



Best Client Outcomes Grant Program

Guidelines 2026



Emily, TAC client



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The TAC's Strategic Direction

The TAC is a Government-owned enterprise, established under the *Transport Accident Act 1986* to reduce the social and financial cost of transport accident injuries to the Victorian community.

Our core purpose is to care for the lives of everyone who travels on Victoria's roads. We do this by promoting road safety and providing support to those who have been injured in a caring, efficient and financially responsible way.

At the heart of Make Every Day Matter are four goals which are strongly connected to our purpose and the vital work we do in road safety, health, disability, and compensation.

Our four strategic goals are:

1. Safe to travel - Ensuring every journey on Victoria's roads is safe.
2. Best client outcomes - Empowering clients to own their recovery journey.
3. High performing culture - Aligning and empowering our people.
4. Scheme for now and the future - Delivering value and ensuring the scheme's health for future generations.

The TAC is offering research grants to improve the quality of health and disability services in Victoria and help achieve the best client outcomes goal in the Make Every day Matter Strategy.

The TAC strategy can be found on our [website](#).

TAC clients

Clients of the TAC are people who have been injured in an accident caused by the driving of a car, motorcycle, bus, train or tram. Many clients recover quickly from their injuries and require little support to resume their life and work pursuits. Others will experience significant mental and physical trauma requiring ongoing care and support – for weeks, months, years and, in some cases, a lifetime.

This grant program seeks to support projects that will have a demonstrable impact on TAC clients who have experienced the following injury types:

- musculoskeletal,
- multi-trauma orthopaedic,
- major trauma including neurotrauma (such as spinal cord and acquired brain injury),
- post-traumatic stress,
- concussion,
- mental health,
- associated secondary, and/or
- chronic conditions (pain).



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Program Focus – 2026 Grant Round

The 2026 Best Client Outcomes Grant round is specifically focused on rehabilitation.

Projects must relate to inpatient, outpatient or community-based rehabilitation for people injured in transport accidents. Projects focused on early trauma care or life participation will not be funded in this grant round.

Aim

To improve the quality of, and equity of access to, rehabilitation services for people injured in transport accidents.

The program will support projects that strengthen rehabilitation service delivery and improve rehabilitation outcomes across inpatient, outpatient and community-based rehabilitation settings.

Funding available

Between \$50,000 and \$200,000 (exclusive of GST) per project, with a maximum of approximately \$1 million available across the program.

Funding Category – Rehabilitation: for the 2026 grant round, funding will be provided only under the rehabilitation category. This includes inpatient, outpatient and/or community-based rehabilitation.

Projects should demonstrate how they will improve rehabilitation service delivery, access, coordination or outcomes for TAC clients.

Key dates

This grant program has a two-stage application process. Only the most competitive Applicants will be invited to participate in Stage 2.

Stage 1: Expression of Interest open	9am, Monday 4 May 2026
Stage 1: Expression of Interest close	12pm midday, Thursday 28 May 2026
Stage 1: Expression of Interest notification	Friday 18 June 2026
Stage 2: Applications open	Monday 22 June 2026
Stage 2: Application support meetings	Monday 22 June – Friday 26 June 2026
Stage 2: Applications close	Friday 3 July 2026
Stage 2: Application notification	August 2026*
Stage 3: Project Planning	August 2026*
Stage 4: Execution of Funding Agreement	September 2026*
Stage 5: Project Delivery (within 24 months)	September 2026 - September 2028*

*dates are indicative and may be subject to change

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Eligibility

Eligible applicants

To be eligible for funding your project must take place in Victoria and include research expertise on your project team.

Your organisation must be Victorian based and one of the following:

- hospital
- rehabilitation service
- post-hospital rehabilitation service
- primary health care service providing rehabilitation.

Applicants must nominate a Chief Investigator who will be responsible for submitting the EOI, application, conducting the project, and reporting as required under the Funding Agreement.

