

2022 Cultural Fire Grants

Application Guidelines



Acknowledgements

Acknowledgment

We acknowledge and respect Victorian Traditional Owners as the original custodians of Victoria's land and waters, their unique ability to care for Country and deep spiritual connection to it. We honour Elders past and present whose knowledge and wisdom has ensured the continuation of culture and traditional practices.

We are committed to genuinely partner, and meaningfully engage, with Victoria's Traditional Owners and Aboriginal communities to support the protection of Country, the maintenance of spiritual and cultural practices and their broader aspirations in the 21st century and beyond.



Photo credit

The photo was supplied by the Gunditj Mirring Traditional Owner Aboriginal Corporation

Cover Page Art: Mirring

The artist, Tom Day worked closely with the DELWP Aboriginal Staff network to create DELWP's Aboriginal Cultural Identity Mirring – Country.

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Contents

Victorian Traditional Owner Cultural Fire Strategy	2
1. Program Overview	3
What is the Cultural Fire Grants Program	3
Key Dates	3
What are the funding details?	3
2. Eligibility	4
Who is eligible to apply?	4
Who is not eligible to apply for funding?	4
What types of project activities are eligible for funding?	4
What will not be funded?	5
3. Application and assessment.....	5
What is the application process?	5
What are the assessment criteria?	5
What supporting documents and information are required with an application?	6
How will applications be assessed?	7
4. What are the funding conditions?	7
Funding agreement	7
Legislative and regulatory requirements	7
Tax implications	8
Acknowledging the Victorian Government’s support	8
Payments.....	8
Project monitoring and delivery	8
Privacy.....	8
Cost.....	9
Probity for application procedures.....	9
Assessment Panel.....	9
Land Manager Support	9
5. Contacts and further information	9

Victorian Traditional Owner Cultural Fire Strategy

Future generations of Victorian Traditional Owners will grow-up observing their Elders leading the use of the right fire for Country. They will be trusted to know the special reasons why fire is used and how it brings health to the land and people. Their children and grandchildren will see culturally valuable plants and animals return to Country and know their stories.

Quote from the Traditional Owners vision from the Victorian Traditional Owner Cultural Fire Strategy.

1. Program Overview

What is the Cultural Fire Grants Program

The connection Traditional Owners have to Country and their role in the future of fire and land management in Victoria is recognised and acknowledged by DELWP and its partner agencies. Traditional Owner Cultural Fire Grants (CFG) is a Victorian Government initiative that supports Traditional Owners to lead the practice of cultural burning and their unique pathway for creating healthy country and communities.

The CFG program will support projects that:

- reinvigorate Traditional Owner-led cultural land and fire management practices across the Victorian landscape
- implement program components of the Victorian Traditional Owner Cultural Fire Strategy (CFS) or existing Country plan
- embed two-way learning and partnerships between Traditional Owners and the state's emergency services agencies
- restore traditional knowledge and practice, safeguarding this knowledge and practice for future generations
- provide employment opportunities within Aboriginal organisations

Key Dates

Event	Date
Applications open	1 April 2022
Applications close	13 May 2022
Application eligibility and assessment panel process	16 May – early June 2022
Successful and unsuccessful applicants notified	Mid-June 2022
Activities complete and acquittal reports submitted	30 December 2024

What are the funding details?

The Cultural Fire Grants program is a competitive program to support Traditional Owner organisations in Victoria. In the first funding round of 21/22 – 22/23, the Victorian Government is providing up to \$6.3 million dollars (GST exclusive) divided between successful applicants, to lead the practice of cultural burning and support their unique pathways for managing Country.

In the first funding round applicants will be able to apply for:

- Small grants totalling between \$1000 to \$200,000 (perfect for smaller initiatives i.e. training course, strategy development)
- Large grants of above \$200,000 (supporting larger on-ground implementation activities or programs)

Projects should be planned to be delivered over a period of up to two years from receipt of funding. Projects with longer delivery timeframes will be considered however Traditional Owner organisations won't be eligible for future funding rounds which become available if existing milestones are not yet delivered.

2. Eligibility

Who is eligible to apply?

For eligibility to apply for funding, applicants must be a Victorian Traditional Owner Corporation that is either:

- an incorporated body registered, under Consumer Affairs Victoria; or
- an incorporated association under the federal Corporations (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) Act 2006; and
- have public liability insurance (\$10 million minimum); and
- professional indemnity insurance (\$2 million minimum)

Traditional Owner-led organisations may choose to partner with another organisation where specific content knowledge, insurances or other expertise is required. However, the Traditional Owner-led organisation and/or community group must be the lead or senior partner throughout the project for partnership-based projects to be considered for funding. Funding is only available to Incorporated organisations.

