



Capital Assistance – An Overview

Endorsed by the Commission: 15 October 2019

1.0 Introduction

This paper provides an overview of the financial assistance available to Queensland Catholic schools under Commonwealth Government and State Government schemes. The paper starts by providing a brief overview of the schemes and then outlining the eligibility for funding for non-government schools. For schools that are eligible for capital funding, the application and assessment process is explained in more detail. The paper also summarises how the Queensland Catholic Education Commission (QCEC) assesses and ranks projects for funding.

This paper is intended to provide information on the processes involved in applying for capital assistance and should be read in conjunction with the QCEC *Capital Assistance Guidelines 2020* and *2020 Capital Round – Important Dates*. The guidelines provide assistance to applicants by specifying area and cost details for eligible infrastructure projects.

2.0 Types of funding

Catholic schools in Queensland can access funding for capital infrastructure from the Commonwealth Government and the Queensland Government.

2.1 Commonwealth Capital Grants Program

The Commonwealth Government's [Capital Grants Program](#) (CGP) provides Commonwealth funding for capital infrastructure for non-government schools as provided through the *Australian Education Act 2013*. The Commonwealth funds are administered by Block Grant Authorities (BGA).

The objectives of the CGP are to provide and improve school capital infrastructure, particularly for the most educationally disadvantaged students. Capital funding for non-government schools is allocated to BGAs on the basis of student enrolments and need.

Non-government schools seeking to apply for CGP funding need to be a member of the relevant BGA in their state or territory. QCEC is the BGA for Catholic schools in Queensland.

2.2 State Capital Assistance Scheme

The Queensland Government's [Capital Assistance Scheme](#) (CAS) provides capital assistance to eligible non-state schools to fund work for educational facilities or boarding accommodation. The scheme is established under the *Education (Capital Assistance) Act 1993* and the *Education (Capital Assistance) Regulation 2015*.

The scheme is administered on behalf of the State Government by Capital Assistance Authorities (CAAs), one nominated by the Queensland Catholic Education Commission and one nominated by the Association of Independent Schools of Queensland Inc. Each CAA will receive and assess applications for capital assistance, make recommendations to the Minister, make payments to approved authorities of schools and monitor progress of projects.

Total funding available for the scheme is announced in the State Budget and allocated on the basis of student enrolments (FTE). Enrolment figures have a weighting of 1 for primary enrolments and 1.5 for secondary enrolments.

Additional weightings applied are based on school location, Socio-economic Status (SES) score and the Queensland Resources Index.

QCEC is the CAA for Catholic schools in Queensland.

3.0 Eligibility for funding

To be eligible to apply for grants under the CGP and CAS, non-government schools must be

- a member of a BGA/CAA
- eligible for funding under the relevant Acts

Existing non-government schools must also be able to demonstrate to the BGA/CAA that

- there is a financial need for assistance (i.e. the school and supporting community do not have the capacity to meet the total cost of the project)
- the project will contribute to the objectives of the grants scheme
- an appropriate maintenance plan is in place and ongoing running costs of facilities can be met
- adequate insurance is held over school buildings
- the project is consistent with education planning within the school and the environment within which it is operating
- the project will not adversely affect the condition of a place in relation to heritage legislation
- the school is financially viable
- the school owns the land or has a lease for the land and/or buildings that has a period to run commensurate with the period in which the capital grant may be required

New non-government schools must be able to demonstrate some certainty of successful establishment, operation and governance in relation to Commonwealth, state or territory and local government requirements. These schools may be able to apply for capital funding prior to receiving recurrent funding.

4.0 Funding administration

All capital funding from the Australian Government and the Queensland Government for Catholic schools in Queensland is provided to the Queensland Catholic Education Commission (QCEC) as the nominated BGA and CAA.

To assist with capital assistance matters and the assessment of applications, the QCEC has formed two separate groups. The agreed responsibilities for each of the groups are outlined below.

Capital Assistance Reference Group	Capital Assistance Assessment Committee
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • develop QCEC Capital Assistance Guidelines, including area allocations and costs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • assess applications under the CGP and CAS according to the criteria set out in the QCEC Capital Assistance Guidelines • score and rank projects

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide feedback on projects to schools and Catholic School Authorities on request, through school visits • assist QCEC Secretariat staff during school visits in validating application information • conduct cost reviews of applications if directed by QCEC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • advise the Commission of assessment outcomes
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5.0 Application process

Every year QCEC advises Queensland Catholic School Authorities of the amount of funding available for capital assistance under the Australian Government and Queensland Government capital assistance schemes. Schools then have until the end of March the following year to submit their applications for capital assistance.

