



Grant Opportunity Guidelines

Defence Strategic Policy Research Program

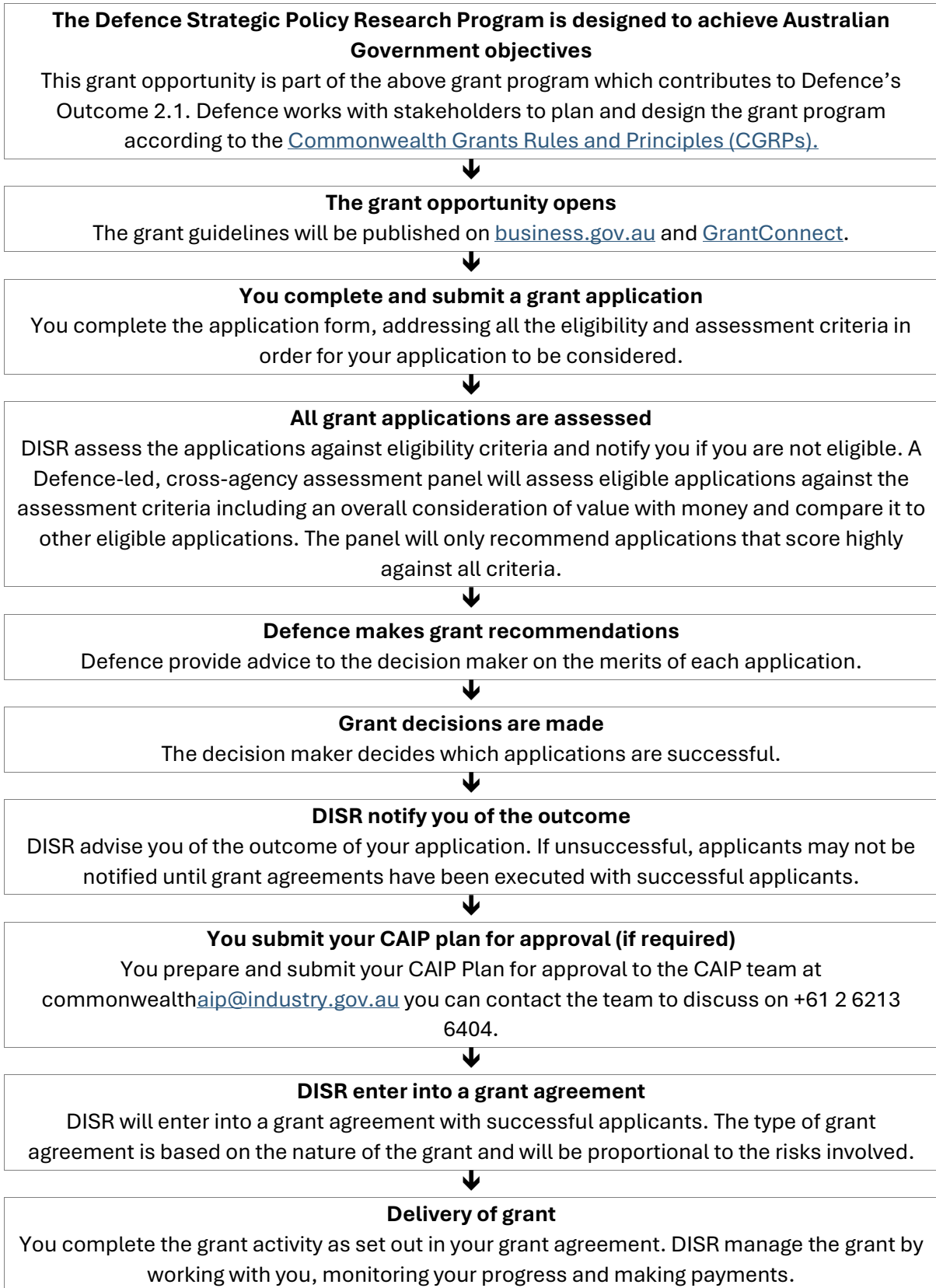
Opening date:	26 August 2026
Closing date and time:	5.00PM Australian Eastern Standard Time on 23 September 2026 Please take account of time zone differences when submitting your application.
Commonwealth policy entity:	Department of Defence (Defence)
Administering entity:	Department of Industry, Science and Resources (DISR)
Enquiries:	If you have any questions, contact DISR on 13 28 46.
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1. Defence Strategic Policy Research Program processes



Evaluation of the Defence Strategic Policy Research Program

Defence will evaluate the specific grant activity and Defence Strategic Policy Research Program as a whole. This is based on information you provide and that is collected from various sources.

1.1. Introduction

These guidelines contain information for the Defence Strategic Policy Research Program.

This document sets out:

- the purpose of the grant program
- the eligibility and assessment criteria
- how we consider and assess grant applications
- how we notify applicants and enter into grant agreements with grantees
- how we monitor and evaluate grantees' performance
- responsibilities and expectations in relation to the opportunity.

This grant opportunity and process will be administered by the Department of Industry, Science and Resources (DISR) on behalf of the Department of Defence (Defence).

DISR and Defence have defined key terms used in these guidelines in the glossary at section 14.

You should read this document carefully before you fill out an application.

2. About the Defence Strategic Policy Research Program grant opportunity

The open competitive Defence Strategic Policy Research Program grant opportunity will provide operating funding to the Australian strategic policy sector for up to five years, from 2027–28 to 2031–32.

