



Program Guidelines

Regional Business Events Program

Strategic Acquisition Events

2026 – 2028

Business Events Victoria in partnership with Melbourne Convention Bureau are offering funding to eligible event organisers to support costs of hosting business events in regional Victoria.

The Strategic Acquisition events program aims to attract new business events to regional Victoria. Funding can be used for accommodation, venue hire, food and beverage, transport and other event costs.

1. Purpose

The Victorian Government's Community Support Fund is supporting the Regional Business Events Program - Strategic Acquisition event grants to attract new business events to regional Victoria. Events must be held **before 31 March 2028** to stimulate short and medium-term activity in the business events sector.

2. Program Outline

- Business Events Victoria (BEV), Melbourne Convention Bureau (MCB) and the Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions (DJSIR) will administer the Program.
- Subject to funding availability, eligibility and a strategic acquisition process, grants commencing at **\$5,000 up to \$50,000** may be available for events held in regional Victoria.
- Successful applicants will be offered an 'up to' funding amount with the final payment aligned to actual deliverables against the program criteria.
- Payment will be made post-event, upon receipt of evidence of deliverables.

3. Eligibility Criteria

To be eligible to apply for the Regional Business Events Program Strategic Acquisition event grants, the following criteria applies:

- Events must be **new** business to regional Victoria (eligible regional Victoria destinations in Attachment A).
- Events must **not** yet be confirmed, contracted or advertised.
- Events must have a minimum of **25 delegates**.
- **At least 30%** of delegates must be from outside the host region.
- Events must have a minimum of **1 night stay** in regional Victoria and a minimum of **1.5 days meeting** or program component.
- Applications must be submitted at least **2 months** prior to the event date.
- Event dates must occur between **4 January 2027** and **31 March 2028**.
- If funding is granted, the event venue must be secured via a deposit payment, and an MCB Event Sponsorship Agreement must be signed within **3 months** of being notified. If the Agreement is not signed, the funding offer will be withdrawn.

Eligible events include corporate or association meetings, conferences, conventions and Business to Business (B2B) trade events in accordance with the following criteria:

- **Corporate or Association Meetings, Conferences, Conventions or Trade Exhibitions.** These are formal gatherings of business professionals, business leaders, organisational employees or associations within a specific industry sector. Examples include:
 - **National Industry Conferences:** Events where professionals from sectors such as healthcare, finance, technology or education gather to explore key topics such as emerging trends, regulatory changes, technology innovations, and best practices. For instance, a healthcare conference brings together hospitals, pharmaceutical companies and suppliers to discuss the latest advancements or new product developments.
 - **Sector-Specific Conferences:** Conferences that bring together industry professionals to enhance knowledge and ideas on important industry issues. An example could be an IT conference, which may or may not feature a trade exhibition showcasing products and services relevant to the technology sector.
 - **Annual General Meetings (AGMs):** Formal gatherings where business leaders, stakeholders and members of an organisation come together to review the organisations past performance, discuss future goals and address financial matters.
 - **Product Launches:** Corporate events designed for businesses to introduce new products or key services to key stakeholders, such as partners, clients or industry leaders. These events typically include product demonstrations, networking opportunities and discussions about potential collaborations or partnerships.

- **B2B trade shows:** Professional gatherings where businesses or organisations interact, exchange ideas, build partnerships or conduct transactions. Note: **consumer events, trade shows and exhibitions are not eligible.**
- Applicants must identify either one or two regions where the event may be held, with regions being:
 - [Destination Gippsland](#)
 - [Goulburn Region Tourism](#)
 - [Grampians Wimmera Mallee Tourism](#)
 - [Great Ocean Road Regional Tourism](#)
 - [Murray Regional Tourism](#)
 - [Tourism Greater Geelong and Bellarine](#)
 - [Tourism Midwest Victoria](#)
 - [Tourism North East](#)
 - [Destination Central Victoria](#) (including Daylesford and Macedon Ranges)
 - [Mornington Peninsula Regional Tourism](#)
 - [Tourism East](#) (including the Yarra Valley and Dandenong Ranges)
 - [Destination Greater Bendigo Loddon](#)
 - [Destination Phillip Island](#)

