

Volunteer Committees of Management - Targeted Asset Maintenance and Upgrades: Public Access, Use and Amenity on Public Land

Round 2 Program Guidelines
September 2025



Energy,
Environment
and Climate Action

OFFICIAL

Acknowledgment

We acknowledge and respect Victorian Traditional Owners as the original custodians of Victoria's land and waters, their unique ability to care for Country and deep spiritual connection to it. We honour Elders past and present whose knowledge and wisdom has ensured the continuation of culture and traditional practices.

We are committed to genuinely partner, and meaningfully engage, with Victoria's Traditional Owners and Aboriginal communities to support the protection of Country, the maintenance of spiritual and cultural practices and their broader aspirations in the 21st century and beyond.



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1. Definitions

Term used	Definition	Examples
Targeted maintenance or upgrade	Works that directly addresses a specific and clearly defined issue that is restricting or limiting public access, public use, or public amenity on the reserve. It is not a general improvement but a strategic intervention that responds to a known risk, failure or gap	Maintenance or upgrades that are needs-driven: responding to a broken asset, or one that is unsafe, non-compliant or no longer fit for purpose. Prioritised : chosen because they have the biggest impact on the public's ability to access or use the site. Outcome focused : designed to clearly improve how the reserve works for the community
Asset	Any physical structure, system or installed element on a Crown Land Reserve under the Committee's management that supports public access, public use or public amenity and aligns with the purpose for which the land was reserved such as public recreation, community gatherings, environmental conservation or cultural use.	Buildings and built structures, installed infrastructure, access and safety features, essential systems. For public halls eligible assets may include doors, flooring, kitchens and toilets, for recreation reserves they may include ovals, change rooms shelters. Essential systems include drainage, irrigation systems water tanks and lighting
Public Access	The ability of all people to safely enter, navigate and use a reserve or facility regardless of their physical, sensory or cognitive abilities. It includes people with disabilities of any kind, people of all ages, and those with temporary injuries.	Include but are not limited to: Ramps with appropriate gradients and handrails to supplement or replace stairs. Wider pathways and doorways for wheelchair access, tactile ground surface indicators for people with vision impairments, accessible toilets, seating areas, clear signage
Use	The functionality of a space. How the community actively engages with a reserve, facility or open space, whether for recreation, sport, cultural activity or a community gathering to name a few. It reflects how the space adds value to the community's everyday life, as a place to connect, participate, to move or to learn	Works on an asset or a modification to a functional space that enables or expands how the community can use it
Amenity	The quality of the experience. Relates to the level of comfortability, useability, safety and appearance of a space	Essential repairs or upgrades to physical assets that support the comfort, cleanliness, safety or aesthetic quality of a reserve or facility. Any delays would result in deterioration of site's condition, rapid distress for public or damage to the reputation of the reserve or committee
Urgent	Refers to maintenance or upgrade works that, if not addressed promptly, pose a significant risk to the safety, functionality, accessibility, or performance of public infrastructure, thereby threatening the reserve's ability to fulfill its purpose in the short to medium term. Includes the deterioration or failure of an asset that, if left untreated, would result in higher repair costs, loss of service, or diminished usability, thereby reducing the reserve's ability to meet its intended purpose and overall value to a diverse community.	Urgency includes situations where immediate hazards could lead to injury or harm to the public, volunteers, or individuals with limited mobility or other vulnerabilities. It also encompasses issues that significantly impair the intended use of the asset, such as access barriers, damaged facilities, or malfunctioning essential services that hinder the reserve's operations or public enjoyment, or for groups that rely on DDA compliant infrastructure.

2. What is the *Volunteer Committees of Management - Targeted Asset Maintenance and Upgrades: Public Access, Use and Amenity on Public Land Program*?