This grant opportunity was established to implement the government response to the 2024 [Independent Review of Commonwealth funding for strategic policy work](#) (the Varghese review).¹

The aim of the grant opportunity is to ensure greater consistency in how government engages the strategic policy sector and provide better value-for-money for the government, while maintaining an effective sector into the future.

The grant opportunity is confined to activities that support the Australian Defence Force (or other defence purposes), with the majority of an organisation's business-as-usual activities directed toward the annual national security policy research priorities, set by the Secretaries' Committee on National Security (SCNS) and published by the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet.

¹ <https://www.pmc.gov.au/resources/independent-review-commonwealth-funding-strategic-policy-work>

The objectives of the grant opportunity are to promote the development of Australia's defence and national security policy and strategy by:

- informing and shaping debate through quality research, discussion fora, and other strategic policy work on Australian strategic and defence policy issues
- deepening public discussion on Australia's strategic and defence policy choices
- strengthening engagement between Defence and the strategic policy sector.

The intended outcomes of the grant opportunity are:

- published original, evidence-based strategic policy research
- development of new and emerging talent within the Australian strategic policy sector, promoting equitable and diverse participation, including with gender-diverse and/or First Nations-led organisations
- enhanced engagement with public and private sector experts, including outside metropolitan locations
- enriched professional development for Defence personnel (military and civilian).

Defence reserves the right to re-open this grant opportunity or offer additional grant opportunities under this program, within the advertised funding envelope. DISR would publish relevant details, including opening and closing dates, on business.gov.au and [GrantConnect](#).

The program is administered according to the [Commonwealth Grants Rules and Principles \(CGRPs\)](#)².

3. Grant amount and grant period

3.1. Grants available

The 2026–27 Budget announced up to \$58.3 million for this grant opportunity over five years, from 2027–28 to 2031–32.

There is no maximum grant amount, but individual grants cannot exceed the amount of available funds.

Proposed funding will be negotiated with successful grantees. Applicants will need to detail what will be delivered with the requested funding. Applicants must also provide information on the likely impact if a reduced amount of funding was provided, specifically 75 per cent and 50 per cent of the grant funding sought.

Indexation has been included in the funding for this grant program and will be passed on to grantees. DISR will advise you in writing of the change to the grant agreement (for example, through a notice of change) of the amount to be paid bi-annually, the indexation factor being applied, and when it will be paid.

² <https://www.finance.gov.au/government/commonwealth-grants/commonwealth-grants-rules-and-principles-2024>

3.2. Project period

The maximum project period is five years.

You must complete your project by 30 June 2032.

4. Eligibility criteria

DISR and Defence cannot consider your application if you do not satisfy all eligibility criteria.

4.1. Who is eligible to apply for a grant?

To be eligible you must:

- have an Australian Business Number (ABN)
- be registered for the Goods and Services Tax (GST)
- have an account with an Australian financial institution
- have an established board, informed by a skills matrix for board positions
- be an incorporated organisation in Australia.

Joint applications are not acceptable.

4.2. Additional eligibility requirements

In addition to the eligibility criteria, you agree to:

- comply with the recommendations under the Varghese review where relevant to your organisation, including:
 - providing the Commonwealth with board observer status
 - policies governing the transparency and appropriateness of corporate, philanthropic and foreign funding
- provide all mandatory attachments specified in section 7.1, including:
 - complying with formatting requirements, file-size restrictions, and word and page limits as specified.

The eligibility criteria cannot be waived under any circumstances.

4.3. Who is not eligible to apply for a grant?

You are not eligible to apply if you are:

- any organisation not included in section 4.1
- an organisation or sole-trader based outside Australia
- already receiving operating funding for strategic policy work from the Commonwealth, between 1 July 2027 and 30 June 2032
- an organisation included on the [National Redress Scheme's website](http://www.nationalredress.gov.au/)³ on the list of 'Institutions that have not joined or signified their intent to join the Scheme'

³ <http://www.nationalredress.gov.au/>

- an employer of 100 or more employees that has [not complied](#)⁴ with the *Workplace Gender Equality Act (2012)*
- an individual
- a partnership
- an unincorporated association
- a trust (however, an incorporated trustee may apply on behalf of a trust)
- a Commonwealth, state, territory or local government body (including government business enterprises and material entities) except a Commonwealth company which is in the *Corporations Act 2001*
- a non-corporate Commonwealth entity.

4.4. Specific legislation, policies and industry standards

While you are required to comply with all relevant laws and regulations, you will be asked to demonstrate that you comply with the following legislation/policies/industry standards to maintain your eligibility for the grant:

- [Working for Women: A Strategy for Gender Equality](#)⁵
- [National Agreement on Closing the Gap](#)⁶.

To be eligible for a grant, you must declare in your application that you comply with these requirements. You will need to declare you can continue to meet these requirements in your grant agreement with the Commonwealth.

5. What the grant money can be used for

5.1. Eligible grant activities

This grant is for operating funding. To be eligible, the majority of the activities you deliver under this grant must be:

- directly related to supporting the Australian Defence Force (ADF), or other defence purposes that inform and shape defence strategic policy
- directed toward the annual national security policy research priorities set by the Secretaries' Committee on National Security, and published by the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet
- undertaken in Australia (although some activities may be undertaken overseas).

Eligible activities must have a clear and direct link to the grant opportunity objectives and outcomes.

Eligible activities include:

- broadening strategic policy debate, including engagement outside metropolitan locations

⁴ <https://www.wgea.gov.au/what-we-do/compliance-reporting/non-compliant-list>

⁵ <https://genderequality.gov.au/>

⁶ <https://www.closingthegap.gov.au/national-agreement>

- enabling two-way exchanges and secondments, subject to operational requirements
- professional development of Defence personnel (military and civilian).

