

Program Guidelines: \$60 million for new and upgraded preschools on non-government school sites

August 2024

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General Information

Purpose

1. The purpose of this document, titled the 'Program Guidelines: \$60 million for new and upgraded preschools on non-government school sites' (July 2024) (the Guidelines), is to set out the requirements for:
 - a. the delivery of the NSW Government's \$60 million grant program for new and upgraded preschools on non-government school sites in high-growth areas (the Program), and
 - b. the administration of the Program, including through non-government school Grant Authorities (Catholic Schools NSW (CSNSW) and The Association of Independent Schools of NSW (AISNSW) (individually, the Grant Authority; collectively, the Grant Authorities).
2. The Guidelines include:
 - a. general information on the Program, including the purpose of the Program
 - b. objectives, eligibility and selection criteria
 - c. specific information related to the funding and administration of the Program
 - d. procedural information regarding the Program including the application, assessment and payment process.
3. These Guidelines may be amended or replaced by the NSW Department of Education (the Department). Grant Authorities should refer to, and comply with, the current version as published on the Department's website. Grant Authorities will be notified of any changes and are expected to relay any relevant changes to participating applicants.
4. The Grant Authorities are required to have relevant and subsequent guidelines and procedures on the Program available to NSW non-government schools.

Introduction

5. The purpose of the Program is to improve access to preschools in high-growth areas, decided on socio-economic status, student demographics and classification as a school for a specific purpose through grants to build new, or upgrade existing, preschools on non-government school sites.
6. Grants under the Program are intended to complement the NSW Government commitment to provide 100 government preschools co-located with public primary schools.
7. Registered NSW non-government schools that do not operate for profit under the *Education Act 1990* (NSW) (the Act) are eligible for NSW Government funding under the Program.
8. Funding under the Program is available for two discrete funding streams:
 - a. New builds: grants of up to \$4 million to support major capital works that will build new preschools on non-government school sites (including grants for planning purposes).

- b. Upgrades to existing preschools: grants of up to \$350,000 to support minor capital works and grants for planning purposes (for example, building of indoor or outdoor play spaces, renovations to existing facilities and minor expansions).
9. CSNSW and AISNSW are responsible for the administration of the Program (as “Grant Authorities”) on behalf of the NSW Government. The Department will oversee the Program and administer funding to the Grant Authorities for approved grants. Non-government schools and/or approved authorities for systems of non-government schools (‘NGS authorities’; defined in sections 26A and 40 of the Act) wishing to apply under the Program must apply to their respective Grant Authority in accordance with the Guidelines.
10. For clarity, funding under this Program is not being provided pursuant to section 83B of the Act.

Contact Information

11. The Department is responsible for administering funding under the Program to Grant Authorities, for the purpose of releasing the funding to schools approved under the Program. For further information, please contact nongovschools@det.nsw.edu.au.

Roles and Responsibilities

12. It is the responsibility of each Grant Authority to:
 - a. administer the Program in accordance with the Guidelines and its respective funding agreement. These Guidelines will form part of the total Funding Agreement with the Grant Authorities
 - b. have practices and procedures in place for the administration of the grants consistent with the key principles and requirements in the [NSW Government Grants Administration Guide \(March 2024\)](#) (the Guide)
 - c. impartially assess and recommend projects (including project variations) for the Minister for Education and Early Learning (the Minister) in accordance with the [Objectives, Eligibility and Selection criteria](#) of the Guidelines for the purposes of funding distributed under the Program
 - d. manage the release of funding to, and the return of funds from, schools in accordance with the Guidelines
 - e. comply with accountability requirements set out in the Guidelines including: maintaining proper records, undertaking timely and accurate reporting, managing actual and potential conflicts of interest, cooperating with any audits, taking prompt action to rectify any non-compliance or other issues identified in review, reconciliation and audit processes.
13. It is the responsibility of the Department to:
 - a. oversight the Grant Authorities’ administration of the Program in accordance with the Guidelines
 - b. be satisfied that the Grant Authorities have practices and procedures in place for the administration of the grants consistent with the key principles and requirements in the Guide
 - c. cross-check and validate recommended projects under the Program against the Guidelines

- d. distribute funding to the Grant Authorities in accordance with the Guidelines and the respective funding agreements
- e. exercise an oversight function to ensure that funding is being spent in accordance with the [Objectives of the Program](#). The Department's oversight function includes:
 - i. reviewing the list of projects provided by the Grant Authorities for Ministerial approval, to ensure they meet the [Objectives of the Program](#), [Selection Criteria](#) and [About Funding under the Program](#)
 - ii. monitoring the progress of projects and the results of completed projects by reviewing the Grant Authorities' progress reports and reporting on the same to the Minister
 - iii. from time to time, requesting from the Grant Authorities and conducting an inspection of, records of the Grant Authorities' assessments of grant applications and records of approved projects
 - iv. reviewing and reconciling the Grant Authorities' annual Audited Financial Statements (see [Reporting](#) and [Audits](#) below)
 - v. from time to time, auditing the Grant Authorities' financial and administrative procedures and providing feedback to the Grant Authorities for action and improvement.

