**Preschool Capital Grants Program**

Guidance for applicants

31 July 2025

# Introduction

AISNSW has been designated by the NSW Department of Education as the Grant Authority responsible for administrating the Preschool Capital Grants Program; a Capital Grants Program for eligible Independent schools to build new or upgrade preschool facilities on school sites.

The purpose of the Capital Grants Program is to improve community access to preschools in high-growth areas of NSW, complementing the government’s recent commitment to build 100 government preschools on Public School sites. The Preschool Capital Grants Program is time limited until 2026.

After the first of three Grant Rounds in early 2025, the NSW Department of Education acknowledged the barriers to applicants seeking to apply for these grants and expanded the eligibility so more schools can apply from Round 2.

# Who can apply?

NSW Independent schools that are part of the AISNSW BGA may apply to AISNSW under Preschool Capital Grants Program, so long as they meet all of the following key criteria. The school must;

* provide Primary education from Kindergarten
* intend to **build a new preschool[[1]](#footnote-2)** on or adjacent to the school site OR **upgrade an existing preschool[[2]](#footnote-3)** on or adjacent to the school site
* be able to contribute a minimum of 5% of the build costs
* be located in a [High Growth LGA](#_What_is_a) as determined by the NSW Department of Education or in [an LGA neighbouring a High Growth LGA](#_LGA_neighbouring_a).
* meet [Socio-economic Characteristics Criteria](#_What_is_the) as determined by the NSW Department of Education.

# How much can I apply for?

The Program offers two funding streams:

* Grants of up to $4 million may be awarded for major capital works to build a new preschool.
* Grants up to $350,000 for minor capital works may be awarded for upgrades to existing preschools such as renovations, upgrades or expansions.

# When can I apply?

AISNSW is accepting applications now for the second funding round. To be considered in this round, applications must be submitted to AISNSW **by Wednesday 31 December 2025**.

A third and final funding round will open in April 2026, with applications due to AISNSW by **30 July 2026.**

# Who can operate the preschool?

The preschool must operate on or adjacent to the school campus. The school may operate the preschool as the Approved Provider or lease the premises to a third party Approved Provider to operate the preschool.

# What is a High Growth LGA?

The NSW Department of Education has determined that for the purposes of this Capital Grant Program, 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 (NSW Department of Education Program Guidelines, August 2024, p.9). Schools in these 33 LGA’s are eligible to apply;

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Blacktown | Coolamon | Lockhart | Port Macquarie-Hastings | Strathfield |
| Burwood | Cumberland | Maitland | Port Stephens | Sydney |
| Byron | Dungog | Mosman | Queanbeyan-Palerang | The Hills |
| Camden | Georges River | Murray River | Randwick | Upper Lachlan |
| Campbeltown | Greater Hume | North Sydney | Ryde | Wollondilly |
| Cessnock | Lane Cove | Parramatta | Shellharbour |  |
| Clarence Valley | Liverpool | Penrith | Singleton |  |

# LGA neighbouring a High Growth LGA

LGAs geographically adjacent to high growth LGAs. The list of neighbouring LGAs is based on the ABS 2024 Local Government Area map. Schools in these LGA’s are eligible to apply;

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Albury | Central Coast | Hornsby | Muswellbrook | Tweed |
| Armidale | Coffs Harbour | Hunters Hill | Narrandera | Upper Hunter |
| Ballina | Cowra | Inner West | Newcastle | Wagga Wagga |
| Balranald | Edward River | Junee | Northern Beaches | Walcha |
| Bathurst | Eurobodalla | Kempsey | Oberon | Waverly |
| Bayside | Fairfield | Kiama | Richmond Valley | Willougby |
| Bellingen | Federation | Ku-ring-gai | Shoalhaven | Wingecarribee |
| Berrigan | Glen Innes | Kyogle | Snowy Monaro Regional | Wollongong |
| Bland | Goulburn Mulwaree | Lake Macquarie | Snowy Valleys | Woollahra |
| Blue Mountains | Hawkesbury | Lismore | Sutherland | Yass Valley |
| Canada Bay | Hay | Lithgow | Temora |  |
| Canterbury – Bankstown | Hilltops | Mid-Coast | Tenterfield |  |

# What is the Socio-economic Characteristics Criteria?

There are three ways to meet the Socio-economic Characteristic Criteria. The grant application must meet at least **one** of these socio-economic characteristic criteria:

1. The school has a [Capacity to Contribute (CTC)](https://www.education.gov.au/recurrent-funding-schools/schooling-resource-standards-capacity-contribute) score of 100 or less[[3]](#footnote-4).

**--------------------------------------- OR ------------------------------------------**

1. The school is located in one of the following local government areas (LGAs) with low[[4]](#footnote-5) [Index of relative Socio-Economic Advantage and Disadvantage (IRSAD)](https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/by%20Subject/2033.0.55.001%7E2016%7EMain%20Features%7EIRSD%7E19#:%7E:text=The%20Index%20of%20Relative%20Socio,only%20measures%20of%20relative%20disadvantage.).

