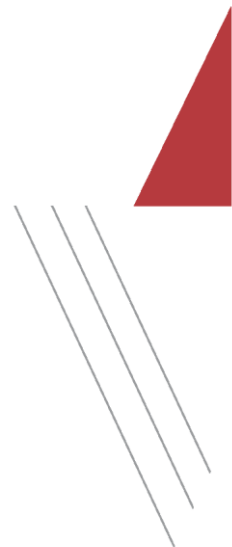


CHILDREN'S FACILITIES CAPITAL PROGRAM

2017-18 MAJOR GRANTS
Frequently Asked Questions





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Program Overview

1. What is the Children's Facilities Capital Program?

The Andrews Labor Government has committed \$70 million between 2015-19 to support local governments and other service providers to invest in early childhood infrastructure. Of this \$70 million, \$10 million was committed to address early years demand in high growth areas, and a further \$10 million to collocate early years infrastructure to school sites.

This investment, through the Children's Facilities Capital Program (CFCP), will support the provision of high quality early years programs for children and their families by:

- increasing infrastructure capacity to deliver kindergarten programs for children in the year before school
- promoting integrated service delivery at one location where families can access early childhood education and care, health and development and family services
- improving access to local and responsive early childhood services for children from vulnerable and/or disadvantaged families
- establishing early childhood infrastructure on or near school sites

2. Who is eligible to apply for a major infrastructure grant?

The following organisations, provided they have permission to undertake capital works, are eligible for the grants:

- local government
- not-for-profit community organisations
- government schools
- non-government schools

For all local government owned land and facilities, only the relevant local council can be the applicant for a major infrastructure grant.

In all other cases the applicant must be either the land/building owner or an approved provider of an early childhood education and care service that has evidence of permission from the land/building owner to undertake the proposed capital works.

3. When do grants for the Children's Facilities Capital Program 2017-18 open

15 June 2017

4. When do grants for the Children's Facilities Capital Program 2017-18 close?

Midnight, 15 September 2017 (AEST)

5. What major grants are available?

There are three types of grants available:

i. Integrated Children's Centre Grant

for providers who wish to build an integrated children's centre. These key hubs for the community bring together a range of services which deliver education, care, health and support services to children and their families.

Integrated children's centres are important community assets that meet the needs of families and children across the early years. They can provide a focal point for new communities in growth areas, but are equally valuable in improving the accessibility, quality and integration of early childhood services in established metropolitan and regional areas.

ii. New Early Learning Facility Grants

for providers who wish to establish a new funded learning facility which provide high quality early learning, including kindergarten in the year before school, at a neighbourhood level.

The location and design of new early learning facilities should respond to the needs of local families and support partnerships with other local services for children and families.

iii. Early Learning Facility Upgrade Grant

for renovating or refurbishing existing, licensed early childhood education and care facilities to expand licensed capacity and / or improve the quality of the learning environment.

When developing proposals, applicants should keep in mind that for children aged 36 months and above, a ratio of one educator to 11 children applies, as per the educator to child ratios that came into effect on 1 January 2016 in accordance with the National Quality Framework.

6. How much funding is available for each grant type?

GRANT TYPE	MAXIMUM GRANT AMOUNT
Integrated Children's Centre Grant	40 per cent of the capital investment in the early childhood related component of the project up to \$1.6 million
New Early Learning Facility Grant	75 per cent of the total project cost up to \$650,000
Early Learning Facility Upgrade Grant	75 per cent of the total project cost up to \$350,000 to eligible organisations who wish to upgrade an existing early learning facility to meet demand for a funded kindergarten program in the year before school in their local area. An exemption to the percentage of applicant contribution may be approved at the discretion of DET if the service is located in area where there is a high level of disadvantage and there is clear evidence that the service does not have the financial capacity to meet the required 25 percent co-contribution.