Objectives, Eligibility and Selection Criteria

Objectives of the Program

14. Grants under the Program must be for the purpose of building new or upgrading existing preschools on non-government school sites registered by the NSW Education Standards Authority under the Act (see [Grant Information](#) for further information).
15. Grants under the Program are to be directed towards non-government schools that—
 - a. provide primary education (that is, primary schools and composite (K-12) schools), and
 - b. are located in high-growth areas, with consideration of socio-economic status, student demographics and classification as a school for a specific purpose (as outlined in the [Eligibility Criteria](#) and [Selection Criteria](#)).
16. Grants under the Program are intended to contribute towards increasing preschool access across NSW in settings that suit all families.

Eligibility Criteria

17. To be eligible for a grant under the Program, a non-government school or a NGS authority must meet all the criteria below:
 - a. be registered under section 47 of the Act
 - b. not operate on a 'for profit' basis within the meaning of section 83C of the Act

- c. be affiliated with one of the two Grant Authorities to the satisfaction of the relevant Grant Authority
- d. either own the land or have a lease on the land and/or buildings for a period commensurate with the period in which the grant may be required to be repaid if the school no longer provides education services (please see [Recovery Guidelines](#)).

18. Applications for projects under the Program will not be eligible if the project has already received partial or full funding, or been successful in a grant application for partial or full funding, through another government source including other programs administered by the Department, other NSW government departments or agencies, or another grant.

Selection Criteria

19. Each Grant Authority must consider and be able to demonstrate to the Department, where required, how a grant application from an eligible non-government school meets the [Objectives of the Program](#) based on consideration of the selection criteria specified below.

20. The grant application of a non-government school must—

- a. meet all of the eligibility criteria above,
- b. meet all of the criteria in the [Mandatory Selection Criteria](#),
- c. meet at least one criterion in the [Socio-economic Characteristics Criteria](#),
- d. meet at least one criterion in the Demographic Projections Criteria, and
- e. demonstrate consideration of the criteria in [other selection criteria](#).

Mandatory Selection Criteria

21. The mandatory selection criteria that a grant application from a non-government school and/or an NGS authority must meet is as follows:

- a. a new project for—
 - i. a new build, or

Note that a new project for a new build refers to a preschool that does not yet exist and requires funding to build it. Also, schools who have already sought development application (DA) approval for a new build may be eligible to apply under the Program. As per paragraph 26, schools can apply for funding for planning, construction, alteration, extension, renovation, or upgrading of educational facilities. Schools can also apply for the types of works specified under paragraph 27.

- ii. an upgrade to an existing preschool or preschool facilities

Note that preschools who have already sought DA approval for upgrades to an existing preschool or preschool facility may be eligible to apply under the Program.

- b. the preschool is co-located on, or adjacent to, a non-government school site
- c. demonstrate the capacity to contribute 5% in meeting the total cost of a new build or upgrade to an existing preschool.

Socio-economic Characteristics Criteria

22. Applications for projects must meet at least one of the socio-economic characteristics criteria detailed in Table 1: socio-economic characteristics.

Table 1: socio-economic characteristics

| Factor | Description of factor | Parameter |
|---|--|--|
| <u>Index of Relative Socio-Economic Advantage and Disadvantage (IRSD)</u> of a local government area (LGA). | <p>The IRSD looks at the proportion of schools with primary full-time equivalent (FTE) enrolments in LGAs with a low IRSD decile.</p> <p>IRSD is a general socio-economic index that summarises a range of information about the economic and social conditions of people and households within an area. A low score indicates relatively greater disadvantage in general.</p> <p>When considering this factor, Grant Authorities should refer to the most recently published IRSD data.</p> | <p>A school with a low IRSD decile may be eligible under the Program.</p> <p>A “low” IRSD decile is defined as <i>5 and below</i>.</p> |
| <u>Australian Early Development Census (AEDC)</u> | <p>The AEDC looks at the proportion of schools with primary FTE enrolments in LGAs with a high proportion of children vulnerable in 2 or more domains.</p> <p>The AEDC is a national assessment conducted every 3 years to examine how children have developed by the time they start school. Children are tracked against 5 key areas known as ‘domains’.</p> <p>When considering this factor, Grant Authorities should refer to the most recently published AEDC data.</p> | <p>A school with a high proportion of children vulnerable in 2 or more domains may be eligible under the Program.</p> <p>A “high proportion” of children vulnerable in 2 or more domains is defined as <i>10% or more</i>.</p> |
| <u>Capacity to Contribute (CTC)</u> score of a non-government school. | <p>CTC is a statutory measure of a non-government school community’s capacity to contribute to the ongoing costs of running the school.</p> | <p>A school with a low CTC score of <i>100 or less</i> may be eligible under the Program.</p> |

Note that schools for a specific purpose are excluded from CTC and may choose not to participate in the AEDC. Grant Authorities should therefore ensure that an application from a school for a specific purpose at least meets

the Mandatory Selection Criteria, the IRSD criterion under Selection Criteria, and the Demographic Projections Criterion.

