Department of
Energy and Economic Diversification

GOVERNMENT OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Expression of Interest

Operator

WA Commercialisation Hub

Opens – 4 August 2026

Closes – 1700 (AWST) 30 September 2026

Contents

On the 4 August 2026 the Hon Stephen Dawson MLC, Minister for Science and Innovation, announced that Expressions of Interest (EOI) for an Operator of the new State-funded WA Commercialisation Hub had opened.

A suitably qualified and experienced Operator organisation is sought to establish, manage, deliver and report on services through the hub from date of commencement for four years, under direction from the Department of Energy and Economic Diversification (DEED), via a Funding Agreement between the State Government, through DEED, and the Operator.

1. WA Government's New Industries and Innovation Fund

Innovation is a key cross-sector enabler to accelerate growth of priority sectors in the State's *Made in WA* plan and *Diversify WA* economic development frameworks.

Since 2017, the State Government has made significant investment in leveraging local innovative opportunities to diversify the economy and create new jobs.

As part of the State Government's *Made in WA* plan $40 million has been committed for 2025/26 – 2028/29 to foster innovation and support the development of emerging industries in Western Australia through the New Industries and Innovation Fund (NIIF). The NIIF supports the commercialisation of local innovation and strengthens the innovation ecosystem, leading to new industries, jobs, and advancing the development of WA's knowledge economy. The NIIF drives growth and resilience in the WA economy.

The principles of the NIIF are to provide place-based support for innovation focused on areas of competitiveness, job creation, and to maximise leverage and co-investment opportunities in areas of strength and competitive advantage for WA.

The NIIF supports the Government's delivery of the *Western Australian Innovation Strategy*. The Strategy provides a vision for Western Australia that sets out clear goals from which to steer and prioritise efforts and benchmark performance. It provides a holistic approach to innovation that recognises the many parts that make up the innovation ecosystem.

Examples of NIIF programs include:

- Innovation Booster Grant
- Commercialisation Bridge Grant
- Innovation Pathways Program
- Sponsorships including West Tech Fest, and
- Innovation Hubs.

The success of these programs demonstrates how rapidly WA's thriving innovation ecosystem is evolving and maturing and highlights the need for support for the next phase of business growth - the scaleup.

The State Government will support scaleups by establishing the new Commercialisation Hub with NIIF funding of $2 million over four years from commencement date.

For the purposes of this process a scaleup is:

- Growth-based: A business with average annualised growth of 20%+ in revenue or employees over three years, and at least 10 employees
- Stage-based: A business past the start-up phase that has validated product-market fit and established, repeatable revenue, and is now focused on growing rather than still searching for a viable model.
- Capability-based: A business with a proven product and customer base that is ready to scale operations, enter new markets, or raise larger growth capital – distinguishable from an early-stage venture still testing its concept.

2. WA State-Funded Innovation Hubs

The introduction of the State Government's New Industries Fund in 2017, enabled establishing State co-funded innovation hubs in creative technologies, cyber security, data science and life sciences.

These hubs assist start-ups and are key factors in promoting innovation and driving commercialisation opportunities across industry sectors.

Support services delivered through innovation and/or commercialisation hubs enable access to the latest knowledge, expertise, and technology for developing innovations relevant to their products, processes, or business models. They provide mentoring, connections with investors, assistance with applying for finance or grants, connecting researchers, users, and suppliers of innovations across the value chain, and fostering synergies between key enabling technologies.

