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# Universal Tourism Grant (UTG)

## Opportunities, Examples and Eligibility

Grant opens: 11 August 2025  
Grant closes: 21 September 2025  
Announcements: October 2025



# Universal Tourism Grant

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The Universal Tourism Grants program is a one off and non-recurrent funding program open to Latrobe City small businesses and not for profit groups to provide accessibility improvements within the tourism related sector. The grant program has been developed by Council and funded through the Victorian Government's Council Support Package.



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## Foreword

Latrobe City is a region full of unique attractions, passionate people and unforgettable experiences and we want to make sure they're open to everyone.

Council is proud to launch the Universal Tourism Grant (UTG), a new initiative that supports small businesses and not-for-profit organisations to enhance accessibility and inclusivity in the tourism sector.

Whether it's through improved infrastructure, staff training, accessible signage or sensory-friendly design, this grant is about helping more people feel welcome and included when they explore our region.

Tourism should be accessible for all and this program reflects our commitment to making Latrobe City an even more inclusive destination. With the support of the Victorian Government's Council Support Package, we're enabling local organisations to think big and take practical steps toward universal access.

I encourage all eligible businesses to apply for the grant. Let's work together to build a tourism experience that truly represents the spirit of our community - inclusive, innovative and open to all.

Councillor Dale Harriman

Latrobe City Council Mayor

## Overview

The Universal Tourism Grants (UTG) program is a one off and non-recurrent funding program open to Latrobe City small businesses and not for profit groups to provide accessibility improvements within the tourism related sector. The grant program has been developed by Council and funded through the Victorian Government's Council Support Package.

## Things to know about this document

**This document is a summary of the grant opportunities.** For detailed criteria, including eligibility and requirements, please go to the webpage:

[www.latrobe.vic.gov.au/the\\_universal\\_tourism\\_grant\\_UTG](http://www.latrobe.vic.gov.au/the_universal_tourism_grant_UTG)



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## ABOUT THE GRANTS

# Latrobe City: Tourism for All

We want to make Latrobe City a truly inclusive destination that everyone can enjoy.

We know that in tourism, people with disabilities – and those with other access needs are sometimes left behind.

These grants will change that in the Latrobe City area.

The Universal Tourism Grants (UTG) will enable small businesses and Not For Profits to make their experiences more inclusive by funding upgrades and improvements that will allow operators to welcome everyone.

Are you missing out on business because you don't have step-free access?

Would your organisation benefit from better seating, more shade or an automatic door?

70% of respondents are more likely to visit somewhere new if they feel welcomed by staff or the venue seems to care about accessibility

2024 Euan's Guide Access Survey

Is it difficult for people who are deaf or have low vision to enjoy your experience?

Accessible Tourism accounted for 1 in 5 trips taken in Australia in 2024

Tourism Research Australia, 2025

Would your staff benefit from training to better welcoming people with disabilities?



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## ABOUT THE GRANTS

# Fast Facts

### Do I have to be operating in Latrobe City?

Yes

### What's the maximum funding available?

\$25,000 (\$27,500 including GST)

### Does my business have to contribute?

Yes, the grants requires a shared project cost, [see more here](#).

### Do I need to own the building?

No, but you'll need permission from the owner for any upgrades.

### Is my business a 'Tourism Business' or a 'Small Business'?

Take a [look at the Small Business Page](#)

### Are we a 'not for profit'?

Take a [look at the Not For Profit Page](#)

### What are the key dates?

Grant opens: 11 August 2025  
Grant closes: 21 September 2025  
Announcements: October 2025

### Do I have to get a quote for the project work?

Yes, along with some other project details. Quotes and project work will need to be undertaken by accredited and/or qualified worker/tradesperson.

### Can I start a new business with the grant?

No, your business must already be in operation.

