

Aboriginal Community Infrastructure Program 2025-26

Guidelines

VICTORIA
State
Government





Cover Image

"Pathangal Purtowen Ngauwingi"
(Pelican Sunset)

This painting represents the ancestral cultural landscape that my people belong to. It depicts how beautiful and important our connection to Country continues to be in our beliefs and lives.

We have a very spiritual relationship with the birds and animals that live within our landscape.

This depiction is of how I believe Pathangal pelican sees our spiritual and cultural world.

Brendan Kennedy

Authorised and published by the Victorian Government,
1 Treasury Place, Melbourne 3002

Aboriginal Community Infrastructure Fund, September 2025

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ISBN 978-1-923294-34-9

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Foreword



The Victorian Government is committed to advancing self-determination through collaborative efforts with Victorian First Peoples to make decisions that have a positive impact on their lives, people, and communities.

The Aboriginal Community Infrastructure Program enables First Nations organisations to invest in community infrastructure to generate wealth, plan for the future and improve outcomes for First Peoples.

This Program hands back control to First Nations organisations so that they can use their capacity, expertise and ideas to develop economic assets and pursue sustained economic and social outcomes for their communities.

Critically, this Program honours the long tradition that First Peoples have in responding with innovation and adaptation. This has been the ubiquitous and enduring response of First Peoples to colonisation over the past two centuries and no doubt to social and environmental change for millennia before that.

Since 2017-18, a total of 115 projects have been funded across 61 distinct First Nations organisations, collectively receiving almost \$50 million to support various infrastructure initiatives across Victoria. Last year, 22 First Nations organisations from across the state received over \$11 million to support their community infrastructure aspirations.

Completed projects are already delivering remarkable results and generating sustainable economic and social progress for Victorian First Peoples by contributing to the foundation for a stronger future. I look forward to visiting some of the funding recipients to see the continuation of the achievements made to date.

As the Minister for Treaty and First Peoples, I take pride in overseeing the Program. I remain dedicated to assisting First Nations organisations to develop infrastructure that best serves their communities and fostering an environment where self-determination and cultural richness thrives.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Natalie Hutchins".

The Hon. Natalie Hutchins MP

Minister for Treaty and First Peoples

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1. What is the Aboriginal Community Infrastructure Program?

The Aboriginal Community Infrastructure Program (Program) is a grants program which enables community-controlled First Nations organisations to build new fit-for-purpose infrastructure; repair, refurbish or expand existing infrastructure; or plan future infrastructure to support Victorian First Peoples to thrive, and live self-determined and culturally rich lives.

The Program enables organisations to:

- improve the safety, responsiveness and delivery of services to communities;
- strengthen connectedness to culture and Country;
- improve the physical, social and emotional health and wellbeing of communities;
- increase functionality, sustainability and accessibility of buildings; and
- expand education and economic participation opportunities for communities.

2. Funding is available under three categories

Category 1: Repairs and Minor Works (Up to \$300,000 plus GST)

Funding for maintenance and minor building works that will support First Nations organisations to improve existing infrastructure for their communities.

Category 2: Capital Works and Upgrades (\$300,000 to \$1,600,000 plus GST)

Funding to support First Nations organisations to build, redevelop, refurbish or expand infrastructure that responds to the needs of First Peoples communities in Victoria.

Category 3: Project Planning (Up to \$200,000 plus GST)

Funding to develop one of two infrastructure planning phases.

- Option 1 — To prepare a feasibility study to ensure an infrastructure proposal is viable, meets the needs of the organisation and the communities served. This study should assess and develop costs for the proposal and may include the development of concept designs.

- Option 2 — To complete design activities to refine the concept designs and/or progress the design of the proposal until the tender stage.

3. Why is the Victorian Government funding this Program?

In response to the multi-faceted and ever-evolving composition of their communities, Victorian First Nations organisations deliver a diverse spectrum of socially and culturally beneficial services across a range of important industries

Renewed Government investment in community infrastructure is essential to strengthening First Nations organisations, to ensure the sector operates effectively and sustainably from quality, fit-for-purpose and accessible assets. Functional and compliant infrastructure also promotes administrative stability and, most importantly, enables continued delivery of tailored, responsive, holistic and culturally safe services and programs for local communities.

Supporting First Nations organisations to prioritise, lead and determine the design, development and use of their current and future infrastructure advances self-determination in local communities to achieve better social outcomes and live culturally rich lives, by:

- empowering organisations to develop and sustain a strong economic base from which to advance socio-economic development;
- capitalising on the abundant knowledge and expertise of First Nations organisations to deliver innovative and best practice programs and services for First Peoples;
- providing an economic and physical platform through which communities can maintain, develop and celebrate connection to culture and Country, pride and belonging;
- promoting place-based strategic planning and decision making for the future; and
- building on the sector's abundant achievements for and with their communities to date.

As outlined in the Victorian **Self-Determination Reform Framework**, Government action to enable self-determination acknowledges that Victorian First Peoples hold the knowledge and expertise to identify, address and evaluate the ever-present, and evolving, cultural, social, economic, regulatory and legislative opportunities – and demands – of their specific circumstances.

