



Department of
**Energy and Economic
Diversification**



2026 Applicant Information Pack

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander STEM Student of the Year

Application closing date: Monday, 11 May 2026 at 4:00PM (AWST)

Applications must be submitted online and endorsed at <https://psa.grantplatform.com> by the application closing date.

Late applications or changes to applications will not be accepted after the advertised application closing date and time.

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Introduction

The Premier's Science Awards (the Awards) recognise and celebrate the achievements of Western Australia's science community. Award recipients exemplify outstanding scientific research, science engagement, STEM education and study efforts taking place across the State.

For the purposes of the Awards, 'science' encompasses applied and discovery science and includes engineering, new technologies and mathematics. Applications for any category can include achievement in any of these disciplines.

The Awards are a proud initiative of the Western Australian Government and are supported by:

- Gold Sponsors: Shell and Woodside
- Silver Sponsor: DUG
- Bronze Sponsors: BioCina, CSIRO, Fogarty Foundation and Orthocell
- University Sponsors: Curtin University, Edith Cowan University, Murdoch University and The University of Western Australia
- Sector Sponsor: The Kids Research Institute Australia
- Community Partner: Scitech
- Media Partner: The West Australian

In 2026, there are ten competitively assessed categories across scientific research, science engagement, STEM education and study along with a People's Choice Award.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander STEM Student of the Year

This information pack provides guidance for applicants to the award category for:

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander STEM Student of the Year

Awarded to an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander undergraduate or postgraduate student who demonstrates excellence in STEM studies*.

PRIZE: \$10,000

* A STEM course, for the purposes of this award, may be focused on one or more of the disciplines of science, technology, engineering, mathematics, health and medicine. Applicants may be studying towards a Bachelor Degree, Honours, Graduate Certificate, Graduate Diploma, Masters or PhD.

Application process

The selection of the award recipients is a competitive process and comparability across applications is essential.

The applicant must follow the required format, meet all information requirements and submit all documentation by the closing date and time for their application to be considered.

Applications must be submitted and endorsed online at <https://psa.grantplatform.com> before the closing date and time. Late applications or amendments will not be accepted.

Applicants must ensure that:

- All required documentation is included
- The required format is followed
- Word limits are observed

Documentation required for this award category is a:

- Completed online Application
- Completed online Endorsement
- Curriculum Vitae
- Images, figures or tables
- Academic transcripts

Applications that do not comply with the requirements will be deemed ineligible.

Step 1: Applicant details

Applicants are required to provide:

- their personal and institution or organisation details
- a statement addressing the eligibility criteria (Step 2)
- an Achievement Summary.

Achievement Summary

Applicants are required to provide an achievement summary, which is an engaging third person narrative that conveys the importance and value of your research and achievements to a layperson.

It should include:

- your name
- title
- organisation
- key elements of responses to the evaluation criteria.

Word limit: 100 words

If announced as a finalist, the biography used in all promotional material draws from the Achievement Summary.

Step 2: Eligibility criteria

Applications will be evaluated for eligibility against the General, Specific and Relative Opportunity and Performance Evidence (ROPE) criteria.

General eligibility criteria

The applicant must meet the general eligibility criteria for the Premier's Science Awards.

Applicants must:

- Be an Australian citizen or permanent resident
- Be currently residing in Western Australia
- Not be a past winner of this category or its equivalent
- Complete the online application for the relevant award category
- Complete the applicant declaration confirming eligibility
- Obtain the relevant endorsement prior to submission
- Submit the endorsed application via the submission portal prior to the application closing date and time
- Declare any perceived, potential or actual conflicts of interest
- Permit submitted material to be used for assessment and promotional purposes.

Applicants may submit applications to multiple categories, provided they meet the eligibility requirements for each category and lodge a separate application for each.

Previous applicants may reapply ensuring their submission reflects current guidelines and evaluation criteria.