### More questions? Contact us:

Phone: 1300 367 700

Email: [utg@latrobe.vic.gov.au](mailto:utg@latrobe.vic.gov.au)

Web: [www.latrobe.vic.gov.au/The\\_Universal\\_Tourism\\_Grant\\_UTG](http://www.latrobe.vic.gov.au/The_Universal_Tourism_Grant_UTG)





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## ABOUT THE GRANTS

# What Is Universal Design In Tourism?

**People are diverse - some are left-handed and some right-handed - and visitors vary in their age, size and functional capacities.**

Everyone should be able to engage in visitor experiences comfortably and safely, as far as possible, without special assistance.

Universal design in tourism ensures that experiences, services, and environments are accessible and enjoyable for people of all abilities, including those with disabilities, older adults, and families with young children.

By removing physical, sensory, and communication barriers, it promotes inclusivity and enhances the overall visitor experience. This approach benefits the community by fostering social equity, boosting local economies through increased tourism, and creating more welcoming public spaces for everyone.

External links for more information about accessible and inclusive tourism

➤ [The WELCOME Framework](#)

Produced by Austrade in collaboration with state and territory governments, the framework highlights easy ways to improve the customer experience for all travellers.

➤ [Centre for Universal Design Australia](#)

The Centre for Universal Design Australia (CUDA) is a registered charity focused on promoting universal design principles and inclusive practices. They have a large section on tourism and universal design





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## ABOUT THE GRANTS

# Examples Of Universal Design In Tourism



Wheelchair  
lift for a  
touring van

APPROXIMATELY  
\$6,000-12,000



Accessible  
bathroom  
fitout

APPROXIMATELY  
\$6,000-30,000



Portable  
hearing loop

APPROXIMATELY  
\$600-800



Staff training  
for disability  
awareness

APPROXIMATELY  
\$1,000-2,500



Horse-riding  
harness

APPROXIMATELY  
\$5,000-6,500



Custom tactile  
wayfinding  
signage

APPROXIMATELY  
\$1,000-6,000

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## ABOUT THE GRANTS

# Project Examples

**All applicants are required to demonstrate how activities improve the accessibility and inclusions of the venue/experience in their funding application.**

Here are just some examples of projects that may be funded:

- Providing step-free access to your operation/ experience
- Assistance with sustainability and accessibility accreditation through VTIC with a recognised organisation
- Staff training on inclusion for service excellence with a recognised organisation
- Installation or upgrade to car parking for Disabled Permit users
- Installation or upgrade of toilet facilities for disabled visitors
- Installation of signage systems with Braille and raised lettering for visitors who are blind/low vision
- Multilingual accessible audio guides for blind/ low vision visitors
- Installation of accessible seating with backrests and armrests
- Installation of a low-height reception service counter
- Purchase of portable hearing augmentation for visitors with hearing loss or D/deafness
- Development of sensory rooms for neurodiverse visitors
- Digital 3D mapping and/or walk-through for inaccessible areas of your tourism business
- Access and inclusion website information – including testimonials, maps, photos, measurements and audio guides
- Assistance in getting access to information into Online Travel Agents
- Innovative approaches to delivering inclusive and accessible outdoor experiences – i.e. purchase of an accessible harness for a zip line, a motorised wheelchair attachment or a vehicle ramp for a tour van.
- Development of a (multi-lingual) audio guide for an appropriate tourism offering
- Development of resources and initiatives such as visual stories, sensory maps, visual communication supports, quiet and sensory rooms, inclusive initiatives (i.e. Quiet Hours, Relaxed Performances)



# 2.0 Information For Small Businesses

- › Eligibility For Small Businesses
- › Small Business Contributions
- › Example - Frank's Cafe & Restaurant

## What's a 'Tourism Business'?

For these grants 'Tourism Businesses' are defined as belonging to industries where tourists account for a significant proportion of the goods and services consumed.

## What's a 'Small Business'?

For these grants a 'Small Business' is defined as being one that employs 20 or less full time equivalent employees, or has an aggregated turnover of less than AUD\$1 million.



# Eligibility For Small Businesses

## Based in Latrobe City

Your organisation must be based in Latrobe City and delivering services in the tourism sector.

## Valid ABN & Insurance

To be eligible, a business must have a valid ABN, be legally registered in Australia, accept legal and financial responsibility for the project outcome, and hold appropriate business insurance.

