

Accessibility Improvement Grant

For

Tourism Small Businesses &
Not-For-Profits

Round Three (Major)

Guidelines



We're making tourism experiences in Latrobe City some of the best, most accessible and inclusive in the country, and we have a funding program that could be available to you.

The Accessibility Improvement Grant is open to Latrobe City small businesses and not-for-profit groups, so they can provide improved accessibility within the tourism sector.

There are lots of ways to make tourism open to everyone, what would make your tourism offering more inclusive?

Better seating with armrests and backrests? A wider doorway with an automatic, sensor opening? Signage with raised letters and Braille? Staff training and a Disability Action Plan? Better lighting or shade?

We're excited about helping our region thrive in the tourism space and we believe you have great ideas to improve your offering.

Let's make Latrobe City open for all.

Resources

[Tourism Victoria Accessibility Resource Kit](#)

[Victorian Government Accessible Tourism Information](#)

[The WELCOME Framework](#)



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Program Overview

The Accessibility Improvement Grant 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.

A maximum funding amount of \$25,000 excluding GST will be provided to the successful applicants to undertake projects that fit within the eligible criteria below.

All applicants are required to make a co-contribution (including eligible in-kind contributions) to the project as outlined in the General Guidelines below.

The total value of the program including all rounds is \$470,000. No further grants will be available once these funds are distributed.

Grant Objectives

The objectives of the Accessibility Improvement Grant are to support tourism providers within Latrobe City to improve the accessibility of existing visitor experiences to:

- Increase the number of accessible tourism experiences
- Increase visitor satisfaction from people with access requirements; and
- Attract new visitors to the region, specifically people with access requirements

Funding Rounds and Schedule

Round Three of the Accessibility Improvement grant will open in March 2026 and remain open until all funds are distributed. No further grant funding will be available once funds are exhausted.

Assessments will commence fortnightly on the 2nd and 4th week of each month. If your application is received after this date, it will be assessed on the Assessment Date of the following fortnight.

Applications must allow for sufficient time for assessment to occur prior to the requested funded activities occurring.

You will be notified of your grant outcome by the below Outcome Notification Date.

Assessment Date	Outcome Notification Date
27 April	11 May
11 May	25 May
25 May	8 June
8 June	22 June
22 June – Final	June 2026

Important things to know before you start

- Read the guidelines carefully. It is important to have a full understanding of the guidelines before you start completing the online application.
- All eligible applicants are limited to receiving one Universal Tourism Grant per round.
- There is no limit to the total project cost, however the maximum grant amount of \$25,000 excluding GST applies to all projects. See Example Three in the Grant conditions for further explanation.
- Grant funding must not be regarded as a recurrent commitment from Latrobe City Council.

Summary for Small Businesses

Accessibility Improvement Grant – Summary for Small Business	
Description	Financial assistance to tourism providers wishing to provide accessibility improvements for visitors.
Project Examples	<p>The types of projects that may be considered include (but are not limited to):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Installation of / modification to ramps, steps and handrails to ensure Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) compliance • Accessibility and Inclusion formal staff training with a qualified / accredited organisation • Installation / upgrade of tactile and Braille signage • Installation of adaptive or assistive technology to maximise the visitor experience
Maximum Grant Amount	\$25,000
Co-Contribution Requirements	<p>Small Business 25% of total project cost In-kind contributions of up to 50% of the applicant's total contribution.</p>
Application Dates	<p>Round Three Opening Date: March 2026 Round Three Closing Date: Round will remain open until funds are exhausted.</p>
Submission Assessment Dates	Fortnightly from March 2026.
Outcome Notification Date	Fortnightly
Application Process	<p>Online application via SmartyGrants https://latrobe.smartygrants.com.au/AccessibilityImprovementGrant</p>
Reporting Requirements	Signed acquittal, a summary of income and expenditure, including copies of invoices and photos of completed project.

To be eligible to apply, applicants must:

- Be a small business operating in Latrobe City within the tourism sector*.
- Employ 20 or less full-time equivalent employees**, or have an aggregated turnover of less than \$10 million.
- Have a valid Australian Business Number (ABN)
- Be an Australian registered business, sole trader, company, business cooperative or partnership, provide documented evidence of its legal structure, and be willing to accept legal and financial responsibility for the investment.
- Be able to provide evidence of appropriate business insurances.
- Submit professional quote(s) for the activity.

