



2019/20 Drought Relief Fund for non-government schools

Special Circumstances Funding Application Instructions

The 2019/20 Drought Relief Fund for non-government schools (the Fund), has been established by the Morrison Government and administered by the Department of Education (the department) to provide financial support for schools in drought affected areas.

The \$10 million Fund provides supplementary financial assistance that can be used to offset school revenue where a family may not be able to afford their school fees due to loss of livelihood or other pressing financial difficulties resulting from the drought. Approved authorities can also apply to access the Fund if they have higher immediate operating costs due to the impact of the drought on their school(s); for example, if they have provided additional support staff to assist students who may have missed part of their schooling or school counsellors to address drought-related issues for their students.

In assessing applications for support, the department will consider:

- the extent to which the approved authority is financially vulnerable due to reduced fee revenue or higher operating expenses. Approved authorities which can demonstrate immediate financial hardships as a result of the drought will be given priority consideration under the Fund.
- the purpose for which the approved authority has requested the funds, and how it will support the school community. For example, fee relief for families affected so severely they are no longer able to afford their children's current school will be prioritised.
- the extent to which the approved authority has the capacity to absorb the financial impact of the drought's effects, relative to other affected approved authorities.

When considering applications, the department will use the information provided by approved authorities as well as the latest information in their school's Financial Questionnaire. The department may also seek advice from an approved authority's non-government representative body (NGRB) about the school(s) situation.

The department may adjust the amount of financial assistance provided for an application to ensure approved authorities with the greatest need for assistance are able to access sufficient funding.

Where an approved authority's individual circumstances are not adequately accommodated by the initial assessment, the approved authority may provide additional information and the department may consider this or seek additional information.

Instructions on how to prepare an application

The following instructions are provided to help applicants in preparing an application for financial assistance under the Fund. Please note:

- This application form is for a dedicated funding round for non-government schools affected by drought in the 2019/20 financial year. The application must be made by an approved authority for a school (or schools) affected by drought, and must be signed by a representative of that approved authority.
- The funding round will target schools with students from drought affected Local Government Areas (LGAs) in New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia, Tasmania and Victoria as identified by the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Cities and Regional Development in the Drought Community Program (<https://www.business.gov.au/assistance/drought-communities-programme>).
- Approved authorities for more than one school are not required to submit a separate application for each of their affected schools—a single application will suffice. However, the application must provide clear information, **for each affected school**, regarding the financial impact of the drought on the school's finances, support services provided by the school, the school's financial position etc.
- Funding should not be sought to provide fee relief for students ineligible for recurrent funding under the *Australian Education Act 2013* (the Act). This includes overseas students as defined in section 6 of the Act, such as students on visa subclasses 500, 570, 571, 572, 573, 574, and 575. Further information on overseas students can be found in the 2018 Non-government Schools Census Guidelines, available [here](#). Please note, distance education students are eligible.
- Before assessment can commence, the applicant must provide the department with:
 - the completed application signed by the approved authority representative
 - supporting documentation specified in the application form that substantiates the approved authority's circumstance and claims.
- Applicants should note that providing any false or misleading information is a serious offence. Such information includes reports, certificates, statements, acquittals or any other information required to meet the requirements of this program.
- Applicants for special circumstances funding must read and comply with the instructions below to ensure their application includes all the information required by the department for assessment.
- The application period commences on 12 November 2019 and concludes on 16 December 2019. Approved authorities will be notified of the outcome of their application in late February 2019 and funding payments will be made through State/Territory Treasuries in March 2020.

A. Applicant details

- Applications must include details for the approved authority and the school(s) affected by the drought, including a primary contact person.
- If the listed contact person is not an approved authority representative, an authority to communicate (provided in the application form) with the listed contact person must be signed by an approved authority representative and provided with the application.

B. Statements in support of request for special circumstances funding

Applicants must provide an estimate of the total amount of special circumstances funding being sought. The estimate must:

- itemise all major components and reflect as nearly as possible the anticipated sum required for each; and
- be accompanied by an explanation that outlines the basis of the estimate and provides a justification for the amount of special circumstances funding sought.

The supporting statements should explain how the school has been affected by the drought, how the approved authority plans to use the special circumstances funding to address drought relief for its students/families, and how the approved authority has suffered financial hardship as a result of the drought.

The application should also ideally include a letter of endorsement from your relevant non-government representative body (NGRB).

C. Approved authority and school financial information

This information will be used to assess the approved authority's and school's financial situation. It will further assist in identifying whether the criteria for special circumstances funding have been met, and enable an assessment of the robustness and feasibility of the approved authority's planned use of the special circumstances funding.

The department may use and/or disclose the information provided to obtain further information about the approved authority or any key individuals of the approved authority from the department's own records and databases, or from the records of NGRBs, the Australian Securities and Investment Commission, Australian Charities and Not-for-profit Commission, Australian Taxation Office, state and territory government agencies and/or a credit rating agency. The department may also disclose this information for the purposes set out in the Privacy Notice in this form.

D. Privacy Notice and Declaration

Each application must be accompanied by the declaration at Item D of the application form. The declaration must be signed by an authorised representative of the approved authority in the presence of another person.

E. Application checklist

Applicants must complete the special circumstances funding application checklist located at Item E of the application form. The form must be signed to verify that all required information and supporting documents have been included with the application.