

# STEM Student Competition Sponsorship Program

## Program Guidelines

Opening	Monday 23 October 2023
Closing date and time	10:00 AEST Friday 16 February 2024
Enquiries	If you have any enquiries, please contact us at <a href="mailto:raap.grants@chiefscientist.nsw.gov.au">raap.grants@chiefscientist.nsw.gov.au</a>
Guidelines release date	23 October 2023
Type of grant opportunity	Open competitive



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# Contents

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Program overview	3
Eligibility criteria	5
Assessment criteria	7
How to apply	8
Assessment process	10
Successful applicants	12
Enquiries and feedback	14
Probity	14
Privacy	14
Confidential information	15
Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 (NSW)	15



# Program overview

The NSW Government established the annual Research Attraction & Acceleration Program (RAAP) in 2012 to support innovation and continued investment in NSW research and development. The RAAP is administered by the Office of the NSW Chief Scientist & Engineer (OCSE) within the NSW Department of Enterprise, Investment and Trade ('the Department').

One of the OCSE's core functions is science outreach and education. The OCSE raises community awareness and appreciation of the important contribution scientists and engineers make to society and encourages careers in these fields by supporting science outreach and engagement.

The STEM Student Competition Sponsorship Program (Program) is funded through the RAAP and aims to support high-tech, high-impact research by NSW students attending domestic and international research competitions.

The Program provides benefits to NSW's future in added educational opportunities, network-building and professional experience for tertiary students while also promoting innovative research and increasing the visibility of NSW research and its value within Australia or internationally.

Teams of student researchers attend competitions to increase their skills in real-world applications, to improve collaboration with international colleagues and to create interest and excitement about their fields with the community, industry partners and fellow students. Exposing students to competitions that address high impact problems also encourages them to consider graduate studies, to pursue higher degrees and Honours programs in science and engineering.

Applicants will have approximately four months to complete and submit their application. The Assessment Panel will have approximately three weeks to assess applications.



Western Sydney University, Urban Innovation and Entrepreneurship Competition 2021

# Objective

Funding is provided on an open competitive basis for all student competition research projects from January 2024 to December 2024. The Program will close **Friday 16 February 2024**.

The objectives of the Program are to:

- support university students who are participating in STEM research competitions
- provide opportunities for STEM student researchers to:
  - increase their skills in real-world applications
  - improve collaboration with international colleagues
  - consider graduate studies in STEM
- profile STEM competition participation to create interest and excitement about STEM research fields with the community, industry partners and fellow students.

The intended outcomes of the Program are to:

- increase participation of NSW university students in STEM fields
- improve essential skills development for STEM university students in teamwork, collaboration, creativity, communication and technical science and engineering knowledge
- increase engagement between STEM student researchers and the community, industry partners and fellow students
- help STEM students and graduates successfully contribute to NSW's scientific community.

We administer the Program according to the *NSW Grants Administration Guide and the Commonwealth Grants Rules and Guidelines (CGRGs)*.

## Your responsibilities when applying for the grant

The Program Guidelines (the Guidelines) contain information about the Program, whether you are eligible to apply and how you can make an application.

You must read these Guidelines before applying for the grant.

This document sets out:

- the purpose of the Program
- the eligibility criteria
- the assessment criteria
- how applications are assessed
- how recipients will be monitored and evaluated
- responsibilities and expectations in relation to the Program.

## Program funding

- The NSW Government, through the OCSE, has announced a total of \$50,000 (excluding GST) to be allocated over 12 months for the Program with the final amount decided at the Department's discretion.
- The quantum of funding awarded to successful applicants will depend on the overall quantity and quality of applications received.
- Funding will take the form of a cash contribution following the execution of an agreement between the applicant and the Department.
- Each successful applicant can apply for and receive up to \$10,000 (excluding GST).
- No more than 50 per cent of estimated funding for the competition can be funded from NSW Government agencies other than the Department.
- You are required to provide a financial acquittal with a final report following the competition, demonstrating the grant funds were used in accordance with program guidelines.
- While the competition must take place throughout 2024, funds must be allocated to the grantee by 30 June 2024.