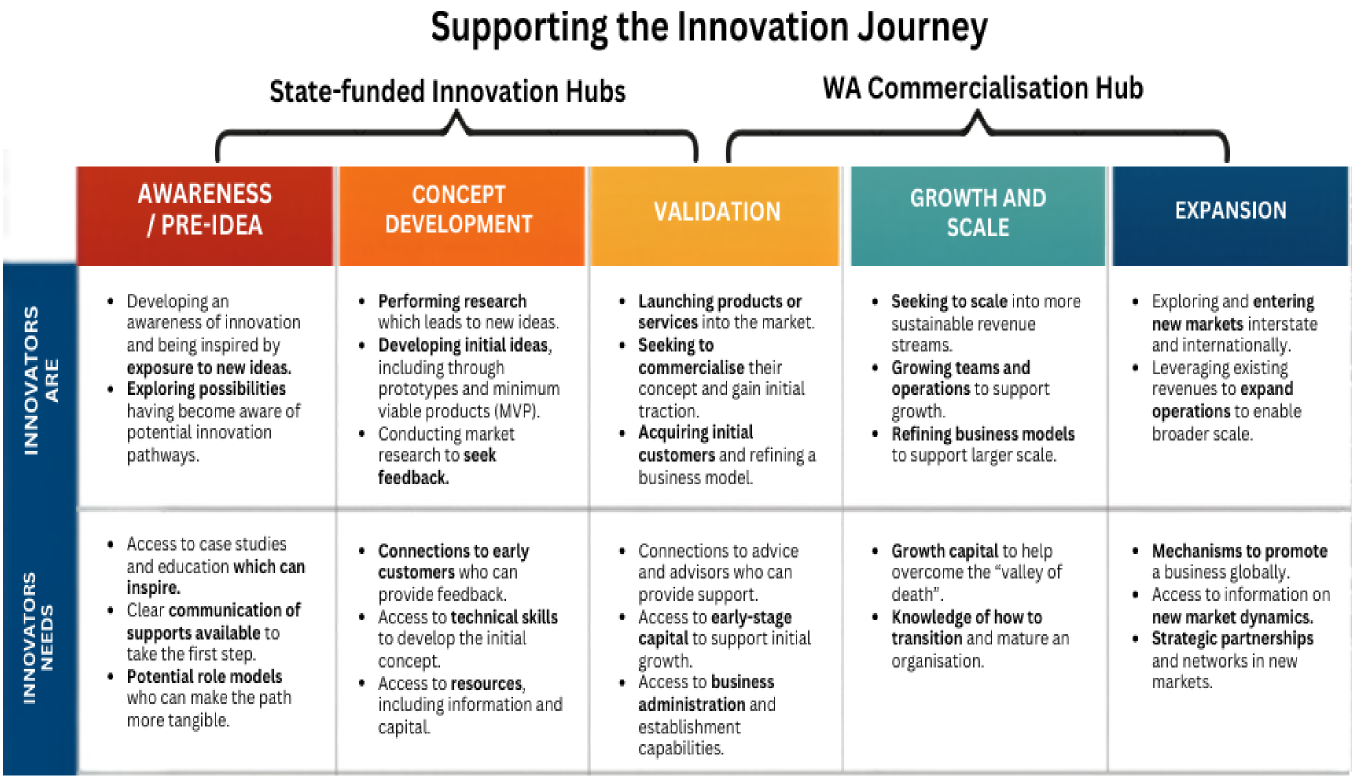
A critical component of growing Statewide innovation has been the service delivery through the collaborative, sector-specific state and partner-funded innovation hubs and as the State's thriving innovation ecosystem evolves and matures so too must the support provided to innovators who have progressed to the scaleup phase.

As part of a needs-based strategic refresh of existing innovation hubs the addition of a new Commercialisation Hub will:

- Be highly client-focused, with collaboration and networking as defining characteristics
- Instil entrepreneurial thinking while remaining firmly rooted in practical business solutions
- Maintain a strong, active and accessible presence
- Have flexible business models that can adapt and evolve as circumstances, technologies, and funding regimes change
- Deliver services and support relevant to the scaleup stage of business growth.

Mobilising investment tools and funding programmes that are available can be a challenge. Specific attention is required to the roles of industry, universities, the Commonwealth, and other funding mechanisms for combining and scaling different funding sources and investment approaches.

Figure 1. Supporting Western Australian Innovators



Supporting the Innovation Journey

State-funded Innovation Hubs: Awareness / Pre-idea, Concept Development, Validation
WA Commercialisation Hub: Validation, Growth and Scale, Expansion

