



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, the State Capital Assistance Scheme and the External Infrastructure Subsidy Scheme. These funds can be used in support of the establishment of new school or campus sites.

The number of school-aged children in Queensland is projected to increase significantly in future years, therefore, to meet enrolment demand and provide parental choice, the Queensland independent school sector must establish new schools and/or campuses of existing schools. This policy is intended to support an Approved Authority to plan for new schools or campuses with the end in mind. It will see new schools/campuses delivered with a focus on sound educational planning, as well as the achievement of long-term strategic goals.

2. Purpose

QIS BGA recognises that the Queensland independent school sector comprises a diverse range of schools that allow and ensure parents/carers are provided with choice. To encourage the establishment of new independent schools/campuses for the benefit of the Queensland community, QIS BGA aims to offer Approved Authorities a degree of funding certainty and support. Accordingly, this policy strives to deliver a supportive and equitable funding approach for all types of new Queensland independent schools/campuses.

This policy outlines QIS BGA's priorities and funding approach for Approved Authorities, both existing and newly accredited, applying for capital funds to establish new school or campus sites. The policy and its accompanying procedures include the parameters by which the Board will establish the fundamental viability and readiness of each new school or campus proposal, prior to assessing capital grant applications, both educationally and financially, submitted under the **New School Funding Model**.

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) The **Development Period** is the duration of time to which the new school funding approach applies, as prescribed in the *New Schools and Campuses Funding Procedure*.
- (c) **Educational Facilities** means the learning spaces and associated facilities required to operate a new school/campus, as described in the annual *QIS BGA Navigating the Capital Grants Process* publication.



- (d) The **Initial Application** (for Phase 1 capital assistance) must include information relating to the entire site-based development and will seek capital funding for the first Stage/s of work related to the :

- (i) Educational facilities, i.e., learning spaces and associated facilities, and
- (ii) Internal site infrastructure, including internal roads and car parks.

The Initial Application assessment will consider the educational and financial needs of the Approved Authority/school for each phase of work during the entire Development Period.

- (e) **Minimum Viable Project** refers to the identification of at least the basic facilities deemed to meet the identified educational need of a specific school, as described in *Navigating the Capital Grants Process*. A proposed project will be deemed to have met the identified educational need through the assessment of application data provided for the following indicators:

- (i) projected enrolments and class size policy
- (ii) number of existing learning spaces and associated facilities, if any, and the associated room occupancy rates at the time of application
- (iii) the condition of the existing facilities, if any
- (iv) number of additional learning spaces and associated facilities within the design of the project proposed to meet the projected enrolment needs and educational philosophy, and
- (v) floor area guidelines for each functional area, as described in the *Navigating the Capital Grants Application Process* publication.

- (f) A **New School** is a newly accredited school, or a school which has applied and is likely to become accredited, governed either by:

- (i) a separate Board of Directors or
- (ii) a Board of Directors responsible for an existing school.

- (g) A **New Campus** is a newly accredited site of an existing school. It is not a temporary Special Assistance School site.

- (h) **Performance Criteria** means the criteria specified in respect of the new school/campus after the Initial Application has been assessed and any Ministerial approval of capital assistance has been received.

- (i) **Preliminary Approval Gateway** means the approval process undertaken by the QIS BGA Board prior to a full New School or Campus Application. The Preliminary Approval Gateway process assesses the strategic viability, governance support, site readiness, financial capacity, demonstrated demand and organisational capability of a proposed new school or campus before an Approved Authority expends substantial resources preparing a full application.

- (j) **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) *Australian Education Act 2013 (Cth)*
- (b) *Australian Education Regulation 2013 (Cth)*
- (c) *Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Act 2017 (Qld)*
- (d) *Education (Capital Assistance) Act 1993 (Qld)*

- (e) *Education (Capital Assistance) Regulation 2015 (Qld)*
- (f) *Australian Government Capital Grants Program Guidelines*
- (g) *State Capital Assistance Scheme Guidelines*
- (h) *External Infrastructure Subsidy Scheme Guidelines*
- (i) *QIS BGA Navigating the Capital Application Process*
- (j) *QIS BGA New Schools and Campuses Funding Procedure*
- (k) *QIS BGA Preliminary Approval Gateway – New School/Campus Funding Application*

5. Scope

The policy applies to:

- (a) existing Approved Authorities, or
- (b) entities which have made an application to become accredited through the Non-State Schools Accreditation Board as an Approved Authority of a Queensland independent school.