Fostering partnerships with First Nations organisations to maintain and develop viable infrastructure projects, without first mortgage encumbrances, is also key to accelerating the actions articulated in the **Victorian Closing the Gap Implementation Plan** such as Priority Reform 2,¹ the **Victorian Aboriginal Affairs Framework 2018-2023** and the **30-year Victorian Infrastructure Strategy 2021-2051**,² while complementing other vital Government priorities including but not limited to **truth-telling** and **treaty**.

4. Who can apply?

First Nation organisations³

Applicants must be a community-controlled First Nations organisation⁴ that is 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).

Applicant organisations must:

- possess an Australian Business Number (ABN);
- be registered for the Goods and Services (GST) tax; and
- be financially solvent.

Auspice organisations

Auspice organisations must be:

- a Local Council; or
- a public institution, such as a university; or
- an incorporated organisation that is registered with:
 - Consumer Affairs Victoria;
 - the Office of the Registrar of Indigenous Corporations; or
 - the Australian Securities and Investments Commission.

Auspice organisations must:

- possess an Australian Business Number (ABN);
- be registered for the Goods and Services Tax (GST);
- be financially solvent;
- be able to demonstrate that the application is made on behalf of a First Nations organisation that owns the project site or has the right to use the project site;
- be able to demonstrate that the scope of the community infrastructure project has been developed in collaboration with the First Nations organisation and is for the sole benefit of First Peoples (i.e. copy of a relevant memorandum of understanding, engagement plan or relevant meeting minutes); and
- be able to demonstrate a genuine, ongoing partnership between the organisation and the auspice (i.e. letters of support from both organisations, or an auspice agreement – a template can be provided upon request).

Project consortiums

Project consortiums or groups must nominate a single applicant to lead the application that satisfies the above eligibility criteria.

¹ Priority Reform 2: a strong and sustainable First Nations community-controlled sector delivering high quality services to meet the needs of First Peoples across the country

² The Victorian Infrastructure Strategy presents 94 recommendations to realise a thriving, inclusive and sustainable Victoria over the next 30 years. The 94 recommendations are for projects, policies and reforms spanning many types of infrastructure organised around the themes of confronting long-term challenges; managing urban change; harnessing infrastructure for productivity and growth; and developing regional Victoria.

³ As per the definition described in the *Closing the Gap National Agreement*, clause 44, page 8, July 2020

⁴ This includes incorporated associations, cooperatives, companies limited by guarantee, and companies limited by shares.

Bendigo & District Aboriginal Cooperative

Repairs and minor works 2023-2024 - \$286,000

Founded in 2001, the Bendigo and District Aboriginal Co-operative (BDAC) is a proud community-controlled organisation, delivering flexible, responsive, and culturally appropriate services to First Nations residents on Dja Dja Wurrung Country (djandak) in Central Victoria. BDAC offers a wide range of programs and services focused on health, wellbeing, education, justice, early childhood and kindergarten, and family and community services, as well as delivering events and activities to foster community connection. Its services focus on community strengthening, cultural safety, connection to Country, and self-determination.

At a series of consultation workshops held to develop their Strategic Plan 2024-29, BDAC clearly heard the community's strong desire to retain their Forest Street property and bring it back into use. The property had long been considered the emotional and spiritual home of BDAC, but years of under-investment had left the property with structural issues, and health and safety concerns.

BDAC received repairs and minor works funding of \$286,000 from round 7 of the Program, to work with local builders to create a building fit for purpose for delivery of services for boorai and youth. Works included restoration of verandas and footings, replacement of windows with doubled glazing, levelling the internal courtyard, installation of new decking and reviving existing garden beds with native plantings. BDAC co-contributed \$51,000.

Completed in February 2025, the suite of upgrades to the property have made for a more appealing facility that better meets the community's cultural expectations and makes the site more inviting for community to attend. The Forest St property, as a Youth Hub, will protect and empower BDAC's boorai and youth in their own development and understanding of healthy relationships, through a connection with culture and their First Nations community.

www.bdac.com.au



5. Who cannot apply?

The following applicants are not eligible to apply for funding under this Program:

- individuals;
- commercial organisations; and
- organisations in liquidation.

If any of the following categories are applicable to your organisation, contact the Program team prior to applying:

- Organisations that are not compliant with the relevant regulatory body (e.g. Consumer Affairs Victoria, the Office of the Registrar of Indigenous Corporations or the Australian Securities and Investments Commission) and/or involved in litigation for being in breach of building and construction legislation.
- Organisations currently in or recently under an investigation, or in administration (with the exception of Body Corporates constituted under section 8 of the *Aboriginal Lands Act 1970* (Vic)).
- Organisations with grant projects 'on hold' with DPC at the time of application.

6. What types of projects will not be funded?

The following activities will not be funded:

- 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 the Program 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 address 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 not complete.