- Be able to provide evidence that you have appropriate approval from Council departments for this activity (where required).
- Be free of debt to Latrobe City Council, have no overdue acquittals from previous Latrobe City Council grant applications, or outstanding acquittals from Universal Tourism Grants Round One or Two; and

* Tourism businesses are defined as belonging to industries where tourists account for a significant proportion of the goods and services consumed

** Full Time Equivalent (FTE) is NOT a headcount. 1 FTE is considered 38 hours of work over a week's period. If 1 part time employee works 20 hours per week and another part time employee works 18 hours per week, both employees equal 1 FTE.

If you answered no to any of the above criteria, you are ineligible to receive funding. However please contact our team to discuss.

Co-contributions

Small businesses must contribute 25% of total project cost.

The co-contribution may come from the applicant organisation or from other sources but must not be from any other Victorian Government or Council program or source.

Applicants must demonstrate they have sufficient funds available for the required co-contribution amount.

The co-contribution may partly be met by in-kind contributions. An in-kind contribution is a contribution of a good or service rather than money. The in-kind contribution may be up to 50% of the applicant's total contribution.

All in-kind contributions will be checked to ensure their value is fair with the value of in-kind contributions to be quoted in monetary terms in the grant application. In-kind contributions must be of a high quality and recognised as professional work.

Example

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 \$15,000 through the Accessibility Improvement Grant (75% of the cost) and would have to contribute \$5,000 from other sources. Frank has the option of nominating 50% of his contribution as an in-kind contribution (being \$2,500).

Universal Tourism Grant (UTG)	\$ 15,000
Small Business Co-Contribution	\$ 2,500
Small Business In-Kind Contribution	\$ 2,500
Project Cost	\$20,000

Summary for Not-For-Profit Organisations

Accessibility Improvement Grant – Summary for Not-For-Profits	
Description	Financial assistance to tourism providers wishing to provide accessibility improvements for visitors.
Project Examples	<p>The types of projects that may be considered include (but are not limited to):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Installation of / modification to ramps, steps and handrails to ensure Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) compliance • Accessibility and Inclusion formal staff training with a qualified/ accredited organisation • Installation/upgrade of tactile and Braille signage • Installation of adaptive or assistive technology to maximise the visitor experience
Maximum Grant Amount	\$25,000
Co-Contribution Requirements	<p>Not-For-Profit 10% of total project cost In-kind contributions of up to 50% of the applicant's total contribution.</p>
Application Dates	<p>Round Three Opening Date: March 2026 Round Three- Closing Date: Round will remain open until funds are exhausted.</p>
Submission Assessment Dates	Fortnightly from March 2026.
Outcome Notification Date	Fortnightly
Application Process	<p>Online application via SmartyGrants https://latrobe.smartygrants.com.au/AccessibilityImprovementGrant</p>
Reporting Requirements	Signed acquittal, a summary of income and expenditure, including copies of invoices and photos of completed project.

To be eligible to apply, applicants must:

- Be a not-for-profit, properly constituted legal entity, operating in Latrobe City within the tourism sector*
- Employ 20 or less full-time equivalent employees**, or have an aggregated turnover of less than \$10 million
- Have a valid Australian Business Number (ABN) where required
- Be an Australian registered not-for-profit, charity and provide documented evidence of its legal structure, and be willing to accept legal and financial responsibility for the investment.
- Be able to provide evidence of appropriate business insurances.
- Submit professional quotes for the activity.
- Be able to provide evidence that you have appropriate approval from Council departments for this activity (where required).

- Be free of debt to Latrobe City Council and have no outstanding acquittals from previous Latrobe City Council grant applications; and

If you answered no to any of the above criteria, you are ineligible to receive funding. However please contact our team to discuss.

Co-contributions

Small businesses must contribute 10% of total project cost.

The co-contribution may come from the applicant organisation or from other sources but must not be from any other Victorian Government or Council program or source.

Applicants must demonstrate they have sufficient funds available for the required co-contribution amount.

