

GUIDELINES

COVIDSafe Outdoor Activation Fund 2021

Message from the Minister

It has been fantastic to see how outdoor dining has been embraced and the difference it's made to the hospitality industry and to the community as we enjoy getting back out and about.

In 2020-21, the \$34.5 million Local Councils Outdoor Eating and Entertainment Package saw councils supporting local businesses across the State to set up outdoor dining areas by providing street furniture, bollards, lighting, marquees and pocket parks, waiving permit fees, and streamlining processes.

The new \$40 million COVIDSafe Outdoor Activation Fund will help councils transform even more outdoor areas so Victorians can get out and support their local businesses safely as we reach the key 70 per cent and 80 per cent double vaccination thresholds.

Councils will be able to support a wider range of businesses and industries and put in place permanent infrastructure so that the community can enjoy outdoor spaces this summer and beyond.

I thank the councils for their hard work in getting this initiative off the ground and I look forward to seeing businesses and shopping strips thriving thanks to the outdoor areas the councils have created.



The Hon Shaun Leane MP
Minister for Local Government

Program Summary

The \$40 million *COVIDSafe Outdoor Activation Fund 2021* supports Victorian councils in assisting businesses to operate in outdoor settings in a COVIDSafe manner. This will assist business viability and will support ongoing community safety and confidence as part of the roadmap to reopening.

The Victorian Government has committed \$40 million to the *COVIDSafe Outdoor Activation Fund 2021* which builds on Round 1 and Round 2 of the *Local Councils Outdoor Eating and Entertainment Package*.

In addition to supporting hospitality businesses, the funding will support a broad range of industries that have been severely impacted by COVID restrictions (such as gyms, creative businesses, personal/beauty services, and non-essential retail).

Funding will be provided to all councils (except for the City of Melbourne) for works, services and promotion of outdoor activation through two components:

- Part A - \$20.5 million for works, services and promotion of outdoor activation, to immediately extend the life of existing outdoor eating and entertainment facilities and provide new facilities for other businesses to also operate outdoors.
- Part B - \$19.5 million to establish semi-permanent and permanent outdoor precincts that support industries impacted by COVID restrictions and will be of lasting benefit to local communities.

The *COVIDSafe Outdoor Activation Fund 2021* will enable all Victorian local councils (excluding the City of Melbourne) to facilitate expanded outdoor economic activity at the local level. Councils will receive a fixed allocation of funding for both Part A and Part B.

1 Eligibility

- 1.1 All Victorian councils are eligible for funding under this Program except for the City of Melbourne, which has received support through a separate funding program.
- 1.2 To be eligible to receive funding, councils will be required to prepare and submit the following:

Part A – Immediate Outdoor Activation

- A Rapid Implementation Plan within one month of the issuing of these guidelines which outlines how the funds will be spent to support the objectives of the program.

A template for the Rapid Implementation Plan is provided in Attachment 1.

Part B – Semi-permanent and Permanent Outdoor Precinct Establishment

- A Detailed Outdoor Precinct Establishment Plan within two months of the issuing of these guidelines which outlines how the funds will be spent to support the

objectives of the program, including the longer term economic, social and environmental benefits.

A template for the Detailed Outdoor Precinct Establishment Plan is provided in Attachment 2.

- 1.3 Councils will be required to demonstrate that they have made support available for outdoor activation for non-hospitality businesses, including gyms, creative businesses and non-essential retail and services, to enable them to move some activities to spaces such as footpaths, public land and car parks.
- 1.4 Councils must demonstrate that businesses and organisations from the Creative Industries are incorporated in the development of their Rapid Implementation Plans (see paragraph 4.8).
- 1.5 Councils should also identify opportunities to work in partnership with publicly available, privately held facilities that could be used for outdoor activations, including community arts hubs.
- 1.6 A Final Report will also need to be submitted to acquit the expenditure and identify the activities the funds were spent on.

2 Available funding

- 2.1 \$40 million funding will be provided to all councils (except for the City of Melbourne) for works, services and promotion of outdoor activation, to:
 - Part A - \$20.5 million for works, services and promotion of outdoor activation, to immediately extend the life of existing outdoor eating and entertainment facilities and provide new facilities for other businesses to also operate outdoors.
 - Part B - \$19.5 million to establish semi-permanent and permanent outdoor precincts that support industries impacted by COVID restrictions and will be of lasting benefit to local communities.

