

# Aboriginal Community Infrastructure Program 2025-26

## Frequently Asked Questions

### About the program

#### What is the purpose of the Aboriginal Community Infrastructure Program (ACIP)?

Investment in First Nations community infrastructure is fundamental to strengthening the First Nations community organisation sector and enabling the pursuit of self-determination.

Well-planned, quality, fit-for-purpose and accessible infrastructure is the critical foundation from which First Nations organisations may continue to operate effectively and sustainably, deliver culturally responsive services and programs, and empower their communities to thrive and live culturally rich lives.

The program supports Victorian First Nations organisations to:

- build new fit-for-purpose infrastructure;
- repair, refurbish or expand existing infrastructure; and
- plan future infrastructure to support growing communities.

#### Who administers the Aboriginal Community Infrastructure Program?

Local Government Victoria (LGV) in the Department of Government Services (DGS) administers the Aboriginal Community Infrastructure Program on behalf of First Peoples – State Relations (FPSR) in the Department of Premier and Cabinet (DPC).

#### How much funding is available for each grant?

There are three categories of funding available:

- **Repairs and Minor Works** provides funding of up to \$300,000 (plus GST)
- **Capital Works and Upgrades** provides funding of up to \$1,600,000 in funding (plus GST)
- **Project Planning** (*formerly known as Feasibility Studies/Business Cases*) provides funding of up to \$200,000 (plus GST)

#### What type of projects will be considered for ACIP funding?

**Repairs and Minor Works** funding might be used to:

- Repair or replace permanent fixtures, fittings and equipment;
- Undertake cosmetic works including repairs, painting, replacement of carpets/flooring;

- Improve functionality of communal spaces such as kitchens, general amenities, meeting rooms, outdoor spaces;
- Establish climate change safeguards and improve the environmental performance of a building through, for example, the installation of solar panels, insulation, double glazing or rainwater harvesting infrastructure;
- Improve the safety of the building, including enhancements to lighting or security measures;
- Make inclusive design alterations to meet building accessibility standards including installing ambulant toilets, handrails, ramps or widening passageways and doorways; and
- Undertake substantial repairs and associated maintenance activities, for example, restumping, roofing and ceiling repair; the replacement or restoration of old/damaged assets such as a heating and cooling system.

**Capital Works and Upgrades** funding might be used to:

- Expand the footprint of existing community facilities;
- Undertake structural works to improve a facility's use, layout or accessibility;
- Renovate and/or remodel a facility to enhance community use and functionality;
- Create culturally appropriate and safe spaces for communities to gather;
- Improve existing facilities to support service delivery and programming needs; and
- Construct new purpose-built facilities that respond to the needs of First Nation communities.

### What is the Project Planning funding category?

Funding of up to \$200,000 (plus GST) is available to develop one of two infrastructure planning phases:

- **Option 1** — This option enables grant recipients to prepare a feasibility study to ensure a future infrastructure project is viable, and takes into consideration options for delivery, the needs of the organisation and the communities served, as well as risks and constraints that may impact the project. This option should also assess the proposed site or sites; the space, function and form of the future infrastructure; and develop concept designs and associated costings.
- **Option 2** — This option enables grant recipients to progress designs and related activities to refine and fully detail a viable infrastructure proposal with technical input from key consultants and experts to ensure the building site is thoroughly considered, including but not limited to latent conditions, heritage restrictions or limitations, planning and statutory requirements, build-ability and environmental impacts. Grant recipients may also progress designs and prepare an anticipated construction program, costings and detailed documentation of risks under this option.

Applicants to **Option 2** must also demonstrate:

- Evidence of owning the project site or having the right to use and develop the project site for a minimum of ten years (e.g., certificates

- of title, a ground lease or tenancy agreements).
- Evidence of planning activities already complete, including a completed feasibility study for the future infrastructure project, and an endorsement for the completed study from the organisation's Board or executive leadership team.

### What type of consultants and experts can I engage?

Experts you may engage using funding from the Project Planning category include, but are not limited to:

- architectural
- building
- Building Code Australia (including Disability Discrimination Act)
- town planning advice,
- geotechnical and soil testing,
- landscaping,
- wayfinding,
- audiovisual,
- façade engineering,
- traffic engineering,
- waste,
- specialist lighting,
- acoustic engineer,
- civil and structural engineering.

### Can I apply for both options under the Project Planning category?

No, you must select one planning option when applying to this funding category.