Demographic Projections Criteria

23. Applications for projects must meet the demographic projections criterion detailed in Table 2: demographic projections criterion.

Table 2: demographic projections criterion

| Factor | Description of factor | Parameter |
|-----------------|--|--|
| High growth LGA | A high growth LGA is defined as an LGA that is in the top 10% of LGAs experiencing growth in a 1-, 3- and/or 5-year period. The ABS Regional Population Statistics dataset is used when determining high growth LGAs. | A school in a high growth LGA may be eligible under the Program. See also paragraph 24 below. |

24. In relation to the high growth LGA criterion, the list of 'high growth' LGAs is in [Appendix A](#). The list of LGAs will be updated each year in line with ABS data updates, and will be available on the Department's website. Grant Authorities should refer to the updated list of LGAs on the Department's website each year.

Note that if an LGA no longer falls within the top 10% of the most recent ABS Regional Population Statistics dataset, it will continue to be eligible as a high growth LGA for up to 3 submission rounds under the Program, or for 1.5 years from the time it ceases to be in the top 10% of high growth LGAs.

Other selection criteria

25. Applications for projects must give consideration to the selection criteria below as follows:

- a. whether the school is classified as a school for a specific purpose

Note that a school for a specific purpose refers to a school that provides education under special programs, or special activities, designed specifically for students with disabilities (defined in section 6 of the *Australian Education Act 2013* (Cth)).

- b. for a new build—
 - i. consideration of low supply of preschool places in the area compared to demand, including the number of existing public and community preschools and preschool programs provided in Long Day Care centres in the area, and the proximity to public school sites being considered for a new build under the NSW Government's other election commitment to build [100 public preschools](#) and capital works grants to not-for-profit preschools (to avoid duplication/ over supply of new preschools in any given area)
 - ii. evidence demonstrating how the preschool will meet the requirements of the [National Quality Framework \(NQF\)](#), including evidence of committing to apply for [service approval](#) and evidence the preschool will implement the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF)

Note that evidence of a commitment to apply for service approval may include a letter from a school conveying a commitment to apply for service approval.

- c. for an upgrade of an existing preschool, evidence demonstrating how the preschool will continue to meet the requirements of the NQF following the upgrade (including evidence the preschool implements EYLF), and evidence of current service approval

Note that evidence of current service approval may be provided by supplying the service approval number of the preschool.

- d. Aboriginal Impact Statement which ensures that a preschool takes into account the following:
 - i. the early childhood education and care needs and interests of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
 - ii. the project does not adversely impact existing local services operated by Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children and Family Centres. See Aboriginal Impact Statement template and guidance on how to fill out an Aboriginal Impact Statement in [Appendix B](#).

Grant Information

About Funding under the Program

26. Under the Program, non-government schools and NGS authorities may apply for funding for the planning, construction, alteration, extension, renovation, or upgrading of educational facilities, including:

- a. new capital developments that provide for increased preschool enrolments
- b. refurbishment of existing facilities that provide for increased preschool enrolments or providing facilities and learning spaces at an acceptable standard.

27. Funding is also available for the following types of work:

- a. the preparation of sites associated with the building project
- b. the purchase of essential furnishings and equipment associated with the project
- c. architectural, engineering and other professional fees (except general legal and bank fees)
- d. essential ground improvements associated with the project
- e. costs associated with meeting Council development application conditions
- f. costs incurred to comply with government (local, state and Commonwealth) legislation.

Funding Available to Grant Authorities

Funding Commitment

28. The Program provides \$60 million in funding between 2024 to 2027.
29. Funding under the Program will be broken down and allocated to each Grant Authority on a financial year basis, following the announcement of the NSW State Budget. Grant Authorities should refer to the Funding Allocation letter sent each year for the confirmed allocated funding.

Grant Authorities Share Calculations

30. Each financial year, the Minister will advise the Grant Authorities of their allocated funding. The share of the annual committed Program funding allocated to each Grant Authority is calculated in accordance with Table 4 below. The shares are calculated at the start of each financial year to enable Program refinement for priority areas and consideration of any fluctuations in parameters.
31. The Department will communicate the share calculation after the NSW State Budget each year and the payments to the relevant Grant Authorities. The share calculation will be based on the following:

Table 3: parameters for the calculation of sector shares

| Factor | Weighting |
|---|-----------|
| 1. Proportion of schools* within the Catholic or Independent sector | 20% |
| 2. Proportion of schools* with low Capacity to Contribute scores (by the respective sector) | 20% |
| 3. Proportion of schools* in local government areas (LGAs) with 1 – 5 year high growth (by the respective sector) | 20% |
| 4. Proportion of schools* in LGAs with low Index of Relative Disadvantage (IRSD) decile (by the respective sector) | 20% |
| 5. Proportion of schools* in LGAs with high proportion of children vulnerable in 2 or more Australian Early Development Census domains (by the respective sector) | 20% |

* For the factors above, 'schools' include primary, combined and schools for specific purposes only. Secondary schools are excluded.

