



2022-2023
Growing Suburbs Fund
Guidelines



Jobs,
Precincts
and Regions



Authorised by the Victorian Government, Melbourne.

Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions

1 Spring Street, Melbourne, Victoria 3000

Telephone (03) 9651 9999

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<https://www.localgovernment.vic.gov.au/grants/growing-suburbs-fund>

Acknowledgement

We acknowledge and respect the Traditional Owners of Country throughout Victoria, their ongoing connection to lands and waterways upon which we depend, and we pay respects to their culture and their Elders past, present, and future.

We acknowledge that Aboriginal self-determination is a human right enshrined in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and we are committed to working towards social, economic, and cultural equity for Aboriginal Victorians.

We acknowledge the diversity of Aboriginal Victorians, and we acknowledge all other people of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander descent living in Victoria.

Message from the Minister

I am pleased to present the 2022-23 round of the Victorian Government's Growing Suburbs Fund.

These last two years have highlighted how important community is and how vital it is for people's wellbeing to maintain community connections.

The Growing Suburbs Fund has community wellbeing at its very core. The fund ensures communities that are living in areas where populations are rapidly growing have access to the facilities and services they need to live well and thrive.

The Fund is a \$425 million investment over eight years, to support critical local infrastructure projects in Melbourne's diverse and fast-growing outer suburbs and key regions where there are growing pressures on local infrastructure.

Hundreds of infrastructure projects have already been supported, ranging from community hubs and sports facilities to playgrounds and kindergartens.

I have visited many of these projects and seen firsthand the positive impact that they have on their communities.

The fact that many of these projects also provide local employment, whether during the construction phase or once programs are implemented, increases the long-term benefits to the community and is good for the local economy.

The Victorian Government is committed to continuing to invest in partnerships with local councils through the Growing Suburbs Fund to build strong and resilient communities. It also provides an opportunity for the Victorian Government and councils to partner with Aboriginal organisations to develop community infrastructure that connects people to country and culture.

By working together, we can combine our strengths to build even better places for Victoria's growing communities to live, work, and connect with one another.

I invite you to read the guidelines and eligibility criteria for this new round of the Growing Suburbs Fund.

I'm looking forward to continuing to work with local councils to build stronger and better communities.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Shaun Leane'.

The Hon Shaun Leane MP
Minister for Local Government



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1. 2022-23 Growing Suburbs Fund Guidelines

The 2022-23 Growing Suburbs Fund is a contribution by the Victorian Government towards meeting critical local community infrastructure needs for our fast-growing outer suburbs.

It is positioned to quickly respond to the pressures being experienced by interface and peri-urban communities by fast-tracking high priority local infrastructure projects that contribute to more resilient and liveable communities and improved capacity for councils to respond to changing community needs and demands.

1.1 Overview

The Victorian Government recognises that interface and peri-urban councils are diverse and are home to some of Victoria's most vulnerable communities. They are located on the fringe of metropolitan Melbourne, marking the interface between the 'city' and 'country'. They also play a critical role in supporting Victoria's population growth and economy, contain productive rural land and make up 90 per cent of Melbourne's Green Wedge areas.

As a group, the interface and peri-urban councils comprise 31.4 per cent of Victoria's population. For over two decades, population growth in these areas has exceeded the State's average, and this trend is expected to continue with around 900,000 additional residents expected to be living in the interface and peri-urban areas by 2036.

The Victorian Government is investing \$50 million through the 2022-23 Growing Suburbs Fund (GSF) to continue the timely delivery of critical infrastructure in interface and peri-urban communities.

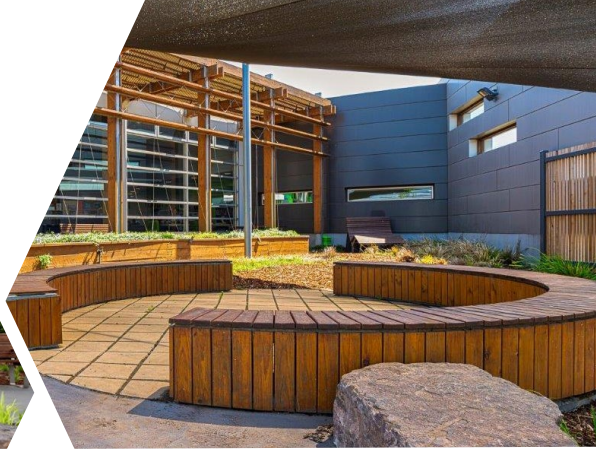
The GSF will be delivered in coordination with other government infrastructure investments in interface and peri-urban communities. It is overseen by the Minister for Local Government and administered by Local Government Victoria within the Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions (the Department).