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Albury | Fairfield | Mid-Coast |
| Campbeltown | Goulburn Mulwaree | Muswellbrook |
| Cessnock | Hilltops | Port Stephens |
| Clarence Valley | Kempsey | Richmond Valley |
| Cowra | Kyogle | Shoalhaven |
| Eurobodalla | Lismore | Upper Hunter |

**--------------------------------------- OR ------------------------------------------**

1. The school participated in the most recent [Australian Early Development Census (AEDC)](https://www.aedc.gov.au/) in 2024, and your school profile shows that your Kindergarten class includes a high proportion[[5]](#footnote-6) of students who are classified as being vulnerable in 2 or more domains.

If you are seeking eligibility under this criterion, you must provide a copy of your School Profile to AISNSW with your application. Schools that do not have a copy of their 2024 School Profile should contact email [helpdesk@aedc.gov.au](mailto:helpdesk@aedc.gov.au) to request one.

CTC exempt schools

CTC exempt schools who did not participate in the 2024 AEDC data collection may use the AEDC public table for the LGA where the school is located. If the LGA data shows a high proportion of students in the LGA who are classified as being vulnerable in 2 or more domains, the school is considered to satisfy the socio economic criterion.

# How will applications be assessed?

AISNSW will undertake an assessment of each application to ensure the criteria established by the NSW Department of Education has been met. An assessment panel will consider the merit of each eligible application to determine recommendations for grant allocation.

The assessment panel will consider objectives of the scheme, eligibility, selection criteria and documentation submitted with the application to prepare a list of recommendations to be provided to the NSW Department of Education. The NSW Minister for Education will decide which schools will be awarded grants.

# Will I be notified of the outcome of my application?

Yes. AISNSW will notify all applicants about the outcome of their application once we receive the decision notice from the NSW Minister for Education.

# What happens if my school is awarded a grant?

If your school is awarded a Grant the school must enter into a funding agreement with AISNSW that will specify all of the expectations and limitations of expenditure, reporting and acquittal requirements.

The agreement issued to the successful applicants will include, a list of actions required of the applicant, the agreement, along with a schedule detailing the awarded project and payment regime, the designated use period and requirements for the tender process.

# What can grant funds be used for?

Generally, grant funds under this program may be used for planning, construction, alteration, extension, renovation, or upgrading of new or existing preschool premises on or adjacent to the school site. This includes

1. A new capital development that provides for new or increased preschool enrolments, OR
2. refurbishment of existing facilities that provides for increased preschool enrolments or provides facilities and learning spaces at an acceptable standard.

Grant funds can be used for costs that include;

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

# Can the grant be used to build or upgrade a K minus 1 class?

No. This program is only for preschools that are regulated education and care services. The grants may not be used for building new or upgrading existing Prep/K minus 1 classes.

# Can the grant be used to build or upgrade a Long Day Care?

Yes[[6]](#footnote-7). For the purposes of this grant, ‘preschool’ refers to a preschool program where an early childhood educational program is delivered by a qualified early childhood teacher to children in the 2 years before school, in an approved early childhood education and care service under the Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010 and Education and Care Services National Regulations. This includes a preschool program operating in a long day care service.

Grant funding for preschools in long day care services must be proportional to the approved number of preschool places if the service also educates and cares for children under three years of age. Applications must detail the proportion of approved preschool places within the long day care service against the total number of approved places in the long day care service to evidence that the funding is proportional. Additionally, funding for preschools in long day care settings must not be used for:

1. Rooms, facilities or spaces, both indoor and outdoor used primarily for nursery or toddler age groups (children under the age of three years.
2. Rooms dedicated for community or allied health services,

# What do I need to include in my application?

To be considered for a grant you must submit a complete application, including separate, appropriately titled documents for each element listed below:

* Completed [Application Form](#_School_details)
* Evidence demonstrating how the preschool will meet the requirements of the National Quality Framework (NQF) and implement the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF).
* For an existing preschool, provide the service approval number for the preschool and a letter from the Principal certifying that it will continue to be operated as a preschool.
* For a new preschool, provide a letter from the Principal/Board certifying that the school will apply for the necessary service approval and operate a preschool from the premises. Alternatively, the school will lease the premises to an external provider to operate a preschool.
* Evidence that you have considered the current supply of preschool places in the area
* Provide a statement (maximum 500 words) that you have considered existing local supply and how you have determined the preschool will attract enough enrolments to be financially viable.
* Aboriginal Impact Statement that contains:
* A summary of 300-400 words that demonstrates how the school will take into account the following:

1. The early childhood education and care needs and interests of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and
2. 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.

