

Victorian Racing Industry Fund Regional Racing Events Program

Program Guidelines

July 2023



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Victorian Racing Industry Fund (VRIF)

The racing industry contributes \$4.7 billion to the economy and helps sustain almost 35,000 jobs across Victoria. More than 121,000 Victorians are directly involved in the racing industry, with almost half of all racing participants residing in regional Victoria.

Established in 2011, the Victorian Racing Industry Fund (VRIF) is a Victorian Government initiative that provides funding to the Victorian racing industry to support the sustainability and growth of thoroughbred, harness, and greyhound racing.

In 2023, the Government committed \$72 million over four years to continue the VRIF.

The VRIF provides support under five funding programs:

Regional Racing Events

Support for regional racing clubs to deliver racing events for the benefit of the industry and community

Regional Customer Facilities

Support for regional racing clubs to improve the standard of public facilities at racing event venues

Racing and Training Facilities

Support to improve the quality and safety of racing and training infrastructure across Victoria

Centralised Racing Marketing

Support to improve and centralise marketing campaigns across the racing industry

Strategic Racing Initiatives

Support for breeding programs, racing animal and participant welfare, and projects that underpin the sustainability of the racing industry

1 PROGRAM SUMMARY

Regional Racing Events program

The Regional Racing Events (RRE) program supports regional racing clubs to attract patrons to racing events which support a sustainable racing industry, provide community and tourism benefits, and develop a vibrant racing experience for all.

1.1 Program objectives and outcomes

The VRIF Regional Racing Events program objectives are to:

- attract patrons to race meetings
- develop sustainable growth opportunities to support the viability of the racing industry
- support racing events that provide benefits to the racing industry and local communities
- encourage an active racing events ecosystem that supports events and supply chain businesses to attract and retain volunteers and staff
- ensure that Victoria continues to be a vibrant state for racing events.

The intended outcomes of this program are:

- increased attendance at regional racing events
- deliver benefits for the community and race day attendees
- provide support for the ongoing viability of regional racing events.



2 PROGRAM DATES

Applications for the program can be submitted at any time throughout the year. However, applications must be submitted prior to the closing date for the season. All applications for the season will be considered for funding after the closing date.

Season	Closing date
Summer	31 August
Autumn	30 November
Winter	28 February
Spring	31 May

3 FUNDING

Applicants can request grant funding of between \$5,000 and \$20,000 (exclusive of GST).

Grants will be provided on a cash co-contribution basis of up to 50 per cent of the eligible event budget expenditure. Funds from other State Government programs cannot form part of an applicant's matching co-contribution.

Where exceptional circumstances can be demonstrated, applicants may request funding of up to 75 per cent of the eligible budget expenditure. It is recommended that the applicant speak with the Office of Racing prior to applying for exceptional circumstances.

The final decision on the grant and funding amount is at the discretion of the Minister.



4 ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

4.1 Eligible applicants

The following organisations are eligible to apply for a Regional Racing Event grant:

- Racing clubs licensed under section 24A of the *Racing Act 1958*. This includes racing clubs registered as part of the Wimmera Racing Club
- Racing clubs licensed by Racing Victoria Limited as a picnic racing club.

Applicants may apply individually or jointly. Where a project involves more than one applicant, the lead organisation must apply, but both applicants may contribute to project expenditure to meet any co-contribution requirements (refer to Section 3, Funding).

4.2 Ineligible racing venues

Events held at the following race venues are ineligible to receive funding through the Regional Racing Event program:

- Flemington Racecourse
- Moonee Valley Racecourse
- Caulfield Racecourse
- Sandown Racecourse
- Tabcorp Park Melton
- Sandown Greyhound Racecourse
- The Meadows.

4.3 Eligible events

The event must be publicly accessible. It must provide racing, economic, social or community value to the local area and to Victoria in general.