Defence may also approve other activities, in line with the objectives and outcomes in section 2.

5.2. Eligible locations

Your project can include overseas activities, as long as the majority are in Australia.

5.3. Eligible expenditure

You can only spend grant funds on eligible expenditure. Expenditure must have been incurred on agreed activities, as defined in your grant agreement.

Eligible expenditure items are:

- grant research costs (e.g. data acquisition, analytical tools, research assistance, and salaries directly related to eligible grant activities)
- grant event costs (e.g. facility hire, equipment hire or catering)
- communication costs (e.g. digital or physical publications and media)
- operating expenses directly related to the grant, which may be applied towards corporate costs, including:
 - office rental and lease expenses
 - essential office equipment
 - supplier expenses
 - utility expenses
 - ICT and website maintenance costs
 - legal and audit expenses
- expenses on corporate overheads, including employee expenses for finance, human resources, IT, publications, fellowship and internship programs, executive management and oversight, and administration
- travel cost at the lowest, reasonable economy-class fare of the day, for domestic or international travel, unless medical evidence is provided to the Program Delegate to support deviation from this requirement. In addition, accommodation and other reasonable travel expenses must align with the Australian Taxation Office Taxation Determination rates. If any travel funded by the grant is undertaken at a higher class, the Grantee is to cover the difference in cost
- the cost of independent audits of project expenditure up to a maximum of 1 per cent of total eligible project expenditure.

DISR may update the guidance on eligible and ineligible expenditure from time to time. If your application is successful, the version in place when you submitted your application applies to your project.

If your application is successful, DISR may ask you to verify grant costs that you provided in your application. You may need to provide evidence such as quotes for major costs.

The Program Delegate (who is a Manager within DISR with responsibility for administering the program) makes the final decision on what is eligible expenditure and may give additional guidance on eligible expenditure if required.

You must incur the expenditure between the start and end date for it to be eligible, unless stated otherwise. The earliest date to commence your project is 1 July 2027.

The Commonwealth is not responsible for any expenditure you incur until a grant agreement is executed and/or before the project commences. The Commonwealth will not be liable, and should not be held out as being liable, for any activities undertaken before the grant agreement is executed.

5.4. What the grant money cannot be used for

Expenditure items that are not eligible are:

- capital costs (e.g. construction work or the purchase of land or real estate)
- costs incurred in the preparation of a grant application or related documentation, except for future rounds of this program
- costs incurred prior to execution of a valid grant agreement
- costs incurred after the end date or activity completion date of a valid grant agreement
- activities for which other Commonwealth, state, territory or local government bodies have primary responsibility.

6. The assessment criteria

You must address all assessment criteria in your application. Your application will be assessed based on the weighting given to each criterion. Funding will only be awarded to applications that score highly against all assessment criteria.

The application form asks questions that relate to the assessment criteria below. The amount of detail and supporting evidence you provide in your application should be relative to the project size, complexity and grant amount requested. You should provide evidence to support your answers. The application form displays word limits for each response.

6.1. Assessment criterion 1

Strategic alignment (50 points).

This criterion assesses the strategic relevance of your organisation, including your ability to inform and shape defence strategic policy in Australia through outputs and institutional direction.

You must demonstrate this through describing:

- a. the alignment of your organisation's activities and outputs with Defence priorities as described in the National Defence Strategy
- b. the timeliness, quality and scope of the proposed research and policy outputs
- c. the durability of deliverables and outcomes, including the ability to adapt activities and outputs in response to changes in the strategic landscape over the life of the program
- d. your understanding of the policy environment including the need for flexibility and responsiveness as a member of the strategic policy sector

- e. your ability to clearly articulate relevant government priorities, specifically the [National Defence Strategy](#),⁷ publicly available SCNS priorities and other national security initiatives and how your organisation's work will support and advance these priorities.

6.2. Assessment criterion 2

Capacity, capability and resources (20 points).

This criterion assesses your ability to resource, manage and deliver on stated projects and initiatives. This criterion preferences organisations that are able to demonstrate an ability to reduce/limit administrative spending, adopt transparent enterprise policies, and provide adequate governance structures including risk minimisation.

You must demonstrate this, through describing how your organisation will:

- a. manage and monitor your work, explaining appropriate governance and planning arrangements
- b. manage risks, including but not limited to those associated with national security issues, any proposed engagement with foreign entities, and intellectual property protection
- c. build and retain an appropriately skilled workforce, including personnel with the right skills and experience; and manage funding, security (including cybersecurity), infrastructure, technology, and intellectual property protection.

6.3. Assessment criterion 3

Impact of grant funding (15 points).

This criterion assesses how the proposed program of work will foster inclusive, informed public debate and how this will be measured.

You must demonstrate this through:

- a. articulating the policy relevance of the research contribution, including how it will inform, challenge, or advance policy development in defence and national security policy
- b. outlining how your proposed work will deepen dialogue, engage the public, and contribute fresh or alternate perspectives to the policy discourse
- c. identifying whether the proposed project addresses a genuine capability or knowledge gap, offers a fresh analytical lens, or revisits established findings with the intent to contest or refine them
- d. outlining the qualitative, quantitative or longitudinal public engagement opportunities
- e. detailing how your organisation will assess and report on impact and reach, where:
 - impact is the degree of meaningful change focusing on quality, depth and significance
 - reach is the number or proportion of people who are exposed to the research or other strategic policy work.