All applications for capital assistance must be made online via QCEC’s online application system [Capital Projects](#).

The QCEC *Capital Assistance Guidelines 2020* provide practical assistance for putting together applications in accordance with the requirements of the Capital Grants Program and the Capital Assistance Scheme.

QCEC will then visit each applicant school to check for compliance. Amendments to lodged applications can be made until late May. No further changes to applications can be made after that date.

The QCEC Capital Assistance Assessment Committee will assess applications in June. The assessment process and scoring criteria are outlined below.

QCEC will send a list of applications to the Minister by 30 September with a brief description of each project, the level of recommended assistance for each application and reasons for the recommended level of assistance.

Government approval is generally provided in November-December of the year of the applications with funding available the following calendar year.

Applicants should refer to *2020 Capital Round – Important Dates* for specific dates.

6.0 Criteria for capital expenditure

Approved authorities may apply for capital funding for the planning, construction, alteration, extension, renovation, relocation or upgrading of educational facilities for students; boarding facilities for students (and supervisors); and residential accommodation for teachers in remote areas (subject to Ministerial approval)¹.

Funding is available for the following types of work:

- Conversion or refurbishment of existing facilities
- Preparation of sites for building

¹ [Capital Assistance Scheme Guideline](#)

- Installation or upgrading of water, sewerage, electricity and other services
- Charges imposed by the local authority are not funded under the External Infrastructure Subsidy Scheme
- The purchase of furniture and equipment
- Architectural, engineering, local authority and other professional fees

Funding is not available for:

- facilities which have religious worship as a principal purpose
- facilities in a co-educational school where those facilities will not be equitably available on a gender basis.
- facilities that are not provided by the State in State schools
- facilities where the majority of the use will be by full fee-paying overseas students
- facilities that are primarily for pre-primary education
- projects proposed other than by School Authorities
- pick up and set down areas and other local government external infrastructure requirements that are funded under the External Infrastructure Subsidy Scheme
- the purchase of pre-existing buildings
- a capital project related to a temporary site
- the acquisition of land
- projects that have commenced prior to Ministerial approval

7.0 Assessment of projects for funding

All applications that comply with the requirements of the QCEC Capital Assistance Guidelines are presented to the Capital Assistance Assessment Committee for evaluation.

Members of the Committee independently consider each project against three criteria:

1. Changes in demographics, enrolments and student characteristics (3 facets)
2. Educational planning (2 facets)
3. Infrastructure planning (3 facets)

Educational disadvantage is assessed separately at a later stage in the assessment process.

Each of the above criterion has between 2 and 3 'facets'. The facets are things the assessor should see when evaluating each criterion. The facets are outlined below.

Each facet is given a score of 1 (not much), 2 (a moderate amount) or 3 (a lot).

The project score is the sum of all the facet scores. There is no weighting attached to the different criteria or the different facets of a criterion.

In this model, the project scores can range from a low 8 (where each facet receives the minimum score of 1) to a high 24 (where each facet receives a maximum score of 3). A higher score indicates that the project has more merit relative to other projects.

