

Regional Tourism Accommodation Support Program Guidelines

Program Summary

The Victorian Government announced Stage 3 Stay at Home restrictions to help slow the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19) on Tuesday 30 June and 4 July 2020, for specific postcodes and then all of Greater Melbourne and Mitchell Shire on 7 July 2020. Further restrictions on interstate visitors through border closures were announced on 6 July 2020. The extension of the Stay at Home restrictions to the rest of Victoria were announced on 2 August 2020. All these restrictions have resulted in a significant decline in bookings in tourism accommodation across Victoria. To ensure Victorian tourism accommodation providers (Accommodation Providers) are not adversely impacted by these Stay at Home restrictions and border closures, the Government has announced the Regional Tourism Accommodation Support Program (Program).

The Program supports Accommodation Providers who are located in the 48 Regional and Rural Council areas, plus the Mornington Peninsula Shire Council, Frankston City Council, Yarra Ranges Shire, Nillumbik Shire Council, Cardinia Shire Council, Victoria's six Alpine Resorts, French Island, Lady Julia Percy Island and Gabo Island. These Accommodation Providers will be eligible for a grant payment to cover cancelled bookings made by residents who are unable to travel due to restrictions.

Eligible Accommodation Providers can apply to the Program for funding of up to \$225 (ex GST) per night to a maximum of \$1,125 (ex GST) per bookable accommodation offering if they receive booking cancellations from residents who are subject to Stay at Home restrictions and border closures after these restrictions were announced (as detailed in Table 1), who had booked accommodation prior to the announcement of Stay at Home restrictions, and the Accommodation Provider has been unable to refill the cancelled booking during the period of Stay at Home restrictions (i.e. 1 July to 13 September 2020). For clarity, the \$1,125 cap applies for the full period per bookable offering regardless of how many times the bookable offering was booked or cancelled for that period.

In these Guidelines:

'booking' and 'booked' means a concluded agreement with the Accommodation Provider for the future supply of accommodation services, and 'booking amount' is the price of the bookable offering under the booking.

'bookable offering' is a room or other accommodation available to the public in a single booking (refer examples in Attachment 2).

Accommodation providers are the operators of the accommodation offering and examples are listed in Attachment 2.

Table 1: Residents under Stay at Home restrictions ¹

Postcodes under Stay at Home restrictions	Announcement of Restriction Time and Date	Stay at Home Restriction period commencement
3012, 3021, 3032, 3038, 3042, 3046, 3047, 3055, 3060, 3064	3.15 pm - 30 June 2020	11.59 pm, 1 July 2020
3031, 3051	4.30 pm - 4 July 2020	11.59 pm, 4 July
Interstate visitors (Border closures)	12.00pm - 6 July 2020	12.01 am, 8 July
Remainder of Greater Melbourne and Mitchell Shire	3.25 pm - 7 July 2020	11.59 pm, 8 July
Remainder of Victoria	3.00 pm – 2 August 2020	11.59 pm, 5 August

1 Eligibility Criteria

1.1 To be eligible to apply for a payment under the Program the regional tourism Accommodation Provider must be able to demonstrate all of the following:

The accommodation:

- a. is in an eligible Victorian regional location as defined in Attachment 1; and
 - b. is bookable to the public and advertised on an online booking platform, a website or is bookable through an accommodation booking agent, including a registered Real Estate Agent²,
- and

The business (which can be the Accommodation Provider or accommodation booking agent applying on behalf of the Accommodation Provider):

- c. holds an Australian Business Number (ABN), has held that ABN at 30 June 2020 and the business is registered with the responsible Federal, State or local regulator^{3 4}; and
- d. in the case of a claim for an eligible grant payment of \$10,001 or more, is registered for GST and the ABN is registered under an ANZSIC⁵ business classification associated with accommodation services.

1.2 Eligible Accommodation Providers (or the accommodation booking agent applying on their behalf) may apply for a grant payment of up to \$225 (ex GST) per night (up to a maximum of

¹ The Department reserves the right to amend this list of eligible postcodes.

² A Real Estate Agent who is licensed and registered with Victoria's Business Licensing Authority.