Non-Incorporated community groups will need to have an auspice arrangement in place to receive the funding.

Who is not eligible to apply for funding?

The Cultural Fire Grants (CFG) program is a program that seeks to support Victorian Traditional Owners reinvigorate the practice of cultural fire to restore health to country and wellbeing to Victorian Traditional Owner communities. The eligibility criteria are intended to support the program to meet these objectives.

Organisations that are not eligible to apply for funding include, but are not limited to:

- sole Traders
- for-profit organisations
- Non-Aboriginal led organisations and groups
- organisations whose primary business is outside of Victoria
- individuals who are not office holders or authorised signatories

What types of project activities are eligible for funding?

Eligible projects will be required to demonstrate how their project supports the Strategic Priorities from [the Victorian Traditional Owner Fire Strategy](#) or from a Nation's Country plan or equivalent document with demonstrable links to cultural fire. Project activities may include:

Strategic Priorities	Project activities or tasks
Victorian Traditional Owner Cultural Fire Strategy - Program Components	Indicative examples
1. Managing the transition to cultural burning and healthy Country	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• resourcing for field visits, staff, equipment (mobile assets) and training to build cultural fire teams to care for Country
2. Restoring and protecting the knowledge system	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Traditional Owner led research projects or pilots• development or strengthening of data information systems• conducting values assessment and pre and post fire monitoring activities

3. Holistic land management for healthy Country and healthy people.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> partnering with land managers to plan long term cultural burns sites and pilot co-management arrangements
4. Embedding cultural fire practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> developing whole of Country plans or cultural fire sub-strategies seasonal fire calendars developing regional stakeholder forums to guide transition of cultural fire
Country Plans or equivalent	
5. Developing or delivering components from Country plans or equivalent document which support cultural fire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> implementation of other existing objectives or actions from Country plan or cultural fire strategy (or equivalent document)

What will not be funded?

The CFG will not fund:

- recurrent operation costs, for example, rents, and utility costs
- purchase of land or water
- any cultural fire activity undertaken overseas
- existing business-as-usual operating costs which cannot be linked back to cultural fire
- fixed assets (e.g., buildings; fire towers)
- funding for political campaigning or advocacy activities for political parties.

3. Application and assessment

What is the application process?

The application process is as follows:

- Carefully read the Application Guidelines to ensure your Organisation meets the eligibility criteria. All applications are submitted online using the Grants Online portal.
- Applicants are encouraged to contact your DELWP regional Deputy Chief Fire Officer to express your interest and discuss implementation of your project proposal. This includes discussing any requirements for Forest Fire Management Victoria resources and availability to support the cultural burn activities and operating in accordance with current Victorian legislation.
- Applications must be completed using the online form through GEMS, with all required documentation and submitted no later than **13th May 2022**.
- If there are inconsistencies in the information provided on the application, the CFG Project Team may contact the applicant to clarify. The applicant will not be provided with an opportunity to improve or enhance their application. Applications that do not meet the eligibility criteria will not proceed to the assessment stage.
- Applicants that are not successful are encouraged to seek feedback on their application and apply in future funding rounds.

What are the assessment criteria?

Eligible organisations' (see [Section 2: Who is Eligible is to apply](#)) application for the CFG program will be assessed against the Assessment criteria. In preparing an application, you are encouraged to engage your

local land manager to assist you in meeting the selection criteria. Each assessment criteria question has a percentage weighting of the total assessment. Assessment criteria with a higher percentage value will be considered more strongly than those with a lower percentage value. Applicants must address all the Assessment Criteria and sub-questions and submit using the Online Application Form found here: [Cultural Fire Grants \(environment.vic.gov.au\)](https://environment.vic.gov.au)

Assessment criterion 1: Enabling Traditional Owner Rights on Country (Value 30%)

Applicants must demonstrate how the project will align with program objectives or actions of the Victorian Traditional Owner Cultural Fire Strategy or an existing Country plan (or equivalent document)

- Describe what project your Organisation intends to deliver and how it supports Strategic Priorities from either the Victorian Traditional Owner Cultural Fire Strategy or an existing Country plan
- Complete the Program Logic table for this project

Assessment criterion 2. Caring for Country and Community (Value 25%)

Applicants must demonstrate how the project will:

- Support your Organisation and your Traditional Owner community to build their capability and skills to care for Country
- Heal or improve the overall health of Country¹
- Provide any other community benefits – social, cultural, economic, health or well-being

Assessment criterion 3: Capacity of project manager to deliver and evaluate the project (Value 25%)

Applicants must demonstrate how the project will be implemented including any key activities, timelines, and strategies for evaluating success of the project.

