

# Building Early Education Fund (BEEF) guide

## SMALL SCALE GRANT



The essential guide for Not-For-Profit childcare providers to navigate The Building Early Education Fund (BEEF) Small Scale grant program.

We think differently.





**A shared  
vision for  
Australia's  
children.**

## The Australian funding landscape.

As specialist advisors to community-focused Not-For-Profit (NFP) organisations, we know that for NFP childcare operators, the vision of establishing a new or expanded centre is about more than just bricks and mortar. It's about creating a nurturing environment for children and a vital hub for the community.

The Government shares this vision. Through initiatives such as the **Building Early Education Fund (BEEF)**, a landmark \$1 billion investment aimed at increasing the number of childcare places in areas of high need, particularly in regional communities and outer suburbs. The fund is divided into \$500 million for capital grants to the sector and \$500 million for the Australian Government to partner with states and territories to build, own, and lease childcare centres.

The major funding streams include, **Large-scale grant rounds** for established not-for-profit providers capable of developing multiple new services, with **Smaller grant rounds** to support smaller, community-based, independent, and in-venue Family Day Care providers.

However, while funding is available, the application process is competitive and rigorous. Success depends on a well-prepared, evidence-based application that strongly aligns with government objectives. That's why having an experienced partner matters.

At Mollard Property Group, we believe that access to quality early education is a right, not a privilege. NFP childcare providers play a vital role in shaping the future of Australia's children – yet too often face overwhelming challenges when applying for government funding or navigating complex compliance processes.

With decades of experience in childcare centre design and development, a 100% success rate in securing development approvals, and a proven track record across Australia, we are here to help you turn your vision into a funded reality.

### The Mollard Property Group Team



This practical guide provides a detailed overview of the Building Early Education Fund Small-Scale Grant Round, and outlines the application procedures, and compliance obligations for prospective NFP applicants.

# Understanding the grant stream.

## Small-Scale Grant Round:

The BEEF small scale grant is available to not-for-profit (NFP) childcare operators currently operating 1–9 Long Day Care (LDC) services, seeking to develop or expand a single LDC project. The program is targeted at outer suburban, regional and remote locations across Australia, with funding of up to \$3 million available.

### PURPOSE

The purpose of the Building Fund Small-Scale grant is to increase the supply of quality Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) places through capital works delivered by not-for-profit providers in areas of need, including the outer suburbs and regional Australia. The Small-Scale Grant Round targets smaller not-for-profit providers and ACCOs to build or expand early learning centres where they are needed most.

### WHO IS ELIGIBLE

This grant is for not-for-profit ECEC providers that operate between 1 to 9 Centre Based Day Care (CBDC) services.

You can apply if your organisation:

- Owns, leases, or has an agreement to lease the site for your project
- Provides a letter of support from your local council (unless you are the council)
- Is proposing a project which will add new places for children 0–5 in an outer suburb or regional and remote area. Projects in major cities are not eligible, other than those defined as 'outer suburb' (per Question 17)
- Is requesting no more than \$3 million in funding.

### FUNDING AVAILABLE

For this grant round, the Australian Government has made available at least \$20 million (GST exclusive) over 2 years (2026–27 to 2027–28). You can apply for up to \$3 million for your project. There is no minimum amount, and smaller projects are welcome.

### WHAT CAN BE FUNDED

The grant funds capital works including:

- Design, planning and approvals
- Construction and fit-out of new or expanded CBDC services
- Modifications for in-venue FDC
- Essential utilities (water, sewerage, electricity)
- Required certifications (e.g. occupancy)
- Project management
- Site preparation and safety works
- Costs associated with National Law approvals
- Essential fit-out assets that will become fixtures on the facility that are essential to deliver CBDC services, such as stovetops and air conditioners

### DEADLINE

Submit your application to SmartyGrants by **5:00PM AEST on 29 May 2026**.

# Understanding the application process.

## Turning vision into a viable, funded project.

Applying for a SMALL-Scale Grant is a competitive and rigorous process. Success depends on a well-prepared, evidence-based application that strongly aligns with government objectives.

### Review guidelines and confirm eligibility

Before commencing, thoroughly review the official guidelines for the specific grant stream. Confirm your organisation is an eligible registered NFP organisation. Ensure your proposed project meets the core requirements, delivering a CBDC service upon completion.