- 2.1 The Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA) is helping volunteer committees open and activate public land by improving access, use and amenity through targeted asset investment projects.
- 2.2 The *Volunteer Committees of Management (CoMs) – Targeted Asset Maintenance and Upgrades: Public Access, Use and Amenity Program* (the Program) allocates \$1.8 million dollars over two years, assisting volunteer CoMs to activate public land and improve the reserves they manage. The 2024/2025 first round funding allocated \$915,000 across 24 targeted asset maintenance and upgrade projects.
- 2.3 The Program supports the planning and implementation of urgent capital asset maintenance or renewal. This funding targets improvements of assets in poor or very poor condition and/or where serviceability is being significantly affected. It also seeks to upgrade facilities and access, to meet or improve levels of compliance of the premises and support a strategic and balanced approach to risk management within the boundaries of Parks and Reserve Trust Account (PRTA) expenditure area (see Figure 1 below). PRTA funds supports management and control of open space, parks and waterways, within the metropolitan area (including maintenance and asset construction) for the purposes of conservation, recreation, leisure, tourism and navigation. To be eligible, projects must be related to asset maintenance or upgrade and improve public access, amenity and the use of public land reserves for the benefit all Victorians.



Fig 1. Representation of the Parks and Reserve Trust Account (PRTA) boundary within which the \$1.8 million funding is available to category 2 and 3 volunteer CoMs with buildings, assets or other structures, for financial years 2024-2026.

3. How do I know if my committee/project is eligible?

- 3.1 DEECA encourages initial project eligibility and expression of interest (EOI) meetings between DEECA and the CoM prior to application submission. The eligibility criteria for organisations is outlined below.

Eligibility Criteria

Active and legal Volunteer (category 2 and 3) CoMs appointed under Section 14 of the *Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978* with buildings/assets on their managed land/reserve and;

Be located wholly or in part within the PRTA expenditure area. This area is broadly within Metropolitan Melbourne, including most of the peri-urban fringe and parts of west Gippsland, see Fig 1 above on page 3.

Propose a funding request: between \$10,000 - \$150,000 (ex GST), supported with quotes valid for at least 21 days from the date of submission to DEECA, supported with evidence of all necessary approvals for works in writing including permits, consents and approvals by DEECA and/or by council, obtained in advance of application and/or that no permits, consents and approvals are required as determined by the relevant land owner and/or other authority.

Have complied with the terms and conditions of any previous Victorian Government funding, grant or concessional loan they have received.

Propose works on or for assets that are consistent with the scope of this program and support outcomes consistent with the program's objectives to target assets which if maintained or upgraded will improve public access, use or amenity on public land.

Provide with the proposal, all relevant supporting documents listed in these guidelines and the completed application form for Round 2.

Attest and demonstrate that all components in the delivery of the project complies with all federal and state legislation, regulations and codes for example relevant planning and building regulations and occupational health and safety standards.

4. What may be funded?

- 4.1 All funded projects must directly or indirectly support the purpose of the reserve by improving access, use or amenity and must:
- 4.1.1 manage an identified risk associated with an underperforming or non-compliant asset; or
 - 4.1.2 demonstrate the ability to improve an asset or a building's performance or function to meet a required service level for the needs of community users.
- 4.2 The program provides a financial contribution based on the annual revenue of the applicant. CoMs with an annual net-revenue (from ordinary activities during the 2024/2025 financial year) above \$100,000 must contribute a minimum of 15% of the total project costs. For other CoMs, leveraged funds are not a pre-requisite however the Program encourages co-contributions where possible to help deliver greater overall outcomes for more local communities.

Applicants net annual revenue	Minimum financial co-contribution
> \$100,000	15% of project cost
< \$100,000	0% of project cost

In addition, CoMs may also include an 'in-kind' figure as part of their contribution. This can reflect the time, provision of equipment, or materials to help deliver projects. Volunteer time is typically valued at \$40 per hour. DEECA highly values in-kind contributions, but they are not included as part of the direct assessment criteria.

