

New Schools and Campuses Policy

1. Introduction

The Australian and Queensland Governments allocate capital assistance funds to independent schools via grants administered by Queensland Independent Schools Block Grant Authority (QIS BGA) under the Australian Government Capital Grants Program and the State Capital Assistance Scheme.

In recognition of the ever-increasing cost of land acquisition and the infrastructure requirements of approvals to develop school sites, the *New Schools Policy* provides guidance tailored specifically to newly accredited and existing Approved Authorities applying for capital funds for development of the first stage a new school or campus.

2. Purpose

It is recognised by the QIS BGA Board of Directors that significant costs are involved in setting up a new school or campus. As such, the Board supports consideration being given to the provision of capital assistance, for the first stage of development, beyond what might normally be considered in future stages. However, whilst giving consideration to each applicant school's individual merits and specific context, QIS BGA must at all times act in line with the legislative instruments and guidelines relevant to each capital assistance program. Approved Authorities and their applicant schools should become familiar with the program parameters under which recommendations for capital grants may be made.

It is intended that the additional consideration should enable Approved Authorities to establish new independent school sites, thereby, supporting parental choice in the Queensland education sector and instilling confidence in the potential school community through providing an evident commitment to develop a school site.

3. Definitions

- (a) An **Approved Authority** is the entity which is accredited by the Non-State Schools Accreditation Board (NSSAB) to operate a school, under the Queensland Government Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Act 2017.
- (b) **New school** is the newly accredited school or schools that have applied and are likely to become accredited, governed either by:
 - a separate Board of Directors or
 - a Board of Directors responsible for an existing school/s.
- (c) **New campus** is a newly accredited site of an existing school.
- (d) **Relevant Entity** means a Minister or a government entity under the Public Service Act 2008, section 24 or the local government for the area in which the school is located.

4. Relevant Documentation and Legislation

- (a) *Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Act 2017 (Qld)*
- (b) *Australian Education Act 2013 (Cth)*
- (c) *Australian Education Regulation 2013 (Cth)*
- (d) *Education (Capital Assistance) Act 1993 (Qld)*
- (e) *Education (Capital Assistance) Regulation 2015 (Qld)*
- (f) *Public Service Act 2008 (Qld)*
- (g) *Australian Government Capital Grants Program Guidelines*
- (h) *State Capital Assistance Scheme Guidelines*, 16 October 2015
- (i) *Learning Places and Spaces- Explaining the QIS BGA Lens*

5. Scope

This policy applies to Approved Authorities applying for capital assistance under the Australian Government Capital Grants Program and the State Capital Assistance Scheme for the establishment of stage one of a new school or campus.

6. Procedure

6.1 CAPITAL GRANTS AVAILABILITY

- (a) Approved Authorities establishing a new school/campus may be eligible to make an application for capital assistance to develop educational facilities under the following programs or, from time to time, other special purpose programs administered by QIS BGA:
 - Australian Government Capital Grants Program (CGP)
 - State Capital Assistance Scheme (SCAS)
- (b) A further program administered by QIS BGA, the External Infrastructure Subsidy Scheme (EIS) is also available to support schools with development requirements of local and State Governments, as well as other Relevant Entities, which are located external to the school site. Further information on EIS will be maintained on the QIS BGA website at www.bga.qld.edu.au.

6.2 MINIMUM CGP AND SCAS APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

QIS BGA is required to make an assessment of any application for capital assistance submitted for a new school/campus according to the CGP and SCAS guidelines in place at the time of application. The following aspects of planning for the development of a new school/campus should be in place to enable an Approved Authority to prepare a meaningful application for capital assistance:

- (a) NSSAB accreditation of the site which is the subject of the proposed capital project/s, or evidence that the site is progressing towards accreditation. Note that where the proposed school site is not accredited by the closing date of the annual capital funding round, the following will apply:

- the NSSAB application for accreditation must be lodged prior to the submission of the QIS BGA application for capital assistance.
 - Contact should be made with the QIS BGA Secretariat to seek further clarification of the implications of making an application for capital assistance prior to accreditation being achieved.
- (b) Demographic analysis supporting the validity of enrolment projections for the new school/campus, projecting 10 years (at least) from the time of application for capital assistance.
- (c) Evidence of enrolment applications received and/or confirmed (deidentified) for the intended year of commencement.
- (d) A business plan or finance model which references the enrolment projections provided under 6.2 (c), amongst other relevant financial information.
- (e) Evidence of site ownership or a 25 year lease on the site.
- (f) A 10 year master plan, overviewing planning and projections for the commencement year, as well as for the short term and long term under the minimum 10 year horizon, or greater duration if relevant to the school's situation.

6.3 ELEMENTS OF CGP AND SCAS ELIGIBLE PROJECTS

Information on planning for educational facilities will be made available in the capital application support documentation *Learning Places and Spaces- Explaining the QIS BGA Lens*, available via the QIS BGA website at www.bga.qld.edu.au.

