



Department of  
**Energy and Economic  
Diversification**

# Innovation Pathways Program (IPP)

2025 Guidelines



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# 1. Introduction

The Western Australian Government has invested \$40 million into the [\*New Industries and Innovation Fund \(NIIF\)\*](#) over four years (2025-29) to boost the development and acceleration of innovation-based technologies and their take up in global value chains.

Building jobs and new industries requires an industry-led approach to innovation and business competitiveness. The *New Industries Fund* was initially established in 2017 to support a self-sustaining innovation environment that encourages collaboration and private sector investment. This will help grow the State's competitive advantages and build the skills required for the jobs of the future.

The NIIF is administered by the Western Australian Department of Energy and Economic Diversification (the Department). The NIIF provides funding for several initiatives, including the *Innovation Pathways Program* (formerly X-TEND WA), to foster an innovative and diversified Western Australia that is competitive, sustainable and attractive to investors, industry and entrepreneurs.

The NIIF is the primary tool for the State to deliver against the [\*WA Innovation Strategy: the place to innovate\*](#) and is a key enabler of the State's economic development framework [\*Diversify WA\*](#).

## 2. Western Australia's Innovation Strategy

The goal of *Western Australia's Innovation Strategy* is to inspire a new generation of innovators to solve our challenges and encourage the economy to diversify. The mission is to elevate Western Australian innovation onto the global radar and propel the local ecosystem into a new phase of growth. The Strategy sets itself the following five 10-year goals to realise this vision, along with the associated Innovation Action Plan, for Western Australia to become a:

- world leader in research and inventiveness;
- location of choice for product and technology development, translation and testing;
- home to globally-focussed organisations that scale, creating new jobs;
- adopter of new technologies and a tech transfer haven;
- place where innovation is inclusive and purposeful, rewarded and respected.

To achieve these five (5) goals, the Western Australian Government is taking action in seven (7) priority areas:

- **Skills, people and culture:** The Western Australian Government will invest in building additional talent across the State and attracting talent globally.
- **Research and tech transfer:** The Western Australian Government will set out a bold new science and research agenda, fit for the decade ahead, and seek to maximise technology transfer opportunities across the State's growing economy.
- **Networks, precincts and shared facilities:** The Western Australian Government will accelerate efforts to enable innovation hubs, precincts and shared facilities to strengthen the innovation ecosystem across the State.
- **Access to capital:** The Western Australian Government will encourage the growth of an active local venture capital market for Western Australian innovators and investigate other ways to ensure there is access to sufficient capital.
- **Procurement and supply chains:** The Western Australian Government is making procurement easier for Western Australian startups and small businesses to provide access to major industry and Government contracts, and will work with partners to open market access to global supply chains.
- **Diversity and inclusion:** The Western Australian Government will grow and foster the diversity and inclusiveness of the Western Australian economy, providing opportunities for greater participation in new and innovative economic activity by underrepresented groups.
- **Promotion and adoption:** The Western Australian Government will elevate efforts to promote and celebrate the outstanding scientific, technological and innovative capability of Western Australia internationally and at home, supporting the adoption of new technologies and innovations across businesses and communities.

## 3. About the grant

### 3.1. Overview

The *Innovation Pathways Program* (Grant) is a competitive Western Australian Government grant, funded through the NIIF. The grant is delivered under three streams: Accelerator support, Entrepreneur education, and Investor education.

The Grant targets accelerator and education programs that support startups to become investor ready, equip entrepreneurs with the skills to commercialise and scale their businesses, and better inform investors to increase the available capital to Western Australia's innovation ecosystem.

The Grant supports local service providers, as well as international and interstate providers who are expanding their services into Western Australia. Interstate accelerator programs are strongly encouraged to apply. Organisations not based in Western Australia are encouraged to partner with a local Western Australian service provider.

## 3.2. Objectives and outcomes

There is a recognised need for improved and expanded education for startups and innovative SMEs to become ‘investment ready’ and/or to scale their businesses, as well as a need to expand the education and ability of investors and corporates to deliver better access to investment capital for startups and innovative SMEs in Western Australia.

