



**Level the Field 2025 to 2027
Program Guidelines**

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Acknowledgement

We acknowledge the traditional Aboriginal owners of Country throughout Victoria, their ongoing connection to these lands and water ways and we pay our respects to their culture and their Elders past, present and future.

We acknowledge Aboriginal Self-Determination is a human right as enshrined in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

We are committed to developing strong and enduring partnerships with Aboriginal communities that will contribute to growing a prosperous, thriving and strong Victorian Aboriginal community.

Disclaimer

You might find this publication useful but Leisure Networks and the Victorian Government and its employees do not guarantee that this publication is without flaw of any kind or is wholly appropriate for your particular purposes. The Victorian Government and Leisure Networks disclaims all liability for any error, loss or other consequence which may arise from you relying on any information in this publication.

Message from the Minister for Community Sport



We're proud to partner with Leisure Networks to create more opportunities for people with disability to participate in the sport and active recreation workforce across regional Victoria.

The new Level the Field 2025 to 2027 Program aims to get more Victorian sporting organisations on board and join in our efforts to support more people with disability to become part of the sport and active recreation sector in paid and volunteer roles.

Through this initiative, we're providing grants to help change the systems that limit people with disability participating in the workforce, boost sport sector capability in inclusion, and develop and enhance pathways for people with disability to volunteer or be employed in the regional sport and active recreation sector.

Grants can be used to support organisational change and innovative local place-based projects that will be delivered in rural and regional Victoria with a focus on making workforce changes that last.

Most importantly we want to see initiatives that are co-designed and led by people with diverse lived experience of disability.

Partnerships and collaborations are encouraged to create sustainable opportunities, approaches, and pathways for people with disability to take on roles such as coaches, officials, team managers, administrators and committee members across all levels and areas of sport and recreation.

Working together we can build a sector that's more resilient, able to respond to demand for existing and new participation opportunities on and off the field, and a sector that is inclusive, where everyone benefits from the experience of getting involved in sport across regional Victoria.

Level the Field 2025 to 2027 is backed by our All-Abilities Workforce and Sector Support Program. They're part of our \$40 million All Abilities Sport Fund that is removing barriers for people with disability to get involved in sport and active recreation in regional Victoria.

Increasing and promoting participation opportunities that give more Victorians a chance to participate in sport and active recreation is a key objective of Active Victoria 2022-2026 – A strategic framework for sport and active recreation in Victoria.

I look forward to seeing new and exciting projects come to life through this Program.

The Hon. Ros Spence MP

Minister for Community Sport



Message from the CEO, Leisure Networks



It is with great pride and anticipation that we launch Level the Field 2025 to 2027, a grant program designed to increase employment opportunities in sport and recreation for people with disability living in regional and rural Victoria.

As part of the All-Abilities Workforce and Sector Support Program, Level the Field 2025 to 2027 is being delivered in partnership by Sport and Recreation Victoria and Leisure Networks. This approach has provided a unique opportunity to have the voice of the sports and recreation sector, as well as people with disability, contributing to and designing the funding streams for Level the Field 2025 to 2027. Leisure Networks is honoured to have been selected as the Regional Coordinator to lead this process.

Level the Field 2025 to 2027 is a bold and important step forward to increase employment opportunities in sport and recreation for people with disability living in regional and rural Victoria.

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, the employment rate for people with disability is 46% compared with the employment rate of 84% for people without disability. Leisure Networks believes all organisations in Australia can do more in supporting people with disability into employment and we are excited to see the Victorian Government is investing significant funding to provide people with disability opportunities to increase their voice, agency and influence in shaping the future of community sport and recreation.

We also know people with disability in regional and rural Victoria can face significant barriers to accessing inclusive sport and recreation. Level the Field 2025 to 2027 will assist with addressing these barriers and provide critical funding to enable local organisations to imagine, design and deliver innovative and lasting solutions.

At Leisure Networks, our 2035 vision is to be 'The most impactful inclusion service in Australia'. We consistently invite bold and fresh thinking that challenges the status quo and pushes boundaries in pursuit of inclusive participation in all areas of life for people with disability. We also believe every person deserves to feel a sense of connectedness, contribution and purpose.

Sport and recreation play such a powerful role in our regional and rural communities, and we want to see equal accessibility for every person who wants to be involved. We hope you will see evidence of bold and fresh thinking - and the principles of connectedness, contribution and purpose – in the design of Level the Field 2025 to 2027. We look forward to seeing the energy, ideas, leadership and collaborations Level the Field 2025 to 2027 will inspire.

Together, we have a powerful opportunity to shape and lead a more inclusive and participatory future for people with disability in regional and rural Victoria.

David Meade
CEO, Leisure Networks



Overview

About the Program

It's time to Level the Field!

The Level the Field 2025 to 2027 Program (the Program) is being delivered by Leisure Networks in partnership with Sport and Recreation Victoria (SRV) to increase paid and volunteer employment opportunities in sport and recreation for people with disability in regional Victoria. The program will facilitate collaboration between sport and recreation, disability and other community sectors to support systemic and sustainable change.

The sport and recreation sector is exciting and rewarding to be a part of, with many Victorians currently in paid and volunteer roles which support our high rates of participation. People with disability living in regional Victoria are underrepresented in this workforce. This Program seeks to address this by supporting more jobs and volunteer opportunities for people with disability and strengthening inclusive workforce practices across the sector.