⁷ <https://www.defence.gov.au/about/strategic-planning/2026-national-defence-strategy-2026-integrated-investment-program>

6.4. Assessment criterion 4

Effective and efficient use of funding (15 points).

This criterion assesses the overall cost-effectiveness of the proposed program of work and your organisation's use of funds. This criterion ensures that public funds are allocated in accordance with the Australian Government's assurance requirements and directed towards proposed programs of work that deliver meaningful, measurable and cost-effective contributions to Australia's strategic policy landscape and debate.

You must demonstrate this through:

- explaining how your organisation will sustain effective engagement with government and the strategic policy sector to provide strong return on investment
- providing a clear, transparent and well-justified budget for operating funding, including any co contribution and an explanation of total costs and evidence that proposed outputs and activities are proportionate to the funding requested
- explaining how your organisation will ensure resources are used efficiently to maximise the reach, relevance, quality and utility of its strategic policy work
- developing a performance framework, including indicators that are specific, measurable and targeted, and address the reporting requirements outlined in Section 12.2.

7. How to apply

Before applying you should read and understand these guidelines, the sample [application form](#) and the sample [grant agreement](#) published on business.gov.au and GrantConnect.

You are encouraged to read the [Independent Review of Commonwealth funding for strategic policy work](#)⁸, and the [Australian Government response](#)⁹ to the report, to understand the detailed rationale for and objectives of the government in establishing this grant program.

Applicants should read all eligibility and assessment criteria closely and attach detailed evidence that supports the assessment criteria.

You will need to set up an account to access our online [portal](#).¹⁰

To apply, you must:

- complete and submit the application through the online [portal](#)
- provide all the information requested
- address all eligibility and assessment criteria
- include all necessary attachments.

You are responsible for ensuring your application is complete and accurate. The use of artificial intelligence and other forms of automation is permissible in developing your

⁸ <https://www.pmc.gov.au/resources/independent-review-commonwealth-funding-strategic-policy-work>

⁹ <https://www.pmc.gov.au/resources/australian-government-response-independent-review-commonwealth-funding-strategic-policy-work>

¹⁰ <https://portal.business.gov.au/>

application, but you remain responsible for the accuracy, security and suitability of all information submitted as part of your application.

Giving false or misleading information is a serious offence under the [Criminal Code Act 1995](#).¹¹ If DISR consider that you have provided false or misleading information they may not progress your application. If you find an error in your application after submitting it, you should call DISR immediately on 13 28 46.

After submitting your application, DISR may contact you for clarification if there is an error or any missing information, including evidence that supports your eligibility/merit.

You can view and print a copy of your submitted application on the portal for your own records.

If you need further guidance around the application process, or if you have any issues with the portal, [contact us](#) at business.gov.au or by calling 13 28 46.

7.1. Attachments to the application

You must provide the following documents with your application, including strict adherence to word and page limits, as appropriate:

- a project plan including a risk management plan (up to 6 pages)
- a detailed project budget that includes all income sources, eligible expenditure, and deliverables
- evidence of funding strategy, e.g. financial statements, loan agreements, cash-flow documents
- evidence of a skills matrix for board positions
- hyperlink to your most recent annual report (if publicly available)
- trust deed (where applicable).

You must attach supporting documentation to the application form in line with the instructions provided within the form. You should only attach requested documents. Individual file sizes cannot be greater than 25MB, while the total of all attachments cannot exceed 50MB. DISR and Defence will not consider information in attachments that they do not request.

7.2. Timing of grant opportunity processes

You can only submit an application between the published opening and closing dates. DISR cannot accept late applications.

If you are successful, you can start your project from 1 July 2027. The Commonwealth is not responsible for any expenditure you incur until a grant agreement is executed and/or before the project commences.

¹¹ <https://www.legislation.gov.au/C2004A04868/latest/text>

Table 1: Expected timing for this grant opportunity

Activity	Timeframe
Assessment of applications	8 weeks
Approval and announcement of successful applicants	4 weeks
Negotiations and award of grant agreements	8 weeks
Notification to unsuccessful applicants	2 weeks
Earliest start date of project	01 July 2027
Project completion date	30 June 2032
End date of grant commitment	30 June 2032

7.3. Questions during the application process

If you have any questions during the application period, [contact](https://business.gov.au) business.gov.au or call 13 28 46.

If you need guidance around the intended scope of the grant opportunity compared to your intended application, contact Defence at sp.review@defence.gov.au.

7.4. Sector briefing

A sector briefing in Canberra (virtual attendance available) will provide an opportunity for prospective applicants to ask questions and seek clarification on the guidelines and assessment process prior to submitting an application.

Attendance will be capped at no more than three attendees per organisation, either in-person or virtual. If you would like to attend the briefing, please send one email per organisation to sp.review@defence.gov.au with the following information to register your interest within 5 business days of guidelines being published:

- Name
- Organisation and role
- Contact number
- Email address.

8. The grant selection process

8.1. Assessment of grant applications

DISR will initially review your application against the eligibility criteria (section 4). Only eligible applications will proceed to the assessment stage.

If eligible, your application will be assessed against the criteria (section 6) by a Defence-led, cross-agency assessment panel.

The assessment panel will consider your application on its merits, based on:

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- how well it meets the criteria
- how it compares to other applications
- whether it provides value with relevant money¹², with consideration to:
 - the overall objective/s of the grant opportunity
 - the evidence provided to demonstrate how your project contributes to meeting those objectives
 - the relative amount of grant funding sought.

If applications are assessed as of equal ranking, the assessment panel will examine value with relevant money and alignment to the program objectives to recommend applications for funding.