The objective of the Grant is to support accelerator programs – an integral mechanism to support and grow the ecosystem, as well as entrepreneurial and investor education programs for Western Australian startups and innovative SMEs, and current and potential investors. This will ensure entrepreneurs are better equipped to commercialise and scale their businesses and current and potential investors are better informed to stimulate more private investment in local innovative ventures.

The intended outcomes of the Innovation Pathways Program are:

- an increase in the number of entrepreneurs and innovators that receive training to become investment ready;
- an increase in the number of investors that receive training to make informed early-stage innovation investment decisions;
- an increase in the number of accelerator and education programs delivered for regional, First Nations, and female founders;
- the establishment of new accelerator programs and education providers in Western Australia that address gaps in current offerings, including interstate and international providers;
- an increase in the capability and skills of entrepreneurs and innovators to develop and commercialise new products and services;
- an increase in the number of investment ready startups in Western Australia; and
- an increase in the dollar amounts of investment into Western Australian startups.

## 4. Program streams

The Department is seeking applications from reputable organisations and service providers that deliver accelerator and education programs to assist, support and grow the Western Australian innovation ecosystem. The Department will accept applications from organisations with a proven track record of success, experience and qualifications that can deliver activities not currently offered in Western Australia, or that build on existing programs in one or more of the following streams:

**Stream A: Accelerator support** - up to \$300,000

Accelerator programs designed for startups, innovative SMEs and scaleups that support them to become investment ready. The programs may be tailored to a specific industry if it aligns with one or more of the *Diversify WA* priority sectors.

**Stream B: Entrepreneur education** - up to \$200,000

Programs, other than accelerators, that are specifically tailored to increase the investment readiness of startups and innovative SMEs or scaleups that include one or more of the following recommended initiatives:

- a. Incubators;
- b. Masterclasses,
- c. Educational forums and workshops focused on innovation, strategy, pitching, scaling;
- d. Entrepreneurs in residence; and/or
- e. Mentorship and coaching;

Note: this list is not exhaustive and does not preclude any other suitable support initiative for the Western Australian innovation ecosystem.

Education programs that will strengthen innovation ecosystem collaboration and improve access to, or participation in, the Western Australian innovation community are suitable.

**Stream C: Investor education** - up to \$200,000

Programs that educate, grow, and encourage investors of all classes including corporates, leading to an increase in investment in innovative ventures in Western Australia.

These programs should activate current and potential investors and/or corporates using best practice tools to make successful investment decisions for investing in local innovation ventures, such as evaluation, due diligence, investment timelines and awareness of incentive schemes.



Applications which deliver programs that target regional<sup>1</sup> audiences, and/or First Nations<sup>2</sup> participants, and/or female participants are strongly encouraged and will be weighting favourably in the evaluation process.

## 5. Funding

### 5.1. Funding Availability

Tier	Applicant	Recipient matched funding requirement
1	For programs that target regional WA	25%
2	For programs that target First Nations participants <sup>3</sup>	25%
3	For programs that target female participants	25%
4	For all remaining programs	35%

A maximum of \$300,000 grant per Stream A application and \$200,000 per Stream B and C application is available. A matched funding requirement must be met and demonstrated in your application. Please refer to the table above to determine which Tier your application is as this will determine the matched funding percentage for your application. The matched funds must be demonstrated cash and all matched funding contribution items may be subject to an independent audit.

It is recognised that some vital initiatives may not be able to attract this level of matched funding. Non-matched funding applications may be considered and evaluated on a case-by-

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<sup>1</sup>A program being offered online does not qualify as a 'regional program' alone; applications need to demonstrate how they are going to reach and develop regional innovators and investors. It is encouraged that proposals for regional Western Australia consider engaging and partnering with a local service provider in the regions.

<sup>2</sup> First Nations-focused programs must be delivered by or co-designed with First Nations facilitators who provide training with culturally safe expertise and are respected by the community in which they deliver the training.

<sup>3</sup> Applicants who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander are eligible for grant writing support from an Aboriginal grant writer. Please contact [innovation@jtsi.wa.gov.au](mailto:innovation@jtsi.wa.gov.au) for more information and to access this support service.

case basis where a demonstrated market need is shown and at the Department's absolute discretion.