University of Sydney Rocketry Team, 2019 Intercollegiate Rocket Competition



# Eligibility criteria

The OCSE cannot consider your application if it does not satisfy all the eligibility criteria.

## Who is eligible to apply?

- To be eligible for the Program applicants **must** be enrolled or employed at a NSW university or public sector research institution.
- The applicant's organisation must have an Australian Business Number (ABN). While university clubs are welcome to apply, the funding agreement must be between the applicant's organisation and the Department.
- The competition research area must fall under at least one of the following categories:
  - Mathematical, information and computing sciences
  - Physical, chemical and earth sciences
  - Engineering, environmental sciences and energy innovation
  - Biological and biotechnological sciences.
- Sponsorship grants will be available for student competition research projects from January 2024 to December 2024.
- Applicants must have confirmation of competition registration or seek written permission from the OCSE to apply for the Program.
- Applicants can only apply once per funding round.

Where an application is identified as not meeting the above eligibility criteria, the application may be set aside from further consideration at the absolute discretion of the Department. The Department may also seek clarification from any applicant in relation to their application, including seeking further information on the eligibility or assessment criteria.

## Who is not eligible to apply?

- Applicants are not eligible if they receive more than 50 per cent of estimated funding for the competition from NSW Government agencies other than the Department. Expenses from additional sources must be acknowledged in the Application Form.
- You are not eligible to apply for the Program if you are:
  - insolvent
  - an individual
  - a partnership
  - an unincorporated association, or
  - a Commonwealth, state, territory or local government agency or body excluding government corporate entities.

The OCSE, at its sole discretion, may decide that an application is ineligible for funding. This may include any person or business activity that could cause reputational and/or other risks to the NSW Government.



UNSW Rocketry, 2023 Spaceport America Cup

## Eligible locations

The competition may be located in Australia or overseas.

## Eligible costs

Funds must be spent on the research component of the competition. Examples include (but are not limited to):

- Lab consumables
- Research materials
- Outreach
- Any other research expenditure

If your application is successful, we may ask you to verify the project cost and request evidence of costs such as supplier contracts, quotes and invoices. We may request financial reports and credit checks from independent third-party service providers.

You must demonstrate value for money by ensuring project costs are reasonable and reflective of market rates. We may use industry cost benchmarks to assess whether costs are reasonable.