Specific eligibility criteria

The applicant must also meet the specific eligibility criteria for the category to which an application is submitted.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander STEM Student of the Year

The applicant must:

- identify and be recognised as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person*
- Demonstrate a commitment to science and excellence in STEM studies
- be a current student** enrolled in their second year or later of undergraduate or postgraduate degree in a STEM course of study***

* Finalists may be asked to provide evidence of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander descent.

** To be regarded as a current student and eligible in 2026, at the application closing date, the applicant must be enrolled to study at a Western Australian university or externally at an Australian university and not have had their qualification conferred.

*** A STEM course, for the purposes of this award, may be focused on one or more of the disciplines of science, technology, engineering, mathematics, health and medicine. Applicants may be studying towards a Bachelor Degree, Honours, Graduate Certificate, Graduate Diploma, Masters or PhD.

Relative Opportunity and Performance Evidence (ROPE)

The Department of Energy and Economic Diversification is committed to fair and equitable access to the Premier's Science Awards for researchers and students from universities, industry and the broader research sector. The Awards allow applicants who have experienced significant career interruptions to provide context for their achievements.

Career interruptions

Applicants that have experienced a career interruption can provide the details of the applicable career interruptions and the total length of all interruptions.

Examples of career interruptions that would be considered include:

- International relocation
- Limited access to facilities and resources
- Caring or parental responsibilities
- Medical conditions
- Misadventure
- Disability
- Maternity or parental leave
- Unemployment
- Part-time study or employment
- Non-research industry roles not concurrent with research
- Community obligations, including Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander cultural practices
- Other similar circumstances.

Applicants can submit ROPE information to enable the judging panel to assess achievements relative to opportunity and experience. The judging panel will consider achievements relative to opportunity for all categories.

Word limit: 300 words

Eligibility periods

All eligibility periods are calculated as at the application closing date.

Step 3: Evaluation criteria

Applicants must demonstrate excellence and impact in their STEM studies.

Eligible applications will be evaluated and ranked against the weighted evaluation criteria in the online form. Weightings and word limits are listed for each criterion.

Note that the evaluation criteria have changed from previous years.

1. Excellence

Demonstrate your academic performance and achievements, such as your:

- Academic results and progress
- Awards, scholarships or other forms of recognition
- Achievements in course-related projects, practical work, placements or research

Weighting: 50%

Word limit: 400 words

2. Impact

Demonstrate how your STEM studies help you make a positive contribution to your community, university or peers, such as your:

- involvement in STEM outreach, mentoring, school engagement or cultural activities
- positive influence as a role model for other Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander students
- demonstrating commitment to future STEM aspirations and explaining how these may benefit community, Country or Western Australia
- contributions that strengthen understanding or valuing of Aboriginal Knowledges in STEM
- participation in community events, cultural responsibilities, volunteering or student groups that align with STEM, leadership or service

Weighting: 50%

Word limit: 400 words

3. Attachments

All applicants must provide supporting attachments that are clearly referenced and relevant to the application including:

- a Curriculum Vitae (four pages maximum)
- images, figures or tables (two pages maximum)
- a copy of the transcript from the current enrolled course and previous tertiary courses where relevant
- one high resolution photograph of yourself in **landscape** format. This may be used for promotional purposes in case you are selected as a finalist.

Formatting

Applicants are required to meet formatting requirements for attachments and supporting documentation:

- Single spaced Arial 11pt font
- Word or PDF document formats

- Document title saved as the applicant's name then document name. Eg. JaneSmithCV.doc

Documents that exceed formatting or page limits will be reformatted and cut off at the page limit.

Step 4: Submission

Once the applicant has completed the online application and answered the Evaluation Criteria, they should attach the supporting documentation, complete their declaration, nominate their endorser and prepare to submit their application with time for their endorser to complete their endorsement at <https://psa.grantplatform.com>.

Note that Endorsement (Step 5) is required prior to the application closing date and time.

Documentation

Only the documentation requested will be provided to the judging panel and considered in the evaluation process.

Application form

All applicants must submit a:

1. Completed online application for the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander STEM Student of the Year* category.