The matched funding cannot include other Western Australian Government funding sources. Matched funding towards agreed program deliverables, including the source of the funding, is to be outlined in the proposed budget submitted with your application (see Section 7).

In some instances, the Department may not offer the full requested Grant amount.

If successful, recipients of the Grant must enter into a Financial Assistance Agreement (FAA) with the Department (see Section 10.1) prior to receiving funds. This FAA must be executed before program work commences.

## 5.2. Eligible Expenditure

Grant funding must only be used for those costs directly associated with the service delivery costs of the program. This includes subsidies for Western Australian participants to participate in the proposed program.

Reasonable domestic travel and accommodation to/in regional Western Australia for program delivery not comprising business-class/first class is acceptable.

What qualifies for eligible expenditure is at the Department's discretion. Expenditure against the program can only commence on or after the execution of a FAA.

## 5.3. Ineligible Expenditure

If successful, you cannot use the Grant, or your matched funding, for any of the following:

- a. Establishment and/or operational costs of an organisation (e.g. licences, insurance and legal fees, rent, utilities, running costs, websites, subscriptions, bookkeeping, accounting, overheads, telephone usage and other fees and expenses that support business-as-usual (BAU) activities);
- b. Infrastructure development (hard or soft, e.g. online platforms);
- c. Retrospective/pre-existing expenses;
- d. Ideation stage and general entrepreneur support;
- e. General small-to-medium enterprise support; and
- f. General business advisory services.



## 6. Eligibility

### 6.1. Applicant Eligibility

To be considered eligible for Grant funding and to progress to the Evaluation stage, applicants must meet the following criteria:

- a. Your organisation is a valid legal entity that possesses a current Australian Business Number (ABN) and/or Australian Company Number (ACN) and/or Indigenous Corporation Number (ICN) and can enter into a funding agreement with the Western Australian Government;
- b. Your organisation
  - i. has a registered business address in Western Australia; or
  - ii. is an Australian or international organisation not located in Western Australia, that agrees to use its best endeavours to register a business address in Western Australia and guarantees that it has representation to operate physically in Western Australia;
- c. Your proposed program will be delivered in Western Australia and aligns with one or more of the Program Streams outlined in Section 4;
- d. Your application is not seeking funding in excess of the maximum Stream amount as outlined in Section 5.1;
- e. Your business/organisation is solvent and will pass due diligence checks;
- f. Grant funding, and your matched funding, will be used for a future education program and will be delivered within 12-months from execution of the FAA;
- g. Your matched funding does not include other sources of Western Australian Government funding;
- h. Your application is submitted via the Good Grants platform by the application closing date and time as outlined in Section 8 and includes a comprehensive Program Plan of up to four (4) pages as outlined in Section 7.2;
- i. Applicants are not employees or officers of the Department, or members of their immediate families; and
- j. Your business/organisation is not a Government Trading Entity or State Government department.

Previous X-TEND WA recipients may reapply to deliver the same program, provided it aligns with the Program Streams and objectives of the Grant and demonstrates a strong market need and measurable success.

## 7. Evaluation Criteria

All eligible applicants will be assessed against the following criteria to determine the extent to which the application meets the funding requirements of the Western Australian Government. Consideration will be given to the scale of impact the application has on the Western Australian innovation ecosystem in comparison to other applicants.

For a competitive application, please address these five criteria as clearly as possible and use concrete evidence where possible. The amount of detail and supporting evidence you provide in your application should allow assessors to determine your capacity and capability to deliver the program to completion. Each criterion is assessed out of 10, with the maximum score being 50.

### 1 Program Plan (10 points)

The submitted Program Plan must include;

- a. a brief program description;
- b. a summary of program deliverables in-line with the Grant Program Stream/s and a timeline for their delivery;
- c. a clear and reasonable budget that identifies how the Grant funding and your matched funding will be allocated towards the deliverables through eligible expenditure items;
- d. resources required to undertake the program;
- e. risks and mitigation strategies;
- f. stakeholder engagement, including how the program will be promoted to attract the maximum number of people within the target audience;
- g. Intellectual Property management concerning participants in your program; and
- h. how impact/success will be measured.