32. All payments to Grant Authorities must be held in a Grants Assistance Fund (GA Fund) and all interest earned must be applied to the [Objectives of the Program](#).

Administration of the Program

33. The Program is administered on behalf of the NSW Government by the Grant Authorities for the schools under the membership of the respective Grant Authority. To assist Grant Authorities in meeting costs associated with administering the Program on behalf of the NSW

Government, Grant Authorities will be allocated an administrative fee for each year that the Program is in operation. Grant Authorities should refer to the Funding Allocation letter sent each year for the confirmed administrative fee amount.

34. If there are significant changes in the budget of the Program or each Grant Authority share calculation, then the administration amount may be negotiated at the beginning of the main project submission round. The Grant Authority should submit a request with supporting rationale for the increase for the Minister's approval as part of the main project submission round.
35. When required by the Department, each Grant Authority will share data received in grant applications for the purposes of administering the Program when required. See [Applications for Funding](#) for the type of data in grant applications that can be shared with the Department.
36. Grant Authorities and the Department are required to administer the Program honestly, impartially, and with accountability and integrity.

Funding under the Program

37. Funding under the Program will be administered under the two discrete funding streams outlined under [About Funding under the Program](#).
38. Funding will be distributed to Grant Authorities in accordance with the respective funding agreements entered into with the Department to release to schools approved under the Program. The funding agreements will be consistent with the requirements of these Guidelines.
39. Funding will then be distributed to approved schools under the Program in accordance with funding agreements entered into between those schools and the relevant Grant Authority.

Disbursement of Funding

40. In accordance with the respective funding agreement entered into with the Department, the funding may only be disbursed and used by Grant Authorities:
 - a. to administer the Program, including the selection, assessment and monitoring the progress of the approved projects
 - b. provide payments to non-government schools for approved projects, as per the following:
 - i. pursuant to its funding agreement with the Department, its funding agreement with approved schools under the Program, and these Guidelines
 - ii. where the funding is not intended for planning purposes, the Grant Authority must be satisfied that all documentation relating to council approvals and other regulatory authorities, and appropriate tender arrangements are finalised

Note that paragraph 41(b)(ii) does not prevent Grant Authorities from recommending a project whilst the documentation is being finalised.
 - iii. must provide details of all payments made at any time throughout the duration of the Program, when requested by the Minister or the Department.
 - iv. as directed by the Minister or the Department from time to time.

41. In order for each Grant Authority to be satisfied with the requirements mentioned under [Disbursement of funding](#) above, each Grant Authority must require schools to do the following (as relevant to the project under consideration):

- a. provide all documentation relating to council approvals, other regulatory authorities, and appropriate tender arrangements
- b. provide all payment details made at any time throughout the Program
- c. if the approved project is no longer being used for preschool purposes or in the event of the school closing and the property being sold, return the funding to the Grant Authorities who will then notify the Department in accordance with the funding agreement.
- d. provide the service approval mentioned at paragraph 25(b)(ii) and paragraph 25(c) upon the completion of projects.

42. The Minister may, in their discretion, recover grant funding from the Grant Authorities if service approval is not granted to a project.

Savings

43. Savings refer to unspent funds. For example, where a total project cost has been overestimated and there are unspent funds at completion of the project, or where there are interest amounts earned in a fund that have not been reinvested into a project.

44. In accordance with the respective funding agreement entered into with the Department, the following must occur:

- a. in the case where the cost of an approved project is less than its approved estimated cost, the grant will be reduced by the amount by which the project cost has decreased. Any such reduction in the funding is also referred to as 'savings'
- b. in the case where a school wants to decrease its contribution following project savings, the decrease in contribution should only occur with the approval of the Department. For example, in circumstances where the Grant Authority has re-assessed the school's capacity to contribute to the project and found that the school's underlying financial position has changed significantly since the project was approved.

45. Grant Authorities must require schools to return to them any savings under paragraph 44 above at the completion of a project or by 30 June 2029 (whichever is earlier) in order for the unspent amount to be recovered by the Department.

Note that the due date of 30 June 2029 may vary subject to the Minister's discretion.

