Natural Hazards STEM Support Program

Program Guidelines

Opening	10:00 AEDT, Thursday 1 February 2024
Closing date and time	10:00 AEDT, Tuesday 2 April 2024
Enquiries	If you have any enquiries, please contact us at grants@chiefscientist.nsw.gov.au
Guidelines release date	1 February 2024
Type of grant opportunity	Open competitive

Contents

Program overview

The Natural Hazards STEM Support Program (the Program) aims to enhance STEM outreach in schools.

The Program targets NSW school children from kindergarten to Year 12, focusing on technology education relevant to natural hazard management and response.

This initiative is a response by the NSW Government to deliver STEM-focused education programs covering natural hazards to improve student learning outcomes and build resilience in communities.

The NSW Government has committed $800,000 for one round of the Program in 2023/24, with up to $400,000 available per grant application.

The Program welcomes the participation of both established and pilot educational programs. Successful initiatives will either directly deliver these educational modules to students or provide essential training to school staff and educators.

The Program will be administered in accordance with the *NSW Grants Administration Guide and the Commonwealth Grants Rules and Guidelines* (CGRGs).

The Office of the NSW Chief Scientist & Engineer (OCSE) within the Department of Enterprise, Investment and Trade (DEIT) administers the Program, while the Funding Agreement will be between DEIT and the successful applicant.

National Science Week in NSW, Bundanon

Objective

The Program aims to enhance the STEM education and skill development of students in kindergarten through to Year 12 through the implementation of program/s that focus on technologies directly relevant to the management and response of natural hazards. This strategic focus is intended to inspire the next generation of innovators and technologists by not only educating but also igniting the curiosity of students in technological domains.

The objectives of the Program are to:

- enhance STEM education and skill development for K–12 students in NSW
- focus on technologies that are directly relevant to the management and response of natural hazards, creating a bridge between theoretical learning and practical application
- motivate and empower an emerging cohort of technologists.

The intended outcomes of the Program are to:

- build awareness of natural hazards management and response
- cultivate an environment that empowers and inspires students to pursue careers in the field of natural hazards management as technologists, innovators and problem-solvers.

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 objectives of the program
- selection criteria and assessment process
- key dates
- the grant amount
- administering agency
- the final decision maker.

The Guidelines may be updated by OCSE at any time. If this occurs, the revised Guidelines or any addenda will be published on www.chiefscientist.nsw.gov.au/natural-hazards-stem-support-program.

Program funding

The NSW Government announced a total of $800,000 for one round of the Natural Hazards STEM Support Program in 2023/24 to be delivered in year 2024/25 and beyond based on the project plan.

- An applicant can apply for a maximum of $400,000.
- All grants are GST exclusive.
- Applications can include co-funding proposals and potential leveraging opportunities.
- If other in-kind assistance is sought, these should be included in proposals where feasible, and will be considered during the assessment process.
- DEIT may choose not to award or recommend funding under this program.
- Proposals may be part-funded if there is insufficient funding available for the whole proposal or where only a component of the proposal is considered suitable/eligible.

Narooma High School - FIRST Championships 2023

Eligibility criteria

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

OCSE cannot award a grant if you are already receiving funding from another government source for the identical purpose unless your application for this Program aims to enhance the funded initiative's outreach and expand its coverage. For example, if you have received funding for a pilot project, you may apply under this Program to extend its reach to additional areas, thereby broadening its impact.

Who is eligible to apply?

To be eligible for the Program applicants **must**:

- have an Australian Business Number (ABN)
- have an account with an Australian financial institution
- be headquartered in NSW
- demonstrate that all project activities will take place in NSW schools
- ensure all grant monies are used on activities undertaken to deliver the program in NSW schools
- demonstrate alignment to content descriptions and student learning outcomes in relevant fields in the NSW curriculum for students in K–12
- demonstrate any funding received from other NSW or other state or federal government grant programs do not duplicate activities requested under the Program.

and be one of the following entity types:

- a company incorporated under the *Corporations Act* (including a company limited by guarantee)
- an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Corporation registered under the *Corporations (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) Act 2006*
- an incorporated trustee on behalf of a trust
- an incorporated association
- a partnership
- a registered charity or not-for-profit organisation
- a NSW public research organisation
- public sector organisation or other organisation, such as not-for-profit organisations
- an individual who agrees to form such an entity so that DEIT can enter into a legally binding funding agreement.

OCSE, at its sole discretion, can take publicly available information about an applicant into account that may cause a business to be ineligible for support, such as any personnel or business activities that could cause reputational damage or other risk to the NSW Government.

OCSE may seek clarification from applicants in relation to its application, including seeking further information on the eligibility or assessment criteria.

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Who is not eligible to apply?

