

Business Website Landing Page

Council User Guide

The Business Website Landing Page template is part of the Business Friendly Councils (BFC) product suite. The Landing Page provides guidance for Councils on how to include a page on their website that outlines key stages of the permit application process for businesses and promotes the Council's Business Concierge function (if in place).

The BFC products and processes were developed collaboratively with councils and tested with businesses through pilot projects led by the Victorian Government Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions. Application of the BFC products and processes benefits both councils and their business customers by providing more consistent and timely regulatory permit advice, enabling better quality applications and improving communication between council regulatory areas involved in the business approvals process.

Note: The BFC products are designed for individual councils to adopt and customize according to their individual local government area requirements. Councils should determine any disclaimers and privacy statements that are necessary to be applied prior to publication.

It is intended that once this product is ready for implementation within your Council this title page should be deleted or replaced with equivalent Council instructions.

Disclaimer: *This resource has been developed for the Business Friendly Councils initiative. This resource may be of assistance to you but the State of Victoria and its employees do not guarantee that the resource is without flaw of any kind or is wholly appropriate for your particular purposes and therefore disclaims all liability for any error, loss or other consequence which may arise from you relying on any information in this resource. While every effort has been made to ensure the currency, accuracy or completeness of the content we endeavour to keep the content relevant and up to date and reserve the right to make changes as required. The Victorian Government and other authors do not accept any liability to any person for the information (or the use of the information) which is provided or referred to in the resource.*

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Business Website Landing Page

Purpose:	Business Website Landing Page Guide
Responsible Department:	[Economic Development / Business Concierge function lead]

Note: This guide is part of the Business Friendly Councils “*Optimise Business First Point Contact*” suite of products including the Business Website Landing Page, Business Permit Navigation Form, and Business Concierge Video Guide.

The content is designed for use where a Business Concierge function has been established, and can be tailored (as appropriate) to suit individual council processes:

- The Business Concierge function is a service provided by local government to assist businesses with starting, expanding or buying a business. Note: some Councils have called this function: Business Support Service, Business Permit Service or BizWiz.
- The Business Concierge function can take many forms (e.g. it can be undertaken by one staff member or be a shared function between many staff) and is usually situated in the Economic Development department.
- The Business Concierge function is the first and best starting point for local businesses seeking to understand the permits and registrations they may need to operate their business.
- The Business Concierge function can save business applicants time and money by providing an overview of the permit process, liaising with different departments across Councils for multi-permit applications, and acting as a single point of contact for businesses.

Start, expand or buy a business

What types of permits are needed to operate your business?

Thank you for choosing [insert region] to start or expand your business.

Whether you have plans for a new business and want to get started, or are taking over or expanding an existing business, you may need permission from Council to operate.

There are a range of permits or registrations your business may need including:

Planning - includes permits for subdividing land, use or development of land, use of building for business, displaying signs, meeting requirements of cultural heritage and bushfire overlays and other statutory planning requirements.

Building - includes building permits that relate to the construction of a building or development, and the use of the building to ensure it meets relevant building codes that apply when you occupy or intend to change the current use of a building. [\[Insert whether council issues building permits or whether this is undertaken by external building surveyors.\]](#)

Environmental Health - includes registration and certificates required for wastewater and septic systems, food premises, accommodation premises, hairdressers, beauty premises and tattoo premises.

Local Laws - includes footpath trading permits, mobile food trading permits, parking permits and domestic animal business permits.

Need help navigating the business application process?

The [\[Business Concierge function title and / or Economic Development team\]](#) is here to help you achieve your business goals. We can:

- Work with you to understand your business plans and identify the permits you may need.
- Arrange a face-to-face 'pre-application' meeting with relevant Council departments, e.g., Planners and Environmental Health Officers.
- Help guide you through the application process.

Contact us Monday to Friday between 9am to 5pm:

[\[Council\]](#)

Phone:

Email:

Ready to get started?

If you already have a business idea, go through the approvals journey mapped out below to see what you will need to do to successfully submit your application.