### Required documentation for the Small-Scale Grant.

#### Service Approval & Compliance Statement

Provide evidence of your existing provider approvals. Include a statement detailing any past non-compliance issues and how they were resolved in accordance with National Law and Family Assistance Law.

#### Construction Project Experience

Demonstrate your organisation's experience in building or expanding ECEC services on time and within budget. Include specific project examples with costing and timing details.

#### Community Engagement History

Describe your experience in providing safe, inclusive ECEC services that meet community needs. Detail your experience working with local community organisations and stakeholders.

#### Cultural Competency Statement

Outline your experience in providing culturally safe ECEC services for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) and First Nations children and families. Include details of your partnerships with these organisations.

#### Project Proposal & Viability Plan

Complete the Project Application Template to outline the operating hours, number of ECEC places, and how you will fund the operation and capital maintenance of the service over the course of the Designated Use Period (which ranges from 10 to 30 years depending on the grant amount requested).

#### Community Need & Demand Analysis

Provide a detailed analysis of the need and demand for ECEC in the proposed location. This should include data on current and forecast population, waitlist information, socioeconomic disadvantage, early childhood developmental vulnerability, and proximity to schools.

#### Letters of Support

Submit a letter of support from the local council for your project, unless your organisation is a council. Include any other evidence of community support, such as letters from First Nations community leaders.

#### Workforce & Project Readiness Plan

Provide a plan to secure the necessary ECEC workforce. Outline the project timeline, key delivery risks, mandatory evidence of land tenure (such as a lease or proof of ownership), and your plan for securing development approval.

#### Detailed Budget & Financial Evidence

Submit a detailed budget using the Activity Work Plan and Budget template, with justification for the requested grant amount. Include evidence of support from your organisation's board or CEO to meet the costs of the activity not covered by the grant.

For more information and current guidelines, application forms, and key dates, download the [SmartyGrants Help Guide for Applicants](#) or check out [SmartyGrants Applicant Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQ's\)](#).



# Common challenges for NFPs.

## Why many great projects miss out... and how to avoid it

While the funding is available, the process is complex and unforgiving. Many not-for-profits fall short not because their projects lack merit - but because their applications fail to meet technical, compliance, or policy alignment standards.

Many NFPs assume that applying for a grant is a straightforward process of completing forms and providing project details. In reality, capital works grant applications require sophisticated strategic, financial, and technical documentation that aligns with strict government assessment criteria. Underestimating the level of expertise, coordination, and compliance required to deliver capital works projects. Internal teams often lack the time, technical skills, or industry connections necessary to manage design consultants, navigate planning approvals, and maintain control over construction.

CHALLENGE	IMPACT	OUR SOLUTION
Weak evidence of demand	Low application score and rejection	Detailed demographic and needs assessment
Poor design compliance	Costly redesigns, delays and missed deadlines	Childcare-licensing-compliant architectural design
Unrealistic project budgets or cost estimates	Funding shortfall or increased provider contribution	Diligent cost planning and feasibility modelling
Missed deadlines or incomplete documentation	Ineligibility or rejection	Project Administration and diligent milestone control and reporting
Governance gaps	Reduced confidence from assessors	Full grant documentation and reporting support

## Act now! Every day counts

**Funding rounds don't wait.** Each missed submission window can set your project back an entire year – and every delay comes at a rising cost. With construction inflation climbing up to 10% annually and enrolment growth outpacing available childcare places, hesitation is costly. This is where a specialist development partner becomes your organisation's most valuable asset.

# Why partner with us?

Mollard Property Group fast-tracks your readiness, ensuring your documentation, compliance, and approvals align with current Building Early Education grant timelines. Our team eliminates the risk of missed milestones, delays and cost blowouts – enabling your NFP to deliver projects sooner, for less, and with confidence. With experts overseeing your grant strategy, planning and approvals, you avoid the risk of missing a funding round or paying more tomorrow for the same project today.

- + 100% success rate in securing DA approvals
- + Over 40 childcare projects across Australia
- + Experts in funding, compliance, and childcare centre design



## Your partner for grant-funded childcare development

Mollard Property Group understands that not-for-profits are mission-driven, not development-driven and that your focus should remain on what you do best: providing exceptional care and education. As Australia's leading specialists in childcare centre development, Mollard Property Group combines property development expertise with in-depth grant and funding knowledge to help NFP organisations successfully secure multi-million-dollar grants and deliver vital childcare facilities.