Attachments and supporting documentation

All applicants must provide:

2. The requested attachments
3. Completed and electronically submitted Endorsement (Step 5)

Declaration

In the online application, the applicant must complete the declaration stating that:

- The information supplied is true, accurate and not misleading
- They are a current undergraduate or postgraduate student in their second year or later undertaking studies in STEM, health or medicine at a Western Australian university
- They identify as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person
- They are an Australian citizen or permanent resident currently residing in Western Australia
- They are not a past winner of the category they are applying for
- Appropriate endorsement will be obtained
- They permit the use of any submitted materials for the purposes of assessment and promotional purposes
- If chosen as a finalist, the Department may use applicant information, photos and/or videos for promotion of the Awards program.

Conflicts of Interest

In the online application, the applicant must also declare any actual, potential or perceived conflicts of interest they or their partners may have in relation to any aspect of the Premier's Science Awards program. Identified conflicts do not affect eligibility, but must be managed by the Department.

If the applicant later identifies an actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest, they must inform the Department in writing immediately.

Conflicts of interest may include, but are not limited to, a professional, commercial or personal relationship with a party that could be reasonably construed as having or seen to have influence on the proper and objective judging process of the Awards, such as an officer of the Western Australian Government Department, an employee of one of the Awards sponsors or partners, a member of a judging panel or a Western Australian Member of Parliament.

Personal conduct statement

Applicants, finalists and Award Recipients are expected to:

- abide by the highest standards of integrity, ethics, diligence and professionalism
- display good judgement, diplomacy and courtesy when acting in the capacity of a Premier's Science Awards participant.

Submission

After completing the application, addressing the evaluation criteria, attaching documentation and completing the declaration, applicants must submit their application at <https://psa.grantplatform.com>.

During submission, applicants must provide the name, email address and phone number of a suitable endorser.

After the application has been submitted:

- the endorser will receive an automated email asking them complete the endorsement before the application closing date and time
- your institution's research office will receive an automated courtesy email advising of applicant name and award category applied, separate to the endorsement process.

Endorsement must be completed before the application closing date and time.

Applicants will receive an email notification once endorsement has been completed. Applicants should follow up if they do not receive an endorsement confirmation email.

Applicants are encouraged to inform their institution's research or student engagement office prior to submission.

Step 5: Endorsement

The applicant must obtain endorsement for their application within the online form at <https://psa.grantplatform.com> by the application closing date and time.

Suitable endorser

In the online submissions, applicants must provide the name and email address of a suitable endorser.

The endorser's role is to confirm the accuracy of the application and indicate that the applicant's organisation supports the submission. The endorser should have knowledge of the applicant's achievements and be able to provide expert opinion on their work in scientific research.

An individual may endorse multiple applicants in the same category.

Who can endorse an application?

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander STEM Student of the Year:

- A mentor, lecturer, tutor, academic supervisor employed by the applicant's university; or the applicant's university research office.

Applicants must allow sufficient time for the endorser to complete the online endorsement before the application closing date and time.

Applicants will receive an email notification once endorsement has been completed. If a notification is not received, it is the applicant's responsibility to follow up with the endorser.

Applicants are encouraged to inform their research or student engagement office prior to submission of an application.

General Information

The applicant should read the following information before completing their application.

General application guidelines

The applicant should ensure that they:

- Complete all sections of the online form and address the Evaluation Criteria
- Provide clear, concise responses in plain English, avoiding jargon and technical terms
- Structure responses logically and avoid repetition
- Clearly attribute where contributions are made, either as an individual or within the context of the wider team
- Support claims with verifiable quantitative and qualitative evidence
- Reference in the application all images, figures, tables or research articles included in the attachments
- Attach documents in the required format: applicant's name document name. Eg. JaneSmithCV.doc
- Avoid including webpages and links to audio-visual files
- Arrange for another person to review and proofread the application prior to submission
- Allow adequate time for the endorser to complete the online endorsement before the deadline
- Submit applications via the submission portal prior to the application closing date and time.

Unsubstantiated or unverifiable statements will not be considered during the selection process.

