

# NSW Research Attraction and Acceleration Program: Conference Sponsorship Program

## Program Guidelines

Opening Friday 20 October 2023

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Closing date and time 10:00 AEST Friday 17 November 2023

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Enquiries If you have any enquiries, please contact us at [raap.grants@chiefscientist.nsw.gov.au](mailto:raap.grants@chiefscientist.nsw.gov.au)

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Guidelines release date 25 September 2023

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Type of grant opportunity Open competitive

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# GUIDELINES – NSW RESEARCH ATTRACTION AND ACCELERATION PROGRAM: CONFERENCE SPONSORSHIP PROGRAM

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# 1. About 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 NSW Office of the Chief Scientist & Engineer (OCSE) within the NSW Department of Enterprise, Investment and Trade ('the Department').

In acknowledgement of the benefits of harnessing our competitive advantages in science and technology, the NSW Government released the [NSW 20 Year R&D Roadmap](#) in 2022, a key evidence-based policy linked to the NSW [Industry Development Framework](#). The Roadmap identifies an array of technologies and applications where NSW has a competitive advantage, presenting opportunities to translate leading capabilities from one sector to another, and to develop more complete capabilities across supply chains in NSW. The Roadmap also identifies capabilities that NSW needs for strategic reasons, such as areas where local capacity is needed to manage risks and maintain sovereign capacity.

Funding is provided on an open competitive basis.

Applicants will have approximately 4-5 weeks to complete and submit their application. The Assessment Panel will have approximately 3 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 Objective

The Conference Sponsorship Program (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 for NSW.

The Program supports research conferences taking place in 2024 in NSW in areas of relevance to the [NSW 20 Year R&D Roadmap](#).

The intended outcomes 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

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### 1.3 Your responsibilities when applying for the grant

The Program Guidelines (the 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
- responsibilities and expectations in relation to the Program

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### 1.4 Program funding

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.

## 2 Eligibility criteria

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

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### 2.1 Who is eligible to apply for the grant?

To be eligible for the Program applicants must be from a NSW public sector research institution or from the NSW community sector. This includes:

- i. Non-profit organisations incorporated under the Federal Corporations Act 2001 as applied in NSW OR a national non-profit organisation planning a conference in

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NSW.

- ii. Community groups
- iii. Universities
- iv. Government associations

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:

- v. Mathematical, information and computing sciences
- vi. Physical, chemical and earth sciences
- vii. Engineering, environmental sciences and renewable energy
- viii. Biological and biotechnological sciences

Sponsorship grants will be available for scientific conferences to be held between February 2024 and December 2024.

A conference is defined as a formal meeting of various people, including researchers, industry and government representatives, and students, whose primary purpose is to share knowledge and collaborate on a particular scientific topic.

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### 2.2 Who is not eligible to apply for the grant?

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

- insolvent
- an individual
- partnership
- unincorporated association
- a Commonwealth, state, territory or local government agency or body excluding government corporate entities.
- conferenced received funding from the Department (including OCSE) in 2023.

The 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.

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### 2.3 Eligible locations

The conference must take place in NSW.

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### 2.4 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
- Venue hire
- Catering
- Promotion - marketing/advertising
- Audio visual services
- Conference management fees
- Transportation
- Insurance

If your application is successful, we may ask you to verify the project cost and request evidence of costs such as supplier contracts, quotes, and invoices. We may request financial reports and credit checks from independent third-party service providers.

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).

All eligible costs will be paid inclusive of GST.

## 3 Assessment criteria

The Assessment Panel will make recommendations for funding against the assessment criteria:

- i. 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.
- ii. Alignment with the NSW 20-Year R&D Roadmap as per table1.
- iii. Evidence the conference would deliver economic, environmental, social and/or technological benefits to New South Wales.
- iv. Evidence of engagement and collaboration with established research entities, networks, or platforms.
- v. Demonstration of how diversity, equity and inclusion will be considered and implemented in the planning and delivery of the conference. *Note: Diversity metrics may include gender, age, cultural and linguistic background, Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, neurodiversity, LGBTIQ+, non-binary or gender diverse, disability/chronic illness, and regional/remote location.*
- vi. Demonstrate need for funding through a budget breakdown, including co-sponsorship and other financial contributors.

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Table 1.

NSW 20-Year R&D Roadmap
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Software</li> <li>• Artificial intelligence</li> <li>• Data analytics</li> <li>• Quantum computing and devices</li> <li>• Blockchain</li> <li>• Robotics</li> <li>• Communications, Sensing, Internet of Things</li> <li>• Semiconductors</li> <li>• Biochemical technologies</li> <li>• Cell technologies</li> <li>• Genetic and molecular technologies</li> <li>• Nanotechnology</li> <li>• Smart materials</li> <li>• Circular economy</li> <li>• Nuclear science</li> <li>• Renewable energy generation</li> <li>• Energy storage</li> <li>• Power to X</li> </ul>

The assessment panel will assess your application based on equal weighting given to each criterion.

Criteria	Description	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 the NSW 20-Year R&D Roadmap	As per table 1	16.66%
Benefits	Evidence the conference would deliver economic, environmental, social and/or technological benefits to	16.66%

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New South Wales.

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%

### 4 How to apply

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

Conference Sponsorship Program application form is available at: [Conference Sponsorship Program | Chief Scientist \(nsw.gov.au\)](#)

Applications are due by **10:00 AEST Friday 17 November 2023**

All applications must be submitted electronically through the SmartyGrants online grant application platform.