1.2 Objectives

The GSF will contribute to meeting critical local infrastructure needs for communities in our changing and fast-growing outer suburbs. It is positioned to quickly respond to the pressures being experienced by interface and peri-urban communities by accelerating infrastructure projects that will make a big difference to the liveability and resilience of these areas.

Grants will be targeted towards high priority community infrastructure projects that contribute to:

- the social and economic recovery of communities and groups impacted by coronavirus (COVID-19)
- the needs of rapidly growing communities
- local employment creation in both the construction phase and the ongoing operation
- improved local economic conditions in interface and peri-urban communities
- improved capacity for councils to respond to changing community needs and demands
- the delivery of innovative models of integrated/shared community infrastructure
- creating a safe and engaging environment for vulnerable and isolated community members
- progressing key priorities of the [Victorian Closing the Gap implementation plan](#) by delivering important cultural community infrastructure, and further enhancing the partnership between government sectors, Aboriginal community-controlled organisations, and the wider community.



2. Eligibility

2.1 Who can apply?

The 2022-23 GSF is open to Melbourne's ten interface and six peri-urban councils.

The ten eligible interface councils are:

Cardinia Shire Council, Casey City Council, Hume City Council, Melton City Council, Mitchell Shire Council, Mornington Peninsula Shire Council, Nillumbik Shire Council, Whittlesea City Council, Wyndham City Council, and Yarra Ranges Shire Council.

The six eligible peri-urban councils are:

Bass Coast Shire Council, Baw Baw Shire Council, Golden Plains Shire Council, Macedon Ranges Shire Council, Moorabool Shire Council and Surf Coast Shire Council.

While only interface and peri-urban councils can apply for funding, Aboriginal community-controlled organisations, and not-for-profit or private sector organisations are encouraged to partner with these councils to put forward proposals for the 2022-23 GSF.

2.2 What will be funded

The 2022-23 GSF will fund new, expanded, or upgraded infrastructure projects within Melbourne's ten interface and six peri-urban councils.

The program will support projects that have a direct benefit to communities and surrounding catchment areas across the following infrastructure categories:

- community health and well-being
- early education, libraries, learning and training
- sport, recreation, and leisure facilities that have dedicated community space and support multiuse purposes

- environmental and climate change resilience
- placemaking, civic amenity, and community connecting
- purpose-built facilities that respond to the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

The program will consider proposals put forward by eligible councils for funding in partnership with Aboriginal community-controlled organisations, and not-for-profit or private sector organisations. These proposals must:

- be in line with the program criteria
- demonstrate the existing partnership between the sectors, and endorsement of the project evidenced by letters of support from both council and the organisation.

Projects are expected to:

- be delivered by qualified professionals
- incorporate Universal Design principles
- incorporate Environmentally Sustainable Design principles.

2.3 What will not be funded

The 2022-23 GSF will not fund:

- projects that have already commenced construction (including, but not limited to site clearing, earthworks, building works and any form of early works)
- projects located on land that is in the process of or yet to be acquired
- projects that are sporting pavilions that cannot demonstrate a dedicated community use space(s) to host community activities for groups other than the resident sporting clubs

- projects that are delivering new or upgraded sports fields or sports courts
- infrastructure that is fully scoped and funded through a development contribution plan, unless it can be clearly demonstrated that GSF funds will bring forward delivery, or that the actual costs of delivering the infrastructure materially exceed the total of developer contributions
- temporary buildings or improvements undertaken prior the delivery of a future and permanent facility
- routine or ongoing maintenance activities, cosmetic works, repair of facilities damaged by vandalism, fire or other natural disasters where the damage should be covered by insurance
- recurrent operating costs, including utilities and staffing resources
- projects where major components are civil works such as roads and associated footpaths, drainage, waste, resurfacing, carparks, and public transport infrastructure
- construction of infrastructure that does not have a direct community benefit or address an identified community need
- service connections (while these elements will form part of construction, any council contributions should be used for these purposes)
- bundling of small projects into a larger project for submission
- project proposals that have not clearly identified the scope and parameters of the project to be delivered.