### 2 Impact (10 points)

Describe the extent to which the proposed program:

- a. provides a comprehensive solution to a market need within the Western Australian innovation community, or, builds on existing programs. If the proposed program builds on an existing initiative, clearly outline how it will align and collaborate with current programs and providers;
- b. aligns with the Grant objectives and Program Streams; and
- c. focuses on regional and/or First Nations and/ or female participants.

### 3 Need for funding (10 points)

Describe the need for the Grant giving consideration to;

- how the Grant will directly help address your financial need in delivering your program;
- why you cannot fund this program yourself (difficulties and gaps in funding); and
- how the Grant funds will be spent to develop and implement your program.

### 4 Capacity, Capability and Resources (10 points)

Demonstrate how you will deliver the proposed program by identifying how;

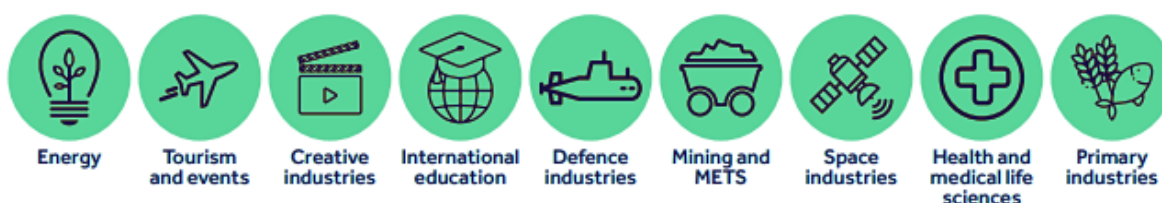
- your team have the relevant skills, experience and capacity to deliver the program, including your track record and qualifications, substantiated with evidence<sup>4</sup>;
- other resources may contribute towards the program and its success; and
- your team are appropriately resourced to deliver Tier 1, 2, or 3 programs to the target cohort, and how these stakeholder groups are represented within your team.

### 5 Alignment to Government priorities (10 points)

Demonstrate how your application aligns to the priorities of the Western Australian Government by explaining how:

- your application will contribute to economic diversification and aligns with at least one of the priority sectors in the State's economic diversification strategy, *Diversify WA*;
- the impact your program will have on new job creation in Western Australia; and
- the potential and real impacts that Grant funding for your program will have on delivering tangible benefits for participants, such as future capital raising, income growth, new markets, and any other measurable benefits.

## Diversify WA Priority Sectors



<sup>4</sup> Evidence may include letters of recommendation, testimonials from past program participants, past program reports, CVs, organisational charts or team structures.

Click [here](#) to access additional information on the priority sectors.

## 7.1. Assessment Scoring

The independent Evaluation Panel will assess the above criteria from 0 – 10 as follows:

Score	Descriptor	Additional explanatory guidance
0 - 2	Poor	A few strengths but with major weaknesses
3 - 5	OK	OK overall, but with at least one moderate weakness
6 - 7	Good	Strong overall, but with a few relatively minor weaknesses
8 - 10	Outstanding	Extremely strong with negligible or no weaknesses to note

## 7.2. Evaluation Panel

The Department engages an independent Evaluation Panel to assess applications based on the above criteria, and to make recommendations for funding. To assist with their decision making, the panel may seek advice from individuals with expertise in the area/s under consideration. They may also request additional evidence to support claims against the Evaluation Criteria.

The deliberations of the Evaluation Panel and all related information and material are strictly confidential, subject to the requirements of the *Freedom of Information Act 1992* (WA) (FOI Act).

The Evaluation Panel's recommendations will be submitted to the Minister for Science and Innovation for approval. The decision of the Minister on allocation of funds is final and at the full discretion of the Minister.