Applicants must ensure they use the correct form for their chosen category. There are different online forms for the Research categories, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Scientist of the Year, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander STEM Student of the Year, Educator categories, Science Engagement Initiative of the Year and Government Science Project of the Year awards.

For technical issues with the portal, applicants can contact science@deed.wa.gov.au.

Decision Making Process

Applications will be evaluated by a Premier's Science Awards judging panel. Evaluation of applications will be based on the application's alignment with the evaluation criteria.

The judging panel reserve the right to request additional evidence to support claims against the evaluation criteria to assist it in making its decision. The judging panel may also seek advice from individuals with expertise in the area under consideration, to assist with evaluation.

The judges' recommendations are final. The deliberations of the judging panel and all related information and material will be kept strictly confidential, subject to the requirements of the *Freedom of Information Act 1992*. The judging panel reserves the right not to recommend a winner or finalist for a particular category. Where the judging panel recommends multiple winners, the prize money will be shared. Recommendations are endorsed by the Premier of Western Australia.

Applicants will be notified by email of the outcome.

Finalists will be announced by media statement in the middle of the year.

Winners of the 2026 Premier's Science Awards will be announced at the Awards ceremony, scheduled for September 2026.

Obligations of finalists

Finalists will be notified by email of the outcome. This will include a request to:

- provide proof of Australian citizenship or permanent residency
- potentially provide evidence of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander descent
- approve the biography to be used in all promotional material
- provide up to three high resolution landscape format headshot photographs with appropriate permissions to use for promotional purposes
- respond promptly to the videographer to coordinate production of the finalist videos
- organise permissions for topics, photographs, b-roll, research, publications or programs that could be filmed
- organise access permissions or entry permits for film locations

Complimentary tickets to the Awards ceremony will be offered to the finalist and two guests.

Finalists are expected to abide by the personal conduct statement.

The Department may facilitate links between 2026 finalists and existing science engagement opportunities, including invitations to:

- be a WA STEM ambassador
- participate in public engagements promoting science.

Finalists are encouraged to promote their success through newsletters, websites, social media and by other means. The Department will provide information to support finalists in these promotions.

In the event finalists are contacted by the media, please seek advice from the Department prior to interviews.

The Department may use finalist information, photos and/or videos to promote the Premier's Science Awards program to the Western Australian community including, for example, social media promotion, public displays and public voting.

Obligations of Award Recipients

Winners of the 2026 Premier's Science Awards will be announced at the Awards ceremony.

Following the ceremony, the Department will contact the award recipients to arrange payment of prize money and discuss any proposed promotional activities.

Award recipients are expected to continue abiding by the personal conduct statement.

Award winners of the Premier's Science Awards are expected to:

- be a WA STEM ambassador
- participate in public engagements promoting science, such as National Science Week activities.

The Department encourages award winners to promote their success through newsletters, websites, social media and by other means. The Department will provide information to support award winners in these promotions.

In the event award recipients are contacted by the media:

- seek advice from the Department prior to interviews
- ensure information provided to the media appropriately acknowledges the Premier's Science Awards, your category and the date the award was granted.

Freedom of Information

Applicants are informed that the Department 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.

Further information on the operation of the Freedom of Information (FOI) Act can be obtained from the [Department of Energy and Economic Diversification](#) or by contacting the Department's FOI Coordinator at foi@deed.wa.gov.au.

Use of Application Materials

All materials provided are accepted on the understanding that the Department will only use or disclose such material:

- determining the recommended winner and finalists for a category
- informing the public about the award outcomes
- promoting of the Awards
- promoting STEM
- in other instances where information collected may be disclosed without consent, where authorised or required by law.

All award-related information, material provided, and material created by the Department through the Awards program, such as media statements, interviews, videos and photos remain the property of the Department.

Tax Information

In some instances, the Australian Taxation Office views prize money as assessable income. An award recipient is advised to discuss any potential taxation implications with their financial advisor or the Australian Taxation Office (13 28 61).

For further information

Project Officer, Future Science Capability: STEM
Department of Energy and Economic Diversification
Email: science@deed.wa.gov.au

END OF INFORMATION PACK