Aboriginal Community Infrastructure Program 2023-24

Frequently Asked Questions

About the program

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

Investment in Aboriginal community infrastructure is fundamental to strengthening the Aboriginal 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 Aboriginal 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 Aboriginal 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** *(a new funding category)* provides funding of up to $200,000 (plus GST)

What is the new Project Planning funding category?

This funding round has expanded the former Feasibility Study/Business Case funding category to Project Planning, for infrastructure planning activities to the value of $200,000 (plus GST).

This change has been made in recognition of the importance of undertaking thorough architectural, design, engineering and other developmental processes to ensure infrastructure projects are well planned and viable.

The Project Planning category offers two funding options:

- **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.

Can I apply for both options under Project Planning?

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

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 projects will be considered for ACIP funding?

Repairs and Minor Works funding might be used to:

- repair or replace permanent fixtures and fittings;
- undertake cosmetic works including repairs, painting, replacing 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 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 Aboriginal communities.

Project Planning funding might be used to:
Grant funding under this category is to develop one of two infrastructure planning and design phases.

- 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 not limited to):

  o 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.

What activities will not be considered for funding?

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 the funding agreement being executed and be completed within eighteen months from commencement.
- **Capital Works and Upgrades** projects must commence within eighteen months of the funding agreement being executed and be completed within three years from 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.

When will I hear whether I have been successful?

The Minister for Treaty and First Peoples is anticipated to make announcements of successful projects from July 2024. 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 applicant(s).

Eligibility

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

Aboriginal 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.

For more information, refer page 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 an Aboriginal organisation, but we provide services for Aboriginal community members. Are we eligible to apply?

Only Aboriginal 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?

Application forms will open from Tuesday 13 February 2024.

When do applications close?

Applications close at 2pm, Monday 22 April 2024.

Prior to submission you must contact acip@ecodev.vic.gov.au to discuss your application with the ACIP team.

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

ACIP and FPSR are interested in the breadth of Aboriginal community 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 return to a previously saved application in the Grants portal?

From Tuesday 13 February 2024, you can access your saved applications via
https://businessvic.secure.force.com/GrantsPortalLogin

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. If there is a technical issue in 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.

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

Yes, you may apply, but only to Project Planning **Option 1**, for funding to support your organisation 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 advance design activities, must have a site already confirmed.

How many applications can I submit?

Only one application can be submitted. Each organisation may submit only one application to only 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 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.

I don't have all my supporting documentation ready prior to submission. Can I still submit my application?

All relevant supporting documentation must be submitted by the closing date at 2pm, Monday 22 April 2024.

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

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

Quantity Surveyor reports or quotes/estimates from builders/tradespeople should be no older than 90 days.

The value of my project exceeds the Capital Works and Upgrades funding threshold of $1,600,000. Can I still apply for funding?

Yes. Clearly demonstrate all other funding sources or contributions (secured or to be secured) to make up any shortfalls in the overall project costs.

Information about documentary evidence is outlined in the following section.

Should I provide documentation about any financial contributions my organisation has received or will contribute to the project?

Yes. If any financial contributions are confirmed please provide evidence (for example, an outcome letter from the funding body to confirm the financial contribution).

If the contributions are currently unconfirmed (for example, you are waiting to receive the outcome of another funding application) please provide as much information as possible including an estimated date for the outcome.

If your organisation is contributing funding to the project, evidence of this commitment should also be provided. For example, a letter of confirmation from the relevant financial delegate such as the Chairperson, CEO or equivalent; or an extract of board minutes etc.

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

Is my organisation required to match funding?

No, but organisational and/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 across multiple sites, or a streamlined project plan to manage all sites.

Contact 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.

A moderation 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 moderation 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 an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person.

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