Additional considerations may include:

- applicants' past performance in response to other grant processes, where it relates to the assessment criteria. The use of such information must be in accordance with the guidelines, and subject to intellectual property and confidentiality obligations. Absence of past performance will not disadvantage new or emerging applicants.
- any national interest, financial, legal/regulatory, governance or other issue or risk identified during any due diligence process that conducted in respect of the applicant. This includes its directors, officers, senior managers, key personnel, its related bodies corporate (as defined in the Corporations Act) or its application that could bring the Australian Government into disrepute if it were to fund the applicant. Such issues and risks include where DISR or Defence consider that funding the application under this grant opportunity is likely to directly conflict with Australian Government policy. Where possible, you will be provided with an opportunity to comment on any material risks identified during this due diligence process prior to our determining the extent (if any) to which those issues or risks affect our assessment of the application and, if so, whether they are sufficient to warrant the exclusion of your application from the assessment process.

8.2. Who will assess applications?

If eligible, DISR will refer your application to the Defence-led, cross-agency assessment panel, which will make recommendations to Defence's Strategic Policy Committee on the grantees and amount of funding to be awarded.

The assessment panel may seek additional advice from independent technical experts or advisors to inform the assessment process.

The assessment panel may seek additional information about you or your application. They may do this from within the Commonwealth, even if you do not nominate the sources as referees. The assessment panel may also consider information about you or your application that is available as a result of the due diligence process or through the normal course of business.

¹² See glossary for an explanation of 'value with money'.

8.3. Who will approve grants?

The Deputy Prime Minister as Minister for Defence decides which grants to approve, taking into account the recommendations of the Strategic Policy Committee and the availability of grant funds.

The Deputy Prime Minister as Minister for Defence's decision is final in all matters, including:

- the grant approval
- the grant funding to be awarded
- any conditions attached to the offer of grant funding.

DISR cannot review decisions about the merits of your application.

The Deputy Prime Minister as Minister for Defence will not approve funding if there are insufficient program funds available across relevant financial years for the program.

9. Notification of application outcomes

DISR will advise you of the outcome of your application in writing. If you are successful, DISR will advise you of any specific conditions attached to the grant.

9.1. Feedback on your application

If you are unsuccessful, DISR will give you an opportunity to discuss the outcome.

9.2. Further grant opportunities

Defence reserves the right to re-open this grant opportunity or offer additional grant opportunities under this grant program, within the advertised funding envelope, during the five-year period.

10. Successful grant applications

10.1. The grant agreement

You must enter into a legally binding grant agreement with the Commonwealth. The grant agreement has general terms and conditions that cannot be changed. A sample [grant agreement](#) is available on business.gov.au and GrantConnect.

DISR will manage the grant agreement through the online portal. This includes issuing and executing the grant agreement. Execute means both you and the Commonwealth have accepted the agreement. You must not start any Defence Strategic Policy Research Program activities until a grant agreement is executed and/or before the project commences. The Commonwealth is not responsible for any expenditure you incur and cannot make any payments until a grant agreement is executed and the project has commenced.

The approval of your grant may have specific conditions determined by the assessment process or other considerations made by the Program Delegate. DISR will identify these in the offer of grant funding.

If you enter an agreement under the Defence Strategic Policy Research Program, you cannot receive other grants for operating funding from other Commonwealth, state or territory granting programs for the same activities.

The Commonwealth may recover grant funds if there is a breach of the grant agreement.

DISR will use a standard grant agreement.

You will have 30 days from the date of a written offer to execute this grant agreement with the Commonwealth. During this time, DISR will work with you to finalise details.

The offer may lapse if both parties do not sign the grant agreement within this time. Under certain circumstances, DISR may extend this period. DISR bases the approval of your grant on the information you provide in your application. DISR will review any required changes to these details to ensure they do not impact the project as approved by the Program Delegate.

10.2. Specific legislation, policies and industry standards

You must comply with all relevant laws, regulations and Australian Government sanctions in undertaking your activities, including legislations listed in Section 4.4. You must also comply with the specific legislation/policies/industry standards that follow. It is a condition of the grant funding that you meet these requirements. DISR will include these requirements in your grant agreement.

In particular, you will be required to comply with state/territory legislation in relation to working with children.

10.2.1. Commonwealth Australian Industry Participation (CAIP)

If your approved grant is equal to or over \$20 million, you may need to develop a Commonwealth Australian Industry Participation plan (CAIP plan). The CAIP policy aims to leverage Australian Government spending to maximise Australian industry participation, capability and jobs. It requires giving Australian businesses full, fair and reasonable opportunities to bid to supply goods and services on government-funded projects. If successful you are responsible for meeting CAIP requirements.

If it is determined that a CAIP plan is required:

- DISR must approve your CAIP plan prior to entering into a grant agreement
- DISR will publish an executive summary of your approved CAIP plan at <http://www.industry.gov.au/aipwww.industry.gov.au/major-projects-and-procurement/australian-industry-participation/australian-government-funded-projects> once the grant agreement is executed
- you must submit Implementation Reports to Defence via the DISR portal, demonstrating implementation of the CAIP plan.

More information on CAIP plan requirements can be found at www.industry.gov.au/major-projects-and-procurement/australian-industry-participation/australian-government-funded-projects <http://www.industry.gov.au/aip>.

10.3. How we pay the grant

The grant agreement will state the:

- maximum grant amount to be paid
- proportion of eligible expenditure covered by the grant (grant percentage).

The maximum grant amount will not be exceeded under any circumstances. If you incur extra costs, you must meet them yourself.