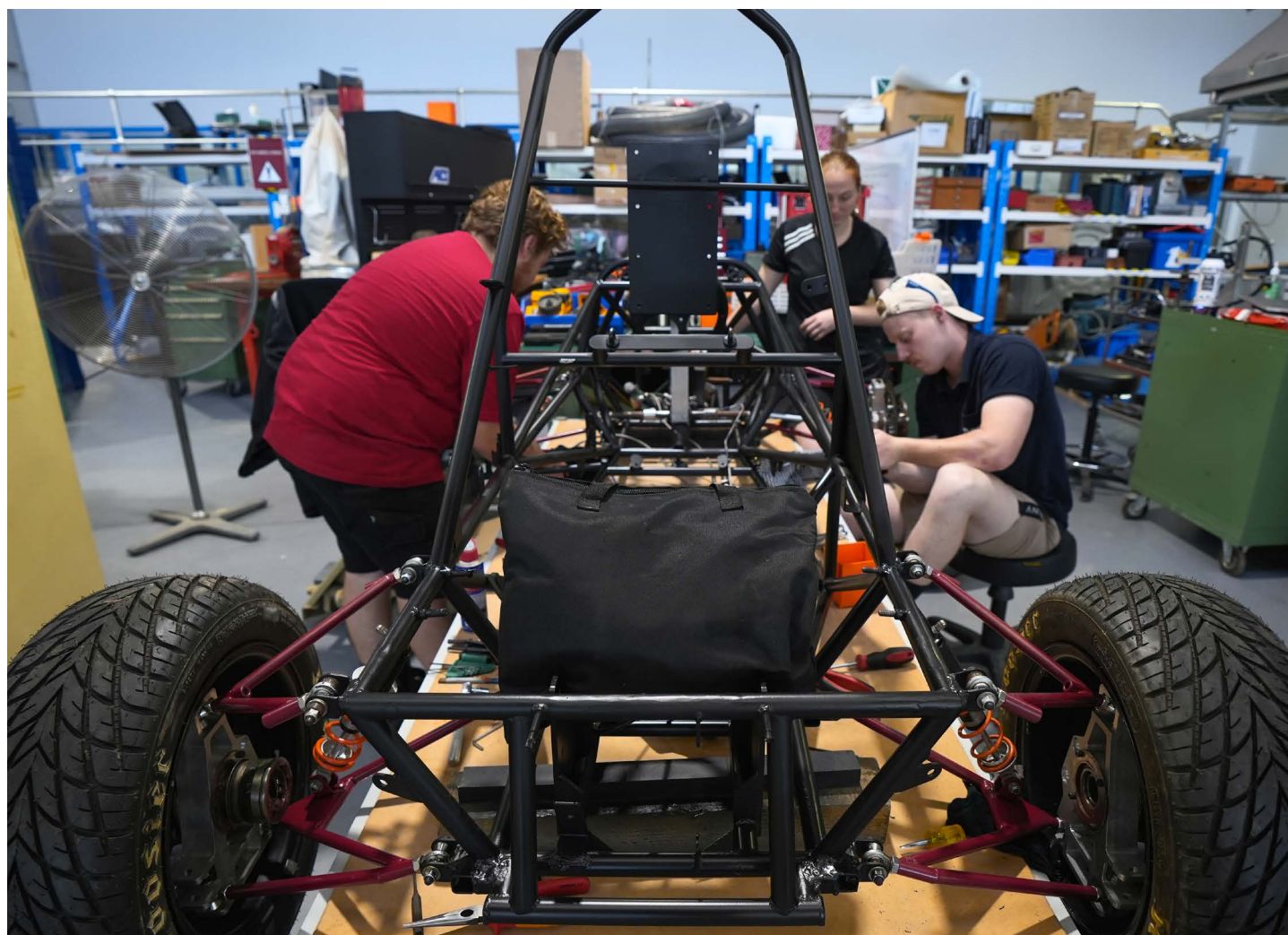
The Department will make the final decision on whether a claimed cost is eligible or reasonable (and only pay the reasonable amount).

All eligible costs will be paid inclusive of GST.

## Ineligible costs

The grant cannot be used on the following activities:

- competition registration
- travel
- accommodation
- visas
- insurance
- any other non-research related expenses.



Western Sydney University, 2023 Formula SAE–Australasia Competition



# Assessment criteria

The Assessment Panel will make recommendations for funding against the assessment criteria:

- Demonstrate the value of competition to the participants, institution and the community.
- Demonstrate support from the applicant's institution, philanthropists, industry partners and/or the Commonwealth Government.
- Demonstrate alignment with the OCSE's core function of science outreach and education:  
[About | Chief Scientist \(nsw.gov.au\)](#)

- Demonstrate how diversity, equity and inclusion will be considered and implemented in the preparation and participation of the competition.

Note: diversity metrics can include gender, age, ethnicity, cultural and linguistic background, Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, neurodiversity, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, religious beliefs, socio-economic background and geographical location.

Note: this assessment criteria will be a two-part question in the application form.

- Demonstrate need for funding through a budget breakdown, including matched or co-funding contributions.



UNSW Rocketry, 2023 Spaceport America Cup

# How to apply

Before applying, the applicant must read and understand these Program Guidelines.

These documents may be found at [STEM Student Competition Sponsorship Program | Chief Scientist \(nsw.gov.au\)](#). Any alterations and addenda will be published on [STEM Student Competition Sponsorship Program | Chief Scientist \(nsw.gov.au\)](#). You will be notified of any changes by email. [Grants Administration Guide | NSW Government](#) is the authoritative source for grants information for the NSW Government.

