



Department of  
**Jobs, Tourism, Science  
and Innovation**



Western Australia's  
**Innovators  
of the Year 2025**

**2025**

**Western Australia's Innovators of the  
Year Guidelines for Applicants**

Showcasing innovative and entrepreneurial individuals, businesses and creative minds since 2006.

# INTRODUCTION

## PURPOSE OF THIS GUIDE

The Western Australia's Innovators of the Year (WAIOTY) Guidelines for Applicants (Guidelines) are to be used as a reference guide when applying for the program.

Applicants should read these Guidelines before completing their WAIOTY Application.

## OVERVIEW OF THE WA INNOVATORS OF THE YEAR PROGRAM

The major aim of the WAIOTY program is to acknowledge and reward exceptional innovators in Western Australia who have developed an outstanding innovative product, technology, or service, which is at the emerging innovation or growth phase of development. The innovation must demonstrate an economic, social, and/or environmental benefit to Western Australia.

Applications funded under WAIOTY program will target market problems and create opportunities of importance to Western Australia. It is intended that any financial support awarded through the program will assist successful applicants to take their product, technology or service from its emerging innovation or growth phase of development to commercialisation or scale up.

### Objectives

In accordance with the New Industries Fund, the objectives of WAIOTY program are to:

- Celebrate, promote and acknowledge the success of Western Australian innovators
- Encourage co-support from industry for promotional activities
- Activate and strengthen industry-government research collaborations
- Engage communities throughout Western Australia's regions in innovation
- Promote job creation and economic diversification in Western Australia

### Program Categories

The WAIOTY program comprises of two categories:

- Rio Tinto Emerging Innovation Category (pre-revenue) is for applicants who have *not yet* generated revenue from their innovation
- Rio Tinto Growth Category (post-revenue) is open to applicants that *have* generated revenue from their innovation

## PROGRAM CATEGORIES

**All applicants must apply for either the Rio Tinto Emerging Innovation Category or the Rio Tinto Growth Category.**

### **Rio Tinto Emerging Innovation Category Winner - \$60,000 (GST exempt)**

Awarded to a WA applicant who has developed an outstanding innovative product, technology, process or service that is pre-revenue. The applicant must also clearly demonstrate an economic, social and/or environmental benefit to Western Australia. The winner will also receive the benefits of a PhD student, through the support of Biodesign Australia.

### **Rio Tinto Growth Category Winner - \$60,000 (GST exempt)**

Awarded to a WA applicant who has developed an outstanding innovative product, technology, process, or service that is post-revenue. The applicant must also clearly demonstrate an economic, social and/or environmental benefit to Western Australia. The winner will also receive the benefit of a PhD student, through the support of Biodesign Australia.

### **Rio Tinto Emerging Innovation Category Runner-up - \$15,000 (GST exempt)**

Awarded to a WA applicant who has developed an outstanding innovative product, technology, process or service that is pre-revenue, and is placed second in this category. The applicant must also clearly demonstrate an economic, social and/or environmental benefit to Western Australia.

### **Rio Tinto Growth Category Runner-up - \$15,000 (GST exempt)**

Awarded to a WA applicant who has developed an outstanding innovative product, technology, process or service that is post-revenue, and is placed second in this category. The applicant must also clearly demonstrate an economic, social or environmental benefit to Western Australia.

*In addition to either the Rio Tinto Growth or Emerging category, applicants may also only enter **ONE** of the following Platinum Awards categories:*

### **Woodside Energy Platinum Award for Energy Innovation Winner - \$30,000 (GST exempt)**

Awarded to a WA applicant who has developed an innovation that inspires and informs the future direction of oil, gas, and new energy production in WA, for export and for domestic WA customers, with new technology and new business models.

To be considered for this award you need to indicate via a tick box on the online application form under the Platinum Sponsor Awards tab.

### **Business News Great for the State Platinum Award Winner - Advertising, subscription and sponsorship pack to the value of \$20,000 plus \$10,000 (GST exempt)**

Awarded to a WA applicant that has a compelling story to tell and best promotes WA as an 'innovative state'. How did the innovation come about? What is the founder's story? What problem does the

innovation solve, and how, and why would this be of interest to a general business/news audience? Could the story be told in an engaging way on a podcast for example?

To be considered for this award you need to indicate via a tick box on the online application form under the Platinum Sponsor Awards tab.

**Wesfarmers Wellbeing Platinum Award Winner - \$30,000 (GST exempt)**

Awarded to a WA applicant who has developed an outstanding innovative product, technology, process or service that advances social or medical wellbeing in the community.