The event must:

- occur during a scheduled race meeting
- comply with all event planning requirements, including obtaining appropriate event permits (as required)
- have the required public liability insurance and other relevant insurances
- be available to the public and publicly advertised, whether ticketed or not
- be held as a standalone event or as a series of two or more event days across a weekend, month, or season
- have a positive impact on the surrounding community e.g., by supporting local businesses or promoting tourism.



4.4 Eligible and ineligible expenditure

Funding will only be provided to meet an applicant's eligible expenditure on the approved event.

Applicants will be required to meet any additional and/or ineligible expenditure that is incurred in relation to the racing event.

Eligible activities/expenses	Ineligible activities/expenses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • animal welfare initiatives or activities • children's activities (games, face painting, sports) • rides and amusements • roving entertainers • MC • DJ and live music • event photography/videography • hire of equipment (i.e., marquees, furniture, big screen, portable toilets, fencing and barriers, audio and PA) • hire of theming and decorations (i.e., flower walls, lighting, neon signs, beach zone activations etc.) • shuttle bus services • security services for the event • local radio, newspaper, and television advertising • signage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ongoing business-as-usual race day, administrative, operating or staffing costs • gate entry, food, and dining subsidies • purchase of alcohol • purchase of equipment for ongoing use (such as furniture purchases) • purchase of decorations (i.e., balloons, streamers) • staff, event managers and first aid • gift packages, prizes, merchandise, giveaways, trophies, or awards • guest speakers and ambassadors • race book printing • activities that occur before or after the scheduled races (activities must occur during the race meeting) • expenses without receipts (clubs cannot invoice themselves) • any costs to meet regulatory requirements (such as permit application fees).

The above list of ineligible activities is not exhaustive. Other activities or types of expenditure may be deemed ineligible by the Department if they do not support the planned outcomes for the event or are contrary to the objectives and intent of the program.

Ineligible activities listed above may be eligible under other VRIF funding programs.

Any expenses incurred prior to the execution of a funding agreement, unless specifically agreed to by the Minister as a part of the funding approval, will be at the risk of the applicant and not considered as part of the event expenditure under the agreement.

Applications seeking funding to support the costs incurred for an entertainer (MC, Band, DJ) must submit the name of the individual or group and a short biography for the Department to undertake due diligence. Applications that propose direct entertainment for children (aged 18 or under) must comply with additional legislative requirements (refer to Section 9.2).



5 APPLICATION PROCESS

5.1 Prepare an application

The person submitting the application must be authorised by the organisation to make the application.

Applicants must undertake the following steps to apply:

1. Carefully read the Program Guidelines
2. Compile all necessary supporting documents as detailed in the Program Guidelines
3. Apply online via the website – <https://www.vic.gov.au/victorias-racing-industry>
4. Check spam/junk mail if the confirmation email is not in your inbox

Applications must be submitted via the online form.

Only applications lodged with the Department by the closing date will be considered and assessed.

Applications still 'in draft' that have not been submitted upon program close will not be assessed.

It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure all requested documentation is supplied to the Department. Failure to do so may result in the application being ineligible for funding.

5.2 Application requirements

Applications must include:

- a clear description of the event, its key components, activities, and initiatives
- statements addressing the assessment criteria in full
- previous attendance numbers and projected attendance
- funding amount requested and total event expenditure amounts
- a conflict-of-interest declaration.

5.3 Supporting documents

The following documentation is required as part of the application:

- an event budget (template provided)
- a letter of support from the relevant controlling body, and
- if applicable, letters of support from other funding bodies, i.e., local council, key stakeholders, or community users/groups.

5.4 Outcome notification

Successful and unsuccessful applicants will be notified of their application outcome in writing. Notification is anticipated within 10 weeks of the closing date.

The successful applicant's name, event name and the funding amount may be made publicly available, including publication on the Department's website and media releases.



6 ASSESSMENT PROCESS

All applications will be evaluated against the eligibility and assessment criteria.

