

Regional Events Fund Guidelines

Message from the Minister for Tourism and Major Events, the Hon John Eren

Regional Victoria has something for everyone and the best of everything. That's why Victorians, Australians and travellers from all around the world love visiting our treasured destinations.

The Victorian Government recognises the critical role events play in attracting visitors and driving the development and growth of tourism, particularly in regional and rural areas.

The importance of the tourism industry as an economic driver for regional Victoria cannot be underestimated, with the sector contributing \$11.5 billion to the regional economy each year and generating 114,400 jobs. That's why, through the new \$20 million Regional Events Fund, we're securing a stronger calendar of regional events for Victoria and driving economic growth with year-round visitation.

The Fund was announced in the 2016/17 Victorian Budget and is set to bring thousands of new visitors from Victoria, Australia and around the world to the biggest and best events all over regional Victoria.

Events keep Victoria strong, because they mean a steady stream of visitors and jobs for Victorians.

The Victorian Government is committed to supporting strategic investment that strengthens our communities, creates more jobs and makes our regional economies thrive.

I look forward to working closely with our regional communities and tourism providers to ensure events continue to strengthen regional Victoria through the Regional Events Fund.



A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "John Eren".

Hon John Eren MP
Minister for Tourism and Major Events



Regional Events Fund Guidelines

The Victorian Government has identified priority sectors that will underpin the State's future economy and jobs growth.

The Regional Events Fund (REF) will secure and develop a strong calendar of regional events for Victoria that align with the State and regional tourism brands and have the ability to drive economic impact through the attraction of intrastate, interstate and international visitation.

Visit Victoria Limited (Visit Victoria) and the Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources (DEDJTR) will administer the REF, which will include the contestable Regional Events and Marketing Partnership Program (REMPP).

1. Purpose of this document

This document sets out the application guidelines for quarterly rounds of the REF. It is designed to assist prospective applicants in deciding whether to apply for a grant and outlines the process for submitting an application.

This document also sets out the purpose of the Fund and explains who is eligible to apply. It sets out the criteria that will be used to assess applications for funding.

2. Description and Objectives

The \$20 million Regional Events Fund is designed to support the attraction, development, marketing and growth of events in regional Victoria in order to:

- increase economic benefits by driving visitation from outside of the region and the State and extending length of stay and yield;
- showcase Victoria's key regional tourism strengths and build Victoria's reputation as an events destination;
- develop a sustainable calendar of regional events; and
- support Victoria's visitor economy through economic benefits and branding opportunities.

3. Fund Objectives

The key objectives of the REF align with the strategic objectives of the Victorian Visitor Economy Strategy (2016 – 2020).

Strong consideration for support through the REF will be given to applicants that can demonstrate alignment with these objectives, particularly:

- estimated economic impact to the State and region;
- alignment with the State and regional tourism brands;
- strategic alignment with the relevant Regional Tourism Board's Event Plan, Strategic Plan and Destination Management Plan and Regional Partnership Priorities;
- alignment with broader government priorities;
- Financial support beyond the State Government including, but not limited to, local government, regional and local tourism organisations and sporting, cultural, industry and community organisations;
- financial sustainability and management capacity; and
- location and timing.

Events should commence at least six (6) months after a full application is received.

The REF will include the following components:

3.1 Significant Regional Events

Visit Victoria and DEDJTR will seek to secure larger events for regional Victoria that will generate significant benefits for the State and region but may not be suitable for consideration through the Major Events Fund. This could include the attraction or development of new events or support for the implementation of innovative growth strategies for existing events.

These events will likely be of international and national significance and will have a focus on securing content for State government-funded infrastructure, including stadiums and cultural institutions.

3.2 Regional Events and Marketing Partnership Program (REMPP)

The REMPP is a contestable program designed to support events that are identified as having the potential to drive economic and branding benefits to the host destination, region and the State.

The REF is segmented into four tiers in order to differentiate by size of event:

	Event type	Purpose of funding	Funding amount
Significant Events	<p>New (one off or ongoing) events of significant scale that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Are exclusive to Victoria - have the capacity to attract intrastate, interstate and/ or international visitation of greater than 30% of total attendees - are of international or national significance - have the potential to develop into major events for the State. - Delivers state-wide profile to a region due to the scale of the event; - Is the highest class of event for the category that is being held in Victoria. 	<p>Funding will support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the attraction of new events to regional Victoria and assist with the costs associated with securing, hosting and marketing the event; - implementation of innovative strategies to increase visitation to existing events, including event development and marketing tourism. 	Discretionary
Tier 1 REMPP	<p>New (one off or ongoing) events of significant scale that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Are exclusive to Victoria - have the capacity to attract intrastate and interstate visitation - are of state or national significance <p>Established events, particularly those that have been previously funded by Tourism Victoria, will be required to detail new initiatives and demonstrate how funding will significantly increase intrastate and interstate visitation.</p>	<p>Funding will support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the attraction of new events to regional Victoria and assist with the costs associated with securing, hosting and marketing the event; - implementation of innovative strategies to increase visitation to existing events, including event development and marketing. 	\$100,000 to \$500,000
Tier 2 REMPP	<p>New or established, preferably ongoing medium to large scale events that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - have the capacity to attract intrastate and interstate visitation - are of state or regional significance; <p>Established events, particularly those that have been previously funded by Tourism Victoria, will be required to detail new initiatives and demonstrate how funding will significantly increase intrastate and interstate visitation.</p>	<p>Funding will support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the attraction of new events to regional Victoria and assist with the costs associated with securing, hosting and marketing the event; - implementation of innovative strategies to increase visitation to existing events, including event development and marketing. 	\$20,000 to \$100,000
Tier 3 REMPP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - have the capacity to attract intrastate and interstate visitation; - are of regional or local significance. <p>Established events, particularly those that have been previously funded by Tourism Victoria, will be required to detail new initiatives and demonstrate how funding will significantly increase intrastate and interstate visitation.</p>	<p>Funding will support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tourism marketing strategies to increase visitation from intrastate and interstate markets; - Strategies to increase event capability to grow events in regional Victoria. 	Up to \$20,000

Event funding programs previously open to small to medium scale events through Tourism Victoria will continue to be administered by Visit Victoria as Tier 3 of the REMPP.



4. Eligibility

4.1 Definition of regional events

Events and festivals that attract intrastate, and/or interstate and/or international visitation, held within the 11 regions currently defined by Visit Victoria, are eligible for funding.

3.2 Who can apply?

Applications will generally be considered from:

- sporting, cultural and creative organisations;
- private sector organisations;
- local governments;
- regional tourism organisations including, but not limited to, Regional Tourism Boards, Local Tourism Associations, Regional Tourism Associations and Industry Groups;
- not for profit organisations, including sporting, cultural and community that:
 - o are an incorporated body, cooperative or association; and
 - o have an Australian Business Number (ABN) or can provide written advice from the Australian Taxation Office that no withholding tax is required from the grant payment.

3.3 What will be funded?

The REF will generally allocate funding to:

- assist with the costs associated with securing, hosting and marketing new events; and
- implement innovative strategies to increase visitation to existing events, including event development and tourism marketing.

Consideration will be given to events in regional Victoria that attract large numbers of participants, have demonstrable impacts on the local economy; and generate significant media coverage and publicity for the region in outlets that are external to that region.

Funding allocated to specific events will be determined at the discretion of Visit Victoria.

What will not be funded?

The REF will generally not fund:

- events that have failed to acquit previous funding;
- applications that are incomplete or fail to meet the Fund requirements;
- events where the funding being requested is normally provided by other state, Commonwealth and/or local government sources for the same outcomes;
- events staged outside of Victoria;
- purchase of assets;
- purchase of land;
- rental or lease of office space (event venue costs may be considered at the discretion of Visit Victoria);
- events that have already commenced at the time of application, or events that will commence less than six (6) months after an application is received (subject to the discretion of Visit Victoria and DEDJTR);
- events that do not meet the criteria as detailed in Section 2; or
- events that commence after 30 June 2020.

5. Application and assessment process

5.1 Before Applying

Read the Guidelines and contact the Regional Tourism Board

Regional Tourism Boards (RTBs) are key strategic partners for DEDJTR and Visit Victoria. Applicants are required to engage with RTBs to determine how their event aligns with regional strategies relating to the Victorian Visitor Economy Strategy.

At the beginning of each financial year, RTBs will be invited to identify priority events for their region. This will assist Visit Victoria with planning and identifying priority events across the State for consideration through the REF.

5.2 Process & timing

Organisations seeking funding from the REF are encouraged to contact their RTB to discuss the event prior to submitting

a proposal for consideration. Applicants are required to obtain a formal endorsement from their RTB for inclusion in their Expression of Interest. Applicants are also encouraged to discuss their event proposal with agencies such as venues, local council and other stakeholders. Applicants should demonstrate the support of stakeholders in their applications.

5.3 Application Process

From 1 July 2017, the process for applying for funding under the **Regional Events and Marketing Partnership Program** is as follows:

Step 1 Stakeholder consultation

Applicants contact their RTB to determine how their event aligns with regional strategies.

