



Australian Government
Department of Industry,
Science and Resources

Business Grants Hub

Grant Opportunity Guidelines

Inspiring Australia – Science Engagement Program: Maker Projects – Community STEM Engagement Grants 2026

Opening date:	6 May 2026
Closing date and time:	5.00pm Australian Eastern Standard Time on 17 June 2026 Please take account of time zone differences when submitting your application.
Commonwealth policy entity:	Department of Industry, Science and Resources (DISR)
Enquiries:	If you have any questions, contact us on 13 28 46.
Date guidelines released:	6 May 2026
Type of grant opportunity:	Open competitive

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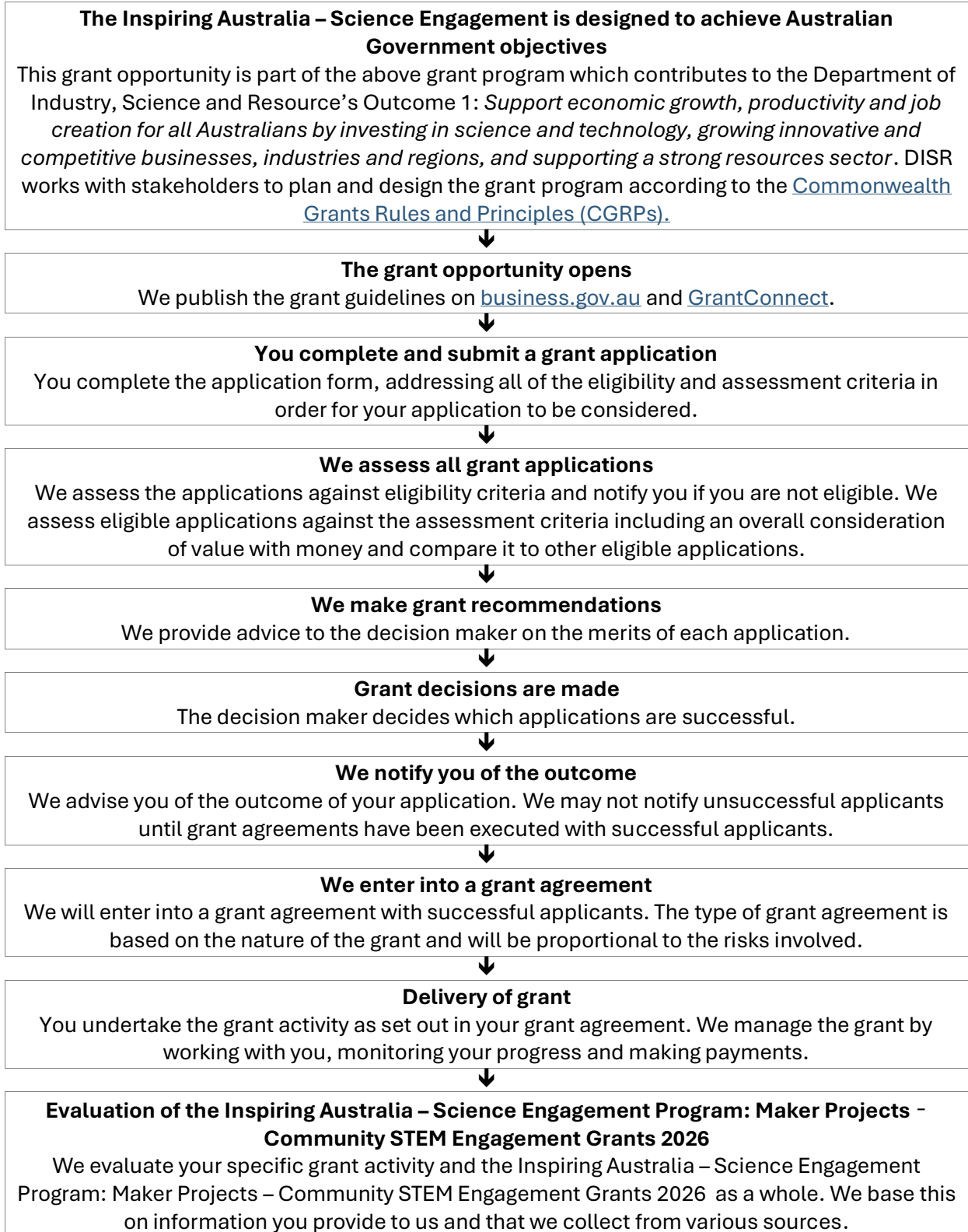
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1. Inspiring Australia – Science Engagement Program: Maker Projects – Community STEM Engagement Grants 2026 processes



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1.1. Introduction

These guidelines contain information for the Inspiring Australia – Science Engagement Program: Maker Projects – Community STEM Engagement Grants 2026 (Maker Projects Grants).

This document sets out:

- the purpose of the grant program/grant opportunity
- 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 (the department/DISR).

We 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 grant program

The Inspiring Australia - Science Engagement Program (the program) provides funding for a range of initiatives delivered under the Inspiring Australia banner.