Note: the application must be prepared by a student who is a competition attendee or team organiser, on behalf of a team, and co-signed by a suitable university staff member. **Funding is available to competition teams NOT individuals.**

To apply you must:

- complete the SmartyGrants online application form at [STEM Student Competition Sponsorship Program | Chief Scientist \(nsw.gov.au\)](#)
- provide all the information requested
- address all the eligibility criteria
- include all necessary attachments
- Submit your application by the timelines outlined under Key dates.

Note:

- The application must be completed in its entirety to be eligible for consideration.
- Clearly mark any information that should be treated confidentially.

- All eligible applicants will be assessed on merit against the assessment criteria. However, the Department, at its discretion, may choose not to award or recommend funding to applicants under the Program.

You are responsible for ensuring your application is complete and accurate. Giving false or misleading information is a serious offence under the *Crimes Act 1900 No 40 (NSW)*. We will investigate any false or misleading information and may exclude your application from further consideration.

Applicants must not lobby the NSW Government on an issue related or seen to be related to the Program that may or may be perceived to give an unfair advantage to the applicant. Applicants are required to comply with all applicable laws including the *NSW Lobbyists Code of Conduct*.

If you find an error in your application after submitting it, you should contact us immediately at [raap.grants@chiefscientist.nsw.gov.au](mailto:raap.grants@chiefscientist.nsw.gov.au). We do not have to accept any additional information, nor requests from you to correct your application after the closing time. You cannot change your application after you have submitted your application.

If we find an error or information that is missing, we may ask for clarification or additional information from you that will not change the nature of your application.

You should keep a copy of your application and any supporting documents.





# Attachments to the application

- You must attach supporting documentation to the application form in line with instructions provided within the online form.
- You should only attach requested documents.
- We will not consider information in attachments we do not request.

We require you to provide the following documents with your application:

- A proof of competition registration.

## Key dates

You must submit an application between the published opening and closing dates.

Applications received after the closing date and time will be deemed to be a late application. At the discretion of the Director, Policy – Science and Research, the Office of the NSW Chief Scientist & Engineer, reserves the right to accept a late application where it is satisfied that its acceptance will not compromise the integrity and competitiveness of the process.

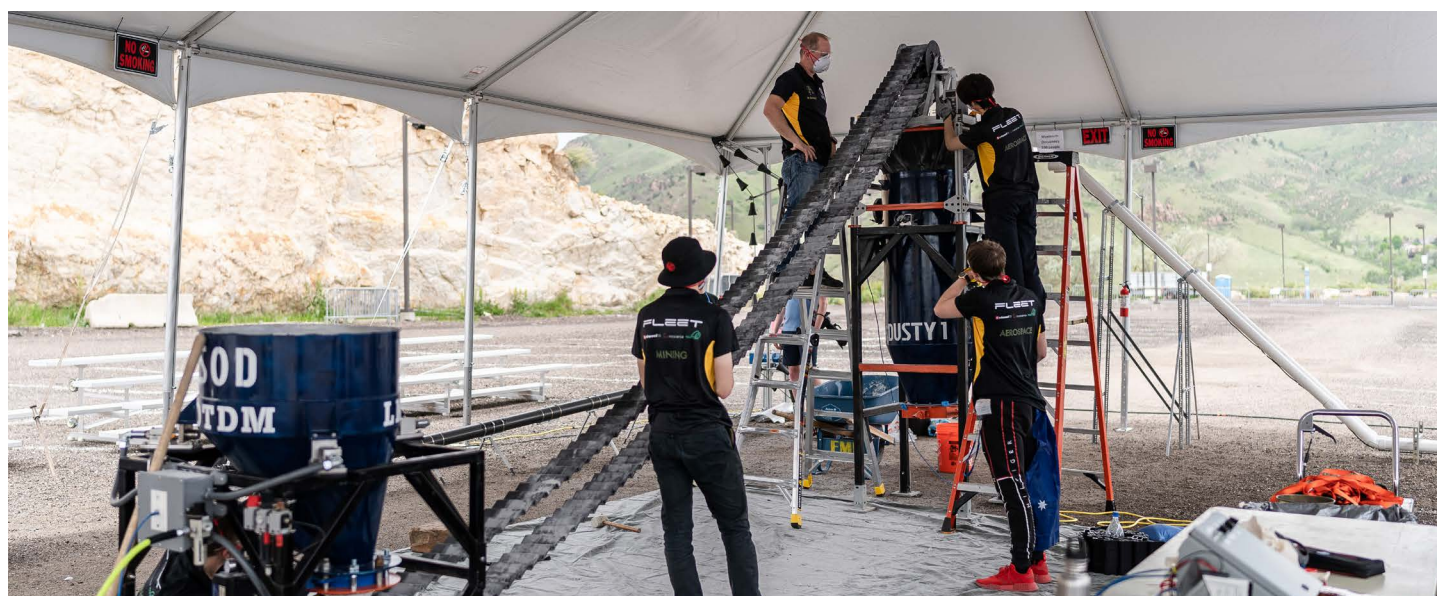
**Table 1: Expected timing for this Program**