You are not eligible to apply for the Program if you are:

- insolvent
- an individual
- an unincorporated association
- part of a consortium or partnership with a business that is insolvent.

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 grant activities

For a grant activity to be eligible it **must** demonstrate a direct and robust alignment with the NSW curriculum. This includes:

- For secondary education proposals, there should be a focus on STEM, Geography, and/or iSTEM curricula.
- For primary education, alignment with the Science and Technology curriculum is essential.
- Alternatively, proposals can demonstrate alignment with other relevant curricula that are suitable and equivalent to the ones mentioned.

Eligible costs

Program funding can only be incurred on eligible activities or agreed Program activities.

To be eligible, costs **must**:

- be directly related to the eligible grant activities in NSW schools
- be incurred within the project period
- reflect competitive market rates
- be a true and accurate reflection of costs required to deliver the activity.

Eligible costs include, but are not limited to:

- labour expenditure for temporary employment for the project
- costs that may be incurred to train NSW Education staff or teachers (for example, travel to sites)
- licence fees incurred as part of the project
- data analysis and/or management costs.

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.

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

Ineligible costs

The grant cannot be used for the following activities:

- the purchase of land or property
- costs incurred in the preparation of a grant application or related documentation
- overseas travel
- the covering of retrospective costs
- wage costs incurred prior to the activity period of the project or outside of approved project activities
- projects requiring ongoing funding from the NSW Government
- projects that are ongoing or constitute the normal course of business
- activities that have commenced or been completed prior to an offer of funding made to successful applicants.

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Assessment criteria

Applications that have met the eligibility criteria will be assessed against the criteria below. Applications will be assessed in a single stage as outlined in Assessment Process.

To allow us to assess your application against Program objectives, your application must address all the criteria set out below. We will assess your application based on the weighting given to each criterion.

You must also meet all criteria set out in Eligibility criteria.

Criteria & weighting	Assessment questions
Project impact and scope in inspiring and enabling student participation and understanding of STEM in relation to natural hazards response and management **(25%)**	• How will the project support increase school student interest, participation and understanding of STEM in relation to natural hazards response, and management? Include which school year(s) the project is targeting. • How will the project encourage student entrepreneurship and career opportunities in STEM? • How will the project build partnerships with local communities and organisations to increase knowledge on natural hazards preparedness and build resilience in communities to deliver broader benefits?

Understanding of best practice student learning outcomes
(25%)
	• How does the project align with best practice learning approaches in STEM and/or cross-curricular learning, including alignment with relevant curriculum and NSW Department of Education approved elective courses?
	• How will the project support and align with the STEM education strategy and assist in sustainable improvements to teachers' confidence and competence in STEM education for NSW?
	• How does the project align with and incorporate the Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience's (AIDR) seven principles of Disaster Resilience Education for young people? The principles are:
	  – places the learner at the centre
	  – reflects the local context
	  – be inclusive
	  – establish and strengthen partnerships
	  – engage and challenge learners
	  – focus on action
	  – build capability.

Track record of relevant delivery, experience or expertise in delivering STEM programs in schools **(25%)**	• Please describe the track record of relevant delivery, experience or expertise in delivering STEM programs in schools. This includes, but is not limited to key project personnel capabilities and experience in delivering STEM programs. Please also provide CVs, and/or LinkedIn profile links, expertise or knowledge that makes your organisation(s) uniquely qualified to deliver this STEM program. • Outline your track record of current projects or similar work/collaborations, including with schools and other education providers, community organisations and/or disaster agencies. • Please describe the appropriate trauma-informed safeguards to address responses that may arise from the content.
Project delivery plan **(25%)**	• Outline your delivery plan and risk management to deliver inclusive and respectful training that meets all legislative requirements. • Outline your proposed project governance. • Outline your demonstrated approach to effectively partner with NSW primary and/or secondary schools to deliver the program.

How to apply

OCSE requires all applications to be submitted through the SmartyGrants portal.

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

These documents may be found at chiefscientist.nsw.gov.au/natural-hazards-stem-support-program. Any alterations and addenda[1] will be published on this page – nsw.gov.au/grants-and-funding is the authoritative source for grants information for the NSW Government.

The Program has a single application process.

To apply you **must**:
- complete the SmartyGrants online application form at chiefscientist.smartygrants.com.au
- provide all the information requested
- address all the eligibility criteria
- address all the relevant assessment criteria
- include all necessary attachments
- submit your application by the timelines outlined in 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, OCSE, at its discretion, may choose not to award or recommend funding to applicants under the Program.

Further information is provided in Assessment process. 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 grants@chiefscientist.nsw.gov.au or by calling 02 9228 5765. 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 the closing date and time.

