

GUIDELINES

Sole Trader Support Fund

Program Summary

On 14 September 2020, the Victorian Government announced the \$100 million *Sole Trader Support Fund* to provide extra support to eligible non-employing sole trader businesses to survive the impacts of continued COVID-19 shutdown restrictions. This is for non-employing sole traders across Victoria that operate from commercial premises or locations, participate in JobKeeper and operate in specific sectors.

Through the *Sole Trader Support Fund*, around 30,000 businesses will receive a grant of \$3,000.

The *Sole Trader Support Fund* specifically targets businesses in industry sectors that have been Restricted, Heavily restricted or Closed as a result of continued restrictions outlined in [Victoria's roadmap for reopening](#).

1 Standard Eligibility Criteria

1.1 To be eligible for the Fund, businesses must:

- a) Operate a business located within Victoria¹; and
- b) Be a sole trader with no employees²; and
- c) Operate from a commercial premises or location (residential premises are not eligible) for at least six months as a:
 - i. tenant, licensee or owner/occupier of fixed commercial premises or
 - ii. operator of a registered 'mobile food premises' (for example a food van) with a permit or commercial agreement to operate at specific location(s); and
- d) Be registered as operating in an industry sector that has an industry restriction level of Restricted, Heavily restricted or Closed and is not easing industry restriction levels between the First Step and Second Step of *Victoria's roadmap for reopening*³ (a business's industry sector is defined by the industry classification (ANZSIC) linked to their ABN⁴); and

¹ Your Victorian business location will be verified against the Australian Business Register or additional supporting documentation.

² Businesses operating as partnerships, trusts and companies are not eligible. The Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions may validate the non-employing status of applicants. A business is assessed as having no employees if it is not registered with WorkSafe Victoria for WorkCover insurance and has an annual payroll of less than \$7,500 for any person other than the business owner.

³ *Victoria's roadmap for reopening – How we work in Metropolitan Melbourne* (the Metro Roadmap) as announced on 6 September 2020. As Regional Victoria's roadmap for reopening begins at the Second Step, the easing criteria does not apply. Businesses in regional Victoria only need to be registered as operating in an industry sector that has an industry restriction level of Restricted, Heavily restricted or Closed as per the Metro Roadmap

⁴ Your industry Australian Business Number (ABN) Registration includes your self-nominated ANZSIC industry classification and this will be used to determine your eligibility for this criterion. Applicants are encouraged to check that these details are up to date and reflect their current business activity prior to submitting their application. For information on how to update your ABN, go to the [Australian Business Register website](#).

- e) Be an 'eligible business participant' in the Commonwealth Government's JobKeeper Payment scheme⁵; and
- f) Be registered for Goods and Services Tax (GST) on 14 September 2020; and
- g) Hold an ABN registered in the business category of 'individual' and have held that ABN at 14 September 2020.

2 Demonstration of eligibility

- 2.1 Applicants must certify that they meet the eligibility criteria and intend to remain trading at the end of restrictions.
- 2.2 **Industry sector:** To be eligible an Applicant's primary business activity must be in an eligible industry sector or sub sector and this must be reflected in the Applicant's ABN registration information. Applicants should review their details at [Australian Business Register website](#) and update these details if needed prior to submitting an application. This includes ensuring that their industry classification (ANZSIC class code) linked to their ABN registration correctly captures their primary business type.
- 2.3 **JobKeeper ID:** Applicants must provide evidence of participation as an 'eligible business participant' in the Commonwealth Government's JobKeeper Payment scheme in the form of either a recent JobKeeper Business Monthly Declaration Receipt ID number or JobKeeper Enrolment Receipt ID generated from the ATO business portal. Businesses must have received a JobKeeper payment.
- 2.4 **Evidence of commercial premises or location:** Applicants must provide the following documents showing specific address or location(s):
 - a) tenant – a current commercial rental agreement of six months or longer
 - b) licensee – a current commercial lease or similar agreement of six months or longer
 - c) owner/occupier of fixed commercial premises – a 2019-20 or 2020-12 Municipal Rates Notice
 - d) registered 'mobile food premises' – Streatrader Statement of Trade AND a current Roadside Trading Permit issued by a Local Government; VicRoads or other commercial agreement to use a particular location(s) for at least six months.

3 Available funding

- 3.1 The total grant will be \$3,000.
- 3.2 A business as defined by its ABN can only receive one grant under the *Sole Trader Support Fund*.

4 How the funding may be used

- 4.1 Grant funds may be used to assist the business, for example on:
 - Meeting business costs, including utilities, salaries, or rent;

⁵ To be considered a participant in the JobKeeper Payment scheme, a business must have received a JobKeeper payment from the ATO. Further information on the JobKeeper Payment scheme is available from the [Australian Tax Office](#).

- Seeking financial, legal or other advice to support business continuity planning;
- Developing the business through marketing and communications activities; or
- Any other supporting activities related to the operation of the business.

5 Assessment Process

- 5.1 Funding will be allocated through a grant process, through which businesses are invited to apply for a grant.
- 5.2 As part of the assessment process, evidence provided by applicants will be subject to a crosscheck with other government agencies such as the Australian Tax Office, Australian Business Register, WorkSafe Victoria and the Department of Health and Human Services.
- 5.3 Any of the following circumstances may be taken into consideration in any decision whether to award a grant:
- Any adverse findings by a regulator regarding a business;
 - The business is or becomes deregistered or unregistered (including cancellation or lapse in registration or permit required to operate); and
 - The sole trader is the subject of a petition for bankruptcy.
- 5.4 Businesses are not eligible for funding under this program if they have received a grant under the *Business Support Fund*, *Business Support Fund - Expansion* or *Business Support Fund 3* programs.
- 5.5 Businesses are not eligible for funding through this program where they have received funding under the *Licensed Hospitality Venue Fund*.
- 5.6 Each application will be carefully considered and assessed against the eligibility criteria. If an unsuccessful applicant considers that their application has been incorrectly assessed, they will have the opportunity to lodge a complaint with Business Victoria. If after that consideration an applicant still believes their application has been incorrectly assessed, there will be an opportunity for arms-length review of their application.

6 Compliance and Audit

- 6.1 Applicants will be subject to audit by the Victorian Government or its representatives and will be required to produce evidence of business premises (such as a lease agreement or council rates notice), or location (Streatrader Statement of Trade and permit or commercial agreement to operate at specific location(s)) at the request of the Victorian Government for a period of four years after the grant has been approved.
- 6.2 If any information in the application is found to be false or misleading, or grants are not applied for the purposes of the business in accordance with the terms of funding

as set out in these guidelines and attached application, the grant will be repayable on demand.

7 Other information about this Fund

- 7.1 The Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions reserves the right to amend these guidelines and application terms at any time as it deems appropriate.
- 7.2 The Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions will endeavour to notify all applicants on the outcome of their submitted application within five business days.

8 Closing date and how to apply

- 8.1 The *Sole Trader Support Fund* will be open for applications until the funds are exhausted or 11.59 pm on 30 December 2020, whichever is earlier.
- 8.2 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.
- 8.3 Further information may be found at business.vic.gov.au or through the Business Victoria Hotline at 13 22 15.