The TAC will accept multiple EOIs from a single organisation, however each EOI must nominate a different Chief Investigator to lead each project, and the projects must be inherently different.

Ineligible applicants

Ineligible applicants	Reason(s)
Academic researchers without dual appointment at an eligible organisation	The 2026 grant round is for rehabilitation service providers.
Service providers who are members of the TAC Clinical Panel	To avoid any perception of bias or conflict of interest.
Recipients (Chief investigators) of the 2025 TAC grant programs	To maximise benefit across the Victorian rehabilitation system.
State government departments	The 2026 grant round is for rehabilitation service providers.

You will also be considered ineligible if:

- your EOI or Application is incomplete or fails to answer all questions,
- your project duplicates a previous project or project in-progress,
- the same Chief Investigator is listed on more than one EOI,
- the TAC determines your project does not meet the eligibility criteria listed above,
- your EOI or Application is not submitted via SmartyGrants by the closing date and time.

What projects we are looking to fund

We are seeking projects that address an identified gap in the quality of rehabilitation services delivered to TAC clients.

This means projects that:

- respond to client needs and expectations,
- leverage and apply existing evidence of best practice,

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- empower clients to take an active role,
- build the capability of service providers,
- improve the efficiency of the service environment,
- measure client experience and outcomes,
- increase client independence as they prepare for the transition to home and community settings
- leverage technology to support client outcomes
- address health inequity.

Projects funded through this program must deliver a tangible product to assist implementing project findings into practice. Products may be, but are not limited to, one or more of the following:

- intervention protocol,
- best practice guideline,
- resources for client education,
- framework or strategy,
- business case,
- animated video.

What projects we are not looking to fund

Project	Reason (s)
Projects that appear to be business as usual activities	These should be funded through an organisation's operating budget.
Projects that do not include scientific research methodology	This is a research grants program.
Projects that do not take place in Victoria	The TAC supports the Victorian community.
Projects that have already taken place or that duplicate existing research	This program is supporting new and/or innovative projects.
Projects that rely on TAC support to recruit clients or staff as participants	Support for recruitment is not available in this grant program.
Projects with a Randomised Controlled Trial (RCT) design	The grant timeline is not conducive for completing RCTs.
Multi-centre projects with separate ethics processes	The grant timeline is not conducive for obtaining multiple ethical approvals.
Projects focussed on developing and/or trialling phone apps	There is a large range of phone apps already available.
Projects that pose an unacceptable level of risk to the TAC	This grant program must be administered within the boundaries of the TAC legislation and policies.
Projects focused primarily on early trauma or acute hospital care and life participation or social participation	The 2026 program is focused on rehabilitation.



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Using the funds

Approved expenses

All budget items must be reasonably justified and directly link to the delivery of the project. Funding can be used for the following project expenses:

- Key personnel - Salary contributions for key project staff or required expertise to deliver the project. For example, a researcher, project manager or statistician. Must match the roles and responsibilities of the position and reflect the time commitment to the project.
- Equipment – Essential to the delivery of the project. For example, language translation, transcription services, and outcome measurement tools.
- Travel - Reasonable accommodation and/or vehicle mileage for data collection.
- Other - Ethics approval costs, client participation in project planning or a governance committee, and/or venue hire for a workshop associated with data collection.

Prohibited expenses

Expenses that won't be funded within this program include:

- Infrastructure and capital works,
- Fees for conferences, professional memberships, training or development courses,
- One-off events such as expos or performances,
- Indirect project costs - costs incurred by an organisation that cannot be directly and easily attributed to this specific project.¹

How to apply for funding

There is a two-stage process for this grant program.

Stage 1: Expression of Interest (EOI)

Stage 2: Application

Only the most competitive project ideas that pass Stage 1 will proceed to Stage 2.

EOI's must be submitted through SmartyGrants, a grants management platform (available via the [TAC website](#)). Your form will not submit if sections marked with an asterisk have not been completed, if any response exceeds the permitted word count or if you hit submit after the closing time.