The program contributes to the Government's vision for an Australian society engaged in and enriched by science. Through this program and other science engagement activities, the Government aims are:

- increasing Australian community engagement with the sciences, through activities and events
- increasing positive public sentiment and awareness of the contribution and achievements of Australian scientists and innovators
- improving communication between Australian scientists, the general public, businesses and government
- enhancing focus on building skills and capability in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) and digital literacy, in Australian schools and communities
- increasing engagement and participation of a diverse range of Australians, especially those historically underrepresented in STEM.

We administer the program according to the *Commonwealth Grants Rules and Principles* (CGRPs)¹.

¹ [Federal Register of Legislation - Commonwealth Grants Rules and Principles 2024](#)

2.1. About the Maker Projects – Community STEM Engagement Grants 2026 grant opportunity

Maker Projects Grants aim to foster creativity and inquiry-based learning. They support the development of STEM skills in students and youth under 18 years of age in design, engineering and programming, through hands-on learning.

The objectives of the grant opportunity are to:

- deliver projects where students and youth under 18 years of age, at the time of application, can develop and apply their STEM knowledge through experimentation, tinkering and hands-on learning by engaging with a range of technologies
- encourage practical skills, creativity and entrepreneurial thinking through the delivery of hands-on STEM-related events and activities
- inspire students and youth under 18 years of age to pursue further studies and careers in STEM
- make projects accessible to as many young people as possible, including those in regional, rural and disadvantaged areas
- make a positive and ongoing impact on students and youth under 18 years of age, particularly those historically underrepresented in STEM including as defined in the glossary.

The intended outcomes of the grant opportunity are:

- increased practical knowledge and skills in scientific experimentation, design, technology, innovation and entrepreneurship through hands-on activities for students and youth
- increased accessibility and participation in STEM-related events and activities for students and youth under 18 years of age, particularly those historically underrepresented in STEM as defined in the glossary
- positive and ongoing development of STEM skills for participating students and youth, fostered through hands-on inquiry-based learning.

3. Grant amount and grant period

3.1. Grants available

For this grant opportunity, a total of \$2 million is available from 2026-27 to 2027-28.

- The minimum grant amount is \$20,000.
- The maximum grant amount is \$100,000.

The grant amount will be up to 80 per cent of eligible expenditure. You and/or your project or collaborative partner(s) are required to contribute at least 20 per cent towards the project. Only eligible expenditure will be counted towards your contribution to the project. Your contribution may be cash and/or in-kind. Where you provide in-kind contributions, including facilities, equipment and services, you must calculate the dollar value for the in-kind activities that directly relate to the project.

You are responsible for the remaining eligible and ineligible project costs.

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If successful you cannot use funding from other Commonwealth, state, territory or local government grants to fund project activities and/or expenditure.

3.2. Project period

Your project must start within one month of executing your grant agreement unless agreed upon by the Program Delegate.

You must complete your project by 30 June 2028.

4. Eligibility criteria

We 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)

and be one of the following entities:

- an entity, incorporated in Australia
- an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Corporation registered under the *Corporations (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) Act 2006* (Cth)
- an incorporated association
- an incorporated not for profit organisation
- a publicly funded research organisation (PFRO) as defined in section 14
- a government or non-government vocational education and training (VET) provider as defined in section 14.

Joint applications (consortia) are acceptable, provided you have a lead organisation who is the main driver of the project and is eligible to apply. For further information on joint applications, refer to section 7.2.

4.2. Additional eligibility requirements

We can only accept applications where:

- you declare that you will deliver the project through a collaborative partnership as defined in the glossary:
 - the partnership must be established prior to the submission of your application
 - the partnership must include at least one partner organisation during the life of the project
 - the partnering organisation/s must be active participants in the delivery of the project and not just beneficiaries of the proposed activities.
- you provide all the mandatory attachments (see section 7.1).

You can have up to 10 partnership arrangements in place to support your project including both project partners and collaborative partners.

We cannot waive the eligibility criteria under any circumstances.

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

You are not eligible to apply if you are:

- an organisation, or your project partner or collaborative partner is an organisation, included on the [National Redress Scheme's website](#) on the list of 'Institutions that have not joined or signified their intent to join the Scheme'
- an employer of 100 or more employees that has [not complied](#) with the *Workplace Gender Equality Act (2012)*.
- an individual/sole trader
- a partnership (distinct from a collaborative partnership as defined in the glossary)
- a school, including early childhood, primary and/or secondary school as defined in section 14
- 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)
- a non-corporate Commonwealth entity.

4.4. What qualifications, skills or checks are required?

If you are successful, relevant personnel working on the project must maintain the following:

- Working with Children check
- Working with Vulnerable People registration.

5. What the grant money can be used for

5.1. Eligible grant activities

To be eligible your project must:

- be aimed at delivering STEM-related activities and events to meet the objectives and outcomes outlined in section 2.1
- have at least 20 per cent contribution towards eligible expenditure
- be for the benefit of students and youth under 18 years of age
- include scientific, technological, engineering or mathematics experts, inventors, innovators or entrepreneurs to work with participants to gain practical knowledge and skills in design, technology, innovation and entrepreneurship
- include either new activities or an expansion to the applicant's existing business as usual activities
- be collaborative in nature and include at least one collaborative partner organisation during the life of the project as per section 4.2
- have at least \$25,000 in eligible expenditure
- include eligible activities, such as:
 - interactive workshops
 - events relating to existing interactive exhibitions

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- hands-on participation from students and youth under 18 years of age
- resources for participants to support the lasting impact of the funded activities.