DISR will make payments on behalf of Defence, according to an agreed schedule set out in the grant agreement. Payments are subject to satisfactory progress on the project.

10.4. Grant Payments and GST

If you are registered for the Goods and Services Tax (GST), where applicable DISR will add GST to your grant payment and provide you with a recipient-created tax invoice. You are required to notify DISR if your GST registration status changes during the project period. GST does not apply to grant payments to government related entities¹³.

Grants are assessable income for taxation purposes, unless exempted by a taxation law. DISR recommends you seek independent professional advice on your taxation obligations or seek assistance from the [Australian Taxation Office](#).¹⁴ DISR does not provide advice on tax.

11. Announcement of grants

If successful, your grant will be listed on GrantConnect within 21 calendar days of the date of execution.

DISR will publish non-sensitive details of successful projects on GrantConnect. This is required under the Commonwealth Grants Rules and Principles (CGRPs),¹⁵ Section 5.4. DISR may also publish this information on business.gov.au. This information may include:

- name of your organisation
- title of the project
- description of the project and its aims
- amount of grant funding awarded
- Australian Business Number
- business location
- your organisation's industry sector.

¹³ See Australian Taxation Office ruling GSTR 2012/2 available at ato.gov.au

¹⁴ <https://www.ato.gov.au/>

¹⁵ <https://www.legislation.gov.au/F2024L00854/latest/text>

12. How we monitor your grant activity

12.1. Keeping us informed

You should let DISR and Defence know if anything is likely to affect your project, activities or organisation.

DISR and Defence need to know of any key changes to your organisation or its business activities, particularly if they affect your ability to complete your project, carry on business and pay debts due.

You must also inform DISR of any changes to your:

- name
- addresses
- nominated contact details
- bank account details.

If you become aware of a breach of terms and conditions under the grant agreement, you must contact DISR immediately.

You must notify us of events relating to your project and provide an opportunity for the Minister or their representative to attend.

12.2. Reporting

You must submit reports in line with the grant agreement. DISR will provide the requirements for these reports as appendices in the grant agreement, and remind you of your reporting obligations before a report is due.

DISR and Defence will expect you to report on:

- progress against agreed project milestones and outcomes, and provide input to Defence's mid-program review in 2029–30
- project expenditure
- any changes to forecast activities
- contributions of participants directly related to the project.

The amount of detail you provide in your reports should be relative to the project size, complexity and grant amount. The use of artificial intelligence and other forms of automation is permissible in meeting your reporting requirements, but you remain responsible for the accuracy, security and suitability of all information submitted in your reports.

DISR and Defence will monitor the progress of your project by assessing reports you submit and may conduct site visits to confirm details of your reports if necessary. Occasionally claims may need to be re-examined, seek further information or request an independent audit of claims and payments.

12.2.1. Progress reports

You must submit bi-annual progress reports as outlined in the grant agreement.

Progress reports must:

- include details of your progress towards completion of agreed project activities
- show the total eligible expenditure incurred to date
- include evidence of expenditure
- be submitted by the report due date (you can submit reports ahead of time if you have completed relevant project activities).

DISR will only make grant payments, on behalf of Defence, upon receipt (by DISR) of satisfactory progress reports.

You must discuss any project or milestone reporting delays with DISR and Defence as soon as you become aware of them.

12.2.2. Ad-hoc reports

You may be asked for ad hoc reports on your project. This may be to provide an update on progress, or any significant delays or difficulties.

12.2.3. Annual project plan

Your annual project plan must identify how your work will align to the annual national security policy research priorities set by SCNS and published by the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet. The annual project plan will be submitted to DISR and assessed and approved by Defence.

12.2.4. End of project report

When you complete the project, you must submit an end-of-project report.

End-of-project reports must:

- include the agreed evidence as specified in the grant agreement
- identify the total eligible expenditure incurred for the project
- include a declaration that the grant money was spent in accordance with the grant agreement and to report on any underspends of the grant money
- be submitted by the report due date.

12.3. Audited financial acquittal report

DISR may ask you to provide an independent audit report. An audit report will verify that you spent the grant in accordance with the grant agreement. The audit report requires you to prepare a statement of grant income and expenditure.

12.4. Grant agreement variations

DISR recognises that unexpected events may affect project progress. In these circumstances, you can request a variation to your grant agreement through DISR, including:

- changing project milestones
- extending the timeframe for completing the project but within the maximum time period allowed in program guidelines
- changing project activities.

The program does not allow for an increase of grant funds.

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If you want to propose changes to the grant agreement, you must put them in writing to DISR before the grant agreement end date. You can submit a variation request via the online portal.

If delays to milestone achievement and associated payments move to a different financial year, you will need a variation to the grant agreement. DISR can only move funds between financial years if there is sufficient program funding in the relevant year to allow for the revised payment schedule. If DISR cannot move the funds, you may lose some grant funding.

You should not assume that a variation request will be successful. DISR will consider your request based on factors such as:

- how it affects the project outcome
- consistency with the program policy objectives, grant opportunity guidelines and any relevant policies of DISR
- changes to the timing of grant payments
- availability of program funds.

12.5. Compliance visits

DISR or Defence may visit you during the project period, or at the completion of your project to review your compliance with the grant agreement. They will provide you with reasonable notice of any compliance visit.

12.6. Record keeping

DISR or Defence may also inspect the records you are required to keep under the grant agreement.

12.7. Evaluation

Defence will evaluate the grant opportunity to measure how well the outcomes and objectives have been achieved. This will occur mid-way through the program and at end of the program. Defence may use information from your application and project reports for this purpose. Defence may also interview you, or ask you for more information to help them understand how the grant impacted you, and to evaluate how effective the program was in achieving its outcomes.

