



Department of
Energy and Economic
Diversification

WA Young Innovators of the Year

2026 Applicant Guidelines



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1. About the grant

1.1. Purpose

The Western Australia's Young Innovators of the Year (WAY 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 WAY IOTY program is to acknowledge and reward exceptional young 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.

The objectives of the WAYIOTY program are to:

- Discover and nurture emerging innovative talent in Western Australia's youth
- Foster entrepreneurial mindsets and skills in secondary school students
- Create pathways between secondary education and the innovation ecosystem
- Encourage consideration of sustainability through economic, social, and environmental impacts in innovation
- Build confidence in young innovators to pursue their ideas
- Connect young innovators with industry mentors and opportunities

2. Award

2.1. WA Young Innovator award

Winner \$1,000 (GST exempt)

Awarded to a WA high school aged individual or team (1 to 5 people) who have developed an outstanding innovative product, technology, process or service that clearly demonstrates an economic, social or environmental benefit to Western Australia.

In addition to the \$1,000 cash prize awarded, the winner/s will receive \$15,000 value in-kind support facilitated by the Young Entrepreneurs Academy (YEA) and includes:

- Bespoke entrepreneurship masterclasses - 4 x 1.5-hour classes
- Professional case study development
- Up to 10 hours of mentoring and development support

- Participation in West Tech Fest events and activities

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. Applicant/s are of secondary school age;
- b. Applicant/s have a project supervisor (teacher or industry mentor);
- c. School endorsement has been received;
- d. Applicant/s are developing their innovation in Western Australia;
- e. The innovation is developed from an original concept;
- f. Applicant/s have not previously received an award under the WA Young 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 students;
- Teams of up to 5 students (all team members must meet eligibility criteria);
- Multiple teams from the same school; and
- Mixed cohorts from various educational streams/ programs/year levels.

3.2. Conditions of entry

- Parent/guardian email consent is required for all participants.
- Completed school endorsement template is required for all participants – refer to webpage for template
- All intellectual property must remain with the student/s.
- Applicant/s are committed to participate in all program elements if selected as finalist
- Appropriate adult supervision/mentoring is required throughout the process.

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 70.

1. Innovation Description – define the problem

Maximum total 550 words (score out of 15)

- Clearly describes the problem being solved (150-200 words)
- Demonstrates how the solution differentiates compared to current solutions (150-200 words)
- Shows understanding of who will benefit from the innovation (100-150 words)

2. Idea Development Process

Maximum total 400 words (score out of 15)

- Evidence of ideation research and testing appropriate to year level (150-200 words)
- Clear documentation of the development process undertaken and challenges faced (150-200 words)

3. Benefits and Potential Impacts

Maximum total 550 words (score out of 15)

- Clearly describes economic, social and/ or environmental benefits for Western Australia (150-200 words)
- Demonstrates potential of scale of innovation (100-150 words)
- Innovation has considered the [United Nations Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#) (150-200 words)

4. Prototype

Maximum total 300 words (score out of 10)

- Demonstration of prototype/ beta test/ minimum viable product (100-150 words)
- Documentation demonstrating research and testing of prototype/ concept/ beta test/ minimum viable product undertaken (100-150 words)

5. Resource and Learning

Maximum total 350 words (score out of 15)

- Creative use of available resources and evidence of resource plan (150-200 words) Attachment accepted for resource list/plan, score based or worded response)
- Evidence of learning and project adaptation throughout the process (100-150 words)