The co-contribution may partly be met by in-kind contributions. An in-kind contribution is a contribution of a good or service rather than money. The in-kind contribution may be up to 50% of the applicant's total contribution.

All in-kind contributions will be checked to ensure their value is fair with the value of in-kind contributions to be quoted in monetary terms in the grant application. In-kind contributions must be of a high quality and recognised as professional work.

Example

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 \$10,800 from the Accessibility Improvement Grant (90% of the cost) and would have to contribute \$1,200 from other sources.

The applicant has the option of nominating 50% of their contribution as an in-kind contribution (being \$600)

Universal Tourism Grant (UTG)	\$ 10,8000
Small Business Co-Contribution	\$ 600
Small Business In-Kind Contribution	\$ 600
Project Cost	\$12,000

Grant Conditions

Successful applicants will be required to:

- Provide Latrobe City Council with any additional information requested to assist in assessing your application within the timeframe specified in the request.
- Enter into a funding agreement and adhere to the conditions of the agreement. Additional funding conditions may be applied to your project during the assessment phase.
- Spend the grant money for the purpose stated in the original application.
- Submit a written request to Council for any variation to the project including changes to the original project scope, project dates, or requests for extensions of time. Approval must be received by Council prior to any changes commencing.
- Expend funds within 5 months of receipt of funding unless written approval has been given for an extension.
- Acquit funds within 1 month of the project completion unless written approval has been given for an extension.
- Return any underspent and excess funding to Latrobe City Council when submitting the acquittal form.
- Seek the appropriate permits and approvals to deliver the project. Approval of funding does not constitute permission to deliver your project. It remains your responsibility to seek the appropriate permits and approvals required to deliver the project. All future maintenance / replacement costs are the responsibility of the applicant.
- Publicly acknowledge Latrobe City Council's and the Victorian Government's contributions to your project. This acknowledgement, depending on the amount of funding received, may include logo presence on supporting publications, displays or signage. You will be provided with copies of the Latrobe City Council and Victorian Government, 'Supported by' logos and guidelines on correct use when you receive your outcome notification.
- Consent to Council using non-confidential information in public forums, Council meetings and all other forms of communications.

General Guidelines

Who is not eligible to apply?

- Applicants that have an overdue debt with Latrobe City Council or that have failed to comply with the terms and conditions of any previous Latrobe City funding agreement.
- Applicants with an outstanding acquittals from Round One and Round Two.
- Franchisees, subsidiaries of larger companies, unincorporated associations.
- Government departments or agencies, foundations or grant making bodies.
- A university, technical college, or school
- Political organisations or organisations that have a political purpose.
- Current Latrobe City employees, immediate families, and contractors.
- Entities that denigrate, exclude, or offend parts of the community.
- Any business not directly involved in the tourism or related sector.

What will be funded?

All applicants are required to demonstrate how the below activities improve the accessibility of the venue in the funding application. Eligible activities include but are not limited to:

- Upgrade of facilities including fit out, alterations and/or extensions to existing premises to ensure compliance with the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) (1992) such as entry ramps, handrails, accessible toilets, widening of doorways.
- ICT hardware and associated operating software such as virtual reality equipment, electronic information boards, initial software licenses, purchase, customisation and installation of customer relationship management (CRM), database, booking and scheduling software, adaptive or assistive technology to maximise the visitor experience.
- Creation of or improvements to a website that facilitates community access to information or services provided by the organisation.
- Modifications and refurbishments to leased buildings or grounds, providing approval has been given by the owner.
- Upgrade or installation of open space furniture including shade/shelters, BBQs, toilet facilities, drinking fountains, permanently installed play equipment, interpretive or wayfinding signage.
- Provision of accessible car spaces and/or footpaths to provide accessible paths of travel into the venue.
- Acquiring vehicles and trailers (and their modification) for community transport/services.
- Accessibility and Inclusion formal staff training.
- Acoustic treatment of tourism spaces to reduce noise.
- 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)

We may also approve other activities, provided they directly relate to the grant objectives.

What will not be funded?