The Level the Field 2025 to 2027 Program is part of the \$40 million All Abilities Sport Fund and the All-Abilities Workforce and Sector Support Program. The Program works alongside the [Regional All Abilities Participation Grant Program](#) and the [Regional Community Sports Infrastructure Fund](#) to address multiple barriers to participation for people with disability in regional Victoria.

Level the Field 2025 to 2027 grant funding will be made available through 2 streams:

1. The Long Game: System and Organisational Change
2. Levelling Up: Employment Pathways and Opportunities.

Level the Field Objectives

The Level the Field 2025 to 2027 Program's overall objective is to increase the number of people with disability in regional Victoria in the sport and active recreation workforce, through paid roles, training and development opportunities and volunteer positions.

The Program to be delivered in regional Victoria will:

- Develop pathways and training for people with disability within the sports and recreation sector for employment and volunteering.
- Increase the skills and capability of the existing workforce in the sport and active recreation sector to create more inclusive environments and lasting workforce opportunities for people with disability.
- Embed policies, systems and approaches that lead to increased and continuing opportunities for people with disability to participate in the sport and active recreation workforce.
- Create and deliver innovative sport and recreation workforce projects that are designed, led and run by and for people with disability in regional Victoria.

Program Outcomes

- More people with disability are employed and volunteer in sport and active recreation in regional Victoria.
- The sport and active recreation sector in regional Victoria has increased capacity to address barriers to employment and volunteering for people with disability.

Key Dates

Program Open

Program will open for applications on 8 January 2026.

Program Closes

Program will close on 26 February 2026.

Program Timing

Projects must be delivered within the Program funding period (1 July 2026 to 31 December 2027).

This includes financial acquittal and completion of final report.

*All funding is subject to approval by the Minister for Community Sport.

Available Funding

Funding is available for projects that support the Program's objectives in regional and rural Victoria, subject to the discretion of the Minister for Community Sport.

Rural and regional Victoria is defined under the *Regional Development Victoria Act 2002* as comprising the 48 Local Government Authorities (LGAs) outside of metropolitan Melbourne, plus Victoria's 6 alpine resorts.

To confirm classifications, search by postcode, regional or rural council area on the [Regional Development Victoria website](#).

Level the Field 2025 to 2027 grant funding will be made available through 2 streams:

Stream	Purpose	Available grant amount
Stream 1 - The Long Game	System and Organisational Change	\$50,000 - \$350,000
Stream 2 - Levelling Up*	Employment Pathways and Opportunities	\$50,000 - \$250,000

*Levelling Up funding requires a 25% co-contribution for any salary costs for employment of people with disability.

Well regarded projects will align with the following principles:

- be **co-designed** with people with diverse lived experience of disability and engage people with disability throughout project delivery
- have a focus on **effective systemic change** to increase employment and volunteering opportunities for people with disability and build skills/capability of the sport and recreation workforce to address the intersectional barriers (ableism, racism, sexism) which impact inclusion
- use **partnerships and collaborations** to extend the reach of the project for example, with organisations specialising in disability employment or regionally based sporting clubs or facilities
- be able to demonstrate social impact and benefits for people with disability living in rural and regional Victoria and have planned for **sustainability** beyond the funding period
- be able to demonstrate **readiness** to implement and provide inclusive workplace environments for employment for people with disability within the funding period.

Applications for both new projects and the scaling up of proven successful projects are welcome. Please note that for projects that are scaling up, costs must only be for expansion activities rather than ongoing costs.

Applicants may apply for a maximum of 2 projects across one or both streams. Applicants should consider their capacity to deliver against the Program principles when applying.

Applications submitted to both streams can be complementary. Please note, success under either Stream does not guarantee success under another and will be separately assessed based on merit.

What will not be funded

Projects that:

1. Do not take place in regional or rural Victoria.
2. Do not comply with the Child Safety requirements set out in these guidelines.

Costs that are:

- Not reasonably attributable to project delivery and do not reflect value for money.
- Business as usual costs including rent, utilities, legal fees, property taxes, business travel, insurance or administrative expenses.
- Infrastructure or capital works including upgrading and/or maintaining assets, building, property or vehicles. This includes fixed playing surfaces and structures.
- Used to meet regulatory requirements for example working with children checks, police checks and permits.
- Any costs which are covered by education or other areas of Government.
- Already funded or partially funded by Government funding.
- Retrospective funding for activities that have already begun.

Specific expenses for:

- Singular day events, come and try days or camps.
- Gala events, functions, trophies, prize money or gift packages.
- Hospitality, catering and alcohol.
- Accommodation expense not relating to the project.
- Transportation purchases or modifications, including purchase of vehicles.
- Equipment, prosthetics, assistive technology, adaptive clothing or environmental aids.

Eligible Organisations

Who can apply

Applicant organisations must meet the following criteria to be eligible:

- a) operate or be physically located within Victoria
- b) hold an active and valid Australian Business Number (ABN)
- c) be a legal entity that can enter into a grant agreement contract¹ that is not ineligible.

Applicant organisations could be one of the following:

- A SRV recognised organisation: [State Sporting Association](#) (SSA), [State Sport and Active Recreation Bodies](#) (SSARB), [Regional Sports Assemblies](#) (RSA).
- A community organisation working with people with disability.
- A health service entity specialising in the provision of services to people with disability.
- A Victorian Local Government Authority (LGA) in rural and regional Victoria.
- Another sport and active recreation league or organisation.
- A Victorian higher education provider (with campuses based in rural and regional Victoria).
- Australian public or proprietary companies.
- An Indigenous organisation.

