <li>• future maintenance costs have been considered and planned for</li> </ul>	
2. Project planning, readiness and capability to deliver	<p><i>Project and implementation planning, including:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• how the proposed activities support project readiness</li> <li>• who will oversee and manage the day-to-day processes of the project (who is the project manager and team?)</li> <li>• budget information including costs are based on verified estimates (e.g. current quotes and proposals where appropriate)</li> <li>• timing and key milestone dates for project delivery within the program timeframes</li> <li>• all required statutory planning has been obtained and evidenced for the project (where applicable)</li> <li>• identification of appropriate service delivery partners for the identified activities, where applicable</li> <li>• risks have been considered and mitigation measures incorporated into project planning</li> <li>• project incorporates appropriate stakeholder consultation (including letters of support where appropriate)</li> </ul>	35%
3. How well the proposed activities support the program objectives and outcomes	<p><i>Activities and outcomes are clearly outlined and align to program objectives:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• project outcomes are clearly outlined and align to program objectives</li> <li>• project aligns with existing cultural tourism plans, action plans or strategies and/or other regional plans and strategies as appropriate</li> <li>• project demonstrates that it can deliver against policy objectives while ensuring efficient, and economical and ethical use of public funds</li> </ul>	30%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

### 5.3. Due diligence checks

Applicants may be subject to due diligence checks to enable the department to assess financial and other non-financial risks associated with the application.

Such checks may include:

- the potential for reputational risk to the State
- the risk profile, financial viability and management capacity of the applicant's business over the duration of the proposed activity
- where the proposal has already been fully funded by the applicant through other means
- the delivery performance of other grants contracted with the Victorian Government and whether the applicant has failed to meet key contractual obligations.

Outcomes from such assessments may be considered 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

Invited applicants will be advised via email of the outcome of their application in writing in May - June 2026.

## 6. Conditions of grant funding

### 6.1. Acceptance of Letter of Offer

Successful applicants will be provided a letter outlining an offer of funding (Letter of Offer). A recipient of a Letter of Offer will have to accept the offer of funding by responding in writing as outlined in the Letter of Offer.

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

### 6.2. Grant Agreements

Successful applicants will be invited to enter into a legally binding grant agreement with the State of Victoria (State) as represented by the department. The Agreement details all funding obligations and conditions.

Grant Agreements must be signed by individuals duly authorised to bind the organisation and will:

- describe the purpose for which the funding must be used
- set out any requirements or conditions that must be met prior to the payment of a grant instalment
- outline agreed milestones and outcomes that must be achieved before payment of a grant instalment.

The activity, and any expenditure of funds associated with the activity, must not commence until a Grant Agreement has been duly executed by both the department and the successful applicant.

Once an Agreement has been executed, the successful applicant will be required to commence the activity within the agreed timeframe recorded in the Agreement and provide regular accurate progress reports to the department. If a successful applicant does not commence the activity by the commencement date, the department has at its absolute discretion the option of terminating the Agreement.

The application provided (as outlined in **Section 4.2**), will become an annexure to the Agreement and form part of the final executed Agreement.

### 6.3. Grant Payment Structure

Grant payments will be released according to an agreed schedule set out in the grant agreement. Payments are subject to satisfactory progress on the project and in accordance with the milestone deliverables stipulated in the Grant Agreement.

#### 6.4. 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 deliver 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 they securely verify 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.

#### 6.5. Refund events

The department has the right to a refund of the whole or part of the Grant amount paid in certain circumstances which are set out in the terms and conditions of the grant agreement. This includes failure to meet milestone deliverables or complete the project in the manner agreed to in the grant agreement or where there is conduct which may bring the department, minister or State into disrepute.

#### 6.6. Evaluation reporting

As a condition of funding, grant recipients will be consulted and asked to participate in any program monitoring and evaluation activities initiated by the department.

This may include completing surveys throughout the program and for a nominated period after program completion to measure progress to achieving outcomes.

Monitoring and evaluation will be consistent with the Burra Lotjpa Dunguludja (AJA4) Monitoring and Evaluation Framework.

Reporting 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.

#### 6.7. Publicity/Acknowledgement

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

The department requires grant recipients to acknowledge the Victorian Government's support on marketing and promotional materials, which must be approved in advance by the department. Acknowledgement of the Victorian Government's support in marketing and promotional material will depend on the grant given and should be specified in the Grant Agreement, e.g., required representation on channels or collateral such as websites, signage, advertisements, and brochures. The department will supply the grant recipient with a logo suite and associated brand guidelines, as well as a guide on how to acknowledge government support, for the purposes of acknowledgment.

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

The department may publicise the benefits accruing to a grant recipient associated with the grant and the state's support for the project, and recipients must cooperate with the department in promoting the program. These requirements are outlined in the Grant Agreement. 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.

