

Guidelines for applying for sponsorship

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Introduction

Thank you for considering V/Line as a potential partner. V/Line is an active member of country communities in Victoria and we aim to support people, activities and organisations that provide benefit to Regional Victoria.

Purpose of this Document

The purpose of this document is to assist organisations or individuals who wish to apply for sponsorship or other types of support from V/Line. These guidelines will enable applicants to:

- Understand V/Line's sponsorship objectives and selection criteria;
- Assess whether an event/project is suitable for sponsorship;
- Understand the various stages of the application process; and
- Understand the associated responsibilities and obligations for applicants receiving sponsorship.

Types of Sponsorship/Support Covered by this Document

This document covers the following areas of sponsorship and other types of support that may be sought from V/Line:

- a) Commercial sponsorships and community partnerships
- b) Philanthropic Support

Sponsorship is defined as:

A long-term relationship or partnership that is mutually advantageous for both parties. In return for monetary or in-kind support the sponsorship will positively raise V/Line's profile and image through numerous promotional opportunities. Sponsorships will align and strengthen the link between V/Line, our staff and regional Victorian communities now and in the future.

Sponsorship does not include:

- A donation, for which little or no return is expected;
- Funds for capital works, amenities or equipment, or to pay the salary of a project officer, unless other promotional or educational benefits are a significant component of that sponsorship;
- Advertising or promotional opportunities¹.

Philanthropy is defined as:

Philanthropy is about goodwill gestures made to enhance and protect our reputation in the communities where we operate without seeking direct commercial benefit. V/Line will engage in selected philanthropic activities across a diverse range of organisations and regions throughout Victoria.

V/Line engages in philanthropic activities in order to develop a strategic and proactive approach to areas of priority interest and as such does not encourage unsolicited submissions.

¹ If you are interested in advertising at V/Line stations and on trains please contact V/Line Marketing on (03) 9619 5900. If you wish to conduct promotional/ sampling activities at V/Line locations contact our Access team via access@vline.com.au.

Background

About V/Line

V/Line is Victoria's regional public transport provider. We run more than 1400 train services and 600 coach services each week. In 2011-12 we served more than 15 million train and coach passengers travelling for work, study, leisure and many other activities. Our customers get to experience the best of country and city life.

V/Line employs more than 1,450 people. Many provide service to the travelling public at our stations or onboard our trains. Others operate and maintain over 3,420km of track and signalling for freight and passenger trains.

V/Line is a responsible regional community member and looks for further ways to support regional and local communities by investing in mutually beneficial and meaningful partnerships.

Sponsorship Application Details

Through our sponsorship and community partnership programs, V/Line aims to maintain a portfolio of properties which meet our sponsorship and community partnerships objectives:

- support V/Line's Vision and Mission
- support V/Line's organisation-wide objective of sustainable growth
- support V/Line's organisation-wide objective of retaining and growing V/Line's reputation within regional Victorian communities
- positively engage V/Line's stakeholders (both internal and external)
- reinforce V/Line's values and key marketing campaign messages
- enhance V/Line's brand image, exposure and organisation profile
- generate positive editorial coverage of the V/Line brand, key messages and initiatives.

Sponsorship Selection Criteria

All applications for V/Line sponsorship will be against V/Line's Sponsorship Objectives and the following Selection Criteria.

A. Geographic Orientation

V/Line will consider sponsoring activities that are located or run in regional Victoria and which offer opportunities to communicate key messages and increase its reputation within local communities.

B. Commercial/Community Objectives

V/Line has a two-pronged approach to our sponsorship policy where properties are assessed, according to set criteria, on their ability to meet commercial and/or community considerations. To be considered for sponsorship, organisations should be able to provide a link to the following areas:

- Maximise V/Line's reputation within local communities
- Reflect V/Line's values and provide opportunities to engage with regional communities in meaningful ways
- Actively contribute to Victorian communities

- Generate opportunities to engage key regional influencers
- Generate opportunities to positively engage and/or involve V/Line staff
- Relevant to V/Line's core passenger business, (i.e. train and coach services)
- Contribute to V/Line's overall business objectives
- Reflect V/Line's target markets, allowing V/Line to engage with them in meaningful ways
- Provide meaningful sponsorship leveraging opportunities to reinforce community positioning
- Generate significant and positive added-value exposure of V/Line's brand and key messages to a relevant mass target audience, through media
- Have proven 'track record' and/or be run by an organisation that is incorporated, financially viable and reputable
- Manageable exposure to limited financial or reputation risk

Applicants must provide evidence that they are capable of, and willing to, deliver full sponsorship leveraging in cooperation with V/Line.

C. Target Audiences

V/Line's sponsorship and community partnership focus is on the following target audiences within country Victoria (users and non-users):

- Youth
- The elderly

In the key areas of:

- Sustainability and environment
- Community and social issues
- Sport
- Education and Safety Awareness
- Arts and culture

Levels of Sponsorship Support Available

Within its sponsorship portfolio V/Line has three levels of sponsorship support:

Major sponsorship or community partnership

A long-term partnership with an organisation that is focused on and/or based in regional Victoria. V/Line will be considered at a minimum a Major sponsor and ideally the Naming Rights Sponsor.

Minor sponsorship or community partnership

Involvement with a regionally based event or community that has an obvious link with V/Line's business. V/Line's participation will be as an active partner with the organisers.

Community fundraising

A small event or fundraising opportunity for a community or organisation in regional Victoria that requires contribution, normally in the form of V/Line travel vouchers.