To be considered for this award you need to indicate via a tick box on the online application form under the Platinum Sponsor Awards tab.

**The winner/s will be announced at the WAIOTY Awards, which will be held on Monday 27<sup>th</sup> October at The Westin, Perth**

## LEVELS OF FUNDING SUPPORT

The WAIOTY program raises awareness of innovation as a driver of economic and technological change in Western Australia. It presents an opportunity for winners to maximise the commercialisation of their innovations by building links between industry and research, and in doing so generate employment and expand the income and export potential of the State.

Celebration of the winners presents the State Government with the opportunity to showcase Western Australia's innovation at its best and inspire others to do likewise.

Please note, that nothing in the application process, the selection process or any associated documentation shall give rise to any:

- (a) Legal relations or process contract between the Minister or the State on the one hand and the applicant on the other; or
- (b) Rights at law or in equity (howsoever arising) on the part of any applicant; or
- (c) Legitimate expectations on the part of the applicant.

In addition to the cash prizes awarded to the winners as outlined above, finalists in all award categories receive a structured 'Accelerator Program' with the following benefits:

- A full day workshop run by a qualified and experienced industry facilitator to provide finalists with the skills and techniques required for a compelling and professional pitch presentation
- A half day wellness check workshop
- A workshop on optimising social media and developing a digital strategy
- A seminar on board models for entrepreneurs
- A one-hour specialised appointment on protecting your IP rights
- A webinar on grant writing and project planning
- A half-day workshop on maximising impact through R&D sector collaboration
- Numerous networking events with industry experts

To qualify for the Accelerator Program certificate, participants need to attend at least 75% of the entire course on offer.

In addition, each finalist will receive:

- A professionally recorded and edited two-minute video of their innovation, which is screened at the Awards Ceremony, and is gifted to the finalist at the conclusion of the program for use in marketing and promotion of their business and innovation; and
- Professional photographs of the company and their innovation.

## ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

### APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY

To be considered eligible for any of the awards, and to be included in the evaluation process, an application must be received through the online WAIOTY Awards platform [Good Grants](#) by **11am AWST on Wednesday 11 June 2025** and must meet the following criteria:

- ✓ Have a business address in, and be developing their innovation in, Western Australia at the time of submission
- ✓ Continue to be based in Western Australia for three years from the application lodgment date
- ✓ Be an industry organisation, private sector firm, public sector agency, university, research institute, partnership, other organisation or a sole trader, based in Western Australia
- ✓ Have an ABN or ACN
- ✓ Have developed their product or service from original concept, can clearly define the market need or problem it solves and have some form of IP protection and/or rapid route to market
- ✓ Be the legal or authorised owner of the innovation
- ✓ Not have previously been a recipient of an award under the WAIOTY program for the same innovation
- ✓ Commit to attending as many WAIOTY Accelerator Workshops in August and September 2025 as possible

To be eligible in the **Emerging Innovation Category**, the applicant must:

- ✓ *Not yet* have generated revenue from the innovation set out in the current application (at the time of application submission).

To be eligible in the **Growth Category**, the applicant must:

- ✓ *Have* generated revenue from the innovation set out in the current application (at the time of application submission).

Applicants can only enter one application per innovation in one of the Emerging or Growth categories (i.e. an application for the same innovation cannot be lodged for both categories).

## EVALUATION CRITERIA

Eligible applicants will be evaluated against the following criteria:

1. **Description of the Innovation:** The applicant demonstrates how the innovation is novel, unique and innovative, and provides a competitive solution to a market need in Western Australia
2. **Commercial Potential:** The innovation has commercial potential, and the applicant has a suitable business plan and marketing strategy
3. **Capability and Capacity:** The applicant demonstrates they have the necessary business experience, resources, and expertise (e.g., technical, managerial), either internally or externally, to advance the innovation
4. **Level of Impact/Change:** The impact that the State Government funds will have on:
  - Advancing the innovation
  - Generating job creation and economic diversification benefits for Western Australia
  - Delivering tangible benefits for industry and end-users. This may include the potential to leverage additional investment into Western Australia

## APPLICATION PROCESS

WAIOTY application is a two-stage competitive process.

Application is via the WAIOTY grant platform [Good Grants](#). Applications will be sought by public advertisement from **11:00am AWST on Wednesday 7 May 2025**.

The online application form must be received through the online WAIOTY Awards platform by the closing date and time of **11:00am AWST on Wednesday 11 June 2025**.