We may also approve other activities. Any additional activities must be in line with objectives and outcomes in section 2.

5.2. Eligible expenditure

You can only spend the grant on eligible expenditure you have incurred on an agreed project as defined in your grant agreement.

Due to the range of expenses that may be eligible, it is not possible to provide a complete list of the types of expenditure that may be eligible.

Examples of the types of eligible expenditure items include:

- contractor costs
- labour costs (up to 30 percent of total project costs)
- labour on-costs (up to 30 per cent of total labour costs). For details on how labour on-costs are calculated refer to Appendix A.3.
- venue and equipment hire
- domestic travel (up to 20 per cent of total project costs)
- tools and equipment such as science equipment, hammers, screwdrivers, and other ICT equipment, electronics, robotics, soldering irons and glue guns
- consumable materials such as workbooks, chemicals, timber, nails, glue, foil, paper, matches, scissors, batteries, string, cardboard, wire, rulers, pliers, paperclips, duct tape, sticky tape, metal sheeting, plastic, wheels, plastic or metal piping, electronic and solar kits
- graphic design
- prizes and the hosting of competitions
- event advertising and promotion
- displays.

For further details on eligible expenditure, refer to Appendix A.

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

Not all expenditure on your project may be eligible for grant funding. The Program Delegate (who is a Manager within the department) makes the final decision on what is eligible expenditure and may give additional guidance on eligible expenditure if required.

To be eligible, expenditure must:

- be a direct cost of the project
- be incurred for project audit activities (where applicable)
- meet the eligible expenditure guidelines.

You must incur the project expenditure between the project start and end date for it to be eligible unless stated otherwise.

You must not commence your project until you execute a grant agreement with the Commonwealth. We are not responsible for any expenditure you incur until a grant

agreement is executed. 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.

5.3. What the grant money cannot be used for

Ineligible activities include:

- activities where beneficiaries are not youth under 18 years of age at the time of application
- activities for the benefit of a single school
- activities for projects to be run during National Science Week
- business as usual activities
- lectures or film festivals
- school excursions or the transportation of students to non-project related events
- participation in competitions or qualifying rounds
- evaluation of the project.

Examples of ineligible expenditure include:

- training or professional development that is not directly related to the project
- projects hosted for the benefit of a single school for the duration of the project
- purchase or leasing of vehicles
- infrastructure costs
- costs incurred prior to execution of the grant agreement.

For further guidance on ineligible expenditure, refer to Appendix B.

6. The assessment criteria

You must address all assessment criteria in your application. We will assess your application based on the weighting given to each criterion.

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 character limits for each response.

We will only consider awarding funding to applications that score at least 50 per cent against each assessment criterion.

6.1. Assessment criterion 1

The reach and impact of your project (50 points)

You should demonstrate this through identifying:

- a. how your project will increase access and participation of students and youth under 18 years of age in STEM-related events and activities, particularly from those historically underrepresented in STEM (refer to section 14)
- b. how your project will enable students and youth under 18 years of age to:

- i. gain practical knowledge and skills in STEM through hands-on, inquiry-based learning
- ii. make a positive and ongoing impact through hands-on, inquiry-based learning.

6.2. Assessment criterion 2

Capacity, capability and resources to deliver the project (20 points)

You should demonstrate this through identifying:

- a. your track record in managing similar projects, including how you managed and mitigated any risks
- b. your access to personnel with the right expertise and experience, including management and technical staff, and how you will work with project partners, collaborative partners and stakeholders to successfully deliver the project
- c. your access, or future access to, any accessible facilities, infrastructure, capital equipment, technology and approvals needed to deliver the project.

6.3. Assessment criterion 3

Impact of grant funding (30 points)

You should demonstrate this through describing:

- a. the total cost of the project, how you intend to use the grant funding and why you plan to use the grant funding in this way
- b. why the grant funding is necessary to deliver your project
- c. cash and/or in-kind contributions, including those from proposed partnerships, and how they support the delivery of the project. This should include a justification of how you calculated the dollar value of in-kind contributions.

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.

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](#). You can only submit an application during a funding round.

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 making sure your application is complete and accurate. Giving false or misleading information is a serious offence under the [Criminal Code Act 1995](#). If we

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consider that you have provided false or misleading information we may not progress your application. If you find an error in your application after submitting it, you should call us immediately on 13 28 46.

After submitting your application, we may contact you for clarification if we find an error or any missing information, including evidence that supports your eligibility/merit. The acceptance of any additional information provided after the submission of your application is at the discretion of the Program Delegate. Additional information should not materially change your application at the time it was submitted and therefore may be refused if deemed to be purely supplementary.