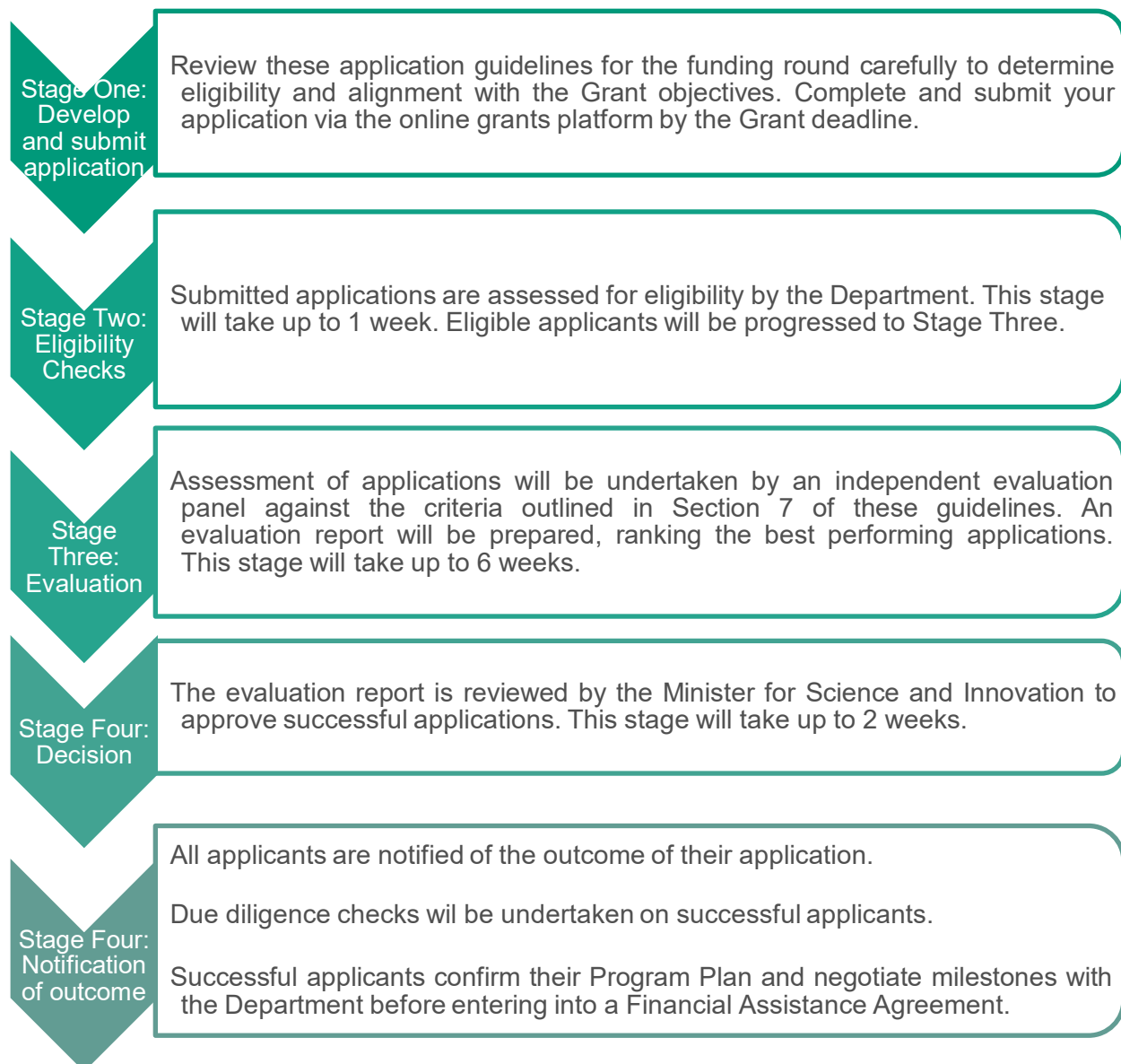
# 8. Application Process

To be considered for funding under the Grant, your application must be submitted via the [online grants platform](#) during open rounds.

## 8.1. Key Dates

Indicative timeline for IPP grant funding	
Applications open	Tuesday 9 December 2025, 10.00am (AWST)
Applications close	Friday 30 January 2026, 4:00pm (AWST)

## 8.2. Assessment stages



## 8.3. Notification of outcomes

Notification of outcomes throughout the process will be sent to the registered email address provided in the online application submission.