	AWARENESS / PRE-IDEA	CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT	VALIDATION	GROWTH AND SCALE	EXPANSION
INNOVATORS ARE	• Developing an awareness of innovation and being inspired by **exposure to new ideas.** • **Exploring possibilities** having become aware of potential innovation pathways.	• **Performing research** which leads to new ideas. • **Developing initial ideas,** including through prototypes and minimum viable products (MVP). • Conducting market research to **seek feedback.**	• **Launching products or services** into the market. • **Seeking to commercialise** their concept and gain initial traction. • **Acquiring initial customers** and refining a business model.	• **Seeking to scale** into more sustainable revenue streams. • **Growing teams and operations** to support growth. • **Refining business models** to support larger scale.	• Exploring and **entering new markets** interstate and internationally. • Leveraging existing revenues to **expand operations** to enable broader scale.
INNOVATORS NEEDS	• Access to case studies and education **which can inspire.** • Clear **communication of supports available** to take the first step. • **Potential role models** who can make the path more tangible.	• **Connections to early customers** who can provide feedback. • Access to **technical skills** to develop the initial concept. • Access to **resources,** including information and capital.	• Connections to advice and advisors who can provide support. • Access to **early-stage capital** to support initial growth. • Access to **business administration** and establishment capabilities.	• **Growth capital** to help overcome the "valley of death". • **Knowledge of how to transition** and mature an organisation.	• **Mechanisms to promote** a business globally. • Access to information on **new market dynamics.** • **Strategic partnerships** and networks in new markets.

2.1. Hubs Services

Hubs offer a broad range of support services, are accessible through multiple entry points, and offer a range of core services and programs can include but are not limited to:

- Supporting startups to research, develop and test prototypes, and leverage outcomes
- Identifying and supporting repeatable and scalable business models
- Assisting with validating business models
- Support with execution and growth of businesses
- Testing market readiness
- Raising awareness around business potential of improved technologies
- Translating research into product development and operational improvements
- Identifying and promoting sector-specific opportunities and networks
- Strategic planning and direction setting, visioning, and strategy development
- Working with companies to assess their maturity and develop plans for IP (intellectual property) management and commercialisation
- Brokering relationships with service providers and engaging stakeholders
- Providing expertise, mentoring and training
- Organising targeted events and forums, including pitch nights, educational seminars, workshops, and knowledge-exchange sessions
- Identifying and leveraging investment-attraction opportunities
- Connecting with other State-funded innovation hubs, universities and other research organisations
- Guiding business entry into new, potentially global, markets
- Assisting with successful grant and award applications (e.g., WA Innovators of the Year Program, Innovation Booster Grants, Commercialisation Bridge Grants, etc.).

3. WA Commercialisation Hub

This Expression of Interest is seeking a suitably qualified Operator for a new WA Commercialisation Hub.

Entrepreneurs and innovators play a vital role in stimulating economic growth by developing and commercialising innovative new services, products, businesses and industries that create jobs and diversify the economy.

The transition from a startup to a scaleup is a critical milestone and requires expertise and specialised knowledge to navigate increased business complexity and manage the different stages of consistent business development. Yet scaleups and entrepreneurs can encounter significant challenges in accessing the right resources, networks, and guidance necessary to transform thriving startups and innovative prototypes into commercially viable scaleups.

Scaleups can struggle with limited access to investment, mentorship, and/or market connections at critical stages of development, which can slow growth and impact on potential expansion. These critical gaps highlight the benefits a dedicated Commercialisation Hub for scaleups that delivers services and initiatives to streamline access to expertise, partnership and funding opportunities.

3.1. Aims

The Commercialisation Hub aims to support this next tier of business growth with the specific focus on IP management, commercialisation and scale-up support services to:

- Improve the translation of research into commercialised products and services
- Accelerate innovation and speed to market
- Improve IP (intellectual property) management, commercialisation and outcomes
- Increase the number of WA's investor ready businesses
- Increase investment into WA start-up businesses
- Increase in the capitalisation of WA start-ups (both for individual businesses and for the ecosystem as a whole).

3.2. Expected Competencies

The Commercialisation Hub would need to possess competencies in:

- Commercialisation such as:
    - enhancing skills in sales
    - market fit, validation, testing and pivoting if required
    - financial literacy
    - capital raising
    - refining business models and value propositions
    - corporate governance support
    - public relations
    - guidance on IP (Intellectual Property) strategies to enable clients to source additional tailored IP expertise through the hub's referrals options
- Strategic planning - developing clear objectives and growth strategies through workshops and one-on-one coaching to navigate complex challenges like regulatory pathways, market entry, and funding strategies
- Networking and mentorship – supporting access to industry experts, technical specialists, mentors, investors, corporate partners, and a community of like-minded peers
- Market expansion - offering expert guidance and critical connections for expanding into national and international markets
- Capital/funding – facilitating connections with diverse investors
- Offering advisory services on an as needed and potentially fee-for-service basis.

