



Department of
Energy and Economic
Diversification

Western Australia's Government Innovators of the Year

2026 Applicant Guidelines



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1. About the grant

1.1. Purpose

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

Applicants should read these Guidelines before completing their applications.

1.2. Objectives and outcomes

The main 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. The innovation must demonstrate an economic, social, and/or environmental benefit to Western Australia.

In 2024, a new WA Government Innovators of the Year Award was introduced to acknowledge Western Australian government entity employees who are innovating, creating novel IP and adding value to public service delivery. For the purposes of this program, Western Australian government entities include Local and State Government departments, and Government Trading Enterprises.

The objectives of the WA Government Innovators of the Year Award are to:

- Identify and celebrate Western Australian Government Entity Employees (local and state departments) and Government Trading Entities
- Encourage innovation within the public sector to improve efficiencies for Western Australia.

2. Award

2.1. Government Innovator Award and Prize

Awarded to Western Australian government entity employee/s who are innovating, creating novel IP and adding value to public service delivery. For the purposes of this program, Western Australian government entities include Local and State Government departments, and Government Trading Enterprises.

The WAG IOTY program prize winner/s will win a place/s on the Australian Innovation Management Institute (AIMI): Certified Innovation Catalyst Program. The prize must be used within six (6) months from the date of announcement and is available for up to five (5) team members.

All finalists receive a professionally edited two-minute video of their innovation which is shown at the Awards Ceremony. The video is gifted to the finalist at the conclusion of the program for marketing and promoting their business and innovation.

3. Eligibility

3.1. Applicant Eligibility

To be considered eligible for the award, and to be included in the evaluation process, applicants must meet the following criteria:

- a. You are the legitimate originator/s of the Innovation;
- b. You are an employee of a Western Australian government entity at the time of submission;
- c. You have endorsement from your agency's Director General or Commissioner (refer to webpage for endorsement template);
- d. Applicant/s are developing their innovation in Western Australia;
- e. The innovation is developed from an original concept and can clearly define the market need or the problem it solves;
- f. You have not previously received an award under the WA Government Innovators of the Year program; and
- g. Your application is submitted via the Good Grants platform by the application closing date and time as outlined in Section 6 - Key Dates.

Applications can be submitted by:

- Individual; or
- Teams of up to 5 members (all team members must meet eligibility criteria).

4. Evaluation criteria

Eligible applications will be evaluated against the following criteria, with consideration given to the year level of participants. The maximum score is 50.

1. Description of the innovation (10 marks):

The applicant/s demonstrate how the innovation is novel, unique and innovative, and provides a solution to a public need in Western Australia.

2. Explanation of why the innovation was developed (10 marks)

The applicant/s describe the need for the innovation including research carried out and justification

3. Capability and capacity (10 marks)

The applicant/s demonstrate how they have the necessary experience, resources and expertise (e.g., technical, managerial), either internally or externally, to advance the innovation

4. Level of impact/change (20 marks)

The impact that the State Government innovation will have on:

- Generating job creation and economic diversification benefits for Western Australia; and
- Delivering tangible economic, social and/or environmental benefits for the Western Australian community and State.

5. Evaluation Panel

The Department appoints independent Evaluation Panels to review applications and provide recommendations.

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* ('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.

