

# Supporting Young Scientists Equity and Access Program

## Program Guidelines

Opening	17:00 AEDST 20 October 2023
Closing date and time	17:00 AEST 31 May 2024 or when allocated funds for 2023/24 are fully expended
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> or 02 6586 7879
Guidelines release date	20 October 2023
Type of grant opportunity	Demand driven



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# Program overview

The NSW Government established the annual Research Attraction and 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 Supporting Young Scientists Equity and Access Program (Program) is funded through the RAAP and supports NSW high school students wishing to further their education in STEM through a related competition, event or course (Activity), either within Australia or internationally. Specifically, the Program is a response to sector-wide calls for initiatives that will help

achieve equity in STEM education and consequent careers, leading to long-term cultural change. It provides benefits to NSW's future in added educational opportunities, network-building and professional experience for high school students while also promoting innovative research and increasing the visibility of NSW research and its value both within Australia and internationally.

This Program is the primary mechanism by which the OCSE provides financial support to NSW high school students, either as individuals or in groups, who seek to further their education in STEM through one of the following ways:

- through either 'in person' or virtual participation in STEM-related competitions, either domestically or internationally
- through either 'in person' or virtual participation in STEM-related events, either domestically or internationally
- through either 'in person' or virtual attendance at relevant prestigious academic courses, either domestically or internationally.



Goulburn High School – World Robotics Championships

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## Objective

Applications will be considered on a demand-driven basis for all eligible Activities held between November 2023 and December 2024. Applications will be assessed in the order in which they are received.

The program will close on 31 May 2024 or earlier if allocated funds for 2023/24 are fully expended.

A key objective of the Program is to support high school students wishing to further their STEM learning opportunities and enable them to participate in an Activity, regardless of their circumstances, background or location. The Program aims to maximise STEM education opportunities for NSW high school students who are:

- experiencing financial hardship
- from a low socio-economic background
- from regional or remote locations
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
- from any other backgrounds that might need support.

The intended outcomes of the Program are to:

- provide opportunities for a diverse sector of students to develop essential skills such as teamwork, collaboration, creativity, communication, and technical science and engineering knowledge
- help students to explore their potential, expand their perspectives and future ambitions
- build participation from students under-represented in STEM education and related industries
- align with policies and initiatives, such as the Australian Government's draft recommendations in the [Pathway to Diversity in STEM Review](#) | Department of Industry, Science and Resources, to advance a resilient and diverse STEM workforce in NSW that meets future innovation needs and broader global technological change.

The OCSE administers 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 throughout the year.
- Funding will take the form of a cash contribution following the execution of an agreement between the applicant and the Department. The applicant will then reimburse the student(s) the grant amount in full.
- The maximum funding for a single student will be capped at \$2,500 (ex GST) per student for domestic activities and \$5,000 (ex GST) per student for international activities.
- The maximum funding available to a team will be capped at \$10,000 (ex GST).
- No more than 50 per cent of your total estimated costs (total budget) 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 activity demonstrating that grant funds were used in accordance with program guidelines.
- Whilst the Activity must take place throughout 2023–2024, funds must be allocated to the Grantee by 30 June 2024.



# Eligibility criteria

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

## Who is eligible to apply?

- Grant funding will be considered for students who identify with at least one of the following groups. For student teams, composition must reflect diversity, equity and inclusion which can include participants who identify with at least one of the following groups:
  - experiencing financial hardship
  - from remote or regional areas
  - from a low socio-economic background
  - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
  - from any other background that might need support.
- Applicants **must** be:
  - a relevant teacher or Principal at a NSW high school applying on behalf of a secondary school student or group of secondary school students.

**or**

  - a relevant teacher, Principal or agent of a NSW high school or other NSW educational institution or association, in their capacity as organiser of a student team or group, which involves secondary school student entries from more than one NSW high school.
- The intended eligible Activity must fall into at least one of the following STEM-related areas:
  - mathematical, information and computing sciences
  - physical, chemical and earth sciences
  - engineering, environmental sciences and energy innovation
  - biological and biotechnological sciences.
- The applicant must:
  - have an Australian Business Number (ABN) or
  - be one of the following entities:
    - a secondary school that is registered with the relevant authority
    - a registered charity or incorporated not-for-profit organisation
    - an entity incorporated in Australia
    - be able to enter into a grant agreement in your own right or through an affiliated entity.
- Grants will be available to NSW high school students undertaking STEM-related activities between November 2023 and December 2024.
- The grant applicant(s) must provide confirmation of the competition, event, or course entry or registration. In situations where timing makes this impossible, interested applicants not yet registered to participate must receive prior written permission from the OCSE to apply for the Program.
- A student can only be included in one application 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 its application, including seeking further information on the eligibility or assessment criteria.