Applicants must be able to attest to complying with all applicable legislation and child safety requirements required for their organisation type and project content and may be required to provide relevant evidence. Refer to Legislation and Policy section on page 26.

Ineligible applicants

The following are not eligible to apply as the lead organisation:

- Leisure Networks (as lead organisation or as a partner to an application).
- Disability Sport and Recreation Ltd.
- individual sporting clubs.
- An unincorporated association.
- A company not incorporated in Australia.
- An individual or sole trader.
- An individual trustee and unincorporated trusts².
- Australian Government or Victorian or other state government agency or body.
- Schools, playgroups, kindergartens, child-care centres or pre-schools.

¹Applicant entities must be registered with appropriate regulator/s, which may include but is not limited to: Australian Securities and Investment Commission, Consumer Affairs Victoria and/or other applicable regulators.

²Trustees can apply on behalf of a Trust, provided the Trustee:

- remains sufficiently liable for the performance of any agreement it signs
- has a right to be indemnified from the assets of the Trust is indemnified from the assets of the Trust.

Program Streams

STREAM 1 - THE LONG GAME: SYSTEM AND ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE

In many cases clubs, organisations and teams want to be more inclusive and engage with everyone who enjoys and participates in their sport or activity. However, many sport and active recreation organisations may not have the skills, structures or confidence to meaningfully include people with disability.

Funding provided under the Long Game stream will support organisations to lead activities that address the systems and organisational barriers to employing and retaining people with disability across their networks.

Who can apply for the Long Game

Applications are sought from organisations that have significant impact and influence across a region or all regional Victoria (for example leagues, associations, state bodies, LGAs) and have the capacity and capability to co-ordinate a project.

Projects funded under the Long Game should:

- engage people with lived experience of disability in project design and delivery
- develop organisational plans and policies that will be actioned, applied and scaled beyond the lead organisation across a regional area or all regional Victoria for example several clubs, facilities or multisport, within the funded period
- be sustainable beyond the funded period
- bring together existing workforce leaders with people with lived experience of disability to create organisational, and systems change and learn from people with lived experience of disability
- create inclusive employment/volunteering practices that build the capacity of the existing regional sport workforce to engage, retain and mentor people with disability in their sport organisation.

Types of projects and activities that could be funded under the Long Game

- **Governance programs** - co-design and deliver a governance program which upskills multiple clubs in engaging, recruiting, mentoring and retaining people with disability on their committees (could be multisport, across a region or across many regions)
- **Disability Employment Plans** - with clear actions and targets to increase employment and volunteering opportunities across their sport/recreation, facilities or regional area with deliverables in the project timeframe.
- **Disability employee networks** the establishment of new networks or consortiums to inform, advocate and support people with disability in regional and rural Victoria as part of a broader application/project.

Eligible expenditure under the Long Game

Project costs funded under this stream must align to project delivery and could include:

- Subcontractor/consultancy fees to procure specific expertise to support the planning, development and roll out of a disability employment strategy and supporting policies.
- Facilitation costs for expert trainers to support the upskilling of the existing workforce.
- Travel and/or accommodation for project delivery for example, for the purpose of communicating new policies and procedures to the network.
- Lived experience/co-design consultation fees for example, ensuring all consultation undertaken as a part of the project with people with disability is appropriately remunerated.
- Communication costs that are directly related to the project that support the promotion of the project across regional networks.
- Engagement activity costs related to engaging regional networks, for example, workshops, forums.
- Salaries - dedicated positions to work within the organisation to lead and deliver the project and create system and organisation changes.

STREAM 2 - LEVELLING UP – EMPLOYMENT PATHWAYS AND OPPORTUNITIES

There are not enough opportunities for people with disability to successfully engage with the sport and recreation sector as employees and volunteers. Building an environment which authentically supports people with disability to belong and feel like part of the team takes significant investment in understanding employment pathways and innovative opportunities for workforce and volunteer participation.

There are a diverse range of paid employment and volunteer roles where people with disability are currently underrepresented in sport and active recreation. These include administration and governance roles, education, coaching, officiating, facility and grounds management, inclusion officers and even hospitality associated with sport and recreation.

Levelling Up funding will support employment projects that assist organisations and people with disability to engage in volunteer roles, take on leadership roles in sport and enter paid employment in the sector. This can be across several organisations in a region or all regional Victoria in organisations such as sport and recreation clubs, leagues, sporting facilities and LGAs.

Funding requested must be matched by the organisation(s) to 25% for any salaries for employment of people with disability. Applications that do not include the matched co-contribution for salary costs will be deemed ineligible.

Who can apply for Levelling Up

Applications are sought from organisations with activities based in regional and rural Victoria who can use their local knowledge and networks to engage people with disability in paid and volunteer roles in the regional sport and recreation sector workforce.

Applicants will have considered the policies, systems and structures needed to meaningfully include people with disability in their workforce and/or engaged a partner organisation that will support establishing relevant workplace policies.