Growing Suburbs Fund



3. Application and project conditions

3.1 Project delivery dates

Projects are required to commence construction within 18 months of the grant being announced and be completed within 24 months of the commencement of construction.

As part of their applications, councils must submit a detailed Project Plan that outlines the timelines for the project(s) they plan to undertake and demonstrate that projects will be delivered within the proposed timeline.

3.2 Number of applications and priority order

There is no limit to the number of projects and dollar amount a council can submit for consideration. However, no more than 15 per cent of the total pool of funding will be allocated to a single council.

Projects funded in partnership with Aboriginal community-controlled organisations will not form part of the prescribed 15 percent of the total pool of funding available to a single council.

A council resolution providing support for each application and a priority order of projects is mandatory. The priority order will be taken into consideration during the assessment of the applications.

3.3 Project location

The applicant will need to provide evidence of land ownership where the proposed project will be located. If the land is owned by a third party, then the applicant will be required to provide evidence of an agreement with the landowner allowing the delivery of the project.

3.3.1 Facilities on School Land

For projects on school land, a Community Joint Use Proposal (to the Department of Education and Training) which is completed by the applicant and the school must be submitted by the applicant to be eligible for funding (schools can access this document from the Department of Education and Training website).

Applicants must allow sufficient time to complete this document and obtain the necessary written endorsement from the Department of Education and Training.

A letter from the Department of Education and Training central office must also be provided that indicates endorsement of the project. Applicants requesting this letter should email vsbaproperty@education.vic.gov.au.

3.4 Permits and approvals

Applicants must disclose any permits, authorities' approvals and reports/plans that will be required to be obtained or completed to deliver the project (e.g. building and planning permits, heritage permits, Water Authority permit, Biodiversity Assessment, Environmental Management Plan, etc.).

3.4.1 Aboriginal Heritage Planning Tool

Applicants are required to complete the [Aboriginal Heritage Planning Tool](#) to determine if a Cultural Heritage Management Plan (CHMP) is required for their applied project. Further information about the CHMP can be found here: <https://www.firstpeoplesrelations.vic.gov.au/cultural-heritage-management-plans>.

3.5 Funding from other programs

The GSF aims to accelerate the delivery of critical community infrastructure and complement, rather than replace, other funding sources available to these communities. Projects that receive funding from multiple programs must comply with the conditions of each of the relevant programs.

Applications must identify any additional sources of funding sought, including State and Commonwealth government programs, as well as eligibility for contributions from developers.

Applications must also identify the additional value and discrete component(s) to be achieved through GSF funding.

4. Application and Assessment Process

4.1 Application process

4.1.1 Pre-application meeting and site visits

Applicants must consult the GSF team before 20 June to discuss their project proposals. This will provide the opportunity for Local Government Victoria to discuss with each council the eligibility of the proposed projects and their alignment with the program objectives.

This process will include a site visit to each proposed location. Where a project has not been discussed with Local Government Victoria, or a site visit held, the project will not be considered for funding.

4.1.2 Submit application and documentation

Applications will be received through a single application round, opening on **23 May 2022**. Applications and supporting documentation must be submitted via the link at <https://www.localgovernment.vic.gov.au/grants/growing-suburbs-fund>.

Applications must be received by the Department no later than 2pm on 4 July 2022.

Department staff may contact applicants to seek further clarification of information submitted. Some applicants may be requested to submit further information following initial assessment of applications by the Department.

If you have any queries, please contact DJPR on 0411 752 071 or email gsf@ecodev.vic.gov.au.