Accommodation booking agents often advertise a range of accommodation such as self-contained houses available to the public within their local area.

³ Relevant regulators are the Australian Securities and Investment Commission (ASIC); the Australian Charities and Not-for-profit Commission (ACNC); Consumer Affairs Victoria (CAV), WorkCover and Local Governments.

⁴ Tourism accommodation properties that are operated by a Local Government or State Agency are ineligible for funding under this program.

⁵ Australian and New Zealand Standard Industry Classification used by the Australian Business Register to classify business industry sectors associated with an ABN.

\$1125 (ex GST) per bookable accommodation offering for the Stay at Home restriction period) for cancelled bookings that meet all of the following criteria:

- a. A single bookable offering;
- b. The booking was made by a resident who is subject to Stay at Home restrictions as defined in Table 1 or is from interstate;
- c. The booking was made prior to the Government announcement of the travel restriction for residents of a postcode or as a result of a Victorian border closure on the date as defined in Table 1 (Relevant Date);
- d. The booking was cancelled after the Government's announcements of Stay at Home restriction, lockdown of residents of specific postcodes, or as a result of a Victorian border closure on the dates as defined in Table 1 (Relevant Date);
- e. Booked accommodation was for the period of the Victorian border closures or the Stay at Home restrictions from the Relevant Date for residents in postcodes represented in Table 1 above through to 13 September 2020;
- f. A refund has been made for 100% of any payment made for the booking including taxes, and no cancellation fee or other tariff was charged to cancel the booking other than standard credit card fee; and
- g. The cancelled booking was not re-booked or filled at the time of this application.

2 Available funding

- 2.1 The total amount available for the program is capped at \$40 million.
- 2.2 The grant payment amount is up to 100% of the cancelled accommodation booking amount and is capped at \$225 (ex GST) per bookable offering per night up to a total amount of \$1125 (ex GST) for the entire Stay at Home restriction period for each bookable offering made available to the public by the Accommodation Provider (the \$1125 cap applies for the full Stay at Home restrictions period per bookable offering regardless of how many times the bookable offering was booked or cancelled for that period).
- 2.3 The program will be open to receive applications from 13 July 2020 until 11.59 pm 14 September 2020. Any application for grant funding made after this date will not be considered.
- 2.4 One Application may be made per geographically distinct business operation (i.e. property address). An eligible Accommodation Provider with multiple geographically distinct business operations in Victoria may make one application for grant funding for each geographically distinct location. Each application must include all associated claims for each bookable offering located at that geographical location.

For example: A rental holiday house should submit one application for all cancelled bookings, a motel with five bookable rooms should submit one application for all cancelled bookings. An accommodation booking agency or Real Estate Agent managing multiple properties would need to provide separate applications for each property they manage.

3 Evidence of eligibility and compliance

- 3.1 Applicants must certify that they meet the eligibility criteria.
- 3.2 Only Accommodation Providers, (or accommodation booking/real estate agents acting on their behalf), operating under an ABN are eligible and:
 - 3.2.1 Must ensure that their Australian Business Register (ABN) registration information was held before 30 June 2020 and is current at the time of application.
 - 3.2.2 Are subject to a risk assessment which verifies business details provided with the Australian Securities and Investment Commission, Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commissioner, Australian Business Register, Consumer Affairs Victoria and/or another applicable regulator.
 - 3.2.3 Any of the following circumstances may be taken into consideration in any decision whether to award a grant payment:
 - a. any adverse findings by a regulator regarding a business;
 - b. a business is placed under external administration;
 - c. there is a petition to wind up or deregister a company or business; and
 - d. the business is or becomes deregistered or unregistered (including cancellation or lapse in registration).
 - 3.2.4 Must provide evidence of the location of their regional tourism accommodation through the most recent:
 - a. Utility bill (gas, electricity, telecommunications, water);
 - b. Business licence or other registration identifying the location of the accommodation service; or
 - c. Council Rate Notice.
 - 3.2.5 The Accommodation Providers must provide evidence of the cancelled booking through the provision of the following:
 - a. Occupancy Report;
 - b. Cancellation Report; or
 - c. Record of cancellation.
- 3.3 Applicants will be subject to audit by the Victorian Government or its representatives and will be required to produce evidence in connection with the cancelled booking and booking amount at the request of the Victorian Government, for a period of two years after the grant payment has been approved.
- 3.4 If any information in the application is found to be false or misleading, or applications for payment are not in accordance with the terms of funding as set out in these guidelines and attached application, the grant payment will be repayable in full on demand.

