

National Business Events Program Regional Victoria – 2025 & 2026 Guidelines



Business Events Victoria in partnership with Melbourne Convention Bureau are offering funding to eligible event organisers to support costs for hosting business events in regional Victoria (Grant). This funding can be used for accommodation, venue hire, food and beverage, transport and other event costs.

There are two program streams:

- 1. Competitive grants program**
- 2. Targeted strategic investments program**

Stream 1: Competitive Grants Program

Funding up to \$80 per delegate to eligible event organisers (up to \$40,000) to support costs for hosting business events in regional Victoria (Grant). This funding can be used for accommodation, venue hire, food and beverage, transport and other event costs.

1. Purpose

- The Victorian Government is supporting the National Business Events Program – Regional Victoria to attract new business events to regional Victoria. Events must be held before **31 March 2026** to stimulate short and medium term activity in the business events sector.
- Business Events Victoria (**BEV**), Melbourne Convention Bureau (**MCB**), and the Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions (**DJSIR**) will administer the National Business Events Program – Regional Victoria.
- Subject to funding availability, eligibility and a competitive assessment process, Grants of up to \$40,000 (for up to 500 delegates) may be available for events held in regional Victoria.
- Strong consideration for support will be given to applicants that demonstrate alignment with the following objectives:

- The attraction of new business events to regional Victorian venues. Events that are new to regional Victoria or have not been held in regional Victoria in the last five years will be viewed favourably.
- Increasing visitation through events which have 25 per cent or more interstate or international delegates.
- The generation of economic contribution to the State including supporting the Victorian business events supply chain.
- Events offering regional dispersal across different areas of the State and across the calendar.
- Events offering additional benefits to the State such as future national or international business event opportunities, regional touring or satellite events, linkages to Victorian businesses or other benefits.
- Events that align with Victorian Government priorities will be viewed favourably.

2. Eligibility Criteria

To be eligible to apply for the National Business Events Program – Regional Victoria, the following criteria applies:

- The event must be a business to business (B2B) event. A **B2B event** is defined as ‘A professional gathering where businesses or organisations interact, exchange ideas, build partnerships or conduct transactions’.
- To qualify for the National Business Events Program – Regional Victoria, the event must meet one of the following specific B2B 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 bringing together hospitals, pharmaceutical companies and suppliers to discuss the latest advancements or new product developments.
 - **Sector-Specific Conferences:** Conferences that bring together industry professionals together 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.
- o **Corporate Incentive Events.** These are events organised by businesses to reward, motivate or recognise employees, clients or business partners. Examples include:
 - A team-building program for a company's sales division.
 - An incentive program to a regional destination for top performing staff or clients.

Corporate incentive events must include a gala/awards dinner and business events program.

- The event must take place at a regional Victorian business event venue or venues (see list of eligible Local Government Areas in Attachment A).
- The event must represent **new** business for regional Victoria that is not yet confirmed, contracted or advertised for regional Victoria.
- The event must be attended by at least 25 in-person delegates per day. Virtual participants cannot be included in delegate numbers.
- The event must have a minimum two-day business event program, with at least one-night stay, and at least 1.5 days meeting/program component, with travel times outside the 1.5 days.
- The event must generate a minimum of 20 room nights, or at least 40 per cent of total delegates requiring the use of local accommodation, whichever is the greater.
- Event dates must occur after 1 June 2025 and before 31 March 2026
- If funding is granted, the event venue must be secured via deposit payment, and an MCB Event Sponsorship Agreement must be signed within **4 months** of being notified. If the Agreement is not signed, the funding offer will be withdrawn.
- Applicants must identify either one or two regions where the event may be held, with regions being:
 - o Daylesford & Macedon Ranges
 - o Gippsland
 - o Central Highlands (including Ballarat)
 - o Bendigo & surrounds
 - o Goulburn
 - o Grampians and the Wimmera Mallee
 - o Great Ocean Road
 - o Greater Geelong & Bellarine
 - o Mornington Peninsula
 - o Phillip Island
 - o The Murray
 - o Victoria's High Country

- Yarra Valley & Dandenong Ranges
- Applicant organisations must be a valid business organisation or operation either in Australia or overseas, with documented evidence of an appropriate legal structure such as a registered company, business cooperative or partnership. For Australian applicants, the organisations must have a valid Australian Business Number (ABN).

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 have contracted a venue in regional Victoria prior to the submission and acknowledgment of receipt of the SmartyGrants application.
- Virtual events (unless minimum in person delegate target is achieved).
- Events that commence prior to **1 June 2025**.
- Events that are held after **31 March 2026**.
- Government departments or agencies and local government.

