### **What is the First Peoples Tourism Industry Strengthening Program (ISP)?**

The Industry Strengthening Program (ISP) is a non-competitive grant program targeted to Registered Aboriginal Parties (RAPs) and delivered over a 20-month period. The program is anticipated to increase the capacity of RAPs to pursue tourism-related economic development activities.

### **How much funding is available under this program?**

### Each RAP is eligible to receive up to $300,000 (exclusive of GST).

### **What types of projects could be funded under this program?**

* **scoping and planning stage** – funded projects under this stage would support RAPs to identifying tourism initiatives and opportunities. This may include:
	+ master planning
	+ identification of the RAPs’ role and aspirations within tourism
	+ mapping of cultural and geographical landscape
	+ identification of key locations and cultural tourism opportunities
	+ tourism products and experiences audit
	+ analysis of strengths, opportunities and challenges
	+ Indigenous Cultural Intellectual Property (ICIP) and Aboriginal Knowledge (AK) protection strategies
	+ community and stakeholder engagement
	+ identification of opportunities for collaboration and partnerships.
* **implementation stage** -funded projects under this stage may focus on:
	+ product development
	+ business case development
	+ funding strategy development
	+ feasibility and operational viability studies
	+ tourism asset and equipment requirement assessments
	+ relevant technical investigations, plans and reports to progress initiatives
	+ strategic asset management plan
	+ storytelling projects
	+ placemaking, including wayfinding and interpretive signage
	+ tourism skills training and certification
	+ tourism marketing plans and website development.

### **Who is eligible for this program?**

This is a targeted program and funding is only available to the 12 RAPs currently in Victoria. <https://www.aboriginalheritagecouncil.vic.gov.au/victoria-registered-aboriginal-parties>

### **What is a RAP?**

A RAP is a recognised representative body of an Aboriginal Australian people per the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006*, whose function is to protect and manage the Aboriginal cultural heritage in the state of Victoria in Australia.

Applicants must hold an active Australian Business Number (ABN) registered in Victoria and have held that ABN on and from 1 July 2022 (exemptions may apply for recently Registered Aboriginal Parties).

### **Which area does each RAP look after?**

[This map illustrates all RAPs areas as of 7 August 2024.](https://www.aboriginalheritagecouncil.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/2024-08/Statewide-Appointed-RAPs-August-2024.pdf)

### **How do I submit my application?**

### RAPs should complete a project application using the designated template and email it to darcy.maine@ecodev.vic.gov.au by 10 April 2025

### The application template, along with program guidelines, will be emailed directly to RAPs.

### **What financial documents do I need to submit with my application?**

Applicants will be asked to supply the department with financial documentation to undertake a Financial Risk Assessment (FRA). This includes audited financial reports for the last three financial years and other relevant documents where available (exemptions may apply for recently registered Aboriginal parties).

There is a document checklist on the supplied application form.

Applicants may be subject to due diligence assessments to enable the Department to assess financial and other non-financial risks associated with proposed activities.

### **What else do I need to include with my application?**

### Applicants will need to include the following details in their application:

* applicant details
* project summary
* project timing and key delivery dates
* project team and roles
* project program strategic alignment
* project objectives and outcomes
* project benefits and success measures
* project budget
* cultural rights holders and stakeholder engagement plan (where applicable)
* risks and mitigation
* financial reports.

### **Will the department hold information session/s to support RAPs with their applications?**

### Program information sessions are planned, and invitations will be sent out early in the application period.

### **When do applications close?**

Applications will close on 10 April 2025.

### **Who do I contact if I have questions?**

### Please contact Darcy Maine at darcy.maine@ecodev.vic.gov.au if you have any questions.

### **When will successful outcomes be announced?**

The Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions aims to notify all applicants of outcomes from June 2025 onwards.

### **When do projects need to be completed by?**

### All projects and activities must be completed by February 2027.

### **What other initiatives is the government delivering to support First Peoples tourism in Victoria?**

First Peoples-led experiences is one of the key pillars under the Experience Victoria 2033 strategic plan.

As part of the pillar’s focus, and a commitment in the Visitor Economy Recovery and Reform Plan, we’re developing a First Peoples Tourism Plan.

The primary objectives include:

* Coordinating and advancing First Peoples tourism.
* Leveraging and enhancing participation for economic development.
* Empowering First Peoples within the tourism industry.

Latest news and updates on the Plan can be found on the [Tourism and Events website](https://tourism.vic.gov.au/about/experience-victoria-2033/first-peoples-tourism-plan).

Further supports for First Peoples tourism will be announced in the coming months.

### **What is Experience Victoria 2033?**

[Experience Victoria 2033](https://tourism.vic.gov.au/about/experience-victoria-2033) was released in May 2023 and is the state’s strategic plan to shape the future of Victoria’s visitor economy over the next 10 years. The plan will strengthen Victoria’s enviable tourism offering by leveraging the state’s competitive advantages. First Peoples-led experiences is identified as one of five product priorities in Experience Victoria 2033, alongside wellness, arts and culture, food and drink and nature.

**Additional Q&As:**

**What types of expenses are eligible for funding?**

* costs directly associated with delivering the ISP projects
* external professional services/consultant fees directly associated with delivering the ISP project.

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

**What types of expenses are not eligible for funding?**

* costs not directly associated with delivering the ISP projects
* usual operational expenditure, including existing staff wages, equipment and IT purchases, communications, travel, entertainment, accommodation and vehicle hire
* requests for retrospective project funding, where projects have been completed prior to receiving funding approval
* costs related to preparing the grant application, preparing any project reports and preparing any project variation requests.

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

**Is there a project plan template?**

The application template is designed to act as the project plan. If you already have a project plan you can attach this to your application.