7. What are the different categories?

Category 1: Repairs and Minor Works (Up to \$300,000 plus GST)

Grant funding under this category 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 the 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 a substantial repair and associated maintenance activities (for example, restumping, roofing and ceiling repairs, the replacement or restoration of old/damaged assets such as a heating and cooling system).

Applicants must contact the Program team at ACIP@ecodev.vic.gov.au to discuss their project proposal prior to submission.

Goolum Goolum Aboriginal Cooperative

Project planning (formerly feasibility studies and business cases) 2018-2019 - \$50,000

Capital works and upgrades 2022-2023 - \$1,600,000

Since inception in 1979, with formal incorporation in 1983, Goolum Goolum Aboriginal Cooperative has delivered a range of services to the Wotjobaluk, Jaadwa, Jadawadjali and Wergaia First Peoples across five local government areas, including Horsham, Yarriambiack, West Wimmera, Hindmarsh, and the Northern Grampians. With a growing and young population, Goolum Goolum's mission is to provide a holistic model that responds to the physical, social, emotional, cultural and spiritual needs of their community members.

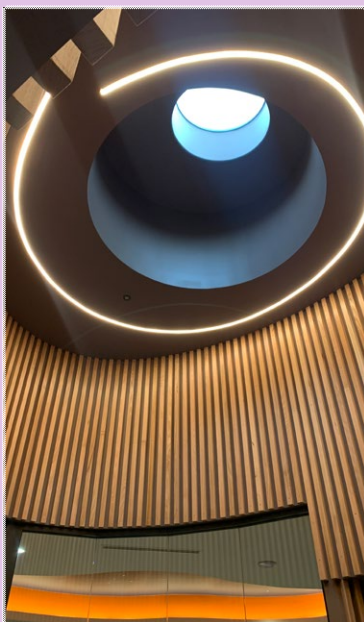
In 2018, the Cooperative received funding from round 2 of the Program to undertake a feasibility study to explore the options of establishing a multi-purpose hub in Horsham, to accommodate their rapidly growing services, and offer accessible community meeting and activity spaces under one roof. The funding allowed the organisation to explore their infrastructure options, engage with community to assess their needs, identify potential sites and properties, test the viability and functionality of their concept, and develop a robust, evidence-based plan to bring to fruition their long-held community dream.

The successful completion of the feasibility study informed Goolum Goolum's 2021 purchase of a prominently located, single-level property, conveniently located 200 metres from their main facility and with a substantial footprint of 1350 square metres. Following the purchase, Goolum Goolum secured \$1 million from the Indigenous Land and Sea Corporation's *Our Country, Our Future* program, \$1.6 million from round 6 of the Program and their board committed a co-contribution of \$3 million to fully realise the delivery of the Dalki Ghuli Community Hub.

The detailed design and tendering phases were impacted by COVID-19 challenges however the project team's commitment and thorough planning ensured the project moved into the build phase on schedule and budget.

The new multi-purpose hub is already enabling Goolum Goolum to expand delivery of a broad range of integrated services ranging from early years playgroup to youth and Elders programs, as well as provide opportunities for gathering in a culturally safe and welcoming environment. By strengthening community connections, belonging and engagement, the Dalki Ghuli Community Hub exemplifies the value of a carefully planned approach, collaborative partnerships and community driven investment.

www.goolumgoolum.org.au



Successful projects under Category 1 must commence works within 6 months of funding agreements being executed and be completed within 18 months of commencement.

Category 2: Capital Works and Upgrades (\$300,000 to \$1,600,000 plus GST)

Grant funding under this category 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;
- construct new, purpose-built and sustainable facilities that respond to the needs of First Nations communities.

At minimum, applicants must submit a completed feasibility study as support material and provide a statement regarding the availability and relevant experience of the project manager to be appointed to coordinate and deliver all components of the project. Applications with advanced design documentation will be considered highly.

Refer to the list of essential supporting documents under Section 8: Assessment Criteria.

Successful projects under Category 2 must commence construction within 18 months of funding agreements being executed and be completed within three years of commencement.

Applicants must contact the Program team at ACIP@ecodev.vic.gov.au to discuss their project proposal prior to submission.

Please note, in the instance the assessment panel recognises the merit of an application under this category but determines further technical development is required, applicants may nominate to be considered for funding under Category 3: Project Planning. To be considered, applicants must provide details of the proposed project planning activities, the funding amount required to undertake the activities, an anticipated budget breakdown, and information about how the activities will be delivered. Nominating an application for consideration, does not guarantee funding under Category 3: Project Planning.

Category 3: Project Planning (Up to \$200,000 plus GST)

Grant funding under this category is to develop one of two infrastructure planning and design phases.

Option 1

To prepare a feasibility study to explore a First Nations organisation's infrastructure vision, objectives and options for delivery, taking into consideration technical, build-ability, organisational and financial risk, and constraints. This option should also explore the context of the proposed site to consider space, function and form; and prepare a feasibility study that includes a concept design and associated costings that considers risks.