Willyama High School – Ecology in Action field trip

## Who is not eligible to apply?

- You are not eligible if you receive more than 50 per cent of the total amount of estimated funding (total budget) for the Activity 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:
  - organising the Activity which you are applying for students to attend
  - insolvent
  - an individual
  - a partnership
  - an unincorporated association
  - a trust (however, an unincorporated trustee may apply on behalf of a trust).

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.

## Eligible locations

The STEM-related activities may be located either within Australia or overseas.

## Eligible costs

Funds must be spent in the following ways:

- for STEM-related competitions, either essential research or construction components of the entry project, entry fees or reasonable travel and accommodation expenses
- for STEM-related events, either essential research or construction components of the event project, entry fees or reasonable travel and accommodation expenses
- for attendance at relevant academic courses, tuition fees, or reasonable travel and accommodation expenses.

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 activity 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 for the following activities:

- costs incurred in the preparation of a grant application or related documentation
- wages
- activities which are permanent in nature
- activities requiring ongoing funding from the NSW Government
- activities that have been completed prior to an offer of funding made to successful applicants
- activities that will not be delivered prior to the end of the grant funding period.



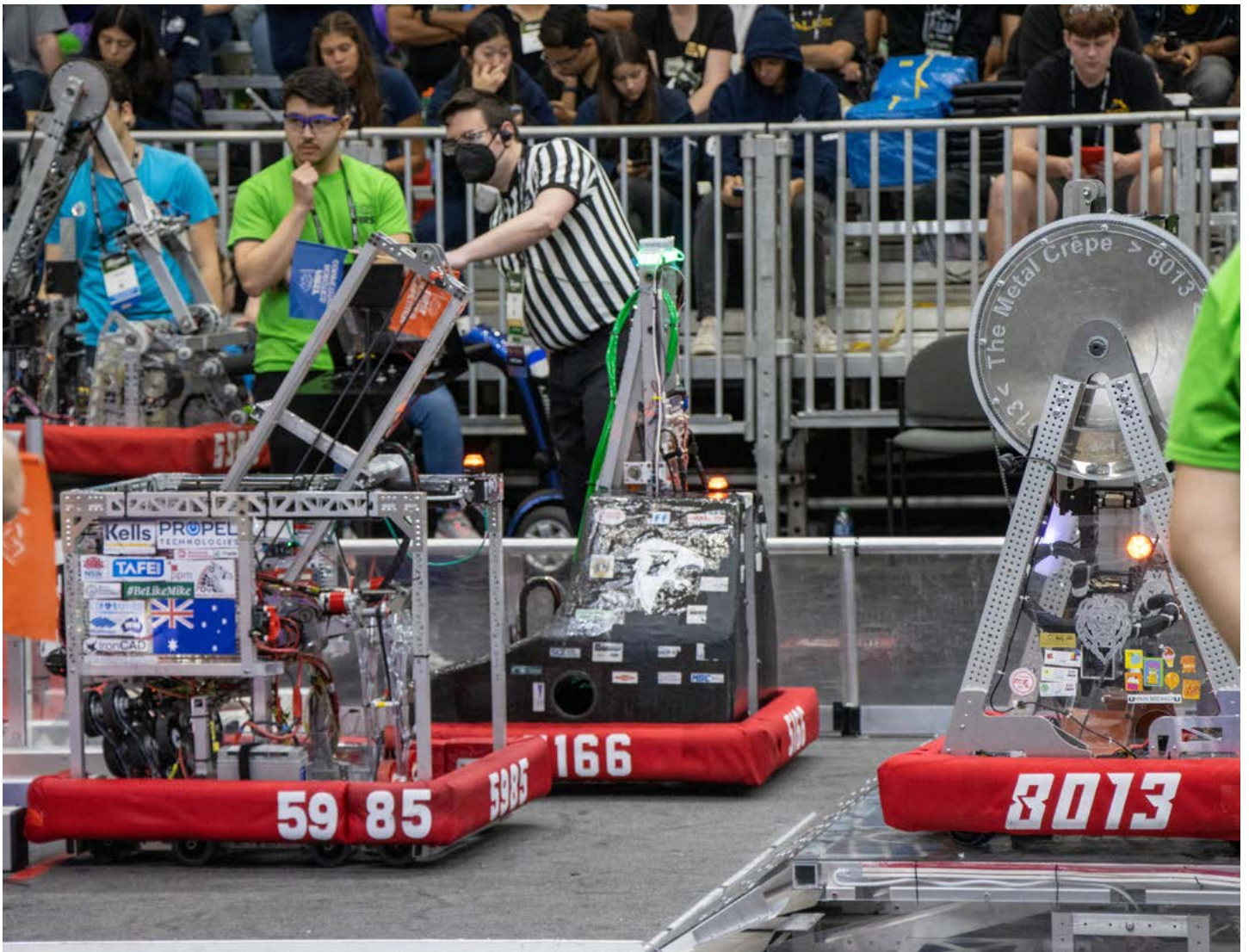
Goulburn High School – World Robotics Championships