6. Application Process

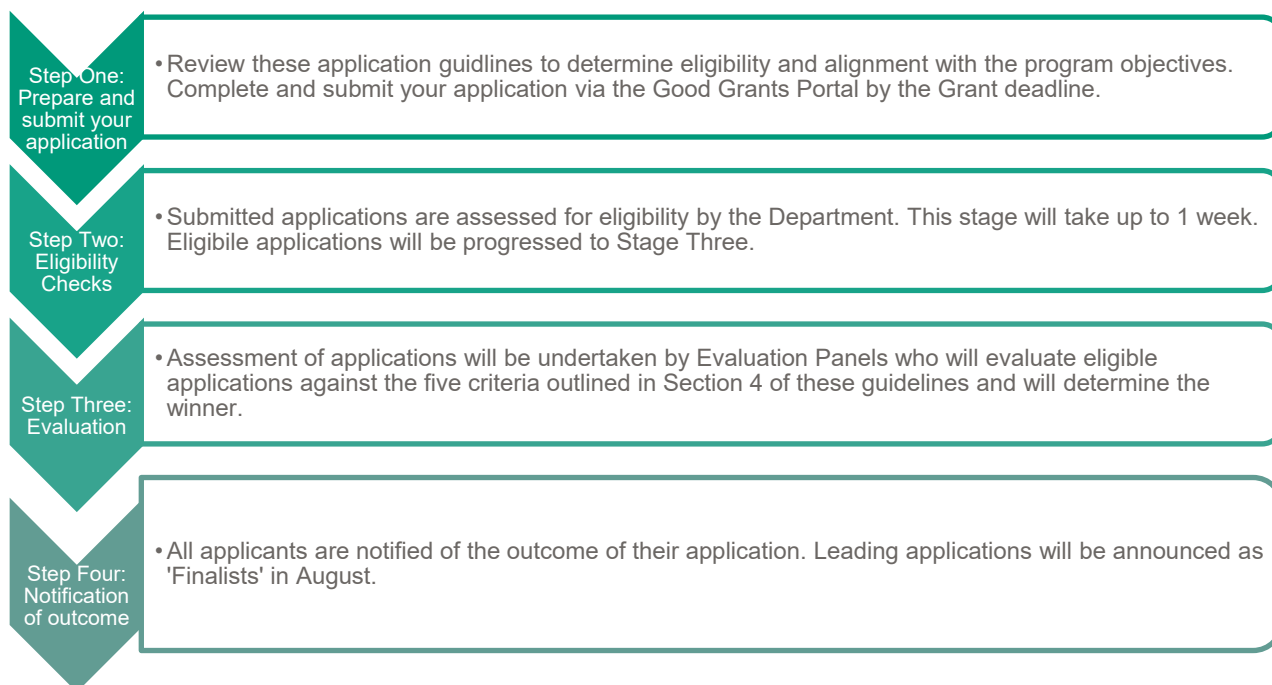
6.1. Key Dates

Item	Key Dates
Program opens for applications	Wednesday 22 April 2026 (AWST)
Application closing date	Friday 24 July 2026, 1.00pm (AWST)
Awards ceremony	Monday 2 November 2026

6.2. Assessment stages

WAGIOTY application is a two-stage competitive process:

Stage One – Written Application



6.3. 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.

6.4. 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 WAG IOTY 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.

7. Conditions and Obligations

For successful Grant Recipients:

1. Conditions of entry

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:

- a. Participate in post programs and activities
- b. Provide post-event information pertaining to how program monies have been utilised
- c. Provide information against performance measures (including financial information) as provided to the participant by the Department of Energy and Economic Diversification

It is expected that all recipients of NIIF 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.

2. Cyber safety responsibility

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

3. Evaluation, and reporting

Successful applicants will be required to cooperate with an evaluation that is undertaken during and/or after completion of the investment.

After completion, recipients are required to participate in surveys conducted up to three 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 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.

4. Funding availability

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.

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

5. Claiming grant funds

Grant payments to successful applicants are via electronic funds transfer (EFT). Prize winners will be required to submit, as soon as practicable 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.

6. Eligible Expenditure

Prize money is to be used, in an appropriate and Department-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.

7. GST excluded

The Department does not regard the Grant as payment for a supply. Thus, the Department does not increase the grant amount to include GST.

8. 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).

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 funding and 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 project/activity 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 recipient name, funding amount, total cost, and a brief recipient project 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 Australian 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. 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.

11. 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; and
- 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.

12. 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 behaviours 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. The Department reserves the right, in its absolute discretion, to discontinue the provision funding or not provide funding to any successful applicant that acts contrary to the code of conduct.

8. Disclaimers

The provision of financial assistance under the Western Australian Government's New Industries and Innovation Fund is at the absolute discretion of the Department. 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.