All decisions are final and made at the State's absolute discretion.

## 9. Follow on funding

Where a recipient has demonstrated successful program delivery under the Grant, follow-on funding for a second year of delivery of the recipient's program may be applied for consideration, subject to:

- achievement of all deliverables and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) agreed in the FAA;
- outcomes of the Grant being achieved to the State's satisfaction;
- evaluation from the first year demonstrating measurable success, with direct participant feedback through surveys provided to support the evaluation;
- a demonstrated strong market need;
- available funds and at the Minister for Science and Innovation's absolute discretion.

It is encouraged that follow-on funded programs extend their reach to regional, First Nations and/or female participants if not already and if appropriate. This can include delivery in additional regions in Western Australia.

Grant recipients are to look at other means of raising revenue beyond a second year of Grant funding for continuation and sustainability of the program. This is encouraged as the Grant cannot be relied upon as a source of income for programs.

The follow-on funding amount offered will be at the State's discretion.

## 10. Conditions and Obligations

### For successful recipients of the grant:

#### 1. Enter into a Financial Assistance Agreement with the Department

Successful applicants under the Grant are required to enter into a written Financial Assistance Agreement (FAA) with the Department that administers the Grant. No rights to financial assistance are accrued until such time as the FAA has been entered into by the relevant parties.

The FAA will outline the terms and conditions under which the Department provides funding, Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) based on the satisfactory Program Plan, negotiated with the Department, publicity and reporting issues. The Department specifies the conditions and obligations of funding prior to the disbursement of any funds.

Businesses recommended for funding may be required to provide more detailed information about their business. Applications may be subject to due diligence, technical, financial and economic appraisals.



## **2. Cyber Safety Responsibility**

Recipients of funding under the Grant are expected to keep their funded programs 'cyber-safe'. The onus is on the recipient to ensure all customer and other data is kept secure. The Department will not be held responsibility for the cyber security, or otherwise, of funded programs.

## **3. Monitoring, evaluation and reporting**

Successful applicants will be required to cooperate with an evaluation that is undertaken during and/or after completion of the investment. This includes reporting against KPIs, including evidence and financial statements, as part of milestone payments under the FAA and Grant acquittal.

The final report submitted at the conclusion of your program to claim the final Grant payment instalment is to summarise your program including the outcomes and impacts, and direct participant feedback. A statement of financial acquittal must be provided to support the final report.

The statement of financial acquittal submitted with the final report must outline the Grant funding to each milestone deliverable as well as your matched funding, if applicable, and be as consistent as possible with the submitted budget as part of the original application unless agreed otherwise with the Department. Invoices or bank statements may be required to verify the Grant expenditure.

All Grant recipients will be required to collect feedback from participants to inform their final report. It is expected that recipients will demonstrate how this feedback will be incorporated into future program design.

Grant recipients are not to include activities provided by any other X-TEND WA or CPP recipient or other Western Australian Government-funded organisation or service as part of their program delivery reporting.

You may also be requested to provide the Department impact measurements outside of the term of your FAA to determine the effectiveness of the State's support for the Grant.

All recipients must add their organisation to [Dealroom](#), under the 'Accelerators', 'Workplaces', 'Universities' section, or as appropriate and keep their profile up to date. Here you can add your organisation and grant information, that then becomes visible to the WA Innovation Ecosystem, unlocking features and helping the database become more complete.

Additionally, recipients are expected to provide information to the Department to assist in tracking progress against the WA Innovation Strategy as required. The data to be provided will be included in the FAA and includes but is not limited to the number of participants, participant demographics, participant business stage, valuation, number of employees, operating market and sectors, previous government support received by

participant, and the challenges and barriers experienced by participants to date and if and how the funded program has addressed these challenges.

#### **4. Funding availability**

Funding is available to successful applicants for up to 12 months after the awarding of the grant.

#### **5. Claiming grant funds**

Grant funding will be managed under a FAA which will link grant instalments to agreed milestones and KPIs based on a satisfactory Program Plan, negotiated with the Department. Grant instalments are paid upon evidence of delivery of milestones inclusive of agreed KPIs. Grant payments to successful applicants are via electronic funds transfer (EFT).