Or:

Option 2

To complete design development activities to refine and fully detail a viable infrastructure proposal with key consultants and experts. This option should develop designs, prepare an anticipated construction program and provide detailed documentation of risks and associated costs.

It is important that the designs are developed with sufficient technical input that considers the building site, including but not limited to latent conditions, heritage overlays, planning and statutory requirements, build-ability and environmental impacts.

Grant funding might be used to:

- hire a new staff member – or supplement the salary of an existing staff member – to coordinate specific components of the project in collaboration with the lead consultant, noting that this person should have construction and contract management experience;
- engage experts to progress the designs and/or a quantity surveyor to develop ideas and solutions to progress the organisation's infrastructure proposal. Experts can 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.
- employ a suitably qualified project manager or suitably qualified lead consultant to establish and drive the planning activities.

Applicants must contact the Program team at ACIP@ecodev.vic.gov.au to discuss their project proposal prior to submission.

Applicants must be able to demonstrate their readiness to commence their planning project with applicable support material. Refer to the list of essential supporting documents under Section 8: Assessment Criteria.

Successful projects under Category 3 must establish a project 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 commencement of meeting these deliverables.

Funding under this category does not guarantee future funding under the Program.

Aboriginal Community Infrastructure Program

Category 1

Repairs and Minor Works
(Up to \$300,000 plus GST)

Category 2

Capital Works and Upgrades
(\$300,000 to \$1,600,000 plus GST)

Category 3

Project Planning
(Up to \$200,000 plus GST)

- Organisations may only submit one application per funding round.
- Organisations may only apply under one category per funding round.
- Organisations may only apply for one Project Planning option per funding round.
- An application should relate to one project site only unless a strong rationale, such as a financial savings or building efficiency, can be demonstrated. Funding for projects with multiple sites is at the discretion of the moderation panel. Refer to Section 8: Assessment Criteria for further information. Please contact ACIP@ecodev.vic.gov.au to discuss your multi-site proposal.

Worn Gundidj Aboriginal Corporation

Repairs and minor works 2019-2020 - \$113,101

Worn Gundidj Aboriginal Cooperative is a community-controlled organisation operating in south-west Victoria. Formed in 1992, the organisation offers services to support and promote culture, First Peoples and place. Worn Gundidj's native nursery is a social enterprise business located in Warrnambool. Open to the public, the nursery offers community and commercial customers a range of native plants, such as bushfood plants, grasses, shrubs and trees to support land care and conservation work, re-vegetation projects, shelter belts, agriculture and sustainable gardening.

In 2019 Worn Gundidj received repairs and minor works funding from round 3 of the Program for the redevelopment of their nursery to increase production capacity, improve weed and disease control, enhance work and learning experience opportunities, and ensure a safe, inclusive environment. The redevelopment included upgrades to nursery infrastructure such as irrigation systems and water tanks, installation of two new hothouses, fencing, landscaping works and construction of retaining walls.

Within 12 months of the nursery redevelopment, production dramatically increased, from 20,000-30,000 plants per year to 150,000-200,000 plants – genetically diverse, resilient and high quality – per year. Improvements in the nursery have also led to increased community connections and networks, and more job opportunities for Worn Gundidj to support at-risk community members and clients to engage in voluntary work and gain work experience, leading to other employment opportunities. The immediate and broader communities have also benefitted, with the nursery supporting tertiary education for First Nations community members to undertake certificates II and III in horticulture, as well as creating accessible and productive spaces for NDIS participants and other clients, community volunteers, trainees and staff members.

www.worngundidj.org.au/product-category/nursery/



8. Assessment Criteria

Applications will be assessed against the criteria set out below. Percentage weightings are provided as a guide to the relative importance of different criteria in the assessment process.

Applicants will not receive a score by the assessment panel. The same criteria will be applied across all funding streams, however, the level of detail provided in the application should be commensurate with the value of the project.