Securing government funding to build or expand a childcare centre requires more than passion – it demands strategic planning, robust business cases and expert navigation of complex regulations. We act as the bridge between your community-focused vision and the government's rigorous commercial requirements.

From site analysis and feasibility studies to design and planning approvals, we ensure the application not only meets eligibility requirements but stands out to funding assessors.

### Grant Application Report

Feasibility Concept Plan, Project Timeline, Detailed Delivery Risks Assessment, and Project Costing aligned with BEEF's criteria and project application template requirements.

### Development Management

Navigate and manage planning permits, compliance, and documentation to secure timely approvals.

### Centre Design & Design Management

Deliver architectural drawings that meet regulations and funding obligations.

Maximising every grant dollar while avoiding costly design pitfalls.

### Project Administration

Secure building permits, manage tenders, and oversee construction delivery.

**Speed, Precision and Clarity: The Mollard Advantage.**

*"The report was outstanding, providing clear costings and concise information. The quick turnaround also met our expectations. Thank you very much."*

Childcare NFP organisation, QLD

# How we add real value.

## Connecting design decisions to financial success.

"I have never seen such a thoughtful and well-executed design at the pre-application stage within the area."

COUNCIL TOWN PLANNER



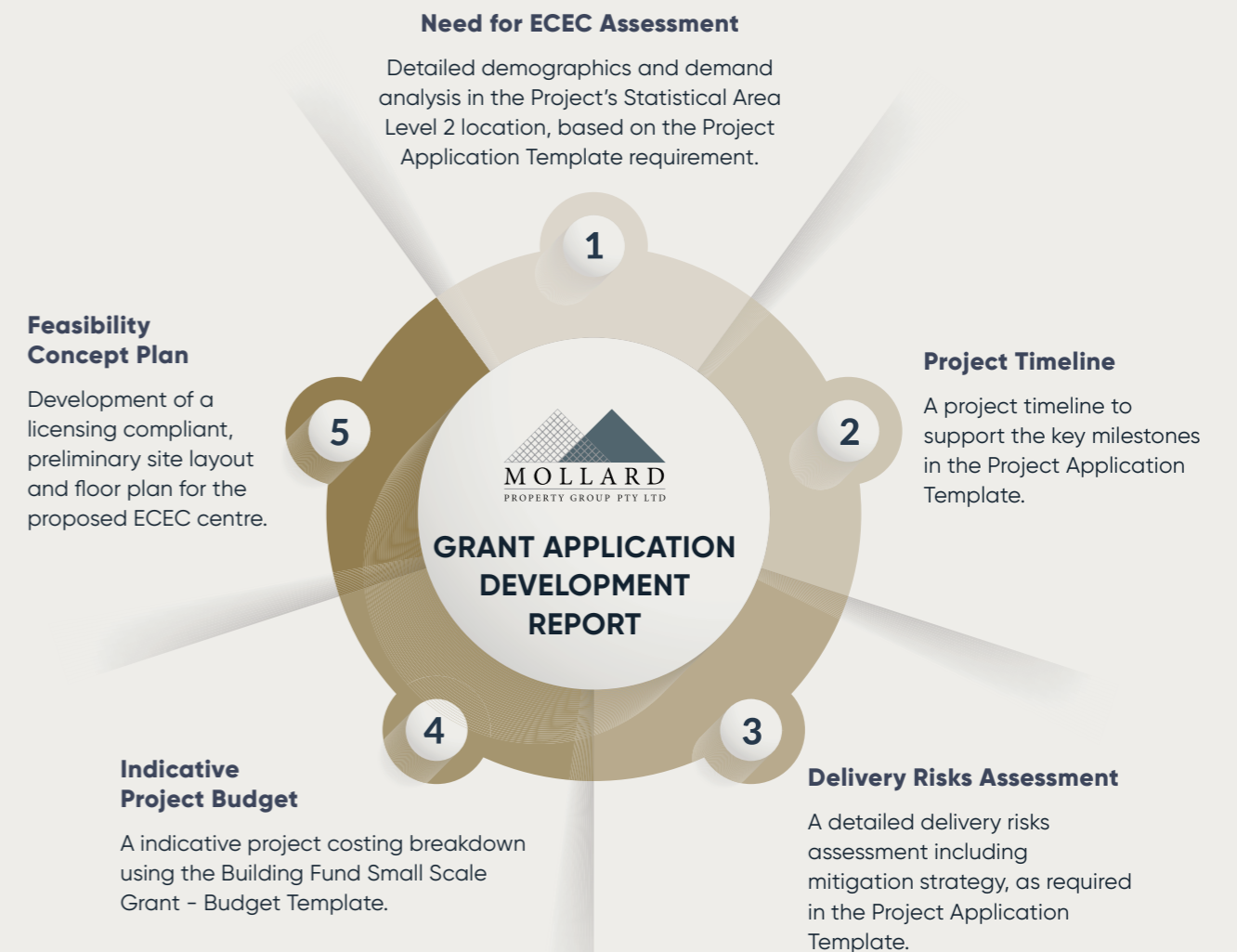
## The 'Mollard Advantage'

