

SCOUTS AUSTRALIA – VICTORIAN BRANCH

BRANCH LOCAL INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING 2009/2010

COMMENCEMENT

These new guidelines outline funding arrangements which will come into effect from 1 July 2009 and replace the current Branch funding arrangements for new halls, major repairs and improvements which have operated for the last two years. The new scheme is designed to significantly improve the physical state of our scout halls and other facilities to meet the six strategic priorities we have identified in order to achieve our Vision of All Victorians Enjoying Scouting.

BACKGROUND

The provision of up to date, safe and attractive facilities is a key factor in the delivery of a successful Scout program, and in attracting and retaining youth members and leaders.

Group Committees are primarily responsible for the provision and maintenance of scout halls and associated facilities and are expected to plan and budget annually for routine items such as grounds maintenance, cleaning, repairs and painting.

However there are some major items of maintenance (e.g. re-roofing or re-stumping) that are infrequent by nature and are of a relatively high cost. Sometimes these items are beyond the ongoing resources of a Group and require special fund-raising efforts, private sponsorship or government grants. The Branch Executive Committee recognizes that Groups may need further assistance to fund these major items and will initiate a revised Branch Infrastructure Refurbishment Program which is to commence from 1 July 2009.

There are also a number of scout halls or other properties that have become redundant or are no longer suitable for their original or intended use. While these are often retained to produce income for a District or Region, that income is quite often less than a truly commercial return on the value of the property.

The Branch Property Committee through the Branch Executive Committee have recently issued Property Retention Guidelines which will assist the Association in deciding whether excess property is to be retained or sold. It is to be clearly understood that the decision about whether property should be retained or sold is to be made by asking, “What is in the interests of Scouting in Victoria?”

When such properties are sold, the proceeds are held by Branch where they are invested in a separate fund. This is the fund which is used to finance capital works such as new facilities, major additions or alterations to existing facilities.

The Branch Executive Committee’s preference is to see these funds and future proceeds of property sales being actively used to provide new and refurbished facilities rather than being passively invested. The best legacy that we can pass to

future generations is a vibrant and active organization with up to date facilities. Therefore Branch Executive Committee is continuing to make some of these funds available to assist those Groups facing the high cost of major repairs, extensions or the establishment of new facilities.

UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES

The basic principle adopted is that today's members, having benefited from the work of past generations to establish facilities, should help to pay for their activities and current amenities and should look to pass on to future generations facilities which are in line with today's requirements and which will service Scouting into the future.

ASSISTANCE FROM BRANCH

Grants and Loans

In appropriate cases, the Branch Property Committee, acting on behalf of the Branch Executive Committee, will provide assistance in the form of grants or loans or a combination of both.

Grants

Subject to the fulfilment of the requirements stated later, grants may be made to Groups for the following purposes:

- a) The provision of a scout hall or suitable meeting premises where none has existed before.
- b) Major extensions or alterations to a hall to enable expansion of a Group or to provide accommodation for a second Group.
- c) To use the proceeds of sale of surplus property to upgrade and improve other properties or to acquire a new property.

Loans

Subject to the fulfilment of the requirements stated later, interest free loans to be repaid over 10 years may be made to Groups lacking sufficient resources to fund major structural or refurbishment works required to reinstate a meeting place to a suitable and safe condition for use.

Requirements to Qualify for Assistance of a Grant or a Loan

Applications for financial assistance may be submitted to the Branch Property Committee by Groups, supported by District and Region recommendations. **The application should be made before any work is committed to or performed.** The application should include the following information in the form of a simple Business Plan:

1. It must detail the planned work to be performed and its estimated cost. Where appropriate, plans will need to be submitted with the application and at least one quote.
2. It must demonstrate the ongoing viability of the Group which meets in the hall. This will include details of the existing youth and adult leader membership of each section, details of any waiting list or plans for

- recruitment, membership of the Group Committee, and the strength of the parent support base.
3. It will also need to provide an ongoing maintenance plan and budget for the hall to maintain it in a safe and suitable condition.
 4. It must demonstrate the financial viability of the Group including the ability to service the commitment to Branch and to maintain the hall in the future. This should include a budget for the next 3 years. Copies of the Group's accounts and Annual Report for the last 2 years should also be included.
 5. It must state whether the hall land is freehold, leasehold, licence or other tenure and, if leasehold, the term of that lease and the lessor.
 6. It must be supported by the District Executive and District Commissioner and endorsed by the Region Commissioner and Region Executive (as applicable) who need to confirm that the work is necessary and that there are no viable alternative facilities, such as shared halls, available to the Group.

Consideration of Application

Once the project is approved by the Branch Property Committee, acting on behalf of the Branch Executive Committee, the Group will be advised as to the outcome of the application. If the application is approved, the Group will be authorised to proceed with the work detailed on the following basis:

- a) In most cases the Group will be required to obtain three quotations for the work and to forward them to Branch with a recommendation as to which one should be accepted. This requirement may be varied where there is a substantial input of voluntary work or where other circumstances may warrant
- b) Funds will be advanced against suppliers' invoices for materials supplied or work performed. Unless other arrangements are agreed Branch will pay these invoices direct.
- c) The work must be completed within 12 months of the approval being given unless an extension has been sought and approved.
- d) Loans will usually be made on the basis that they are repaid by equal half-yearly payments over a period up to 10 years.

REMEMBER

The Victorian Branch financial resources are always limited and the needs across the State's seven hundred properties are significant so it is to be clearly understood that it is expected that Group, District, Region and outside resources are expected to be used to contribute to any project as part of any request for funding support from the Branch Local Infrastructure Fund.

John W de Wijn
Chairman
Branch Property Committee