- 4.3.1 The Program also assists category 2 and 3 CoMs to undertake required works identified in their 2022 CT Management reserve reports. These condition reports rated asset condition and indicated timeframes for repair, renewal or replacement. The Program requires CoMs to focus on the key issues and risks identified in the reserve's CT Management asset report in their application. If your reserve did not receive a report, or the report you received is no longer reflective of your current works priorities, this will not influence DEECA's assessment against the criteria.
- 4.4 DEECA will also consider supporting a range of projects which focus on:
- Urgent repair of community facilities and reserve infrastructure (e.g., public halls, amenity blocks, sport and recreation assets) ensuring these are safe and accessible for all users.
 - Rectification, renewal or upgrade of assets that if delayed beyond 12 months would lead to significantly increased costs incurred by committee (i.e. time-critical works).
 - Urgent upgrade or replacement of assets to improve compliance with the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 and relevant Australian Standards (e.g., AS 1428.1:2021). This includes, but is not limited to, accessible unisex toilets, pathways, ramps, compliant parking bays, tactile and braille signage, and supporting infrastructure designed to ensure equitable and safe access to the premises and/or public facilities
 - Replacement of assets essential to reinstating or fundamental to the use and function of the Crown land reserve and its facilities particularly where these upgrades enhance accessibility and usability for all.
 - Removal of damaged, or dangerous assets. This includes addressing barriers to access or safety concerns that disproportionately affect persons with disabilities.
 - High-priority upgrades to assets that reduce risk during emergency events (e.g., fire doors).
 - Repair and/or replacement of rusted, damaged, or leaking assets (e.g., roofs), where failure to act would impede access, safety, or functionality.
 - Replacement or construction of assets to meet current safety standards with a focus on incorporating universal design principles.
 - Repair/replacement of aging assets ensuring upgrades improve safety, usability, or compliance.
 - Projects that incorporate one or more of the above while demonstrating additional community value, such as creating welcoming and inclusive spaces or supporting increased participation by diverse user groups for example.
- 4.5 DEECA will preferentially consider proposals supported by:
- Preliminary condition audits or inspection reports; these should demonstrate areas where assets fail to meet certain standards or community needs.
 - Letters of support by council or other relevant authorities or engagement meeting summaries with focus groups, local community, or relevant users.
 - Feasibility and preliminary studies; these should detail proposed measures to eliminate discrimination in access and promote equitable use of community facilities on the premises. For instance, include evidence of how the National Construction Code (NCC) and Universal Design Principles (see links in stream 2 application form) will be applied to demonstrate both improved compliance and feasibility.
 - Assessments, reports, or investigations necessary to comply with statutory requirements and approvals (e.g., planning or building permits, Native Title, Aboriginal Heritage Regulations).
 - Relevant project scoping documentation by certified access consultants and building surveyors to ensure designs are compliant and fit for purpose.
 - Preliminary detailed designs of works (e.g. stormwater management plans for drainage upgrades) provided by appropriately qualified industry professionals or consultants.
 - How works are underpinned by government directives e.g. the State disability plan 2022–2026.
- 4.6.1 Works that have three or more quotes (note: projects <\$50K may not require multiple quotes).

- 4.6.2 DEECA will consider proposals as they are received. Subject to project eligibility, DEECA will immediately allocate funding to support time-critical works on poor or very poor condition assets and timely replacement, or purchase of new assets required for the purpose or security of the reservation and/or to satisfy suitable levels of accessibility for all user groups and other compliance related needs.
- 4.6.3 The funding round will remain open until DEECA has allocated all funds to eligible projects. This may occur at any time during the financial year and therefore DEECA encourages CoMs to submit comprehensive applications as early as possible.
- 4.6.4 Where a project meets all listed criteria, DEECA will allocate funds. DEECA may waitlist proposals that partially meet the criteria and may re-consider at a later stage (subject to funding availability).

