Building Blocks

Assessment Factsheet and Application Checklist   
Improvement 2025

# Document Purpose

We have designed this document to help you complete your Building Blocks Improvement grant application.

This document should be read in conjunction with the Building Blocks [Improvement Guidelines](https://www.schoolbuildings.vic.gov.au/building-blocks-grants-improvement) found on the Victorian School Building Authority (VSBA) website.

After reading this document you should:

* have a clear understanding of what information you need to include in your application.
* understand how your application will be assessed after it has been submitted

# Important information to consider before applying

## Projects on Department of Education (DE) owned Land

If you propose an **Early Learning Facility Upgrade** or **Minor Infrastructure** project on land owned by DE you must advise the VSBA Early Childhood Grants team and DE’s relevant regional Provision and Planning Manager as early as possible during the development of your proposal. This is required to discuss the approach to land and project delivery should you be successful.

The VSBA Early Childhood Grants team can be contacted by email: [building.blocks@education.vic.gov.au](mailto:building.blocks@education.vic.gov.au).

The relevant DE regional Provision and Planning Manager can be found [here](https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/asset-management-planning/policy). It is important to start this process as early as possible prior to submitting your application.

Applications for projects on DE land must include:

* **a completed** [Land Use Proposal Form](https://www.schoolbuildings.vic.gov.au/early-childhood-grants) found on the VSBA website (refer to Projects on Department of Education land)
* **all required documentation** as listed in the [Land Use Proposal Form](https://www.schoolbuildings.vic.gov.au/early-childhood-grants)

If a project is located on DE owned land, DE will procure a Quantity Surveyor report and, where necessary, a Division 6 Asbestos Report, Soil Hygiene Report and/ or Geo-Tech Reporting.

Applications for projects on DE owned land that are high value and/or deemed high risk or especially complicated may be delivered by DE.

DE will determine whether any project on DE land is delivered by the applicant or the VSBA. Successful applicants will be consulted regarding the approach for delivery.

Prospective applicants interested in undertaking projects on DE owned land are strongly advised to attend the grant information session to gain a thorough understanding of the specific requirements for these projects. The session times will be advised on the [VSBA website](https://www.schoolbuildings.vic.gov.au/building-blocks-grants-inclusion). Attending the session will ensure applicants are well-informed and prepared to meet all criteria for funding and project implementation on DE land.

## Documents required to support your application

Two documents that require the most time to secure are the **Soil Hygienist Report** and the **Divisional 6** **Asbestos Audit Report.** Your application will not proceed to assessment until these documents are supplied.

These documents must not be more than 10 years old at the time of submission.

Applications for projects on DE land are not required to provide a soil hygienist or asbestos report. DE will complete this requirement following the submission of your application.

### Soil Hygienist Report

A Soil Hygienist Report is required for any project that disturbs the soil (including installation of outdoor shade sails) to determine suitability of the kindergarten site.

It is important that an environmental professional is engaged to provide a Soil Hygienist Report – and not a geotechnical report. If applicable to your project, a Soil Hygienist Report **must** be included in your grant application.

Soil Hygienist Reports must:

* be performed by a qualified environmental professional
* align with standards such as the National Environmental Protection (Assessment of Contaminated Sites) Measure (NEPM)
* involve a desktop review of past site history and soil investigation samples for analysis of contaminants such as arsenic, asbestos, and heavy metals with particular focus on where project soil works are proposed
* compare contamination results against NEPM human health and ecological investigation levels as well as Victoria EPA Industrial Waste thresholds
* include a statement to indicate if the site is suitable for use as an early learning centre and/or potential project risks
* specify if contaminated soil is identified above the levels specified for use as an early learning centre.

If contaminated soil is identified above the levels specified for the use as an early learning centre, a Soil Management Plan (SMP) must be developed for safe management or removal and disposal of the contaminated soil. The SMP must also be provided as part of your grant application.

Examples of consultants who specialise in soil hygienist testing and site assessment are listed below:

* The Australian Contaminated Land Consultants Association - [Australian Contaminated Land Consultants Association](https://aclca.com.au/)
* The State Government Construction Supply register [Construction Supply Register](https://www.dtf.vic.gov.au/infrastructure-investment/construction-supplier-register) under Contamination Testing category.

