

Development Facilitation Program

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the Development Facilitation Program (DFP)?

Following the success of the Building Victoria's Recovery Taskforce (BVRT) Priority Project Fast-Track pilot program, the Minister for Planning has established a fifteen-month DFP within the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) to speed up the assessment and determination of identified priority projects that will:

1. deliver investment into the Victorian economy;
2. keep people in jobs; and
3. provide a substantial public benefit.

What is the Development Facilitation Team?

A dedicated Development Facilitation Team (DFT) of planning professionals has been established within DELWP to oversee the program to ensure it is robust and transparent with assistance from Invest Victoria. The team will facilitate projects for accelerated assessment and determination, which includes:

1. planning permit applications; and
2. planning scheme amendments.

What is the Priority Projects Team?

Successful projects identified for accelerated assessment and decision will be sent to the Priority Projects Team to undertake a detailed merits assessment, including (where required) review by the Priority Projects Standing Advisory Committee and notification to:

1. the relevant council; and
2. referral authorities and stakeholders.

Following this assessment, the Minister for Planning will decide on the project.

What is the difference between the BVRT Fast Track program and the DFP?

The BVRT comprised three independent co-chairs who were supported by a Fast-Track team of planning professionals to identify suitable projects for potential Ministerial intervention if they were deemed to meet the eligibility criteria. Recommended projects were then referred to DELWP for a detailed merits assessment and briefing of the Minister on whether he wanted to intervene and facilitate the project.

The DFP brings that BVRT function into DELWP to identify and facilitate priority projects. The DFP will provide greater surety to applicants that their projects may be successful for accelerated assessment through revised eligibility criteria and the introduction of an online portal for lodgement and tracking.

Development Facilitation Program

What is the project assessment workflow?



Do I have to meet all the DFP eligibility criteria?

Yes.

Does an independent group review recommended projects before they are forwarded for merits assessment and briefing to the Minister?

Yes. A Project Control Group (PCG) has been established comprising Government Executives to review recommended projects.

What other role will the PCG have in the development facilitation process?

The PCG will monitor the program via regular reporting. The PCG will also monitor all reporting on DELWP's business as usual statutory planning functions, such as planning scheme amendments and planning permits. This will ensure all statutory decisions where the Minister for Planning is responsible are made in a timely manner.

How long do I have to make a submission to the Development Facilitation Program?

The DFP has been set up to operate until 31 December 2021.

How long will it take before I know if my project is being referred to the Minister for accelerated assessment and decision?

An initial assessment against the DFP eligibility criteria will typically occur within 14 business days following submission, provided all required information has been provided.

Am I required to provide financial information for the DFP?

If your project is deemed to have met the eligibility criteria, financial information will be requested to verify project's feasibility.

If I applied to the BVRT can I reapply?

Yes. However, consideration against the DFP eligibility criteria must be given.

Are there instances when a project may meet the criteria but be ineligible?

Yes. Ineligible projects include:

- Where the Minister is already the responsible authority. DELWP business as usual processes are streamlined to accelerate all decisions; and/or
- Where the Minister has authorised or directed the Victorian Planning Authority (VPA) to prepare or implement a plan for an identified precinct.

If I apply to the DFP, does this stop a current request before Council or the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT)?

No. You are encouraged to continue with the usual statutory application process as the Development Facilitation Team are only making recommendations for prioritisation.

If a project is recommended for prioritisation, is that a guarantee that the Minister will prioritise it?

No. These are recommendations which are non-binding and still provides the Minister with the opportunity to determine the matter as he sees fit.

If my project is referred and the Minister decides not to intervene, what happens next?

You will be notified in writing of the decision and your project will be required to continue down the normal statutory application process.

If my project is referred and the Minister decides not to intervene, can I challenge this decision?

No, as the DFP is not a formal statutory process. The program has been offered in good faith to assist industry recover from the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

What does 'capital expenditure' mean?

Capital expenditure refers to the costs associated with purchasing land and the construction costs of the project.

What does 'development value' mean?

Development value means the construction costs of the project.

What does 'shovel ready' mean?

'Shovel ready' means that the project has investment certainty, that can demonstrate:

- it is ready to commence within twelve months following approval; and
- the capacity to secure funding for the project, including capitalisation and financial capacity.

Do I need to submit a full planning application with technical reports and supporting information?

Yes. The application should include all information that is/would be included in a planning permit application or planning scheme amendment request. Unless all required documentation is submitted, the application will not be assessed.

Can I update the application details after lodging online?

Yes, an application may be amended via the online DFP portal at any time prior to a recommendation being made to the Minister.

Do I need to inform DELWP if the usual planning application status changes during priority program assessment?

Yes, it is important that correct and up-to-date information informs DELWP's assessment.



Development Facilitation Program

Will DFT inform Council or other authorities of its recommendation or determination of the application?

DFT will not inform Council and referral authorities when a recommendation for consideration for Ministerial intervention is made

What happens with the financial information submitted with the application?

The financial information is stored securely by Invest Victoria and is only privy to individuals responsible for assessing the financial information related to the project.