Projects funded under Levelling Up should:

- engage people with lived experience of disability in project design and delivery
- help multiple people connect to employment/volunteering opportunities, for example, support involvement in more than one local organisation
- have identified the sites and/or organisations for employment or volunteering to occur and be able to ensure regulated workplace practices as described under the Compliance and Audit section of these guidelines
- ensure that inclusive workplace practices are part of the training and employment processes
- be sustainable beyond the funded period by planning a clear pathway for how the volunteers or employees will continue to be involved
- the lead or project partner must have demonstrated 'back end' support for inclusive practices for example, disability action or employment plan, inclusion policies, mandatory staff training for inclusion
- detail the matched co-contribution amount of a minimum 25% for any salaries for employment of people with disability
- test and deliver innovative ways to engage people with disability in the sector that can ideally be replicated.

Types of projects and activities that could be funded under Levelling Up

- **Traineeship program targeting people with disability** in facility management for example, groundskeeping or any sport and recreation skills shortages across a region or regional Victoria.
- **Employment of people** with disability into any new or vacant roles within the sport and active recreation sector, for example, deliver education programs in schools, inclusion officers, communication and marketing, IT systems and data, event management.
- **People with disability employed** to scale up successful participation programs across a region or all regional Victoria and

build workforce capacity to deliver.

- **Volunteer training programs** for people with disability in coaching, officiating or administrative focus across a sport/recreation in regional Victoria.
- **Partnership programs** with sport/recreation bodies and disability employment providers to match jobs with skills and interests of people with disability such as a social enterprise hospitality business operating the café's/canteens across several clubs.
- **Career development projects** or initiatives that support career progression for people with disability including opportunities to upskill and move into leadership or more senior roles within a sport or active recreation organisation in regional Victoria.

Eligible expenditure under Levelling Up

Project costs funded under this stream must align to project delivery and could include:

- Salaries directly paid to people with disability under a traineeship or direct employment that are matched with organisation's 25% co-contribution.
- Salaries - dedicated positions to lead and deliver the project.
- Lived experience/co-design consultation fees for example, ensuring all consultation undertaken as a part of the project with people with disability is appropriately remunerated.
- Training programs that are evidence based and represent best practice.
- Facilitation costs for expert trainers to support the upskilling of the existing workforce.
- Communication costs that are directly related to the project that support the promotion of the project across regional networks.
- Engagement activity running costs with their networks, for example, workshops, forums.
- Travel and/or accommodation for project delivery.

Partnerships

Partnerships are encouraged in the implementation of project activities for both the Long Game and Levelling Up streams. Applications should consider the role and suitability of partner organisations to deliver their project.

Partnerships could include:

- **disability organisations** that provide advice and access to people with disability to embed codesign and match with employment/volunteering opportunities
- **disability employment agencies** that engage with people with disability who want to be employed or gain further work experience with the sport and recreation sector
- **organisations with expertise** in inclusive workplace practices such as policies and procedures for inclusive recruitment, onboarding and retention of people with disability in paid or volunteer roles
- **networked organisations** such as sporting clubs, neighbourhood houses, allied health services, higher education providers, groups of LGAs to increase the reach of the project.

Successful lead applicants will need to establish service agreements with Subcontractors and for key Partners it will be expected that written or formalised agreements setting out how the parties will collaborate will be established, for example, a memorandum of understanding.

The Learning and Development Hub

The Learning and Development Hub (the Hub), created and overseen by Disability Sport and Recreation Victoria, provides resources, training and learning opportunities that reflect best practice disability inclusion in community sport and active recreation to support people with disability, place-based organisations, community organisations, sporting clubs and active recreation organisations.

Successful projects will be required to engage with the Learning and Development Hub during project implementation, to ensure any resources or training material used aligns with best practice and to support projects to access the Hub resources and training materials.

Inclusion Coaches

Leisure Networks have employed regionally based Inclusion Coaches to ensure the voices of people with lived experience of disability is embedded throughout all aspects of the grant program for successful projects.

Please note that Inclusion Coaches cannot assist you in the development of your grant application but will support projects in their region if they receive funding under Level the Field Program.

How to apply

Check your Eligibility

Refer to page 10 of the guidelines to see if you are eligible to apply.

Refer to page 13 for more information on Partnerships and how they can support your application.

Register and Apply Online

Applicants will be required to register their details and can apply online at www.levelthefield.org.au

You can access further information including:

- application forms for each stream
- checklist of mandatory documentation required to complete and submit with your application
- downloadable templates for applicants (Project Plan, Risk Management Plan, Budget Template)
- guidelines and assessment criteria
- Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) section
- contact details for Leisure Networks.

Information Sessions

Join us for interactive and engaging sector briefings throughout Regional Victoria.

Facilitated by Leisure Networks, plus an option to attend online.

This will be your opportunity to learn more about the grant opportunities, engage with the local Sport and active Recreation Networks in the regions and other potential partner organisations. There will be time allocated in the sessions to ask questions about the Program and process.

For upcoming dates and to register to attend an information session, and requests for any accessibility needs, contact Leisure Networks [here](#).

What your application needs to include

Applications must use the relevant application forms available at www.levelthefield.org.au.

To be considered for funding, applicants must provide project details that fully illustrate the type of project they want to undertake and the associated costs.

Applicants are also strongly encouraged to read the FAQs and attend the Information Sessions in regional Victoria prior to applying.

Mandatory support documentation

A finished project plan, detailed budget, risk management plan, letters of support must be submitted with each Application. Templates are provided here on the [Level the Field Funding Portal](#).

