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COOLER SCHOOLS SUBSIDY PROGRAM GUIDELINE

1. Short title

This guideline may be cited as the Cooler Schools Subsidy Program Guideline.

2. Commencement

This guideline commences on 11 February 2005.

3. Objects of the program

(1) The objects of the State Government’s Cooler Schools Subsidy Program (the program) is to assist non-state schools which are eligible for State Government funding to meet the costs of purchase and installation of cooling systems, including air-conditioning and passive cooling systems. The focus of the program is on school needs and the ability of the school community to meet those needs.

(2) The basis for the program is contained in the Education (Capital Assistance) Act 1993 and the Education (Capital Assistance) Regulation 2005. If there is any inconsistency between this guideline and the legislation, then the operations of the program as provided for in the legislation shall apply.

4. Administration of the program

(1) The program 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.

(2) To assist CAAs in meeting costs associated with administering the program on behalf of the State Government, each CAA may utilise for administrative purposes up to 1% of the total annual budget of the program.

(3) Interest earned by a CAA on funds provided for administration may only be used by a CAA:
   (a) to pay its administrative costs; or
   (b) to provide capital assistance for approved projects at listed schools.
5. Funding available

(1) The total funding available for the program will be announced in the State Budget each year.

(2) Funds are paid to each CAA to enable the CAA to provide capital assistance for approved projects. Each CAA will be paid 50% of its allocation in July, 25% in October and 25% in January.

(3) Funds will be allocated to CAAs on the basis of the most recent State Government data survey of eligible non-state schools (using full-time equivalent enrolment figures, except for preschool students) with a weighting of 1.5905 (Commonwealth area weightings - 9.75m² Sec; 6.13m² Pri) for secondary enrolments and a weighing of 0.5 for preschool enrolments. Weightings based on each location published by the Queensland Department of Public Works (or its replacement or successor), as amended from time to time, and a needs weighting are also applied.

(4) The process for determining the needs weighting will be the same as that used in determining the needs weighting for State Government recurrent grants to non-state schools.

(5) A CAA must make recommendations to the Minister for Education and the Arts (the Minister) for projects to be funded in a financial year up to the amount of funds available for commitment by the CAA in that financial year. The amount of funds available will be equal to the budget allocation plus uncommitted funds including interest earned on these funds.

6. Eligibility and listing

(1) To be eligible for capital assistance under the program, a non-state school must:
   (a) be accredited and eligible for Government funding under the Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Act 2001;
   (b) be listed with a CAA;
(c) be located in the Department of Education and the Arts former Capricornia, Northern or Peninsula regions, or north of latitude 20° South; and

(d) have been in operation on 29 June 1998 (i.e. the date of commencement of the program).

(2) Only facilities in existence as at 29 June 1998 are eligible for subsidisation.

7. **Purpose of financial assistance**

(1) Under the program, approved authorities may apply for a subsidy for the purchase and installation of cooling systems, including air-conditioning and passive cooling systems.

(2) Only funds raised by a school’s community for the purpose of the purchase and installation of cooling systems will be eligible for subsidisation. Applicants for subsidy will be required to provide evidence of funding sources.

(3) However, school communities are not be required to contribute any funds towards the cost of installing air-conditioning in resources centres, installing passive cooling systems, or electrical upgrades and building works associated with the installation of air-conditioning. Assistance may be provided for the full cost of these aspects of a project.

(4) A subsidy will not be provided to meet expenditure related to any aspect of the following:

(a) the cooling of facilities which have religious worship as the sole or principal function;

(b) the cooling of facilities of a type not provided by the State or Commonwealth in State schools with the exception of onsite residential boarding facilities for students or boarding supervisors if:

   (i) the facilities are situated in the school grounds, or

   (ii) the Minister approves the provision of the facilities.

(5) Some spaces are excluded from eligibility based on their functions. Examples include toilets, outdoor spaces, student centres, assembly halls and gymnasium. Consideration will be given to the inclusion of suitable cooling systems for areas such as home economics kitchens and manual arts workshops.
(6) Spaces which are assessed as being impractical to air-condition by virtue of their design, function or location will be excluded unless these circumstances change in a material way. Such assessments will be undertaken by CAAs on a case-by-case basis.

(7) All projects must meet relevant Australian Standards, the Building Code of Australia and any other applicable legislative requirements.

(8) Projects for which a contract for the project has been entered into or construction, including site works, has commenced prior to Ministerial approval will not be eligible for funding.

8. Applications

(1) An application for subsidy for a proposed capital project must be given to the CAA with which a school is listed by a due date determined by the CAA. The due date must occur at least once in every calendar year and a CAA must notify every school listed with it by 30 September of the year before the date is to apply of when the due date will occur.

9. Subsidy parameters

(1) Subsidies will be provided within the following parameters:

(a) unless otherwise determined by the Minister, all funds available in a financial year will be allocated to the applications approved in that year or the preceding year;

(b) all applications received by a CAA by the due date by which applications can be lodged will be assessed for assistance;

(c) the maximum amount of subsidy possible for any application will be the total of actual expenditure minus any assistance received from any other State or Commonwealth agency;

(d) large projects may be split into discrete applications for subsidy and, provided each meets all other conditions, each of these will be considered separately;

(e) the provision of a subsidy for a project which is one stage of a larger project does not imply a commitment to fund other stages in the same year or subsequent years;
(f) the provision of a subsidy for one application does not imply commitment to fund other applications in subsequent years; and

(g) unsuccessful applications may be re-submitted by school authorities in subsequent years provided the conditions for subsidisation continue to be met.