### Division 6 Asbestos Audit Report

A Division 6 Asbestos Audit Report is site specific and is required for any project that involves work to a building constructed before 1990, where the fabric of the building will be disturbed. If applicable to your project, a Division 6 Asbestos Audit Report must be included in your grant application.

#### Division 6 Asbestos Audit Reports must:

* be performed by a trained professional such as an Occupational Hygienist
* contain the results of a visual and invasive inspection of a building to monitor and identify Asbestos Containing Material (ACM)
* include the logged results of the asbestos audit in an asbestos register, which is to be updated following all subsequent audit reports and removal works

Please note that a Division 5 Asbestos Audit Report will not be accepted.

If ACM is discovered in a building or site, an Asbestos Management Plan for removal and disposal of the ACM must be developed and provided as part of your grant application.

Information and examples of consultants who specialises in asbestos and site assessment, are listed at:

* The State Government Construction Supply register [Construction Supply Register](https://www.dtf.vic.gov.au/infrastructure-investment/construction-supplier-register) under Contamination Testing category
* [WorkSafe](https://www.worksafe.vic.gov.au/asbestos) Victoria.

Division 6 Asbestos Audit Reports are not required for works to buildings constructed from 1990 onwards. Where this is the case, an applicant is required to provide:

* an asbestos report (if one is available) or evidence, such as an occupancy permit or statement from the landowner that the building is not older than 1990
* a letter signed by an authorised representative of the organisation that confirms the applicant will be responsible for any remediation and ongoing management should ACM or other contaminants be discovered during works undertaken at the site.

For further information about asbestos safety, including how to find and identify asbestos, asbestos management and asbestos disposal visit [Asbestos Victoria](https://www.asbestos.vic.gov.au/).

## Additional resources

The following links are provided as a starting point for considering best practice approaches to inclusion.

Applicants are encouraged to undertake their own research to identify solutions that will meet their needs.

Australian Resources

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| Australian Children’s Education & Care Quality Authority | [National Quality Framework](https://www.acecqa.gov.au/nqf/about) |
| **Department of Education** | Disability Standards for Education  [Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework](https://www.vic.gov.au/victorian-early-years-learning-development-framework-veyldf) |

International Resources

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| Centre for Excellence in Universal Design | [The 7 Principles of Universal Design](https://universaldesign.ie/about-universal-design/the-7-principles) |
| **Health and Education Advice and Resource Team (HEART)** | [Universal Design of Schools and Classrooms](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/57a08a01ed915d3cfd000534/Universal-design-of-schools-and-classrooms.pdf) |
| **The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)** | [Including Pupils with Special Educational Needs in Schools in Ireland (OECD)](https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/education/including-pupils-with-special-educational-needs-in-schools-in-ireland_224824045146) |
| **UNICEF** | [The State of the World’s Children - Playgrounds of Inclusion](https://www.unicef.org/reports/state-worlds-children-2013) |
| **National Centre on Universal Design for Learning** | [Universal Design Guidelines for Learning](https://www.cast.org/impact/universal-design-for-learning-udl) |

# Assessment Process

Building Blocks Improvement grants are highly competitive. Organisations are encouraged to provide clear responses to all questions and attach all required documentation at the time of application, to strengthen their chances of being successful.

**Late or incomplete applications will not be considered.**

Once the grant round has closed, DE will commence the following assessment process:

* undertaking an eligibility assessment, to determine if the organisation is eligible to apply (refer to Eligibility and Merit Assessment section below) and ensuring that all required documentation has been provided (refer to the Application Checklist in the **Appendix**)
* assessing all eligible applications against the merit assessment criteria as outlined in the Building Blocks [[Improvement Guidelines](https://www.schoolbuildings.vic.gov.au/building-blocks-grants-improvement).](https://www.schoolbuildings.vic.gov.au/building-blocks-grants-inclusion)
* convening an assessment panel to oversee funding recommendations and manage any conflicts of interest.