You can view and print a copy of your submitted application on the portal for your own records. You should keep a copy of your application and any supporting documents.

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:

- a letter of support from each project partner and collaborative partner (template provided on business.gov.au)
- 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. The total of all attachments cannot exceed 50MB. We will not consider information in attachments that we do not request.

7.2. Joint (consortia) applications

We recognise that some organisations may want to join together as a group to deliver a project. In these circumstances, you must appoint a lead organisation. Only the lead organisation can submit the application form and enter into the grant agreement with the Commonwealth. The application must identify all other members of the proposed group and include a letter of support from each of the project partners (see section 7.1). Each letter of support should include:

- details of the project partner
- an overview of how the project partner will work with the lead organisation and any other project partners in the group to successfully complete the project
- an outline of the relevant experience and/or expertise the project partner will bring to the group
- the roles/responsibilities the project partner will undertake, and the resources it will contribute (if any)
- details of a nominated management level contact officer.

You must have a formal arrangement in place with all parties prior to execution of the grant agreement.

7.3. Timing of grant opportunity processes

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

If you are successful, we expect you will be able to commence your project within a month of executing your grant agreement.

Table 1: Expected timing for this grant opportunity

Activity	Timeframe
Assessment of applications	6 weeks
Approval and announcement of successful applicants	6 weeks
Negotiations and award of grant agreements	5 weeks
Notification to unsuccessful applicants	2 weeks
Earliest start date of grant activity	November 2026
Project completion date	30 June 2028
End date of grant commitment	30 June 2028

7.4. Questions during the application process

If you have any questions during the application period, [contact us](#) at business.gov.au or by calling 13 28 46.

8. The grant selection process

8.1. Assessment of grant applications

We first review your application against the eligibility criteria. If eligible, your application will be assessed against the assessment criteria (section 6). Only eligible applications will proceed to the assessment stage. We may undertake due diligence processes when assessing eligibility and merit.

We will then assess your application against the assessment criteria (see Section 6) and against other applications.

We consider your application on its merits, based on:

- how well it meets the criteria
- how it compares to other applications
- whether it provides value with relevant money.²

² See glossary for an explanation of ‘value with money’.

When assessing the extent to which the application represents value with relevant money, we will have regard to:

- the overall objectives of the grant opportunity
- the evidence provided to demonstrate how your project contributes to meeting those objectives
- the relative value of the grant sought
- how the grant activities will target groups or individuals.

In order to increase accessibility of STEM-related activities and events, the Program Delegate/Committee will also take into account value for money, the science discipline, geographic location of the activities and events, alignment with program objectives and how the grant activities will target diverse cohorts and groups historically underrepresented in STEM, when recommending projects for funding. This consideration will also be applied if applications are scored the same.

We also consider any financial, legal/regulatory, governance, national interest, national security or other issue or risk that we identify regarding you, project partners, collaborative partners, related body corporates, related entities and associated entities (as defined in the [Corporations Act 2001](#)) and related personnel.

If we identify risks which would affect our assessment, we may ask you to comment on these, subject to security considerations. If we identify risks that cannot be adequately mitigated, we may exclude your application from further consideration.

We may seek additional information about you, project partners, collaborative partners, related bodies corporate, related entities and associated entities (as defined in the Corporations Act) and related personnel from third party sources, including other Commonwealth agencies, for due diligence purposes. We may do so even if you do not nominate the sources as referees. We may also consider information that is discovered through the normal course of business.

Due diligence checks may occur at eligibility, merit or decision-making stages. We use this information to verify the information you provide in the application and to identify issues and risks. See Section 13.2 for information on how we use the information you provide to us.

8.2. Who will assess applications?

We assess your application against the selection criteria.

We refer your application to an independent committee of experts. The committee may also seek additional advice from independent technical experts or advisors to inform the assessment process. Any expert or advisor, who is not a Commonwealth Official, will be required to perform their duties in accordance with the CGRPs.

The committee will assess your application against the assessment criteria and compare it to other eligible applications before recommending which projects to fund. The committee will be required to perform their duties in accordance with the CGRPs.

The Committee 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 Committee 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.

8.3. Who will approve grants?

The Program Delegate decides which grants to approve taking into account the recommendations of the committee and the availability of grant funds.

The Program Delegate'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.

We cannot review decisions about the merits of your application.

The Program Delegate will not approve funding if there are insufficient program funds available across relevant financial years for the program.

9. Notification of application outcomes

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

You can submit a new application for the same (or similar) project in any future funding rounds. However, you should include new or more information to address the weaknesses that prevented your previous application from being successful. If a new application is substantially the same as a previous ineligible or unsuccessful application, we may refuse to consider it for assessment.

9.1. Feedback on your application

If you are unsuccessful, we will give you an opportunity to discuss the outcome with us.

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.

We 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 project activities until a grant agreement is executed. We are not responsible for any expenditure you incur, and cannot make any payments, until a grant agreement is executed.

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

If you enter an agreement under the Maker Projects Grants you cannot receive other grants for the same activities from other Commonwealth, state or territory granting programs.