Although you are unable to add pictures or diagrams to the online application form, you are permitted to attach up to two images or diagrams (to a maximum of two single-sided pages each) to support your application as a separate attachment to the email. All descriptions pertaining to the pictures or diagrams must be included within the allowed text on the online application form.

**Applications lodged after the due date and time will not be accepted under any circumstances. Please ensure that you allow adequate time to submit your application as the Department takes no responsibility for late submission of applications.**

Applicants are to submit only the completed application form and permitted supporting documents. Do not submit any other supporting documentation as it will not be used in the evaluation of the application. All applicants will be notified via email as to the outcome of their application.

### Stage 1 – Written Applications

Following the submission of applications, Evaluation Panels for each category will evaluate eligible applications against the criteria and develop a shortlist of applications per category.

The leading applications will be announced as “Finalists” in August. The Department of Jobs, Tourism, Science and Innovation will notify all applicants by email (sent to the address provided on the Application Form).

Successful finalists are publicly announced by the Minister for Science and Innovation. As part of this and other media, the Department may disclose selected high-level details to the public, such as business suburb and postcode. In applying to the program, you agree to this promotion.

### Stage 2 – Presentation to the Evaluation Panel

The finalists will be notified of their allocated presentation time and must ensure that they arrive on time as they will not be permitted extra time due to lateness or unpreparedness. Finalists will be required to give a strictly timed 15-minute presentation to the second Evaluation Panel. The presentation will be followed by a 10-minute question and answer session.

During this presentation, finalists will be required to elaborate on their innovation, its stage of development, its potential and the resources required for further development and commercialisation. Emphasis should be placed on presenting a realistic and engaging summary of the innovation and business opportunity.

If appropriate, finalists are permitted to bring a prototype of the innovation or visual aids to demonstrate the innovation to the evaluation panel. Following the presentations, the Evaluation Panel will reach consensus on the winners and runners-up of the two categories:

- Rio Tinto Emerging Innovation Category Winner, aka WA Innovator of the Year (Emerging)
- Rio Tinto Emerging Innovation Category Runner-up
- Rio Tinto Growth Category Winner, aka WA Innovator of the Year (Growth)
- Rio Tinto Growth Category Runner-up

## **FINALIST'S ACCELERATOR PROGRAM SESSIONS**

The Accelerator Program will be administered through the Department of Jobs, Tourism, Science and Innovation. All sessions will be held in August and September and attendance is strongly recommended for all finalists. The sessions will be held at a variety of suitable Perth locations

Note: Seminars, dates and venues will be confirmed for finalists in August. For regional finalists that cannot attend these sessions in Perth, alternative arrangements will be made.

While attending these sessions is obligatory, they do not form part of the assessment for the Awards program proper. Finalists gain access to the sessions for no cost, so they can be considered as a valuable benefit for making it to the finalist stage.

Applicants that attend at least 75% of the program will be provided with a Certificate of Completion.

## PROFESSIONAL PHOTOGRAPHY AND VIDEO PRODUCTION

Finalists are required to be available for professional photography with their innovation, which will be used for promotion of the program and will take place during August and September.

Finalists will also receive a professionally edited video of their innovation which will be produced during August and September. Filming takes approximately three hours and times will be confirmed with each finalist.

The finished short videos will be screened at the Awards Ceremony and gifted to the finalists at the completion of the program. They will also be used to promote the WAIOTY program by the Department on its promotional platforms. Finalists will be able to use the video for the promotion and marketing of their innovation.

Note: For regional finalists' alternative arrangements can be made.

## DECISION MAKING PROCESS

The Department of Jobs, Tourism, Science and Innovation will establish independent Evaluation Panels (one for each the Emerging Innovation and Growth categories, and a second panel for the finalist presentations) who will evaluate applications and make recommendations. Each Platinum Award will have a separate judging panel. To assist in the evaluation of applications, the Department of Jobs, Tourism, Science and Innovation may seek advice from individuals with expertise in the area/s under consideration.

Evaluation of applications will be determined by the application's alignment with:

- ✓ The objectives contained in the application form
- ✓ State Government priorities for industry and innovation
- ✓ WAIOTY program evaluation criteria

The applications may also be subject to due diligence, technical, financial, and economic appraisals.

The Department of Jobs, Tourism, Science and Innovation's decision is final, and no further correspondence will be entered into.

The Evaluation Panel reserves the right to request additional evidence from applicants to support claims against the Evaluation Criteria to assist in making recommendations.

The deliberations of the Evaluation Panel and all related information and material will be kept strictly confidential, subject to the requirements of the *Freedom of Information Act 1992*.

