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| **First Peoples’ Adoption of Renewable Energy**  **Program**  Application Guidelines |



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| 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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## What is the program?

Victoria’s energy sector is undergoing a significant transformation, with renewable energy opportunities delivering many benefits for Victorian communities and businesses. This presents a valuable opportunity for Victorian Traditional Owner Corporations (TOCs) to build knowledge of renewable energy and relevant government grants and rebate programs available, as well as further determine how they would like to participate in the transition to renewable energy.

The Victorian Government acknowledges the importance of Traditional Owner and First Peoples representation within the renewable energy sector and seeks to increase investment by building capacity and capability both within Traditional Owner Corporations and government for this role to be better articulated.

The aim of the First Peoples’ Adoption of Renewable Energy Program (FPARE Program) is to develop the capacity and capability of TOCs and their communities to engage with the renewable energy sector in an empowered and self-determined way.

The program provides grant funding to TOCs to assist with progressing First Peoples’ access to and management of opportunities to participate in renewable energy.

The purpose of the funding is to build renewable energy capability for TOs and Aboriginal communities through education and awareness raising, assist information-sharing programs/campaigns/events, and aid the development of projects, plans and documentation that supports capability building.

This inaugural program assists the transfer of power and resources to Aboriginal communities for cultural, economic, customary and spiritual purposes.

The program aims to support as many Traditional Owners and First Peoples as possible and will work towards delivering the following objectives:

* recognise First Peoples’ values and objectives for participation in the transition to renewable energy
* support First Peoples’ access to renewable energy for economic development
* build capacity and capability to increase Traditional Owner and Victorian First Peoples’ participation in the energy transition
* empower Traditional Owners to self-determine how they would like to participate in the energy transition.

## Who can apply?

The following organisations are eligible to apply for funding:

* Victorian Traditional Owner Corporations - both Registered Aboriginal Parties (RAPs) and Non- formally recognised Traditional Owner Corporations (non-formally recognised TOCs)
* Note: If required, RAPs and non-formally recognised TOCs could arrange an auspicing organisation to support them and manage funding and project administration on their behalf

All proposed projects must:

* be conducted in Victoria
* demonstrate how the project will assist in delivering on Traditional Owners’ self-determining rights and interests in the energy transition.

In addition, to be eligible for funding applicants must:

* be located/based in Victoria;
* have an Australian Business Number (ABN)

Only Victorian RAPs and non-formally recognised TOCs can apply for funding through this EOI process. Only Registered Aboriginal Parties (RAPs) can apply for projects on their formally recognised Country; RAPs and non-formally recognised TOCs can apply for projects on Country in which they have an interest and over which Traditional Owners are not formally recognised. This is consistent with [DEECA’s Traditional Owner and Aboriginal Community Engagement Framework 2019](https://www.delwp.vic.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0031/508099/Traditional-Owner-and-Aboriginal-Community-Engagement-Framework-compressed-2.pdf).

## Who cannot apply?

The following organisations and individuals cannot apply for funding:

* non-Aboriginal groups or organisations;
* Aboriginal Community Controlled organisations;
* private individuals;
* local government authorities;
* federal / state government departments or agencies.

## What might be funded?

Proposed projects must meet the project eligibility requirements. The following types of projects or resources may be funded:

* building on and progressing the projects, plans and policies funded under the previous Traditional Owner Renewable Energy Program
* developing TOC-specific document(s) on energy related engagement, interests, aspirations, or benefit sharing models
* energy-related resources, such as a First Peoples Energy Officer, to share energy knowledge and assist with corporation members in accessing government programs and rebates
* progressing Country Plan or Self-Determination Plan energy objectives; or
* cultural events and gatherings supporting capacity strengthening and knowledge sharing in relation to renewable energy awareness raising and adoption benefits
* activities that progress Aboriginal cultural values and participation, recommendations and/or economic purposes of renewable energy

Projects must be scheduled to conclude by June 2024.

## What will not be funded?

The Program will not fund:

* the purchase of land
* routine or ongoing maintenance activities
* activities that have already started
* Recurrent operating costs, for example rent and utility costs, and/or activities establishing expectations of on-going funding; or
* where duplicate services are in operation or planned for in a targeted community
* projects which aren’t completed by June 2024
* activities located outside the State of Victoria.