Activity	Timeframe
Applications open	Monday 23 October 2023
Applications close	10:00 AEST Friday 16 February 2024
Notification of outcome	April 2024
Allocation of funds	Within 60 days of the funding agreement being exchanged
Earliest start date of the competition	1 January 2024
End date of the competition	31 December 2024

## Queries during the application process

If you have any questions during the application period, please contact us at [raap.grants@chiefscientist.nsw.gov.au](mailto:raap.grants@chiefscientist.nsw.gov.au)

The OCSE will endeavour to respond to questions within three working days.



UNSW Sydney, Over the Dusty Moon Challenge

# Assessment process

The assessment of applications will be led by the Department. Your application will be considered based on a two-stage process. Where the Department considers an application unsuitable or unsatisfactory against any criteria, we may exclude that application from further evaluation. Only eligible applications will move to the next stage. We consider eligible applications through an open competitive grant process.

## Assessment of applications

### Stage 1: Eligibility assessment

The OCSE Secretariat will conduct an initial eligibility screening for all applications according to the published eligibility criteria in these Program Guidelines that are set out Section 2: Eligibility Criteria.

Only applications which meet all eligibility criteria will progress to assessment against the assessment criteria.

### Stage 2: Assessment by the assessment panel

The membership of the Assessment Panel (Panel) will be determined by the Department in its sole discretion and may include independent assessors from the broader NSW public sector.

The Panel will assess each application on its merits and compare it to other eligible applications before recommending which applications are to be awarded a grant.

On behalf of the Panel, the Department may seek additional information about you or your application.

The Panel has the discretion to recommend that an applicant receive a smaller amount of funding than indicated in their application.

The Panel members are expected to assess all eligible applications unless they have a declared conflict of interest for a certain application(s).

Panel members will individually assess all eligible applications against each criterion set out Section 3: Assessment Criteria. All criteria have equal weighting. When making their recommendations, the Assessment Panel may take the following into consideration:

- The total funding available for the STEM Student Competition Sponsorship Program 2024 round
- The assessment criteria outlined in the STEM Student Competition Sponsorship Program Guidelines
- The requested amount against the scope of the project i.e. could the applicant effectively deliver the proposed competition with less funding. Advice may be sought from applicants to understand the potential impact if a decision was made to award less funding than was applied for
- Whether the requested funding amount is too large compared to the competition
- Whether a reduction could pose significant risks to the success of a competition
- Whether applicants have sufficient or additional resources or avenues available to raise capital other than this grant that could assist with the success of their competition
- Whether a decrease in funding will impact achieving the overall aim of the STEM Student Competition Sponsorship Program.





The Panel will assess your application based on equal weighting to each criterion.