Applications will be assessed using the following process:

1. Applications assessed for applicant and event eligibility
2. Applications evaluated against the assessment criteria by Office of Racing representatives
3. Recommendations made to the Minister for Racing for final decision.

Decisions on the allocation of grant funding under this Program are at the Minister's absolute discretion.

Applications must be submitted via the online application form, along with the required documentation. Further information may be sought from applicants if required. All questions in the application need to be fully completed to proceed to assessment.

Applications may be deemed ineligible, if in the Department's opinion association with the event may bring the Department, a Minister, or the State of Victoria into disrepute.

6.1 Eligibility Assessment

The following eligibility criteria are considered:

- applicant eligibility
- event eligibility
- activity/expense eligibility
- support from the racing code
- required supporting documentation (budgets, letters of support etc.)



6.2 Assessment Criteria

Eligible applications will be assessed on how well they meet the assessment criteria. All attachments and information provided as part of the application will be taken into consideration during the assessment process.

Criteria 1.

Ability of the event to attract patrons and encourage visitation to the region (40%)

Considerations:

- significance of the event to the local community, racing, region, and Victoria
- number of estimated attendees
- activities and initiatives which demonstrate innovation, and the delivery of a quality racing event
- previous event success, if applicable
- contribution to the calendar of events for racing, the region, and Victoria
- uniqueness of the event and activities
- how the event aligns with and supports local and regional tourism

Criteria 2.

Economic, social or community benefits of the racing event (30%)

Considerations:

- number of local suppliers and contractors to be engaged
- additional internal staff employed for the purposes of the event
- potential economic, social and community flow-on benefits to the local area
- visitation numbers beyond the local area
- public accessibility, including disability and diversity accessibility
- number of volunteers who will support the event

Criteria 3.

Capability to deliver the project (20%)

Considerations:

- staffing and resource management planning
- track record of running this event and/or similar events
- analysis of previous events i.e., successful/unsuccessful elements, research, and audience feedback
- event feasibility and event planning
- marketing and communication planning showing how attendees will be attracted to the event

Criteria 4.

Need for government support and value for money (10%)

Considerations:

- what event activities would not proceed or be reduced without government funding?
- how will the event be improved with government funding? e.g., reach a particular cohort, expansion of offering, purchase of expertise, more accessible, longer hours of operation
- is the event receiving other funding?
- will government funding enable or support the event to occur again in the future?



7 APPROVAL PROCESS

The Office of Racing will provide the Minister with funding recommendations following the assessment process.

Decisions on allocation of grant funding under this Program are at the Minister's absolute discretion.

Successful and unsuccessful applicants will be notified of their application outcome in writing.

The successful applicant's name, event name and the funding amount may be made publicly available, including publication on the Department's website and media releases.

8 GRANT AGREEMENTS

Successful applicants will be required to enter into a legally binding Grant Agreement with the Department on its standard terms and conditions.

The Grant Agreement details all funding obligations and conditions. Grant Agreements must be signed by an authorised representative with the authority to bind the organisation.

Successful applicants will be required to accept the Department's payment schedule noting payments will be made according to set milestone deliverables detailed in the Grant Agreement.

Successful applicants will have 15 calendar days from the date of the Letter of Offer to accept and to sign the Grant Agreement with the Department. The offer may be withdrawn if the Grant Agreement is not executed within the timeframe.

The event must not commence until a Grant Agreement has been executed by both the successful applicant and the Department.

8.1 Payment conditions

The approved grant amount or up to 50 per cent of eligible expenditure (whichever is the lesser) will be provided upon successful delivery of the project and completion of reporting requirements.

Funding will not be provided for retrospective activities (costs incurred prior to the signing of the Grant Agreement).

The Department reserves the right to withhold funding, if the grant recipient fails to comply with the obligations outlined in the funding agreement. The Department will not be responsible for shortfalls in event budgets if the grant recipient is unable to meet any event costs.

Grant recipients will need to meet the cost of any ineligible expenditure associated with their event.