Step 2 Submit and Expression of Interest (EOI) Online

- Applicants submit an online EOI in SmartyGrants using the link available at www.corporate.visitvictoria.com. Note that applications can remain in SmartyGrants as a draft as applicants collate the required information.
- An initial assessment will be undertaken against program eligibility.
- Visit Victoria will provide initial feedback on the EOI to the applicant within 5 business days of the EOI being submitted.
- After considering feedback, the applicant may decide to apply for funding.

Step 3 Apply online

- Applicants will be provided with a link to the online REF Application Form;
- Applicants will be required to complete the REF Application online and submit.
- Visit Victoria will assess the application against the assessment criteria in consultation with other relevant parts of the Victorian Government, including Regional Development Victoria, Creative Victoria, DEDJTR and Sport and Recreation Victoria in the Department of Health and Human Services.
- Visit Victoria will make a funding recommendation to the Minister for Tourism and Major Events.
- Applicants will receive confirmation of the outcome of their application.

At EOI stage, Visit Victoria will formally refer any applicants that are determined to be more suitable for consideration for funding through another program.

From the date the formal application for funding is submitted to Visit Victoria, the assessment process will generally be completed within eight (8) weeks.

Applications seeking significant event funding from the REF are encouraged to contact Visit Victoria to discuss the event prior to submitting a proposal.

5.4 Funding Rounds 2017/2018

Applications for the REF are now open. Applications must be received a minimum of six months prior to the commencement of the event (subject to the discretion of Visit Victoria).

Please note that the assessment process takes approximately eight weeks from the commencement of the process.

Applicants are encouraged to submit their applications at the earliest possible opportunity and take into consideration the following timelines:

Round 1 2017/18

Opens	17 July 2017
EOI's Close	15 September 2017
Applications Close	29 September, 2017
Will be announced in:	November, 2017

Round 2 2017/18

Opens	2 October 2017
EOI's Close	15 December 2017
Applications Close	29 December 2017
Will be announced in:	February 2018

Round 3 2017/18

Opens	2 January 2018
EOI's Close	16 March 2018
Applications Close	30 March 2018
Will be announced in:	May 2018

Round 4 2017/18

Opens	2 April 2018
EOI's Close	15 June 2018
Applications Close	29 June 2018
Will be announced in:	August 2018



5.5 Application

Applications will be required to include the following information. The level of detail required will vary depending on the level of funding requested:

- Details of the event, including description, date and location
- If an existing event - previous attendances, up to 5 years, including, local, intrastate, interstate and international attendance
- If a new event - projected attendance, including, local, intrastate, interstate and international attendance.
- Economic impact details from independent studies (where available)
- Marketing Plans to include:
 - specific details relating to tourism marketing that will be undertaken
 - Description of target markets; and
 - all proposed marketing activity and timelines
- Details regarding how the event aligns with and supports:
 - State and regional tourism brands
 - Regional Tourism Board event plans, strategic plans, Destination Management Plans and Regional Partnership Priorities
 - Broader Government priorities
- Detailed revenue and expenditure budget, including financial support beyond the State Government including, but not limited to local government, regional and local tourism organisations and sporting, cultural, industry and community organisations
- Demonstrated management capacity and plans to achieve long-term financial sustainability.

5.6 Submission

Applications should be submitted online.

5.7 Criteria for Assessment

Eligible applications will be assessed using the information given as answers to each question in the application form, as well as required supporting documentation. Applicants should answer each question and ensure they have provided the appropriate supporting documentation. Applications that do not address each question adequately may not be considered.

Applications under the REF will need to demonstrate how the event meets the following criteria:

Economic Benefits

This relates to the ability of an event to drive benefit into regional Victoria in the form of new expenditure and/ or future investment to regions. The key factors that demonstrate this impact include:

- **Number of anticipated participants:** These include participants, spectators, organisers and other visitors who will travel to the region specifically for the event;
- **Average Length of Stay:** The number of days and (if applicable) nights that participants will stay in the region;
- **Expenditure:** Estimated daily expenditure. Including expenditure from expected intrastate visitation.

If the proposed event is a new event, assessments will be made through comparison of events of a similar nature. If a previously held event, performance data will be used to assess the event.