- General maintenance expenses. This includes the ongoing care of an existing asset e.g. painting, new roof, fence repairs etc.
- Sponsorship signage and sponsorship agreements.
- Requests for the purpose of raising funds for other groups. Including fundraising projects with the primary purpose of fundraising for other organisations or individuals.
- Funding for trophies, awards, scholarships, subscriptions, prizes, and honorariums.
- Projects that deliver a religious or political party message where the purpose is to advance the organisation's religious beliefs, irrespective of what those beliefs or positions might be.
- Projects or events at venues where there are gaming machines; unless there is no appropriate alternative venue, and the applicant has considered the potential impact to participants.

- Retrospective costs. This includes reimbursement of costs already incurred and funding for projects which have already taken place or began prior to the application being approved by Council.
- Payments of debts and loans.
- General operating expenses – Funding will not cover expenses such as wages and salaries.
- The purchase of land.
- Repair of facilities damaged by vandalism, fire, or other natural disasters where the incident should reasonably be expected to be covered by insurance; and
- Any activity that denigrates, excludes, or offends part of the community, is contrary to anti vilification laws, or freedom of speech, or not aligned with council policies, priorities or values.
- Activity that pollutes, air or water, or destroy or waste non-renewable resources.

What is the process once your application is submitted?

1. Applications are checked for eligibility against the grant program guidelines.
2. Applications are assessed by an assessment panel consisting of Latrobe City Council Officers and weighted out of 100 using the below assessment criteria:

Assessment Criteria	Weighting
Organisation Eligibility	Pass / Fail
Approvals where required (Latrobe City Council / Building Owner)	Pass / Fail
Demonstrated Co-Contribution	Pass / Fail
Assessment of In-Kind Contributions	Pass / Fail
Standardised Scoring (15)	
Amount of funding received in previous Universal Tourism Grant rounds.	15
Assessment Panel Scoring Criteria (85)	
Alignment to the Tourism Sector The application demonstrates a clear alignment to the tourism sector, and how the organisation services visitors and locals within a tourism context.	10
Benefit to the community and alignment with the grant objectives. This includes demonstrating how the proposed project improves the experience for visitors with accessibility requirements.	40
The applicant’s capacity to deliver the project. This includes any quotes, budget information, and plans as well as the demonstrating the ability to deliver within the timeframe required.	25
Local Procurement Ability to obtain goods / services to deliver the project from within Latrobe City.	10

3. Recommendations will be developed by the assessment panel. Applications that do not score more than 50% may be removed from consideration at the discretion of the assessment panel.
4. Applicants will receive an email notifying them of the outcome of their application.
5. Successful applicants are required to complete a funding agreement and provide any further information requested.

6. For other grant funding, on receipt of your funding agreement and any further information requested, funding will be deposited into your nominated bank account within 6 weeks.

NOTE: The outcome notification email does not mean that your funds have been paid. You are required to complete a funding agreement prior to funds being paid into your nominated bank account. No grant funds should be spent until you have completed all relevant documentation and you have received your funding.

Applicants who fail to comply with the terms and conditions listed in the funding guidelines and supplementary agreements will be required to return the funding to Latrobe City Council.

Supporting Documents

You will be asked to provide the following attachments when completing your application:

- Proposed Project Budget breakdown including proof of ability to fund in-kind contributions.
- Written quotes from a registered tradesperson or business as outlined:

Project Value	Required Quotes
<\$5,000	One written quote
\$5,001 - \$25,000	Two written quotes

- Current Certificate of Public Liability that will be used to cover the project.
- Written permission from the asset owner to complete the project (if required).
- Written agreement from any other user group sharing the site associated with the project (if required).

Acquittal

The Acquittal form will be a reconciled statement of expenditure and income associated with the grant. It will ask the applicant to provide details on the outcomes of the project that were achieved as a result of the funding. You will also be required to attach:

1. Photo evidence that showcases the completed project.
2. An income and expenditure budget for the project, including proof of purchase invoice and/or receipts for all items purchased using funding from Latrobe City Council; and
3. Evidence of how Council's and the Victorian Government's support for the project was recognised.

Further Information

The following resources are provided to assist applicants in identifying areas for improving accessibility.

[Tourism Victoria Accessibility Resource Kit](#)

[Victorian Government Accessible Tourism Information](#)

[The WELCOME Framework](#)

Support for applicants

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

Sports Legacy & Activation Team

Phone: 1300 367 700

Email: utg@latrobe.vic.gov.au

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 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