

BAPTIST CHURCHES OF NEW SOUTH WALES PROPERTY TRUST

APPLYING FOR GOVERNMENT GRANTS

A number of grant programs exist to assist community groups, such as churches, to achieve their purposes. These are at federal, state and local government levels, as well as some private donors. Most of the grants are restricted to incorporated associations, while most of our churches are unincorporated associations. The Property Trust is the legal owner of real estate of Baptist churches affiliated with the Association and, as a statutory corporation, is the proper vehicle to apply for grants on behalf of Baptist churches. In this capacity, the Property Trust has applied for grants for a number of churches in the last few years, mainly to assist with renovations or maintenance purposes.

APPLICATIONS

Most authorities use an online processing system to receive applications and to deliver related documents. A preview of the application may be available and the Property Trust can provide a Word version of the form to assist churches in compiling the application. This can be sent to you to complete and return, together with supporting documents, including;

- Development Applications,
- Budget for the project,
- Financial Report,
- Insurance Certificate of Currency,
- Quotes for the work to be completed.

The budget needs to be framed on either a GST inclusive, or GST exclusive, basis, as stated in the application. Care needs to be taken with the documents to be uploaded with the application, as some applications limit the number and size of the files to be uploaded.

Please ensure that applications are forwarded to the Property Trust in sufficient time to allow completion and submission within the required timeframe. Applications can take up to an hour to enter, and if several applications are received at the last minute, it may not be possible to submit all applications within the available time.

APPROVAL

Consideration of the applications can take up to six months and letters conveying the result of the application, either approval or otherwise, will be received by the Property Trust. These letters will be forwarded to applicant churches for their information.

FUNDING AGREEMENT

After a short while, for approved applications, a Funding Agreement will be issued, which sets out the terms and conditions of the grant, including reporting requirements. It will be sent to the applicant church by the Property Trust for their information, and acknowledgement of the terms and conditions. On receipt of this acknowledgement the Property Trust will sign and submit the Funding Agreement, which will then be signed by the grant authority and returned to the Property Trust. A copy of the signed agreement will be sent to the church for their records.

INVOICES

In order to obtain the grant funds the Property Trust will issue an invoice, or invoices where paid by instalments, in the prescribed form, on either a GST inclusive or exclusive basis. Funds will be held within the Property Trust's Common Fund until expended.

Where GST is included in the payment it will be remitted to the ATO via the Property Trust's BAS return and funds will then be transferred to the church on a GST exclusive basis.

Interest on the funds held will be paid in accordance with our normal practice. Statements will be forwarded quarterly at the end of January, April, July and October.

PROJECT PAYMENTS

As the project proceeds, funds can be released to the church for work done, on receipt of invoices from suppliers. As noted above, reimbursement will be on a GST exclusive basis. If this will cause hardship please contact the Property Trust to discuss alternatives. This will continue until all funds, including interest earned, are exhausted.

PROJECT COMPLETION

In some cases it will be appropriate to hold an official opening/dedication service and you may wish to invite your local MP, or appropriate representative of the funding body, to this service. Any printed material on the day should include a reference to the grant funds, in the manner prescribed in the Funding Agreement. The assistance received should also be acknowledged in annual reports or financial statements, even if these are only distributed to members.

COMPLETION & ACQUITTAL REPORTS

Once a project is complete a Completion & Acquittal Report will need to be submitted by the Property Trust, using the online system, to the funding authority. This will include evidence as required to confirm completion, which may be copies of invoices (as previously supplied), photos before/after, etc. Details of requirements will be forwarded by us to allow provision by the church within the allowed timeframe.

INTERIM REPORTS

In some cases the funding authority will call for an interim report on the project. We will advise you what is required and when it is to be provided.

GENERAL

For a recent grant round, one electorate received applications for almost \$800,000 in grants, all of which were of a high quality. With funds of only \$200,000 to be allocated it can be seen that the process needed to be very selective. However, in 2015/16 six churches received a total of \$120,000 in grants.

Should you be considering an application for a grant we encourage you to contact us early to discuss the process, and to allow us to work with you towards the desired goal.

Cules Mouton,
Secretary,

E: propertytrust@nswactbaptists.org.au

T (02) 9868 9249

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