

Summer by the Sea 2027 Guidelines

1 – 31 January 2027

With the current outbreak of H5 bird flu in Australia, there is updated advice for reporting sick or dead waterbirds, seabirds, shorebirds, birds of prey and marine mammals. [Visit Agriculture Victoria for up-to-date information.](#)



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.

DEECA is committed to genuinely partnering with Victorian Traditional Owners and Victorian Aboriginal communities to progress their aspirations.



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Accessibility

To receive this publication in an alternative format, phone the DEECA Customer Service Centre on 136 186, email customer.service@deeca.vic.gov.au or via the National Relay Service on 133 677. Available at www.deeca.vic.gov.au.

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1. What is the Summer by the Sea 2027 grants program?

The Summer by the Sea (SBTS) grants program provides free public activities on coastal Crown Land, delivered in partnership with professional activity suppliers.

The SBTS grants objectives are to:

- champion inclusivity and increase the diversity of Victorians visiting and caring for our coastal environments
- build capability of Victorians to take informed action on conservation, sustainability and climate change through event-based educational activities
- prioritise Traditional Custodians' Self-Determination in caring for Country, recognising their deep knowledge and enduring connection to Sea Country
- promote positive behaviour change and marine and coastal volunteering and stewardship.

More information can be found at: <https://www.marineandcoasts.vic.gov.au/coastal-programs/coastcare-victoria/summer-by-the-sea/>

2. What are the funding details?

The total program funding available is \$80,000. Funding details per application are outlined below.

Funding available	Up to \$7,000 (ex. GST)
Application limit	Applicants may submit only one application outlining all activities.
Activity delivery period	1 – 31 January 2027 *Subject to change in response to H5N1 avian influenza
How many activities can be included?	As many as can be budgeted within the funding available.
Applicant responsibility	Applicants must be prepared to manage registrations, activity promotion and communication with participants. Successful applicants will be required to monitor current Victorian Government guidance and actively manage any H5N1 avian influenza (H5 bird flu) risks relevant to their activities. <i>This may include changes at short notice to activities and locations to a safe environment.</i>
Community attendance	Priority will be given to applicants with community organisation connections related to the target groups below, and those who commit to events designed for their participation. Target groups include: • people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds • people with disabilities (including physical, intellectual, neurological, learning, immunological and sensory disabilities) • people experiencing mental health challenges • people from disadvantaged backgrounds • local community group/s.

3. Who can apply?

Applicant eligibility

Eligible applicants include:

- Aboriginal groups and organisations, Traditional Owners, land councils, trusts, co-operatives and Registered Aboriginal Parties under the *Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006*
- incorporated groups, organisations and educational institutions with a focus on the marine and coastal environment
- individual/sole traders or private businesses
- local or state government bodies, committees of management

Applicants must hold:

- an active Australian Business Number (ABN)
- public liability insurance of at least \$20 million, covering the specific event category(s) outlined in the grant application.

Additional requirements:

- First Aid Certificate (level 2 with CPR) for activity leader/s
- Working With Children Certificates for activity leader/s, including activity support volunteers.

Project eligibility

Safety and supervision guidance

All events must:

- have parent/guardian supervision for children 16 years of age and under
- meet the Victorian Government's policy on the ratio of leaders to participants
- be fully compliant with Child Safety policies and procedures
- align safety requirements with the relevant Adventure Activity Guidelines prepared by the Department of Education. It is the applicant's responsibility to be aware of any/all updates to the Guidelines (<https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/excursions/guidance/adventure-activities>).

All activity leaders must have the relevant and up to date industry qualifications and training for the intended events.

All adventure activities must align with the Australian Adventure Activity Standards. It is the applicant's responsibility to be aware of any/all updates to the Standards (<https://www.outdoorsvictoria.org.au/resources/australian-adventure-activity-standard/>).

Location of activities

Activities must be undertaken on, or relate to, Victorian marine and coastal Crown land. This is defined in the Marine and Coastal Act as 'the outer limit of Victorian coastal waters and 200 metres inland of the high-water mark of the sea', or 'reserved under the *Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978* for the purposes of the protection of the coastline'.

Accessibility can be a major challenge for individuals to access events. Please consider event locations that have access to public transport where possible.

Activity planning – H5N1 avian influenza (H5 bird flu)

Suppliers will be required to assess (during planning & delivery phases):

- Recent reports of sick or dead birds in the selected activity area.
- Proximity to seabird colonies, roosting sites, or breeding areas.

And in the lead up to delivery, consistently monitor:

- Any biosecurity alerts issued by DEECA, Agriculture Victoria, or local land managers.

