

Premier's Department

NSW Research Attraction and Acceleration Program: Conference Sponsorship Program

Program Guidelines

July 2025

Grant Program Details	
Opening date and time	Friday 1 August 2025 10:00 AEST
Closing date and time	Friday 26 September 2025 10:00 AEST
Application outcome date	December 2025
Project delivery timeframe (for successful applications)	January-December 2026
Decision-maker	Minister for Innovation, Science and Technology
NSW Government Agency	NSW Office of the Chief Scientist & Engineer
Type of grant opportunity	Open, competitive
Grant value (total available funding for the grant and the available individual grant amounts, excluding GST)	Successful applicants will be awarded funds from a maximum available pool of \$100,000 (excluding GST). Each successful applicant can apply for and receive up to \$10,000 (excluding GST) at the discretion of the assessment panel
Enquiries	raap.grants@chiefscientist.nsw.gov.au

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1 Overview of the program

1.1 Background

The NSW Government established the annual Research Attraction and Acceleration Program (RAAP) in 2012 to support innovation and continued investment in NSW research and development. The RAAP is administered by the Office of the NSW Chief Scientist & Engineer (OCSE) within the NSW Premier's Department ('the Department').

In recognition of the value of leveraging NSW's competitive advantages in science and technology, the NSW Government released the *NSW 20-Year R&D Roadmap* in 2022. This evidence-based policy identifies strategic technology areas where NSW has global strengths, as well as capabilities needed to build sovereign capacity and manage long-term risks.

RAAP supports these strategic objectives by funding activities that enhance NSW's research ecosystem, including the delivery of high-impact research conferences. These conferences play a critical role in attracting global talent, fostering collaboration, and promoting the translation of NSW-led research into commercial, policy or public-good outcomes. They also support capability development in emerging areas of economic and strategic importance, as identified in the R&D Roadmap.

The **Conference Sponsorship Program (the Program)** is funded under RAAP and supports the delivery of research conferences that will be held in NSW in 2026. The Program aims to attract national and international thought leaders and research communities to NSW, facilitating the exchange of ideas, knowledge and expertise in areas aligned with the *NSW 20-Year R&D Roadmap*.

Funding is provided on an open competitive basis. Applicants will have approximately eight weeks to complete and submit their application. The Assessment Panel will have approximately five weeks to assess applications.

The Program will be administered in accordance with the NSW Grants Administration Guide and the Commonwealth Grants Rules and Guidelines (CGRGs).

1.2 Purpose and objectives

The Program is funded by the RAAP and aims to encourage groups to meet in NSW to exchange ideas, knowledge and expertise, making a significant contribution to NSW.

The Program supports research conferences taking place in NSW in 2026 in areas of relevance to the *NSW 20-Year R&D Roadmap*.

The intended objectives of the Program are to:

- disseminate knowledge leading to advancements in science and technology, benefiting NSW's overall intellectual capital
 - foster collaboration, knowledge exchange and expertise sharing among participants, leading to significant contributions and outcomes
 - collaborate and drive change through innovation.
-

1.3 Your responsibilities

The Program Guidelines (Guidelines) contain information about the Program, whether you are eligible to apply, and how you can make an application.

You must read these Guidelines before applying for the grant.

This document sets out:

- the purpose of the program
- the eligibility criteria
- the assessment criteria
- how applications are assessed
- how recipients will be monitored and evaluated.

1.4 Grant value

Funding will take the form of a cash contribution following the execution of an agreement between the applicant and the Department.

Funds can be expended on any aspect of conference organisation occurring in NSW.

Successful applicants will be awarded funds from a maximum available pool of \$100,000 (excluding GST) with the final amount decided at the Department's discretion. Each successful applicant can apply for and receive up to \$10,000 (excluding GST) at the discretion of the assessment panel. The quantum of funding awarded to successful applicants will depend on the overall quantity and quality of applications received.

The applicant is required to provide a financial acquittal with a final report following the conference, demonstrating that grant funds were used in accordance with program guidelines.



For Foods Sake 2025

2 Selection criteria

2.1 Stage One - Eligibility criteria

The OCSE cannot consider your application if it does not satisfy all the eligibility criteria.

2.1.1 Who is eligible to apply?

To be eligible for the Program applicants must be from an NSW public sector research institution or from the NSW community sector.

This includes:

1. Non-profit organisations incorporated under the Federal Corporations Act 2001 as applied in NSW OR a national non-profit organisation planning a conference in NSW
2. Community groups
3. Universities
4. Government associations
5. A Professional Conference Organiser (PCO) may apply in partnership with the above entities.