If you are still investigating starting a business, you can do more research on our other relevant pages:

[\[insert other relevant business / Economic Development pages\].](#)

[\[Insert Council's Business Approvals Journey Map\]](#)

[\[Insert Business Concierge Video\]](#)

Prepare

Before you apply for permits or registrations for your business, spend some time getting prepared. Avoid costly mistakes and do these steps before you sign a lease or commercial agreement:

Develop a business plan

A business plan includes:

- what products or services you intend to supply,
- where you will operate and from what premises,
- how many people you plan to employ,
- an estimation of how many customers you anticipate attracting on a daily basis, and
- your immediate requirements, and your anticipated future needs.

This information will determine the type of permits and registrations you require.

Connect with Council

Connect with Council to understand what permits and registrations you might need. You can complete this Business Navigation Form as a first step for some high-level guidance [\[Insert link to Business Permit Navigation Form\]](#). Our [\[Business Concierge function title / Economic Development Team\]](#) will get in touch with you after you have submitted the form to review your information and guide you through the process.

Attend a pre-application meeting

Once we've reviewed your information, you may be invited to meet with Council officers for a business pre-application meeting. Members from each of the relevant regulatory areas will help you determine if the proposed address allows for the intended business use, and which permits and registrations you will need for your business.

This is a good time to ask questions about what information you need to supply with your application and how you should lodge your application. You can also request information upfront on what fees or costs may be applicable for your required permits.

If you would like to discuss your business proposal or arrange a pre-application meeting, contact us today. To help prepare for the business application meeting, refer to the pre-application meeting agenda [\[Insert link to Business Pre-application Meeting Agenda\]](#).

Get your documents together

You will be asked to provide documents as part of your permit application, and you may be required to bring these to a pre-application meeting. We recommend that you prepare these documents, and any others required by the relevant department, as soon as possible to avoid delays:

- Floor plan with proposed and existing development
- Site plan with proposed and existing development

- Copy of title less than 3 months old
- Public Liability Insurance (Certificate of Currency).

Resources to help you get started

Research how and where you want your business to operate

The [\[insert relevant Planning Scheme\]](#) sets out the rules for development. Zones and Overlays are covered by this scheme, and they may restrict your business function in certain areas or identify special conditions that you need to adhere to.

Free property planning report

To find out what zone or overlay applies to the address you are considering for your business, visit the [Victorian Government Planning website](#) for a [free property planning report](#).

Additional resources to help you with your research:

- Download useful factsheets to help you start your business at [\[insert business resources page\]](#)
- Learn more about developing a business plan [Writing a business plan guide | Business Victoria](#)
- Get information on setting up a business from [Business Victoria](#)
- Find out which licences you need to start, run or grow your business at [ABLIS](#)
- Check your recordkeeping requirements at [Australian Taxation Office](#)
- Find a copy of your title using [LANDATA \(Victorian Land Registry Services\)](#)
- Understand the process for liquor licences from [Victorian Government liquor licensing](#)
- Seek advice and support from the [Small Business Mentoring Service](#)

Sector-based business approvals guides

These guides were developed to help you understand what permits and registrations you might need for your specific business type.

[\[Link to Council specific Business Approvals Sector-based Guides\]](#)

Apply

Depending on the type of business, you may need one or more permits, which will require separate applications. The cost of the permit depends on the type of business and proposed activities.

Before you lodge an application, we recommend you contact the [\[Business Concierge function title / Economic Development team\]](#) to understand how to prepare and submit your application.

Permit type	Where to apply	Indicative timelines for approvals
Planning	<Insert links to permit pages>	<Insert typical time taken for approval>
Building	<Insert links to permit pages>	<Insert typical time taken for approval>
Environmental Health	<Insert links to permit pages>	<Insert typical time taken for approval>
Local Laws	<Insert links to permit pages>	<Insert typical time taken for approval>
Footpath Trading	<Insert links to permit pages>	<Insert typical time taken for approval>

[Insert this note if the Council does not issue Building Permits].

Please Note: [\[Insert Council name\]](#) does not issue building permits, however we can provide building advice including process and expected timelines.

Assessment

A team member from each relevant Council department will be assigned to your application. The [\[Business Concierge function title\]](#) may contact you directly (or where appropriate, team members from the other regulatory departments), and will:

- Advise on the expected timelines to assess your application.
- Confirm the final fees and payment details.
- Request further information (if required).