Criterion for evaluation	Assessable Facet		Facet Score
You evaluate the merit of a project in three areas	You look for these aspects of the project	Comments and illustrations	You assign a score of 1–3 to each facet
C1: Changes in demographics, enrolments and student characteristics	C1F1: The project addresses a shortfall in facilities to meet the needs of the current student population	The Committee should consider the school's current facilities compared to the school's eligibility for facilities as detailed in the Capital Guidelines.	
	C1F2: The project addresses projected changes in the size and/or composition of student population over the next five years and beyond	This facet is about schools to be constructed or about schools being extended, renovated, or improved. The Committee should consider the need for the project as demonstrated by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - New suburbs or towns or increasing population density in existing suburbs - Movement from other sectors - Retention rates - Pressure on enrolments - Provision of schooling options eg Single-sex, coeducational, P-12 - Impact of this project on other Catholic schools 	
	C1F3: The project responds to changes in the characteristics of students	This facet is about students. The Committee should consider how this project will address student needs including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Students with disabilities - Indigenous students - Refugees - Students with challenges impacting on learning - High potential learners 	
C2: Educational planning	C2F1: The project reflects current Commonwealth and State objectives, priorities and innovations	The Committee should consider how this project addresses current government priorities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Boosting literacy, numeracy and Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics engagement and performance - National curriculum (compulsory years) - Digital technologies curriculum - Languages other than English from Prep - Expansion of vocational education - Supporting student health and wellbeing 	
	C2F2: The project aligns with and supports the school's, and where appropriate the school system's curriculum offerings, teaching and assessments	The Committee should consider how this project addresses the school's educational planning, e.g. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Laboratories - Laptops/ personal computing devices - Hubs for transdisciplinary learning 	
C3: Infrastructure planning	C3F1: The project balances the need for new construction, renovation, addition, and/or major improvement, and the adequacy of existing facilities	The Committee should consider how this project addresses these aspects of infrastructure planning.	
	C3F2: The project produces a build/design solution that is fit for purpose	The Committee should consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> That renovations/alterations complement existing school structures in size, design and use of facilities; That new construction or demolition of existing buildings is appropriate. That all build/design solutions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fit the school's overall strategic plan and master site and facilities plan - Flexible in use and support of new technologies - Aesthetically pleasing environment – enhances student learning and wellbeing - Enhances student and staff amenity (e.g. temperature, ventilation, light) 	
	C3F3: The project provides value for money	The Committee should consider how this project provides a value for money solution.	
TOTAL SCORE			

The next stage of assessment considers the school's 'educational disadvantage'. QCEC uses the Index of Community and Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) which provides an indication of the socio-educational background of students (it has nothing to do with the staff, school facilities or teaching programs at the school).

The project score derived above is weighted by a factor derived from the school's ICSEA value. The weighting factor reflects where in the overall ICSEA distribution the school lies. By design, the ICSEA values have a mean of 1000 and a standard deviation of 100. The lower the ICSEA value, the greater the educational disadvantage.

In this calculation there will be three bands:

1. Schools more than one standard deviation below the mean – weighting factor 1.1
2. Schools within one standard deviation of the mean – weighting factor 1
3. Schools more than one standard deviation above the mean – weighting factor 0.9

New schools, that do not yet have an ICSEA score, will be allocated to one of the three bands based on the band classifications of surrounding schools.

8.0 Ranking of projects for funding

Given that there are generally more requests for funding than there are funds available, QCEC has to prioritise projects. This is done by ranking projects according to their combined score. To ensure a fair assessment, all Assessment Committee members receive the same information and training and are given the same timeframe to complete the assessment.

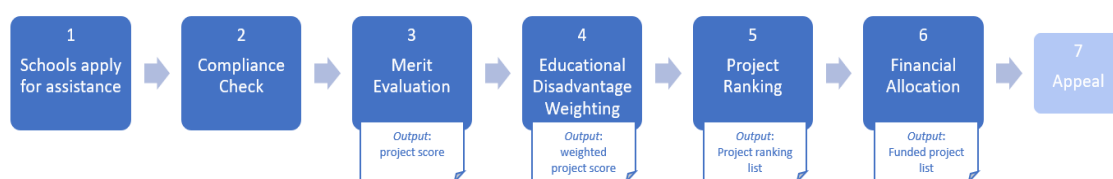
The combined score for each project will be calculated as a 'trimmed mean'. A trimmed mean is a robust way of determining the true average as it discounts outlying scores, i.e. the highest and lowest scores are excluded from the calculation. Where two or more members give an equal highest or lowest score, only one of those scores is excluded.

The combined score is then rounded to one decimal place. The decimal place allows discrimination between similar proposals where the underlying scores may have differed by only one unit.

9.0 Allocation of funds

Concurrent to the Assessment Committee scoring and ranking projects, financial contribution assessments are undertaken.

After the ranking of the projects is completed, the financial contributions of each school are included to determine the grant funding required for each project. The ranked list of projects that can be funded is then determined by the total amount of grant funding available.



10.0 Appeal process

[QCEC's appeal mechanism](#) is available to project proponents.

For assistance contact QCEC on 3316 5818 or capital@qcec.catholic.edu.au