The research area of the conference must fall into one of the following categories:

1. Mathematical, information and computing sciences
2. Physical, chemical and earth sciences
3. Engineering, environmental sciences and renewable energy
4. Biological and biotechnological sciences.

Sponsorship grants will be available for scientific conferences to be held between January and December 2026.

2.1.2 Who is not eligible to apply?

Applicants are not eligible to apply for the Program if they are:

- insolvent
- an individual
- a partnership
- unincorporated association
- a private company
- a Commonwealth, state, territory or local government agency or body excluding government corporate entities.

Conferences that received funding from OCSE in 2025 are ineligible.

University programs held during break periods, including summer and autumn school activities are not eligible for funding support.

2.1.3 Eligible costs

Funds can be expended on any aspect of conference organisation occurring in NSW.

Examples include (but not limited to):

- speaker costs – airfares and accommodation
- student travel/registration grants
- venue hire

- catering
- promotion – marketing/advertising
- audiovisual services
- conference management fees
- transportation
- insurance.

OCSE, at its sole discretion, may decide that an application is ineligible for funding. This may include any person or business activity that could cause reputational and/or other risks to the NSW Government.

Where an application is identified as not meeting the above eligibility criteria, the application may be set aside from further consideration at the absolute discretion of the Department. The Department may also seek clarification from any applicant in relation to its application, including seeking further information on the eligibility or assessment criteria.

You must demonstrate value for money by ensuring conference costs are reasonable and reflective of market rates. We may use industry cost benchmarks to assess whether costs are reasonable. The Department will make the final decision on whether a claimed cost is eligible or reasonable (and only pay the reasonable amount).

The grant payment must be issued to the designated contract organisation.

All eligible costs will be paid inclusive of GST.

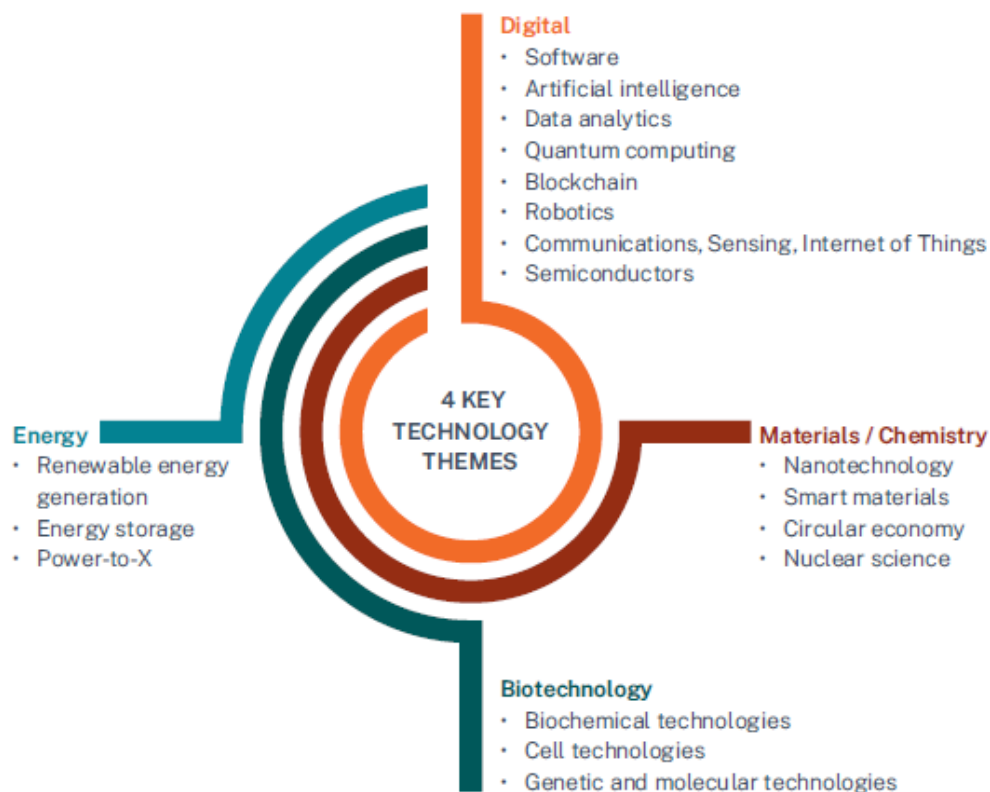
2.2 Stage Two – Assessment criteria

The Assessment Panel will make recommendations for funding against the assessment criteria as set out in Table 1.

