

Strengthening Local Government Partnerships

Grant Application Guide



Photo: Wodonga Council



Energy,
Environment
and Climate Action

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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.



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Background

Safer Together is a Victorian Government approach to reducing the risk of bushfire. Safer Together involves fire and land agencies working together with communities and partners to combine in-depth local knowledge and experience with the latest science and technology. Safer Together recognises the essential role that Victoria’s Local Government Authorities play in supporting communities to prevent, prepare for, respond to, and recover from bushfire and other emergencies.

A core part of Safer Together is the Community First program, which prioritises working with communities and taking a community-centred, place-based approach to managing the risk of bushfire.

Based on the principle of shared responsibility, the Community First program recognises the importance of partnerships in bushfire management, providing the opportunity for collaboration and sharing of local knowledge and experience to inform an approach that is relevant and meaningful to people and place.

Information session

If you are interested in learning more an information session will be held on 12 February 2024. Please register your interest [here](#) or contact safer.together@delwp.vic.gov.au.

Key dates

Applications open	5 February, 2024
Applications close	28 March, 2024
Applicants notified	May, 2024
Funding agreements executed	June, 2024

1. What is the Strengthening Local Government Partnerships program?

The Strengthening Local Government Partnerships program aims to support and strengthen partnerships between Local Government Authorities, fire and land management agencies and communities to reduce bushfire risk and build community resilience.

It is recognised that Local Government Authorities are a key partner with legislative responsibilities, as well as uniquely placed to support and connect with local leaders and community networks.

The program provides grants for Local Government Authorities to design collaborative, community-centred projects that meet the needs of people and place within their local context.

Funding is available for projects that adopt a community-centred, partnership approach to managing bushfire risk and building community resilience. This approach may be of benefit to a range of other hazards within that geographical area, however the focus should be on bushfire.

Working and collaborating with communities and local partners is key in bringing together diverse perspectives, knowledge, interests and priorities to address complex issues. This approach ensures that the community and place-based issues are central to the design and delivery of bushfire management approaches.

2. What are the Strengthening Local Government Grant objectives?

- Foster a collaborative, multi-partner approach to bushfire risk reduction and building community resilience
- Support Local Government Authorities to take a place-based, community-centred approach to building community resilience to bushfires
- Provide resources, support and connections to increase capacity and capability of Local Government Authorities
- Facilitate sharing and learning across Local Government Authorities and partners across the state

3. What are the grant funding conditions?

Amount	Grants of up to \$150,000 per financial year, per Local Government Authority. Grant applicants are encouraged to apply for funding amounts that are suitable for their individual needs.
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Duration	Funding is available for applications of up to 24 months in duration.
Who can apply?	Local Government Authorities working to reduce bushfire risk. Considerations will be given to Local Government Authorities who have not previously been funded through the Strengthening Local Government Partnerships Grants.
Who cannot apply?	The following organisations and individuals cannot apply for funding: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Individuals• State Government agencies• Private sector businesses and agencies• Educational institutions• Not for profit organisations• Any other group not classified as a Local Government Authority

4. What might be funded?

Grant funding could be viewed as seed funding to develop new ideas, or additional funding to add value, extend or build capability for existing projects.

Projects that:

- Increase community participation in bushfire risk management activities and support community involvement in decision making
- Employ a staff member to work within one or across several municipalities to implement community engagement approaches
- Focus on strengthening partnerships and collaboration with fire agencies and other community/local organisations to work with communities in bushfire risk management
- Encourage collaboration or support between two or more Local Government Authorities and communities
- Identify connections or support links between bushfire management, emergency management and community-based approaches
- Support research, monitoring, evaluation and learning related to community-based priorities, local bushfire risk reduction activities and the impacts of these activities on communities, businesses and the environment

5. What will not be funded?

The Strengthening Local Government Partnerships Grants will not fund the following activities:

- The purchase of land or capital assets
- Routine or ongoing maintenance activities
- Where duplicate services are in operation or planned for in a targeted community
- Business as usual activities
- Recurrent operating costs, for example rent and utility costs, and/or activities establishing expectations of ongoing funding
- Consultant fees above 20% of the total grant amount received (unless required in special circumstances)
- Projects that focus exclusively on emergency response
- Fuel management and other fuel mitigation activities
- Activities located outside the State of Victoria
- Activities that include using the funding for political campaigning or advocacy activities for political parties

6. What are the assessment criteria?

First, applications will be checked for eligibility to make sure that the applicant and their activity are eligible for funding.

After that, eligible applications will be assessed using the criteria listed below. Each criterion is given a percentage weighting to indicate its relative importance in the assessment process. Applications should address all relevant criteria.