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

10.2. Simple grant agreement

We will use a simple 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, we 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, we may extend this period. We base the approval of your grant on the information you provide in your application. We will review any required changes to these details to ensure they do not impact the project as approved by the Program Delegate.

10.3. Specific legislation, policies and industry standards

You must comply with all relevant laws, regulations and Australian Government sanctions in undertaking your project. 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. We will include these requirements in your grant agreement.

10.3.1. Child safety requirements

You must comply with all relevant legislation relating to the employment or engagement of anyone working on the project that may interact with children, including all necessary working with children checks.

You must implement the [National Principles for Child Safe Organisations](#)³ endorsed by the Commonwealth.

You will need to complete a risk assessment to identify the level of responsibility for children and the level of risk of harm or abuse, and put appropriate strategies in place to manage those risks. You must update this risk assessment at least annually.

You will also need to establish a training and compliance regime to ensure personnel are aware of, and comply with, the risk assessment requirements, relevant legislation including mandatory reporting requirements and the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations.

You will be required to provide an annual statement of compliance with these requirements in relation to working with children.

³ <https://www.humanrights.gov.au/our-work/childrens-rights/national-principles-child-safe-organisations>

10.4. How we pay the grant

The grant agreement will state the:

- maximum grant amount we will pay
- proportion of eligible expenditure covered by the grant (grant percentage)
- any in-kind contributions you will make
- any financial contribution provided by you or a third party.

We will not exceed the maximum grant amount under any circumstances. If you incur extra costs, you must meet them yourself.

We will make an initial payment on execution of the grant agreement.

We will make subsequent payments according to an agreed schedule set out in the grant agreement. Payments are subject to satisfactory progress on the project.

10.5. Grant Payments and GST

If you are registered for the Goods and Services Tax (GST), where applicable we will add GST to your grant payment and provide you with a recipient created tax invoice. You are required to notify us if your GST registration status changes during the project period. GST does not apply to grant payments to government related entities⁴.

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

11. Announcement of grants

If successful, your grant will be listed on the GrantConnect website 21 calendar days after the date of effect.

We will publish non-sensitive details of successful projects on GrantConnect. We are required to do this by the [Commonwealth Grants Rules and Principles](#), Section 5.4. We 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.

⁴ See Australian Taxation Office ruling GSTR 2012/2 available at [ato.gov.au](#)

12. How we monitor your grant activity

12.1. Keeping us informed

You should let us know if anything is likely to affect your project or organisation.

We 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 us of any changes to your:

- name
- addresses
- nominated contact details
- bank account details
- joint/consortia/collaborative partners and related arrangements (if applicable).

You must also inform us of any material changes in the circumstances of project participants including but not limited to:

- changes to organisation ownership or governance structure
- changes in financial and in-kind support contributions
- affiliations with foreign governments, including foreign militaries, intelligence organisations, police forces and government-owned or sponsored organisations (see section 13.6).

If you become aware of a breach of terms and conditions under the grant agreement, you must contact us 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. We will provide the requirements for these reports as appendices in the grant agreement. We will remind you of your reporting obligations before a report is due. We will expect you to report on:

- progress against agreed project milestones and outcomes
- project expenditure, including expenditure of grant funds
- 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.

We 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 we may need to re-examine claims, seek further information or request an independent audit of claims and payments.

12.2.1. Progress reports

Progress reports must:

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

We will only make grant payments when we receive satisfactory progress reports.

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

12.2.2. Ad-hoc reports

We may ask you for ad-hoc reports on your project. This may be to provide an update on progress, or any significant delays or difficulties in completing the project.

12.2.3. 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

We 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

We recognise that unexpected events may affect project progress. In these circumstances, you can request a variation to your grant agreement, 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.

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

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If a delay in the project causes milestone achievement and payment dates to move to a different financial year, you will need to submit a variation to the grant agreement. We can only move funds between financial years if there is enough program funding in the relevant year to allow for the revised payment schedule. If we cannot move the funds, you may lose some grant funding.

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

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

12.5. Compliance visits

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

12.6. Record keeping

We may also inspect the records you are required to keep under the grant agreement.

12.7. Evaluation

We will evaluate the grant program to measure how well the outcomes and objectives have been achieved. We may use information from your application and project reports for this purpose. We may also interview you, or ask you for more information, to help us understand how the grant impacted you and to evaluate how effective the program was in achieving its outcomes.

We 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 a project funded under the program, including in a brochure or publication, you must acknowledge the grant by using the following:

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

If you erect signage in relation to the project, the signage must contain an acknowledgement of the grant.

13. Probity

We 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.

13.1. Enquiries and feedback

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

We may publish answers to your questions on our website as Frequently Asked Questions.

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

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

If you are not satisfied with the way we handle your complaint, you can contact:

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

You can also contact the [Commonwealth Ombudsman](#)⁵ 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 and/or program. There may be a conflict of interest, or perceived conflict of interest, if any individual or entity⁶ involved in assessing, funding, administering or undertaking the project:

- has a professional, commercial or personal relationship with a party which 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, a party which could prevent the activity from being carried out fairly and independently or otherwise compromise the integrity of the activity or its participants
- has a relationship with, or interest in, a party from which they could receive personal gain because the party receives a grant under the grant program/grant opportunity.