Table 1: Assessment Criteria

Criteria	Specific information and evidence required	Weighting
Purpose of conference	Demonstrate value of conference to the community, research sector and the NSW Government, including how the conference will recognise the financial contribution of the Department	16.66%
Alignment with NSW Government priorities	Demonstrated alignment with the <u>NSW 20-Year R&D Roadmap</u> , <u>NSW Innovation Blueprint</u> and <u>NSW Industry Policy</u>	16.66%
Benefits	Evidence the conference would deliver economic, environmental, social and/or technological benefits to NSW	16.66%
Engagement and collaboration	Evidence of engagement and collaboration with established research entities, networks or platforms	16.66%
Diversity, equity and inclusion	Demonstrate how diversity, equity and inclusion will be considered and implemented in the planning and delivery of the conference	16.66%
Budget	Demonstrate need for funding through a budget breakdown, including co-sponsorship and other financial contributors	16.66%

The Roadmap identifies four technology themes (with 39 applications) across 13 sectors (e.g. defence, healthcare, manufacturing) where NSW has competitive advantages.



3 Application process

3.1 How to apply

Before applying, you must read and understand these Program Guidelines.

Applications are due by **10:00 AEST Friday 26 September 2025**.

To apply you must:

1. complete the SmartyGrants online application form at [Conference Sponsorship Program | Chief Scientist \(nsw.gov.au\)](#)
2. provide all the information requested
3. address all the eligibility criteria
4. include all necessary attachments
5. submit your application by the timelines outlined in Section 3.2 Key dates.

Note:

- The application must be completed in its entirety to be eligible for consideration.
- Clearly mark any information that should be treated confidentially.
- All eligible applicants will be assessed on merit against the assessment criteria. However, the Department, at its discretion, may choose not to award or recommend funding to applicants under the Program.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) can assist in many aspects of the grant application process. However, it should be used to complement, not replace human expertise and judgment. While the use of AI is not prohibited, applicants are advised to use it appropriately. Keep in mind that assessors are seeking authentic responses to the assessment criteria and often recognise when AI tools have been used.

You are responsible for ensuring your application is complete and accurate. Giving false or misleading information is a serious offence under the *Crimes Act 1900 No 40 (NSW)*. We will investigate any false or misleading information and may exclude your application from further consideration.

Applicants must not lobby the NSW Government on an issue related or seen to be related to the Program that may or may be perceived to give an unfair advantage to the applicant. Applicants are required to comply with all applicable laws including the *NSW Lobbyists Code of Conduct*.

If you find an error in your application after submitting it, you should contact us immediately at raap.grants@chiefscientist.nsw.gov.au. We do not have to accept any additional information, nor requests from you to correct your application after the closing time. You cannot change your application after you have submitted your application.

If we find an error or information that is missing, we may ask for clarification or additional information from you that will not change the nature of your application.

You should keep a copy of your application and any supporting documents.

We will acknowledge that we have received your application after you submit through the online portal.

One application per applicant will be assessed. If more than one application for the same Program is submitted, only the latest application will be considered unless otherwise determined through consultation with the OCSE Secretariat.

3.2 Key Dates

Activity	Timeframe
Applications open	10:00 AEST Friday 1 August 2025
Applications close	10:00 AEST Friday 26 September 2025
Notification of outcome	December 2025
Allocation of funds	By 30 June 2026
Earliest start date of the conference	1 January 2026
End date of the conference	31 December 2026

3.3 Support available to applicants

If you have any questions during the application period, please contact us at raap.grants@chiefscientist.nsw.gov.au. OCSE will endeavour to respond to questions within three working days.



International Global Navigation Satellite Systems - IGNSS 2024

4 Assessment process

4.1 Assessment of grant applications

The assessment of applications will be led by the Department. Your application will be considered based on a two-stage process. Where the Department considers an application unsuitable or unsatisfactory against any criteria, we may exclude that application from further evaluation. Only eligible applications will move to the next stage. We consider eligible applications through an open competitive grant process.

Stage 1: Eligibility Assessment

The OCSE Secretariat will conduct an initial eligibility screening for all applications according to the published eligibility criteria in these Program Guidelines that are set out in Section 2.1: Eligibility criteria. Only applications which meet all eligibility criteria will progress to assessment against the assessment criteria.

