



FUNDING GUIDELINES:

Bushfire Recovery Grants for Aboriginal Communities

Background

The 2019-2020 bushfire season was unprecedented in intensity and devastation. These fires directly affected Aboriginal communities across Victoria, primarily in the south eastern and northern eastern parts of the state.

Aboriginal people are disproportionately affected by the impact of fires due to the higher proportion of Aboriginal people living in bushfire affected areas than elsewhere in the State (especially East Gippsland), existing structural and financial inequalities, a backdrop of historical and intergenerational trauma, and the significant impacts that bushfire and fire suppression activities can have on Country and cultural heritage.

Lived, professional and specialist expertise is required to implement recovery efforts supporting Aboriginal communities affected by fire. It is critical that tailored, culturally informed and proficient approaches are implemented across all aspects of the recovery process, including consultation, design and implementation.

In January 2020, the Victorian and Commonwealth Governments announced an \$86 million Victorian Bushfires Community Recovery Package. This package is joint funded through Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA), which are the Commonwealth-state cost-sharing arrangements for providing financial support for relief and recovery activities resulting from natural disasters and terrorist acts.

Bushfire Recovery Victoria

Bushfire Recovery Victoria (BRV) is a new, permanent and dedicated Victorian Government agency working directly with local communities to listen, help and deliver what they need to recover from the impact of bushfires.

Aboriginal Victoria

Aboriginal Victoria (AV) has been working in partnership with BRV to coordinate bushfire recovery efforts through the Bushfire Recovery Aboriginal Reference Group. AV is continuing to support the recovery of Aboriginal communities through its leadership of the Aboriginal Culture and Healing line of recovery (see below).

Community Recovery and Resilience Grants Initiative

The Community Recovery and Resilience Grants Initiative is a \$35 million initiative, which aims to provide financial support to locally-led and responsive programs that support the recovery of communities in Victoria's bushfire affected regions.

The Community Recovery and Resilience Grants Initiative is being administered by BRV.

All programs funded under the Community Recovery and Resilience Grants Initiative will seek to support the following objectives:

- Improve community connectedness and cohesion



- Support community development
- Strengthen communities' resilience against natural disaster
- Build community capability and capacity for recovery
- Empower communities to lead and direct their recovery process.

Within in the Community Recovery and Resilience Grants initiative, \$3.5 million has been allocated to the Bushfire Recovery Grants for Aboriginal Communities for targeted support to Aboriginal communities in bushfire affected areas. All projects funded through the program must support the objectives of the Community Recovery and Resilience Grants initiative.

Aboriginal Cultural and Healing

BRV has expanded on previous recovery models by establishing a dedicated line of recovery for Aboriginal Culture and Healing. This will ensure significant and appropriate focus is given to the unique needs and attributes of Aboriginal individuals, families, communities, business and Traditional Owner groups.

Grants are available in two streams to address the recovery needs for Aboriginal communities; with a focus on projects that meet one or more of the following objectives:

- Valuing and respecting Aboriginal culture
- Addressing Aboriginal trauma and supporting healing
- Promoting Aboriginal cultural safety, and
- Promoting Aboriginal ownership, resilience and participation.

Grants cannot be used for:

- Offsetting of salaries, operating costs for existing staff or contractors
- Feasibility studies, business plans, cost benefit analysis and economic impact studies
- Projects that may have a negative impact on existing businesses / services
- Passing on funding to a third party in the form of a sponsorship or grant
- The purchase or land or buildings
- The cost of works or activities covered by insurance

Funding Stream 1: Cultural Heritage Recovery (\$1.2 million available)

Grants of up to \$500,00 are available to support immediate cultural heritage management needs across bushfire affected Country.

Examples of projects that may be funded in this category are include:

- Country mapping
- Protection works for Ancestral Remains
- Training and capacity building for Traditional Owner organisations, and



- Archaeological data collection and processing.

Funding Stream 2: Aboriginal Community Support (\$2.3 million available)

Grants of up to \$500,000 are available for projects that address the needs of Aboriginal communities throughout recovery.

- Events to reconnect communities
- Training and capacity building workshops
- Activities to improve community resilience in future disasters, and
- Community development activities.

Guidelines

Applicant Eligibility

To be eligible, an organisation must be either:

- An Aboriginal organisation that is an incorporated legal entity
- A social enterprise with a clearly stated purpose or mission related specifically to supporting Aboriginal communities in bushfire recovery
- Capability to report to BRV on the outcomes and activities of the funded project
- Applicants for grants under Stream 1 must have had their Country directly impacted by the 2019-20 bushfires

And you must have:

- A current Australian Business Number (ABN)
- No outstanding final reports or final reports required for any previous government grant programs.

Auspice Organisations

Auspice organisations can support unlimited applications from lead applicants.