Assessment Process

46. Grant Authorities will receive and assess grant applications for funding under the Program, and make recommendations to the Department for the Minister, in line with the [Objectives of the Program](#). This will require Grant Authorities to submit to the Department in writing the list of projects recommended for funding, including consideration of the merits of the projects, having regard to the Guidelines, reasons for their recommendations, and an analysis of how and why they excluded other grant applications from their list of recommended projects. Each project a Grant Authority recommends to the Department must include the following details:

- a. the name and details of the school

- b. the type of project (new build or upgrade)
 - c. proposed commencement and expected completion date of the project
 - d. a brief description of how the project meets the [Objectives of the Program](#) and details of the facilities to be provided
 - e. an assessment of how the project meets the [Selection Criteria](#)
 - f. the estimated total costs for the project and the recommended funding to be provided
 - g. details of the school's capacity to co-contribute 5% towards the estimated total costs of the project.
47. While assessing grant applications, each Grant Authority must ensure that robust assessment processes are in place and clearly demonstrate how each grant application was assessed and prioritised against the [Selection Criteria](#). At a minimum, the assessment process must include:
- a. an assessment stage and a decision-making stage when assessing applications;
 - b. an assessment team who will make recommendations to the Department, for the purpose of making recommendations to the Minister who is the decision-maker under the Program;
 - c. a process for managing any conflicts of interest which may arise; and
 - d. clear communication to prospective applicants about the assessment process.
48. Each Grant Authority must also securely retain records of the application assessments and how the Selection Criteria are met, as the Department may call upon these records.
49. Upon receiving the list of projects recommended by each Grant Authority, the Department will cross-check and validate the recommended projects against the Guidelines, and make a decision about the final projects which will be recommended and submitted in writing to the Minister. Where required, the Department will seek further clarification from the Grant Authorities prior to collating the final list of recommended projects to the Minister for approval.
50. The Department will also conduct checks of the school's proprietor when cross-checking and validating the recommended projects. This may include a requirement for a school's proprietor to indicate they are not insolvent or an ASIC search. The information obtained from these checks may be used to determine if the school meets specific [eligibility criteria](#), or to inform the final projects recommended to the Minister.
51. The Department will provide each Grant Authority a Funding Outcome letter, advising of the projects that have been approved or declined by the Minister.
52. See [Appendix C](#) for a summary of the roles of the Grant Authorities, the Department, and the Minister in the Assessment and Approval process of the Program.

Submission and Approval by the Minister

53. There will be two submission rounds each financial year from 2024-25 to 2026-27 on or by which Grant Authorities will need to submit to the Department in writing the list of projects recommended for funding: the last business day of September for a main application round and the last business day of March for a supplementary round.
54. The indicative dates for submission rounds and the application outcomes dates are as follows:

| | Application due date | Outcome date |
|------|--|--------------|
| 2024 | 30 September (main application round) | 29 November |
| 2025 | 31 March (supplementary application round) | 30 May |
| | 30 September (main application round) | 28 November |
| 2026 | 31 March (supplementary application round) | 29 May |
| | 30 September (main application round) | 30 November |

Note that the Grant Authorities will determine their own opening and closing dates for receiving applications from schools under the Program. The main application round and supplementary application round dates above relate strictly to the dates in which recommended projects from Grant Authorities are to be submitted to the Department.

Note that the dates of the submission rounds and/or application outcome dates – main and supplementary – are indicative only and may change each year, in consultation with the Grant Authorities.

55. A late grant application received after the closing date of the submission rounds will only be considered in exceptional circumstances, provided there is sufficient funding available.

Procedural Information

Applications for Funding

56. The Grant Authorities will develop an appropriate application form for non-government schools and NGS Authorities. In lieu of the Department providing a template application form, at a minimum, an application for funding by a non-government school and NGS authority must include the following information:
- a. the name and address of the school
 - b. indication of whether the application is for the planning, construction, alteration, extension, renovation, or upgrading of educational facilities
 - c. indication of whether the application is for a new build or an upgrade
 - d. a description of the proposed project and how it meets the Objectives of the Program
 - e. evidence demonstrating how the project will meet the requirements of the NQF
 - f. documentation indicating that the preschool is or will be co-located on the non-government school site
 - g. current and projected enrolments for projects involving an upgrade to an existing preschool
 - h. financial data detailing the following:

- i. the estimated total cost of the project
 - ii. the amount of funding sought
 - iii. for a new build project, the level of co-contribution to be paid (5%) towards the estimated total costs of the project
 - iv. for a new build project, the year the project is required to be available for use.
- i. Applicant consent to data provided in the application form being shared with the Department and/or made publicly available.

57. While it is not a mandatory requirement under the Program, the Department encourages Grant Authorities and applicants to consider the following principles when carrying out their projects:

- e. where contractors are employed under the Program, contractors should employ apprentices and trainees, including school-based apprentices and trainees, and consider gender equity by engaging women as apprentices and trainees in non-traditional trades. Contractors may also invest in skill development by promoting upskilling in employment, through vocational education and training.
- f. schools should maximise employment opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, especially where a project is undertaken specifically for an Indigenous Australian community or is located in an area likely to provide employment or training opportunities to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Support available to Applicants

58. Applicants who require support in compiling a grant application under the Program are encouraged to contact the relevant Grant Authority for assistance. For instance, when preparing a grant application, or when requiring advice on a particular element of a grant application.