Criteria	Description	Weighting
Value of competition	Demonstrate value of competition to the participants, institution and the community.	20%
Evidence of support	Demonstrate support from the applicant's institution, philanthropists, industry partners and/or the Commonwealth Government.	20%
Alignment with the OCSE's core function	Demonstrate alignment with the OCSE's core function of science outreach and education.	20%
Diversity, equity and inclusion	Demonstrate how diversity, equity and inclusion will be considered and implemented in the participation of the competition.  Note: this assessment criteria will consist of a two-part question in the application form.	20%
Budget	Demonstrate need for funding through a budget breakdown, including matched or co-funding contributions.	20%

## Who will approve the grant?

The Director, Policy – Science and Research, Office of the NSW Chief Scientist & Engineer, determines which grants to approve with consideration of recommendations by the Assessment Panel and the availability of funds for the Program.

The Director, Policy – Science and Research's decision is final in all matters, including:

- the approval of the grant
- the grant funding amount to be awarded
- the terms and conditions of the grant.

## Notification of application outcomes

We will advise the outcome of your application via email.

Unsuccessful applicants will be notified via email of the outcome of their application within 10 business days from the assessment panel meeting and will be provided feedback if requested.

If unsuccessful, you can submit a new application for future grant opportunity in the next funding round. Your submission must meet the eligibility criteria and should include new or additional information to address any feedback from your previous application.



# Successful applicants

## Notification

Successful applicants will be notified via email. If you are successful, we will advise you of any specific conditions attached to the grant. This could include a request to keep the grant confidential for a specified period due to an announcement being made by the NSW Government in relation to this Program and your award.

The NSW Government will notify successful applicants in April 2024.

## Funding Agreement

Successful applicants who accept the offer of a grant will be required to enter into an agreement with the Department.

The NSW Government (including the Department) makes no binding funding or other commitment to the applicant unless and until both parties have signed a funding agreement. The funding agreement will require the successful applicant to provide a copy of all relevant insurances and any other relevant supporting documentation as requested by the Department. You should not make financial commitments reliant on this Program until the Department has formally advised that you are successful, and a funding agreement is signed and executed.

- The agreement will specify obligations that relate primarily to the recipient's accountability for the grant, including use of the grant for research activities, return of any unspent grant funds and reporting requirements.

- A template of the Funding Agreement can be found here: [STEM Student Competition Sponsorship Program | Chief Scientist \(nsw.gov.au\)](#)
- The agreement must be signed by a university officer authorised to sign an agreement with the NSW Government.
- The applicant is required to provide a financial acquittal with a final report following the competition, demonstrating that grant funds were used in accordance with program guidelines.

## How we pay the grant

The grant will be paid and distributed in a single tranche to each successful applicant.

Invoices for grant payments will be submitted and paid within two months of agreement execution.

Grants are assessable income for taxation purposes, unless exempted by a taxation law. We recommend you seek independent professional advice on your taxation obligations. We do not provide advice on your particular taxation circumstances.

All payments are inclusive of GST.



Western Sydney University, 2023 Formula SAE–Australasia Competition



# How we monitor your grant activity

Within 30 days after you complete the competition, you must submit a final report. You will be provided with a report template from the Department, which is to be completed by your authorised officer.

We will expect you to report on:

Competition Summary:

- main outcomes of the competition
- number of attendees
- diversity, equity and inclusion summary.

Financial Acquittal Report:

- expenditure of the grant and copies of relevant receipts.

Media Profile:

- competition overview
- competition highlights
- testimonial
- photographs.

## Evaluation

The Department will evaluate the Program to measure how well the outcomes and objectives have been achieved. We may use information from your application and reports for this purpose. We may also interview you or ask you for more information to help us understand how the Program impacted you, and to evaluate how effective the Program was in achieving its outcomes.

We may contact you up to three years after you receive your final grant payment associated with the Program for more information to assist with this evaluation.

The Department and the NSW Audit Office reserve the right to undertake an audit of Program funding and support within seven years. Tracking and reporting will be a requirement of the funding agreement.