Repairs and Minor Works – Up to \$300,000 (plus GST)	
Why (30%)	Applications must clearly demonstrate why the repairs and minor works are needed. Applications should include a clear rationale for the proposed project and why the repairs and minor works have been identified as important to the organisation.
What (30%)	<p>Applications must clearly articulate what works will be undertaken and how these improvements will deliver outcomes, such as improved responsiveness, safer access to or expanded service delivery for First Peoples.</p> <p>Projects across multiple sites must demonstrate a clear rationale, such as financial savings or a building efficiency.</p> <p>If the repairs and minor works will support a new enterprise or organisational focus, applications should be substantiated by a relevant business model, plan or equivalent.</p> <p>If applicable, details of additional cash funding or in-kind contributions from stakeholders should be provided.</p>
Who (20%)	Applications must clearly articulate who will benefit from the repairs and minor works and be supported by relevant data or information.
How (20%)	Applications must describe how the project will be delivered including key steps, an overview of the project timeline, details and level of experience of who will oversee and manage the repairs and minor works, and the governance structure for decision-making, approvals, and managing contracts and payments.
Supporting Material	<p>Essential</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Evidence of owning the project site or having the right to use the project site for a minimum of three years (e.g. certificates of title⁵, a ground lease or tenancy agreements). ✓ If the site is leased, in principle approval from the landlord or appropriate delegate to upgrade the project site. ✓ Applications must provide current quotes/cost estimates (no older than 90 days) for all proposed works. ✓ Budget breakdown of anticipated income and expenditure (a template can be provided upon request). If seeking funding for a project with multiple sites, a breakdown of costs for each site is required. Where appropriate, escalation should be applied to cost estimates. ✓ Details of any confirmed cash funding or in-kind contributions, or information about unconfirmed funding sources, if applicable. ✓ Letter of support from both parties (e.g. the First Nations organisation and auspice organisation), or an auspice agreement (a template can be provided upon request) if an auspice arrangement is in place. ✓ Photos of the site where the proposed repairs and minor works will take place. <p>Desirable</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Project delivery plan (a template can be provided on request), a project timeline, Gantt chart, or a scope of works document developed by an architect, tradesperson or equivalent. ✓ Overview of any governance arrangements and strategic plans to demonstrate the priority of the project to the applicant. ✓ Letters of support from partner organisations or key stakeholders. ✓ Details of how the project might support key Victorian frameworks or policies, including but not limited to the Victorian Aboriginal Affairs Framework or the Victorian Closing the Gap Implementation Plan.

⁵ For guidance on how to obtain a certificate of title, please refer to Annexure A of the Guidelines.

Capital Works and Upgrades – \$300,000 to \$1,600,000 (plus GST)

Why (30%)	<p>Applications must clearly demonstrate why the infrastructure project is needed and include a clear rationale as to why the proposed infrastructure has been identified as an important priority for the organisation, its community members and stakeholders. For example, the rationale may include, but should not be limited to, anticipated benefits and outcomes such as jobs, other economic opportunities and new or expanded programs and services.</p> <p>If the capital works and upgrades will support a new enterprise or organisational focus, applications should be substantiated by a relevant business model, operational plan, strategy or equivalent.</p>
What (30%)	<p>Applications must clearly describe the works, and the purpose and function of the proposed infrastructure.</p> <p>Projects across multiple sites must demonstrate a clear rationale, such as financial savings or a building efficiency.</p> <p>If applicable, details of additional cash funding or in-kind contributions from stakeholders should be provided.</p>
Who (20%)	<p>Applications must articulate who will benefit from the proposed project and how the infrastructure will support the target community. Provide relevant data about the population served, how this project will benefit them, and include a summary of anticipated outcomes. These may be qualitative and quantitative.</p>
How (20%)	<p>Applications must articulate how the project will be successfully delivered. This should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ details of a suitably qualified project manager/superintendent from a qualified third-party organisation for the duration of the project; ✓ details of a suitably qualified quantity surveyor from a qualified third-party organisation for the duration of the project; ✓ information about a governance structure, composition of a steering group or committee, and how key decisions and approvals will be made throughout the course of the project; ✓ information on how contracts and finances for the project will be managed for the duration of the project; ✓ a procurement plan, delivery program, cost plan, resource plan; and ✓ a risk register, including processes to mitigate identified risks or issues throughout the course of the project.
Supporting Material	<p>Essential</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Applications must provide evidence of project planning, at minimum a feasibility study/ business case (a template can be provided upon request). ✓ Designs containing a level of detail commensurate to the amount of funding requested, accompanied by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – a detailed description of the proposed project, the scope of works, and the building options considered as part of the development process; – evidence the proposed infrastructure addresses community and organisational needs; – planning and building considerations such as land zoning, planning schemes, compliance and standards; – cost benefit and risk analysis; – details of research and community consultation/engagement undertaken to develop and support the proposal; – photos and/or a site plan where the proposed capital works and upgrades will take place; and – architectural drawings and associated technical documentation.

Capital Works and Upgrades – \$300,000 to \$1,600,000 (plus GST)

Supporting Material continued

- ✓ 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 title⁶, a ground lease or tenancy agreements).
- ✓ A statement regarding the availability and relevant experience of the staff and project manager/superintendent to be appointed to coordinate and deliver all components of the project.
- ✓ A governance framework outlining the structure for decision-making, approvals and reporting.
- ✓ A current quantity surveyor report, or detailed quotes/cost estimates that specifically relate to the submitted architectural drawings and scope of works (no older than 90 days). The cost plan/estimate should list key assumptions and exclusions.
- ✓ If seeking funding for a project with multiple sites, a breakdown of costs for each site is required.
- ✓ Anticipated project timeline or Gantt chart.
- ✓ Evidence of any confirmed cash funding or in-kind contributions, or information about unconfirmed funding sources, if applicable
- ✓ Letter of support from **both parties** (e.g. the First Nations organisation and auspice organisation), or an auspice agreement (a template can be provided upon request) if an auspice arrangement is in place.
- ✓ If the application is for a new enterprise or organisational focus, evidence of operational resources.