Project Plan

Project plans must use the provided template and include the following information:

- Project name.
- Scope and project overview.
- Proposed timelines, deliverables and outcomes for project.
- Location(s) where the project is being undertaken.
- Budget including cost estimates.
- The name of each partner organisation and any subcontractors, including their contribution, roles and responsibilities in the project.
- Identify the beneficiaries of your project including the specific cohort/s of people your project plans to benefit, for example, adults with disability within a region/s, volunteers with clubs within a region/s; a group of adults with a specific disability type in a region/s, women aged 50+ with a disability.
- Letter of commitment from lead applicant's Executive, Board or Chair.
- Evaluation approach.

Letters of Support

Applicants must provide letters of support (providing evidence of commitment from partners, and your organisation's board, executive leadership or CEO). This support documentation is mandatory.

Your application can include partnership agreements, Memorandum of Understandings or endorsements from organisations (including regional organisations) where relevant.

Budget

Applicants must use the budget template provided to detail all income and expenses related to the application.

Additional details such as in-kind costs and other funding contributions should be included where relevant.

Note that salary costs for Stream 2 – Levelling Up must include details of the 25% co-contribution for any salaries for employment of people with disability. Your application must include written confirmation from your organisation's board or authorised representative that the organisation can meet the required co-contribution amount.

Where only an approximation in spending can be noted in advance, a detailed list highlighting these estimated costs can be submitted.

You will need to detail in your budget and project plan any funds being provided to subcontractors/ consultants to support your project including:

- specific roles and responsibilities within the project
- the funding allocation to subcontractors/consultants
- rationale for needing to engage a specific subcontractor/consultant

Refer to the eligible expenditure under each stream.

Financial documentation

For organisations other than LGAs and publicly funded universities and educational institutions that are applying for grants of \$50,001 or more the following documentation is required:



- Audited financial reports for the last 3 financial years. This should be the ‘final accounts’ with a directors’ report and declaration, and should include profit and loss statement, balance sheet, cash flows, and notes to the accounts. If accounts are not audited, unaudited accounts from an Accountant will be accepted.

If the latest financial report is more than 6 months old, up-to-date management or interim accounts for the current year including profit and loss statement and balance sheet, and, in the case of public listed corporations, a half yearly financial report.

Assessment

Application assessment and funding outcomes are based on:

1. Applicant eligibility.
2. Applications that best respond to the assessment criteria.
3. Adequacy of support documentation.
4. Availability of funding.

Applications will be assessed on how well they meet the assessment criteria as outlined below.

All supplementary attachments and information provided as part of the application will be taken into consideration as part of this assessment.

Assessment Process

Assessment criteria are informed by the Program objectives and Program outcomes on page 7.

The following assessment processes will be followed:

1. Applications will be assessed and scored by an independent grant review panel against the application assessment criteria.
2. Financial risk assessments and other due diligence (refer to page 21) may be undertaken, and outcomes considered as part of the recommendation.
3. Final recommendations will be made considering the scored panel assessment result, any financial risk assessments and due diligence outcomes.
4. Recommendations will then be submitted to the Minister for Community Sport for consideration and approval.

The Grant Review Panel and assessment process is overseen by a Probity Officer.

Decisions regarding funding by the Minister for Community Sport are final and no further correspondence shall be entered into regarding such decisions.

Assessment Criteria

Applications will be assessed on how well they meet the assessment criteria as outlined below. All supplementary attachments and information provided as part of the application will be taken into consideration as part of this assessment. Unless stated the criteria applies across both Stream 1 – The Long Game and Stream 2 – Levelling Up.

Assessment criteria	Considerations	Weighting
Co-design, equity and inclusion	<p>The application demonstrates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is an appropriate level of engagement with people with disability proposed for the design and delivery of the project, showing how a diverse range of voices of people with lived experience of disability will be elevated and involved in decision making throughout the project. • How well the project proposal identifies the needs of people with disability and addresses issues and barriers facing people with disability in participating in the sport and recreation workforce in the identified regional or rural Victorian area/s. • How well the proposal includes an intersectional approach considering multiple and complex barriers people with disability may experience. 	25%
Readiness, capability and commitment	<p>The application demonstrates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The organisation’s readiness, capacity, and capability to lead and deliver the project (including project planning and identification of key milestones and risks, and governance arrangements and alignment to existing organisational strategy). • The project is based on a sound budget and represents value for money across all aspects of the budget. • The skills and experience of key personnel of lead organisation and partners to deliver the proposed project including if people with disability are in these roles. • How well the lead organisation (and set up of the proposed project) supports people with disability within the organisation, organisational leadership, executive and board (for example, the nomination of a project sponsor from the leadership group and existing inclusion policies). • A clear commitment to community benefit is demonstrated within the project. 	20%

Assessment criteria	Considerations	Weighting
	<p>Stream 1 – Long Game only:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The readiness to implement and disseminate project into regional Victoria (for example, networks and dissemination channels are confirmed), including the balance of the budget between planning and implementation. <p>Stream 2 – Levelling Up only:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The readiness of the organisations/sites where employment, training and volunteering will occur to provide an inclusive and safe workplace environment for employing people with disability for example, workplace practices and policies. Budget includes confirmation of organisation(s) co-contribution minimum 25% for salaries for people with disability. 	
Sustainability	<p>The application demonstrates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How the project impacts and benefits will continue beyond the funding period. <p>Stream 1 – Long Game only:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plans for how the organisation will embed the system change beyond the funding for example, policies, processes and approaches to support continued opportunities for people with disability to participate in the workforce. How the skills and knowledge developed through the project will be shared within the organisation’s network and could be shared with the broader sport and active recreation sector in the region/state. <p>Stream 2 – Levelling Up only:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plans for how the workforce roles created will continue beyond the funded period. How people with disability will develop skills and be connected to employment pathways and training to support their ongoing contribution to the sport and active recreation sector. 	15%

