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| Cemetery grants program guidelines |
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# Introduction

The cemetery grants program was established to provide funding as a contribution to the cost of cemetery infrastructure, amenities, maintenance, equipment and training. Grants are available to both Class A and Class B cemetery trusts, however it is acknowledged that Class B cemetery trusts, operated by volunteer members, are often unable to generate sufficient funds to maintain or improve their facilities.

The *Cemeteries and Crematoria Act 2003* (the Act) requires Class A cemetery trusts to pay an annual levy to the Victorian Government. The cemetery grants program is funded by this levy.

# Priority areas

Cemetery trusts may apply to the department for grants relating to specific issues at their cemeteries in circumstances where they do not have funds available for the required expenditure.

Grants are prioritised based on need. Items relating to the maintenance of significant structures, such as fences, or issues which pose a threat to personal safety, such as dangerous trees, are generally considered priority issues. Standard items include equipment required for the operation of a cemetery. Items that may enhance the quality or amenity of the cemetery, but are not necessary to its function, are considered a low priority.

# Application process

To apply for a grant, a cemetery trust must submit a completed grant application form before work commences. The department will not reimburse trusts that have expended funds in anticipation of receipt of a grant. Applications should include two quotes (GST inclusive) for the proposed expenditure and photos (where appropriate). If a trust is unable to obtain two quotes, a written explanation outlining why this is not possible must be submitted with the application.

The trust will be contacted if additional information is required, although this is likely to delay the application. To avoid such delays please read the information requirements carefully. Unsuccessful applications can be resubmitted in the next round of grants with updated information and quotes.

Grant applications are assessed twice each financial year in November and March. A selection panel will assess each application against the assessment criteria. The selection panel will include a representative from the Victorian Health Building Authority and from the Cemetery Sector Governance Support Program.

Written notification of the outcome of all applications will be provided to the applicable trusts following completion of the assessment process. Grants received must be spent in accordance with the proposal made in the application.

# Assessment criteria

## General

1. Whether the application aligns with the grant program’s objectives.
2. The extent to which the application will benefit the cemetery and/or the community. The application should clearly explain the works or item/service required, including any occupational health and safety aspects, heritage considerations and risks associated with NOT undertaking the works.
3. The extent to which the trust has demonstrated the support of the local community for the application.
4. The extent to which the budget is comprehensive, realistic, provides value for money and enables the delivery of objectives within the proposed timelines.
5. The extent to which alternative and complimentary funding sources have been explored or secured.
6. The demonstrated financial need of the trust.
7. The trust’s ability to undertake or implement the funded activity should they be successful.

## Specific

1. Cemetery trusts are required to have an ABN.
2. Cemetery trust are required to have **fully expended all previous cemetery program grants and provide evidence of the grant acquittal to the department**.
3. Cemetery trusts **are required to have submitted their Abstract of Accounts**.
4. Operational cemetery trusts **are required to have a suitable scale of fees**.

**Please note:** Trust members cannot quote or be paid to carry out any part of the proposed works, as this is a direct conflict of interest.

# Suitable grant requests

Examples of suitable grant requests include:

* removal of infrastructure or other items that pose a public safety risk
* purchase of lawnmowers, garden tools, fuel, poison, paint, watering systems, water tanks
* construction or repairs to fences, gates, roads, driveways, pathways, car parks, toilets **(specification must provide access for those with a disability)**, storage sheds, rotundas, niche walls and/or the establishment of new burial areas
* removal or lopping of trees that pose a public safety risk\*
* grave covers and shoring equipment
* computer hardware and software\*\*
* health and safety training (e.g. Grave Safe).

## \*Removing, destroying or lopping trees

Prior to removing, destroying or lopping trees from cemetery grounds trusts may be required to consider heritage and native vegetation restrictions, appropriate health and safety processes and community views. Tree removal may also require approval from the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning and/or the local council. When applying for a grant for removing, destroying or lopping trees, trusts will need to demonstrate that they have addressed these matters appropriately by completing the additional Removing, destroying or lopping trees attachment.

## \*\*Computer hardware and software

The department will fund up to $4,000 to assist trusts to purchase IT equipment for trust use. The grant covers the purchase of a desktop or laptop computer, an all-in-one printer-fax-scanner and the relevant software. Grant requests for ongoing software licencing or subscription fees, as well as grant requests for the installation and ongoing costs of internet connection and usage, will not be considered.

# Ineligible grant requests

Grant money will not be provided for the normal operations of a cemetery. Examples include salary and wages of employees, repair and restoration of memorials, and ongoing maintenance such as groundskeeping.

In addition, grant money cannot be provided to reimburse trusts that have expended funds in anticipation of a grant. Commencement of work or the purchase of requested items must not take place until the trust has received the approved amount of funding from the department.

A retrospective grant may be considered when a trust is applying for a grant for urgent health and safety matters (such as removal of a tree which is confirmed to pose an immediate threat to visitors, or compliance with a Work Safe order) or health and safety training (such as Grave Safe). Trusts must contact the department to discuss the possibility of applying for a retrospective grant in these cases **before** submitting an application.

# Payment

Due to the limited funds available for cemetery grants, the department may be unable to grant the full amount requested in an application and may allocate a partial grant. Trusts that receive partial grants are expected to draw upon their own funds to undertake the proposed expenditure. Top-up grants will not be provided for the same proposal in subsequent years.Approved grant funds will be deposited into a nominated cemetery trust bank account.

# Funding conditions

Any grant money transferred to a trust must be spent within four months of allocation and appear in the following year’s Abstract of Accounts. If a grant is not expended within four months of receipt, the trust must provide a written explanation to the department explaining the delay and providing a revised completion date.

Trusts must fully account for the grant allocation by advising the department in writing when the grant is spent and providing copies of invoices/receipts as well as photos (where appropriate). **Trusts that have received a grant in previous years and not provided verification of the expenditure will be ineligible for future grants until the department receives the information.**

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