5. What will not be funded?

- 5.1 DEECA considers the following projects, costs or activities to be outside the scope of the program and will therefore not fund items including but not limited to:
- Projects located wholly or in part on land not managed by a category 2 or 3 volunteer CoM;
 - Projects outside the PRTA expenditure area.
 - Recurrent operating costs (e.g. rent, electricity and utility costs, and/or activities establishing expectations of ongoing funding)
 - Routine or ongoing maintenance activities that should be part of the day-to-day management of the reserve, including weed removal, cleaning and maintenance of public toilets, picnic areas, and BBQ facilities
 - Renovation or re-building of an asset that is no longer used by the public;
 - Any works on boundary fences¹. (internal fencing, for safety, may be considered).
 - Projects wholly funded by other Commonwealth or state government departments, local councils, grants programs, or insurance claims within the previous 12 months;
 - Projects which have received confirmation of expected funding by other Commonwealth or state government departments, local councils, grants programs or insurance claims;
 - Risk treatment for land where DEECA is not the landowners;
 - The purchase of land;
 - Projects without dedicated project management or where DEECA is expected to be the project manager. As far as is possible, DEECA expects all grant recipients to manage and have oversight of all aspects of the contractor procurement and delivery.
 - Any project beginning prior to 01 July 2025, and/or any project due for completion after 01 May 2026.
 - Costs associated with the preparation of the application for this Program including but not limited to: feasibility studies, business cases, expert reports, developments plans, risk assessments, assessments/reports undertaken to support applications for required Council permits
 - Coastal protection works.

5.3.5 ¹ Due to the scale of fencing across the state adjoining Crown land reserves, the DEECA does not contribute to the cost of fencing boundaries that adjoin Crown land as per Section 31 of the *Fences Act 1968*. Please also note that while the *Fences Act 1968* does not compel DEECA to contribute to the cost of fencing, it also means that committees are not required to contribute to the costs of fencing should DEECA wish to erect a new fence.

6. How much can we apply for?

- 6.1 The Program will provide for up to 100% of eligible costs (dependant on requirements for any co-contribution) to a maximum of \$75,000 per application (excluding GST) under stream 1 and to a maximum of \$150,000 per application (excluding GST) under stream 2.
- 6.2 A single application may include multiple projects/components.
- 6.3 Once a funded project in round 2 has been successfully acquitted, each committee can re-apply for a second (and final) time, subject to funding availability. This second application will be assessed based on the same eligibility criteria.
- 6.4 The total Program funding available at the start was \$1.8M. In 2025/26, the Program seeks to allocate all unspent Program funding.
- 6.5 The two funding streams available are as follows:

Stream 1	Stream 2
Urgent Maintenance and Critical Upgrades	Compliance-related asset improvements
Asset maintenance and upgrades that are essential to the purpose of the reserve. Projects must be targeted to enable continued public access or use, or to improve the community amenity and function of the facility or reserve. Unlike Stream 2, projects do not need to demonstrate a specific compliance obligation however must lead to activation of public spaces and significant community benefit.	Asset maintenance or upgrade projects that directly address a compliance obligation under legislation, regulation or mandatory standards. Projects must be necessary to meet a legal, regulatory or safety requirement. They must demonstrate a clear alignment with a recognised compliance issue. Project delivery will lower the risk associated with non-compliance to within an acceptable range.
Funding available per application: \$10,000 - \$75,000	Funding available per application: \$10,000 - \$150,000

- 6.6 This program is following the rulings in the *GSTR 2012/2 - Goods and services tax: financial assistance payments* document.
- 6.7 You should apply for the full cost of your project, including GST. This means including the GST you will pay on goods and services in your budget. Most CoMs are not subject to GST on the grant itself, but GST may still apply when purchasing materials or services. By applying for the GST-inclusive amount, the grant will fully cover the eligible project costs (unless a mandatory contribution applies). For more information on tax implications please see section 8.3.
- 6.7 The available funding will influence the number and size of grants allocated by the Program. Once funds are allocated, subsequent applicants within the eligible period of the current round will be wait-listed. In the event a successful applicant/s withdraws from the program or reduces its required funding allocation, DEECA will reallocate unspent funds to support waitlisted applications.
- 6.8 It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that their application is complete and correct, and to provide all required supporting documents. DEECA aims to provide initial feedback prior to evaluating applications, however due to staff capacity and volume of applications, please review your application thoroughly before submitting.
- 6.9 Successful projects must be completed (including all milestones acquitted) by 1 May 2025.