Assessment criteria	Considerations	Weighting
<p>Quality of the application (reach and impact)</p>	<p>The application demonstrates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The likelihood the project will contribute to the Program outcomes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - More people with disability are employed and volunteer in sport and active recreation in regional Victoria - The sport and active recreation sector in regional Victoria have increased capacity to address barriers to employment and volunteering for people with disability. • The reach and impact of the project in increasing the number of people with disability participating in the sport and recreation workforce (and on-field if applicable) in regional or rural Victoria. • How well the project will increase the skills/knowledge/capability of the existing sport or active recreation workforce in relation to creating inclusive environments with/for people with disability in regional or rural Victoria. • The project builds on learnings, best practice and an evidence base, either by scaling a previous project and/or by using knowledge of similar projects. <p>Stream 2 – Levelling Up only:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The partner sites and/or organisations where employment or volunteering will occur have been identified and are committed to employment of people with disability (for example, letters showing involvement). 	<p>25%</p>
<p>Partnerships and Collaboration</p>	<p>The application demonstrates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The role and suitability of partner organisations and how they will contribute to project objectives and outcomes. • Existing relationships with regional or rural networks in the sport or active recreation sector and/or disability sector that are committed to and will support the project delivery and sharing of outcomes. <p>Stream 2 – Levelling Up only:</p>	<p>15%</p>

Assessment criteria	Considerations	Weighting
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The partner / stakeholders have relevant skills and experience in inclusive workplace practice which will support project outcomes. 	

Applicant Checks

Applicants may be subject to due diligence checks to enable the assessment of financial and other non-financial risks associated with the application and these may be considered in decisions to recommend or award grant funding.

Some applicants, depending on organisational entity type and grant amount requested, may be required to share financial accounts for assessment of the risk profile, financial viability and management capacity of the applicant's business over the duration of the proposed activity.

A financial risk assessment will be undertaken by the department where appropriate and any financial information will be shared securely with the Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions.

Applicants may be removed from the application and assessment process, if in the department's opinion, association with the applicant may bring the department, a minister or the State of Victoria into disrepute.

Notification of Outcomes

Applicants will be advised of the outcome of their grant application via email.

Leisure Networks will endeavour to notify applicants of the outcome of their application within 12 weeks from submission.

Unsuccessful applicants are welcome to seek feedback from Leisure Networks.

Privacy Statement

Any personal information provided for this Program will be collected and used by Leisure Networks on behalf of the Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions for the purposes of assessing eligibility, Program administration, Program review and evaluation.

Leisure Networks completes a range of eligibility assessments to clarify the accuracy and quality of information supplied. This is part of due diligence processes and for confirming eligibility across this Program.

In the assessment of an application for the Program, it may be necessary to share personal information with State and Commonwealth Government departments and agencies, as well as other external experts. If personal information about a third party is included in the application, the applicant must ensure the third party is aware of and consents to the contents of this privacy statement.

Leisure Networks collects demographic information for reporting purposes. No personal information is used in reporting; all reports are presented with aggregated deidentified data.

Any personal information about the applicant or a third party will be collected, held, managed, used, disclosed or transferred in accordance with the provisions of the *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014* (Vic) and other applicable laws.

Enquiries about access or correction to your personal information can be emailed to levelthefield@leisurenetworks.org. Leisure Networks Privacy Policy is also available [here](#).

Other concerns regarding the privacy of personal information, can be emailed to the department's Privacy Unit at privacy@ecodev.vic.gov.au. The department's privacy policy is also available by emailing the department's Privacy Unit.

Conditions of Funding

Funding Offer

Successful applicants will be sent a letter of offer which will need to be accepted within 14 days of issue.

The letter of offer needs to be accepted and signed by the successful applicant before proceeding to a legally binding grant agreement with Leisure Networks on its terms and conditions.

An offer of funding is not binding on Leisure Networks unless and until both Leisure Networks and the applicant execute the grant agreement.

The project and any expenditure of funds associated with the project must not commence until the grant agreement has been executed (signed) by both Leisure Networks and the applicant.

Grant Agreements

Successful applicants will be invited to enter into a legally binding grant agreement with Leisure Networks.

The applicant will be required to sign the grant agreement in 28 days from acceptance of the letter of offer. The offer may be withdrawn if the grant agreement is not signed within the timeframe given.

The project, and any expenditure of funds associated with the project, must not commence until the grant agreement has been executed. Agreement execution means the grant agreement has been signed by both Leisure Networks and the applicant.

Once the agreement has been executed, the grant recipient (successful applicant) will be required to commence the project within the agreed timeframe. If a recipient does not commence the project commencement date, Leisure Networks has at its absolute discretion the option of terminating the agreement.

The grant agreement details all funding obligations and conditions such as:

- payments
- funding use
- grant activity deliverables and due dates
- monitoring and milestones
- project outcomes
- reporting and accounting
- evaluation requirements
- audit
- publicity and acknowledgment
- termination.