⁵ <http://www.ombudsman.gov.au/>

⁶ Including: any of our staff able to influence the project, any member of a committee or advisor, you, your project partners, collaborative partners, and any personnel involved in the project.

As part of your application, we 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 us 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.

We publish our [conflict of interest policy](#)⁷ on the department's website. The Commonwealth policy entity also publishes a conflict of interest policy on its website.

13.3. Privacy

Unless the information you provide to us is:

- confidential information as per 13.4, or
- personal information as per below

we 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.

We 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.

We may give the personal information we collect from you to our employees and contractors, the committee, and other Commonwealth employees and contractors, so we can:

- manage the program
- research, assess, monitor and analyse our programs and activities
- identify and manage any financial, legal/regulatory, governance, national interest, or national security risks.

We, or the Minister, may:

- announce the names of successful applicants to the public
- publish personal information on the department's websites.

You may read our [Privacy Policy](#)⁸ on the department's website for more information on:

⁷ <https://www.industry.gov.au/publications/conflict-interest-policy>

⁸ <https://www.industry.gov.au/data-and-publications/privacy-policy>

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

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).

We may at any time, require you to arrange for you; or 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 committee and our Commonwealth employees, contractors and service providers, 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
- to other Commonwealth agencies for risk management purposes.

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.

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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.

13.6. National security

Eligible activities under this grant may have national security implications. It is your responsibility to consider any such implications of the proposed project and identify and manage any risks, particularly relating to export controls, intellectual property protection, espionage and foreign interference and unwanted transfer of technology, data or other knowledge.

You must inform the department if you identify any material risks relating to national security. To assist with managing security risks, you are strongly encouraged to review the department's [Guide to undertaking international collaboration](#)⁹.

13.6.1. Know Your Partner

You should ensure that you know who you are collaborating with by undertaking appropriate due diligence, proportionate to the risk and subject to available information, on all partners and personnel participating in the project. This should take into account any potential security, ethical, legal and reputational risks, and, where necessary, you should be prepared to demonstrate how you will manage and mitigate any identified risks.

13.6.2. Foreign Affiliations

Eligible activities under this grant may involve partners or personnel with foreign affiliations. You must inform us of any relationships between project participants and foreign parties that could influence or benefit from the proposed activity. Such relationships may include foreign ownership or sponsorship, connections to foreign governments, militaries, political parties, or other organisations, and membership of foreign talent programs. You must also inform us of the establishment of any such relationships throughout the life of the grant.

13.6.3. Foreign Government Affiliations

Eligible activities under this grant may involve partners or personnel with connections to foreign governments. You must inform us if you, your project partners or any project personnel are receiving funding or benefits from, or otherwise affiliated with, a foreign government, including:

- a foreign state or local government
- a foreign military, intelligence organisation or police force
- an organisation owned or sponsored by a foreign government (such as a state-owned corporation or state-sponsored university)
- a foreign government talent program.

⁹ <https://www.industry.gov.au/strategies-for-the-future/increasing-international-collaboration/a-guide-to-undertaking-international-collaboration>

You must also inform us of the establishment of any such relationships throughout the life of the grant.

13.7. Disclosure of Commonwealth, state or territory financial penalties

You must disclose whether any of your board members, management or persons of authority have been subject to any pecuniary penalty, whether civil, criminal or administrative, imposed by a Commonwealth, state, or territory court or a Commonwealth, state, or territory entity. If this is the case, you must provide advice to the department regarding the matter for consideration.

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.
collaborative partnership	A collaboration between organisations towards shared goals. You may collaborate with organisations such as libraries, private companies, schools, and not-for-profit bodies to deliver collaborative projects (internal organisation partnerships are not eligible). As noted in the eligibility assessment criteria, you must demonstrate evidence that collaborative partners are committed to the goals of the project through a letter of support see section 7.1.
collaborative partner	A member of the collaborative partnership.
<i>Commonwealth Grants Rules and Principles (CGRPs)</i>	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

Term	Definition
	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.
committee	The body established to consider and assess eligible applications and make recommendations to the Program Delegate for funding under the program.
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.
decision maker	The person who makes a decision to award a grant.
Department	The Department of Industry, Science and Resources.
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.
eligible application	An application or proposal for 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 5.22.
eligible expenditure guidance	The guidance that is provided at Appendix A.
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:

Term	Definition
	<p>a. under which relevant money¹⁰ or other Consolidated Revenue Fund (CRF) money¹¹ is to be paid to a grantee other than the Commonwealth; and</p> <p>b. which is intended to help address one or more of the Australian Government’s policy outcomes while assisting the grantee achieve its objectives.</p>
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 grant program is a group of one or more grant opportunities under a single [entity] Portfolio Budget Statement Program.
GrantConnect	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.
groups historically underrepresented in STEM	<p>These groups may include but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ First Nations peoples ▪ culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) people ▪ women and girls

¹⁰ Relevant money is defined in the PGPA Act. See section 8, Dictionary.