Stage 2: Assessment by the Assessment Panel

The membership of the Assessment Panel (Panel) will be determined by OCSE in its sole discretion and may include independent assessors from the broader NSW public sector.

The Panel will assess each application against the assessment criteria and compare it to other eligible applications before recommending which applications should be awarded a grant.

On behalf of the Panel, the Department may seek additional information about you or your application.

The Panel has the discretion to recommend that an applicant receive a smaller amount of funding than indicated in their application.

The Panel members are expected to assess all eligible applications unless they have a declared conflict of interest for a certain application(s).

Panel members will individually assess all eligible applications against each criterion set out in Section 2.2. All criteria have equal weighting.

When making their recommendations, the Assessment Panel may take the following into consideration:

- the total funding available for the Conference Sponsorship Program 2026 round
- the assessment criteria outlined in these Guidelines
- the requested amount against the scope of the project i.e. could the applicant effectively deliver the conference with less funding
- whether a reduction could pose significant risks to the success of a conference
- whether applicants have sufficient or additional resources or avenues available to raise capital other than this grant that could assist with the success of their conference
- whether a decrease of funding will impact achieving the overall aim of the Conference Sponsorship Program.

The Assessment Panel may seek advice from an external probity advisor if required.

The Assessment Panel will assess your application based on equal weighting given to each criterion as per the Table 1.

4.2 Who will approve the grant?

The Panel will provide advice to the NSW Government on the suitability of each proposal for funding.

The Minister for Innovation, Science and Technology, will consider recommendations from the Panel and determine final grant funding approvals.

The Minister for Innovation, Science and Technology or their delegate's decision is final in all matters, including:

- the approval of the grant
- the grant funding amount to be awarded
- the terms and conditions of the grant.

4.3 Notification of application outcome

We will advise the outcome of your application via email. Unsuccessful applicants will be notified via email and/or letter of the outcome of their application within 20 business days from the assessment panel meeting and will be offered feedback if requested.

The OCSE Secretariat may liaise with ineligible applicants with the final determination made by the Assessment Panel.

If unsuccessful you can submit a new application for a future grant opportunity. Your submission must meet the eligibility criteria and should include new or additional information to address any feedback from your previous application.



2nd Zero Childhood Cancer National Symposium 2024

5 Successful grant applications

Successful applicants will be notified via email. If you are successful, we will advise you of any specific conditions attached to the grant. This could include a request to keep the grant confidential for a specified period due to an announcement being made by the NSW Government in relation to this Program and your award.

The OCSE Secretariat will notify successful applicants by December 2025.

5.1 Grant agreement

Successful applicants who accept the offer of a grant will be required to enter into a sponsorship agreement with the Department. The agreement will specify obligations, including use of the grant for activities occurring in NSW, return of any unspent grant funds and reporting requirements.

A template of the Funding Deed can be found here: [NSW Government funding agreement template](#). The agreement must be signed by at least one conference organiser or a relevant representative from the institution responsible for organising the conference.

The applicant is required to provide a financial acquittal with a final report following the conference, demonstrating that grant funds were used in accordance with program guidelines.

While the activity must take place throughout 2026, funds must be allocated to the Grantee by 30 June 2026.

5.2 Grant payment

The grant will be paid and distributed directly in a single tranche to each successful applicant. Invoices for grant payments will be submitted and paid within 12 months of agreement execution. Grants are assessable income for taxation purposes, unless exempted by a taxation law. We recommend you seek independent professional advice on your taxation obligations. We do not provide advice on your particular taxation circumstances. All payments are inclusive of GST. If you become aware of a breach of terms and conditions under the funding agreement, you must contact us immediately.

5.3 Unspent Funds

Organisations must not use the money provided for the project, nor any interest earned on the money, for any other purpose beyond what is specified in the approved submitted application and grant agreement. If you become aware of a breach of terms and conditions under the funding agreement, you must contact us immediately.

5.4 Indicative reporting and acquittal requirements

Two months prior to the conference date, you must submit a progress report. You will be provided with a report template from the Department, which is to be completed by your authorised officer.

We will expect you to report on:

- current registration numbers
- keynote speakers
- website link
- conference program
- current budget, including other sources of income outside of grant

- diversity and equity strategies and activities.

Within 30 days after you complete the conference, you must submit a final report. You will be provided with a report template from the Department, which is to be completed by your authorised officer.