7. What is required for each grant?

Integrated Children's Centre Grants

To be eligible for an integrated children's centre grant, the service must at a minimum, all of the following:

- Two rooms for a funded kindergarten program for children in the year before school. This can be sessional and/or integrated within long day care.
- The licensed capacity of the service must be at least 66 (unless otherwise agreed with DET)
- Long day care (unless evidence is provided that there is no unmet demand for long day care in the local area)
- Maternal and Child Health services
- Allied health services for early years
- Family services.

Integrated Children's Centres should also incorporate flexible, multi-purpose spaces and provision for other services that meet the needs of the local community, for example:

- Three year old kindergarten
- Supported playgroups and / or community parent-led playgroups
- Parenting groups or programs
- Occasional care
- Family day care program coordination
- Counselling services
- Community meeting spaces
- Outside school hours care
- Adult education programs.

New Early Learning Facility Grant

New Early Learning Facilities funded through the CFCP must include two rooms. The licensed capacity of the service must be at least 66 (unless otherwise agreed with DET) for the delivery of a funded kindergarten program for children in the year before school – and provision for AT LEAST ONE other early childhood service from the following:

- Long day care
- Three year old kindergarten
- Maternal and Child Health
- Playgroups.

A proposed new early learning facility must be on a site that is not currently used by a licensed children's service.

Early Learning Facility Upgrade Grant

Facilities renovated or refurbished through the CFCP must be used for the provision of a funded kindergarten program for children in the year before school. Applicants are also encouraged to consider the potential for renovated facilities to support the provision of other early childhood services.

8. How do I submit an application?

Applications must be submitted via the online via the Department of Education and Training (DET) website. A separate application form is available for each type of grant. Go to <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/funding/Pages/201718grantsround.aspx> and select the link to the required grant.

Eligibility and Funding

9. Can I apply for a grant if I have received an early childhood capital grant in the past?

Yes, if you can demonstrate that:

- demand has increased in the local area since your original successful application
- the new proposal will further increase the capacity of services in the area to meet demand.

10. Can I apply for more than one major grant in this round?

No, in this round your organisation may apply for only **one major grant per facility**.

11. I have recently entered into a building contract for renovations I am undertaking to improve my facility; can I apply for a grant to cover the costs of this project?

No, funds are not available from the Children's Facilities Capital Program for retrospective assistance.

To remain eligible for funding, applicants must not enter into a contract for any works proposed in their application prior to being informed of the application outcome.

12. If I am not the building or land owner, can I apply for a grant to upgrade my building?

To be eligible for a major grant you must provide evidence in the form of a signed agreement/lease that you have use of the building for a minimum of ten years from the date of signing the Common Funding Agreement.

If the land and/or building are owned by local government then only the relevant local council can be the applicant for a major infrastructure grant. Your lease must also state that you have permission to complete the building works. If this is not stated in the lease you must attain a variation to the lease documenting this permission.

Funds will not be released by DET until successful verification of the lease and any required addendums. All administrative and legal fees incurred will be the responsibility of the applicant.

13. If I own an existing building and I would like to start a new funded kindergarten program can I apply for funding to make the building suitable?

Yes, if you meet eligibility requirements you can apply for an Early Learning Facility Upgrade Grant on the basis that you deliver a funded kindergarten program once the project is complete.

14. Our building used to offer a range of early childhood services, but we don't currently offer a funded kindergarten program. Can we still apply?

Yes, if you meet eligibility requirements you can apply for the Early Learning Facility Upgrade Grant on the basis that you deliver a funded kindergarten program once the project is complete.

15. Will I be required to match or contribute to funding if applying for an Early Learning Facility Upgrade Grant?

Yes, you will be expected to provide a co-contribution of 25 per cent of the total project cost. Eligible organisations can apply for up to 75 per cent of the total project cost, capped at \$350,000 per grant (GST exclusive).

16. If there are more applications than funds available, or there are not enough funds to cover my entire request, can I receive a partial grant?

No, in order to support the financial viability of proposed projects, proposals will not be partially funded.

