



SMALL BUSINESS GRANTS

COVID-19 RESPONSE



VICTORIA

BUSINESS SUPPORT FUND

The \$500 million Business Support Fund will support the hardest hit sectors, including hospitality, tourism, accommodation, arts and entertainment, and retail.

The Government will work with the Victorian Chamber, Australian Hotels Association and Australian Industry Group to deliver the Fund, which will help these businesses – which may not be eligible for payroll tax refunds due to their size – survive and keep people in work.

Small businesses that have been highly impacted by shutdown restrictions can now apply for a one-off \$10,000 grant from the Victorian Government's Business Support Fund. Applications are open until 1 June 2020.

Grants can be used towards business costs such as rent, utilities and salaries, and activities to support business continuity planning, such as seeking financial and legal advice.

HOW TO APPLY

Applicants must submit an application online via the 'Apply now' button on this page.

Applicants are required to provide a copy of their most recent Business Activity Statement (BAS). Other supporting materials can also be provided.

For guidance on what is considered acceptable as BAS please refer to the [BAS statement examples](#).

Note: Lodged Business Activity Statements are available on the ATO's Business Portal or through your tax agent.

All questions in the application must be completed and any requested documentation attached to ensure timely assessment and grant payment.



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FAQS

Why has the Victorian Government launched this fund?

- ▶ The Victorian Government has launched the \$500 million Business Support Fund to support small businesses in the sectors hit hardest by coronavirus (COVID-19) so they can survive and keep people in work.
- ▶ The fund is part of the Victorian Government's \$1.7 billion Economic Survival Package which is supporting businesses and workers through the devastating impacts of coronavirus (COVID-19).

When do applications open and close?

- ▶ Applications open on Monday 30 March 2020 and close on Monday 1 June 2020.
- ▶ Businesses that have already expressed interest will be contacted by email with a link to apply.

What businesses are eligible to apply for grants under the Business Support Fund?

Businesses can apply if they meet all the following criteria:

- ▶ Employ staff
- ▶ Have been subject to closure or is highly impacted by [Restricted Activity Directions issued by the Deputy Chief Health Officer to-date](#)
- ▶ Have a turnover of more than \$75,000
- ▶ Have payroll of less than \$650,000
- ▶ Hold an Australian Business Number (ABN) and have held that ABN at 16 March 2020 (date of the State of Emergency declaration)
- ▶ Have been engaged in carrying out the operation of the business in the Australian State of Victoria on 16 March 2020.

When do applications open and close?

The Business Support Fund is for small businesses that employ staff and are subject to closure or are highly impacted by the shutdown restrictions announced by the Victorian Government as a result of coronavirus (COVID-19).

This includes businesses in the hardest hit sectors including:

- ▶ Accommodation and Food Services (e.g. cafes, restaurants, caterers, hotels, motels)



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- ▶ Arts and Entertainment (e.g. cinemas, performing arts venues, creative spaces, performers, museums)
- ▶ Health and Beauty Services (e.g. hairdressers, barbers, beauty therapists)
- ▶ Sport and recreation (e.g. gyms, swimming pools, indoor climbing, play centres)
- ▶ Tourism (e.g. tourist transport, tour operators, tour arrangement)
- ▶ Retail, other than supermarket, groceries, liquor and pharmacy businesses
- ▶ Other Services (e.g. real estate agents)

For a current list of sectors impacted please refer to the [Restricted Activity Directions issued by the Deputy Chief Health Officer to-date](#)

Eligibility for this fund will be assessed against the industry classification of the applicant's Australian Business Number.

Applicants should ensure that the industry classification linked to their Australian Business Number reflects their current business activity and is up-to-date.

Why are applications only open to businesses with an annual wage bill of less than \$650,000 a year?

The fund is targeted at small businesses that may not be eligible for 2019-20 refunds and waiving of payroll tax, which applies to businesses with wages bills of \$650,000 or above.

Businesses with a wages bill between \$650,000 and \$3 million will have their payroll tax refunded and waived for the 2019-20 financial year under the Victorian Government's \$1.7 billion economic survival package.

Why are applications only open to businesses with an annual turnover of more than \$75,000?

Businesses with a turnover below this level are likely to be sole traders that do not employ people. \$75,000 is also the threshold for when the [Australian Taxation Office requires a business to register for GST](#).