Further project cost assessment may be required in instances where project costs are particularly complex, or clarification is required.

Following the assessment process, DE provides funding recommendations to the Minister for Children for formal approval. Applicants will be advised of any prolonged delays in notification of grant outcomes.

## Eligibility and Merit Assessment

To be eligible to receive funding for a **Building Blocks Improvement grant**, your project must be for a facility located in Victoria that is, or will be, licensed to provide a funded free Three and Four-Year-Old Kindergarten program ([Free Kinder](https://www.vic.gov.au/free-kinder-english)) at the time of application. It must offer, or intendto offer, both programs. This can be sessional or integrated with long day care.

Your organisation can apply if it is:

* a Victorian local government (Council)
* a not-for-profit community organisation that is a legal entity (for example an incorporated association, incorporated cooperative or Indigenous corporation)
* a Victorian government school
* a Victorian non-government school registered with the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority or Catholic Education Commission of Victoria.

**For-profit organisations cannot apply** for any grant streams within Building Blocks.

It is important to note that eligible projects will be recommended for funding based primarily on their rating against the merit assessment criteria which is weighted according to specified percentages and aligned with the Building Blocks Improvement stream objectives. However, the number and value of eligible, highly rated applications may exceed the total available funding. Therefore, DE will consider other factors including whether:

* a service has received recent Building Blocks grant funding
* the proposed project increases approved kindergarten places
* the proposed project is deemed a priority upgrade for the facility, that increases safety, compliance, and helps keep the kindergarten continue operating into the future
* a service is in an area of demand or an area of projected demand for funded kindergarten places.

DE will also assess the applicant’s past performance to determine whether this is likely to have an impact on the successful delivery of the proposed project.

All eligibility requirements and merit assessment criteria can be found the Building Blocks [[Improvement Guidelines](https://www.schoolbuildings.vic.gov.au/building-blocks-grants-improvement) found on the VSBA website.](https://www.schoolbuildings.vic.gov.au/building-blocks-grants-inclusion)

## Review of application outcome

If you are unsuccessful in obtaining funding for a Building Blocks Improvement grant you may:

* contact the VSBA Early Childhood Grants Team for feedback on your application and outcome
* seek a review of the assessment of your application.

The VSBA Early Childhood Grants team can be contacted by email [building.blocks@education.vic.gov.au](mailto:building.blocks@education.vic.gov.au).

