

Victorian Racing Industry Fund Regional Customer Facilities Program

Program Guidelines

March 2024



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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 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 Customer Facilities program

The Regional Customer Facilities (RCF) program supports regional racing clubs to improve customer infrastructure and facilities, which enable the delivery of public racing events at regional racing venues.

Strong, sustainable, and attractive racing events need high-quality, accessible, well-designed, and well-managed facilities to conduct racing event activities. Developing facilities that support participation and inclusion of the broader community, while boosting local economic activity is a priority.

1.1 Program objectives and outcomes

The program will support regional racing clubs to upgrade facilities with an aim of attracting the public to racing events and providing additional use of club facilities to the broader community.

The VRIF Regional Customer Facilities program objectives are to:

- improve the standard of public facilities at regional Victorian racing venues
- improve customer facilities used for racing and community events in regional areas of Victoria
- support facility upgrades which are inclusive, diverse, and accessible
- support facility upgrades which have universal design, gender neutral design, are environmentally sustainable, and strategically planned
- develop local economic activity through the planning, building, activating, maintaining, and managing of redeveloped or new infrastructure
- ensure that Victoria continues to be a vibrant state for racing events of every scale.



The intended outcomes of this program are:

- improved customer facilities which attract the public to racing events and provide additional use of club facilities to the broader community
- improved raceday event experience
- improved access for all attendees at racing events
- support for the ongoing viability of regional racing events.

2 PROGRAM DATES

2.1 Regional Customer Facilities Program Funding Rounds

Applications will be considered in rounds, as detailed in the table below.

Year	Closing dates	
2023		30 December 2023
2024		31 July 2024
2025	31 January 2025	31 July 2025
2026	31 January 2026	31 July 2026

3 FUNDING

Applicants can request grant funding up to \$100,000 (exclusive of GST) per project.

Grants will be provided on a cash co-contribution basis of up to 50 per cent of the eligible project 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 Regional Customer Facilities 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

Projects at the following race venues are ineligible to receive funding through the Regional Customer Facilities program:

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

4.3 Eligible projects

The applicant must hold or intend to hold regular racing events at the venue, which are publicly accessible. They must be able to demonstrate that the racing events held, or to be held will provide racing, economic, social or community value to the local area or to Victoria.

The project must:

- be located at a regional racing venue which holds or intends to hold, regular racing events in Victoria
- enable publicly accessible racing events
- comply with all planning requirements of the Local Government, including obtaining appropriate permits (as required)
- have the required public liability insurance and other relevant insurances
- have an expected completion date within 12 months of project commencement
- have a positive impact on the surrounding community e.g., supporting local businesses.



4.4 Eligible and ineligible expenditure

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

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

Eligible expenses	Ineligible expenses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • building and construction of infrastructure (i.e toilets, decking, shelters, small buildings) • seating for public areas • shade structures and sails • paving, paths, surfaces in entertaining or access areas • accessible ramps, paths, amenities • entertaining areas (ie beer garden, BBQ area) • landscaping • gate entry structure and ticketing booths • driveway, entry roads, parking surfaces • fences and barriers for event zoning • permanent or temporary marquees • equipment purchases as part of a broader zone or area upgrade i.e., furniture, televisions for a function room upgrade, permanent BBQs for a BBQ area) • facility upgrades (painting, new flooring, new walls) • permanent signage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ongoing business-as-usual race day, administrative, operating or staffing costs • training and racing infrastructure • purchase of alcohol • purchase of portable equipment not part of an overall upgrade (such as a BBQ not part of a BBQ area, or a fridge not part of a kitchen upgrade) • expenses not directly related to event infrastructure • expenses to areas not accessible by the public • expenses without receipts (clubs cannot invoice themselves) • expenses solely dedicated to compliance • project contingency

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 project 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 project expenditure under the agreement.



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' and 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:

- provide a clear description of the project, its key components, plans and timelines
- statements addressing the assessment criteria in full
- funding amount requested and total project expenditure amounts
- 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
- relevant permit and planning guidelines/approvals (where necessary)
- site specific plan / aerial map showing location of proposed project
- quotes or cost estimates (less than 12 months old) for goods and services to be procured, which demonstrate value for money
- a letter of support from the relevant controlling body
- if applicable, letters of support from other funding bodies, i.e., local council, key stakeholders, or community users/groups
- written confirmation of landowner consent
- evidence of consultation with other relevant organisations.



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.

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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
- project eligibility
- activity/expense eligibility
- support from the racing code
- required supporting documentation (budgets, quotes, 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.

Ability to improve customer facilities which attract patrons to racing events. (40%)

Considerations:

- 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 racing events and the community
- current and potential additional usage of facilities by the community
- number of racing events per annum and estimated attendees
- previous event success or potential for success after improvements
- contribution to the calendar of events for racing, the region, and Victoria
- how the venues racing events aligns with and support local and state tourism

Criteria 2.

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

Considerations:

- number of suppliers and contractors to be engaged
- potential economic, social and community flow on benefits to local area
- expected increase to visitation numbers beyond the local area
- contribution to social cohesion and inclusivity
- public accessibility including universal design, disability and diversity accessibility
- facility improvements which demonstrate a long-term improvement to shade, shelter, aesthetics, amenities, comfort, viewing, safety or access
- facility improvements which enable additional use of club facilities to the broader community

Criteria 3.

Capability to deliver the project (20%)

Considerations:

- staffing and resource management planning
- track record of delivering similar projects
- analysis of previous events i.e., successful/unsuccessful elements, research and audience feedback
- project feasibility and delivery planning
- project planning and initiatives which demonstrate innovation, potential to attract attendees and the development of quality racing events

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 materials, size of project or timing
- is the project receiving other funding?
- 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. Notification is anticipated within 12 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.

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 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.