CLIENT COMMUNIQUÉ

Block Grant Authority Applications

This Client Communique has utilised the information made available by the Association of Independent Schools of NSW (AISNSW) through their website.

What is a Block Grant Authority Application?

NSW non-government schools that are registered and do not operate for profit under the Education Act 1990 (the Act) may be eligible for NSW Government funding assistance for building and development projects. This assistance is provided through the Building Grants Assistance Scheme (the Scheme) and is administered on behalf of the NSW Government by the NSW Catholic Block Grant Authority (BGA) and the Association of Independent Schools of NSW BGA.

Objectives of the Building Grants Assistance Scheme

The key objectives of the Building Grants Assistance Scheme include:

▪ Providing funding assistance for capital projects comprising education and learning spaces at primary and/or secondary levels in non-government schools.

▪ Providing support to areas of greatest need (including financial need, demographic student projections, socio-economic characteristics and/or classification as a special school).

▪ Prioritisation towards new schools and new capital developments undertaken to provide educational facilities for increased student enrolments.

▪ Assistance provided for the provision of proper and adequate teaching facilities which are comparable in area and standard to those provided in a NSW government school.

Is your school eligible for financial assistance?

To be eligible for assistance under the Scheme your school must be:

▪ Non-government and not for profit and be registered for funding assistance.

▪ Affiliated with the NSW Catholic BGA or the Association of Independent Schools of NSW BGA.

▪ Demonstrate to the BGA that the school is financially viable to be eligible for funding under the Scheme.

How does the BGA assess applications?

The BGA has regard to the objectives of the Scheme and considers the following when assessing BGA applications:

▪ Socio-economic characteristics and/or classification as a special school.

▪ The proposed project supports enrolment growth and/or enrolment maintenance.

▪ The ability of the school and its supporting community to bear the total cost of the project.

How can the BGA funding assistance be used?

Schools may use the funding assistance for the planning, construction, alteration, extension, renovation, relocation or upgrading of educational facilities with a focus on projects that facilitate increased student enrolments and maintain an acceptable standard of learning and teaching facilities.

What is required for a BGA Application?

BGA applications will generally comprise the following:

- A brief description of each project identifying the major facilities to be provided and how it meets the objectives of the Scheme
- The number of new classrooms and additional student places for each project
- An assessment of how the project satisfies the selection criteria outline on the AISNSW website
- The project type (new construction or upgrade)
- The total cost of the project
- Estimated start and completion dates for the project
- A summary of projected increase in student places

How do I prepare and lodge a BGA Application?

Eligible schools receive an email from the BGA in December each year requesting schools submit an Expression of Interest (EOI) by the end of January the following year for financial assistance through the Scheme.

Schools that lodge an EOI will have access to online material to assist with the preparation of the application as well as a Capital Grants Programme (CGP) application form.

Schools will likely require the assistance of a Project Manager, Architect, Town Planner and Quantity Surveyor to prepare advice and documentation to address the requirements of a BGA application. Examples of BGA application submissions can be found on the AISNSW website.

Applications close on 30th April 2021 this year. The AISNSW will then commence reviewing the applications ahead of submitting to the relevant NSW Education Minister for review and approval. Successful schools are usually notified by January the following year.

How can EPM help?

EPM has extensive experience with providing Project Management and Town Planning services to independent schools. We have also assisted schools with the preparation and submission of their BGA applications and the subsequent management of their projects.

BGA applications are commonly informed by Master Plans. Master Plans provide an excellent road map for schools to plan development across campuses to satisfy the growth and operational requirements of the school. Further information on developing a Master Plan can be found here on EPM's website.

Whether you have an existing Master Plan or are yet to develop one, EPM can assist with facilitating the completion of studies and preparation documents to support your BGA application. EPM together with other consultants that we appoint and manage, can assist with the following BGA application deliverables:

- Preparation of drawings to show the capacity, type and standard of the proposed buildings
- Preparation of project cost estimates
- Advice of statutory planning approval pathways
- Preparation of a programme to inform the commencement and completion dates and to convey any proposed staging

Please contact the following if you would like to discuss with EPM how we may be able to assist with your applications.

Todd Ewart
Associate, EPM Projects
tewart@epmprojects.com.au
(0424) 994 485

WEBSITE: www.epmprojects.com.au

PO Box 1034

Level 2, 146 Arthur Street

NORTH SYDNEY NSW 2060

P: (612) 9452 8300

F: (612) 9452 8388

E: us@epmprojects.com.au

KEY CONTACTS

Andrew Graham

CEO

M: 0419 732 021

E: agraham@epmprojects.com.au

Johan O'Brien

COO

M: 0414 917 904

E: jobrien@epmprojects.com.au

Mark Blizard

Group Executive

M: 0438 126 778

E: mblizard@epmprojects.com.au

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