

FUNDING GUIDELINES

Recreational Boating Dredging and Access Program

2025-2026



Introduction

Improving the boating experience includes better and more reliable access from our boating facilities to the water. That's why we're investing \$500,000 from the 2025–26 Better Boating Fund into the Recreational Boating Dredging and Access Program.

The dredging and access program will allocate grant funding to eligible organisations for dredging projects to ensure safer navigation at publicly accessible Victorian boating facilities. This will provide better access at local waterways for boaters and improved social and economic outcomes for local communities and businesses.

Grant applications must be submitted online and will then be assessed by a Funding Advisory Panel (see page 2 for further details). Grant funding recommendations made under the dredging and access program will then be submitted for consideration and approval by the Minister for Outdoor Recreation.





Who can apply for grant funding?

Eligible organisations consist of local councils, local committees of management, water corporations, catchment management authorities and state government agencies and statutory authorities.



Maximum funding amount

The grant amount awarded will not exceed \$110,000 (ex GST) in total per project. An eligible organisation may submit multiple project applications for consideration.



Funding ratio

Applicants are strongly encouraged to submit proposals that demonstrate good value for money (co-funding contributions). Applications will be scored accordingly. However, 100% grant funding will also be made available, particularly for smaller organisations or volunteer committees of management with limited capacity.

Funding contributions from the applicant can include project management, committed funds from other government agencies or sources, and in-kind contributions which can be substantiated.



Program aims

Grants awarded are expected to result in a demonstrable improvement in safety, navigation and waterway access at Victorian public boating facilities.

Dredging projects which are eligible for funding under the program include:

- Dredging projects that will deliver navigational benefits and improved safety and access to managed waterways for powered recreational vessels.

- Dredging projects that will improve access to public facilities, such as boat ramps, jetties and pontoons.

- Pre-dredging activities for eligible dredging projects (surveys, reports and plans) will be considered.

- Removal of minor materials, such as rubble, siltation and wrack, in the vicinity of a boat launching facility.

How applications will be assessed

Applications for grants will be assessed against the following assessment criteria.

Project goals and outcomes (25%) :

- Project has clearly defined goals relating to navigational benefits, improved safety and enhanced public access to waterways for powered recreational vessels.
- The project outcomes and benefits for Victorian boaters to be derived from the funding have been clearly defined.
- The application demonstrates a strong contribution to recreational boating in Victoria, the region and the immediate area.

Project need (15%) :

- The application demonstrates a strong need for investment at the facility, such as high levels of usage and an immediate need for improved boating access and/or dredging at the site.

Project impact (10%) :

- Project planning and design has considered how dredging could benefit as many current and potential users as possible (e.g. enhanced access at a greater range of weather/tidal conditions, increased access for people with low mobility and all genders).

Project planning and previous experience (20%) :

- The application demonstrates detailed project planning and good project design. Relevant permits, consents and approvals have been obtained and/or planning has been undertaken.
- The application includes details of any community/stakeholder engagement undertaken and demonstrates strong support and processes.
- The project has demonstrated integration with regional and local management and adaptation plans, as appropriate.
- If relevant, demonstrated satisfactory performance on projects for which funding has been awarded to the applicant under previous boating programs.

Value for money (20%) :

- Expected projects costs and funding sought is clearly defined, including a cost breakdown.
- Expected project costs have been appropriately substantiated.
- Co-funding and/or additional funding partners have been secured, demonstrating good value for money.

Whether the applicant is in receipt of existing boating funding revenue sources, such as the Victorian Government's Free Boat Launching and Parking Initiative will also be considered (10% weighting).

Note: Applications which meet all assessment criteria may not be recommended to the Minister for Outdoor Recreation for approval, in the event other applications score more highly against the spread of assessment criteria.

What will not be funded

The following projects or project elements will not be funded:

- projects in relation to boating facilities not open to use by the general public
- projects that provide direct support for non-powered boating use only (such as land-based fishing, kayak/rowing access)
- contingency and project management costs
- maintenance and other ongoing costs
- insurances required in relation to the project.

How to apply

Applications must be completed online through the Victorian Fisheries Authority's SmartyGrants portal (fisheriesvictoria.smartygrants.com.au).