Payments

Payments will be set out in instalments over the course of the Program based on key milestones completed and on submission of appropriate progress documentation.

Publicity/Acknowledgment

Leisure Networks requires grant recipients to acknowledge the Victorian Government's support on marketing and promotional materials, which must be approved in advance by Leisure Networks. Acknowledgement of the Victorian Government's support in marketing and promotional material will depend on the grant given and will be specified in the grant agreement, for example, required representation on channels or collateral such as websites, signage, advertisements and brochures. Leisure Networks will supply the grant recipient with a logo suite and associated brand guidelines, as well as a guide on how to acknowledge government support.

Grant recipients must obtain written approval before making public announcements about receiving the grant.

Leisure Networks and the department may publicise the benefits accruing to a grant recipient associated with the grant and the state's support for the Program, and recipients must cooperate with Leisure Networks and the department in promoting the Program. These requirements will be outlined in the grant agreement. The department may include the name of the grant recipient and the amount of funding granted in any publicity material and in the department's annual report.

Program Evaluation

As a condition of funding, grant recipients will be required to participate in any monitoring and evaluation activities initiated by Leisure Networks and the department including an interim and final Program evaluation. This may include data collection or survey completion throughout the Program and for a nominated period after Program completion to measure progress to achieving outcomes.

Evaluation is critical in understanding Program impact, supporting continuous improvement in Program design and delivery, and delivering effective Program outcomes for regional Victoria.

Terms of Applying

Probity and decision-making

Leisure Networks has engaged the services of Landell as Probity Officer to oversee the Level the Field 2025 to 2027 Program grants process.

Leisure Networks makes every effort to ensure the grant application and assessment process is fair and undertaken in line with these Program guidelines.

Decisions in recommending and awarding grant funding under the Level the Field 2025 to 2027 Program are at the Minister for Community Sport's discretion. This includes not making any funding available or approving a lesser amount than that applied for.

Leisure Networks, under direction from the department may request the applicant provide further information should it be necessary to assess an application to the Program's policy objectives.

Enquiries about the process, probity and oversight of the Program can be emailed to levelthefield@leisurenetworks.org.

Conflict of Interest

A conflict of interest arises where a person makes a decision or exercises a power in a way that may be, or may be perceived to be, influenced by either material personal interests (financial or non-financial) or material personal associations. A conflict of interest may arise where a grant applicant:

- has a professional, commercial or personal relationship with a party who can, or may be perceived to, influence the application assessment process, such as a Leisure Networks staff member, or
- has a relationship with, or interest in, an organisation which is likely to interfere with or restrict the applicant from carrying out the proposed activities fairly and independently.

Applicants must advise Leisure Networks of any actual, potential or perceived conflicts of interest relating to an application for which it has applied for funding.

Leisure Networks staff are required to act in accord with the Leisure Networks Code of Conduct and Conflict of Interest Policy. This includes an obligation to avoid conflicts of interest wherever possible and declare and manage any conflicts of interest that cannot be avoided. To gain a copy of Leisure Networks Code of Conduct and Conflict of Interest Policy, you can contact us at levelthefield@leisurenetworks.org.

Feedback and Complaints

Applicants may request feedback on their application by directing their request in writing to levelthefield@leisurenetworks.org

If an applicant wants to lodge a complaint about the process for a grant application, requests can be made by sending a written request to:

Level the Field Program Manager

Leisure Networks

4 Verner Street

SOUTH GEELONG VIC 3220

Requests can be made in relation to any of the following:

- Dissatisfaction with the process and/or timeliness of the process.
- Communication provided by the Leisure Networks.
- Adherence to the published Program guidelines.

Leisure Networks aims to respond to all complaints within 28 days.

Re-assessment of an application or overturning of a funding decision will not be considered through the complaints process.

Payments of GST on Grant Funding

Applicants registered for GST should supply their project costings excluding GST. Applicants **not** registered for GST should supply their project costings including GST.

Grants to successful applicants not registered for GST are exempt from GST.

Legislation and Policy

All applicants will be required to attest in their application compliance with the legislative and policy requirements listed below and may be required to provide relevant evidence. If successful, recipients will be required to maintain adherence throughout the life of the agreement.

Child Safety

The following Child Safety requirements will apply to partner organisations, in addition to applicants, where any partner organisation is specified in an application.

Child Safe Standards

The [Child Safe Standards](#) (the Standards) require certain organisations to have policies, procedures and practices in place to protect children from harm and abuse.

An applicant must comply with the Standards, including when delivering any funded initiatives, if it is a Schedule 1 entity under the [Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005](#). Schedule 1 entities include a range of non-government entities that provide services to young people aged under 18 years, including sporting and recreational services.

Further information about the Standards can be found at www.ccp.vic.gov.au/child-safe-standards, including:

- [who must comply with the Standards](#)
- [how to comply with the Standards](#).

National Redress Scheme

The National Redress Scheme enables eligible survivors of institutional child sexual abuse to access compensation.

All recipients of Victorian Government funding must comply with the [Victorian Government Policy on Institutional Participation in the National Redress Scheme for Institutional Child Sexual Abuse](#).

Consistent with this policy, if an applicant was named in the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, or has received notice that it has been named in an application for redress to the National Redress Scheme, the applicant must disclose this and provide evidence that it:

- has joined the National Redress Scheme, or
- intends to join the National Redress Scheme within 6 months of receiving the relevant notice, or
- has been deemed ineligible to join the National Redress Scheme.