Defence may contact you up to two years after you finish your project for more information to assist with this evaluation.

12.8. Acknowledgement

If you make a public statement about an activity funded under the program, including in a brochure or publication, you must seek permission from Defence. You may be asked to acknowledge the grant by using the following:

‘This project received grant funding from the Australian Government.’

13. Probity

DISR and Defence will make sure that the grant opportunity process is: fair, according to the published guidelines; incorporates appropriate safeguards against fraud, unlawful activities and other inappropriate conduct; and is consistent with the CGRPs.

These guidelines may be changed from time-to-time by DISR during the application period. When this happens, the revised guidelines will be published on GrantConnect.

13.1. Enquiries and feedback

For further information or clarification, you can contact DISR on 13 28 46 or by [web chat](#) or through our [online enquiry form](#) on business.gov.au.

DISR may publish answers to your questions on their website as Frequently Asked Questions.

Our [Customer Service Charter](#) is available at business.gov.au. DISR uses customer satisfaction surveys to improve our business operations and service.

If you have a complaint, call DISR on 13 28 46. DISR will refer your complaint to the appropriate manager.

If you are not satisfied with the way DISR handles your complaint, you can contact:

General Manager
Grant Programs
Business Grants Hub
Department of Industry, Science and Resources
GPO Box 2013
CANBERRA ACT 2601

You can also contact the [Commonwealth Ombudsman](#) with your complaint (call 1300 362 072). There is no fee for making a complaint, and the Ombudsman may conduct an independent investigation.

13.2. Conflicts of interest

Any conflicts of interest could affect the performance of the grant opportunity. There may be a conflict of interest, or perceived conflict of interest, if our staff, any member of a committee or advisor and/or you or any of your personnel:

- has a professional, commercial or personal relationship with a party who is able to influence the application selection process, such as an Australian Government officer or member of an external panel
- has a relationship with or interest in, an organisation, which is likely to interfere with or restrict the applicants from carrying out the proposed activities fairly and independently or
- has a relationship with, or interest in, an organisation from which they will receive personal gain because the organisation receives a grant under the grant program.

As part of your application, DISR will ask you to declare any perceived or existing conflicts of interests or confirm that, to the best of your knowledge, there is no conflict of interest.

If you later identify an actual, apparent, or perceived conflict of interest, you must inform DISR in writing immediately.

Conflicts of interest for Australian Government staff are handled as set out in the Australian Public Service Code of Conduct (Section 13(7)) of the [Public Service Act 1999](#). Committee members and other officials including the decision maker must also declare any conflicts of interest.

DISR publishes its [conflict of interest policy](#)¹⁶ on the DISR website. The Commonwealth policy entity also publishes a conflict of interest policy on its website.

13.3. Privacy

Unless the information you provide is:

- confidential information as per below, or
- personal information as per below.

DISR and Defence may share the information with other government agencies for a relevant Commonwealth purpose such as:

- to improve the effective administration, monitoring and evaluation of Australian Government programs
- for research
- to announce the awarding of grants.

DISR and Defence must treat your personal information according to the Australian Privacy Principles (APPs) and the *Privacy Act 1988* (Cth). This includes letting you know:

- what personal information we collect
- why we collect your personal information
- to whom we give your personal information.

DISR and Defence may give the personal information collected from you to their employees and contractors, the assessment panel, and other Commonwealth employees and contractors, so they can:

- manage the program
- research, assess, monitor and analyse their programs and activities.

DISR, Defence, or the relevant Minister, may:

- announce the names of successful applicants to the public
- publish personal information on the DISR websites.

You may read the [Privacy Policy](#)¹⁷ on the DISR website for more information on:

- what is personal information
- how DISR will collect, use, disclose and store your personal information
- how you can access and correct your personal information.

¹⁶ <https://www.industry.gov.au/publications/conflict-interest-policy>

¹⁷ <https://www.industry.gov.au/data-and-publications/privacy-policy>

13.4. Confidential information

Other than information available in the public domain, you agree not to disclose to any person, other than us, any confidential information relating to the grant application and/or agreement, without our prior written approval. The obligation will not be breached where you are required by law, Parliament or a stock exchange to disclose the relevant information or where the relevant information is publicly available (other than through breach of a confidentiality or non-disclosure obligation). Where you hold a security clearance, you must act in accordance with the requirements of the security clearance and the guidance provided in the [Australian Government Protective Security Policy Framework](https://www.protectivesecurity.gov.au/).¹⁸

We may at any time, require you to arrange for you, your employees, agents or subcontractors to give a written undertaking relating to nondisclosure of our confidential information in a form we consider acceptable.

We will treat the information you give us as sensitive and therefore confidential if it meets all of the following conditions:

- you clearly identify the information as confidential and explain why we should treat it as confidential
- the information is commercially sensitive
- disclosing the information would cause unreasonable harm to you or someone else
- you provide the information with an understanding that it will stay confidential.

We may disclose confidential information:

- to the assessment panel, Strategic Policy Committee and our Commonwealth employees and contractors, to help us manage the program effectively
- to the Auditor-General, Ombudsman or Privacy Commissioner
- to the responsible Minister or Assistant Minister
- to a House or a Committee of the Australian Parliament.

We may also disclose confidential information if:

- we are required or authorised by law to disclose it
- you agree to the information being disclosed, or
- someone other than us has made the confidential information public.

