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| 2024–25 Men’s Shed Funding Program |
| Frequently asked questions |
| OFFICIAL |

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# About the program

## What is the funding objective?

Social and community connections help improve men’s health and wellbeing. Spending time on activities in a workshop environment, in the company of other community members, can reduce social isolation and provide a sense of purpose and enjoyment. This is especially true for men who may find it difficult to connect in other places.

Men’s sheds are places for men to make positive social connections and to take an active part in their local communities.

The objectives of the Victorian Men’s Shed Funding Program are to:

* strengthen social connections between community members and reduce social isolation for men.
* support men to be actively involved in their local communities in a way that suits them.
* increase the capacity and variety of activities sheds can provide, to respond to community need.
* build and strengthen connections between shed groups and their local community.
* increase the number and diversity of men who take part in men’s sheds.

Applications must respond to at least one of the funding objectives to be eligible.

## What types of projects may be appropriate?

A total of $860,000 is available in grants of up to $100,000 for:

* constructing new men’s sheds, including converting a building that is not a men’s shed into a men’s shed.
* refurbishing, extending, or upgrading existing men’s sheds.
* purchasing major equipment that will remain in, and be used by, the men’s shed.

## What is ‘major equipment’?

Major equipment eligible for funding includes machinery such as dust extractors, thicknessers, lathes, table saws and defibrillators. It is equipment that stays at the shed and is used by the shedders. It does not include vehicles, trailers, hand tools or small kitchen items.

These grants are one-off payments and do not cover any ongoing maintenance, replacement or related staff training costs for equipment purchased using a grant. Sheds applying for funding for major equipment should include evidence of their capacity to cover related costs.

# Eligibility

## We have an outstanding report from another grant, what should we do?

If you have an overdue report for another grant from the Victorian Government, you might not be eligible for funding in the current round.

Please contact the team responsible for your existing grant for advice. Your key contact should be on the funding agreement for that grant program.

## How do we check our Australian Business Number (ABN)?

To check your ABN, visit the [Australian Business Register (ABR)](https://abr.business.gov.au) abr.business.gov.au.

## What if we do not have an ABN?

If your organisation does not have ABN, you will need an auspice organisation. Your auspice organisation must be an eligible organisation type. Refer to the program guidelines.

## What is an auspice organisation?

An auspice organisation can receive funds on behalf of a smaller organisation or community group to meet the grant program’s financial and legal requirements. The auspice organisation will then make these funds available to the smaller organisation or community group. An auspice organisation may also be known as a sponsoring agency.

An auspice organisation takes on the responsibility to:

* sign your grant agreement.
* take legal and financial responsibility of the grant on your organisation’s behalf.
* receive and distribute grant funds under the grant agreement.
* ensure all grant activities or events are completed.
* submit accountability and evaluation reports on your organisation’s behalf.

If you use an auspice organisation, you will need a written auspice agreement. The agreement should outline the nature of the arrangement and the responsibilities of each party.

If using an auspice organisation, you must attach a copy of the agreement to your application to meet the eligibility criteria.

## How do we check our organisation type?

To find out your organisation’s registration status, check the [Australian Business Register](https://abr.business.gov.au/) https://abr.business.gov.au. Visit these websites to find out more about your organisation type:

* For incorporated associations, co-operatives or organisations incorporated through other means, go to [Consumer Affairs Victoria](http://www.consumer.vic.gov.au) www.consumer.vic.gov.au.
* For a Company Limited by Guarantee, go to the [Australian Securities and Investment Commission](http://www.connectonline.asic.gov.au) www.connectonline.asic.gov.au.
* For registered charities, go to the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission www.acnc.gov.au/charity.
* For Aboriginal corporations, go to the Office of the Registrar of Indigenous Corporations www.oric.gov.au.

## Our organisation is outside of Victoria but is near the border and visited by Victorians. Are we eligible to apply?

Your shed must be located in Victoria to be eligible.

## What are the insurance requirements for our project?

You must have public liability insurance and any other insurance that is relevant to your project activities. You need to attach proof of insurance to your application to be eligible for funding.

## What is security of tenure?

Security of tenure means the legal right to the land, either as an owner or a lessee.

Applications seeking more than $10,000 in grant funds need a minimum of 5 years security of tenure for the funded organisation at the project site.

You must attach evidence of this tenure to your application – for example, a copy of the lease or land title.