Projects funded through this program should include a team with the skills, knowledge and experience required to deliver the project successfully. Individuals should only be listed as Project Team members if they have a substantial role in the project, such as contributing to project design, leading activities or delivering key components of the work. Individuals who provide occasional advice or participate in one-off activities (such as workshops or advisory groups) should not be listed as Project Team members.

Notification of outcome will be via email in line with the key dates on page 4.

¹Social Ventures Australia and the Centre for Social Impact (2022) [Paying what it takes: funding indirect cost to create long-term impact](#). Social Ventures Australia.

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Assessment

Assessment process

The TAC adopts an open, transparent and objective assessment process which consists of the following stages:

1. Screening – each EOI will be screened to confirm eligibility and compliance with the grant program guidelines, the potential benefit to TAC clients, maturity of thinking and implementation readiness. Only the most competitive EOIs will be invited to submit an Application.
2. Assessment – each Application is reviewed and assessed against the defined assessment criteria. This assessment is undertaken by a panel of subject matter experts from the TAC.
3. Recommendation – the highest scoring Applications are compiled into a recommendation report and the final decision is made by the TAC delegate.

Assessment criteria

Criteria	Description
1. Impact on TAC Client Outcomes (40% weighting)	The project will reach and benefit a TAC client cohort, address a relevant problem that is quantified using data, apply existing best-practice evidence and be scalable to benefit future TAC clients.
2. Capability and Capacity (25% weighting)	The project team has the skills and expertise in the subject matter, project management and research, and access to resources to deliver the project.
3. Project Methodology (25% weighting)	The project design and procedures are appropriate and feasible for the aim and objectives outlined in the application.
4. Value for Money and Risk (10% weighting)	The project has a realistic project budget with expenses justified and a risk management plan that identifies and mitigates risks.

Additional assessment considerations

During the assessment process, the TAC may prioritise projects looking to address equity of access to rehabilitation services for TAC clients. This may include, but is not limited, projects looking to address access for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, people with poor mental health, people with disabilities, refugees, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, people with low socioeconomic status and people living outside major cities.²

² NHMRC (Last published 23/11/2018). Guidelines for Guidelines: Equity.
<https://nhmrc.gov.au/guidelinesforguidelines/plan/equity>.



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Successful Applicants

Project Plan

Successful Applicants will need to develop a Project Plan. The Project Plan will detail the aims, objectives, methodology, deliverables and payment schedule (exclusive of GST). The TAC will transpose information from the Application into the Project Plan template. Successful Applicants will be required to complete any unpopulated sections of the Project Plan template and may be required to revise some sections to meet TAC expectations for quality. The Project Plan will be incorporated into and form part of the terms and conditions of the Funding Agreement.

Funding Agreement

All Successful Applicants will need to sign a Funding Agreement before the project commences. This document details the TAC's Standard Terms and Conditions and is available to review on our website prior to submitting an EOI.

Project delivery

All projects must be completed within 24 months of the Funding Agreement commencement date unless otherwise agreed to by the TAC.

Reporting

Reporting is required to monitor project progress and ensure projects are delivered as agreed. All reporting requirements are set out in the Funding Agreement and will be integrated into the Project Plan.

The following reports can be expected:

- Progress Report – due around the midpoint of project
- Outcome Report – due at the conclusion of project activities
- Completion Report and Financial Acquittal – due after the Outcome Report has been approved and final payment processed.

Reporting must be completed using the TAC templates provided.

Payments

The payment schedule will be outlined in the Project Plan. Payments are triggered by the execution of the Funding Agreement, and the receipt and approval of project reports.

The standard payment schedule is:

- Project Initiation – execution of the Funding Agreement (50%)
- TAC approval of Progress Report – at midpoint from commencement date (25%)
- TAC approval of Outcome Report – within 24 months of commencement date (25%)

Contact us

For further information, or to discuss a project idea email the Research and Evaluation team research@tac.vic.gov.au