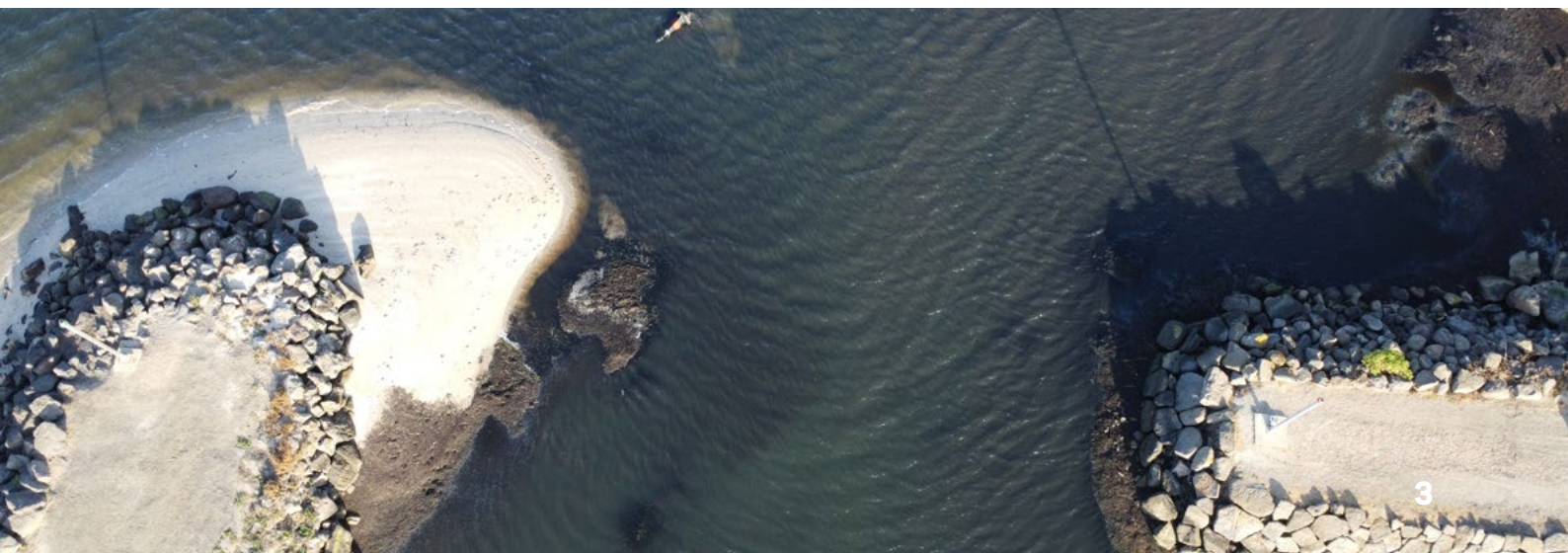
Grant assessment

A Funding Advisory Panel will be convened by Better Boating Victoria and will consist of government agencies and stakeholders. The Funding Advisory Panel will provide input into recommendations for grant allocations for consideration and, if successful, approval by the Minister for Outdoor Recreation.

Program timeline

20 April 2026	Applications open
12 June 2026	Applications close
Mid June – early July 2026	Assessment of applications and recommendations made by Funding Advisory Panel to the Minister for Outdoor Recreation
August 2026	Applicants notified and successful projects announced
Late August 2026	Funding agreements returned to Better Boating Victoria by the applicant
August 2026 – December 2027	*Dredging projects delivered by recipients

*Consideration on the impacts to the users of the boating facility needs to be considered in the delivery phase. Better Boating Victoria will work with the grant recipient to develop an appropriate works schedule.



Quotations and supporting evidence

1. If your project cost is less than or equal to \$50,000 (excl. GST) one written quote is required. For projects over \$50,000 (excl. GST) three written quotes must be provided.
2. Quotations from all applicants must specify the cost exclusive of GST.
3. If more than one quote is required, each quote must be from different suppliers.
4. It is recommended that written quotes be valid for 90 days from the date of quote. Any increase in project costs must be borne by the applicant; **it will not be possible** to increase the grant amount, if awarded.
5. Applicants must fully disclose any relationship to a person or organisation supplying a quotation.



Unexpended funds

If the grant recipient does not appropriately expend the funds by the date set out in the funding agreement, the unexpended funds must be repaid, or an application must be submitted to Better Boating Victoria for approval to expend the funds on other related public boating infrastructure managed by the recipient.



Project variation

The grant recipient must complete and submit an application for a project variation to Better Boating Victoria and obtain its approval prior to making any change to the scope of the project.

Advance notification must be made to Better Boating Victoria if there are any changes to agreed deliverables or timelines.



Funding agreements

Successful applicants will be required to enter into a funding agreement within 30 days of the project start date nominated in the agreement.

No funds will be paid until a funding agreement has been signed by both parties, and a project plan to the satisfaction of Better Boating Victoria has been submitted.

Applicants should not incur any costs relating to the project (even if the project has been approved by the Minister) until, at the earliest, receipt of a signed copy of the funding agreement.



Specific terms and conditions (contained in the funding agreement)

- The site at which the applicant's project is to be carried out must be, and must remain, under the control of a council, a government department, a statutory authority or a committee of management appointed by the appropriate statutory body.
- The facility at which the project is to be undertaken must be available to the general public at all reasonable times.
- Project works should be avoided during the peak boating season in Victoria (approximately October – March) to avoid disruption to users. You must contact Better Boating Victoria if this cannot be avoided.
- An applicant will be required to take all reasonable steps so that the facility remains safe and open for public access during project works.
- It is the sole responsibility of an applicant to obtain all relevant permits, consents and approvals from the appropriate authorities.
- An applicant must effect and maintain appropriate insurance policies in relation to the project.

For further information, contact us at
BBV.Communications@vfa.vic.gov.au

betterboating.vic.gov.au