4.2 Timelines

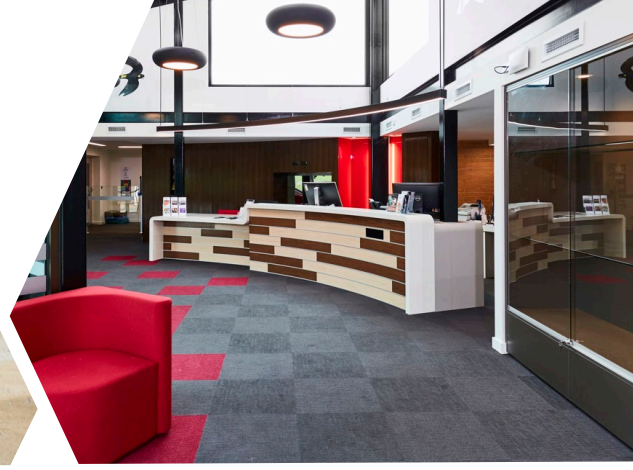
Applications Open	23 May 2022
Applications Close	2pm, 4 July 2022
Assessment and Decision Making	July/August 2022
Announcements from	September 2022
Funding Agreements Executed	October 2022
Construction Commencement	Within 18 months of the funding announcement
Construction Complete	Within 24 months of construction commencement

4.3 Assessment Process

Applications will be assessed by an independent moderation panel which will provide recommendations to the Minister for Local Government for decision.

The Department reserves the right not to assess an application if:

- the application does not address the assessment criteria (section 4.4.1) by completing each question within the online application form
- the project falls into one or more of the categories under what the GSF will not fund (see Section 2.3)
- the mandatory supporting documentation (as requested in section 5) is not included
- the application is submitted after the application closing date
- the application does not clearly identify the scope and parameters of the project to be delivered.



4.4 Criteria

4.4.1 Applicant Criteria

Applications must address all relevant criteria and provide relevant supporting documents as set out on page 14. Claims made against each criterion must be substantiated with evidence.

Percentage weightings are provided as a guide to the relative importance of different criteria in the assessment process.

Applications will be assessed against the following project assessment criteria:

Criteria	Description / Questions
Why? (25%)	<p>Applications must demonstrate the extent to which the project addresses an identified need in the community by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • demonstrating the connection between the project and a rapidly growing community, clearly identifying the need or gap in infrastructure provision that the project will address • demonstrating how the project will add to local economic activity, employment creation, and outcomes for vulnerable job seekers in their communities in both the construction phase and the ongoing operation • demonstrating how the project aligns with and delivers against current state policy objectives • demonstrating how the project will deliver on the purpose of the GSF and the desired outcomes. <p>Applications that directly address needs resulting from population growth will be favorably considered. Applications that progress partnerships between Aboriginal community-controlled organisations and government sectors will also be considered favorably.</p>
Who? (25%)	<p>Applications must clearly demonstrate the extent to which the project will deliver benefits to the community and:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • contribute to improved gender equality and the needs of diverse communities • clearly identify the intended benefits (social, economic, and/or environmental) that the project will deliver • demonstrate the breadth and depth of the expected benefits including who will benefit and how.

Criteria	Description / Questions
What? (20%)	<p>Applications must provide details of what the funding will be used for and:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • clearly identify the scope and parameters of the project to be delivered • demonstrate that site/floor plans have been developed • demonstrate consistency with climate change, environmentally sustainable design, and universal design principles. Consideration should be given to achieving positive environmental outcomes e.g. reducing operational costs, reducing environmental impacts of construction, energy and water efficiencies • explain how the proposed infrastructure will be managed and its benefits sustained once the infrastructure is delivered.
How? (20%)	<p>Applications must provide details that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • demonstrate 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 • demonstrate capacity to implement and/or source expertise to manage the delivery of the project • outline the proposed funding contributions for the project. <p>Projects that have significant council contributions and attract further public, not-for-profit or private sector investment are desirable and strongly encouraged.</p> <p>Applications must identify whether an application has been made to an additional funding body or program, and the status of this application's outcomes.</p> <p>Applications must clearly identify how the coinciding funding agreements, timelines, and milestone deliverables will be managed.</p> <p>Applications must also identify how council will fund the difference if applications for other funding contributions are unsuccessful.</p>



Criteria

Description / Questions

The extent of council and community support for the project (10%)

Applications must demonstrate:

- that the project is a recognised strategic council priority and is consistent with key council plans such as the current Council Plan and Strategic Resource Plan, community plans or structure plans and/or policy documents
- the level of community support. This could be demonstrated by engagement activities, co-contributions or in-kind support from community members or groups
- the increase in activities and community use of the facility the project will support.

For projects partnering with Aboriginal community-controlled organisations, and not-for-profit or private sector organisations, applications must demonstrate the existing partnership between the sectors, and how council has, and will continue to work with the partnering organisation to achieve project delivery.