59. The relevant contact details of each Grant Authority when requesting support are provided below:

- CSNSW: Kevin Morrison - Director, Capital Planning and Resources
E: kevin.morrison@csnsw.catholic.edu.au
- AISNSW: Kay Winton - Team Leader, Projects Administration Finance and Grants
E: KWinton@aisnsw.edu.au

Note that where support has been provided by the Grant Authorities to an applicant or potential applicant, Grant Authorities will document the support that was given and the reasons for giving the support.

60. Any complaint/s related to the Program should also be directed to the relevant Grant Authority who will review and handle them accordingly.

Funding Parameters

61. Funding will be provided within the following Program parameters:

- a. Unless otherwise determined by the Minister, all funds available in a financial year will be disbursed by the Grant Authorities to the approved projects in that year or the following year.

- b. All applications received by the Grant Authorities will be assessed for funding.
- c. The maximum amount of funding for any grant application is 95% (noting paragraph 21(c) whereby schools need to contribute 5% in meeting the total cost) the total actual expenditure, and not including other assistance received from any other State or Commonwealth government agency.

Project Variations and Terminations

62. Grant Authorities must ensure that sufficient funds are available within existing allocations for either a minor or major variation to a project as follows:

- a. Minor project variations:
 - i. is described as an increase to the original grant amount approved by the Minister of less than 10% and/or where the facilities to be provided and how the project meets the [Objectives of the Program](#) remains unchanged.
 - ii. are to be re-submitted to the Minister for approval.
- b. Major project variations:
 - i. described as an increase to the original grant amount approved by the Minister by an amount equal to or more than 10% and/or a change to the major facilities to be provided and how the project meets the [Objectives of the Program](#).
 - ii. are to be re-submitted to the Minister for approval.
- c. Project Terminations:
 - i. may occur at any stage of the project (either prior to or at the completion of a project, or after acquittal)
 - ii. the remaining funds may be reallocated to an existing project or re-allocated to the next round of project submissions for the Minister's approval
 - iii. otherwise, the funds will be repayable to the Department.

63. It is the responsibility of the Grant Authority to make recommendations to the Department, in respect to funding, actions which best serve the [Objectives of the Program](#).

Conflict of Interest

64. Each Grant Authority and the Department is required to manage and administer the Program fairly and appropriately, noting that public funding is being provided by the Department to build new, and upgrade existing, preschools under the Program, and appropriately manage conflicts of interest.

65. The Grant Authorities, if necessary, may seek advice from the Department to help resolve conflicts of interest. In such a case, the Grant Authorities should write to the Department.

Accountability

66. Each Grant Authority must establish a GA Fund for the specific payment and receipt of funds related to the Program including:

- a. all amounts paid by the NSW Government under the Program
- b. all amounts of capital assistance paid to approved schools
- c. all amounts of capital assistance returned by the schools
- d. all interest amounts earned in each fund
- e. administrative costs incurred by the Grant Authorities.

Reporting

67. In accordance with the respective funding agreement entered into with the Department, each Grant Authority is required to make all records of approved projects available for inspection to the Department and the Minister, if so required.
68. Each Grant Authority is also required to submit the three following reports in accordance with the scheduled reporting terms:
- a. before 30 December each year, provide the Minister with a written return for the previous financial year which includes an Audited Financial Statement of the fund depicting the following:
 - i. amounts paid to and from the fund
 - ii. the financial status of the fund from beginning and end of the financial year
 - iii. the amounts associated with administration costs received in the fund for the previous financial year
 - iv. all interest amounts earned
 - v. disbursements
 - b. provide the Minister with a Financial Statement of the fund within 30 days of the end of each quarter (at the end of March, June, September and December of every year). The Financial Statement of the fund will include a projected payment cash flow for all approved projects on a quarterly basis until the conclusion of each project.

Refer to the [Financial Statement Template in Appendix D](#).
 - c. provide the Minister with Progress Reports within 30 days of the end of each quarter (at the end of March, June, September and December of every year) for all the projects underway (including the projects approved in the previous financial year), which will include reporting the following:
 - i. the name of the approved school and the project identifier
 - ii. the type of project - newly built or upgraded
 - iii. the proposed start and completion date
 - iv. the status of the project – for example, recently approved, in progress or completed
 - v. If completed, date of completion and final total project cost.

Refer to the Progress Report Template in [Appendix E](#).

69. Data provided may be made publicly available.

Audits

70. In accordance with the respective funding agreements entered into with the Grant Authorities, the Department will, from time to time, undertake the following:

- a. review and reconcile the three reports mentioned in paragraph 69 above, as provided by each Grant Authority
- b. audit or review the financial and administrative procedures of each Grant Authority or engage an independent auditor to do so. Matters that may be audited include:
 - i. compliance with the obligations of the Guidelines
 - ii. financial records
 - iii. determination project eligibility
 - iv. ranking of eligible projects
 - v. the procedures and processes of the Grant Authority.
- c. document and report to each Grant Authority the results of the review and reconciliation process for action and improvement.