## What are the funding details?

Up to $960,000 is available to develop and implement projects, research and resources between July 2023 and June 2024.

Applications for grants up to $50,000 are preferred however, depending on program uptake, higher amounts may be considered for projects that can illustrate significant and sustainable benefits.

## What are the assessment criteria?

First, applications will be checked for eligibility to make sure that the applicant and their activity are eligible for funding. Eligible applications will then be assessed using the criteria listed below. Each criterion is given a percentage weighting to indicate its relative importance in the assessment process. Applications should address all relevant criteria and give a response as to whether this is capability or capacity focused.

Applications assessed as the most meritorious based upon the FPARE Program objectives and assessment criteria may be funded. The number of successful applicants will depend upon the number of applications received and budget availability.

**Criterion 1 – What will be delivered? (25%)**

* What opportunities for Victorian First Peoples community participation are identified throughout the project?
* What tools and resources will be delivered via this project for Traditional Owners and/or Victorian First Peoples to build capacity and capability in energy-related priorities?

**Criterion 2 – Why should the project be funded? (25%)**

* To what extent does the project align with community and/or TOC energy priorities? (examples of evidence may include strategic plans and Country Plans)
* What capability and capacity gaps exist today?
* How does the project align with the program objectives?

**Criterion 3 – How will the project be delivered? (25%)**

* How will this project be delivered? (do budget and project schedule all fit within allocated timeframes and budgets, are resources available to complete the project)?
* How will the project provide opportunities for greater participation in energy opportunities for Traditional Owners and Victorian First Peoples?
* How will this project maintain or increase Traditional Owner and First Peoples understanding of the energy transition and/or programs and rebates?

**Criterion 4 – Who will the project benefit? (25%)**

* Which Traditional Owner and First Peoples communities will the project enhance participation opportunities for in the transition to renewable energy in a self-determined manner?
* How are First Peoples and Traditional Owners currently being impacted by the energy transition e.g. Request for engagement in projects, programs and opportunities. Please share how this is this likely to change in the near term?

## What supporting documents will need to be provided?

The following supporting documentation must be attached:

1. Project delivery schedule template
2. Any other documents to support and provide context for the application such as a letter of support from an auspicing organisation who will manage funding on behalf of a Victorian Traditional Owner Corporation.

## What are the funding conditions?

## Funding agreements

Successful applicants must enter into a funding agreement with DEECA. 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.

No funding will be released until DEECA and the applicant have executed the funding agreement and the appropriate milestone evidence identified in the funding agreement has been met. DEECA reserves the right to withhold payments in cases where evidence has been provided but deems that there are concerns relating to the delivery of the project. In this instance, DEECA will release funding when appropriate actions have been taken to ensure the project is delivered within the agreed timeframes.

The activity must not include using the funding for political campaigning or advocacy activities for political parties.

## Funding Agreements

* For not-for-profit or community organisations and individuals, the Victorian Common Funding Agreement will be used. <https://www.vic.gov.au/victorian-common-funding-agreement>

## Legislative and regulatory requirements

In delivering the activity grant recipients are required to comply with all relevant Commonwealth and state/territory legislations and regulations, including but not limited to:

* *The Privacy Act 1988* (Cth)
* *The Freedom of Information Act 1982* (Vic)
* *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004* (Vic)
* *Electricity Safety Act 1998* (Vic)
* *Environment Protection Act 2017* (Vic)

Successful applicants are expected to acknowledge the Victorian Government’s support and promotional guidelines (https://www2.delwp.vic.gov.au/grants) will form part of the funding agreement. Successful applicants must liaise with the departmental program area to coordinate any public events or announcements related to the project.

**Cost**

DEECA is not liable for any costs, expenses, losses, claims or damages that may be incurred by applicants in connection with the application process, including in preparing or submitting an application, providing further information to DEECA, or participating in negotiations with DEECA.

## Tax implications

Successfully funded projects will be offered funding as a GST exclusive amount. However, for organisations with an ABN and who are GST registered, payment will be made GST inclusive. No GST is payable to councils. 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. Each applicant is responsible to investigate their own tax structure and treatment.

Applicants should consult the Australian Taxation Office or seek professional advice on any taxation implications that may arise from this grant funding.