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 under the following programs:
 - (i) Australian Government Capital Grants Program (CGP), or
 - (ii) 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 the external development requirements of local and State Governments, as well as other relevant entities as per the Public Service Act 2008. Further information on EIS will be maintained on the QIS BGA website at www.bga.qld.edu.au.
- (c) From time to time, governments may make available targeted capital assistance via other special purpose programs which will be administered by QIS BGA, as required.
- (d) For 20 years from the date of completion of a capital project, the respective Governments retain a right to repayment from Approved Authorities of grants which are more than \$75,000 should they, within the 20 years, sell or otherwise dispose of the facilities or cease to use the facilities for educational use.

6.2 ESSENTIAL PRE-APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

- (a) For all new schools/campuses, a staged pathway to making an application for capital grants will be undertaken, i.e.,
 - (i) before submission of any capital funding application, Approved Authorities must gain an understanding of the two capital funding pathways available and the necessary eligibility and participation requirements

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- (ii) the pre-application **Capital Funding Pathways Scan** supports the development of this understanding and will be completed and submitted via the QIS BGA website at [QIS BGA Capital Program](#).
 - (iii) the outcomes of the scan will inform QIS BGA of basic application readiness requirements, such as:
 - eligibility status of the Approved Authority
 - the Approved Authority's planning progress towards securing a site and the necessary approvals to develop that site
 - the expected commencement date for educational delivery to occur at the proposed new site, and
 - best timing for an Approved Authority to participate in a capital funding round.
 - (iv) subsequent discussions with QIS BGA will guide the existing or prospective Approved Authority into an appropriate capital funding pathway, i.e.,
 - the QIS BGA New Schools Funding Model, or
 - the typical capital grant application process.
- (b) Where it is determined that the Approved Authority has met the above basic requirements, further progress may be made towards participation in the New Schools Funding Model, as overviewed in section 6.3.
- (c) Approved Authorities that do not demonstrate the basic requirements may wish to re-submit the Capital Funding Pathways Scan to trigger new discussions with QIS BGA at a later date, or, if eligibility and readiness to establish a new school/campus has been demonstrated, a typical capital application may be the preferred option.

6.3 NEW SCHOOLS/CAMPUSES FUNDING MODEL

6.3.1 The Preliminary Approval Gateway

- (a) Before preparing a full capital application under the New Schools Funding Model, the Approved Authority must prepare a **Preliminary Approval Gateway** submission to demonstrate to the QIS BGA Board the following:
 - (i) governance endorsement
 - (ii) strategic intent and school model
 - (iii) site identification and control
 - (iv) site town planning status
 - (v) forecast enrolment demand
 - (vi) organisational capability to deliver the project
 - (vii) preliminary financial support.
- (b) The **Preliminary Approval Gateway – New School/Campus Funding Application** guidance document, which will be provided by the QIS BGA General Manager, will form the basis of the Preliminary Approval Gateway submission.
- (c) QIS BGA Board's approval of the Preliminary Approval Gateway submission is required before progression to a capital application under the **New Schools and Campuses Funding Procedure** can occur.

6.3.2 The New Schools and Campuses Funding Procedure

- (a) Where new schools or campuses of existing schools are the subject of a capital grant application, existing or prospective Approved Authorities should contact the QIS BGA office to inquire about accessing or extending a **QIS BGA Participation Agreement** prior to submission of the Initial Application.
- (b) The following aspects of planning for the development of a new school/campus should be in place to enable the preparation of a meaningful capital application:
 - (i) NSSAB accreditation of the Approved Authority and/or 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 at least by the annual closing date of the capital application.
- contact should be made with the QIS BGA Secretariat to seek further clarification of the implications of submitting an application for capital assistance before accreditation is achieved, including the potential for delayed accreditation to impact on the receipt of Ministerial approval and, subsequently, project and educational delivery commencement.
- (ii) Evidence of a local government development approval conditions or Ministerial Infrastructure Designation (MID) requirements for the site.
- (iii) a 10-year educational facilities Master Plan, overviewing planning and projections for the commencement year, as well as for the short term and long term with a minimum 10-year horizon, or greater duration if relevant to the school's situation.
- (iv) evidence of site ownership or a minimum 30-year lease on the site, thereby, enabling appropriate coverage of the 20 year contingent liability period.
- (v) a business case which will assist the Approved Authority/school to address the following concepts:
 - strategic intent
 - governance structure
 - school capability statement
 - educational philosophy
 - competitor analysis
 - student enrolment demand 10-year forecast
 - staffing requirements 10-year model
 - property portfolio
 - 3-way, 10-year financial model.