**---------------------------------------- AND ------------------------------------------**

* A detailed response to the following two components:

1. The potential impact of the project 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.

* **Project documents** *(those applicable to your project)*
* Preliminary architectural drawings by a registered architect of the proposed project
* Proposed site plans (THIS project) with proposed NEW build or UPGRADED building clearly highlighted.
* Quantity Surveyor or equivalent professional COST estimate
* Evidence of discussion and/or progress with planning authorities (email, letter, approval notification) if applicable
* Evidence of appropriate insurance – Certificate of currency – *Industrial Special Risks*
* **Additional Supporting Documents (if relevant)**
* Copy of a current lease (if applicable)
* 2024 General Purpose Financial Statement – AUDITED
* Spreadsheet or Table of current and/or projected Preschool enrolments post project
* Spreadsheet demonstrating proposed operational BUDGET for commencing year (CY) PLUS - **three** forward years. (ie: CY, CY+1, CY+2, CY+3)

# What if I have more questions?

If you have questions about Preschool Capital Grants Program please contact the AISNSW Grants Team, [Grants@aisnsw.edu.au](mailto:Grants@aisnsw.edu.au)

Please email your completed Application Form and attachments to [Grants@aisnsw.edu.au](mailto:Grants@aisnsw.edu.au)

# School details

Please provide your school details.

*NOTE: ‘relevant campus’ address is the address of the campus where your Kindergarten class is situated – the proposed or existing Preschool must operate on or adjacent to this campus.*

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| School name | <Enter text> | | |
| School AGEID | <Enter text> | Location AGEID | <Enter text> |
| Location address of relevant campus | <Enter text> | | |
| Principal name | <Enter text> | Principal email | <Enter text> |

# Nominated contact person

Please provide details of the details of the person AISNSW should contact in relation to this application.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Name | <Enter text> | Role title | <Enter text> |
| Phone | <Enter text> | Email | <Enter text> |

# Application type

Check the relevant application type (choose 1 only)

|  |
| --- |
| New build application *(for a Preschool that does not yet operate)* |
| Renovation/upgrade of existing Preschool |

# Project details

## Project location

Specific location coordinates (Latitude and Longitude) for the proposed project. Where on/adjacent to the campus is the Preschool (intended Preschool).

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Latitude | <Enter text> |  |
| Longitude | <Enter text> |  |

## Project Summary

Please describe the project using the following sub-headings (as appropriate):

* New facility including description of learning areas, amenities and administration
* Renovation/upgrade describe which learning area/s or facilities or amenities will be included in the scope of work and,
  + why the work is needed.
* Number of places proposed, including details of the numbers and hours per day.
* Number of rooms proposed

|  |
| --- |
| <Enter text> |

## Project Costs

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Proposed total project cost | $ <Enter amount> |
| Proposed School Contribution  *(must be a minimum of 5% of total project cost)* | $ <Enter amount> |
| Grant amount requested | $ <Enter amount> |
| Contribution from any other source (if relevant) | $ <Enter amount> |

## Project Timing

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Proposed date for building to commence | <Enter date> |
| Proposed date of building completion | <Enter date> |
| Proposed date of operation | <Enter date> |

## Planning Approval

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Planning approval type?  (eg: Comply and Development / Development  Application) | <Enter text> |
| Planning approval received?  YES / NO  Date planning approval received (if YES) | <Enter text>  <Enter date> |

## Funding confirmation

Please provide a statement confirming:

* no other partial or full funding has been received, nor has the school

been successful in a grant application through another government source, including other programs administered by the department, other NSW Government departments or agencies, or another grant.

<Enter text>

# Attachment checklist

Please check the following list to confirm all evidence is included to meet requirements of the application

The evidence supporting each component must be submitted as

* A separate document clearly identified

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | 1. Letter confirming operation as an NQF approved Preschool implementing the EYLF |
|  | 1. Evidence that you have considered the current supply of preschool places in the area |
|  | 1. Aboriginal Impact Statement |
|  | 1. 2024 AEDC School Profile *(if relevant to your eligibility)* |
|  | 1. Preliminary architectural drawings by a registered architect of the proposed project |
|  | 1. Proposed site plans with proposed NEW build or UPGRADED building clearly highlighted |
|  | 1. Quantity Surveyor or equivalent professional COST estimate |
|  | 1. Evidence of discussion and/or progress with planning authorities (email, letter, approval notification) if applicable |
|  | 1. Evidence of appropriate insurance – Certificate of currency – Industrial Special Risks |
|  | 1. Copy of a current lease (if applicable) |
|  | 1. Spreadsheet or Table of current and projected enrolments for existing or proposed Preschool |
|  | 1. Spreadsheet demonstrating proposed operational BUDGET for commencing year (CY) *PLUS* – **three** forward years (ie CY, CY+1, CY+2, CY+3) |

Submission Confirmation

(Application has been completed and all submission requirements met):

<Signature / Name / Position>

1. For the purposes of this grant, ‘preschool’ refers to a preschool program where an early childhood educational program is delivered by a qualified early childhood teacher to children in the 2 years before school, in an approved early childhood education and care service under the Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010 (National Law) and Education and Care Services National Regulations. This includes a preschool program operating in a long day care service. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. Ibid [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. Based on 2025 CTC scores released by the Australian Government Department of Education on 12 November 2024 [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. Low is defined as 5 and below [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. A “high proportion” of children vulnerable in 2 or more domains is defined as 10% or more [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
6. The NSW Department of Education amended the program guidelines in mid 2025 in response to AISNSW feedback that preschool programs operating in long day care services provide the same education as a traditional preschool, but with hours more supportive of working families. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)