### What activities will not be considered for funding?

Please note that ACIP is unable to fund the following activities:

- Purchase of freestanding or temporary items including but not limited to furniture, whitegoods or technical equipment;
- Land or property acquisition as an isolated activity;
- Landscaping as an isolated activity;
- Projects that have already commenced prior to ACIP funding agreements being executed;
- Projects that relate to multiple sites, locations, or physical addresses unless a strong rationale such as financial savings or a building efficiency can be demonstrated;
- Project planning that primarily focuses on non-infrastructure activities such as community engagement and preparing a business model, operation plan or equivalent;
- Repair of facilities where the damage can or should have been covered by insurance, warranties or defects that form part of a building contract;
- Operational costs for utilities and on-going staffing resources;

- Civil works such as drainage, waste, roads and footpaths, carparks and public transport infrastructure that a local or state government agency is responsible for constructing and maintaining;
- Construction of infrastructure that does not have a direct community benefit or addresses an identified community need;
- Projects that duplicate repairs and maintenance works previously funded through the First Mortgage and Community Infrastructure Program;
- Projects or works outside the state of Victoria;
- A future stage of a project where the previous stage(s) is/are not complete.

If successful, how long does my organisation have to commence and complete the project?

- **Repairs and Minor Works** projects must commence within six months of funding agreements being executed and be completed within 18 months of commencement.
- **Capital Works and Upgrades** projects must commence within 18 months of funding agreements being executed and be completed within three years of commencement.
- **Project Planning** projects must establish a delivery plan and engage key consultants and staff within four months of funding agreements being executed. Project planning activities must be completed within 12 months of meeting these deliverables.

## Eligibility

Who is eligible for the grant funding / who can apply?

First Nations organisations who are either:

- registered with Consumer Affairs Victoria;
- registered with the Office of the Registrar of Indigenous Corporations;
- registered with the Australian Securities and Investments Commission; or
- a body corporate constituted under section 8 of the *Aboriginal Lands Act 1970* (Vic) are eligible to apply.

This includes incorporated associations, cooperatives, companies limited by guarantee, and companies limited by shares.

ACIP employs the definition of First Nations organisations outlined in clause 44 of the *Closing the Gap National Agreement*, July 2020.

For more information, refer to *page 6* of the Guidelines.

Can I apply with an auspice?

Yes, you can apply with an eligible auspice – please refer to *page 6* of the Guidelines for further information.

My organisation is not a First Nations organisation, but we provide services for First Nations community members. Are we eligible to apply?

Only First Nations organisations are eligible to apply.

For further information about eligibility refer to “Who can Apply” on page 6 of the Guidelines.

## About the application process

When can I access the application forms and start my submission?

Application forms will open on Wednesday 24 September 2025.

Links to the application forms are located on *page 18* of the Guidelines, and on the Program website at [First Peoples–State Relations](#).

When do applications close?

Applications close at 2pm, Wednesday 3 December 2025.

Applicants must contact [acip@ecodev.vic.gov.au](mailto:acip@ecodev.vic.gov.au) to discuss their infrastructure proposal with the ACIP team prior to submission of their application.

Why do I have to contact the ACIP team to discuss my application?

ACIP and FPSR are interested in the breadth of First Peoples infrastructure needs across Victoria. The discussion will provide a good opportunity to chat about the requirements of the program and strengthen your proposal to ensure the information you provide in your submitted application fulfils the assessment criteria. It’s also an opportunity to meet representatives from the ACIP team.

How do I find a previously saved application in the online grants portal?

You can access your saved applications at online grant portal:

<https://businessvic.secure.force.com/GrantsPortalLogin>

What is the process for Capital Works and Upgrades applications to be considered for Project Planning funding?

If you are preparing an application under Capital Works and Upgrades, you may nominate this application to be considered for funding under Project Planning. There is a dedicated section in the application form to nominate your project, if appropriate. In this section you will be asked to supply details about:

- the proposed project planning activities,
- how much funding you require to undertake the activities,

- an anticipated budget breakdown, and
- information about how the activities will be delivered.

The application may be considered for Project Planning funding if the assessment panel recognises the merit of your proposal but is unable to award Capital Works and Upgrades funding due to funding limitations or the proposal is considered to require more technical development.

Nominating an application for consideration does not guarantee funding under Category 3: Project Planning.

I am having trouble with my application via the Grants portal – who can I contact?

Please contact the ACIP team on [acip@ecodev.vic.gov.au](mailto:acip@ecodev.vic.gov.au).

If you experience a technical issue with the online grants portal when preparing or submitting your application, please include any relevant information that will help us resolve the issue (for example – a screen shot or reference number of a specific error message).

Do you have a feasibility study or business case template that I could use?

Yes, the ACIP team can provide you with a template on request. Please contact [acip@ecodev.vic.gov.au](mailto:acip@ecodev.vic.gov.au).

I don't have a confirmed site for my Project Planning application – can I still apply?

Yes, you may apply, but only to Project Planning **Option 1**, for funding to prepare a feasibility study. In this instance your application should include details on how you will explore and identify appropriate site/s for your future infrastructure needs.