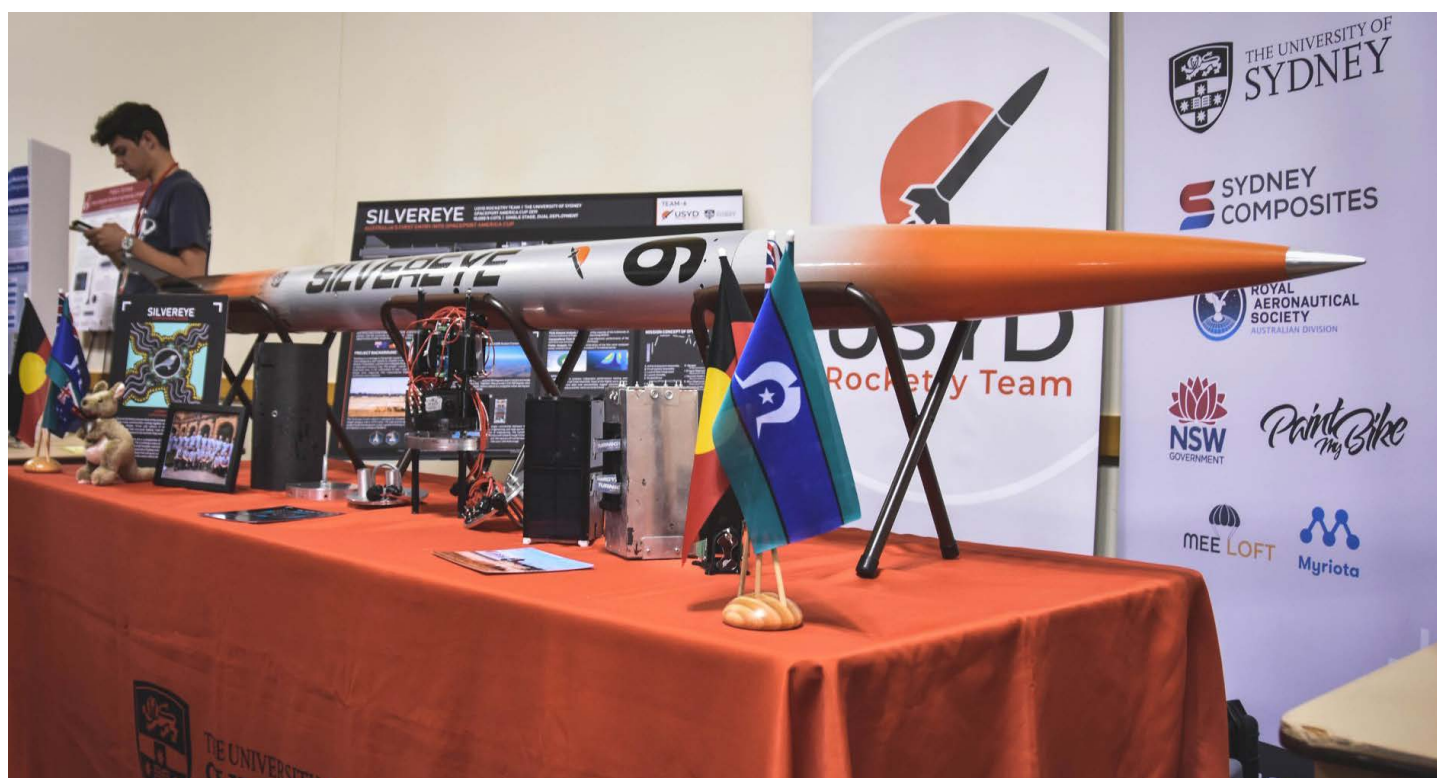
## Acknowledgement

All recipients of NSW Government funding should acknowledge this financial support in accordance with the Funding Acknowledgement Guidelines for Recipients of NSW Government Rebates available at [nsw.gov.au/branding/sponsorship-and-funding-acknowledgment-guidelines](https://nsw.gov.au/branding/sponsorship-and-funding-acknowledgment-guidelines).

You must seek our written consent prior to any significant public announcement, marketing, press announcements or official launch in relation to the Program.