3.3. Expected Services

It is anticipated the Hub will provide independent and, as required, confidential services covering, but not limited to:

- Intellectual property management
    - IP strategy development
    - IP agreement templates
    - Platform for IP sharing arrangements
    - Early advice to support universities and medical research institutes, government departments and start-ups
    - Deliver IP and commercialisation training program
- Commercialisation and Licensing
    - Develop and maintain licencing term sheets
    - Engage in licencing discussions between IP owners and industry
    - Develop business strategies and market access plans for high value IP
    - Help establish spin-offs based on State IP
- Grants and Bid Development

    - Improve awareness of grant funding opportunities
    - Assist in developing successful applications for federal funding programs
    - Work with spin-offs and start-ups in preparing submissions to investment sources, including the National Reconstruction Fund
    - Actively connect portfolio organisations with venture capital and investment networks to source application co-contributions
- Venture Building and Pre-Seed Funds
    - Develop a network of 'venture builders' with commercialisation experience to commercially partner with portfolio companies
    - Develop valuation and growth frameworks for portfolio companies to secure pre-seed funding
- Commercialisation System Integration
    - Provide formal referral pathways and collaboration opportunities with existing State-funded hubs, universities, research institutions, investors, industry partners, precincts, and relevant government programs.
    - Provide pathways points of contact and linkages with other hubs and financial support services to ensure scaleups navigate the innovation ecosystem from prototype to product to accelerate growth
- Statewide outreach and access pathways for supporting regional innovators and First Nations businesses.
- Business strategies and market access plans for high-value IP
- Investment readiness and how to attain bankable deals.

Specific events or services may involve a third party or platform. As such, hub staff would not need to provide all proposed services.

State-funded innovation hub directors meet bi-monthly to collaborate and build statewide cross-sectoral capability and capacity by creating incentives for start-ups, emerging businesses, SMEs, and others to engage with the hub network. It is important the Commercialisation Hub coordinates well with other innovation hubs and precincts, especially those with a remit in commercialisation support such as the Western Australian Life Sciences Innovation Hub.

The Hub would need to evaluate and report to DEED on value-for-money and the impact of the hub's service delivery outcomes.

3.4. Funding

State Government funding for the WA Commercialisation Hub is **capped at $2M over a four-year period** from date of commencement**.**

The proposed operator model should include the operator's **co-contribution or investment** in the operation of the hub. In addition, the hub operator is expected to actively pursue additional cash and in-kind contributions (through grants and joint ventures) and to expand partnerships in order to optimise impact and positive outcomes for the State as well as for the businesses using the hubs services. The Operator can also attain services from separatley identified fee-for-service providers.

It is expected the operator will offer entry level services and engagements free to participating businesses, but that a tiered structure of cost recovery is used for more bespoke services.

4. Preparing an Expression of Interest

4.1. General Guidance

When preparing an EOI respondents should:

- Refer to Sections 1, 2 and 3 above for important information about the State's expectations and the Operator's role
- Provide key information about the proponent organisation and its ability to support the growth of entrepreneurship and innovation across Western Australia, especially regarding the scaleup and commercialisation stages of business growth
- Describe the framework or model, including the management, operations, technical and financial capability that would ensure timely and appropriate service delivery through the Commercialisation Hub
- Describe the organisation's experience, proven capability and capacity to operate an innovation hub
- Describe how the Hub's services, activities, outcomes and impact would be measured, evaluated and reported on. For example, what key performance indicators would be used to demonstrate commercial outcomes, such as scaleups and IP-rich ventures supported through commercialisation pathways, investment-readiness progression, private capital or grant funding secured, federal funding applications supported, licensing or spin-out outcomes, customer pilots, procurement pathways, market-entry outcomes, external capital leveraged, and regional and First Nations participation.

- Provide an outline of the personnel proposed to deliver the hub's work.
- See Frequently Asked Questions which will be updated with new questions and answers until the EOI's closing time and date.

In developing EOI's respondents should ensure they understand the State Government's goals and priorities in driving the WA economy and how WA entrepreneurs, innovators and innovation will/can assist. Include how the proposal is aligned with the State Government's objectives for the State's growth, resilience and sustainability.