Increasing Brand Equity

Visit Victoria will assess the event's effectiveness in driving strategic brand and marketing outcomes for Victoria, including:

- **Strategic alignment:** the event aligns with the relevant Regional Tourism Board's Annual Event Plan, Strategic Plan, Destination Management Plan and Regional Partnership priorities;
- **Brand alignment:** the event delivers against the attributes of the State and regional tourism brands;
- **Location and timing:** the nature of the event aligns with location and time of year the event is proposed to maximise benefit to the region.
- **Audience:** the nature and size of the event audience
- **Marketing alignment:** How promotional strategies for the event support the marketing objectives of Victoria and the region;
- **Expertise:** how the event may raise or create awareness of the region's expertise e.g. innovation, event delivery, cultural, sporting venues;
- **Media Impact:** the potential for intrastate, interstate and/or international media coverage.



Government Priorities and Community

Visit Victoria will assess the event's capacity to create positive engagement and generate community buy-in and pride:

- **Government Priorities:** the event is held in a Government funded venue or area or aligns with other strategic priorities of Government;
- **Satisfaction:** ensuring that the community and visitors have a positive event experience that enhances their perception of the region;
- **Community engagement:** the opportunity for visitors and locals alike to participate in the event; and
- **Local Involvement:** how the local community and/or regional institutions can engage with the event.

Calendar Fit

The Regional Event Fund supports regional visitation strategies and objectives of each region - events need to demonstrate how the timing of their event meets the key visitation and economic drivers of the region.

Financial viability

Visit Victoria will assess the event's ability to:

- **Financial Management:** deliver demonstrated financial sustainability and management capacity; and
- **Financial Support:** generate financial support beyond State Government funding including (but not limited to) local government, regional and local tourism organisations, corporate and community sponsorships and industry and community organisations;

Consultation

Visit Victoria will take into strong consideration the endorsement of the Regional Tourism Board and regional stakeholders to demonstrate viability of the event.

5.8 Approval Process

The assessment panel will make recommendations to the Minister for Tourism and Major Events.

The Minister for Tourism and Major Events will consider the recommendations of the Regional Events Fund Committee in determining the events to be under the Fund.

Successful applicants will receive a letter of offer from the Minister for Tourism and Major Events.

6. Conditions of funding

6.1 Administration

Visit Victoria and DEDJTR will administer the REF.

6.2 Conflict 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. These include financial or other interests that:

- have been held;
- are currently held; or
- will accrue.

Examples of a substantial financial or other interest include being a principal or key employee of a material professional adviser supplying services; and/or interests in contracts, trusts or other business arrangements.

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 – www.vpsc.vic.gov.au and in its eLearning guide on Conflicts of Interest.

6.3 Funding agreements

Successful applicants will be required to enter into a funding agreement with Visit Victoria or DEDJTR, detailing all funding obligations and conditions. The funding agreement will at a minimum detail the purpose for which the funding must be used and set out any requirements or conditions, including reporting requirements, that must be met by the funding recipient.

Multi-year funding agreements may be available; however, these will be determined on a case-by-case basis and significant consideration will be given to the presentation of long term plans for financial sustainability.



6.4 Evaluation and reporting

Successful applicants will be required to undertake a post-event evaluation. Visit Victoria will provide a post-event evaluation template to successful applicants. Post event evaluations will be required within three (3) months of the conclusion of the event.

Depending on the level of funding, events may be required to undertake an independent economic impact assessment and provide progress reports including financial summaries.

6.5 Payments

Advance payments will be made in stages as long as:

- The funding agreement has been signed by both parties;
- Grant recipients provide reports as required, or otherwise demonstrate that the event is progressing as expected;
- Other terms and conditions of funding continue to be met; and
- A valid tax invoice is received by Visit Victoria.

For all grants, a percentage of total funding is paid on provision and acceptance of a Final Event Report.

6.6 Acknowledgement

Successful applicants are required to acknowledge Visit Victoria and the Victorian Government's support through the provision of a grant through the REF. The funding agreement will include the requirement that the State Government is appropriately recognised through the inclusion of an approved logo on appropriate materials including but not limited to event collateral, media releases and signage.

Successful applicants must liaise with Visit Victoria to coordinate any events or announcements related to the event.

6.7 Payments

Any personal information about applicants or a third party in an application will be collected by Visit Victoria. 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.

Visit Victoria is committed to protecting the privacy of personal information. You can find Visit Victoria's Privacy Statement online at www.visitvictoria.com.au.

Enquiries about access to information about you held by Visit Victoria should be directed to the Corporate Affairs department of Visit Victoria.

7. General information

It is expected that demand for the Regional Events Fund will be high.

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.

Applicants also should not assume that if they are successful once, they will be successful again in the future.

All applicants are encouraged to plan for contingencies and consider other funding sources and options should their application be unsuccessful.