What V/Line does not sponsor

The following projects or activities are ineligible for sponsorship from V/Line:

- Activities where the audience/participants are irrelevant to V/Line's target market
- Organisations with direct links to political or religious activities
- Organisations with direct links to tobacco, illegal drugs, negative impacts on health or the environment, or associated with risk taking activities
- Events/projects with a large number of sponsors or conflicting sponsors – making it likely that V/Line's brand and messages would be easily lost
- Events/projects with a solely metro Melbourne focus
- Event/ projects that offered limited times and opportunity to promote our brand or key messages
- Events/projects conducted outside Victoria, or organisations proposing activity relating to the sponsorship outside Victoria
- Events/projects that V/Line considers inconsistent with its image and key messages
- Events/projects with existing or proposed sponsors that V/Line considers is inconsistent with V/Line's image and key messages
- Project, events or organisations undertaking high-risk activities or with poor occupational health and safety performance
- Sponsorships that conflicts with, or is too similar to, an existing V/Line sponsorship
- Retrospective sponsorship of any project, event or organisation
- Event, projects or organisations that expose V/Line to reputation or financial risks.

Sponsorship Selection Process

Each sponsorship application received will be assessed against V/Line's sponsorship objectives and priorities. Applications that meet our selection criteria and, where funding is available, will be recommended for approval. Applicants may be required to attend a briefing with representatives from V/Line to discuss the details of the sponsorship application. This may or may not result in a successful application for sponsorship. Please Note: even if a sponsorship application fits within these priorities, V/Line has complete and final discretion in the decision to undertake any sponsorship.

Responsibilities/Obligations of Sponsored Organisations

Successful applicants will be required to enter into a formal letter of agreement or contract that will detail the agreed conditions of the sponsorship. This document will include items such as benefits, time lines, reporting and evaluation requirements. Agreed benefits are to be delivered by the successful applicant according to the terms of the contract or letter of agreement. V/Line requires final approval of any promotional or advertising item that refers to V/Line, the sponsorship, or uses of our image.

Conditions of Funding

- Only written applications complying with the requirements outlined in the “Contents of Your Submission” section of this document will be accepted.
- During the review process V/Line may negotiate the terms of the sponsorship with the applicant to ensure the final agreement maximises the investment and outcomes for V/Line.
- No application shall be accepted, or deemed to have been accepted, unless and until the applicant and V/Line have entered into a written sponsorship agreement. (No comment by any officer or employee of V/Line or any other fact or circumstance affects this position).
- V/Line’s decision will be final regarding funding decisions under its sponsorship program.
- V/Line will notify applicants in writing of the outcome of your application.
- V/Line may, but shall be under no obligation to give reasons for declining an application.
- Applicants are responsible for all costs incurred in submitting any application and any subsequent presentation, including the supply of additional supporting materials requested by V/Line.
- All information submitted would be treated as confidential. Personal information collected in accordance with an application will be used for the purpose of assessing the application and, if successful, the administration of the sponsorship.

Your Submission

Contents of the Submission

Sponsorship applications must include the following:

1. Cover letter
2. Formal submission in relation to the sponsorship proposal, providing the following details, under the headings and in the order specified:
 - **Introduction** - General introduction to your application.
 - **Organisational Profile** -An overview or profile of your organisation.
 - **Sponsorship Event/Property Title** - Name of sponsorship event/property.
 - **Sponsorship Event/Property Details** - Specific details of the sponsorship event/property, including: i.e. date(s); location; description; scope; coverage; aims and desired outcomes; target audience; logistics; and any other details you consider relevant to your application.
 - **Link to V/Line’s Target Audience/Core Business** - Explanation of the link between the proposed sponsorship event/property and V/Line’s target audience/core business.
 - **Benefits to V/Line** - Comprehensive list of benefits to V/Line offered by the sponsorship of the event/property.
 - **Budget** - A detailed budget for the event/property, including a breakdown of how funds would be spent.
 - **Measurement of Outcomes** - An outline of what measures and processes you will use to evaluate the progress/success of the sponsorship relationship with V/Line.
 - **Opportunities for V/Line Employee and Stakeholder Involvement** - An outline of the potential opportunities for V/Line employees and stakeholders to be involved in the activities associated with the sponsorship event/property;

- **Marketing/Media Plan** - A detailed outline of the marketing and media plans associated with the sponsorship event/property.
- **Other Sponsors** - a list of existing and other target sponsors (corporate and media), partners and associated organisations for the sponsorship event/property.
- **Insurance Coverage** - Details of your relevant insurance coverage associated with the sponsorship event/property.
- **Other Information** - Any other information that you consider relevant to your application.

Please Note: your application will be assessed according to your compliance with identified submission requirements.

3. Any additional support information you consider to be relevant to your application.

Submitting Your Application

If you believe you can satisfy the above criteria, we would be pleased to receive your application. You can submit your application as follows:

1. **Online via our website**
www.vline.com.au/sponsorship
2. **By Email**
sponsorship@vline.com.au
3. **By Post**
Attention: Sponsorship Manager
V/Line
PO Box 5343
Melbourne Vic 3001

Unfortunately, the number of applications seeking support will always exceed the funds available and worthwhile programs cannot be guaranteed support regardless of merit. You will receive acknowledgement of your application when it's been received. Allow minimum of four weeks from the time of submission to process your request.

It is recommended that applications are submitted a minimum of, six months for major sponsorships and three months for minor sponsorships, prior to commencement of the project or event to ensure that the opportunities are maximised.

Please Note: V/Line encourages you to make provisional enquiries to evaluate the suitability of your project to V/Line's sponsorship objectives.

Further Enquiries

If after accessing this information you have further enquiries please contact the Sponsorship Manager on 03 9619 5900.