Why 20%	Applications must demonstrate: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why the project is important to the local community and local government area. • What gap will be met by the project, or how the project will enhance or add value to activities in place within the local government area. • Why the external funding applied for is important to the delivery of this project at this time.
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Who 20%	Applications must demonstrate: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who was collaborated with in the development of the application. This could include collaboration with other Local Government Authorities, fire and land management agencies and/or communities. • Approach to working collaboratively with other Local Government Authorities, fire and land management agencies and/or communities in building resilience and reducing bushfire risk.
How 30%	Applications must demonstrate: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A community-centred approach within the project's design and delivery. • How the project strengthens partnerships with communities, fire and land management agencies and/or Local Governments Authorities in the spirit of shared responsibility. • Sufficient capacity within the Local Government Authority to deliver the project, including the necessary capabilities and resources such as staff, time, skills, and leadership support.
What 30%	Applications must demonstrate: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A detailed outline of what and how the funding will be used, including the proposed benefits for community. • Considerations for the delivery and sustainability of the project beyond the life of the grant funding.

7. What is the application process?

Applications are submitted online using the Grants Online portal.

To apply, visit:

- Victorian Government grants site
www.vic.gov.au/grants-and-programs
- DEECA Grants site
www.deeca.vic.gov.au/grants

Attaching required documents:

Supporting documents must be in an acceptable file type, such as Word, Excel, PDF, or JPEG. The maximum file size for each file is 10MB.

You will receive an application number when you submit an application online. Please quote this number in all communications with the department relating to your application.

If you have documents to submit that cannot be attached to your online application you can email them to Safer.Together@delwp.vic.gov.au quoting your application number. Attach all documents to one email, zipping the files if required.

Make sure your application is submitted by the 28 March 2024.

Note: No hard copy applications will be accepted. Late and incomplete applications will not be considered.

8. What supporting documents will need to be provided?

Supporting documents are welcomed but not required.

We may call upon the project applicant to supply specific supporting documentation during the application review process.

9. What are the funding conditions?

Funding agreements

Successful applicants must enter into a funding agreement with Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA). The Victorian Common Funding Agreement is used for funding agreements with not for profit organisations and Local Government Authorities.

The DEECA Transfer Payment Funding Agreement is used for Victorian public entities, as defined under section 5 of the *Public Administration Act 2004*. (To delete this paragraph if not required)

It is recommended that applicants review the terms and conditions before applying. Information about

the Victorian Common Funding Agreement is available on <https://www.vic.gov.au/victorian-common-funding-agreement>

Legislative and regulatory requirements

In delivering the activity grant recipients are required to comply with all relevant Commonwealth and state/territory legislations 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*

Tax implications

Applicants should consult the Australian Taxation Office or seek professional advice on any taxation implications that may arise from this grant funding.

Successful applicants without an ABN will need to provide a completed Australian Taxation Office form 'Statement by a Supplier' so that no withholding tax is required from the grant payment.

Acknowledging the Victorian Government's support

Successful applicants are expected to acknowledge the Victorian Government's support and promotional guidelines (<https://www2.delwp.vic.gov.au/grants>) will form part of the funding agreement. Successful applicants must liaise with the departmental program area to coordinate any public events or announcements related to the project.

Payments

Payments will be made as long as:

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

Monitoring

Grant recipients are required to comply with project monitoring and reporting requirements as outlined in the funding agreement. This may include progress reports, site inspections, completion reports and acquittal documentation.

Privacy

Any personal information about you or a third party in your application will be collected by the department 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.

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

Requests for access to information about you held by DEECA should be sent to the Manager Privacy, P.O. Box 500 East Melbourne 8002 or contact by emailing Foi.unit@delwp.vic.gov.au.

10. Additional information

If you require assistance submitting your application online, email safer.together@delwp.vic.gov.au

11. What is the notification process?

Successful and unsuccessful applicants will be notified in writing after the assessment process is completed. All decisions are final and are not subject to further review. Unsuccessful applicants can ask for feedback on their application.

12. Checklist

Read these guidelines before applying and complete the following checklist.

Have you:

- ☐ read these guidelines carefully?
- ☐ checked if your Local Government Authority is eligible for this grant funding?
- ☐ checked if your activity is eligible for this grant funding?
- ☐ collaborated and consulted with key partners to develop the application to ensure that your project is not duplicating any existing or planned projects?
- ☐ checked that you would be able to comply with all relevant laws and regulations in delivery of your activity?
- ☐ prepared the appropriate supporting documents?