The following events will not be eligible for funding:

- Applicants that do not meet the eligibility and assessment criteria.
- Events for social and family groups, weddings, student groups, sports groups, study and technical tours (unless part of a conference), leisure tour groups, consumer exhibitions or wellness retreats.
- Business events that have been confirmed, advertised or contracted a venue in regional Victoria prior to the submission and acknowledgment of receipt of the SmartyGrants application.
- Events receiving funding from other Victorian government funding programs.
- Virtual events (unless minimum in person delegate target is achieved).
- Events that commence prior to **4 January 2027**.
- Events that are held after **31 March 2028**.
- Events conducted by Government departments or agencies and local government.

- Events taking place at Nyaal Banyul Geelong Convention and Event Centre (NBGCEC) with more than 250 delegates. Please contact NBGCEC. Events with less than 250 delegates are eligible.

Please note: The outcomes of the funding program are at the full discretion of BEV, MCB and the State Government of Victoria. The program is competitive with consideration given to supporting a spread of event types, sectors and locations. Applicants must not assume they will be successful or enter into commitments based on that assumption before receiving formal notification of the outcome of their funding application. All applicants are encouraged to plan for contingencies and consider other funding sources and options should their application be unsuccessful.

4. Assessment Considerations

Funding applications will be assessed by BEV and MCB. Recommendations will be submitted for approval to the Deputy Secretary, Sport and Experience Economy, Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions. Applicants will be notified of the outcome of their application by MCB or BEV.

- Funding will be assessed based on the anticipated economic impact on the host community, with a weighted scoring system including:
 - Number of delegates attending
 - Number of event days
 - Number of overnight stays
 - Number of vendors used
 - Percentage of delegates from outside the region
 - Alignment with government/regional priority sectors will be viewed favourably
 - Location, with additional weighting for events taking place in Category B locations (outlined in Appendix A) to encourage regional dispersal.

5. Application and Approval Process

- Applications will open in **October 2026** and will be open until 31 January 2028 or until funds are exhausted.
- Before applying, applicants must read the program guidelines.
- An Expression of Interest (EOI) must be submitted to determine eligibility (available on MCB's and BEV's website), and details emailed to info@businesseventsvictoria.com
- If the EOI identifies the event is eligible, MCB or BEV will provide access to a detailed application form to be completed.
- Applications must respond to all questions and provide information including a draft event program or a representative past event program. The application submitted is final and no

further details will be sought or accepted after submission of the application.

- Each application submitted will be assessed against the program eligibility and assessment criteria.

6. Who can apply?

Applications can be made by the event owner or event organiser (including Professional Conference Organisers where authorised by the event owner), including:

- Private sector businesses (where the event will deliver a clear public benefit)
- Incorporated industry associations
- Not for profit incorporated bodies, cooperatives or associations. Applicant organisations must have:
 - a valid Australian Business Number (ABN) for Australian applicants
 - documented evidence of an appropriate legal structure such as a registered company, business cooperative or partnership.

7. Conditions of Funding

- This funding must be used to cover actual event costs, including but not limited to accommodation, venue hire, transport, food and beverage, marketing, or event promotion. Funding cannot be used for administrative costs, payment of salary and related employment costs, purchase of assets, or rent or lease of office space.
- Successful applications must agree to enter into an Event Sponsorship Agreement with MCB. This will be administered once a signed venue contract and confirmation of payment of deposit has been submitted to MCB. The Event Sponsorship Agreement must be signed within **3 months** of being notified. If the Agreement is not signed, the funding offer will be withdrawn.
- Funding will be paid post event upon receipt of an approved post event report and other requirements detailed in the Event Sponsorship Agreement.
- Applicants must agree to transparency with BEV and MCB regarding event details. All applicants must provide supporting documentation if requested by BEV and MCB.
- The event organiser may not receive any funds if they fail to meet the agreed delegate target and minimum room nights per the signed Agreement, or if any key event details are changed.