Note that the ranking of eligible projects refers to how the Grant Authorities assessed applications and recommended projects to the Minister (i.e. from most recommended project to least recommended project).

Risks and Mitigation

71. Each Grant Authority and the Department must ensure that the Program is administered appropriately by identifying and managing all risks associated with grants under the Program.

Acknowledgement

72. The Minister reserves the right to attend or have a representative attend official opening ceremonies and events related to the Program.

73. Schools are required to comply with the [NSW Government's Funding Acknowledgment Guidelines](#) noting that the acknowledgement requirements may be subject to change.

74. The Department will advise the Grant Authorities of any changes to the acknowledgement requirements.

Recovery Guidelines

75. In accordance with the respective funding agreements entered into with the Department, any unused funds or savings under the Program may be recovered by the Department. Circumstances in which unused funds may be recovered by the Department include project termination or should a school close. These matters are addressed in funding agreements with the Grants Authorities.

Publication of Grants Information

76. The NSW Grants Administration Guide requires that certain information is published in relation to grants awarded no later than 45 calendar days after the funding agreement takes effect. This information is also open access information under the *Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009* (NSW) which must be made publicly available unless there is an overriding public interest against disclosure of the information.
77. In accordance with these requirements, relevant information about the funding awarded under the Program will be made available on the NSW Government Grants and Funding Finder (Finder) as soon as possible after the funding is approved or declined.

Note that announcements regarding grants awarded will only be made once successful applicants have been informed by the Grant Authorities.

78. All records in relation to this decision will be managed in accordance with the requirements of the *State Records Act 1998* (NSW).

Appendices

Appendix A

List of 'High Growth' LGAs

| LGA code | LGA |
|----------|-----------------|
| 10750 | Blacktown |
| 11300 | Burwood |
| 11350 | Byron |
| 11450 | Camden |
| 11500 | Campbelltown |
| 11720 | Cessnock |
| 117 | Clarence Valley |
| 12000 | Coolamon |
| 12380 | Cumberland |
| 12700 | Dungog |
| 13340 | Greater Hume |
| 14700 | Lane Cove |
| 14900 | Liverpool |
| 15050 | Maitland |
| 15350 | Mosman |
| 15520 | Murray River |
| 15950 | North Sydney |
| 16260 | Parramatta |

| | |
|-------|-------------------------|
| 16350 | Penrith |
| 16380 | Port Macquarie-Hastings |
| 16400 | Port Stephens |
| 16490 | Queanbeyan-Palerang |
| 16550 | Randwick |
| 16700 | Ryde |
| 16900 | Shellharbour |
| 17000 | Singleton |
| 17100 | Strathfield |
| 17200 | Sydney |
| 17420 | The Hills |
| 18400 | Wollondilly |

Note that as per paragraph 23, a high growth LGA is defined as an LGA in the top 10% of LGAs experiencing growth in a 1-, 3- and/or 5-year period. The ABS Regional Population Statistics dataset is used when determining high growth LGAs.

Appendix B

Aboriginal Impact Statement template

Completing the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Impact Statement question form

Title of the initiative:

Organisation/Department/Centre:

Contact name and title:

Contact phone number:

Date completed:

Summary

Please provide a 300–400-word summary that demonstrates how the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Impact Statement has been considered. This summary is required in addition to a more detailed response to the 2 components below.

1. The potential impact of the policy, strategies, frameworks, projects and plans on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, communities and organisations including approaches to lessen any potential undesired impacts.
2. Engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, communities and organisations.

Approved by:

Date:

Title/position:

Organisation/Department/Centre:

Contact phone number:

Signature:

By signing this document you agree that the initiative satisfactorily meets the 2 key components of the NSW Department of Education Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Impact Statement.

Completing the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Impact Statement

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Impact Statement requires staff and organisations to consider 2 components in detail and provide a brief overall summary using the following form.

The two key components that must be considered prior to the development of new, or revision of existing initiatives are:

1. The potential impact of the policy, strategies, frameworks, projects and plans on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, communities and organisations including approaches to lessen any potential undesired impacts.
2. Engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, communities and organisations.

We are available to support you through this process and the completion of the impact statement.

Component 1:

The potential impact of the policy, strategies, frameworks, projects and plans on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, communities and organisations including approaches to lessen any potential undesired impacts.

When policy, strategies, frameworks, projects and plans are developed the potential impacts of the initiative on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, communities and organisations must be considered. This process should include the identification and exploration of both the positive and negative impacts and the steps that will be taken to address and/or lessen the negative impacts. Consideration should also be given to how this will be monitored.

Key questions to consider are:

- How will this initiative impact on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and will the impact be different for Aboriginal and Torres Strait people, communities and organisations compared to non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait people, communities and organisations?
- What may be the unintended impacts (including potential undesired impacts) for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, communities and organisations and how will this be addressed?
- What will be the processes to monitor and evaluate the impacts of the initiative?

Component 2:

Engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, communities and organisations.