- Complete details of the project plan
- Demonstrate what measures will be used to measure the success of the project
- Discuss approach for engaging community participation and key stakeholders including evidence of any letters of support and any agreements/MOUs with the land manager where applicable

Assessment criterion 4: Value for money (Value 20%)

All applicants must demonstrate the project represents good value for money with realistic costs and the budget elements are well justified and transparent.

- List estimated expenditure for this project up until December 2024
- Outline the legacy of this project, and how the project outcomes can be maintained, expanded or continued in the future.

What supporting documents and information are required with an application?

Applicants may be required to provide the following information with your application:

- evidence of your status as an incorporated legal Aboriginal entity (Cth) or (Vic)
- authorised auspice information (if applicable)
- Australian Business Number (ABN)
- evidence of public liability insurance
- completed Project Plan and Budget templates
- signature from authorised representative

¹ Only applies to large grants

How will applications be assessed?

All applications will be assessed in the following way:

- All applications will be assessed against the assessment criteria in the guidelines and application form through a two-stage assessment process.
- The assessment panel will include Aboriginal representatives and DELWP representatives.
- Please note funding is limited. The awarding of grants is a merit-based process. This means that not all eligible submissions will receive funding in this round if the funding pool has already been allocated to submissions that receive a higher ranking.
- A minimum of \$500,000 will be quarantined for small grants. If applications for smaller funding grants are undersubscribed, this will be repurposed for large grants.
- If the CFGs are oversubscribed, the CFG assessment panel may negotiate project scope and terms to assist with the final distribution of funds.
- After assessment, DELWP will recommend projects to the Minister Energy, Environment and Climate Change for final approval.
- At the completion of the assessment process, all successful and unsuccessful applicants will be advised of the outcome in writing and given the opportunity to obtain feedback about their submission.

4. What are the funding conditions?

Funding agreement

Successful applicants must enter into a funding agreement with DELWP. Funding agreements establish the parties and outline their commitments and obligations to each other, as well as setting out the general funding terms, conditions, and payments schedule. Where possible, details of the activity schedule, key dates and outcomes of the project will be informed by the relevant information provided by applicants as part of their submissions. The activity does not include using the Funding for political campaigning or advocacy activities for political parties.

The Victorian Common Funding Agreement (VCFA) is used by all Victorian Government departments and establishes a standardised approach to how funding is managed. The VCFA simplifies funding arrangements with both the not-for-profit community sector and the local government sector. It is recommended that applicants review the terms and conditions before applying. [Victorian Common Funding Agreement | Victorian Government \(www.vic.gov.au\)](http://www.vic.gov.au). The terms of the VCFA cannot be varied.

Legislative and regulatory requirements

Speak to the relevant land manager for advice on specific legislative or regulatory requirements specific to your project. In delivering the activities under the VCFA, grant recipients are also required to comply with all relevant Commonwealth and state/territory legislation and regulations including but not limited to:

- *The Privacy Act 1988 (Commonwealth)*
- *The Freedom of Information Act 1982 (Vic)*
- *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004*
- *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006 (Vic)*
- *Code of Practice for Bushfire Management on Public Land (2012)*
- *Emergency Management Act 2013*

Tax implications

Successful applicants will be offered funding as a GST exclusive amount. However, for organisations with an ABN and who are GST registered, payment will be made GST inclusive. Recipients are responsible for determining their tax liabilities for grant payments. Grants provided by DELWP are classified as income and tax may be payable by recipients. Each applicant is responsible to investigate their own tax structure and treatment.

Acknowledging the Victorian Government's support

A common condition of Victorian government funding for services or project activity is that recipients must follow DELWP's support and promotional guidelines (<https://www2.delwp.vic.gov.au/grants>) will form part of the funding agreement. Successful applicants must liaise with relevant DELWP program area to coordinate any public events or announcements related to the project.

Payments

Payments will be made in a combination of both upfront payments and after the completion of successful agreed on milestones. Payment scheduling will be determined as part of the assessment process.

