



Funding guidelines: Aboriginal Community Mitigation and Crisis Management (ACMCM)

Background

The 2019-2020 bushfire season was unprecedented in intensity and devastation. These fires directly affected Aboriginal communities across Victoria, primarily in the south eastern and north eastern parts of the state.

Aboriginal people are disproportionately affected by the impact of fires due to the higher proportion of Aboriginal people living in bushfire affected areas than elsewhere in the State (especially East Gippsland), existing structural and financial inequalities, a backdrop of historical and intergenerational trauma, and the significant impacts that bushfire and fire suppression activities can have on Country and cultural heritage.

In January 2020, the Victorian and Commonwealth Governments announced an \$86 million Victorian Bushfires Community Recovery Package. This package is joint funded through Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA), which are the Commonwealth-state cost-sharing arrangements for providing financial support for relief and recovery activities resulting from natural disasters and terrorist acts.

Bushfire Recovery Victoria

Bushfire Recovery Victoria (BRV) is a new, permanent and dedicated Victorian Government agency working directly with local communities to listen, help and deliver what they need to recover from the impact of bushfires.

Community Recovery and Resilience Grants Initiative

The Community Recovery and Resilience Grants Initiative is a \$35 million initiative, which aims to provide financial support to locally led and responsive programs that support the recovery of communities in Victoria's bushfire affected regions.

The Community Recovery and Resilience Grants Initiative is being administered by BRV.

All programs funded under the Community Recovery and Resilience Grants Initiative will seek to support the following objectives:

1. Improve community connectedness and cohesion
2. Support community development
3. Strengthen communities' resilience against natural disaster
4. Build community capability and capacity for recovery
5. Empower communities to lead and direct their recovery process.

ACMCM Funding Program

The ACMCM funding program seeks to address unmet needs in strengthening Aboriginal communities' resilience against natural disasters:

- Aboriginal communities still lack culturally safe crisis management plans that can help to ensure culturally appropriate responses to bushfire crises, so funding is needed to support future bushfire mitigation and planning strategies.
- The sector requires further support to address the increased pressure on Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs) and their staff to deliver recovery programs for the 2019-20 Eastern Victorian fires and prepare for future bushfires.
- There is a need to ensure that communications between Government departments, agencies, ACCOs, and other community stakeholders are streamlined and consistent.

The program has two streams, which will be disbursed on a competitive basis:

Stream 1: Crisis management, mitigation and planning (\$1.8 million)

Stream 2: Improved Aboriginal infrastructure to better prepare for future emergency events (\$2 million)

Funding Stream 1: Crisis management, mitigation and planning (\$1.8 million available)

Grants of up to \$450,000 are available to support Aboriginal organisations with readiness to develop and implement disaster crisis planning and mitigation initiatives on bushfire-affected Country.

Examples of projects that may be funded in this category are:

- pre-bushfire season planning and mitigation works
- public safety initiatives
- bushfire crisis mitigation/management training and capacity building for Traditional Owners
- bushfire crisis mitigation/management training and capacity building for Aboriginal communities

Funding Stream 2: Improved Aboriginal infrastructure to better prepare for future emergency events (\$2 million available)

Grants of up to \$1 million are available for projects that address the structural needs of bushfire-affected Aboriginal communities, including:

- rebuilding/repairation/replacement works on bushfire-affected Aboriginal infrastructural assets
- construction of new, or the upgrade of currently dilapidated, local emergency shelters and facilities
- restoration of community kitchens, emergency water supply and sewage management facilities, to safeguard their ability to remain operational during a disaster event/throughout the bushfire crisis
- fire-proofing existing community-gathering spaces to protect against fire risks

Guidelines

Eligibility criteria

To be eligible, an organisation must be either:

- An Aboriginal organisation that is an incorporated legal entity
- A social enterprise with a clearly stated purpose or mission related specifically to supporting Aboriginal communities in bushfire recovery
- Capability to report to BRV on the outcomes and activities of the funded project
- Applicants for the ACMCM grants must have had their Country directly impacted by the 2019-20 bushfires, with the following Local Government Areas and Alpine Resorts being in scope:

Local Government Areas: Ararat, Alpine, Ballarat, East Gippsland, Glenelg, Golden Plains, Greater Bendigo, Indigo, Mansfield, Moyne, Northern Grampians, Pyrenees, Southern Grampians, Strathbogie, Towong, Wangaratta, Wellington and Wodonga

Alpine Resorts: Falls Creek, Mount Buller, Mount Hotham and Mount Stirling

Applicants must also have:

- A current Australian Business Number (ABN)
- No outstanding final reports or financial reports required for any previous government grant programs.