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 across regional 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.

3. Application, Assessment, and Approval Process

- Applications will open at 9am (AEST) on **5 February 2025**.
- Applications will close at 5pm (AEST) on **28 February 2025**.
- Before applying, applicants must read the program guidelines. If further information or application assistance is required, contact info@businesseventsvictoria.com
- Submit an application online via SmartyGrants – link available on the Business Events Victoria website [HERE](#)
- Applications must respond to all questions and must include a draft event program or a representative past event program. The application submitted is final; no further details will be sought or accepted after the closing date.
- When the application period has closed, BEV will assess each application against the program eligibility and assessment criteria.

- Assessment of Grant applications will be based on the following:
 - Economic contribution and capacity of the business event to generate new business event activity in regional Victoria including spending in the Victorian business event supply chain.
 - Events that are new to regional Victoria or have not been held in regional Victoria in the last five years will be viewed favourably.
 - Events that align with or have the potential to attract future national and international event opportunities to the State.
 - Association, corporate and incentive group B2B events will be considered more favourably than one off staff meetings and social gatherings.
 - Events delivering additional benefits to the State such as regional touring or satellite events, linkages to Victorian businesses or other benefits.
 - Events offering regional dispersal across different areas of the State and across the yearly calendar. Events that are conducted in a low or shoulder period will be considered favourably (for example during winter).
 - Events that align with Victorian Government priorities will be viewed favourably.
 - Applicants who provide greater detail in their application will be viewed more favourably.
- Funding applications will be assessed by BEV and MCB, who will then provide their recommendations to the Deputy Secretary – Sport and Experience Economy, DJSIR. Applicants will be notified of the outcome of their application.

Stream 2: Targeted strategic investments program

Funding up to \$100 per delegate to eligible event organisers (up to \$75,000) to support costs for hosting business events in regional Victoria (Grant). This funding can be used for accommodation, venue hire, food and beverage, transport and other event costs.

1. Purpose

- The Victorian Government is supporting the National Business Events Program Strategic Acquisitions to attract strategic business events to regional Victoria. These grants will be available outside of the competitive grants program. Events must be held **before 31 March 2026** to stimulate short and medium term activity in the business events sector.
- Business Events Victoria (**BEV**), Melbourne Convention Bureau (**MCB**), and the Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions (**DJSIR**) will administer the National Business Events Program – Regional Victoria.
- Subject to funding availability, eligibility and a strategic acquisition process, Grants of up to \$75,000 (for up to 750 delegates) may be available for events held in regional Victoria.
- Strong consideration for support will be given to applicants that demonstrate alignment with

the following objectives:

- The attraction of new business events to regional Victorian venues. Events that are new to regional Victoria or have not been held in regional Victoria in the last five years will be viewed favourably.
- Increasing visitation through events which have 25 per cent or more interstate or international delegates.
- The generation of economic contribution to the State including supporting the Victorian business events supply chain.
- Events offering regional dispersal across different areas of the State and across the calendar.
- Events offering additional benefits to the State such as future national or international business event opportunities, regional touring or satellite events, linkages to Victorian businesses or other benefits.
- Events that align with Victorian Government priority will be viewed favourably.

2. Eligibility Criteria

To be eligible to apply for the National Business Events Program – Regional Victoria, the following criteria applies:

- The event must be a business to business (B2B) event. A **B2B event** is defined as ‘A professional gathering where businesses or organisations interact, exchange ideas, build partnerships or conduct transactions’.
- To qualify for the National Business Events Program – Regional Victoria, the event must meet one of the following specific B2B 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 bringing together hospitals, pharmaceutical companies and suppliers to discuss the latest advancements or new product developments.
 - **Sector-Specific Conferences:** Conferences that bring together industry professionals together 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.
- o **Corporate Incentive Events.** These are events organised by businesses to reward, motivate or recognise employees, clients or business partners. Examples include:
 - A team-building program for a company's sales division.
 - An incentive program to a regional destination for top performing staff or clients.

Corporate incentive events must include a gala/awards dinner and business events program.