¹¹ Other CRF money is defined in the PGPA Act. See section 105, Rules in relation to other CRF money.

Term	Definition
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ people living in regional and remote areas ▪ people with disability ▪ people from low socio-economic backgrounds ▪ neurodivergent people ▪ LGBTQIA+ people <p>people who face age-based discrimination.</p>
guidelines	Guidelines that the Minister gives to the department to provide the framework for the administration of the program, as in force from time to time.
inquiry-based learning	An approach where learners actively investigate concepts, questions or problems, and build their understanding through exploration, experimentation, evidence gathering, and reflection, rather than receiving information passively.
Minister	The Commonwealth Minister for Industry and Innovation.
non-corporate Commonwealth entity	A non-corporate Commonwealth entity is a Commonwealth entity that is part of the Commonwealth and which represents and acts on behalf of the Commonwealth. They are Commonwealth departments, such as a department of state (e.g. Department of Industry, Science and Resources), as recognised by the Administrative Arrangements.
non-income-tax-exempt	Not exempt from income tax under Division 50 of the <i>Income Tax Assessment Act 1997</i> (Cth) or under Division 1AB of Part III of the <i>Income Tax Assessment Act 1936</i> (Cth).
personal information	<p>Has the same meaning as in the <i>Privacy Act 1988</i> (Cth) which is:</p> <p>Information or an opinion about an identified individual, or an individual who is reasonably identifiable:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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.

Term	Definition
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	A project described in an application for grant funding under the program.
project partner	A member of the joint (consortia) partnership.
Publicly funded research organisation (PFRO)	All higher education providers listed at Table A and Table B of the <i>Higher Education Support Act 2003</i> (Cth) and corporate Commonwealth entities, and state and territory business enterprises which undertake publicly funded research.
school, including early childhood, primary and/or secondary school	Both government and non-government (private) educational institutions for the following sectors: Early Childhood: Including but not limited to pre-schools and other child-care settings that provide care and supervision of children, to prepare children for school, and to ensure that children are able to effectively participate in subsequent learning opportunities. Primary: for students starting at Foundation (also called kindergarten/preparatory/pre-school) through to Year 6 or 7. Secondary/Senior Secondary: for students from Years 7 or 8 to 10 and/or Years 11 to 12.
selection criteria	Comprises of eligibility criteria and assessment criteria.
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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ the quality of the project proposal and activities;

Term	Definition
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ 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.
Vocational education and training (VET) provider	Training providers registered by the Australian Skills Quality Authority or a state regulator to deliver vocational education and training services.

Appendix A. Eligible expenditure

This section provides guidance on the eligibility of expenditure.

The Program Delegate makes the final decision on what is eligible expenditure and may give additional guidance on eligible expenditure if required.

To be eligible, expenditure must:

- be incurred by you within the project period
- be a direct cost of the project
- be incurred by you to undertake required project audit activities (where applicable)
- meet the eligible expenditure guidelines.

A.1 How we verify eligible expenditure

If your application is successful, we may ask you to verify the project budget that you provided in your application when we negotiate your grant agreement. You may need to provide evidence such as quotes for major costs.

The grant agreement will include details of the evidence you may need to provide when you achieve certain milestones in your project. This may include evidence related to eligible expenditure.

If requested, you will need to provide the agreed evidence along with your progress reports.

You must keep payment records of all eligible expenditure, and be able to explain how the costs relate to the agreed project activities. At any time, we may ask you to provide records of the expenditure you have paid. If you do not provide these records when requested, the expense may not qualify as eligible expenditure.

At the end of the project, you may be required to provide an independent financial audit of all eligible expenditure from the project.

A.2 Labour expenditure

Eligible labour expenditure for the grant covers the direct labour costs of employees you directly employ on the core elements of the project. We consider a person an employee when you pay them a regular salary or wage, out of which you make regular tax instalment deductions.

Eligible labour expenditure, including any that you provide as an in-kind contribution, is limited to 30 per cent of total project costs except where otherwise approved by the Program Delegate.

We do not consider labour expenditure for leadership or administrative staff (such as CEOs, CFOs, business owners and partners, accountants and lawyers) as eligible expenditure, even if they are doing project management tasks, unless you substantiate to our satisfaction that these costs relate to performance of core elements of the agreed project and is agreed by the Program Delegate.

Eligible salary expenditure includes an employee’s total remuneration package as stated on their Pay As You Go (PAYG) Annual Payment Summary submitted to the ATO. We consider salary-sacrificed superannuation contributions as part of an employee’s salary package if the amount is more than what the Superannuation Guarantee requires.

For periods of the project that do not make a full financial year, you must reduce the maximum salary amount you claim proportionally.

You can only claim eligible salary costs when an employee is working directly on agreed project activities during the agreed project period.

A.3 Labour on-costs and administrative overhead

You may increase eligible salary costs by an additional 30 per cent of total labour costs to cover on-costs such as employer paid superannuation, payroll tax, workers compensation insurance, and overheads such as office rent and the purchase or provision of computing equipment directly required or related to the delivery of the project

You should calculate eligible salary costs using the formula below:

$$\text{Eligible salary costs} = \text{Annual salary package} \times \frac{\text{Weeks spent on project}}{52 \text{ weeks}} \times \text{percentage of time spent on project}$$

You cannot calculate labour costs by estimating the employees worth. If you have not exchanged money (either by cash or bank transactions) we will not consider the cost eligible.