The hub's activities are to be aligned with the relevant State policies, see additional resources including:

- Made in WA
- Diversify WA
- Future State – Accelerating Diversify WA
- Western Australia's Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) Industry Information Pack
- Western Australia's Innovation Strategy
- WA's 10 Year Science Plan

4.2. Operator Organisational Requirements

In addition to the requirements outlined above the Operator organisation will:

- Aim to commence hub operations at a date negotiated with DEED
- Be registered, or be eligible to register, for an Australian Business Number (ABN)
- Be a legal and solvent entity, or partnered with a legal and solvent entity, with a proven trading history for the past three financial years as accepted in their domicile (as a minimum)
- Be an established organisation with a proven track record in the service delivery of relevant business expertise
- Be an entity associated with or engaged in commercialisation
- Be an innovative provider or holder of relevant intellectual property and/or other who has a proven track record in relevant service delivery
- Be an organisation that successfully runs, or has successfully run, innovation hubs (or similar entities) in Western Australia, or in other jurisdictions nationally or internationally
- Use an operations model that enables the hub to function as an independent business unit, for example, as an unincorporated joint venture aligned with the Operator's organisation The proposed model would include the Operators co-contribution/investment in hub operations
- Locate the hub, and its director, in Western Australia and ensure its State-funded budget is spent in WA (unless otherwise agreed by DEED)
- Recruit and manage an experienced hub Director who has the demonstrated expertise and ability to deliver on the hub's requirements
  Note: In addition to the Director, the Operator organisation will engage employees to support the director and delivery of hub activities and services. Proposed staffing arrangements should be outlined in the EOI

4.3. Assessment

The selection process, undertaken by a panel, will consider factors such as expertise, experience, capabilities, the operating model proposed and strategic alignment with State goals, with additional information sought if required.

The Assessment Criteria have been assigned a weighting (expressed in percentage terms in the table below) which indicates the relative importance of each criterion in the qualitative assessment of the Proposals.

There should be clear articulation of how the proposed model uniquely addresses commercialisation gaps with Western Australia and how it is additive and distinct from existing support mechanisms. Partnerships between local and external operators are encouraged and models that explore joint ventures and shared services are welcome.

All Proposals will be assessed against the following assessment criteria.

Assessment Criteria	Description	Weighting
1. Strategic alignment	Ability of the Operator and any proposed partners to deliver positive commercialisation outcomes that align with WA Government priorities. Articulation of how the identified service will address commercialisation barriers outside of existing support systems and organisations.	30%

2. Demonstrated ability to achieve commercialisation outcomes	Extent to which the submission delivers a compelling offer to identify, translate, grow and deliver commercialisation opportunities for Western Australians through: a) Improving the translation of research into commercialised products and services b) Accelerating innovation and speed to market c) Improving IP (intellectual property) management, commercialisation and outcomes d) Increasing the number of WA's investor ready businesses e) Increasing investment into WA start-up businesses f) Increasing in the capitalisation of WA start-ups (both for individual businesses and for the ecosystem as a whole).	30%
3. Key personnel	Capability, expertise and experience of the Key Personnel who will be involved in developing and delivering the Hub's initiatives and programs	20%
4. Implementation risk	Demonstrated ability of the Operator to establish the WA Commercialisation Hub, and successfully deliver its services over the four-year term, describing the approach to: a) Establishing the Hub in WA b) Delivering support services for scaleups c) Measuring and evaluating service delivery and outcomes d) Leveraging the State's contribution e) Attracting additional resources f) Managing free entry-level services alongside bespoke cost-recovery services g) Sustaining service delivery.	20%

5. Important Information

5.1. Timelines

Activity	Timeframe (Proposed)
EOI process opens for submissions	4 August 2026 (Week 1)
EOI submitted, in PDF format, to	innovation@DEED.wa.gov.au
EOI submission deadline **Note:** Allow sufficient time to lodge the EOI as late submissions will not be considered.	1700 (AWST) 30 September 2026 (Week 8)

EOI panel assessment period	30 Sept - 11 November 2026 (Weeks 9 – 14)
Applicants informed of EOI outcome	9 December - 23 December 2026 (Week 18 - 20)

5.2. Frequently Asked Questions

Frequently asked questions are available on the Department of Energy and Economic Diversification website and will be updated as relevant new questions are answered.

5.3. For more information

For more information, please contact innovation@deed.wa.gov.au