- The event must take place at a regional Victorian business event venue or venues (see list of eligible Local Government Areas in Attachment A).
- The event must represent **new** business for regional Victoria that is not yet confirmed, contracted or advertised for regional Victoria.
- The event must be attended by at least 50 in-person delegates per day. Virtual participants cannot be included in delegate numbers.
- The event must have a minimum two-day business event program, with at least one-night stay, and at least 1.5 days meeting/program component, with travel times outside the 1.5 days.
- The event must generate a minimum of 40 room nights, or at least 40 per cent of total delegates requiring the use of local accommodation, whichever is the greater.
- Event dates must occur after **1 June 2025** and before **31 March 2026**.
- If funding is granted, the event venue must be secured via deposit payment, and an MCB Event Sponsorship Agreement must be signed within **4 months** of being notified. If the Agreement is not signed, the funding offer will be withdrawn.
- Applicants must identify either one or two regions where the event may be held, with regions being:
 - o Daylesford & Macedon Ranges
 - o Gippsland
 - o Central Highlands (including Ballarat)
 - o Bendigo & surrounds
 - o Goulburn
 - o Grampians and the Wimmera Mallee
 - o Great Ocean Road
 - o Greater Geelong & Bellarine
 - o Mornington Peninsula
 - o Phillip Island

- The Murray
 - Victoria's High Country
 - Yarra Valley & Dandenong Ranges
- Applicant organisations must be a valid business organisation or operation either in Australia or overseas, with documented evidence of an appropriate legal structure such as a registered company, business cooperative or partnership. For Australian applicants, the organisations must have a valid Australian Business Number (ABN).

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 have contracted a venue in regional Victoria prior to the submission and acknowledgment of receipt of the SmartyGrants application.
- Virtual events (unless minimum in person delegate target is achieved).
- Events that commence prior to **1 June 2025**.
- Events that are held after **31 March 2026**.
- Government departments or agencies and local government.

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.

3. Application, Assessment, and Approval Process

- Applications now open until funds exhausted
- Before applying, applicants must read the program guidelines. If further information or application assistance is required, contact info@businesseventsvictoria.com
- Submit an application online via SmartyGrants – link available on the Business Events Victoria website [HERE](#)
- Applications must respond to all questions and must include a draft event program or a representative past event program. The application submitted is final; no further details will be sought or accepted after the closing date.
- BEV will assess each application submitted during the application period against the

program eligibility and assessment criteria.

- Assessment of Grant applications will be based on the following:
 - Economic contribution and capacity of the business event to generate new business event activity in regional Victoria including spending in the Victorian business event supply chain.
 - Events that are new to regional Victoria or have not been held in regional Victoria in the last five years will be viewed favourably.
 - Events that align with or have the potential to attract future national and international event opportunities to the State.
 - Association, corporate and incentive group B2B events will be considered more favourably than one off staff meetings and social gatherings.
 - Events delivering additional benefits to the State such as regional touring or satellite events, linkages to Victorian businesses or other benefits.
 - Events offering regional dispersal across different areas of the State and across the yearly calendar. Events that are conducted in a low or shoulder period will be considered favourably (for example during winter).
 - Events that align with Victorian Government sector priorities will be viewed favourably.
 - Applicants who provide greater detail in their application will be viewed more favourably.
- Funding applications will be assessed by BEV and MCB will then provide their recommendations to the Deputy Secretary – Sport and Experience Economy, DJSIR. Applicants will be notified of the outcome of their application.

Key information for both streams

1. Who can apply?

Applications can be made by the event owner or event organiser (including Professional Conference Organiser 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.

2. 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 4 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.

3. 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.

4. 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 BEV. 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.

5. 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, BEV logo recognition on any relevant event promotional material relating to the event (videos, website, print publications etc).
 - 'Victoria' brandmark and BEV to appear on the Event Website with a link to www.visitvictoria.com.
 - Opportunities for Ministerial attendance and/or letter of welcome in official event program.
 - Acknowledgement in media releases.

6. 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. MCB is 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 National 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

info@businesseventsvictoria.com

Attachment A: Eligible Victorian Local Government Areas

Alpine Shire Council
Ararat Rural City Council
Ballarat City Council
Bass Coast Shire 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
Glennelg Shire Council
Golden Plains Shire Council
Greater Bendigo City Council
Greater Geelong City Council

Greater Shepparton City Council
Hepburn Shire Council
Hindmarsh Shire Council
Horsham Rural City Council
Indigo Shire Council

Latrobe City Council
Loddon Shire Council

Macedon Ranges Shire Council
Mansfield Shire Council
Mildura Rural City Council
Mitchell Shire Council

Moira Shire Council
Moorabool Shire Council

Mornington Peninsula Shire Council
Mount Alexander 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

Surf Coast 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

Yarra Ranges Shire Council
Yarriambiack Shire Council