# Assessment criteria

The assessment panel will make recommendations for funding against the assessment criteria:

- Demonstrate equity and/or access circumstances that may impact on the student's ability to participate in the STEM Activity proposed in the Program application. A relevant teacher, advisor or school Principal must complete the Letter of Support for each student in the application.
- Demonstrate benefits of the funding and the value of providing improved STEM skills and knowledge to the student(s) who participate in the eligible Activity.
- Benefits to the community arising from the eligible Activity (for example: outreach to students, teachers, industry) and the wider significance of involvement in the Activity.
- Demonstrate alignment with the purpose of this Program (see page 4 in this document) and the OCSE's core function of science outreach and education [About | Chief Scientist \(nsw.gov.au\)](#)
- Demonstrate need for funding through a budget breakdown, including matched or co-funding contributions/support (e.g. from the applicant's high school, parents, philanthropists or industry partners), which will leverage the Department's investment).



Project Bucephalus Robotics – First Robotics Championships

# How to apply

Before applying, you must read and understand these Program Guidelines.

These documents may be found at [Supporting Young Scientists Equity and Access Program | Chief Scientist \(nsw.gov.au\)](#)

Any alterations and addenda will be published on [Supporting Young Scientists Equity and Access Program | Chief Scientist \(nsw.gov.au\)](#) You will notified of any changes by email. [Grants Administration Guide | NSW Government](#) is the authoritative source for grants information for the NSW Government.

To apply you must:

- complete the Smartygrants online application form at [Supporting Young Scientists Equity and Access Program | Chief Scientist \(nsw.gov.au\)](#)
- provide all the information requested
- address all the eligibility criteria
- address the assessment criteria set out in Section 3: Assessment 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.
- You must clearly mark any information that should be treated confidentially.
- The application must be authorised and submitted by the relevant teacher or Principal for an individual student, or team of students, registered at that school **or** by the agent representing a team or group of secondary school student entries from more than one NSW high school.
- All eligible applicants will be assessed on merit against the selection 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 to 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.