- (c) Dependent on the circumstances related to the proposed new school/campus, QIS BGA may request additional information from the Approved Authority to enable any special consideration required to be validated.

6.3 APPLICATION FRAMEWORK

- (a) The school categories guiding the New School/Campus application and assessment procedures will be as follows:
 - (i) **Type 1:** Mid to large schools
 - (ii) **Type 2:** Small schools, and
 - (iii) **Type 3:** Schools accredited as Special Assistance Schools, Special Schools or Majority Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Schools.
- (b) Applications for capital assistance for new schools/campuses will be made according to the following structure:
 - (i) the **Initial Application**, i.e., where the assessment will consider the educational and financial needs of the Approved Authority/school for each stage of work during the Development Period.
 - (ii) the **Subsequent Applications**, i.e., where the assessment will consider the next stage/s of educational and financial needs of the Approved Authority/school, as well as the achievement of the future performance criteria as communicated to the Approved Authority/school by QIS BGA after the Initial Application process has concluded.
- (c) At each application, the entire site-based development requirements of the new school/campus will be examined according to the following areas:
 - (i) **Internal site infrastructure**, including **internal roads** and **car parks**, and
 - (ii) **Educational facilities**, i.e., learning spaces and associated facilities.
- (d) At the discretion of the Board, for Type 1 schools, a minimum of a 50 percent grant will be applied to the total project cost (ex GST) for each stage of the educational facilities (identified as the Minimum Viable Project) and the total project cost of the internal site infrastructure costs.

For type 2 and 3 schools, the minimum percentage grant will be derived from an assessment of the Approved Authorities capacity to contribute to the project.
- (e) The application assessment will also include the use of per student funding caps for both educational facilities and internal site infrastructure, including internal roads and car parks.
- (f) The educational facilities and internal site infrastructure funding caps will be updated annually and applicable to the next capital assistance round.
- (g) In the event of the internal site infrastructure cap not being exceeded, and the education facility cap is exceeded, the remaining amount funds within the internal site infrastructure cap can be added to the educational facility cap.
- (h) A full capital assistance application, inclusive of the required supporting documentation must also be submitted. This will enable QIS BGA to assess the following elements of a proposed project:
 - (i) educational facilities, such as new construction, refurbishment and modular buildings
 - (ii) professional fees
 - (iii) loose furniture and equipment
 - (iv) local authority charges

- (v) built-in equipment
 - (vi) internal site infrastructure costs, and
 - (vii) site development costs.
- (i) Applications at all stages of development will be submitted via the capital application process using the Enquire grant management system (GMS), within the scheduled application timeframe, as advertised on the QIS BGA website in approximately September of each year for the following round.
 - (j) Where the delivery of external infrastructure is a requirement of an approval to develop required by local or State Government or another relevant entity, applications may be made via EIS for:
 - (i) infrastructure charges, and/or
 - (ii) project work.

The application assessment approach under EIS will not vary based on the category of new school/campus, as it does for CGP and SCAS.

6.4 ASSESSMENT PARAMETERS

- (a) In addition to the requirements of the New Schools Funding Model, QIS BGA will make an assessment of an application for capital assistance submitted according to the CGP and SCAS guidelines operating at the time of application.
- (b) A recommendation for a capital grant will be based on the application assessment processes of the New Schools and Campuses Funding Procedure. The assessment will involve the determination of:
 - (i) the Minimum Viable Project to meet an identified educational need (including demographic growth and/or student disadvantage), and
 - (ii) the maximum financial contribution an Approved Authority and the school community can make.
- (c) When assessing Subsequent Applications, a determination will be made regarding the school's achievement of the established Performance Criteria, thereby, enabling the continuation of the school's classification as a new school/campus for capital funding purposes.
- (d) Where an Approved Authority no longer wishes to, or is no longer able to, apply for capital funds under the *New Schools and Campuses Funding Procedure*, it may apply for capital funding as per the regular CGP/SCAS capital application processes.
- (e) The full methodology associated with allocating capital funds to a successful project under this policy will be provided via the *New Schools and Campuses Funding Procedure*, which is reviewed and updated annually.
- (f) 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.
- (g) 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 will be assessed as a new school or campus at the discretion of the QIS BGA Board.

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		
VERSION: v10.0		Reference: OP/Pol/12
Last Revision Date: October 2026	Next Revision Date: October 2027	Review Frequency: Annual

