

Victorian Racing Industry Fund Strategic Racing Initiatives Program

Program Guidelines

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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

Strategic Racing Initiatives program

The Strategic Racing Initiatives (SRI) program supports the three racing codes to implement strategic projects which support the long-term growth and viability of the Victorian racing industry.

A sustainable racing industry needs strategic projects and initiatives to provide high quality training and racing in Victoria. Supporting projects which strategically improve welfare, integrity, breeding and sustainability for the racing industry is a priority.

1.1 Program objectives and outcomes

The program will support the implementation of strategic projects for the benefit of racing across Victoria.

The VRIF Strategic Racing Initiatives program objectives are to:

- support appropriate breeding programs across the three racing codes
- support the welfare of racing animals and the wellbeing of jockeys, trainers, drivers, and participants
- support projects that underpin the sustainable growth and viability of the racing industry
- support projects which are integral to the strategic plans of the three racing codes
- support projects which uphold and improve the integrity of racing in Victoria.

The intended outcomes of this program are:

- improved breeding and welfare programs
- support for strategic and integrity projects
- support for the ongoing viability of racing in Victoria.



2 PROGRAM DATES

This is an open program with no specific funding rounds. It is recommended that applications are submitted at least 3 months prior to the expected commencement date of the project.

3 FUNDING

Grants will be provided on a cash co-contribution basis of up to 50 per cent of the total eligible 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 a representative of 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 Strategic Racing Initiative grant:

- Racing Victoria Limited
- Country Racing Victoria
- Harness Racing Victoria
- Greyhound Racing Victoria
- Racing clubs licensed under section 24A of the *Racing Act 1958*. This includes HRV Management Limited (trading as Tabcorp Park) and racing clubs registered as part of the Wimmera Racing Club
- Racing clubs licensed by Racing Victoria Limited as a picnic racing club
- Racing clubs licensed by Harness Racing Victoria as a graduation club.

The following organisations are eligible to apply for funding under the VRIF with written support from the relevant controlling body:

- associated racing industry bodies and stakeholders, for example the Victorian Jockeys' Association, Australian Trainers' Association (Victorian Branch)
- Racing Analytical Services Limited
- Association of Victorian Country Harness Racing Clubs.

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

4.2 Ineligible applicants

All entities except those listed in Section 4.1.



4.3 Eligible projects

The applicant must provide a detailed project plan with strong alignment to strategic priorities for the racing industry. It must be able to be demonstrated that there is a need for the project and the project is timely, appropriate and with an expected impact on the racing industry across Victoria. Applicants must discuss their project with the Office of Racing prior to application.

Examples of strategic projects include, but are not limited to the following:

- major projects
- cross code projects
- breeding and sales incentive projects
- animal and participant welfare
- integrity projects
- development of industry training
- projects that support the economic development of the industry.

The project must:

- have a strategic focus
- have a strong implementation plan
- have a positive impact on the racing industry.



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.

Applications still 'in draft' and 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

Applicants will be asked to include the following details in their application:

- provide a clear description of the project, its key components, plans and timelines
- address the assessment criteria in full
- grant funding amount and total expenditure figures
- a conflict-of-interest declaration.

5.3 Supporting documents

The following documentation is required as part of the application:

- a project budget (template provided)
- project implementation plan
- provide quotes or internal cost estimates (less than 12 months old) for goods and services to be procured, which demonstrate value for money to the State
- evidence of research or consultation with any relevant organisations.

5.4 Additional supporting documents for projects above \$500,000

In addition to the required documentation listed in Section 5.3, projects greater than \$500,000 must be accompanied by the following supporting documentation:

- evidence of co-contribution including:
 - evidence that the applicant can undertake the project and meet its co-contribution costs
 - an approved loan facility (including loan amount) – where appropriate
- project implementation plan including the relevant permit and planning guidelines/approvals (where appropriate)
- CVs of the responsible senior management team responsible for delivering the project and relevant experience in delivering similar projects
- quantity surveyor or independent qualified expert report (less than 12 months old) and a market engagement strategy or Procurement Plan.



5.5 Additional supporting documents for projects above \$1 million

In addition to the required documentation listed in Section 5.4, projects greater than \$1 million must be accompanied by the following supporting documentation:

- a business case which includes detailed cost-benefit analysis and risk assessment (including a SWOT - Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats analysis) of the proposed project

Projects over \$1 million may be required to comply with additional legislative requirements under the Local Jobs First Policy (refer to Section 9.3).

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 project 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 project 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
- activity/expense eligibility
- if applicable, support from the racing code
- required supporting documentation (budgets, quotes, tender reports, business cases, 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.

The project's ability to drive long term growth and sustainability of the Victorian racing industry (40%)

Considerations:

- demonstration of strategic alignment with industry plans, needs, sustainability and growth
- the need for the project, issues which need resolving, and urgency
- the readiness of the project to commence upon approval
- the expected benefits of the project to the racing industry, participants, animal welfare, and the community

Criteria 2.

Economic, social or community benefits delivered by the project (30%)

Considerations:

- number of suppliers and contractors to be engaged
- additional internal staff employed for the purposes of the project
- type and quality of suppliers and contractors to be engaged
- potential economic, social and community flow on benefits to local area or Victoria
- expected increase to participant and patron numbers
- resources to be allocated to the project, including number of suppliers and contractors to be engaged
- long-term project benefits
- outcomes which provide; cost savings, improved industry standards, improved gender equality and diversity

Criteria 3.

Capability to deliver the project (20%)

Considerations:

- staffing and resource management planning
- track record of delivering similar projects
- implementation plans which demonstrate an understanding of the project purpose, targets, and impact
- a targeted approach with value for money, underpinned by research and focused on timely delivery

Criteria 4.

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

Considerations:

- what project elements would not proceed or be reduced without government funding?
- how will the project be improved with government funding? e.g. better quality, size of project or timing
- is the project receiving other funding?
- the risks to the project without Government support
- will government funding enable or support the project to create revenue, savings, or sustainability?



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, project 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 project 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 the pro rata per cent of eligible project expenditure (if the total project expenditure is less than budgeted) will be provided upon successful delivery of the project and completion of reporting requirements.

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

The department reserves the right to withhold the balance of the 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 project budgets if the grant recipient is unable to meet any project costs.

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

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

- a valid tax invoice
- a progress or completion report
- signed and executed grant agreement
- evidence of the applicant's recognition of the government's contribution to the project
- documentary 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)
- documentary 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 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.

9.3 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.



9.4 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 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 \(External link\)](#).

9.5 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.