## Co-Contribution & Reporting

You must be able to prove the your business can co-contribute to the project – at least half of the cost. Also you must agree to some council requirements about acknowledging we helped fund the project.

[See all the criteria on the website >](#)

## Ineligible Projects

These grants are designed to support Small Businesses and Not For Profit Organisations in the tourism industry.

### Funding will not be provided for:

- general maintenance
- sponsorships
- fundraising for other groups
- awards or prizes, or
- projects promoting religious or political messages.

[See all ineligible project types on the website](#)



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# Small Business Contributions

Small Business applicants must contribute to the project using their own or other non-government funds.

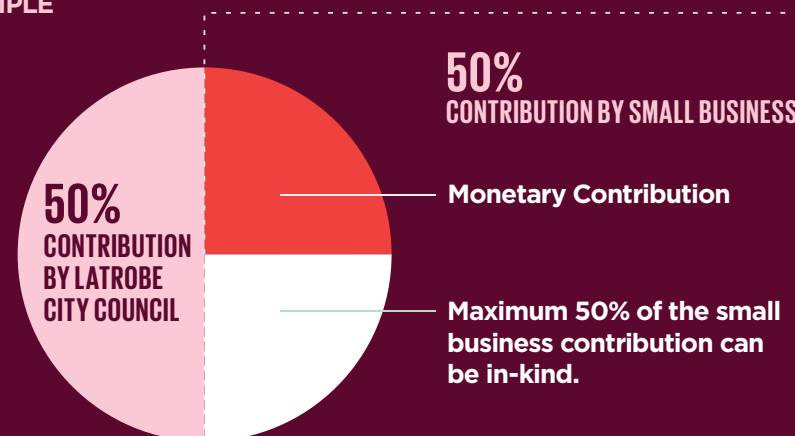
They must show proof of having enough funds, and up to 50% of their contribution can be in-kind.

## In-kind Contributions

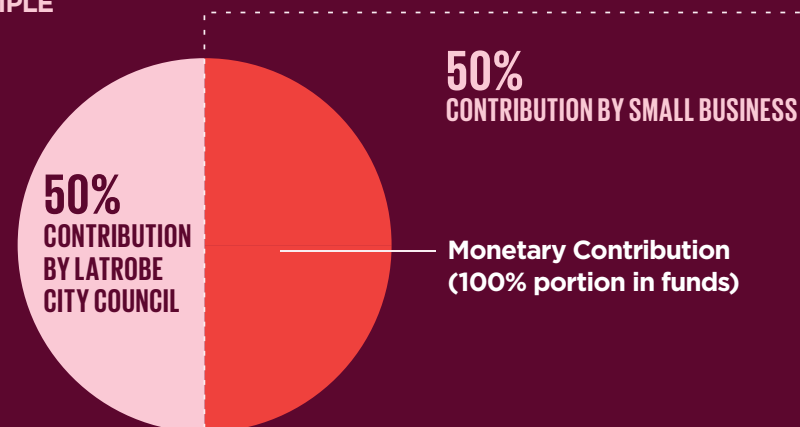
An in-kind contribution refers to the donation of goods, services, or time - rather than money - that directly supports the project.

All in-kind contributions will be checked to ensure their value is fair.

### EXAMPLE 03



### EXAMPLE 04





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## INFORMATION FOR SMALL BUSINESS

# Example - Frank's Cafe & Restaurant

**Frank is a sole trader and runs Frank's Cafe & Restaurant.**

He wants to make his business step-free so everyone can get in and move around easily. It's good for business and the right thing to do.

Installing a ramp with handrails, removing concrete steps and installing a wider door has an estimated cost of \$20,000.

Frank can apply for up to \$10,000 through the Universal Tourism Grant (50% of the cost) and would have to contribute \$10,000 from other sources.

Frank has the option of nominating 50% of his contribution as an in-kind contribution (being \$5,000).