3 Funding for Councils

	Number of Councils	Part A	Part B
		Funding Per Council	Funding Per Council
Metropolitan – Very High Activity	3	\$800,000	\$775,000
Metropolitan – Other Inner	5	\$500,000	\$475,000
Metropolitan – Middle/Outer	22	\$300,000	\$275,000
Regional - Large	3	\$500,000	\$475,000
Regional - Other	7	\$300,000	\$275,000
Rural – High Activity	5	\$250,000	\$250,000
Rural – Medium Activity	17	\$150,000	\$150,000
Rural – Other	16	\$100,000	\$100,000

4 Permitted Expenditure

- 4.1 This funding will allow for outdoor eating and entertainment facilities and other businesses to operate outdoors and is intended to support a broad range of industries.
- 4.2 The funding will support the outdoor operation of hospitality businesses and businesses beyond the hospitality sector (including gyms, dance studios, creative and performing arts, hairdressers, beauty/personal services and non-essential retail), with a focus in Part B on permanent infrastructure to facilitate longer-term outdoor activation.
- 4.3 Councils should also identify opportunities to work in partnership with publicly available, privately held facilities that could be used for outdoor activations, including community arts hubs.
- 4.4 Councils must demonstrate that any additional costs or fees councils incur, or loss of revenue, as a result of the activation of outdoor spaces will not be levied on local businesses in order to receive this funding.

Part A – Immediate Outdoor Activation

- 4.5 Councils will be eligible for funding for the following activity areas directly associated with the re-activation, and establishment of new, outdoor spaces:
 - administering permit regulation and approvals processes and the waiving of applicable fees and charges associated with permit applications;
 - provision, maintenance or upgrade of outdoor spaces, parklet facilities, bollards, planter boxes, street furniture, landscaping, signage, lighting, etc;
 - purchase or hire of equipment to support outdoor economic activity in public areas including marquees or other structures, screens and blinds, shelving and display racks, seating, PA Systems etc;
 - street entertainment, cultural displays and performances, etc, to enhance the ambience of outdoor areas;
 - traffic management, including street closures;
 - additional waste management and sanitation in public areas;
 - local marketing and communications to promote outdoor economic activity; and
 - locating and operating mobile food vendors.

- 4.6 Councils will be required to maximise the reuse of temporary infrastructure funded through the 2020 program and prioritise areas that do not have fit for purpose outdoor dining infrastructure funded through the 2020 program in place.
- 4.7 Councils will be required to meet the maintenance (not replacement) costs of temporary infrastructure.
- 4.8 Councils will be required to submit a Rapid Implementation Plan within one month of the issuing of these guidelines which outlines how the funds will be spent to support the objectives of the program.

Part B – Semi-permanent and Permanent Outdoor Precinct Establishment

- 4.9 Councils will be eligible for funding for activity areas directly associated with the establishment of Semi-permanent and Permanent new outdoor precincts that:
 - support enhanced outdoor activation to reach its full potential, for example, due to:
 - density of businesses in the municipality have been severely impacted by COVID restrictions (such as hospitality businesses, gyms, dance studios, personal/beauty services, and non-essential retail);
 - where a comparatively large number of these businesses are competing for space; and/or
 - complex road infrastructure; such as a high number of arterial roads that require more robust and expensive safety infrastructure.
 - alleviate the cost of activating outdoors compounded by financial difficulties due to lost revenue or significant resources dedicated to the COVID-19 response.
 - add to local economic activity and employment creation, in particular demonstrating that the funding will allow traders and local councils to make longer term investments to facilitate more businesses moving activities outdoors.
- 4.10 Councils will be eligible for funding for the following structures related to the establishment of Semi-permanent and Permanent new outdoor precincts:
 - parklet facilities;
 - bollards;
 - planter boxes;
 - marquees;
 - street furniture;
 - landscaping;
 - signage;
 - lighting;
 - outdoor stages;
 - amphitheatres; and
 - other minor works to establish outdoor spaces.

- 4.11 Councils will be required to fully meet the maintenance and repair costs of semi-permanent and permanent infrastructure.
- 4.12 Councils will be required to submit a detailed Outdoor Precinct Establishment Plan within two months of the issuing of these guidelines that sets out in detail what the funding will be used for and demonstrates:
- project plans or site-specific plans have been developed;
 - a sound approach to delivering the project, providing realistic timeframes for delivery, and demonstrating that the project is financially viable and represents value for money;
 - capacity to implement and/or source expertise to manage the delivery of the project;
 - how the proposed infrastructure will be managed and its benefits sustained over the medium to longer term once the infrastructure is delivered; and
 - how the proposed infrastructure will support industries impacted by COVID restrictions, including gyms, creative businesses, personal/beauty services, and non-essential retail operating in the municipality.