Applications must also outline the extent of community support and engagement for the project.

4.4.2 Program Wide Criteria

A program assessment panel will consider six program-wide factors. These factors are:

- consistency with state priorities – the panel will consider how each project aligns local and State priorities
- leveraged funding – councils are expected to contribute funding to the delivery of each project. A notional program wide funding leverage of \$1 for \$1 is in place
- geographic distribution – no more than 15 percent of the total pool of funding will be allocated to a single council
- diversity of infrastructure/project types – the assessment will seek to ensure that funded projects represent a mix of infrastructure
- council's past performance on delivering government funded projects will be taken into consideration
- the consideration of the Green Star Rating certification for design, construction and operations for sustainable buildings.

5. Supporting documentation

To be considered for funding, the applicant must submit the **mandatory** supporting documentation to support the eligibility and readiness of the project.

It is also recommended that the preferable documentation listed in the table below be submitted to further support the application.

Please ensure all documents are clearly named (e.g. Concept Plan – Project Name, Project Plan – Project Name, etc.).

Council is also required to provide estimated ongoing staffing for the project, broken down by female and male employees. This will be included in the online application form.

Supporting documentation	Requirement
Evidence of a council resolution providing support for each application and priority order of projects	Mandatory
Site/floor plans for the project	Mandatory
Confirmation of other funding sources	Mandatory
Detailed project plan outlining the project's timeline and activities (e.g. Gantt chart, project management/delivery plan)	Mandatory
Current project budget, within 90 days of the application being made (e.g. QS report, Cost plan, independent qualified expert report, OPC)	Mandatory
Evidence of land ownership or legally binding land use agreement with landowner or in-principal agreement with landowner	Mandatory
For projects on school land, please refer to section 3.3.1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A completed Joint Use Agreement, or a completed Community Joint Use Proposal to enter into a Community Joint Use Agreement • A letter from the Department of Education and Training central office that indicates endorsement of the project. Applicants requesting this letter should email vsbaproperty@education.vic.gov.au 	Mandatory if applicable
Evidence of stakeholder and community consultation that demonstrates the support for the project	Mandatory
Evidence that the Aboriginal Heritage Planning Tool (Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006) has been completed	Mandatory
For projects partnering with Aboriginal community-controlled organisations, and not-for-profit or private sector organisations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of the existing and ongoing partnership between the sectors (e.g. letters of support from both council and the organisation endorsing the partnership and project to be delivered) • Evidence of community engagement and support of the partnership (e.g. letters of support, facility use agreements etc.) 	Mandatory if applicable

Supporting documentation

Requirement

Applicable permits including Cultural Heritage Management Plans, Environmental Effects Statement, etc.	Preferable
A business case, feasibility study or cost benefit analysis that may have been completed for the project	Preferable
Relevant sections of council reports, plans, or strategies (please do not attach entire documents)	Preferable
Letters of support from groups or organisations clearly demonstrating their support to the project and how they will benefit from it	Preferable
Facility schedule of use	Preferable
Aerial Images or plans showing location of proposed project	Preferable
Site investigation documents (e.g. Geotech report)	Preferable





6. Funding Conditions

6.1 Funding agreement

Successful applicants must enter into a funding agreement with the Department. Funding agreements establish the parties and outline their commitments and obligations to each other, as well as setting out the general funding terms and conditions. It is recommended that applicants review the Common Funding Agreement standard terms and conditions before applying.

No funding will be released until the Department and the applicant have executed the funding agreement and the appropriate milestone evidence identified in the funding agreement has been met. This includes confirmation of construction starting within the 18-month timeframe.

The Department reserves the right to withhold payments in cases where there are concerns relating to the delivery of the project. In this instance, the Department will release funding when appropriate actions have been taken to ensure the funded project will be delivered within the agreed timeframes.

In the event of a project being delivered for less than the budget stated in the funding agreement, two alternatives will be available to councils:

- return the unspent funds negotiated on a pro rata basis
- opportunity to put forward a case to have any unspent funds used to expand the scope of either the underspent project or another funded GSF project.

Any reallocation request to Local Government Victoria must include information about why there was an underspend on a GSF project and how increasing the scope of the underspent project or transferring the funding to another GSF project will further benefit the community and generate economic activity and job creation.