UTG Grant \$ 10,000

Co-Contribution \$ 5,000

In-Kind \$ 5,000

**Project Cost \$ 20,000**





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# 3.0 Information For Not For Profit Organisations

## What's a 'Tourism Business'?

For these grants 'Tourism Businesses' are defined as belonging to industries where tourists account for a significant proportion of the goods and services consumed.

## What's a 'Not For Profit'?

Not For Profit organisations must be registered with Consumer Affairs Victoria (CAV) and/or the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC).



# Eligibility For Not For Profit Organisations

## Based in Latrobe City

Your Not For Profit must be based in Latrobe City and delivering services in the tourism sector.

## Valid ABN & Insurance

To be eligible, a Not For Profit must be registered in Australia, hold a valid ABN (where required), accept legal and financial responsibility for the project outcome, and hold appropriate insurance.

## Co-Contribution & Reporting

You must be able to prove the your Not For Profit can co-contribute to the project – at least one quarter of the cost. Also you must agree to some council requirements about acknowledging we helped fund the project.

[See all the criteria on the website >](#)

## Ineligible Projects

These grants are designed to support Small Businesses and Not For Profit organisations in the tourism industry.

### Funding will not be provided for:

- general maintenance
- sponsorships
- fundraising for other groups
- awards or prizes, or
- projects promoting religious or political messages.

[See all ineligible project types on the website](#)



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# Not For Profit Contributions

Not for profit applicants must contribute to the project using their own or other non-government funds.

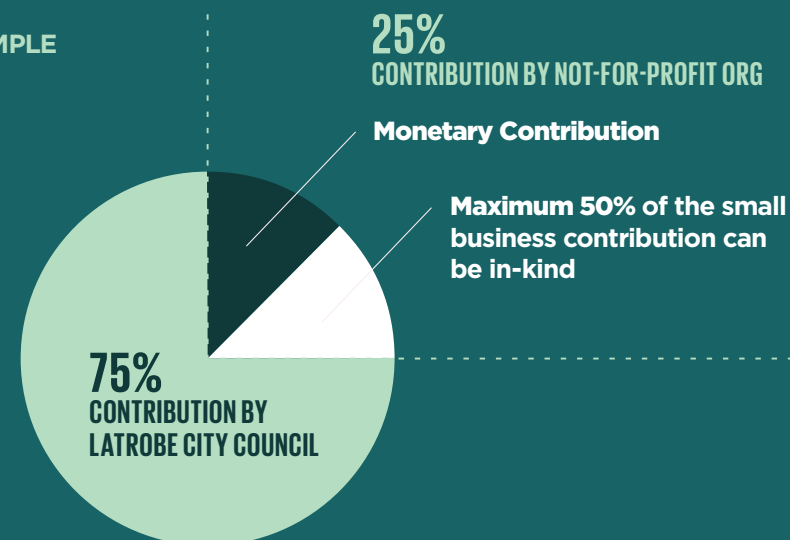
They must show proof of having enough funds, and up to 50% of their contribution can be in-kind.

## In-kind Contributions

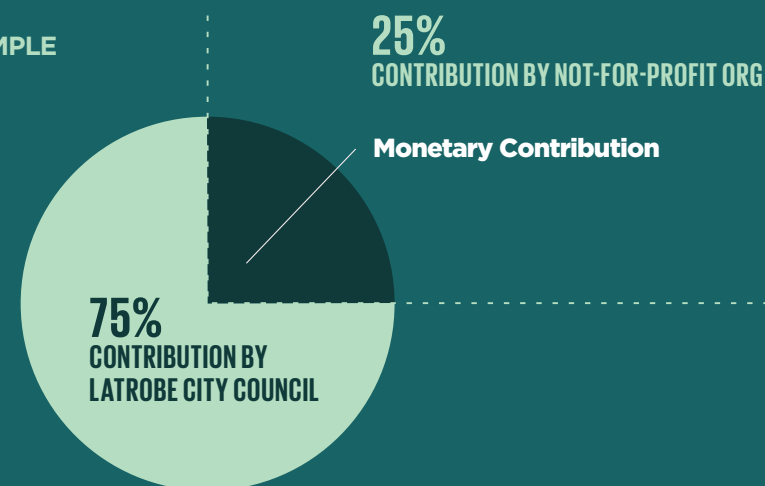
An in-kind contribution refers to the donation of goods, services, or time - rather than money - that directly supports the project.