# Appendix – Application Checklist

#### Early Learning Facility Upgrade and Minor Infrastructure Checklist

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| Evidence | Description |  |
| Considered responses to the assessment criteria | All responses must demonstrate how the project will meet each merit assessment criteria. | |
| Written confirmation of co-contribution (if applicable) | If applicable, authorised written confirmation from the applicant and all other funding organisations including contributions from the Federal Government, Victorian Government, local government, or other sources must be submitted with the application. | |
| Builder quotes and/or Quantity Surveyor Report, must include a minimum 5-10% (ex GST) cost contingency | **For projects under $200,000 ex GST** - Two appropriate cost estimates (quotes) from separate qualified building professionals registered for a trade that is consistent with the scope of the proposed works  **For projects $200,000 or more ex GST** - One Quantity Surveyor report from a registered Quantity Surveyor is required for building projects  Applications for projects on DE owned land must provide 2 quotes from a qualified professional for projects below $75,000 (GST inclusive) **or** 3 quotes for projects exceeding $75,000 (GST inclusive). See application requirements for projects on DE owned land below. | |
| Project Budget (ex GST) | All applications must provide a budget (i.e. a simple excel or word document) including a clear and accurately itemised table of Total Project Costs according to the quote/s provided (**ex GST**) and requested funding amount, which will be the total project cost minus any co-contribution (if any). | |
| Soil Hygienist Report | A Soil Hygienist Report is mandatory for any project that disturbs the soil. The report must include testing for contaminates such as arsenic, asbestos, and heavy metals from a qualified environmental professional. Report must not be dated more than 10 years.  Applications for projects on DE land do not need to provide this report as DE will procure this report following the application process. See application requirements for Projects on DE land below. | |
| Div 6 Asbestos Audit Report | A Division 6 Asbestos Audit Report is mandatory for any project where the fabric of the building is being disturbed (unless constructed before 1990). Report must not be dated more than 10 years.  If the building was constructed before 1990, provide:   * asbestos report (if one is available) or evidence, such as an occupancy permit or statement from the landowner that the building is not older than 1990 * letter signed by an authorised representative of the organisation that confirms the applicant will be responsible for any remediation and ongoing management should ACM or other contaminants be discovered during works undertaken at the site.   Applications for projects on DE do not need to provide this report as DE will procure this report following the application process. See application requirements for Projects on DE land below. | |
| Designs, Plans, Photos, Permits | All applications must provide professional schematic design drawings and site plans/ photos/ permits (where required) to illustrate what parts of the land or building will be changed by the project | |
| Project Plan | All applications must provide a project plan (i.e. a simple excel or word document) to support the dates nominated in the application for stages of the project | |
| Affected services | If your project will directly affect service providers currently operating at the facility, you must provide evidence that you have consulted with these providers such as letters of support or documented outcomes of consultation and engagement | |
| Not-for-Profit Status | All not-for-profit organisations must provide evidence of not-for-profit status (such as a copy of your Australian Business Number, registration as a not-for-profit, certificate of registration as charity, or a certificate of registration as an incorporated association) | |
| Signed financial Statements | All not-for-profit organisations and non-government schools must provide evidence of financial solvency such as a signed copies of audited financial statements for the **previous two financial years**. | |
| Auspice Arrangement | If an auspice arrangement is proposed, signed, written confirmation from both parties is required | |
| Evidence of Land ownership | The type of evidence required depends on **who owns the land**.  **If the land is owned by DE, please see the section below.**  If a local council or state/federal government agency own the land, or if you are leasing the building or the landowner is not the building owner, you must provide:   * certificate of land title with owners name and service address * current lease with an end date at least four years after completing the project signed and dated by both parties; or   + if the current lease will end earlier than four years, the applicant must provide a signed letter from the landowner (on letterhead) referring to the specific property and project, stating they intend to allow the facility to operate as a kindergarten for at least four years after completing the project. It should not be dated more than three months.   + signed, written consent to undertake the work from the landowner (on letterhead) referring to the specific property and project, including who will deliver the project (i.e. applicant, landowner or the building owner) and any known risks or issues for the project site. It should not be dated more than three months.   If **you (the applicant)** own the land for the nominated project site, you must provide:   * certificate of land title, LANDATA documents or council rates notice with owners name and service address. | |
| Projects on DE owned land | Your application **must** include   * a completed [Land Use Proposal Form](https://www.schoolbuildings.vic.gov.au/building-blocks-grants-inclusion)(LUPF) found on the VSBA website (refer to Projects on DE owned land section). * a copy of any existing lease or agreement between relevant parties * a detailed design of your proposal * 2 quotes from a qualified professional for projects below $75,000 (GST inclusive) **or** 3 quotes for projects exceeding $75,000 (GST inclusive) * structural assessment reports (if works are proposed to a roof i.e. solar installations or extensions of roof line or roof upgrades). * a mark-up of a School Plan (previously Schools Asset Management Plan) or Site Plan indicating clearly where the proposed works will be carried out. | |

#### Information Technology checklist

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| Evidence | Description |
| Considered responses to the assessment criteria | All responses must demonstrate how the project will meet the merit assessment criteria |
| Supplier quote (ex GST) | **One** appropriate cost estimate from a registered supplier that is consistent with the scope of the proposed works |
| Affected services | If your project will directly affect service providers currently operating at the facility evidence that you have consulted with these providers such as letters of support or documented outcomes of consultation and engagement |
| Not-for-Profit Status | All not-for-profit organisations must provide evidence of not-for-profit status (such as a copy of your Australian Business Number, registration as a not-for-profit, certificate of registration as charity, or a certificate of registration as an incorporated association) |
| Auspice Arrangement | If an auspice arrangement is proposed, signed, written confirmation from both parties is required |