17. What project costs will be considered for funding?

For all major infrastructure grant categories the following items can be included as part of the total cost of the project for the calculation of the maximum Victorian Government contribution:

- planning and design costs
- project management costs
- site prep, including clearing/demolition if needed
- construction and commissioning
- fittings, furniture and equipment.

18. What will not be considered for funding?

Funds are not available from the Children's Facilities Capital Program for:

- site acquisition costs
- purchase of cars, buses and other vehicles
- staff salaries and training
- ongoing administration costs
- toys, consumables and routine maintenance
- cosmetic upgrades.

Application requirements for Major grants

19. Is there an Expression of Interest stage this year?

No, the application is a one-stage process. Applicants are required to demonstrate the merits and readiness of their project in relation to the criteria listed in the 2017-2018 CFCP guidelines.

Applicants that submitted an unsuccessful application the 2016-2017 CFCP grant round, but are still interested in funding, are strongly encouraged to submit an application in the current round.

20. What information must be provided in the application form for program criteria requirements?

Applicants are required to submit a detailed application providing the following information:

- A project proposal that addresses the aims of the Children's Facilities Capital Program, including the identified service need and responses to each of the assessment criteria (and supporting evidence as required)
- Indicative scope, cost, value of grant sought and commencement/completion dates including the following:
 - Total estimated investment for the project including estimated building cost, organisational contribution, other contributions and the Grant amount requested
 - Confirmation of all other funding including contributions from the Federal Government and other Victorian Government grant programs, Local Government or other sources.
 - Schematic design drawings
 - Licensed Quantity Surveyors Report or better (estimated costing of the project will be acceptable if project is less than \$200,000)
 - Confirmation the project meets all National and DET regulatory requirements
 - Evidence of the financial viability of the organisation (except local government and government schools)
- Evidence of land ownership or signed documents/lease confirming legal permission to undertake the works and operate the building as a licensed service for ten years minimum (if not currently owned, evidence that the proposed site will be available within 90 days of the grant round closing date)
- Evidence of service providers that will be directly affected by the proposal have been consulted and their views (e.g. community-based kindergarten services operating in existing facilities that are being proposed to be relocated)
- All required services for the grant type will be delivered
- Relative priority where an applicant is submitting multiple business case applications
- A letter of support from the relevant CEO (or authorised delegate) of the Local Government Area (LGA) for the project dated within 6 months of the 2017-18 Children's Facilities Capital Program application lodgement. This letter must possess an explicit statement by the LGA addressing why the proposed project will be beneficial to the community and if it has been

included in council plans and where possible recommended priority if the LGA is supporting more than one project.

Applicants that submitted an unsuccessful application in the 2016-17 Children's Facilities grant round, but are still interested in funding, are strongly encouraged to resubmit their applications to reflect this year's criteria.

21. What information must be provided in the application for assessment criteria requirements?

The following **assessment criteria** will be used to prioritise projects for funding.

The project:

- 1) will respond to unmet demand for funded kindergarten provision in the year before school and other early childhood services
- 2) will support the integrated delivery of early childhood and related family services and/or the establishment of partnership arrangements with other services
- 3) will improve access to high quality early childhood services for the local community, particularly for disadvantaged and vulnerable families
- 4) is co-located with a government school, or supports the establishment of other connections with local schools
- 5) facilitates access for children of all abilities
- 6) is ready to commence construction

Assessment of Applications

22. Are there other factors that the Department will take into account when assessing applications?

To support the assessment process, DET may consult with relevant local councils, in their municipal planning role, and have reference to demographic and other data sets (e.g. population projections, Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA) data and Australian Early Development Census (AEDC) data). The selection of projects to be considered for funding will be primarily based on ratings against the assessment criteria, however, other factors may be taken into account including:

- the distribution of approved projects across applicants, local government areas and different regions of the state
- new early childhood education and care infrastructure in Victoria's growth areas. Growth areas are defined by the Metropolitan Planning Authority (MPA) as the following councils: Cardinia, Mitchell (inside the urban zone), Whittlesea and the Cities of Casey, Hume, Melton and Wyndham
- councils supporting their applications with a co-contribution sourced from local government funds rather than supplementary funding from other Victorian Government sources such as Regional Development Victoria (RDV)
- the availability of funding in each financial year, noting that the number and value of eligible, highly rated projects may exceed the total available funding

23. If my application meets all of the criteria will my project receive funding?

Not necessarily. All applications received will be assessed against the assessment criteria. A distributional balance of funding across Victoria will be taken into consideration in the allocation of grants from this program.