Evidence you will need to provide can include:

- details of all personnel working on the project, including name, title, function, time spent on the project and salary
- ATO payment summaries, pay slips and employment contracts.

A.4 Contract expenditure

Eligible contract expenditure is the cost of any agreed project activities that you contract others to do. These can include contracting:

- another organisation
- an individual who is not an employee, but engaged under a separate contract.

Project partners and collaborative partners are separate entities from the grantee. For this reason, the time contributed by their staff is classified as contractor expenditure instead of labour expenditure.

All contractors must have a written contract prior to starting any project work – for example, a formal agreement, letter or purchase order which specifies:

- the nature of the work they perform
- the applicable fees, charges and other costs payable.

Invoices from contractors must contain:

- a detailed description of the nature of the work
- the hours and hourly rates involved

Invoices must directly relate to the agreed project, and the work must qualify as an eligible expense. The costs must also be reasonable and appropriate for the activities performed.

We will require evidence of contractor expenditure that may include:

- an exchange of letters (including email) setting out the terms and conditions of the proposed contract work
- purchase orders
- supply agreements
- invoices and payment documents.

You must ensure all project contractors keep a record of the costs of their work on the project. We may require you to provide a contractor's records of their costs of doing project work. If you cannot provide these records, the relevant contract expense may not qualify as eligible expenditure.

A.5 Travel expenditure

Eligible travel expenditure may include:

- domestic travel limited to the reasonable cost of accommodation and transportation required to conduct agreed project and collaboration activities in Australia

Eligible air transportation is limited to the economy class fare for each sector travelled. Where non-economy class air transport is used only the equivalent of an economy fare for that sector is eligible expenditure. Where non-economy class air transport is used, the grantee will require evidence showing what an economy airfare costs at the time of travel.

Eligible travel expenditure is limited to 20 per cent of total project costs except where otherwise approved by the Program Delegate.

A.6 Software and ICT hardware

Eligible expenditure for software and ICT hardware the purchase, lease and/or upgrade of software and ICT hardware that will be directly used for eligible project activities.

You may be required to provide evidence to substantiate the requirement for the purchase, lease and/or upgrade of software and ICT hardware for the successful delivery of the project

A.7 Other eligible expenditure

Other eligible expenditures for the project may include:

- staff training (including internal staff training) that directly supports project outcomes. Internal staff training does not count towards the cap on labour expenditure
- financial auditing of project expenditure, the cost of an independent audit of project expenditure (where we request one) up to a maximum of 1 per cent of total eligible project expenditure.

Other specific expenditures may be eligible as determined by the Program Delegate.

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Evidence you need to supply can include supplier contracts, purchase orders, invoices and supplier confirmation of payments.

Appendix B. Ineligible expenditure

This section provides guidance on what we consider ineligible expenditure.

The Program Delegate may impose limitations or exclude expenditure, or further include some ineligible expenditure listed in these guidelines in a grant agreement or otherwise by notice to you.

In addition to examples provided in section 5.3, other examples of ineligible expenditure may include:

- research not directly supporting eligible activities
- activities, equipment or supplies that are already being supported through other sources
- financing costs, including interest
- capital expenditure for the purchase of assets such as office furniture and equipment, motor vehicles, and the construction, renovation or extension of facilities such as buildings and laboratories
- costs such as rental, renovations and utilities
- uniforms worn in relation to project activities or STEM-related events
- non-project-related staff training and development costs
- administrative project management activities
- insurance costs not directly supporting project activities (the participants must affect and maintain adequate insurance or similar coverage for any liability arising as a result of its participation in funded activities)
- debt financing
- costs related to obtaining resources used on the project, including interest on loans, job advertising and recruiting, and contract negotiations
- depreciation of plant and equipment beyond the life of the project
- maintenance costs
- costs of purchasing, leasing, depreciation of, or development of land
- routine operating expenses not accounted as labour on-costs, including communications, accommodation, overheads and consumables not directly related to project activities
- costs for software, user licences, ICT hardware, upgrades, updates, maintenance, warranties, websites, customer relationship management systems, databases, subscription-based software or IT support memberships that do not directly relate to the project
- recurring or ongoing operational expenditure (including annual maintenance, rent, water and rates, postage, legal and accounting fees and bank charges)
- costs related to preparing the grant application, preparing any project reports (except costs of independent audit reports we require) and preparing any project variation requests
- overseas travel
- domestic travel costs that exceed 20 per cent of total project costs except where otherwise approved by the Program Delegate.

This list is not exhaustive and applies only to the expenditure of the grant funds. Other costs may be ineligible where we decide that they do not directly support the achievement of the planned outcomes for the project or that they are contrary to the objective of the program.

You must ensure you have adequate funds to meet the costs of any ineligible expenditure associated with the project.