If an applicant receives funding under this program, the applicant must notify Leisure Networks and the department if it is named in an application for redress to the National Redress Scheme at any time during the period covered by a relevant funding agreement under this program.

Insurance and Public Liability

Victorian Funding Guideline for Services to Children

The Victorian Funding Guideline for Services to Children (Funding Guideline) improves the ability of child abuse survivors to bring legal claims and access compensation.

If an applicant's funded activity includes children, the applicant must be:

- incorporated as a separate legal entity
- appropriately insured against child abuse (\$5 million per claim and \$10 million in the aggregate).

An applicant will need to provide evidence of compliance with the Funding Guideline requirements with their application, including insurance against child abuse, if it proposes to use any grant funding for a project that includes children. For further information about these requirements, please refer to the [Department of Justice and Community Safety's webpage](#).

All applicants will also be required to attest, and may be required to provide relevant evidence, that they hold all relevant insurances including, but not limited to:

- Public Liability Insurance.

If successful, recipients will be required to maintain adherence throughout the life of the agreement.

Compliance and audit

Grant recipients, including applicants that accept a Letter of Offer and enter into a Grant Agreement with Leisure Networks, will be subject to audit upon request from the Victorian Government or its representatives and may be required to produce evidence of how the grant funding was expended.

If any information provided in an application is found to be false or misleading, or grants are not applied for the purposes of the applicant in accordance with the terms of funding as set out in these guidelines and the submitted application, the grant will be repayable on demand.

Grant recipients must comply with all laws including all applicable Commonwealth and Victorian equal opportunity, anti-discrimination, affirmative action and privacy legislation and employment, industrial relations and workplace health and safety laws. This includes:

- Fair Work Act 2009 (Cth).
- Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 (Vic).
- Wage Theft Act 2020 (Vic).
- Long Service Benefits Portability Act 2018 (Vic).
- Labour Hire Licencing Act 2018 (Vic).
- any other laws specified in the Guidelines.

Grant recipients must hold all licences and/or registrations related to employment, industrial relations and workplace health and safety laws as are required for their relevant industry.

Grant recipients must demonstrate a commitment to equity and diversity in their organisational practice.

Glossary

Applicant means an organisation that has submitted the application for funding for a grant.

Application means the application submitted by the applicant to Leisure Networks.

Codesign is a design led process that uses participatory methods from the beginning to the end. There is no one size fits all approach nor a set of checklists to follow. Instead, there is a series of principles that can be applied in different ways with different people. The 'co' in codesign stands for community or conversation. It is about bringing together people and professionals to jointly make decisions, informed by each other's expertise.

Grant means funding given to organisations or individuals for a specified purpose to meet Program objectives.

Grant Agreement means a document that details the conditions of the grant and sets out the relationship between the parties.

Grant Recipient means the legal entity that has entered into a grant agreement with Leisure Networks.

Innovative means undertaking new approaches compared to what has been undertaken previously in the development of inclusive programs, policies and projects for people with disability in community sport and active recreation. This Program represents a unique opportunity to reinvent how programs are delivered to build sector resilience.

Intersectionality is an approach to understanding how ability, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, religion, language, class, socio-economic status and age can overlap and interconnect to create interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage. Applying an intersectional framework leads to the creation of a more equitable, diverse and inclusive sport and active recreation sector for everyone.

Lived experience means engaging people who have knowledge, experience, understanding and perspectives about people with disability participating in the sport and active recreation workforce from their own individual direct personal involvement as a person with disability or as a carer, family member, or support for a person with disability.

Partner means a collaborator in respect of the Project who has a specific role and/or responsibilities allocated by the Recipient for the Project but is not a Subcontractor or a legal partnership as defined in the *Partnership Act 1958 (Vic)*.

Program means the Level the Field Program.

Project means the key activities specified in the application by the applicant for which the grant is provided.

Social impact the effects that a project's activities and outputs has on a system, individuals, community, and society. This could include systematic benefits such as improved access to resources and education, financial benefits such as increased employment opportunities, health and wellbeing benefits such as increased physical activity, and social benefits such as improved social connection and positive promotion of people with disability within the community.

Subcontractor means a third party who is contracted by the Recipient to undertake work to complete a part of the Project.

Sustainability means the project activity, for example, training and resources will continue beyond the funding period, without the need for additional funding.

System change refers to the underlying policies, practices (for example, the way of doing something) and processes (for example, recruitment processes) that influence workforce engagement rather than just focusing on individuals.

Traineeship is a job that includes formal training in a nationally recognised qualification and relevant practical experience in the workplace. Traineeships are formalised under a training contract and are in a non-trade occupation – such as, for example, Swimming Teacher.

Training a structured and organised set of activities and resources that aims to develop an individual's skills, knowledge, confidence, and capability relevant to the sport and active recreation sector. Training should be targeted for people with disability, or people involved in the design and delivery of sport and active recreation for people with disability.

Workforce the delivery of sport and active recreation is reliant on the skills of more than 70,000 people in paid employment and more than 580,000 volunteers across more than 12,000 sporting clubs. The resilience and capability of the sector is dependent on the support and development provided to its workforce.

These guidelines are subject to changes at the discretion of the Minister for Community Sport.