All in-kind contributions will be checked to ensure their value is fair.

### EXAMPLE 01



### EXAMPLE 02





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# Example - Mary Street Toy Museum

**The Mary Street Toy Museum is a Not for profit community-based business.**

They want to provide new accessible signage across the museum and create a multilingual audio guide for the museum.

More visitors will be able to enjoy the Museum, especially international and interstate visitors who might not speak English.

The upgrades will cost \$12,000.

The Mary Street Toy Museum can apply for up to \$9,000 Universal Tourism Grant (75% of the cost) and would have to contribute \$3,000 from other sources.

The applicant has the option of nominating 50% of their contribution as an in-kind contribution (being \$1,500)

UTG Grant	\$ 9,000
Co-Contribution	\$ 1,500
In-Kind	\$ 1,500
Project Cost	\$ 12,000



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## Example - Liz's Equine Tours

**Liz's Equine Tours is a small business offering guided tours that include horse riding.**

They want a new accessible van and a supporting horse saddle so they can reach a bigger market – and schools.

Their total project cost is \$75,000.

Liz's Equine Tours can apply for up to \$25,000 through the Universal Tourism Grant and would need to contribute \$50,000 from other sources.

They don't wish to utilise in-kind contributions.

UTG Grant      \$ 25,000

Co-Contribution      \$ 50,000

In-Kind      \$ –

**Project Cost      \$ 75,000**



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# 4.0 Preparing Your Application





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## PREPARING YOUR APPLICATION

# Getting Started On Your Application

## Applicant Checklist

To make the process simple you should have the following ready for the application through the SmartyGrants portal.

- ☐ Your address & contact details
- ☐ **Proof of Business** (ABN) Charity/Not For Profit status
- ☐ **Proof of insurance** (Current Certificate of Public Liability) - used to cover the project
- ☐ **Outline of the project**, including written permission from the asset owner to complete the project (if required).
- ☐ **Project Budget** breakdown including proof of ability to fund in-kind contributions
- ☐ **Written quotes** from a registered tradesperson or business (project cost less than \$5,000 : 1 quote, project cost \$5,000 - \$15,000 : 2 quotes, project cost more than \$25,000 : 3 quotes)

## Got Everything?

## Key Dates

GRANTS OPEN



11 August 2025



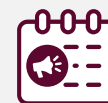
GRANTS CLOSE



21 Sept. 2025



OUTCOME ANNOUNCED



Oct. 2025



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## PREPARING YOUR APPLICATION

# Support For Your Application

## Support For Applicants

For grant enquiries, including assistance and support available to help you submit your application, please contact:

### Sports Legacy & Activation Team

Phone:  
1300 367 700

Email:  
[utg@latrobe.vic.gov.au](mailto:utg@latrobe.vic.gov.au)

## How To Apply

Applications for grants are completed online using SmartyGrants. Applicants must address the eligibility, assessment criteria, answer all questions and submit all required documentation prior to program closing.

[https://www.latrobe.vic.gov.au/  
CommunityGrants](https://www.latrobe.vic.gov.au/CommunityGrants)

## Technical Assistance

Refer to the SmartyGrants help guide for technical assistance related to submitting your application. The SmartyGrants support desk is open 9am – 5pm Monday to Friday on 03 9320 6888 or by email at:  
[service@smartygrants.com.au](mailto:service@smartygrants.com.au).

## Interpreter & Translation Services

To contact us in your own language through the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS) phone 13 14 50 and ask them to contact the Latrobe City Council on 1300 367 700

If you are deaf, or have a hearing impairment or speech impairment:

Contact us through the National Relay Service;

TTY users phone 133 677 then ask for 1300 367 700;

Speak and Listen users phone 1300 555 727 then ask for 1300 367 700;

Internet relay users connect to the NRS then ask for 1300 367 700



**LATROBE CITY  
COUNCIL**



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