The application must be completed in its entirety to be eligible for consideration.

Clearly mark any information that should be treated confidentially.

The application must be signed by at least one of the conference organisers.

All eligible applicants will be assessed on merit against the assessment criteria. However, The Department, in its discretion, may choose not to award or recommend funding to applicants under the Program.

Applications received after the closing date and time will be deemed to be a late application. At the discretion of the Director Policy, Science and Research the Department reserves the right to accept a late application where it is satisfied that its acceptance will not compromise the integrity and competitiveness of the process.

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](mailto:raap.grants@chiefscientist.nsw.gov.au). We do not have to accept any additional information, nor



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requests from you to correct your application after the closing time. You cannot change your application after the closing date and time.

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.

### 4.1 Key dates

You must submit an application between the published opening and closing dates.

Applications received after the closing date and time will be deemed to be a late application. At the discretion of the Director Policy, Science and Research NSW DEIT reserves the right to accept a late application where it is satisfied that its acceptance will not compromise the integrity and competitiveness of the process.

Table 2: Expected timing for this Program

Activity	Timeframe
Applications open	Friday 20 October 2023
Applications close	10:00 AEST Friday 17 November 2023
Notification of outcome	Late January 2024
Allocation of funds	By 30 June 2024
Earliest start date of the conference	1 February 2024
End date of the conference	31 December 2024

### 4.2 Queries during the application process

If you have any questions during the application period, please contact us at [raap.grants@chiefscientist.nsw.gov.au](mailto:raap.grants@chiefscientist.nsw.gov.au).

OCSE will endeavour to respond to questions within three working days.

## 5 Assessment process

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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.

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### 5.1 Assessment of applications

#### 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 Section 2: 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 the Department in its sole discretion and may include independent assessors from the broader NSW public sector.

The Panel will assess each application on against the assessment criteria on merit 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 Section 3: Assessment Criteria. 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 2024 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*.

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### 5.2 Who will approve the grant?

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

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The OCSE Director, Policy, Science and Research will consider recommendations from the Assessment Panel and make final decisions on whether to support conferences.

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### 5.3 Notification of application outcomes

We will advise the outcome of your application via email and/or letter.

Unsuccessful applicants will be notified via email and/or letter of the outcome of their application within 10 business days from the assessment panel meeting and will be offered feedback if requested.

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.

## 6 Successful applicants

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### 6.1 Notification

Successful applicants will be notified via email and/or letter. 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 NSW Government will notify successful applicants in January 2024.

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### 6.2 Funding 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.

Whilst the activity must take place throughout 2024, funds must be allocated to the Grantee by 30 June 2024.

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### 6.3 How we pay the grant

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.

### 6.4 How we monitor your grant activity

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
- Updated 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
- Conference highlights
- Testimonial

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- Photographs

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### 6.5 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.

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### 6.6 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 [nsw.gov.au/branding/sponsorship-and-funding-acknowledgment-guidelines](https://nsw.gov.au/branding/sponsorship-and-funding-acknowledgment-guidelines).

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 of Enterprise, Investment and Trade pull-up banner for the duration of the activity; and
- Two complimentary registrations to the conference.

## 7. Enquiries and feedback

Any enquiry you have about the assessment process or the outcome of your application for this Program should be sent to [raap.grants@chiefscientist.nsw.gov.au](mailto:raap.grants@chiefscientist.nsw.gov.au)

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](mailto:raap.grants@chiefscientist.nsw.gov.au)

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Complaints must be first lodged in writing to the Department Enterprise Investment and Trade. If the applicant is unhappy with the response, they may escalate their complaint to the NSW Ombudsman.

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### **8. 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.

### **9. Privacy**

We treat your personal information according to *the Department's Privacy Management Plan* available at [Privacy management plan | Department of Enterprise, Investment and Trade NSW Government](#) and the *Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998 (NSW)*. This includes letting you know:

- what personal information we collect
- why we collect your personal information
- who we give your personal information to

Your personal information can only be disclosed to someone for the primary purpose for which it was collected unless an exemption applies.

The Department may also use or disclose information about applicants and recipients under this Program for reporting purposes.

We may share the information you give us with other NSW Government entities for purposes including government administration, research or service delivery, according to Australian and NSW laws.

As part of your application, you declare your ability to comply with the *Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998 (NSW)* and impose the same privacy obligations on officers, employees, agents and subcontractors that you engage to assist with the activity, in respect of personal information you collect, use, store, or disclose in connection with the activity. Accordingly, you must not do anything that would breach your obligations under the Act.

### **10. 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

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acceptable.

We will keep any information in connection with the funding agreement confidential to the extent that it meets all of 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

The funding agreement may also include any specific requirements about special categories of information collected, created or held under the funding agreement.

## 11. Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009

Applicants should be aware that information submitted in applications and all related correspondence, attachments and other documents may be made publicly available under the *Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 (NSW)*. Information that is deemed to be commercially sensitive will be withheld.

The *Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 (NSW)* makes government information accessible to the public by:

- requiring government agencies to make certain sorts of information freely available
- encouraging government agencies to release as much other information as possible
- giving the public an enforceable right to make access applications for government information
- restricting access to information only when there is an overriding public interest against disclosure

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