8. Conflicts of interest

- All applicants will be required to declare any interests of which they are aware, which could reasonably raise an expectation of a conflict of interest or material interference with an application.

- Conflicts of interest can be actual, potential, or perceived, and should be declared to ensure that any risks are managed. Detailed guidance can be found on the Victorian Public Sector Commission website in its Conflict-of-Interest Policy Framework – [Victorian Public Sector Commission](#) and in its eLearning guide on Conflicts of Interest.

9. Funding Agreements

- Successful applicants will enter into an Event Sponsorship Agreement with MCB.
- Applicants must have the legal capacity to enter into an agreement with MCB in accordance with Australian law. The contract signatory must be the same as per the venue contract. A third party can apply on behalf of an event organiser if they are also signing the venue contract (for example, a Professional Conference Organiser).
- Applicants must not be insolvent and must be in good financial standing to enter into an agreement with MCB.
- Pre event, successful applications will be required to provide confirmation of payment of deposit.
- All successful applicants will be required to complete a post event report using the report template provided by MCB. Post event reports will be required within four weeks of the conclusion of the event.
- Successful applicants may be requested to participate in case studies and research to assess the impact of the funding program.

10. Acknowledgements

- Successful applicants will be required to acknowledge the Victorian Government's support of the program. Full details will be provided in the Event Sponsorship Agreement. This may include:
 - Victorian Government, Community Support Fund, MCB and BEV logo recognition on any relevant event promotional material relating to the event (videos, website, print publications, etc.).
 - Opportunities for Ministerial attendance and/or letter of welcome in official event program.
 - Acknowledgement in media releases.

11. Disclaimers

- This information may be provided to Victorian Government bodies for the purpose of assessing your application. If you intend to include personal information about third parties in your application, please ensure they are aware of the contents of the 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. BEV and MCB are committed to protecting the privacy of personal information. You can find MCB's Privacy Statement online at melbournecb.com.au/privacy. Enquiries about access to information about you held by MCB should be directed to the Corporate Affairs department of MCB.

- Please note, the Regional Business Events Program may be highly contested. Outcome of funding applications is at the full discretion of BEV, MCB and the State Government of Victoria. Applicants must not assume they will be successful or enter into commitments based on that assumption before receiving formal notification of the outcome of their funding application. All applicants are encouraged to plan for contingencies and consider other funding sources and options should their application be unsuccessful.

For more information or application assistance please contact:

Business Events Victoria: info@businesseventsvictoria.com or
Melbourne Convention Bureau: info@melbournecb.com.au

Attachment A: Eligible Victorian Local Government Areas

Category A locations

Ballarat City Council
Bass Coast Shire Council
Greater Bendigo City Council
Golden Plains Shire Council
Hepburn Shire Council
Greater Geelong City Council
Moorabool Shire Council
Mornington Peninsula Shire Council
Mount Alexander Shire Council
Macedon Ranges Shire Council
Mitchell Shire Council
Surf Coast Shire Council
Yarra Ranges Shire Council

Category B locations

Alpine Shire Council
Ararat Rural City Council
Baw Baw Shire Council
Benalla Rural City Council
Borough of Queenscliffe Council
Buloke Shire Council
Campaspe Shire Council
Central Goldfields Shire Council
Colac Otway Shire Council
Corangamite Shire Council
East Gippsland Shire Council
Gannawarra Shire Council
Glenelg Shire Council
Greater Shepparton City Council
Hindmarsh Shire Council
Horsham Rural City Council
Indigo Shire Council
Latrobe City Council
Loddon Shire Council
Mansfield Shire Council
Mildura Rural City Council
Moirā Shire Council
Moyne Shire Council
Murrindindi Shire Council
Northern Grampians Shire Council
Pyrenees Shire Council
South Gippsland Shire Council
Southern Grampians Shire Council
Strathbogie Shire Council
Swan Hill Rural City Council
Towong Shire Council
Wangaratta Rural City Council
Warrnambool City Council
Wellington Shire Council
West Wimmera Shire Council
Wodonga City Council
Yarriambiack Shire Council