

Media Release

Steve Dimopoulos MP
Minister for Environment
Minister for Tourism, Sport and Major Events
Minister for Outdoor Recreation



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RAISING A GLASS TO REGIONAL VICTORIA'S BEST EVENTS

The Allan Labor Government is investing in the regions, supporting major events across the state which attract visitors from around the world and provide a huge boost for local economies.

Minister for Tourism, Sport and Major Events Steve Dimopoulos today joined local winemakers ahead of the upcoming Grampians Grape Escape to announce more than 20 events will be supported in the latest round of the Regional Events Fund.

The latest round of funding supports events across the state, from the Mildura Fringe Festival to the Great Trentham Spudfest, the East Gippsland Winter Festival and Ballarat International Foto Biennale.

The Grampians Grape Escape attracts thousands of visitors to the Grampians region. It is one of 37 events supported through earlier rounds of the Regional Events Fund, over the past 12 months.

The beloved festival brings together dozens of local wineries, breweries, growers and chefs – with tastings, cooking demonstrations and family activities in the stunning Grampians (Gariwerd) National Park from May 2 to 4.

The Regional Events Fund supports festivals, sporting events, and exhibitions that create local jobs, boost tourism, and showcase Victoria's regional communities—offering up to \$500,000 for major events of national or international significance, and up to \$50,000 for events that draw visitors from across the state and country.

In the past year, regional events across the state have attracted more than a million attendees and led to more than 300,000 hotel nights being booked. Forward hotel occupancy data from STR for regional Victoria was very high at 79 per cent for Good Friday and Easter Saturday.

The Major Events Fund is also supporting marquee events held regionally, including the Rip Curl Pro, the Cadel Evans Great Ocean Road Race and the *Frida Kahlo: In her own image* exhibition in Bendigo.

The Labor Government is also supporting marquee events held regionally, including the Rip Curl Pro, the Cadel Evans Great Ocean Road Race and the *Frida Kahlo: In her own image* exhibition in Bendigo with regional events forming a key part of the state's \$40 billion visitor economy.

Applications for the next round of Regional Events Fund – Stream 2 open on Thursday, 1 May and more information can be found at www.corporate.visitvictoria.com/events/regional-events.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Tourism, Sport and Major Events Steve Dimopoulos

"The Regional Events Fund brings thousands of visitors to local communities, providing a huge boost for businesses and showcasing some of Victoria's most incredible destinations."

"Whether it's the Grampians Grape Escape, the Western Bulldogs' games in Ballarat or the East Gippsland Winter Festival, we're ensuring communities across the state benefit from our huge pipeline of events."

Quote attributable to Member for Western Victoria Jacinta Ermacora

"We know the Grampians have been hard hit by bushfires over the past couple of years, so it's fantastic to see the community band together to put on another fantastic edition of the Grampians Grape Escape and I'd encourage everyone who can to buy a ticket and support the region."

Quote attributable to Visit Victoria CEO Brendan McClements

“Victoria boasts so many unique events for visitors to enjoy – from the Grampians to Gippsland and Mildura to the Great Ocean Road - showing off what makes our state ‘Every bit different.’”

Quotes attributable to Grampians Grape Escape Festival Director Kate Kirkpatrick

“This event brings a real buzz to the region, both as a celebration of local talent and as a driver of economic activity for our community.”

“Support from the Regional Events Fund means we can continue to grow the festival, attract new visitors to the region and shine a spotlight on the incredible produce we have right here in the Grampians.”