5 Non-Permitted Expenditure Part A and B

- 5.1 Councils are not permitted to utilise funding under this Program for the following activities:
- projects or initiatives that are subject to and/or require ongoing funding from the Victorian Government;
 - ongoing operating costs or salary subsidies, except where a salary subsidy provides project implementation or management for the funded project or support to fast track permits;
 - the purchase of land;
 - upgrades or the provision of new infrastructure, technology and/or equipment inside of venues;
 - provision of direct grant funding to businesses or sole traders;
 - imposing new fees or charges on local business;
 - the reimbursement of any fees waived for the use of on or off street carparks other than application fees, assessment fees and other administrative costs; and
 - the costs associated with forgone parking fees/revenue as a result of outdoor activation.

6 Conditions of Funding

- 6.1 Councils will be required to enter into an agreement in the form of the Victorian Common Funding Agreement with the Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions (the

Department) setting out the terms of the funding including the Council's commitments and obligations (**VCFA**).

- 6.2 *COVIDSafe Outdoor Activation Fund 2021* funding will be released upon the execution of the VCFA by the Department in accordance with its terms and will be required to be expended by 30 June 2022.
- 6.3 Works must commence within six weeks of the approval of the Department Rapid Implementation Plan for Part A and the Detailed Outdoor Precincts Establishment Plan for Part B.
- 6.4 Provision of funding under Part B will be conditional on council fully acquitting the funding received under the 2020 Outdoor Eating and Entertainment Package (both rounds), or returning unspent funds to the Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions.
- 6.5 Councils can use funds for permitted activities (Section 4) undertaken following approval of the Rapid Implementation Plan and the Detailed Outdoor Precinct Establishment Plan.
- 6.6 Councils will need to ensure that all activities undertaken as part of this Program, comply with the directions of the Victorian Chief Health Officer that are applicable at the time of any activation (available from <https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/business-sector-coronavirus-disease-covid-19> and amended from time to time).
- 6.7 Councils will be required to complete and submit a Rapid Implementation Plan for Part A and a Detailed Outdoor Precincts Establishment Plan for Part B. The project plan will ensure all proposed works align with these guidelines and are eligible for funding through the Program.
- 6.8 At the completion of the Program councils will be required to submit a Final Report to acquit the expenditure and identify the activities the funds were spent on. This will include but not be limited to:
 - (a) photographic evidence of outdoor activation
 - (b) an acquittal of funding provided under this Program, and
 - (c) information setting out the activities undertaken as part of the Program including any data gathered in respect of those activities such as the number of patrons, success of the outdoor activations and issues or problems encountered.

- 6.9 Councils may also be required to provide further acquittal information at the Department's discretion.
- 6.10 In the event that either the Rapid Implementation Plan or the Detailed Outdoor Precinct Establishment Plan is not lodged within the required timeframes councils will be required to return those funds to the Department.
- 6.11 In the event that any portion of the funding has not been fully expended by 30 June 2022 in accordance with these guidelines and the VCFA, councils will be required to return those funds to the Department.

7 Evaluation

- 7.1 Councils will be required to report on the outcomes of their funding and provide information when required to the department for the evaluation of the program.

8 Compliance and Audit

- 8.1 Councils may be subject to audit by the Victorian Government or its representatives and will be required to produce further evidence to demonstrate that the funding has been utilised in accordance with these guidelines and the VCFA between the Local Councils and the department.
- 8.2 Councils acknowledge and agree that as part of entering into a funding agreement for this Program and any audit process undertaken in administering this Program, the Department may collect and disclose information to relevant Victorian Government agencies and departments and relevant third parties, for the purposes of verifying particulars of a council's application and use of funding under this Program.

9 Acknowledgement

- 9.1 Successful councils must acknowledge Victorian Government support of any activities undertaken as part of the Program through, for instance, activity-related publications, media releases and promotional material in accordance with the VCFA.

10 Privacy Information

- 10.1 Any personal information provided as part of the application process and/or the VCFA about the council's employees, representatives or a third party will be collected by the Department for the purpose of grant administration and will be collected, held, managed, used, disclosed or transferred in accordance with the provisions of the *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014 (Vic)*, and other applicable laws. For further information, please email: privacy@ecodev.vic.gov.au or refer to the Department's Privacy Policy available from <https://djpr.vic.gov.au/privacy>. The council must ensure that it has the

requisite consent of any individual whose personal information it has provided to the Department for the purposes of administering this Program.

11 Other information

- 11.1 The Department reserves the right to amend these guidelines and application terms at any time as it deems appropriate.

12 Further information

- 12.1 For further information, please contact Local Government Victoria on via email lgv.emergencies@ecodev.vic.gov.au.