In cases where a council or other organisation is managing the construction of a men’s shed, sometimes the lease will not be finalised until construction is complete and the facility is handed over to the shed group. In this case a letter of intent from the managing organisation that specifies that a lease of 5 years or more will be executed on completion may be accepted as evidence of security of tenure.

## What is a strategic plan? What does it include?

A strategic plan summarises an organisation’s goals and the steps it will take to achieve them. A strategic plan must be attached for applications seeking more than $10,000 in grant funds.

The plan does not need to be complex. It should include information about your shed group’s future direction and the steps you will take to achieve this. The plan is a shared vision of what your shed values and wants to achieve and should be developed as a group.

## Do we need detailed design plans?

Professionally designed plans (site plan and building plan) should be provided for projects that include:

* refurbishments over $10,000
* constructing a new men’s shed.

Plans should match the level of complexity of the project. For example, the construction of shelving units would have simpler plans than the construction of a new shed.

# Application process

## What supporting information do we need to attach to our application?

All information for your application must be submitted in the application form or uploaded as an attachment. Information submitted outside of the application form, such as through email, may not be considered.

All projects should attach a detailed budget to the application form, specifying any in-kind contributions.

Other relevant attachments may include letters of support, leases, design plans, strategic plans, insurance details and other documents that show how your project meets the eligibility and selection criteria.

Make sure you work through the **checklist in the grant guidelines** before submitting your application. This will ensure you have provided the necessary information.

## What happens if we cannot submit on time?

Late applications will not be accepted.

Technical difficulties often occur at the worst possible moment. We recommended you plan to submit your application well ahead of the closing time.

If you are having difficulties submitting your application, please contact the Department’s Social Inclusion Team ahead of the closing time, via mens.sheds@dffh.vic.gov.au.

## Can we submit more than one application?

The department will only assess one application per organisation.

We recommended that organisations focus on developing one, high-quality application for the project that would have the most impact for their shed group.

## Who can we talk to for advice about our application?

The Social Inclusion Team can provide general information and technical support during the application process. You can contact the Social Inclusion Team via email at mens.sheds@dffh.vic.gov.au. You can also call the Social Inclusion Team on (03) 8633 4765.

Please note, specific advice about your project and the selection criteria cannot be provided. This ensures a fair and equitable process for all grant applicants.

The Victorian Men’s Shed Association (VMSA) can also give general advice to men’s sheds. You can contact the VMSA on 0448 015 554 or by email at gm@vmsa.org.au.

# Budget information

## Should we attach a detailed budget with our application form?

For complex projects, we recommend you attach a more detailed budget. This can enhance your application, providing greater detail to grant assessors about how you have costed your project.

But even if you are attaching a more detailed budget, you still need to complete the budget section of the application form.

If you choose to attach a detailed budget, you can:

* use the template available on the [department’s men’s shed webpage](https://providers.dffh.vic.gov.au/mens-shed-program) https://providers.dffh.vic.gov.au/mens-shed-program , or
* use a template of your choosing.

## How do we complete the budget section in the application form?

You must complete the budget section of the application form for your application to be considered.

First, enter the requested grant amount in the income column of the budget. Then, add all other income sources for the project underneath, including in-kind contributions and funds from other sources.

Next, the application form will prompt you to select what the grant funds will be spent on. It will give different categories to choose from (for example, labour, construction materials). Then, it will prompt you to select what the other income sources will be spent on.

When you finish the table, check the total of the income column equals the total of the expenditure column.

## How much would our shed need to contribute to the project?

For every $100 of funding received under the men’s shed grant, an extra $25 must be provided from other sources to contribute to the total project cost. This means 20% of the total project cost must be from other sources.

Other sources may include funding and support from:

* the men’s shed group
* other government organisations
* businesses
* philanthropic organisations
* community fundraising.

Half of the funding contribution can include realistically costed in-kind expenses such as voluntary labour and donated materials.

## How do we record in-kind contributions and voluntary labour?

In-kind contributions are one type of income source you can use for your project. They can be recorded in the income section of the budget, up to (but not exceeding) 10% of your total project cost, or half of the 20% funding contribution.

One type of in-kind contribution is voluntary labour. There is a link in the application form to help you calculate the hourly rate for unqualified voluntary labour. Volunteer labourers with **current** qualifications can be calculated at the [market rate](https://stateofvolunteering.org.au/volunteer-replacement-cost-calculator/) https://stateofvolunteering.org.au/volunteer-replacement-cost-calculator/.