10. Assessment of applications

(1) In considering an application for subsidy, a CAA must have regard to the following criteria:
(a) the condition and extent of the school’s existing cooling systems;
(b) the cooling systems that are, or likely to be, needed to assist effective provision of the school’s curriculum or proposed curriculum;
(c) how many students attend the school in the year of application;
(d) how many students are expected to attend the school in the 2 years after the year of application; and
(e) the characteristics of students who attend, or are expected to attend, the school including, for example, the ages of the students and whether they have particular needs because of disabilities or a requirement for special learning support.

(2) Assessment of applications in accordance with section 10 (1) is intended to ensure that all funds are allocated on the basis of educational and financial need. All eligible applications may not receive a subsidy as a matter of course.

11. Submission to Minister

(1) By 30 September, each CAA will provide to the Minister a list of all applications received that year, a brief description of the project associated with each application, the level of recommended subsidy for each application and reasons for the recommended level of subsidy including reasons for recommending that a subsidy not be granted for any applications.
12. Agreement between school and CAA

(1) To be eligible to receive a subsidy, the approved authority of an eligible non-state school must enter into an agreement with the CAA with which it is listed. The agreement must include the following conditions:

(a) in respect of a subsidy greater than $75,000, the approved authority of the non-state school must undertake to use the approved project for educational purposes for a period of 20 years. Failure to use the project for educational purposes could result in a liability of subsidy repayment equal to 5% of the subsidy for each year of the 20 year period during which the building is not used for educational purposes; and

(b) the approved authority must agree to return monies to the CAA under the conditions outlined in section 13.

13. Payment process

(1) Payment will be made to the approved authority of an eligible non-state school for approved projects on the following basis:

(a) an approved authority of a non-state school that has signed a subsidy agreement as described in section 12 applies to a CAA for payment in respect of the approved project. A CAA must determine that at least one-quarter of the work (in terms of value) has been completed. In determining whether one quarter of the work has been completed, a CAA may request that an application be accompanied by a statutory declaration signed by a representative of the approved authority;

(b) if the CAA is satisfied with the application, the CAA may proceed with payment. Upon request by the Minister, CAAs must provide details of all payments made in any specified period;

(c) unless otherwise approved by the Minister in exceptional circumstances, a subsidy received by approved authorities under this program must be expended as soon as possible, but within six months of the date of payment to the school. Any funds not expended by this time must be returned to the CAA. If project expenditure on the approved works is less than the subsidy provided, the difference must be returned to the CAA. Any funds so returned may be
(d) available to increase the amount of funds available for future applications for subsidy; and

(e) an application for payment must be received by the relevant CAA within two years of the date of approval, or the original grant for the project will be revoked, unless an extension is approved by the Minister.

14. Minor variation

(1) A CAA may make a minor variation to the amount paid to the approved authority of an eligible non-state school for an approved project where:

(a) the variation to be paid is less than 10% of the grant; and

(b) the variation is required because of a change in the costs of the approved project that was not foreseeable at the time of the approval of the project.

(2) A minor variation can only be paid using uncommitted funds, including interest earned, held by a CAA.

15. Review of application

(1) If a subsidy has been granted to a school for a capital project, the approved authority of the school may apply to the Minister, through the CAA, for the amount of subsidy to be increased. The application must specify the amount of the increase sought and give reasons for seeking the increase.

(2) The CAA must assess the application for review on the same criteria on which it assesses applications for subsidy. After assessment of the application, the CAA must make a recommendation to the Minister.

(3) The Minister will inform the school and the CAA of the amount of any increased subsidy granted.

16. Accountability

(1) Each CAA must establish a program pool under the Capital Assistance Fund into which it pays:

(a) all amounts paid by the State Government under the program;

(b) interest on administrative funds which it intends to use for capital assistance;
(c) amounts of subsidy returned by schools; and  
(d) interest earned on amounts in the program pool.

(2) A CAA must keep funds standing to the credit of the program pool with a bank or another institution approved by the Treasurer and keep those funds separate from any other funds.

(3) The CAA must make all records of approved projects available for inspection to a person approved by the Minister for the purpose. The person may make a copy of, or take extracts from such records for the purpose and may retain it in the person's possession for a reasonable period.

(4) A CAA must, by 30 June each year, give to the Minister a written return for the previous calendar year. The return must:

(a) contain an audited statement of the amounts received by it for administration in the previous year, interest received on the amounts and the expenditure of the amounts;

(b) contain an audited statement of the program pool showing details of the amounts paid to and from the program pool in the previous year and the financial position of the program pool at the beginning and end of the previous year;

(c) give the following details, in a format agreed to between the CAAs and the Department of Education and the Arts, for all projects for which an approved authority received or retained a subsidy in the previous calendar year:

(i) a description of the project;

(ii) whether or not the project was completed in the previous year;

(iii) the amount spent on the project as at the end of the previous year;

(iv) the amount, if any, held on account of the project at the end of the previous year; and

(v) the amounts, and sources of the amounts, used to fund the project; and

(d) contain an assessment of the scheme including the effectiveness of the assessment criteria.

(5) The audit specified in section (16) (4) (a) and (b) must be carried out by a person registered as an auditor under Part 9.2 of the Corporations Law and approved by the Minister.
17. Recognition of subsidy

(1) For projects assisted with State Government funds, appropriate recognition of the source of the funding is to be provided in any publicity associated with the project.

(2) If there is to be an official opening ceremony, the Minister or a representative must be invited to attend the ceremony.