If your business is not eligible for this funding you may still be eligible for other support in the [Victorian Government's Economic Survival Package](#) or those provided by the Commonwealth Government or your local council.



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Why are applications only open to businesses with an annual wage bill of less than \$650,000 a year?

A Business Activity Statement (BAS) is required as evidence that your business has an annual turnover of more than \$75,000. If you are unable to provide a BAS, you must provide business bank statements to evidence that your business activities in the 2019/20 financial year meet the eligibility criteria. Please note that this may delay the processing of your application

What are acceptable versions of BAS?

Checklist of acceptable forms of BAS

Acceptable BAS evidence can be either:

1. A copy of your most recently lodged BAS for the 2019-20 financial year from the ATO's Business Portal with evidence of lodgement date (your tax agent, if you have one, will be able to assist). OR
2. If you are unable to obtain the above, a copy of your most recently prepared BAS for the 2019-20 financial year with your ABN/ TFN and evidence of lodgement to the ATO such as a receipt or bank statement showing payment.

Note that the legal name, business and/ or trading name on your BAS should match the details provided on your application.

Checklist of not acceptable forms of BAS

Common issues with not acceptable BAS evidence:

1. Activity doesn't occur in 2019-20 financial year.
2. Missing ABN/ TFN.
3. Different legal name, business and/ or trading name to the details provided on your application.
4. No evidence that the business activity statement has been lodged with the ATO (i.e. does not contain a lodgement date, receipt from the ATO or bank statement, or is a pre-lodgement document).

For examples of what is considered acceptable as BAS please refer to the [BAS statement examples](#).

Note: Lodged Business Activity Statements are available on the ATO's Business Portal or through your tax agent.



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Why is my application taking longer than five business days to process?

Most applications are being processed within five business days, however some applications may take longer to process including if the applicant doesn't provide acceptable documentation, provides incorrect banking details or other business information or if duplicate applications have been submitted.

What other Victorian Government support is available for businesses and workers impacted by coronavirus (COVID-19)?

- ▶ The Victorian Government has announced a \$1.7 billion [Economic Survival Package](#) to support businesses and workers affected by the coronavirus (COVID-19).

In addition to the Business Support Fund, the package also provides:

- ▶ Full payroll tax refunds and waivers for the 2019-20 financial year to small and medium-sized businesses with payroll of less than \$3 million, which can also defer payroll tax for the first three months of the 2020/21 financial year until 1 January 2021
- ▶ Waiving of liquor licensing fees for 2020
- ▶ Land tax deferral for landowners that have at least one non-residential property and total taxable landholdings below \$1 million
- ▶ Fast tracking outstanding supplier invoices to within five business days and future invoices within 10 days
- ▶ Rent holiday for commercial tenants in government buildings for 2020.

[Download the Economic Survival Program fact sheet](#) for information on how to access the above initiatives.

Can I access the Business Support Fund if I am a non-employing business?

The Business Support Fund is open to businesses that have employed staff during 2019-20. If your business has had to let staff go as a result of closure or being highly impacted by shutdown restrictions announced by the Victorian Government to-date, you still may be eligible to apply for this grant.

How much can my business apply for under the Business Support Fund?

Businesses can apply for a one-off grant of \$10,000.



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My business has been impacted by coronavirus (COVID-19), but it is not on the list of affected sectors. Can I still apply?

- ▶ The Business Support Fund provides support for businesses closed or highly impacted by the Victorian Government's shutdown restrictions.
- ▶ There is a range of alternative coronavirus business support available from the Victorian Government's [Economic Survival Package](#) and from the Commonwealth Government.
- ▶ Please refer to the above questions about Victorian Government and Commonwealth Government support packages for possible alternatives.

I run a not-for-profit organisation; can I apply for a grant under the Business Support Fund?

Not-for-profit organisations may apply for a grant as long as they meet the eligibility criteria.

If I am a successful applicant, are there restrictions on what I can spend the funds on?

It is expected that funds can be spent on business activities and costs, including:

- ▶ Utilities, salaries and rent
- ▶ Seeking financial, legal or other advice to support business continuity planning
- ▶ Developing the business through marketing and communications activities
- ▶ Other supporting activities related to the operation of the business.



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