If your organisation is not incorporated or does not have an ABN, you may still apply if you are supported by an eligible auspice organisation that has agreed to manage the grant for you.

An auspice arrangement is when a larger organisation assists a smaller organisation to fund a grant activity or event.

The larger organisation is known as the auspice organisation. Your community group or organisation is known as the grant recipient.

Who cannot apply?

- State and Federal government agencies
- Individuals and sole traders
- Unincorporated community organisations



- Commercial enterprises
- Fixed trusts
- Local Government Authorities (LGAs) including LGA managed, operated, administered and regulated trusts (can act as an auspice).
- Registered primary and secondary schools, preschools, TAFE institutes and universities (can act as an auspice)
- Commercial enterprises are not eligible to apply for a grant alone (they can partner with an organisation as a sponsor and only provide contributions).

Selection Criteria

Provided your organisation is eligible to apply (see Applicant Eligibility) your application for a Bushfire Recovery Grant for Aboriginal Communities will be assessed against the following:

- How well it meets the five key selection criteria set out below, and
- Whether you demonstrate all application requirements and provide all the required documentation.

1. Purpose

Applicants must provide an explanation of how their project will deliver direct benefit to a bushfire affected community and supports one or more of the objectives of this funding:

- Valuing and respecting Aboriginal culture
- Addressing Aboriginal trauma and supporting healing
- Promoting Aboriginal cultural safety, and
- Promoting Aboriginal ownership, resilience and participation.

2. Aboriginal community participation

Applicants must demonstrate how the project will:

- Be Aboriginal community or Traditional Owner led, and
- Promote Aboriginal employment and the potential for future wellbeing and economic development initiatives.

3. Location

Applicants must demonstrate that their project will occur in bushfire affected area and describe how the bushfires directly impacted on their community.

As of June 2020, the following Local Government Areas and Alpine Resorts are in scope:

Local Government Areas

Ararat, Alpine, Ballarat, East Gippsland, Glenelg, Golden Plains, Greater Bendigo, Indigo, Mansfield, Moyne, Northern Grampians, Pyrenees, Southern Grampians, Strathbogie, Towong, Wangaratta, Wellington and Wodonga



Alpine Resorts

Falls Creek, Mount Buller, Mount Hotham and Mount Stirling

4. Planning and delivery

Applicants must provide a clear explanation on how the project will be undertaken and the anticipated completion date.

5. Budget

Applicants must provide evidence to show that:

- Costs are accurate and reasonable
- Include any in kind or co-contribution funding support

Further mandatory requirements

Applications must outline how the proposed project(s) will comply with the Victorian COVID-19 restrictions and requirements.

Applications must comply with any other legal requirements (e.g. *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2008* (Vic), an agreement or equivalent made under the *Traditional Owner Settlement Act 2010* (Vic) or *Native Title Act 1983* (Cth); local planning laws)

Assessment Criteria

Applications received will be assessed against the criteria as outlined in the table below.

Assessment Criteria	Weighting
<p>The application demonstrates the project meets the program objectives and the extent to which those objectives are met.</p> <p>The program objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • valuing and respecting Aboriginal culture; • addressing Aboriginal trauma and supporting healing; • promoting Aboriginal cultural safety and • promoting Aboriginal ownership, resilience and participation. 	<p>30%</p>
<p>The application demonstrates the extent to which the project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is delivery ready, supported by a clear approach and realistic timeframes; • is financially viable, based on sound cost estimates and represents value for money and • sources materials and resources to deliver the project which strengthens Aboriginal communities. 	<p>30%</p>



<p>The application demonstrates the extent of Aboriginal community participation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ proposes a collaborative approach with a range of partners and indicates how they will contribute to the project; ▪ proposes an effective project management approach that ensures Aboriginal community participation and <p>Aboriginal communities have been engaged, including with project partners, in the development of application.</p>	20%
<p>The application demonstrates the extent to which the project addresses the direct impacts of the 2019-20 Victorian Bushfires on the local Aboriginal community.</p>	20%

Funding Agreements and Reporting

Organisations approved for funding will enter into a Victorian Common Funding Agreement (VCFA) with Bushfire Recovery Victoria.

The VCFA will outline:

- The grant's terms and conditions, including use of funds
- Agreement terms
- Key deliverables and due dates, and
- Reporting requirements.

Organisations that are successful in receiving funding will have 30 days to enter into a VCFA. If a grant offer is not accepted during this period, the grant may be withdrawn.

Reporting

Organisations will be required to report on the funded activity and can submit their final reports online and must submit their final report on time.

Acknowledgement Guidelines

A common condition of BRV grants is that grant recipients must agree to follow BRV guidelines for acknowledging the government's funding. A breach of these guidelines is considered a breach of your funding agreement with BRV. The BRV Acknowledgement Guidelines can be found at <https://www.vic.gov.au/bushfire-recovery-victoria>.