Desirable

- ✓ Budget breakdown with anticipated income and expenditure (a template can be provided upon request).
- ✓ Letters of support from partner organisations or key stakeholders.
- ✓ Strategic and operational plans, and annual reports to demonstrate the priority of the project to the applicant.
- ✓ Applicable permits or permissions, if available.
- ✓ Details of how the project might support key Victorian frameworks or policies, including but not limited to the [Victorian Aboriginal Affairs Framework](#) or the [Victorian Closing the Gap Implementation Plan](#)

Project Planning – Up to \$200,000 (plus GST)

Why (30%)

Applications must provide a clear rationale for why the project planning is needed and why the future infrastructure project has been identified as important to the organisation. This must include details about how the infrastructure project is anticipated to support the future of the organisation.

If the future infrastructure project will support a new enterprise or new organisational focus, applications should be substantiated by a relevant business model, operational plan, strategy or equivalent, if available.

What (20%)

Applications must clearly articulate the scope of the planning activities, as per the overview of [Option 1](#) or [Option 2](#). If some planning activities are already complete, describe what has been achieved and who has been involved to date.

Include details about the purpose of the future infrastructure project to be explored, designed and costed, and the site. A site must already be selected if applying for [Option 2](#). Organisations may only apply for one project planning option at a time.

Who (25%)

Applications must clearly articulate who will benefit from the proposed future infrastructure project, provide relevant data about the population served and how this project will benefit them.

Include an overview of how the future infrastructure project will involve the relevant communities.

⁶ For guidance on how to obtain a certificate of title, please refer to Annexure A of the Guidelines.

Project Planning – Up to \$200,000 (plus GST)

How (25%)	<p>Applications must describe the key steps the organisation will take to deliver the specified project planning activities. Include details of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Governance structure for decision-making and approvals, including who will oversee and manage the day-to-day processes including contracts and finances; ✓ Details of third parties to be appointed to contribute to the project, such as architects, engineers or quantity surveyors; ✓ Information on how contracts and finances for the project will be managed throughout the course of the project; and ✓ How the organisation plans to engage with community members and stakeholders.
Supporting Material	<p>Essential</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Evidence to demonstrate organisational readiness to commence the project planning, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Quotes or estimates (no older than 90 days) from consultants and other contributing experts including, but not limited to an architectural firm, quantity surveyors, town planners or community engagement specialists; and – If applying for Option 2 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 title⁷, a ground lease or tenancy agreements) ✓ Budget breakdown of anticipated income and expenditure (a template can be provided upon request) where appropriate this should include escalation, key assumptions and exclusions. ✓ Evidence of any confirmed cash funding or in-kind contributions, or information about unconfirmed funding sources, if applicable. ✓ Evidence of planning activities already complete. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – If applying for Option 2 a feasibility study for the future infrastructure project. This should include endorsement for the completed study from the organisation's Board or executive leadership team. ✓ Letter of support from both parties (e.g. the First Nations organisation and auspice organisation), or an auspice agreement (a template can be provided upon request) if an auspice arrangement is in place. <p>Desirable</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ A preliminary project plan (a template can be provided upon request). ✓ Letters of support for the application from the organisation's chairperson, partner organisations or key stakeholders. ✓ Strategic plans and annual reports to demonstrate the priority of the project to the applicant. <p>For reference, a feasibility study template can be provided upon request.</p>

⁷ For guidance on how to obtain a certificate of title, please refer to Annexure A of the Guidelines

Lakes Entrance Aboriginal Health Association

Project planning (formerly feasibility studies and business cases) 2022-2023 - \$50,000

Capital works and upgrades 2023-2024 - \$678,284

Lakes Entrance Aboriginal Health Association (LEAHA) has provided culturally appropriate health and well-being services to First Peoples in Lakes Entrance for over 22 years. Operating from a small, rented facility under an auspice arrangement with Gippsland Lakes Complete Health, the organisation has long outgrown its current space, which lacks capacity to meet growing community demand for services.

In response to years of community consultation calling for independence and self-determination, LEAHA undertook a feasibility study to explore the development of a purpose-built, standalone community-controlled health clinic and realise the vision to establish a fit-for-purpose facility to operate independently, expand service delivery and reflect First Nations culture.

In 2022, LEAHA received funding from round 5 of the Program to undertake a feasibility study, which enabled the organisation to hire an experienced consultant to work with their Board, CEO, staff and community to develop a work plan to guide LEAHA toward full independence in their new health clinic. The feasibility study assessed the organisation's infrastructure needs, building design requirements, local planning requirements and potential property options. The process involved collaboration with local architects, builders, and property experts to ensure the facility meets both community expectations and Australian standards.

In 2023, LEAHA secured infrastructure funding of \$2,034,953 through the Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care's *Closing the Gap Major Capital Works Program*. In 2024, following the completion of their feasibility study, they were also successful in securing capital works and upgrades funding of \$678,284 from round 7 of the Program. The funding has enabled them to purchase a nearby property and commence development of their new health clinic, with completion anticipated in early 2026.