Priority will be given to services located in areas with high levels of disadvantage and vulnerable populations, and those with higher levels of children under five years old (as indicated in AEDC and SEIFA data). Consideration will also be given to the geographic distribution of grants, with an objective to ensure all metropolitan, regional and rural areas have access to grants.

24. Do I need to include any information from the service provider in my application?

Yes, applications need to include information about the licensed service capacity, enrolments and demonstrate collaboration and evidence of established partnerships. You are encouraged to work with the service provider to develop an application.

Support for applications

25. What do I do if I am having technical difficulties with the online application form?

Please contact SmartyGrants Support Desk:

- Email: service@smartygrants.com.au

- Phone: (03) 9320 6888

This service is available Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm (Eastern Standard Time).

26. Who can I contact for further information about the grant program?

For assistance, please contact, the Children's Facilities Capital Program:

- Email: childrens.capital.program@edumail.vic.gov.au
- Phone: (03) 9651 3399

27. Can I have more than one grant application open at the same time?

No. It is essential that you only have one application open for entering your responses at any one time; otherwise you may have issues saving the new information into the system.

Before opening a new application or editing an existing application on the system, please save the current application and close it.

While it is only possible to have one application open to enter your responses at a time, once you complete your entry and close the form it is possible to open it in the preview view and copy your responses from the preview view into a different application.

Project costs and planning

28. How long do I have to complete my project?

GRANT TYPE	EXPECTED PROJECT COMPLETION TIME
Integrated Children's Centre Grants	24 months
New Early Learning Facility Grants	18 months
Early Learning Facility Upgrade Grants	12 months

29. What happens if the project runs over budget?

The Department does not hold additional funding to meet cost overruns for capital works projects. If for some reason the project does run over budget, the grant recipient must meet the additional costs.

Building licensing, regulations, ownership

30. Who can I contact regarding the licensing and regulation of our children's service and the requirements for our building?

If the service is undertaking works of a structural nature that will change the design of the licensed children's facility – for example, the addition of a children's room or expansion of a children's space, and/or where there will be an increase in the approved number of places – your service may be required to seek approval from DET prior to completion of the works. These approvals may take some time to consider and approve.

Please contact the Quality Assessment and Regulation Division at DET to discuss your circumstances if you have specific concerns

- Email: licensed.childrens.services@edumail.vic.gov.au
- Phone: 1300 307 415

Notifications and applications may be submitted via the National Quality Agenda IT system. The system may be accessed from <https://public.nqaits.acecqa.gov.au/Pages/Landing.aspx>

Further information is available on the ACECQA website www.acecqa.gov.au and the Regulation and Quality Assessment page on the DET website: <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/regulation/Pages/default.aspx>.

31. My building is located on land owned by DET – what do I do?

You need to complete the DET Land Use Proposal Form. There are two pages to be completed and signed in this document. Both will need to be attached to the application.

It is important to begin this approval process early in planning. Page 1 of this form is to be signed by the school principal and the president of the school council. The form then requires

endorsement from DET Regional Office after which it should be forwarded to the DET Infrastructure & Sustainability Division for review and final approval. Applicants should allow sufficient time for the review and administration of this form and are encouraged to commence this process as early as possible. If you require further assistance with the form please contact the appropriate DET regional office.

The DET Land Use Proposal Form is available at:

www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/funding/Pages/capitalprogresources.aspx