#### **6. GST**

The agreed Grant amount is exclusive of GST. For organisations registered for GST, the Department regards this Grant program as having sufficient nexus for supply, and as such grant funds will be inclusive of GST if applicable to organisations receiving funding.

#### **7. Consultant/Supplier(s)**

The FAA is between the Department and the successful applicant. Consultant/supplier(s) and any other third parties (if used) shall have no contractual, legal or equitable rights against the Department.

#### **8. Privacy and Confidentiality**

The personal information you provide in your application will be used for the primary purpose for which it was collected. Your personal information will at all times be dealt with consistently with any legal obligation and in accordance with any applicable legislation. This includes, but is not limited to, the *State Records Act 2000* (WA) and the *Privacy and Responsible Information Sharing Act 2024* (WA). The Department holds your information in accordance with the *Privacy Act 1988* (Cth) and the Australian Privacy Principles (together, Australian Privacy Laws). The Australian Privacy Principles can be found [here](#).

#### **9. Freedom of Information, Confidentiality and Disclosure of Information**

Applicants must keep confidential any dealings with the Department about their application, including any financial assistance offered, but may make disclosures to advisors who are under an obligation of confidence or if required by law.

The State and the Department reserves the right to publicly disclose the names of applicants, general information about investments and the assistance provided, and details about the anticipated economic outcomes and benefits to the State. The State and the Department may also disclose confidential information of, or provided by, the applicant:

- a. if required to be disclosed by law;
- b. to its advisors, consultants and contractors; and/or
- c. to any government agency.

Applicants are informed that the Department is subject to the *Freedom of Information Act 1992* (WA) ('FOI Act'), which provides a general right of access to records held by State agencies and local governments. Under the FOI Act, applicants should be aware that information pertaining to the receipt of State Government funding may be tabled in the Western Australian Parliament. This information could include the names of recipients, the amount of funding, the name of the program and, possibly, a brief description thereof. This could result in requests for more detail to be released publicly.

Applicants should clearly identify all commercial-in-confidence material, noting that the recipient name, funding amount, total cost, and a brief recipient program, description may be published for all successful applicants.

Successful applicants should be aware that their organisation's name, investment name and amount of funding approved will appear on the Department's website and potentially in media releases.

The Department reserves the right to discuss an application with a third party if it is deemed necessary to assist in assessing the application.

State agencies are subject to the legislative and administrative accountability and transparency requirements of the State, including disclosures to the Western Australia Parliament and its Committees. As such, applicants should be aware that disclosure of information outside of State agencies may occur if the information is required or is authorised to be disclosed by law.

## **10. Media and Promotions**

All media enquiries or public announcements relating to the Grant are coordinated and managed by the Department's Media team. Where possible, all media and communications about investments will be undertaken jointly with successful applicants. Recipients must:

- a. seek and obtain the Department's approval before making public statements, or contacting or responding to the media, regarding successful or unsuccessful applications.
- b. provide the Department with at least 10 business days' notice of any proposed media event.
- c. provide any proposed media or public statement to the Department for approval prior to its release as well as make any changes or amendments to the form, content or manner reasonably requested by the Department.

## **11. Code of Conduct**

Successful applicants for the Grant will comply with all relevant laws and ensure the services they provide and/or participate in proactively address, manage and where possible, avoid any unwelcome behaviour that offends, humiliates or intimidates a person. Unwelcome behaviour can include physical, verbal or visual conduct (e.g. in the form of posters, email, or SMS messages). Successful applicants are expected to treat all people with respect and courtesy.

# **11. Disclaimers**

The provision of financial assistance under the Western Australia Government's *New Industries and Innovation Fund* is at the absolute discretion of the Department and the Minister for Science and Innovation. Nothing in the application process, the selection process or any associated documentation shall give rise to any:

- a. legal relations or any process or other contract between the Minister or the Western Australian Government on the one hand and the applicant on the other;  
or
- b. legitimate expectations on the part of the applicant.