The Department will pay the grant recipient once the following has been received:

- a valid tax invoice
- a completion report
- evidence of the applicant's recognition of the government's contribution to the project
- evidence attesting to the total cost of the project, this may be in the form of a statutory declaration as specified in the grant agreement
- evidence of the expenses i.e., (invoices, receipts)
- evidence as specified in the grant agreement and/or any additional documents, photos, or other evidence as the Department may reasonably require.



9 TERMS AND CONDITIONS

9.1 Conflict of Interest

A conflict of interest is a situation in which someone in a position of trust or influence has competing professional or personal interests.

For example, in the context of VRIF funded projects, a conflict of interest may arise where a committee member or employee of a club has a personal interest, owns shares in or controls a business that is selected by the club to supply goods or services for one or more project components. A conflict may also exist where spouses or family members of committee members or club employees have any of these interests.

Applicants must advise the Office of Racing of any actual or perceived conflict of interest relating to a project for which it has applied for VRIF funding. Applicants must clearly demonstrate how the proposed project costs represent value for money and detail how the conflict will be managed. This may include obtaining additional quotes to confirm that the quotes provided by conflicted businesses demonstrate value for money.

Should the applicant be unable to satisfy the Office of Racing that a conflict has been appropriately managed, the Office of Racing may require the applicant to choose another supplier or withdraw its application until the matter has been resolved.

9.2 Child protection requirements

Where the purpose of the funding provided by the government is in support of services provided directly to children (under 18 years of age) and the grant recipient will have sole responsibility and supervision of such children, funding will only be provided where the applicant provides evidence of insurance coverage relating to any claims of child harm or abuse.

Further information and the related guidelines can be found at:

<https://www.justice.vic.gov.au/safer-communities/protecting-children-and-families/organisations-providing-services-to-children-new>

9.3 Reporting for Program Evaluation

As a condition of funding, successful applicants will be required to participate in any program monitoring and evaluation activities initiated by the Department. This may include completing surveys to measure progress to achieving outcomes, and for up to three years after project completion.

Reporting is critical to the Department in understanding program impact, supporting continuous improvement in program design and delivery, and delivering more effective grant programs to the people of Victoria.



9.4 Privacy and Confidentiality

Any personal information provided by the applicant or a third party in an application will be collected by the Department for the purpose of program administration. This information may be provided to other Victorian Government bodies for the purposes of assessing applications. If confidential personal information about third parties is included in an application, applicants must ensure that the third party is aware of the contents of this Privacy Statement.

Any personal information collected, held, managed, used, disclosed, or transferred will be held in accordance with the provisions of the *Information Privacy Act 2000* (Vic) and other applicable laws.

The Department of Justice and Community Safety is committed to protecting the privacy of personal information. The Department's Privacy Policy can be found online at <https://www.justice.vic.gov.au/your-rights/privacy/information-privacy-policy>. Enquiries about access to information should be directed to the Department's Privacy Unit by phone on (03) 8684 0178 or email privacy@justice.vic.gov.au.

9.5 Publicity/Acknowledgement

Recipients must:

- agree to cooperate with the Department in the preparation of materials used to promote the benefits of the program to industry, such as a media release or case study of the project
- consult with the Department prior to the publication of any project promotion materials
- not make any public announcement or issue any press release regarding the receipt of a grant without prior approval by the Department
- comply with any additional requirements as specified in the Grant Agreement
- include the State Government insignia on all advertising, race books and promotional material for any approved VRIF event project.

The Department may request Recipients and Service Providers to fact check any text and seek approval to use any owned imagery associated with the activity prior to the publication of any such promotional materials.

Further information on the Victorian Government Branding Guidelines can be obtained via the [Department of Premier and Cabinet website \(External link\)](#).

9.6 Contact information

For more information about the Victorian Racing Industry Fund, or to discuss any specific queries, please contact the Office of Racing.

Email: VRIF@justice.vic.gov.au

These guidelines are subject to change at the discretion of **the Minister for Racing**.