

In January 2004, Executive Council invited Baptist Investment and Finance Ltd (BIF) to open a branch in Victoria. Since that time the Union recommends and encourages churches to apply for loans for with BIF. Details about BIF loans are available by contacting the State Manager at the Union office or at www.bif.com.au

The Union maintains a close working relationship with BIF. The state office is located with the Union office and the Audit and Finance Committee approve all loans before they are approved by the BIF Board.

Churches may be entitled to receive a grant for their building program and churches should refer to the guidelines on Advancement Fund Grants

Loans direct from the Advancement Fund are still possible in special circumstances and the following is a summary of the guidelines approved by Executive Council in July 1999.

1. Loans to be made to churches recognized by the Baptist Union of Victoria for the purpose of;
 - 1.1. Acquiring freehold land for the purpose of erecting a church complex
 - 1.2. Erection of a church complex
 - 1.3. Extensions to an existing church complex
 - 1.4. Purchase of a residence for the use of a member of the pastoral team
 - 1.5. Purchase of other properties, as approved by the Executive Council of the Baptist Union of Victoria, to be used for church related or sponsored activities
 - 1.6. The provision of temporary financial support to churches in need of support.

2. Loans may be made from the capital of the fund.
3. Applicants for loans need to demonstrate;
 - 3.1. Consistent support of the direct ministries of the Baptist Union of Victoria for a significant period (3-5 years, depending on the age of the church). It is anticipated that this support will continue for the period of the loan and beyond
 - 3.2. Approval of and commitment to the project and its financing by a number of church members, not less than authorized by the church's constitution for a Special Church Members Meeting and, if there is no such figure, not less than 67% of members attending and voting at a Special Church Members Meeting. This support to be evidenced by the provision of the minutes of the meeting concerned indicating both the number of members present and the result of the vote regarding the financing of the project.
 - 3.3. A similar level of support among those regularly attending and participating in the life of the church that are non-members.
 - 3.4. The church is capable of raising 20% of the total cost of the project and will have this in hand at the time the project commences.
 - 3.5. Where additional external finance is being obtained, a certificate from the financier that the funds will be available.
 - 3.6. An ability to meet the repayments of principal and interest to all financiers over a period of not longer than 15 years.
4. Loan approvals are by the Executive Council of the Baptist Union of Victoria.
5. The interest rate for loans will be a rate determined from time to time by the Executive Council of the Union and will be known as the standard rate. Currently the rate is the average of the Standard Variable Home Mortgage rates of the four major Banks (ANZ, Commonwealth, NAB, Westpac).
6. The period of loans will be at the discretion of Executive Council but will not exceed 15 years. Temporary assistance loans will be repayable over a maximum of 5 years.
7. Repayments are expected to be made monthly in accordance with the agreement made before the loan commences.
9. The following terms are mandatory for loan made to churches from the Advancement Fund;
 - 9.1. All property to be held in the name of the Baptist Union of Victoria
 - 9.2. The recognition and acknowledgement of the church that the loan repayments area matter of priority. Provision for repayments is to be made in any budgeting or planning for

new or additional ministries. The Union recognizes that the payment of pastoral remuneration should have first call on the church finances.

9.3. Church financial reports to be provided to the Baptist Union of Victoria at agreed intervals

9.4. No additional external financing to be obtained without prior approval of the Union's Executive Council

9.5. Defaults and events of defaults and remedies to be discussed.

The Baptist Union of Victoria
Victorian Baptist Advancement Fund
Guidelines for Provision of Grants