Applicants seeking funding for Project Planning **Option 2**, to progress design activities, must have a site already confirmed.

How many applications can I submit?

Only one application can be submitted per funding round, to one of the three funding categories:

1. **Repairs and Minor Works;**
2. **Capital Works and Upgrades;** or
3. **Project Planning.**

Your application should only apply to one project site. However, a multi-site proposal may be considered if a strong rationale can be demonstrated (for example, showing financial savings or building efficiency).



Please contact [acip@ecodev.vic.gov.au](mailto:acip@ecodev.vic.gov.au) to discuss further.

### What types of support material do I need to submit with my application?

The specific support material required for each funding category is slightly different, please refer to **Section 8: Assessment Criteria** in the Guidelines for a detailed list of 'essential' and 'desirable' documents.

Some examples of support materials that are required include:

- Evidence of owning or leasing the project site property, with terms that meet the requirements of the specific funding category;
- Letters of support from the auspice and the applicant organisation if an auspice relationship is in place;
- In-date quantity surveyor reports, or quotes/estimates from builders/tradespeople (no older than 90 days);
- A budget breakdown of anticipated income and expenditure;
- A project delivery plan, a project timeline, Gantt chart or scope of works document prepared by a relevant expert;
- Details of how the project will be successfully delivered including the details of a qualified project manager or superintendent;
- Information about a governance structure, composition of a project steering group or committee, and how key decisions and approvals will be made throughout the course of the project;
- For the Capital Works and Upgrades category, evidence of completed project planning activities is required, at minimum a fully scoped and costed feasibility study/business case, designs containing a level of detail commensurate to the amount of funding requested and associated technical documentation.

### My supporting documentation is not ready for submission. Can I still submit my application?

All supporting documentation must be submitted by the closing date at 2pm, Wednesday 3 December 2025.

If you have any concerns about your supporting documents, please contact [acip@ecodev.vic.gov.au](mailto:acip@ecodev.vic.gov.au) as early as possible to discuss any anticipated issues.

### How recent should my quantity surveyor report or quotes be for my Repairs and Minor Works or Capital Works and Upgrades application?

Quantity surveyor reports, quotes and estimates from builders and tradespeople should be no older than 90 days from the submission date of your application.

### The value of my project exceeds the specific funding category threshold. Can I still apply for funding?

Yes, you can still apply.

However, your application should clearly outline all sources of funding (confirmed, or yet to be confirmed), to the anticipated value of the project and provide evidence as required.

- If your organisation is contributing cash funding to the project, evidence may include a letter of confirmation from the relevant financial delegate such as the Chairperson, CEO, CFO or equivalent; or an extract of board minutes etc.
- If your organisation has secured funding via another grant, evidence may include an outcome letter or an executed funding agreement.
- If a source of grant funding is unconfirmed (for example, you are waiting to receive the outcome of a funding application) please provide as much information as possible including an estimated date for the outcome. A contingency plan should also be provided in the event of the funding application being unsuccessful.
- If your organisation has secured additional funding for the project via a loan, evidence may include documentation or a letter from a financial institution.

Information about additional sources of funding for the project can be uploaded to the Supporting Documents section of your application.

### Is my organisation required to match funding?

No, organisations are not required to match grant funding. However, organisational cash or in-kind contributions will be looked upon favourably.

### I want to apply for funding at multiple project sites. How do I demonstrate building efficiency or financial savings?

Examples could include undertaking one tender process for works across multiple sites, or a streamlined project plan to manage all sites.

Contact [acip@ecodev.vic.gov.au](mailto:acip@ecodev.vic.gov.au) to discuss your multi-site proposal.

### How much should I include in my budget for project management fees?

Project management and other costs associated with the delivery of the project should be commensurate to the project's total value, geographical location and complexity of delivery.

The Victorian Government reserves the right to impose a cap on project management fees claimed as part of the grant, at its discretion.

## About the Assessment Process

### Who assesses the applications and who makes the final decision?

The ACIP business unit completes a thorough due diligence process and preliminary assessment. During this assessment stage, the ACIP business unit may need to contact applicants to clarify information about the project proposal.



An assessment panel, guided by a Terms of Reference document, is convened to review all eligible applications and make funding recommendations to the Minister for Treaty and First Peoples. The assessment panel consists of senior representatives from departments or agencies of the Victorian Government and who possess relevant subject matter expertise.

The majority of senior representatives identify as First Peoples.

The Minister for Treaty and First Peoples approves the final recommendations.

### When will I know whether the application is successful?

The Minister for Treaty and First Peoples is anticipated to make announcements of successful projects from March 2026. All applicants will receive an outcome notification letter by email.

Successful applications may also be the subject of a public funding announcement, media releases and other disclosures. In these instances, the ACIP team will work closely with the successful applicants.