The new, purpose-built clinic will allow LEAHA to relocate and expand its primary health services into a larger, more accessible space. Designed with community input, the clinic will feature culturally appropriate consultation and treatment rooms, and multiple spaces to support high-quality, community-centred healthcare and enhance the wellbeing of their local communities. The new building will be a key step toward self-determination in health, supporting accreditation, better services and workforce growth, and demonstrates how community-led infrastructure can transform care and build long-term independence.

www.glch.org.au/aboriginal-services/lakes-entrance-aboriginal-health-association/



9. How do I apply?

Applicants must contact the Program team at ACIP@ecodev.vic.gov.au to discuss their project proposal prior to submission. Site visits will be undertaken if time permits.

To start an application, visit the Program website at [First Peoples - State Relations](#) or click on one of the buttons below:



APPLY FOR REPAIRS
AND MINOR WORKS



APPLY FOR CAPITAL
WORKS AND UPGRADE



APPLY FOR
PROJECT PLANNING

Applicants must complete the application form via the online grants portal and attach all supporting material. Please note, Google Chrome is the preferred browser.

Applications will be considered against the Eligibility Criteria (**Section 4. Who Can Apply?** and **Section 5. Who Cannot Apply?**) and the Assessment Criteria in these guidelines.

All applications must be submitted by **2.00pm** on **Wednesday 3 December 2025**. No hard copy applications will be accepted.

10. Funding conditions

Funding is discretionary

Notwithstanding any other policy, guidance or statement found on the Aboriginal Community Infrastructure Program, the assessment of any application for grant funding and any decision to approve funding is a decision for the Victorian Government in its absolute discretion.

All decisions of the Victorian Government in relation to the Aboriginal Community Infrastructure Program application and assessment process are final. In particular:

- the Victorian Government may treat an application as invalid and not consider it if it is received late, is incomplete, is not reasonably able to be understood, or does not comply with these Guidelines or other information available on the Aboriginal Community Infrastructure Program;

- the Victorian Government may request that an applicant confirm the details in their application;
- the submission of an application does not guarantee funding and a successful applicant may not be granted the full amount of funding they requested;
- funding for projects with multiple sites may be considered at the discretion of the moderation panel and part funding may be recommended;
- the Victorian Government may extend, cancel, or amend the process for applying for funding at any time without an applicant's consent; and
- the Victorian Government will not negotiate its decision in relation to funding applications or the conditions of any funding that is granted.

The State is not liable for claims arising from an application

The Victorian Government will not be liable for:

- any action or claim that an applicant might bring in relation to an Aboriginal Community Infrastructure Program application for funding or its assessment;
- any loss or damage, including indirect and economic loss, which an applicant might suffer in the course of applying for or accepting the provision of funding through the Aboriginal Community Infrastructure Program; and
- any personal injury suffered in the course of applying for or accepting the provision of Aboriginal Community Infrastructure Program funding.

The above does not apply to any liability that the law does not allow the Victorian Government to exclude.

No binding agreement

No binding agreement, legal relationship or other understanding for the supply of funding will exist between the Victorian Government and any applicant unless and until they have signed a formal written funding agreement.

Guidelines subject to change

The Victorian Government may update these Guidelines at any time at its discretion.

Applicants and users should check the [Aboriginal Community Infrastructure Program](#) website regularly for updates to the Guidelines. If any part of these Guidelines is determined to be unlawful, void or for any reason unenforceable, that part is deemed severable from the Guidelines and does not affect the validity and enforceability of the remaining parts.

Funding from other sources

Applicants should clearly identify and substantiate any additional cash funding that the organisation will contribute, has or is likely to secure from a third party to support the proposed project or any additional funding that the organisation is seeking to support the proposed project.

Additional funding secured or sought by the organisation includes, but is not limited to, funding from other Department of Premier and Cabinet (DPC) programs; other State Government agencies; and the Commonwealth Government. Where additional funding is sought, the applicant should provide information about key dates and contingency plans in the event of the funding application being unsuccessful.

Where projects have secured multiple sources of funding, the application must clearly articulate what the Program funding will deliver.

In-kind contributions

Applicants should clearly identify and substantiate any in-kind contributions to the project and explain the nature of the in-kind contribution, including who is making the contribution (if not the applicant) and how the value has been calculated based on what it would cost if the applicant had to pay cash.

Announcements and events

Successful applications may be the subject of funding announcements, media releases, and other disclosures. Successful applicants will be required to liaise with First Peoples–State Relations (formerly Aboriginal Victoria) to facilitate funding announcements and should be prepared to hold an event at which the Minister for Treaty and First Peoples or a delegate can announce the successful application and funding

amount. Successful organisations are required to develop a communications plan to detail any Ministerial opportunities, such as a celebratory event to launch a finished project, at which the Minister for Treaty and First Peoples or a delegate can attend.

The Minister for Treaty and First Peoples should be given the opportunity to officially open or launch the completed project.

Funding agreements

Successful applicants will be required to enter into a funding agreement with the Victorian Government using the [Victorian Common Funding Agreement](#). The Funding Agreement establishes the parties and outlines their commitments and obligations to each other, as well as setting out the general [funding terms and conditions](#).