4 Other application information

- 4.1 Funding will be allocated through a grant process, through which eligible Victorian regional tourism accommodation providers are invited to apply for funding.
- 4.2 As part of the assessment process, evidence provided by applicants will be subject to a crosscheck with other government agencies such as Worksafe, the Land Titles Office,

Australian Business Register and the Business Licensing Authority (i.e. Real Estate Agents making applications on the written permission of their clients).

- 4.3 Applicants are required to submit an application online via the Business Victoria website (business.vic.gov.au). All questions in the application need to be completed to ensure timely assessment and grant payment.

5 Other information about this program

- 5.1 The Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions (DJPR) reserves the right to amend these guidelines and application terms at any time as it deems appropriate.
- 5.2 Further information may be found at business.vic.gov.au or through the Business Victoria Hotline at 13 22 15.
- 5.3 The Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions will endeavour to notify all applicants on the outcome of their submitted application within 10 business days.

ATTACHMENT 1

Tourism accommodation providers located in regional Victoria

1. Alpine Shire Council
2. Ararat Rural City Council
3. Ballarat City Council
4. Bass Coast Shire Council
5. Baw Baw Shire Council
6. Benalla Rural City Council
7. Buloke Shire Council
8. Campaspe Shire Council
9. Cardinia Shire Council
10. Central Goldfields Shire Council
11. Colac-Otway Shire Council
12. Corangamite Shire Council
13. East Gippsland Shire Council
14. Falls Creek Alpine resort
15. Frankston City Council
16. French Island
17. Gabo island
18. Gannawarra Shire Council
19. Glenelg Shire Council
20. Golden Plains Shire Council
21. Greater Bendigo City Council
22. Greater Geelong City Council
23. Greater Shepparton City Council
24. Hepburn Shire Council
25. Hindmarsh Shire Council
26. Horsham Rural City Council
27. Indigo Shire Council
28. Lady Julia Percy island
29. Lake Mountain Alpine Resort
30. Latrobe City Council
31. Loddon Shire Council
32. Macedon Ranges Shire Council
33. Mansfield Shire Council
34. Mildura Rural City Council
35. Mitchell Shire Council
36. Moira Shire Council
37. Moorabool Shire Council
38. Mornington Peninsula Shire Council
39. Mount Alexander Shire Council
40. Mount Baw Baw Alpine Resort
41. Mount Buller Alpine Resort
42. Mount Hotham Alpine Resort
43. Mount Stirling Alpine Resort
44. Moyne Shire Council
45. Murrindindi Shire Council
46. Nillumbik Shire Council
47. Northern Grampians Shire Council
48. Pyrenees Shire Council
49. Queenscliff Borough

50. South Gippsland Shire Council
51. Southern Grampians Shire Council
52. Strathbogie Shire Council
53. Surf Coast Shire Council
54. Swan Hill Rural City Council
55. Towong Shire Council
56. Wangaratta Rural City Council
57. Warrnambool City Council
58. Wellington Shire Council
59. West Wimmera Shire Council
60. Wodonga City Council
61. Yarra Ranges Shire Council
62. Yarriambiack Shire Council

ATTACHMENT 2

A single bookable accommodation offering includes:

1. A private holiday rental
2. A room in a Bed and Breakfast
3. A self-contained apartment
4. A room in a motel or hotel
5. A cabin
6. A room in a lodge that is available to the general public
7. A cabin in a caravan park
8. A bookable campsite, including in a caravan park
9. A Houseboat
10. A bed or room in a Hostel
11. A school camp booking for a single group
12. A distinct booking at a Farm Stay
13. Glamping Tents
14. Camping Sites
15. Other, at the discretion of DJPR.