7. How does DEECA assess projects?

- 7.1 DEECA will assess applications against the eligibility criteria listed in section 3 to ensure the CoM and its listed project(s) are eligible for funding. DEECA will assess applications' details (i.e. outcomes, risks and costs) and supporting information.
- 7.2 Each criterion is given a percentage weighting to indicate its relative importance in the assessment process. Applications should address all relevant criteria: -

Criteria	Project Outcomes	Project Risks	Project Costs and Value
Weighted score	60%	20%	20%
Description	Level to which applicant, scope and planned outputs satisfies the eligibility criteria listed in section 3. Detail and level of project urgency and public benefit of outcome relating to public access, use and/or amenity	Level to which potential project risks are identified and the mitigating actions that are proposed to remove, manage, or reduce the risk.	Level to which the application demonstrates that the project budget is relevant and appropriate for the scale of the project and activities versus the funding sought and value of successful project completion

- 7.3 The highest scoring applications will satisfy the assessment criteria to a high degree and the level of detail in the proposal will be proportionate to the project's complexity, risk and value.
- 7.4 DEECA will conduct financial checks via annual returns reporting to confirm what financial contribution requirements may apply to the CoM project, if any. For committees who have not submitted annual returns to DEECA from the 2024/2025 financial year, this form may be requested to clarify net revenue.

8. What are the funding conditions?

8.1 Funding agreements.

- 8.1.1 Successful applicants must enter into a grant agreement with DEECA. Refer to information about the Victorian Common Funding Agreement at www.vic.gov.au/victorian-common-funding-agreement
- 8.1.2 Any emails, letters or invitations to successful applicants to enter into a funding agreement will not constitute a formal contract and are not legally binding on the State unless a formal written grant agreement is executed by both parties
- 8.1.3 DEECA may negotiate with applicants on details of a project under the funding agreement to meet any requirements the financial delegate may impose as a condition of funding and any specific milestones the applicant will be required to meet.
- 8.1.4 The funding agreement will outline all conditions for the provision of funding. Successful applicants will be expected to meet all terms and conditions of the grant agreement, including governance and reporting requirements.
- 8.1.5 Grant recipients will be required to cooperate with DEECA in any promotional, marketing or evaluation activities relating to the Program. Funded projects may be publicly listed on DEECA's social media channels or recorded in newsletters for the purposes of engagement with community.
- 8.1.6 The activity does not include using the funding for political campaigning or advocacy activities for political parties.

8.2 Legislative and Regulatory Requirements.

- 8.2.1 In delivering the activity, grant recipients are required to comply with all relevant Commonwealth and State legislations including but not limited to: -
- 8.2.2 *The Privacy Act 1988;*
- 8.2.3 *The Freedom of Information Act 1982;*
- 8.2.4 *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004;*