We will expect you to report on:

Conference Summary

- main outcomes of the conference
- number of participants
- benefits to NSW

Financial Acquittal Report

- expenditure of the grant

Media Profile

- conference overview
- highlights
- testimonial
- photographs

5.5 Evaluation

The Department will evaluate the Program to measure how well the outcomes and objectives have been achieved. We may use information from your application and reports for this purpose.

We may also interview you or ask you for more information to help us understand how the Program impacted you, and to evaluate how effective the Program was in achieving its outcomes. We may contact you up to three years after you receive your final grant payment associated with the Program for more information to assist with this evaluation.

The Department and the NSW Audit Office reserve the right to undertake an audit of Program funding and support within seven years. Tracking and reporting will be a requirement of the funding agreement.

5.6 Acknowledgement

All recipients of NSW Government funding should acknowledge this financial support in accordance with the Funding Acknowledgement Guidelines for Recipients of NSW Government Rebates available at www.nsw.gov.au/branding#toc-sponsorship-and-funding-acknowledgement.

You must seek our written consent prior to any significant public announcement, marketing, press announcements or official launch in relation to the Program.

The applicant must agree to provide the following benefits to the Department, if requested by the Department:

- acknowledgement of the Funding at the opening and closing ceremonies of the conference
- acknowledgement with the NSW Government logo and preferred URL link on the conference website
- acknowledgement with NSW Government logo in all printed delegate material
- the opportunity to provide and assemble an OCSE and/or Department pull-up banner for the duration of the activity, and
- two complimentary registrations to the conference.

6 Additional information and resources

6.1 Complaint handling

If you do not agree with the way the Department has handled your enquiry or complaint, you may wish to contact the NSW Ombudsman. The NSW Ombudsman will not consider a complaint unless the matter has been first raised directly with the Department.

The applicant must lodge a complaint with the Department in writing and submit it to raap.grants@chiefscientist.nsw.gov.au

6.2 Probity

The Department will make sure that the grant opportunity process is fair, according to the published guidelines and incorporates appropriate safeguards against fraud, unlawful activities and other inappropriate conduct.

Decision makers may seek the guidance of an independent probity advisor as required.

6.3 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, your employees, agents or subcontractors to give a written undertaking relating to non-disclosure of our confidential information in a form we consider acceptable.

We will keep any information in connection with the funding agreement confidential to the extent that it meets all the three conditions below:

1. You clearly identify the information as confidential and explain why we should treat it as confidential
2. The information is commercially sensitive
3. Revealing the information would cause unreasonable harm to you or someone else.

We will not be in breach of any confidentiality agreement if the information is disclosed to:

- the Assessment Panel and other NSW Government employees and contractors to help us manage the program effectively
- employees and contractors of the Department so we can research, assess, monitor and analyse our programs and activities
- employees and contractors of other NSW Government departments or agencies for any purposes, including government administration, research or service delivery
- other Commonwealth, State, Territory or local government agencies in program reports and consultations
- the Auditor-General, Ombudsman or Privacy Commissioner
- the responsible Minister or Secretary
- a House or a Committee of the NSW Parliament

Premier's Department

More Information

[Conference Sponsorship Program | Chief Scientist \(nsw.gov.au\)](#)

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Privacy notice

The Department is requesting this information from you so that we can assess your application for the Conference Sponsorship Program as well as to generally administer the Program. In addition, the information contained in your application may be used for:

- research or marketing purposes
- developing the scope of, and

policies and frameworks for, future grant programs

- assessing applications made to other NSW Government grants programs
- administering other NSW Government grants programs.

For these purposes, the Department may provide this information about you to other Government agencies, members of Parliament and other relevant third parties such as consultants engaged to review or assess applications. Public announcement of successful applications will be made and may include the disclosure of personal information contained in an application.

The person who makes an application that contains personal information is responsible for obtaining the consent of the person whom that information is about and making them aware of the content of this privacy notice.

The Department will not disclose your personal information to anybody else unless we are required to do so by law – for example if the information is needed in an emergency or for a law enforcement purpose. Information you provide may be provided where the Department is authorised or compelled to do so, for example, in response to an access request under the *Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009*.

Providing us with the requested information is not required by law. However, if you choose not to provide us with

the requested information, the Department will not be in a position to consider the application further.

Any person may request access to their personal information that is held by the Department at any time. To access or update your personal information, or for more information on our privacy obligations, contact the Department.

The Department will handle and store your personal information in accordance with its Privacy Management Plan and the *Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998* (NSW).