13.5. Freedom of information

All documents in the possession of the Australian Government, including those about the program, are subject to the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* (Cth) (FOI Act).

The purpose of the FOI Act is to give members of the public rights of access to information held by the Australian Government and its entities. Under the FOI Act, members of the public can seek access to documents held by the Australian Government. This right of access is limited only by the exceptions and exemptions necessary to protect essential public interests and private and business affairs of persons in respect of whom the information relates.

¹⁸ <https://www.protectivesecurity.gov.au/>

If someone requests a document under the FOI Act, we will release it (though we may need to consult with you and/or other parties first) unless it meets one of the exemptions set out in the FOI Act.

14. Glossary

Term	Definition
administering entity	When an entity that is not responsible for the policy, is responsible for the administration of part or all of the grant administration processes.
application form	The document issued by the Program Delegate that applicants use to apply for funding under the program.
assessment criteria	The specified principles or standards, against which applications will be judged. These criteria are also used to assess the merits of proposals and, in the case of a competitive grant opportunity, to determine application ranking.
Commonwealth Grants Rules and Principles (CGRPs) ¹⁹	Establish the overarching Commonwealth grants policy framework and articulate the expectations for all non-corporate Commonwealth entities in relation to grants administration. Under this overarching framework, non-corporate Commonwealth entities undertake grants administration based on the mandatory requirements and key principles of grants administration.
completion date	The expected date that the grant activity must be completed and the grant spent by
date of effect	Can be the date on which a grant agreement is signed or a specified starting date. Where there is no grant agreement, entities must publish information on individual grants as soon as practicable.
Department	The Department of Industry, Science and Resources (DISR).
decision maker	The person who makes a decision to award a grant. For this program, this will be the Deputy Minister as the Minister for Defence.
eligible activities	The activities undertaken by a grantee in relation to a project that are eligible for funding support as set out in 5.1.

¹⁹ <https://www.finance.gov.au/government/commonwealth-grants/commonwealth-grants-rules-and-principles-2024>

Term	Definition
eligible application	An application or proposal for services or grant funding under the program that the Program Delegate has determined is eligible for assessment in accordance with these guidelines.
eligibility criteria	Refer to the mandatory criteria which must be met to qualify for a grant. Assessment criteria may apply in addition to eligibility criteria.
eligible expenditure	The expenditure incurred by a grantee on a project and which is eligible for funding support as set out in 5.3.
General Manager	Position title for Senior Executive Service level staff within DISR.
grant	For the purposes of the CGRPs, a 'grant' is an arrangement for the provision of financial assistance by the Commonwealth or on behalf of the Commonwealth: a. under which relevant money²⁰ or other Consolidated Revenue Fund (CRF) money²¹ is to be paid to a grantee other than the Commonwealth; and b. which is intended to help address one or more of the Australian Government's policy outcomes while assisting the grantee achieve its objectives.
grant activity/activities	Refers to the project/tasks/services that the grantee is required to undertake
grant agreement	A legally binding contract that sets out the relationship between the Commonwealth and a grantee for the grant funding, and specifies the details of the grant.
grant funding or grant funds	The funding made available by the Commonwealth to grantees under the program.
grant opportunity	Refers to the specific grant round or process where a Commonwealth grant is made available to potential grantees. Grant opportunities may be open or targeted, and will reflect the relevant grant selection process.
grant program	A 'program' carries its natural meaning and is intended to cover a potentially wide range of related activities aimed at achieving government policy outcomes. A

²⁰ Relevant money is defined in the PGPA Act. See section 8, Dictionary.

²¹ Other CRF money is defined in the PGPA Act. See section 105, Rules in relation to other CRF money.

Term	Definition
	grant program is a group of one or more grant opportunities under a single entity Portfolio Budget Statement Program.
GrantConnect ²²	The Australian Government's whole-of-government grants information system, which centralises the publication and reporting of Commonwealth grants in accordance with the CGRPs.
grantee	The individual/organisation which has been selected to receive a grant
impact	The degree of meaningful change focusing on quality, depth and significance.
personal information	Has the same meaning as in the <i>Privacy Act 1988</i> (Cth) which is: Information or an opinion about an identified individual, or an individual who is reasonably identifiable: a. whether the information or opinion is true or not; and b. whether the information or opinion is recorded in a material form or not.
program	The Defence Strategic Policy Research Program. Projects will contribute towards this overarching program.
Program Delegate	A Manager within the Business Grants Hub in DISR with responsibility for administering the program.
program funding or program funds	The funding made available by the Commonwealth for the program.
project	Operating activities undertaken as part of this grant opportunity.
reach	The number or proportion of people who are exposed to the research or other strategic policy work.
SCNS	Secretaries' Committee on National Security

²² <http://www.grants.gov.au/>

Term	Definition
selection criteria	Comprises of eligibility criteria and assessment criteria.
Strategic Policy Committee	The body established to consider and assess eligible applications and make recommendations to the decision maker for funding under the program. The Committee is chaired by the Secretary of the Department of Defence and comprises senior executives across government agencies with Defence and National Security oversight.
value with money	Value with money in this document refers to ‘value with relevant money’ which is a judgement based on the grant proposal representing an efficient, effective, economical and ethical use of public resources and determined from a variety of considerations. When administering a grant opportunity, an official should consider the relevant financial and non-financial costs and benefits of each proposal including, but not limited to: ▪ the quality of the project proposal and activities; ▪ fitness for purpose of the proposal in contributing to government objectives; ▪ that the absence of a grant is likely to prevent the grantee and government’s outcomes being achieved; and ▪ the potential grantee’s relevant experience and performance history.