To check on the status of your application, contact the [\[Business Concierge function title / Economic Development team\]](#) on [\[phone\]](#) or via [\[email\]](#).

Indicative time frame

The time it takes for approval depends on the type of permit/s you need. Refer to the [\[Council\]](#) Business Approvals Journey Map and information below for indicative timeframes.

Permit payments

There are standard fees that apply to all permit types. The details of your application will determine the exact fees and charges. The [\[Business Concierge function title\]](#) or team member from another relevant department will contact you after you submit your application to confirm the final fee and payment details. [\[Insert link\]](#)

Requests for further information

You may receive a request for further information when your application is assessed. Please be prompt in responding to any requests, as a slow response may delay a decision.

Planning Assessment

Can take up to 12 months

A Planning Permit [\[Insert link to Planning Permit website page\]](#) may be required from the Planning Department to operate a home business, change the use of an address, install or use sheds, install signage, undertake external building modifications, and sell liquor.

- Where multiple permits are needed, a current valid planning permit is commonly required to obtain building and environmental health permits.
- Depending on the complexity of your business and its proposed location, a planning permit can take [\[two to twelve\]](#) months to process.
- If there is insufficient detail in your initial application, Council may request further information within the first 28 days from lodgement. Please respond to any requests promptly to avoid further delays.
- If advertising is required for your application (which is often the case for Planning and Building applications) additional fees will be incurred. During the advertising period Council seeks comments on the application from neighbours who may be impacted by the proposal.

- Approvals from external regulators e.g. Environment Protection Authority (EPA), Liquor Control Victoria (LCV) may be required.
- Objectors and applicants have the right to seek a review of Council decisions through the Victorian Civil and Administration Tribunal (VCAT), which can add to the final decision timeline.

Building Assessment

Can take up to 2 months

A Building Permit [\[Insert link to Building Permit website page\]](#) is required before the commencement of building works, which includes construction of new buildings and demolition and/or alteration of existing buildings. Other important factors that can be impacted include accessibility requirements e.g. wheelchair access and ramps.

A Building Permit is likely to be needed if your application involves any of the following:

- alterations to external windows and doors
- building extensions
- adding or removing canopies
- alterations to permanent structures
- adding or removing partitions or walls
- addition or alteration of steps and ramps
- addition of mezzanines.

[\[Insert information as to whether Council issues Building Permits or not\]](#)

Environmental Health Assessment

Can take up to 2 months

Environmental Health registration and certificates [\[Insert link to Environmental Health website page\]](#) are required for several business types including:

- food (production / wholesale / retail / food storage)
- home-based business
- hair and beauty (including tattooing, dry needling, acupuncture)
- health and fitness
- tobacco
- prescribed accommodation
- wastewater and septic systems.

Other types of businesses may also require a Health registration, so it is important you contact Council early to understand what could be required.

Council may request further information within the first 10 days from lodgement. Please respond to any requests promptly to avoid further delays. On-site inspection(s) are likely to be carried out. Health registrations require a final on-site inspection before you can start trading.

Local Laws Assessment

Can take up to 2 weeks

Approvals from the Local Laws Department [\[Insert link to Local Laws website page\]](#) may be required for the following:

- Animal-related businesses
- Businesses that want skip bins or extra waste bins
- Businesses that allow the consumption of liquor on Council land
- Mobile food trading businesses
- Businesses that want to do any footpath trading (e.g. outdoor dining, A-frame signs, goods for sale or display on the footpath).

Outcome

Once your application has been assessed by the responsible department, you will be provided with a copy of the outcome, whether it is approved or refused.

If your application is approved, we will email you a copy of your permit or registration and, where appropriate, hard copies will also be mailed to you.

Once you have been issued with the correct permits for your business you can start operating.

Ongoing Support

You now have all the permits and registrations you need to operate your business. Congratulations!

Our Economic Development team can connect you with services that will help your business to grow and succeed.

We encourage you to stay in touch with Council for ongoing business support:

- Subscribe to the [\[insert links for business news\]](#) for regular updates.
- Keep up to-date with [\[insert links for business events\]](#) in [\[Council name\]](#).