The Local Jobs First Policy (LJF) applies to all projects funded under this program valued at over \$1 million in regional Victoria, or over \$3 million in metropolitan Melbourne and statewide activities.

For further information, go to the [LJF website](#).

Successful applicants are expected to acknowledge the Victorian Government's support. Acknowledgement and Publicity Guidelines will form part of the Funding Agreement.

Reporting requirements

Successful applicants are required to comply with the reporting requirements outlined in the Funding Agreement with the Victorian Government. This includes participating in any program evaluation and data collection activities implemented by the Victorian Government, in particular reporting on project outcomes generated by this investment. A questionnaire about anticipated project outcomes forms part of the application process.

Ideally, program reporting requirements should be completed by, or in collaboration with, a representative of the applicant or auspice organisation who is familiar with the project, or has been involved in project delivery.

Administrative costs incurred prior to a funding agreement being executed may not be claimed as part of the grant.

Project delivery

Funded recipients are required to establish appropriate governance and financial management structures and processes for the duration of the project, and appoint a suitably qualified project manager/superintendent to manage the delivery of the project within budget and against agreed deliverable milestones and outputs. If project delivery is unreasonably delayed, substantial changes to the project scope are made, or a project is not delivered as agreed, the Victorian Government reserves the right to cancel the Funding Agreement and recover any unspent funds.

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.

If applicable, representatives from the Program may request to attend project control group meetings as an observer, and this attendance requirement may form part of the Funding Agreement.

If an underspend is identified at project completion, approval to expand the scope of the project will be made on a case-by-case basis.

In procuring services, the funded recipient will need to demonstrate how it is limiting commercial and contractual risk. For example, depending on the scale and stage of the project, a suitably qualified project manager/superintendent, quantity surveyor and lead consultant should be appointed directly by the organisation, with all other consultants engaged under the lead consultant.

Signage

Recipients of funding over \$250,000 are required to acknowledge the investment from the Program by placing temporary signage at the project site during construction. The Victorian Government [capital works signage guidelines](#) must be followed. Templates are available.

No guarantee of future funding support

Securing funding under this Program does not guarantee future funding support from the Victorian Government under this Program or any other program administered by the Victorian Government.

11. Resources for applicants

The following resources have been provided to assist and guide applicants.

Resources about project planning, building design and development

- [Office of the Victorian Government Architect](#)
- [Australian Institute of Architects: Procurement of Architectural Services](#)
- [Office of Projects Victoria](#)
- [Building and Plumbing Commission](#)
- [A Framework for Place-Based Approaches](#)

Resources about property zoning and planning information

- [Mapshare: VicPlan](#)
- [Mapshare: Victoria Unearthed](#)

Resources about sustainable buildings

- [Built Environment Sustainability Scorecard](#)
- [Council Alliance for a Sustainable Built Environment \(CASBE\)](#)
- [Sustainability Victoria: Find an Energy Auditor](#)
- [National Australian Built Environment Rating System \(NABERS\)](#)

Information for regional applicants

- [Regional Development Victoria: Regional Economic Strategies](#)

Resources about managing cultural heritage places

- [The Burra Charter Practice Notes](#)

12. Program administration

Local Government Victoria at Department of Government Services (DGS) is engaged to administer the Aboriginal Community Infrastructure Program on behalf of [First Peoples-State Relations](#) at DPC. A program control group consisting of representatives from both Departments oversees the Program.

13. Privacy

Information provided to DGS and DPC in Program applications will be used to assist DGS and DPC to assess eligibility and suitability for the Program and to prepare funding agreements. Any personal information that is provided will be handled in accordance with the *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014* (Vic) and other applicable laws.

DGS or DPC, its officers, employees, agents and sub-contractors may use and disclose any of the information provided with the application to Victorian Government departments, agencies or bodies, non-government organisations and/or the Commonwealth, states or territories for any purpose in connection with the administration of the Program.

Successful applications may also be the subject of media releases and disclosure as otherwise provided in the 'Terms and Conditions' of the Funding Agreement.

Prospective applicants may access a copy of DPC's Privacy Policy in relation to the management of personal information collected by contacting 1300 366 356.

14. Accessibility

If you would like to receive this publication in an accessible format, please email ACIP@ecodev.vic.gov.au

Authorised and published by the Victorian Government, 1 Treasury Place, Melbourne.

For more information on this grant program please email ACIP@ecodev.vic.gov.au

Annexure A – Guidance on Obtaining Certificates of Title

- i. Visit <https://www.landata.online/copy-of-title/>
- ii. Select 'Order a Copy of Title using an address' or select 'Order a Copy of title using a Volume and Folio number'
- iii. Search by Address, and select next
- iv. Select the certificates you wish to order, and select next. Fees apply.
- v. Complete your order delivery details and payment details. Select Pay.
- vi. Following payment, Landata will issue the documents and a receipt which should be saved for your records.

Please note, you may be required to register an account.

Fill in your organisation's or personal details to complete registration.