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

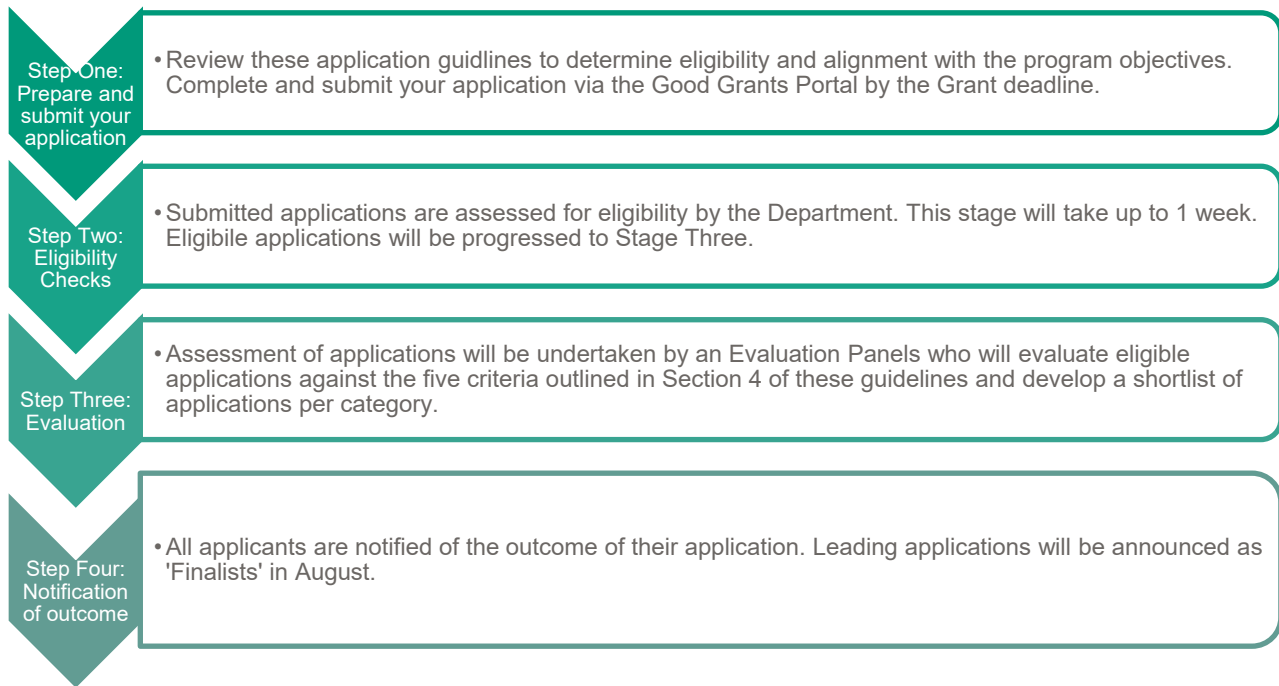
6.1. Key Dates

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

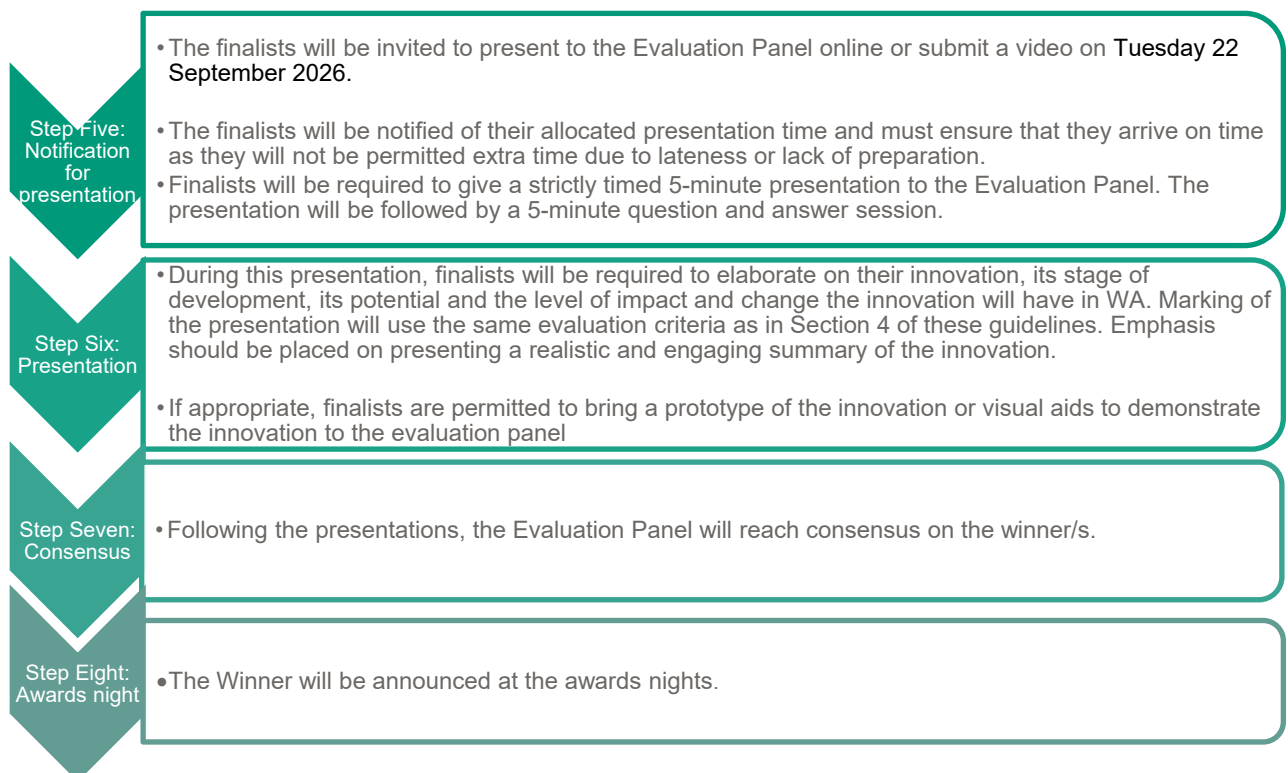
6.2. Assessment stages

WAY IOTY application is a two-stage competitive process:

Stage One – Written Application



Stage Two – Presentation to the Evaluation Panel



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 WAY 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 Jobs, Tourism, Science and Innovation.

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 WAY IOTY.

Participants in the WAY IOTY program agree to provide to the Department information regarding their WAY IOTY 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 DEED-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.