The applicant must agree to provide the following benefits to the Department, if requested by the Department:

- Publish the Department logo and preferred Department URL link on the team website, social media or any associated online collateral if applicable
- Department logo featured on team uniforms or equipment if applicable
- Acknowledgement in interviews, news articles, reports, publications or any other material the Grantee deems appropriate, and
- One invitation to any post-event briefings or presentations.



University of Sydney Rocketry Team, 2019 Intercollegiate Rocket Competition

## Enquiries and feedback

Any enquiry you have about the assessment process or the outcome of your application for this Program should be sent to [raap.grants@chiefscientist.nsw.gov.au](mailto:raap.grants@chiefscientist.nsw.gov.au)

If you do not agree with the way the Department has handled your enquiry or complaint, you may wish to contact the NSW Ombudsman. The NSW Ombudsman will not consider a complaint unless the matter has been first raised directly with the Department.

The applicant must lodge a complaint with the Department in writing and submit it to [raap.grants@chiefscientist.nsw.gov.au](mailto:raap.grants@chiefscientist.nsw.gov.au)

If the applicant is unhappy with the response, they may escalate their complaint to the NSW Ombudsman.

## Probity

The Department will make sure that the grant opportunity process is fair, according to the published guidelines and incorporates appropriate safeguards against fraud, unlawful activities and other inappropriate conduct.

## Privacy

We treat your personal information according to the Department's Privacy Management Plan available at [Privacy management plan | Department of Enterprise, Investment and Trade NSW Government](#) and the *Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998 (NSW)*. This includes letting you know:

- what personal information we collect
- why we collect your personal information
- who we give your personal information to.

Your personal information can only be disclosed to someone for the primary purpose for which it was collected unless an exemption applies.

The Department may also use or disclose information about applicants and recipients under this Program for reporting purposes.

We may share the information you give us with other NSW Government entities for purposes including government administration, research or service delivery, according to Australian and NSW laws.

As part of your application, you declare your ability to comply with the *Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998 (NSW)* and impose the same privacy obligations on officers, employees, agents and subcontractors that you engage to assist with the activity, in respect of personal information you collect, use, store, or disclose in connection with the activity. Accordingly, you must not do anything that would breach your obligations under the Act.





# Confidential information

Other than information available in the public domain, you agree not to disclose to any person, other than us, any confidential information relating to the grant application and/or agreement, without our prior written approval. The obligation will not be breached where you are required by law, Parliament or a stock exchange to disclose the relevant information or where the relevant information is publicly available (other than through breach of a confidentiality or non-disclosure obligation).

We may at any time, require you to arrange for you, your employees, agents or subcontractors to give a written undertaking relating to non-disclosure of our confidential information in a form we consider acceptable.

We will keep any information in connection with the funding agreement confidential to the extent that it meets all of the three conditions below:

- you clearly identify the information as confidential and explain why we should treat it as confidential
- the information is commercially sensitive
- revealing the information would cause unreasonable harm to you or someone else.

We will not be in breach of any confidentiality agreement if the information is disclosed to:

- the Assessment Panel and other NSW Government employees and contractors to help us manage the program effectively
- employees and contractors of the Department so we can research, assess, monitor and analyse our programs and activities
- employees and contractors of other NSW Government departments or agencies for any purposes, including government administration, research or service delivery

- other Commonwealth, State, Territory or local government agencies in program reports and consultations
- the Auditor-General, Ombudsman or Privacy Commissioner
- the responsible Minister or Secretary
- a House or a Committee of the NSW Parliament.

The funding agreement may also include any specific requirements about special categories of information collected, created or held under the funding agreement.

## Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009

Applicants should be aware that information submitted in applications and all related correspondence, attachments and other documents may be made publicly available under the *Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 (NSW)*. Information that is deemed to be commercially sensitive will be withheld.

The *Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 (NSW)* makes government information accessible to the public by:

- requiring government agencies to make certain sorts of information freely available
- encouraging government agencies to release as much other information as possible
- giving the public an enforceable right to make access applications for government information
- restricting access to information only when there is an overriding public interest against disclosure.



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