8.3 Tax Implications.

- 8.3.1 Applicants should consult the Australian Taxation Office or seek professional advice on any taxation implications that may arise from this funding.
- 8.3.2 Recipients are responsible for determining their tax liabilities for grant payments. Grants provided by DEECA are classified as income and tax may be payable by recipients. You are responsible to investigate your own tax structure and treatment.
- 8.4 **Acknowledging the Victorian Government's Support**
- 8.4.1 Successful applicants are expected to acknowledge the Victorian Government's support. Promotional guidelines will form part of the funding agreement. (https://www.deeca.vic.gov.au/_data/assets/word_doc/0022/392503/DEECA-Acknowledgement-and-Publicity-Guidelines.docx). Successful applicants must liaise with the Asset Upgrades team regarding any public events or announcements related to the project.
- 8.5 **Payments**
- 8.5.1 Payments will be made as long as:
- grant recipients achieve and provide the milestone deliverables specified in the grant agreement, such as execution of funding agreement, evidence of payments and evidence required in final report;
 - other terms and conditions of funding continue to be met.
- 8.6 **Monitoring**
- 8.6.1 Grant recipients are required to comply with project monitoring and reporting requirements as outlined in the funding agreement. This may include progress reports, bank statements, invoicing, photographic evidence, site inspections, completion reports and acquittal documentation.
- 8.7 **Privacy**
- 8.7.1 Any personal information about you or a third party in your application will be collected by the department for the purposes of administering your grant application and informing Members of Parliament of successful applications. Personal information may also be disclosed to external experts, such as members of assessment panels, or other Government Departments for assessment, reporting, advice, comment or for discussions regarding alternative or collaborative grant funding opportunities. If you intend to include personal information about third parties in your application, please ensure that they are aware of the contents of this privacy statement.
- 8.7.2 Any personal information about you or a third party in your correspondence will be collected, held, managed, used, disclosed or transferred in accordance with the provisions of the *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014* and other applicable laws.
- 8.7.3 DEECA is committed to protecting the privacy of your personal information. You can find the DEECA Privacy Policy online at <https://www.deeca.vic.gov.au/privacy>
- 8.7.4 Requests for access to information about you held by DEECA should be sent to the Manager Privacy, P.O Box 500 East Melbourne 8002 or contact by emailing FOI.unit@DEECA.vic.gov.au

9. How do we apply?

- 9.1 To apply, please arrange an initial eligibility check meeting with the Committee of Management Asset Upgrades team by emailing your EOI, or questions to asset.upgrades@deeca.vic.gov.au.
- 9.2 DEECA will verify your committee account details, and this may include updating banking details or filling out a new supplier details form. Please ensure you have a copy of the updated application templates. Please ensure that you are filling out the correct form for the stream of funding you are requesting funding from. **See section 15 for links to these templates.**
- 9.3 Complete the correct application form and send back to asset.upgrades@deeca.vic.gov.au with all approved permits and consents, required supporting documentation and site photos as attachments.
- 9.4 If you indicate that this is in draft format, there will be an eligibility review and additional support can be provided to ensure completeness and to reduce delays post-evaluation.
- 9.5 If approved for funding, the committee will be invited to enter into a funding agreement. Parties will be prompted to sign the agreement via Adobe Sign.

- 9.6 Once the funding agreement is fully executed, the first milestone will be approved. Please wait 72 working hours for the payment to be processed.

10. Risk Management

- 10.1 DEECA's 'On Board' provides information for DEECA agencies about risk:
www.deeca.vic.gov.au/boards-and-governance/on-board

11. What is the notification process?

- 11.1 DEECA will notify all applicants in writing of their application outcome upon completion of the evaluation process. DEECA aims to issue a decision within 15 working days of receipt of final application form.

12. Key dates

Applications open	01 September 2025
Applications close	31 March 2026
Applicants notified	15 business days after receipt of final application form
Activities commence	When the funding agreement has been signed by all parties
Activities completed and acquittal reports submitted	All projects to be completed and acquitted by 01 May 2026

13. Checklist

- 13.1 Read these guidelines, FAQs and complete the following checklist.
- 13.2 Have you: -
- Read these guidelines carefully?
 - Checked if your organisation is eligible for this grant funding?
 - Checked if your activity is eligible for this grant funding?
 - Checked that you can comply with all relevant laws and regulations in delivery of your activity?
 - Prepared the appropriate supporting documents including all council and DEECA permissions in writing, written quotes, and photos.

14. Contacts

- 14.1 Your local Land and Built Environment (LBE) officer is listed in the following table. Please contact the following emails to discuss your potential grant project.

Port Phillip LBE Project Officer

- henry.kisby@deeca.vic.gov.au

Asset Upgrades Team – General enquiries

- asset.upgrades@deeca.vic.gov.au