Activities in affected locations could be relocated (for example, indoors at a Surf Lifesaving Club) or postponed where necessary.

Example SBTS H5N1 trigger framework

Situation	Response (if prior to activity date)	Response (on day of activity delivery)	During activity delivery
Single dead bird observed	Report and avoid area	Report and avoid area	Activity leaders manage participant safety and direct participants away from wildlife. Conclude event early & report observation.
Multiple dead birds observed	Relocate activity	Postpone & relocate activity	Activity leaders manage participant safety and direct participants away from wildlife. Conclude event early & report observation.
Confirmed H5N1 detection at site	Relocate activity	Postpone & relocate activity	Activities generally occur for 1-3 hours. If a supplier is made aware that H5N1 has been detected at the site during activity delivery, the activity should conclude immediately.
If relocation of activity is not possible, an activity may need to be cancelled in the interest of public safety.			

Job Safety Plan with Land Manager approval

Applicants will be required to complete a Job Safety Plan, including planned response to H5N1 avian influenza (H5 bird flu) and have this approved by relevant land manager/s prior to activity delivery.

The land manager can ensure the proposed activities comply with the objectives of the relevant coastal and marine management plans and relevant legislation and policy.

Free of charge

All activities must be offered free of charge.

4. Who cannot apply?

The following organisations cannot apply for funding:

- Commonwealth Government agencies.

5. What might be funded?

The SBTS 2026 Grants program supports community participation, engagement and education to enhance community knowledge and understanding of coastal and marine management in the face of climate change.

The following activity types are eligible for funding:

- citizen science activities
- educational walks and talks
- educational marine activities (including snorkelling, rockpool rambles, canoeing)
- Traditional Owner led cultural activities
- marine related art and craft
- online education activities
- other events designed to promote positive behaviour change, marine and coastal stewardship and environmental volunteering

The following costs are eligible for funding:

- professional and technical consultants, contractors and specialists (including AUSLAN interpreters, language translators)
- training & certification (if directly related to funded events)
- equipment hire or purchase directly related to event on-ground components*
- consent or permit costs
- transportation costs for Activity Leaders
- transportation costs for participants (only available for applicants who are partnering with a local community organisation to offer designated participation- see Section 2 What are the grant funding details)
- event coordination[#]

Note: If grant applications exceed the available funding, successful applicants may be awarded a portion of the funding requested.

*Where possible ensure assets and equipment are hired, borrowed, and shared between groups rather than purchased for events. Capital items must become a registered asset of the entity.

[#] Any grant funding incurred for event coordination **must be itemised**. This can include staff wages of the applicant organisation for time worked on event administration. Non-event related wages, or wages already being paid are ineligible.

6. What will not be funded?

The following activities are ineligible:

- any activity involving offsetting, clearing of vegetation or revegetation works using species which are not local indigenous species
- infrastructure or engineering works, such as coastal protection structures and erosion mitigation activities
- activities (or components of projects) that have already been funded on the same site by other sources
- political campaigning or advocacy events for political parties
- conferences.

The following expenditure items will not be funded:

- the purchase or production of goods or merchandise which are environmentally damaging e.g. single use plastics (hard or soft), polystyrene
- goods or services for competitions, prizes, gifts, vouchers or alcohol
- travel and accommodation outside Victoria
- IT equipment: computers, laptops, tablets and smartphones

Note: products produced from Victorian Government funding cannot be sold or reproduced for money.

7. What are the assessment criteria?

Applications will be checked for both applicant and project eligibility. Eligible applications will be assessed using the criteria and weighting below. Applications should address all relevant criteria.

Criteria	Weighting	Description
Community involvement	60%	Applicants must demonstrate: • the extent to which the activity involves community engagement, education and on-ground action, • how it will meet the SBTS objectives outlined in section 1 of these guidelines. Priority will be given to applicants with community organisation connections related to one or more of the outlined target groups (see

Criteria	Weighting	Description
		Section 2), and who commit to delivering activities designed for their participation.
Risk management	20%	Applicants must identify potential risks to the event in the Job Safety Plan(s) and provide adequate actions to remove, manage, or reduce the risks. Job Safety Plan(s) must be approved by the relevant Land Manager prior to activity delivery. Applicants must outline how they will identify, monitor and respond to potential H5N1 avian influenza (H5 bird flu) risks relevant to their activities.
Value for Money/ budget	20%	Applicants must demonstrate the activities represent good value for money, maximising community participation, with reasonable costings.

The following principles will be considered across all applications to maximise program outcomes.