Auspice Organisations

Auspice organisations can support unlimited applications from lead applicants.

If your organisation is not incorporated or does not have an ABN, you may still apply if you are supported by an eligible auspice organisation that has agreed to manage the grant for you.

An auspice arrangement is when a larger organisation assists a smaller organisation to fund a grant activity or event.

The larger organisation is known as the auspice organisation. Your community group or organisation is known as the grant recipient.

Exclusion criteria

Grants cannot be used for:

- offsetting of salaries, operating costs for existing staff or contractors
- feasibility studies, business plans, cost benefit analysis and economic impact studies
- projects that may have a negative impact on existing businesses / services
- passing on funding to a third party in the form of a sponsorship or grant
- the cost of works or activities covered by insurance.

Who cannot apply?

- State and Federal government agencies
- Individuals and sole traders
- Unincorporated community organisations
- Commercial enterprises
- Fixed trusts
- Local Government Authorities (LGAs) including LGA managed, operated, administered and regulated trusts (can act as an auspice).
- Registered primary and secondary schools, preschools, TAFE institutes and universities (can act as an auspice)
- Commercial enterprises are not eligible to apply for a grant alone (they can partner with an organisation as a sponsor and only provide contributions).

Selection Criteria

Applications (see Eligibility and Exclusion criteria) to the ACMCM grant program will be assessed against the five key selection criteria outlined below, as well as on the extent to which they can demonstrate how the requirements will be met with supporting documentation.

6. Purpose

Applications must clearly demonstrate why the proposed project and its works are needed, including a clear explanation for how these needs have been identified as important to the organisation or the Aboriginal community.

Applications must also explain how their project will deliver direct benefit to a bushfire-affected community and support one or more of the objectives of this funding:

- Valuing and respecting Aboriginal culture
- Addressing Aboriginal trauma and supporting healing
- Promoting Aboriginal cultural safety
- Promoting Aboriginal ownership, resilience and participation.

7. Aboriginal community participation

Applicants must demonstrate how the project will:

- Ensure Aboriginal voices are leading bushfire management solutions for the future,
- Better prepare Aboriginal communities for future bushfire crisis, and/or
- Promote Aboriginal community resilience towards future natural disaster events.

8. Planning and delivery

Applicants must provide a clear explanation on how the project will be undertaken and the anticipated completion date.

9. Budget

Applicants must provide evidence to show that:

- Costs are accurate and reasonable
- Include any in kind or co-contribution funding support

Further mandatory requirements

Applications must outline how the proposed project(s) will comply with the Victorian COVID-19 restrictions and requirements.

Applications must comply with any other legal requirements (e.g. Aboriginal Heritage Act 2008 (Vic), an agreement or equivalent made under the Traditional Owner Settlement Act 2010 (Vic) or Native Title Act 1983 (Cth); local planning laws)

Assessment Criteria

Applications received will be assessed against the criteria as outlined in the table below.

Assessment Criteria	Weighting
Extent to which the application clearly demonstrates why the proposed project and its works are needed, and how these needs were identified.	30%

Extent to which the application clearly articulates what works will be undertaken and why they are financially viable.	30%
Extent to which the application clearly demonstrates how the proposed project/works will directly support Aboriginal communities to be better prepared for and/or be more resilient towards future bushfire crisis, safeguard culturally appropriate responses to bushfire crises, and ensure Aboriginal voices are leading bushfire management solutions for the future.	30%
Extent to which the application clearly describes how the project will be delivered; including the key steps and milestones, an overview of the project timeline, and details of who will oversee and manage the bushfire mitigation or infrastructural works.	10%

Funding Agreements and Reporting

Organisations approved for funding will enter into a Victorian Common Funding Agreement (VCFA) with Bushfire Recovery Victoria.

The VCFA will outline:

- the grant's terms and conditions, including use of funds
- agreement terms
- key deliverables and due dates
- reporting requirements.

Organisations that are successful in receiving funding will have 30 days to enter into a VCFA. If a grant offer is not accepted during this period, the grant may be withdrawn.

Reporting

Organisations will be required to report on the funded activity and can submit their final reports online and must submit their final report on time.

Acknowledgement Guidelines

A common condition of BRV grants is that grant recipients must agree to follow BRV guidelines for acknowledging the government's funding. A breach of these guidelines is considered a breach of your funding agreement with BRV. The BRV Acknowledgement Guidelines can be found at <https://www.vic.gov.au/bushfire-recovery-victoria>.