If you are claiming volunteer labour as part of your project income, you must:

* provide specific details of who will perform what task and at what rate.
* attach this information to your application (tip: you can include this as part of a detailed budget sheet).

Discounts from a supplier or contractor also count as an in-kind contribution. If receiving a discount, you need to get this confirmed in writing and attach it to your application.

## Should we include GST in our budget?

All budgets should **exclude** GST.

If your organisation is registered for GST, this will be included in grant payments. GST is not provided for grants allocated to local councils.

# Selection criteria

## What do you mean by ‘value for money’?

Value for money means that grant funds are used efficiently, effectively, and sustainably to achieve the most benefit for participants and the community. It also means that the project is proportionate in cost and size to the number of people it will benefit. It includes considering alternative or cheaper options that may achieve the same outcomes.

When responding to the application criteria, you should justify the cost of your project and show how it will achieve the greatest impact within the funding provided. You can also show this through the attachments to your application, such as a detailed and realistic budget, based on quotes and catalogue prices rather than cost estimations.

## What do you mean by ‘inclusivity’?

The Victorian Government is committed to making sure funded activities are inclusive and accessible. This ensures all Victorians can access opportunities equally. It also ensures that government funding has the greatest possible impact.

Funded sheds should be:

* proactively open to all men in the local community in a meaningful way, including men from diverse cultural and social backgrounds, with some men-only days offered.
* geographically inclusive, which means the location can be accessed by most men in the target community.
* where there is community interest and organisational capacity, inclusive of women and gender-diverse people on some days or for specific activities, to help strengthen community relationships.
* physically accessible for people with a broad range of mobility related needs
* inclusive of people with disability, as outlined in the [*Inclusive Victoria: State disability plan (2022–26)*](file:///C%3A/Users/dpen1802/AppData/Local/Microsoft/Windows/INetCache/Content.Outlook/2K8C2J82/Inclusive%20Victoria%3A%20State%20disability%20plan%20%282022%E2%80%9326%29) https://www.vic.gov.au/state-disability-plan
* incorporating universal design principles to ensure ongoing accessibility.

## What is ‘universal design’?

Funded projects should be designed using the principles of [universal design](https://www.vhba.vic.gov.au/resources/universal-design). Universal design is a design philosophy that ensures products, buildings, environments, and experiences are innately accessible to as many people as possible, regardless of the person’s age, level of ability, cultural background or any other differentiating factors that contribute to the diversity of our communities. For more information on universal design, visit the [Victorian Health Building Authority website](https://www.vhba.vic.gov.au/resources/universal-design) https://www.vhba.vic.gov.au/resources/universal-design.

Projects that include toilet facilities must have an all-gender option. This means that at least one of the toilet facilities must be signed as all-gender or free of gender signage.



# Application outcomes

## How will we be notified?

Organisations will be notified of the outcome of their application by email. Please ensure the email addresses provided in your application are accurate and that you will still have access to those email accounts after the application period has closed.

## What if I am not successful?

Organisations that are not allocated funds will have the opportunity to receive feedback on their application. Details on how to request feedback will be included in the outcome notification.

Seeking feedback can assist organisations to submit a stronger application in a future grant round.

# Conditions of funding

## What reporting will we need to do?

Online forms for reporting will be made available through the DFFH Grants Gateway portal.

If successful, funded organisations will have to provide:

* quarterly reports on the status of their projects
* a final report and financial acquittal.

The final report template will require you to:

* complete a short evaluation of the grant activities and outcomes.
* outline how you acknowledged government funding.
* provide a transaction list of the items you spent the funds on.

You will also need to provide copies of invoices or receipts for all individual purchases over $10,000.

## How long do we have to complete the project?

All projects must be completed by 31 March 2027.

## When will funds be paid?

If successful, a first payment will be made after your organisation signs the funding agreement. Other payments will be released after you submit progress reports.

## What if the project changes?

Successful projects are funded based on the description provided in the application.

Any changes to the project from this description must be detailed to the department in writing. This may mean completing a document template or providing more information.

All changes to projects need to be approved by the department. This ensures projects remain consistent with the intention of the minister who approved the funds. **You should not proceed with any changes to a project before receiving approval from the department.**

If you need to request changes to your project, please contact the Social Inclusion Team via email for individual advice and support on mens.sheds@dffh.vic.gov.au.