Payments will be made if:

- the funding agreement has been signed by both parties,
- grant recipients provide any reports as required, or otherwise demonstrate that the activity is progressing as expected,
- other terms and conditions of funding continue to be met

Project monitoring and delivery

Grant recipients are required to comply with project monitoring and reporting requirements as outlined in the funding agreement. This may include progress reports, completion reports and acquittal documentations. In cases where a project is delayed for an unreasonable length of time, or where substantive changes to scope are made after funding has been approved, or where a milestone fails to be delivered, DELWP reserves the right to cancel the next milestone payment until the milestone activity has been completed.

Privacy

Any personal information about you or a third party in your application will be collected by DELWP for the purposes of administering your grant application and informing Members of Parliament of successful applications. Personal information may also be disclosed to external experts, such as members of assessment panels, or other Government Departments for assessment, reporting, advice, comment or for discussions regarding alternative or collaborative grant funding opportunities. If you intend to include personal information about third parties in your application, please ensure that they are aware of the contents of this privacy statement.

Any personal information about you or a third party in your correspondence will be collected, held, managed, used, disclosed or transferred in accordance with the provisions of the Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014 and other applicable laws.

DELWP is committed to protecting the privacy of personal information. You can find the DELWP Privacy Policy online at www.delwp.vic.gov.au/privacy.

Requests for access to information about you held by DELWP should be sent to the Manager Privacy, P.O. Box 500 East Melbourne 8002 or contact by phone on 9637 8697.

Cost

DELWP is not liable for any costs, expenses, losses, claims or damages that may be incurred by applicants in connection with the application process, including in preparing or applying, providing further information to DELWP, or participating in negotiations with the DELWP.

Probity for application procedures

The applicant and any of its associates must not offer any incentive to, or otherwise attempt to influence any of the persons who are either directly or indirectly involved in the application process, or in awarding any subsequent contract. If DELWP determines that the applicant or any of its associates have violated this condition, the applicant may be disqualified from further consideration, in DELWP's absolute discretion. By applying, the applicant consents to DELWP performing probity and financial investigations and procedures in relation to the applicant or any of its associates. The applicant agrees, if requested by DELWP, to seek consents from individuals to allow such probity checks.

Assessment Panel

An Assessment Panel will be formed by identifying members who would have no actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest with regards to incoming applications. All members must declare any conflict of interest with any application. Assessment Panel members will not assess any application where they have a conflict of interest and will abstain from discussions about any project where they have a conflict of interest. . The Assessment Panel will include Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal representatives from DELWP and organisations with appropriate cultural and technical expertise.

Land Manager Support

Where projects propose activities on public or private land outside areas with an existing agreement, obtaining a letter of support from the relevant land manager is encouraged and will be considered as part of the assessment process. A letter or evidence of land manager support does not approve these activities and formal approval may still be required from the land manager to deliver these. If you have any queries about land manager support, seek advice from the land manager or from your DELWP regional Deputy Chief Fire Officer before submitting your application. Land managers in Victoria include DELWP, Parks Victoria and Local Government among others. For any non-implementation or non-operational activities such as engagement or strategy development demonstrating land manager support will not be required.

5. Contacts and further information

For assistance with application guidelines or further information about Cultural Fire Grants email: culturalfiregrants@delwp.vic.gov.au

For technical queries when using the online application portal email: grantsinfo@delwp.vic.gov.au

Further information in relation to on Country delivery of cultural fire projects should be addressed to the relevant land manager. Please contact the following representatives in the first instance:

Hume Region: Aaron R Kennedy DELWP aaron.kennedy@delwp.vic.gov.au

Loddon Mallee Region: Scott C Falconer (DELWP) scott.falconer@delwp.vic.gov.au

Port Phillip Region: Tamara S Beckett (DELWP) tamara.beckett@delwp.vic.gov.au

Barwon South West Region: Andrew J Morrow (DELWP) Andrew.Morrow@delwp.vic.gov.au

Grampians Region: Tony J English (DELWP) tony.english@delwp.vic.gov.au

Gippsland Region: Sam Quigley (DELWP) sam.quigley@delwp.vic.gov.au

For support or to discuss proposals with a Parks Victoria representative, in the first instance please contact David Nugent (PV) david.nugent@parks.vic.gov.au

For support and to discuss proposals with a local government or private land cultural fire focus please contact Daniel Idczak (CFA) Daniel.Idczak@cfa.vic.gov.au.