All program-related information and material provided remains the property of the Department of Jobs, Tourism, Science and Innovation.



## CONDITIONS OF ENTRY AND OBLIGATIONS FOR FUNDING UNDER THE GUIDELINES

Prize winners will be required to submit, as soon as practicable (no later than 12 months) after receiving the award, a detailed plan of the proposed expenditure of their prize monies to demonstrate the progress of their innovation. The department will assess and provide approval for the proposed expenditure.

Prize money is to be used, in an appropriate and JTSI-approved fashion, to advance the innovation for which the applicant won an award.

Funding cannot be spent on general business/operational/business planning activities that are usual requirements of a business. This includes, but is not limited to, training courses, payment of existing salaries, hardware or software purchases, planning, marketing or website development.

The State Government requires that winners and finalists will, from time to time, assist in publicly promoting innovation as important contributors to Western Australia's economic, social and environmental wellbeing. For this reason, winners and finalists will be required to:

- Participate in post programs and activities
- Provide post-event information pertaining to how program monies have been utilised
- Provide information against performance measures (including financial information) as provided to the participant by the Department of Jobs, Tourism, Science and Innovation

It is expected that all recipients of NIF funding add their organisation to [Dealroom](#), under the 'Startups & Scaleups' or as appropriate. Here you can add your organisation and funding information, that then becomes visible to the WA Innovation Ecosystem, unlocking features and helping the database become more complete.

## PROGRAM EVALUATION

In accordance with the strategic direction of the New Industries Fund to diversify the economy and create new Western Australian jobs, the WAIOTY program seeks to evaluate outcomes in terms of project progress, achievements and impact.

All financial support provided by JTSI is subject to a post funding review. Recipients are required to participate in online surveys conducted by JTSI up to 3 years after the funding ceases. Surveys generally take 10 minutes to complete and seek feedback on inputs, activities, results, usage and impacts related to the WAIOTY.

Participants in the WAIOTY program agree to provide to the Department of Jobs, Tourism, Science and Innovation information regarding their WAIOTY project as reasonably requested. This information may be used for reporting and accountability purposes and may also be used to inform policy development, investment decisions and design and delivery of future initiatives.

## AVAILABILITY OF FUNDING

The provision of financial support under this Scheme is at the absolute discretion of the State Government and is subject to the availability of funds.

## FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 1992

Applicants are informed that the Department of Jobs, Tourism, Science and Innovation is subject to the *Freedom of Information Act 1992*, which provides a general right of access to records held by Western Australian State and Local Government agencies.

Applicants should be aware that information pertaining to the receipt of State Government financial support may be tabled in the Western Australian Parliament. This information could include names of recipients, the amounts of financial support, the name of the project/activity and, possibly, a brief description thereof. This could result in requests for more detail to be released publicly.

Applicants should be aware that some information about their innovation will be made public if they progress to the final stage of judging. In order to promote and acknowledge the success of Western Australian innovators, the Department of Jobs, Tourism, Science and Innovation will hold an official ceremony and may include information about the finalists in brochures, media releases, social media and on the New Industries Fund, and the Department of Jobs, Tourism, Science and Innovation's website.

Applicants should consider IP protection and confidential information before submitting an application.

Further information on the operation of the *Freedom of Information Act 1992* can be obtained from the Department of Jobs, Tourism, Science and Innovation's website.

## CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Applicants and evaluation panel members are required to disclose any information that might be relevant to an actual or potential conflict of interest. This will exclude them from judging that application as well as providing input into the judging process.

## TAX INFORMATION FOR APPLICANTS

In some instances, the Australian Taxation Office views prize money as assessable income. In the event of receiving prize money discuss any potential taxation implications with a financial advisor, or the Australian Taxation Office (13 28 61).

## APPENDIX A - GLOSSARY OF TERMS

### Definitions

**capability** means measure of the ability of the applicant to achieve the objectives as stated in the application.

**capacity** means measure of the resources available to the applicant, such as the number of people and their qualifications/skills/experience, to achieve the objectives as stated in the application.

**collaboration** means a cooperative arrangement in which the applicant works jointly with another party towards the common objectives as specified in the application. The parties may or may not have had any previous relationship.

**end-user** means a person or organisation that uses a product, as opposed to the person or organisation that authorises or procures the funding in the application.

**innovation** means improvements in technology, products, services, or business operations that lead to a distinct competitive advantage or productivity gain.

**revenue** refers to income generated from the innovation being submitted. It does not include other revenue received by the organisation.