YOUR JOURNEY STARTS WITH A STRONG SMALL-SCALE GRANT APPLICATION – IT LAYS THE FOUNDATION FOR SUCCESSFULLY SECURING FUNDING.

This is where a specialist development partner like Mollard Property Group becomes your organisation's most valuable asset. To support the BEEF application, we can provide a comprehensive **Grant Application Development Report** to ensure a well prepared evidence based application, that adheres to strict compliance and reporting criteria.

We align the project with the grant objectives to strengthen the application and increase their chance of success, providing all required technical development information and drawings to support the grant application. Acting as your development manager and project administrator to obtain approvals and oversee the project from the beginning to completion, and ensure the project aligns with the grant requirements.

### The grant application development report for BEEF includes:



# Real results...



**"Partnering with Mollard Property Group was one of the best decisions we made. Their understanding of compliance and community needs was invaluable"**

LIBBY EWING-JARVIE, GENERAL MANAGER,  
COWRA EARLY CHILDHOOD SERVICES

## Turning vision into reality for Cowra Early Childhood Services

When Cowra Early Childhood Services, a not-for-profit preschool in regional NSW, set out to build a 60-place centre, they faced strict funding constraints and compliance challenges. As part of their plan to deliver a high-quality early learning environment, Mollard Property Group were engaged to provide strategic support to assist with the application for a capital grant through the NSW Department of Education. We also provided end-to-end development and design management, from feasibility and grant documentation through to approvals, the engagement of a trusted builder and construction oversight.

### Mollard Property Group's role:

- Led feasibility, architectural and façade design and planning approval processes
- Developed cost-efficient, licensing-compliant layouts
- Achieved council approval in just 31 days - one of the fastest on record
- Undertook extensive value management and coordinated builder tenders
- Negotiated construction pricing to meet the client's grant-aligned budget
- Secured a trusted builder to deliver within the approved budget and timeframe
- Prepared and supplied project budget, invoice register and program required for departmental funding approval and milestone payments.

### Fast-tracked development approval and cost-controlled delivery

Following funding success, MPG led the Development Application (DA) process, achieving Council DA determination within an exceptional timeframe of 31 days. This rapid approval reflected the quality, detail, and precision of the application, supported by a collaborative and transparent approach.

MPG applied disciplined cost management and proactive coordination throughout the project's delivery phase. Extensive value management, builder tenders and pricing negotiations ensured the project proceeded within the client's grant-aligned budget and met all Department of Education funding milestones. The Cowra Preschool project demonstrates MPG's ability to support community-based operators, balance cost and quality, and deliver fully compliant early learning facilities efficiently and on time.

We don't just meet funding criteria – we exceed them by aligning your vision with the government's social and educational objectives.



# How grant-ready is your organisation?

## To secure funding, your project must meet the strict compliance and reporting criteria to support the BEEF application.

Is your project meeting the unmet demand in the SAL2? Do you have a clear and realistic project timeline? Do you have a realistic project cost estimate? Do you have evidence of community support?

If you are unsure whether your project ticks every box, talk to one of experts today.

## Book your complimentary grant readiness consultation today.

In this no-obligation 30-minute session, you will receive a preliminary eligibility check for your project. Expert insight and a clear roadmap of your next steps to become 'grant ready'.

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