The following elements of new school/campus development are eligible for capital assistance under either CGP and/or SCAS, as indicated:

- (a) Master Plan
- Development of a 10 year master plan for the school site and any related reports, for example, landscaping, bushfire and/or flood management.
- (b) Purchase of Land (eligible under CGP guidelines only)
- Purchasing land, with or without buildings (or parts of buildings), not including the cost of appeals or other legal costs related to the purchase of the land.
- IMPORTANT-** It is advisable that Approved Authorities working towards land purchases make contact with the BGA Secretariat in the early stages of planning to receive information on eligibility and the sequence of events required, leading up to the making of any application.
- (c) Educational Facilities
- Design and construction of new educational facilities, as well as the refurbishment, conversion and/or upgrade of existing buildings for educational activities, to be in educational use for at least 20 years.
 - Provision of modular buildings that have an educational use on the approved site for at least 20 years.
 - Furniture and equipment, via a specified allowance which is provided as a contribution to the setup of educational facilities.

- Typical educational facilities eligible for consideration for funding in the first stage of a new school/campus include:
 - Learning and support areas, i.e., sufficient spaces to adequately cater for projected enrolments/streams 2 years out from the year of application.
 - Amenities- staff and student
 - Covered lunch areas
 - Administration areas.
- (d) Professional Fees
- Costs related to the engagement of professionals, to provide services in relation to the planning and development of the proposed project/s, such as a town planner, project manager, architect and/or engineer.
- (e) Government Requirements
- Costs for local government development applications, building applications and/or operational works permits.
 - Costs for works resulting from an approval to develop a site given by any Relevant Entity under the Public Service Act 2008 (Qld)
 - Costs for the actioning of an approval to develop via the Queensland Government Ministerial Infrastructure Designation process.
- (f) Fire and other Special Services
- Fire services include, but are not limited to, hose reels, hydrants, extinguishers, fire ring mains.
 - Special services may include, but are not limited to, air-conditioning, security systems, telecommunications installations, operable walls.
- (g) Site Development
- Site works involved in preparing for the construction of educational facilities, such as sewerage, water, power and/or power upgrades, telecommunications, internal roads and car parks.
- (h) Infrastructure Requirements
- Stage One fees and charges that relate to the reasonable development of a site, such as:
 - infrastructure charges
 - infrastructure works.
 - Infrastructure works internal to the site, required by local government or another Relevant Entity, as per the development conditions belonging to a development application.

NOTE- In South-East Queensland there are 2 types of organisations—local councils and council-owned distributor-retailers—which provide water distribution, retail and sewerage services to customers in 11 council areas. School sites located in these local government jurisdictions will be subject to the fees, charges and conditions of councils, as well as other Relevant Entities. In all other jurisdictions, fees, charges and conditions of development applications will be issued by councils only.
 - State Government infrastructure works as established through the development requirements of a Ministerial Infrastructure Designation.

- Any infrastructure works external to the site, required by local or State Government or a Relevant Entity may be eligible for assistance under EIS (refer section 6.1(b))
- For all future stages, after the lodgement of a Stage One capital application for CGP and SCAS grants, infrastructure charges and external infrastructure project work costs on the developing school site should be applied for under EIS (refer section 6.1(b)).

6.4 ASSESSMENT PARAMETERS

Consideration will be given to the following when assessing an application for funding:

- (a) Applications for capital assistance must be submitted via the regular CGP/SCAS application process, within the scheduled application timeframe, as advertised on the QIS BGA website.
- (b) Schools cannot apply for stages one and two of a new school/campus at the same time. Determination of the minimum viable project in the first stage of a school site will be based on the educational facilities required to accommodate the educational delivery for the projected enrolments two years out from the year of application.
- (c) A recommendation of a capital grant will be based on the application assessment process, that is, the determination of the minimum viable project to meet an identified educational need (including demographic growth and/or student disadvantage) and the maximum financial contribution an Approved Authority and the school community can make.
- (d) In assessing the school's financial capacity to contribute to the establishment of a new campus, consideration may be given to the school's requirement to provide initial human and material resources and the risk involved in providing capital assistance.
- (e) Assessment of applications submitted by multi-campus schools will give consideration to the resources of both the Approved Authority and the individual school, as deemed necessary to determine the minimum viable project and the maximum contribution able to be made to the proposed project.
- (f) Where a division of an accredited school has occurred, or the acquisition of an accredited (or once accredited) school site has been achieved, as per NSSAB accreditation processes, applications for capital assistance regarding will be assessed as a new school or campus under the *New Schools Policy* at the discretion of the QIS BGA Board of Directors.
- (g) As a general guide, the Approved Authority is deemed to be the primary financial contributor to the project, unless special circumstances are identified.

7. Responsibilities

- (a) The QIS BGA Board carries responsibility for reviewing and monitoring the policy.
- (b) The General Manager is responsible for the communication and implementation of the policy.
- (c) Employees of QIS BGA are responsible for the escalation of any known breaches to the General Manager.

QIS BGA DOCUMENT CONTROL DETAILS		
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