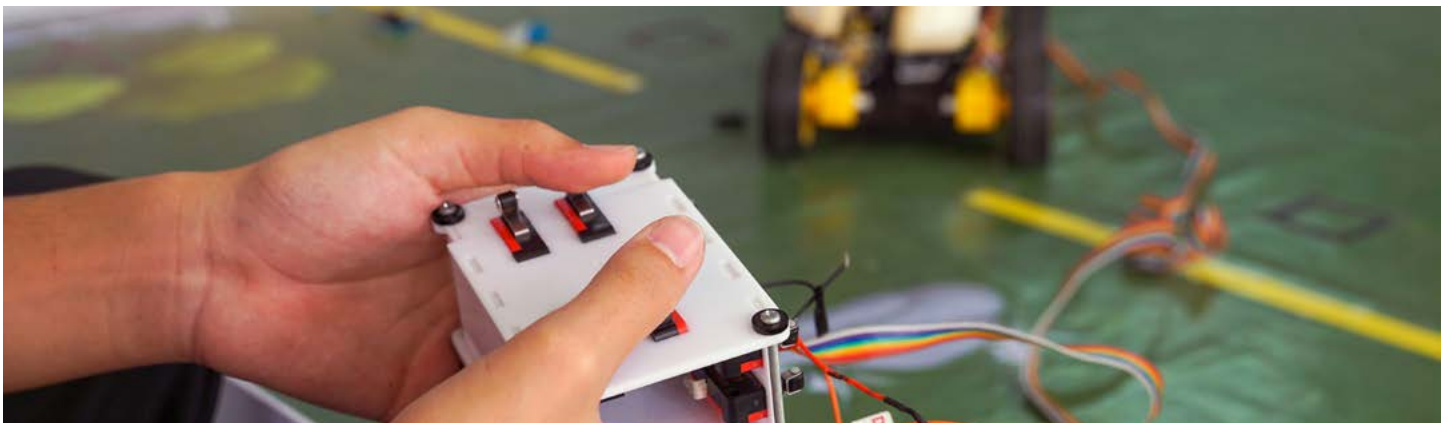
You should keep a copy of your application and any supporting documents.

We will acknowledge that we have received your application after you submit through the online portal.

One application per applicant will be assessed. If more than one application for the same Program is submitted, only the latest application will be considered.

Alterations and addenda include but are not limited to:

- corrections to currently published documents
- changes to closing times for applications
- questions and answers (Q&A) documents and
- frequently asked questions (FAQ) 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 document with your application:

- A **Letter of Support** from a relevant teacher, advisor or school Principal demonstrating your student’s access and/or equity need in order to meet eligibility and assessment criteria.

## 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, OCSE 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	20 October 2023
Applications close	17:00 AEST 30 May 2024 or when allocated funds for 2023/24 are fully expended
Notification of outcomes	30 days after application has been received
Allocation of funds	Within 60 days of funding agreement being exchanged
End date of the Program activity	17:00 AEDST 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.



# 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 and demand-driven grant process.

## 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 in 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 against the assessment criteria before recommending the application 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 in 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 Supporting Young Scientists Equity and Access Program 2023-2024 round.
- The assessment criteria outlined in the Supporting Young Scientists Equity and Access Program Guidelines for Applicants.
- The requested amount against the scope of the activity i.e. could the applicant effectively deliver the activity with less funding? Advice may be sought from applicants to understand the potential impact if a decision was made to award less funding than requested.
- Whether the requested funding amount is too large compared to the Activity.
- Whether a reduction could pose significant risks to the success of the Activity.
- Whether the applicant has sufficient or additional resources or avenues available to raise capital other than this grant that could assist with the success of their Activity.
- Whether a decrease of funding will impact achieving the overall aim of the Supporting Young Scientists Equity and Access Program.



Project Bucephalus Robotics – First Robotics Championships



## Who will approve the grant?

The Director – Policy, Science and Research, OCSE, determines which grants to approve with consideration to the recommendations of 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:

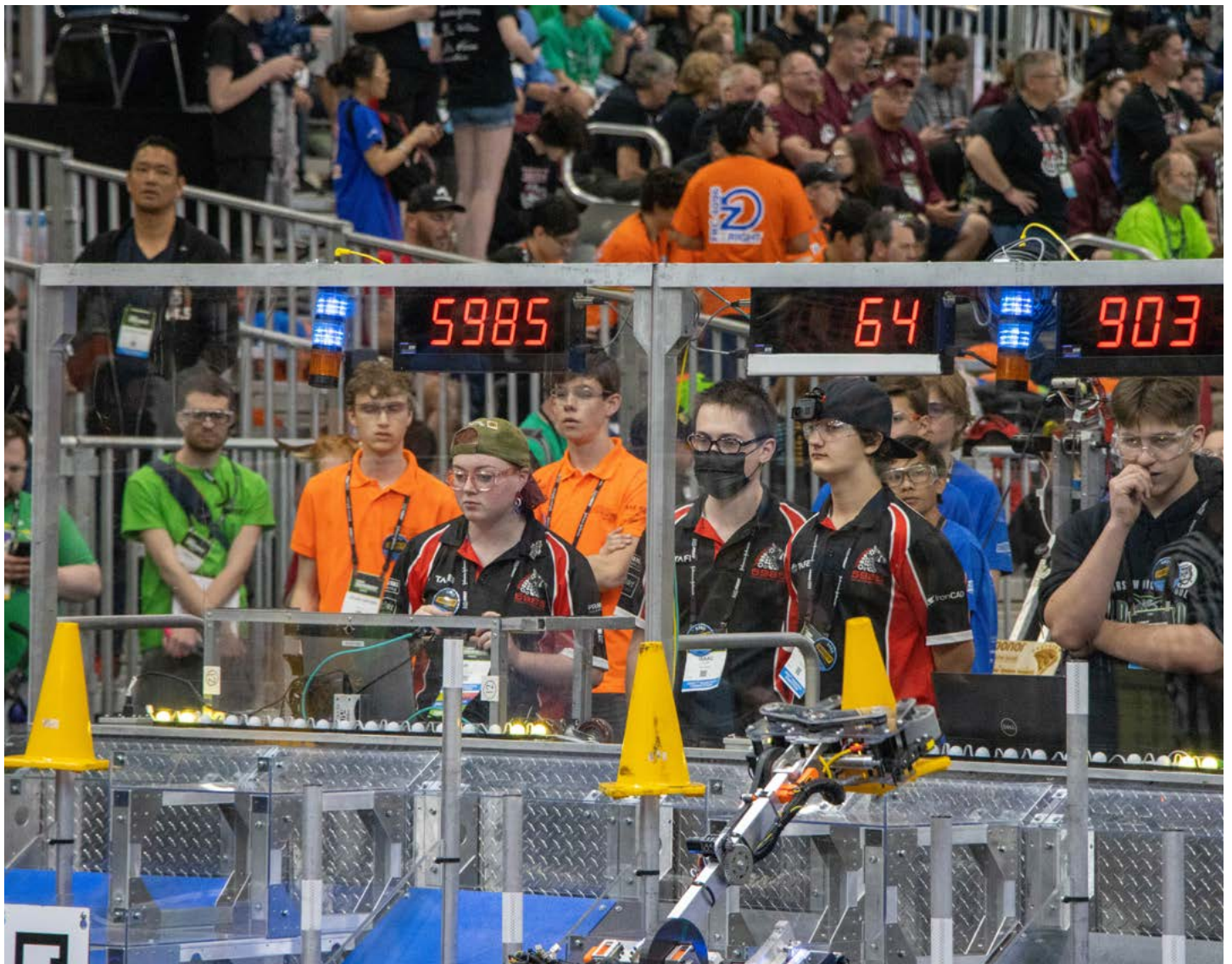
- the approval of the grant
- the grant funding amount to be awarded
- the terms and conditions of the grant.

## 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 offered feedback if requested.

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



Project Bucephalus Robotics – First Robotics Championships



# 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 within 30 days of application submission.

## Funding Agreement

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

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 have 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, return of any unspent grant funds and reporting requirements.
- A template of the Funding Deed can be found here: [NSW Government funding agreement template](#)
- The agreement must be signed by an authorised teacher, Principal or agent representing the participating schools.
- The applicant is required to provide a financial acquittal with a final report following the activity demonstrating that grant funds were used in accordance with Program guidelines.
- While the Activity must take place throughout 2023–2024, funds must be allocated to the Grantee by 30 June 2024.

## 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.



International Robotics Competition



# How we monitor your grant activity

Within 30 days after you complete the Activity, 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:

## Activity Summary

- main outcomes of the activity
- number of attendees
- student equity and access summary
- benefits provided to the community

## Financial Acquittal Report

- Expenditure of the grant and copies of relevant receipts

## Media Profile

- activity overview
- activity 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:

- Support of the OCSE in any publications, promotional and advertising materials, public announcements about the Activity and on any web page established in connection with the Activity.
- Use of the OCSE's logo when acknowledging the Department's support of the Activity
- The OCSE may publish the title and brief description, including outcomes, of the Activity and the amount of the Funding.



St Joseph's College Hunters Hill – First Robotics 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)

## 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.



Willyama High School – Ecology in Action field trip



# 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

Applicant 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.



Embers Robotics Incorporated – Melbourne Robotics Tournament

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The Guidelines are subject to change at any time at the sole discretion of the Department.