Key considerations are:

- Will there be engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, communities and organisations prior to the development or revision of an initiative/s?
- Is there confirmation that there is no duplication of existing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander initiatives for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, communities and organisations?
- What information will be provided to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, communities and organisations and how will the initiative facilitate continued engagement, implementation and evaluation?

Appendix C

Assessment Process roles and responsibilities

The table below summarises the roles of the Grant Authorities, the Department and the Minister in the Assessment process of the Program.

| Steps in the Assessment process | Responsible party |
|--|-------------------|
| <p><u>Assessment of grant applications</u></p> <p>Assess grant applications from schools against Eligibility Criteria and Selection Criteria under the Guidelines through two grant rounds per year (a primary round in September and a supplementary round in March) .</p> | Grant Authorities |
| <p><u>Recommendation of projects</u></p> <p>Recommend the list of projects for the two submissions rounds each financial year (concluding in 2026-27) to the Department for the Minister for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. new builds b. upgrades to existing preschools. <p>The recommendation is to include consideration of the merits of the projects, having regard to the Guidelines, reasons for their recommendations, and an analysis of how and why they excluded other grant applications from their list of recommended projects.</p> | Grant Authorities |
| <p><u>Cross-check and validation of recommended projects</u></p> <p>Cross-check and validate project submissions provided by each Grant Authority to ensure the projects meet the Objectives of the Program, Eligibility Criteria and Selection Criteria of the Program.</p> <p>Where applicable, seek clarification from Grant Authorities on the recommended projects.</p> <p>Conduct checks of the schools with recommended projects.</p> | Department |
| <p><u>Approval of project submissions</u></p> <p>Approve or decline project submissions from the Department, having regard to the Guidelines.</p> | Minister |
| <p><u>Application outcomes</u></p> <p>Advise the Grant Authorities in writing of the projects that have been approved and declined by the Minister (Funding Outcome letter).</p> | Department |

| | |
|--|--------------------------|
| <p><u>Release of funding</u></p> <p>Enter into individual funding agreements with approved schools.</p> <p>Manage the release of funding to and from schools approved under the Program, in accordance with the funding agreements entered into with the Department.</p> | <p>Grant Authorities</p> |
| <p><u>Publishing of information</u></p> <p>Publish information about grants and decisions made in relation to grants under the Program on Finder, in accordance with the NSW Government Grants Administration Guide (March 2024).</p> | <p>Department</p> |

Appendix D

Financial Statement template

Each Grant Authority must use the Financial Statement template below when providing the Minister with financial statements at the end of each quarter, as specified under the Reporting requirements of the Program.

\$60 million for new and upgraded preschools on non-government school sites Program

Quarterly Financial Statement

[Name of Grant Authority]

[Date range of quarter eg.. 1 January 2025 – 30 March 2025]

| Project Identifiers | | | | | Financial Progress | | | | | | |
|---------------------|----------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------|--|--|---|---|
| School | Project Number | Type of Project: new build or upgrade | Proposed start date | Proposed completion date | Estimated total project cost | School contribution amount (5%) | NSW funding amount | Total NSW funding disbursed to the school by the GA in the quarter | Total NSW funding disbursed to the school by the GA to date (cumulative) | Total NSW funding used by the school in the quarter | Total NSW funding used by the school to date (cumulative) |
| | | | | | | | | | | | |

Note that the amount of NSW funding remaining with the Grant Authority (GA) in each quarter will be calculated by subtracting *Total NSW funding disbursed to school by the GA in the quarter* from *NSW funding amount* from the table above. Similarly, the amount of NSW funding remaining with the school will be calculated by subtracting *Total NSW funding used by the school in the quarter* from *Total NSW funding disbursed to school by the GA to date (cumulative)*.

Appendix E

Progress Report template

Each Grant Authority must use the Progress Report template below when providing the Minister with progress reports at the end of each quarter, as specified under the Reporting requirements of the Program.

\$60 million for new and upgraded preschools on non-government school sites Program

Quarterly Progress Report

[Name of Grant Authority]

[Date range of quarter eg. 1 January 2025 – 30 March 2025]

| Project Identifiers | | | | | Progress Identifiers | | | | |
|---------------------|----------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|--|---|---|--|---|
| School | Project Number | Type of Project: new build or upgrade | Proposed start date | Proposed completion date | Status of project: recently approved, in progress, completed | If project is completed, date of completion | If project is completed, final total project cost | Estimated number of additional preschool placements projected for the project* | Description of any variations to the project including any costs associated with the variations |
| | | | | | | | | | |

Note that the column in the template relating to the *Estimated number of additional preschool placements projected by the project* acknowledges that estimates may remain the same or change from quarter to quarter, as a project progresses. It also acknowledges that projects for upgrades may not create additional placements.

When a final quarterly report is submitted for a completed project, Grant Authorities should ensure that the actual number of additional placements is recorded.

*Specific Note: If the estimated number of additional placements has changed since the previous quarter, please indicate the new estimated number and provide further details / explanation of why.

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