1. A proportionate geographic spread across Barwon South West, Port Phillip and Gippsland regions, where possible.
2. A variety of activity types available across Summer By The Sea program.
3. Traditional Owner Corporations and First Nations owned businesses will be prioritised in line with the Victorian Government's commitment to Traditional Owner Self-Determination.

8. What supporting documents will need to be provided?

All applicants must provide the following documents. Failure to provide one of the below documents will result in the application being ineligible.

Compulsory:

- ☐ Public Liability Insurance Certificate of Currency of at least \$20 million, covering the specific event categories(s) outlined in the grant application
- ☐ Land Manager Approval of the Job Safety Plan (dated signature or written email evidence) including planned response to H5N1 avian influenza (H5 bird flu)
- ☐ First Aid Certificate (Level 2 with CPR) for activity leader/s
- ☐ Working With Children Certificates for activity leader/s (evidence for volunteers not required).

If applicable:

- ☐ Declaration of Conflict of Interest (if the applicant will use contractors and there is a perceived or actual relationship between the applicant and contractor)
- ☐ Letter of support from a local community organisation outlining their agreement to be involved in a designated activity(s).

9. What are the funding conditions?

Caretaker Conventions

As the Victorian State election will be held on Saturday 28 November 2026, the Victorian Government will assume a caretaker role from 6.00pm on 3 November 2026 until such time that either it becomes clear that the incumbent government will be returned, or when a new government is commissioned.

In line with the caretaker conventions, the incoming government will determine whether to proceed with this grant process and award funding after the caretaker period.

Applicants should be aware that:

- all information about this grant process represents the position of the current government only, and is subject to change

- the incoming government may decide to not proceed with this grant process.

Funding agreements

Successful applicants must enter into a funding agreement with the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA). The Victorian Common Funding Agreement (VCFA) is used for funding agreements with not-for-profit organisations. It is recommended that applicants review the terms and conditions before applying. Information about the VCFA is available on <https://www.vic.gov.au/victorian-common-funding-agreement>

The activity does not include using the Funding for political campaigning or advocacy events for political parties.

Acknowledging the Victorian Government's and Coastcare Victoria's funding support

Funding recipients are required to acknowledge Coastcare Victoria and Victorian Government funding support in all project activities, including printed and published materials and in verbal communications at events and activities. Further information: [Brand Victoria Guidelines | vic.gov.au](#).

Legislative and regulatory requirements

In delivering the activities, 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 (Commonwealth)*
- *The Freedom of Information Act 1982 (Vic)*
- *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004*
- *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006*
- *Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1986*
- *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*
- *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988*
- *Marine and Coastal Act 2018*
- *Native Title Act 1993*
- *Working with Children Act 2005*

Tax implications

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

Payment

Payments will be made as long as:

- the funding agreement has been signed by both parties;
- other terms and conditions of funding continue to be met.

Monitoring

Grant recipients are required to comply with event monitoring and reporting requirements as outlined in the funding agreement. This may include attendance lists, feedback reports and acquittal documentation.

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 <https://www.deeca.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@deeca.vic.gov.au.

10. What is the application process?

Applications are submitted online using the DEECA Grants Online portal.

Applications must be submitted by: **3pm (AEST) on 28 September 2026.**

Note: Hard-copy applications won't be accepted. Late and incomplete applications won't be considered.

Use the link below to start your application and click on the 'Start New Application' button:

<https://www.marineandcoasts.vic.gov.au/coastal-programs/coastcare-victoria/summer-by-the-sea/>

To return to a draft application: <https://deeca.my.site.com/grants/s/>

If you require technical assistance submitting your application online, email grantsinfo@deeca.vic.gov.au

Attaching required documents:

Supporting documents must be in an acceptable file type, such as Word, Excel, PDF, or JPEG. The maximum file size for each file is 10MB.

You will receive an application number when you submit an application online. Please quote this number in all communications with the department relating to your application.

If you have documents to submit that cannot be attached to your online application you can email them to grantsinfo@deeca.vic.gov.au, quoting your application number. Attach all documents to one email, zipping the files if required.

11. 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 request feedback on their application by emailing coastcare.victoria@deeca.vic.gov.au.

12. Key dates

Event	Date
Applications open	31 August 2026 *Subject to change in response to H5N1 Avian Influenza
Applications close Late applications will not be accepted	3pm AEST 28 September 2026
Applicants notified	October 2026
Successful recipient briefing meeting	November 2026
Registration and promotion of SBTS activities	December 2026
Activity delivery	January 2027
Completion Report submitted	February 2027