## Acknowledging the Victorian Government’s support

Successful applicants are expected to acknowledge the Victorian Government’s support and promotional guidelines will form part of the funding agreement. Successful applicants must liaise with the departmental program area to coordinate any public events or announcements related to the project.

## Payments

Payments will be made as long as:

* the funding agreement has been signed by both parties;
* grant recipients provide reports as required, or otherwise demonstrate that the activity is progressing as expected;
* other terms and conditions of funding continue to be met.

## Monitoring

Funding recipients are required to comply with project monitoring and reporting requirements to be outlined in the funding agreement. This may include progress reports, site inspections, completion reports and acquittal documentation. Recipients are responsible for project delivery, including any project cost overruns should they occur. In cases where a project is delayed for an unreasonable length of time, where substantive changes to scope are made after funding has been approved, or where a project fails to be delivered, DEECA reserves the right to cancel the grant and, if applicable, recoup any payment that has already been provided.

## Privacy

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.

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.

DEECA is committed to protecting the privacy of personal information. You can find the DEECA Privacy Policy online at www.delwp.vic.gov.au/privacy.

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@delwp.vic.gov.au](mailto:Foi.unit@delwp.vic.gov.au).

## What is the application process?

Applications must be submitted through the Grants Online Portal no later than **5pm Australian Eastern Daylight Time, Friday 28 April 2023**. To apply, go to the grant program web page <https://www.energy.vic.gov.au/grants/first-peoples-adoption-of-renewable-energy-program> and click on the ‘Start New Application’ button. To return to a saved draft application, click on the ‘Access Saved Application’ button.

Late applications or applications lodged other than in accordance with the requirements of this section will only be accepted where DEECA believes acceptance of the late application, or an application lodged other than in accordance with the requirements of this section will not compromise the integrity of the application process.

When you apply online you will receive an acknowledgement email with an application number. Please quote your application number in all future correspondence relating to your application.

**Attaching required documents:**

You can attach documents to your online application provided they are in an acceptable file type (e.g. Word, Excel, PDF, or JPEG). Please note:

* Attached files must not be larger than 10MB
* When you submit your application online check carefully to ensure all your attachments have been uploaded

If you have documents to submit that cannot be attached to your online application, you can email them to [grantsinfo@delwp.vic.gov.au](mailto:grantsinfo@delwp.vic.gov.au) after the form has been submitted quoting your application number (number provided upon application submission). Attach all documents to one email, zipping the files if required.

**Note:** No hard copy applications will be accepted. Incomplete applications will not be considered.

## Additional information

Energy webpage: https://www.energy.vic.gov.au/

Email the Program Team at [aboriginalenergy@delwp.vic.gov.au](mailto:aboriginalenergy@delwp.vic.gov.au)

Applicants can submit clarification questions in relation to the application guidelines, the application process and the broader Program to DEECA. Questions must be lodged no later than **5pm Eastern Standard Daylight Time, 7 calendar days before applications close**.

Any information provided by DEECA in response to any question raised by a potential applicant may be uploaded onto the “Frequently Asked Questions” webpage. Clarification questions can be submitted to [aboriginalenergy@delwp.vic.gov.au](mailto:aboriginalenergy@delwp.vic.gov.au)

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| If you experience difficulty downloading information or technical difficulties with the online application, please **contact the grants application support at** [**grantsinfo@delwp.vic.gov.au**](mailto:grantsinfo@delwp.vic.gov.au) |

## What is the notification process?

Successful and unsuccessful applicants will be notified in writing after the assessment process is completed. All decisions are final and are not subject to further review. Unsuccessful applicants can ask for feedback on their application.

## Key dates

Indicative program timing is summarised below.

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| **Event** | **Date** |
| Applications open | 9 March 2023 |
| Application enquiries close | 20 April 2023 |
| Applications close | 28 April 2023 |
| Assessment and approvals | May-June 2023 |
| Project start by | July 2023 |
| Project completion | June 2024 |

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## Checklist

Read these guidelines and the information about this grant program at <https://www.energy.vic.gov.au/grants/first-peoples-adoption-of-renewable-energy-program> before applying and complete the following checklist.

Have you:

\* read these guidelines carefully?

\* checked if you are, or your organisation is, eligible for this grant funding?

\* checked if your activity is eligible for this grant funding?

\* checked that you would be able to comply with all relevant laws and regulations in delivery of your activity?

\* prepared the appropriate supporting documents?

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