#### 6.8. Child Safety Requirements

Requirements for all applicants.

The National Redress Scheme (the NRS) enables eligible survivors of institutional child sexual abuse to access compensation, provided the responsible entity has joined the NRS.

All recipients of Victorian Government funding must comply with the [Victorian Government Policy on Institutional Participation in the National Redress Scheme for Institutional Child Sexual Abuse](#).

All applicants will be asked to disclose whether they have previously received a Notice of Redress Liability as part of their application.



### **Additional requirements for applicants**

If the following requirements are applicable to your funded activity, you must comply with them. 'Child' refers to any individual aged under 18 years.

#### **Child Safe Standards**

The [Child Safe Standards](#) (the Standards) require certain organisations to have policies, procedures and practices in place to protect children from harm and abuse.

If you operate a Schedule 1 entity per the [Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005](#), you must comply with the Standards, including while delivering funded activities.

Please refer to the Commission for Children and Young People's website for further information about:

- [who must comply with the Standards](#)
- [how to comply with the Standards](#).

Applicable organisations will be asked to declare whether they comply with the Standards as part of their application.

#### **Victorian Funding Guideline for Services to Children**

The Victorian Funding Guideline for Services to Children (the Funding Guideline) improves the ability of child abuse survivors to bring legal claims and access compensation.

If your funded activity involves the direct delivery of 'services to children,' your organisation must be:

- incorporated as a separate legal entity
- appropriately insured against child abuse.

'Services to children' refers to recurring events or activities for children where your organisation is responsible for the supervision of, or authority over, a child. It does not include:

- one-off activities or events for children
- activities or events involving only incidental or ad-hoc contact with children
- recurring activities or events for children where a parent, guardian, caregiver or teacher is present and supervising their participating child/children.

Applicable organisations will need to include evidence of the above requirements as part of their application. For further information about these requirements, please refer to the [Department of Justice and Community Safety's webpage](#).

## **7. General terms**

### **7.1. Privacy Statement**

Any personal information provided by an applicant for the purpose of seeking First Peoples Tourism Growth Program funding will be collected and used by the department for the purposes of assessment of eligibility, program administration, 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 local, 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 an 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 [darcy.maine@ecodev.vic.gov.au](mailto:darcy.maine@ecodev.vic.gov.au). Enquiries about access to personal information, or for other concerns regarding the privacy of personal information, can be emailed to the department's Privacy Unit by emailing [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.

## 7.2. 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.

### 7.2.1. Applicant Conflict of Interest

A conflict of interest arises where a person makes a decision or exercises a power in a way that may be, or may be perceived to be, influenced by either material personal interests (financial or non-financial) or material personal associations. A conflict of interest may arise where a grant applicant:

- has a professional, commercial, or personal relationship with a party who is able to, or may be perceived to, influence the application assessment process, such as a Victorian Government staff member, or
- has a relationship with, or interest in, an organisation which is likely to interfere with or restrict the applicant from carrying out the proposed activities fairly and independently.

Applicants must advise the department of any actual, potential, or perceived conflicts of interest relating to a project for which it has applied for funding.

## 7.3. Tax advice

Tax implications for grant recipients may differ depending on individual circumstances. The department recommends successful entities seek independent tax advice or alternatively liaise with the Australian Tax Office (ATO) for advice that is specific to their individual circumstances. The ATO website also provides guidance in relation to specific grants payments which may be used for tax determination purposes.

## 7.4. GST

If you are registered for the Goods and Services Tax (GST), where applicable, we will add GST to your grant payment.

- Example: If the approved funding is \$100,000 GST exclusive, the department will process payments totalling \$110,000 (\$100,000 GST exclusive funding + \$10,000 GST).

## 7.5. Complaints

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 Sarah Wilson, Manager Aboriginal Tourism and Industry Development, [sarah.x.wilson@ecodev.vic.gov.au](mailto:sarah.x.wilson@ecodev.vic.gov.au) or by calling [1800 878 969](tel:1800878969).

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.

## **7.6 Record keeping for recipients**

### **7.6.1 Accounting 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 provide access and produce evidence (such as business activity statements, bank statements, financial reports, sales reports and invoices, payroll reports to demonstrate impact and turnover) and assist the department, its representatives, and the Auditor General of Victoria with the conduct of the audit, as required.

## **8. Support for applicants**

If you have any questions regarding this program or the application process, please contact Darcy W Maine, Senior Project Officer - First Peoples Tourism, Tourism Policy and Programs unit, DJSIR via [darcy.maine@ecodev.vic.gov.au](mailto:darcy.maine@ecodev.vic.gov.au)