Local Government Victoria will use this information in making recommendations to the Minister for Local Government on the reallocation of any unspent funding.

6.2 Project monitoring and delivery

Funding recipients are required to comply with project monitoring and reporting requirements outlined in the funding agreement. It is the Department's preference that councils appoint a primary contact for all matters relating to reporting, monitoring and delivery.

Councils are responsible for project delivery, including any project cost overruns should they occur. In cases where applications are submitted in partnership with third party organisations, it is expected that councils will take responsibility for project delivery.

Councils are to extend an invitation to the GSF team to participate in any Project Control Board meetings that occur throughout the duration of the project.

Councils must also take full responsibility for the cost of ongoing operation and maintenance of any facilities through their asset management processes.

In cases where a project is delayed for an unreasonable length of time, or substantive changes to scope are made after funding has been approved, or where a project fails to be delivered, the Department reserves the right to cancel the grant and, if applicable, recoup any payment that has already been provided.

A request to vary the timing of an approved project must be discussed with the Department prior to the submission of a variation request. Any timing variation over 6 months must be accompanied by a letter from the council's Chief Executive Officer approving the request.

Timing variation approvals are at the discretion of the Department and may lead to a reduction or cancellation of the grant.

Progress reports will be requested throughout the life cycle of the funding agreement. These reports are required to be submitted through the Department's online system. A final report with financial acquittal for all project income and expenditure is required to be submitted to the Department together with:

- building compliance or occupancy certificate
- photographs of the completed facility
- an invitation to the Department to inspect the facility in operation
- media coverage material.

An outcomes report is also required to be submitted to the Department within 12 months of construction completion. This will need to include information and data demonstrating:

- increased usability
- increased activities and programs
- visitation, including age breakdown where applicable
- new initiatives that have been implemented as a direct result of funding from the GSF
- the delivery of innovative models of integrated/shared community infrastructure (e.g. partnerships formed, service delivery model developed).

6.3 Local Jobs First Policy

The Local Jobs First Policy (LJF Policy) issued under the Local Jobs First Act 2003 supports businesses and workers by ensuring that small and medium size enterprises are given a full and fair opportunity to compete for both large and small government contracts, helping to create job opportunities, including for apprentices, trainees and cadets. The LJF Policy is implemented by Victorian Government departments and agencies to help drive local industry development. The LJF Policy applies to grant projects where the value of the grant is above the threshold values of:

- \$3 million or more in metropolitan Melbourne, or
- \$1 million or more in regional Victoria.

Projects funded through the GSF must comply with the Local Jobs First Policy.

Local Jobs First requirements will be built into all funding agreements where these thresholds apply.

Further information regarding the requirements can be found at:

<https://localjobsfirst.vic.gov.au/>

6.4 Acknowledgement

6.4.1 Acknowledgement and Publicity Requirements

Successful applicants are expected to acknowledge the Victorian Government's support through the Growing Suburbs Fund. Promotional guidelines form part of the funding agreement and include the requirement that all activities acknowledge Victorian Government support through logo presentation on any activity-related publications, media releases and promotional material. Successful applicants must liaise with the Department's program area to coordinate any public events or announcements related to the project.

Plaque proofs must be submitted to the Department's program area for approval before being displayed at any public event, and must contain the Victorian Government logo.



Successful applicants may be required to provide information on activity outcomes for use in program evaluation or in the Department's communication material.

6.4.2 Capital Works Signage Requirements

Successful applicants need to acknowledge the State Government's support for the project through appropriate signage consistent with the Victorian Government's Capital Works Signage Requirements (available at <https://www.vic.gov.au/capital-works-signage-guidelines>) or as otherwise specified by the Department of Jobs Precincts and Regions.

6.5 Privacy

The Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions is committed to protecting your privacy. We collect and handle any personal information about you or a third party in your application, for the purpose of administering the funding and informing the public of successful applications.

In order for us to administer your application effectively and efficiently, we may need to disclose your personal details with others for the purpose of assessment, consultation, and reporting. This can include departmental staff, Members of Parliament and their staff, external experts, such as members of assessment panels, or other government departments.

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.

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 (Vic) and other applicable laws.

To obtain a copy of the Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions Privacy Policy, please email g sf@ecodev.vic.gov.au.

For information about how to access information about you held by the Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions, please email g sf@ecodev.vic.gov.au.