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.

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[1] 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

Your application must address the assessment criteria set out in Assessment criteria.

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.

To assess your application, we require you to provide the following documents with your application:

* evidence of required insurances and working with children checks for all personnel, where required.

Key dates

You must submit an application between the published opening and closing dates. We cannot accept late applications.

Table 1: Expected timing for this Program

Activity	Timeframe
Applications open	10:00 AEDT, Thursday 1 February 2024
Applications close	10:00 AEDT, Tuesday 2 April 2024
Notification of eligibility screening	5 April 2024
Notification of funding outcomes	31 May 2024
Additional application feedback	June 2024

Queries during the application process

If you have any questions during the application period, please contact us at grants@chiefscientist.nsw.gov.au or call 02 9228 5765. This office mailbox is monitored during business hours to ensure any application enquiries are resolved. OCSE will aim to respond to all enquiries within three business days.

The office, in response to any question raised by a potential applicant that is deemed to be public, may upload information onto the frequently asked questions (FAQ) page which can be found on the chiefscientist.nsw.gov.au/natural-hazards-stem-support-program.

The office will not publicise details of the applicant organisation that has asked the question.
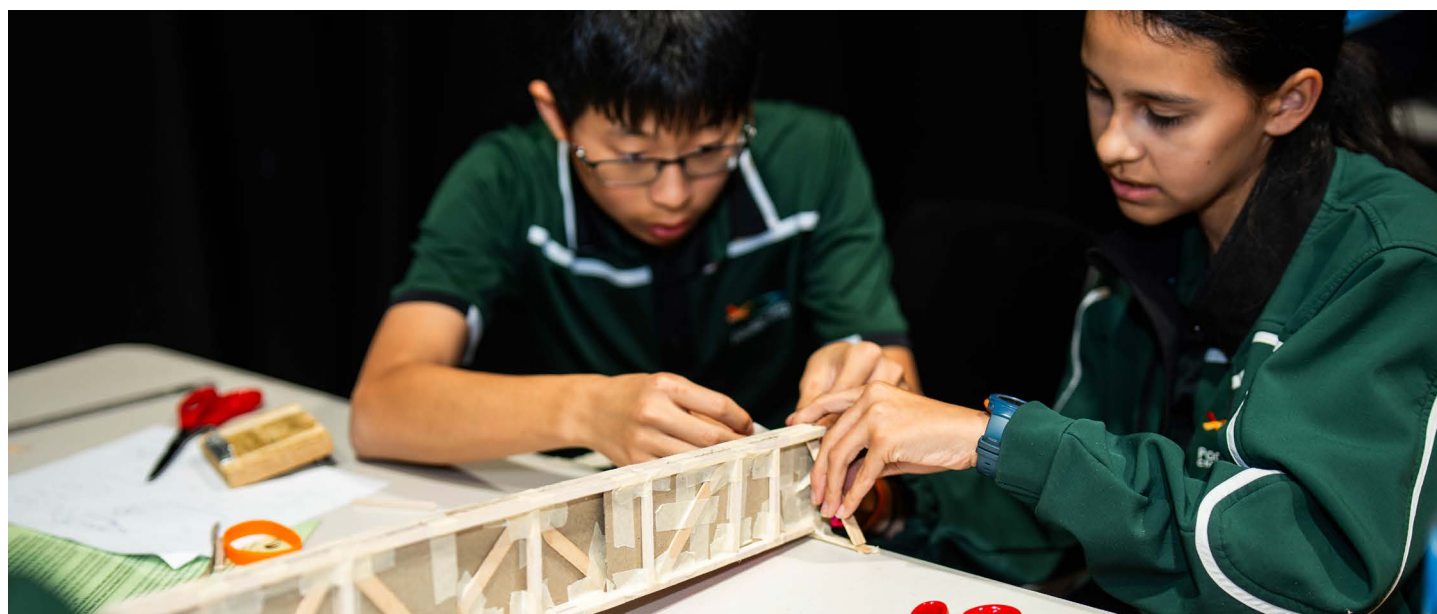
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Assessment process

OCSE will lead the assessment of applications. Your application will be considered based on a two-stage process. Where OCSE 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.

Stage 1: Eligibility assessment

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

Only applications which meet all eligibility criteria will progress to assessment against the assessment criteria. OCSE will record the ineligible applicants and will report the number of ineligible applications and reasons why to the Assessment Panel (Panel).

Stage 2: Assessment by the assessment panel

The assessment process for eligible applications by the Assessment Panel is listed below:

- Complete, eligible applications for each challenge will be sent by OCSE to the Panel to assess each application against the Assessment Criteria.
- The Panel will score all applications against the Assessment Criteria.
- The Panel members may request additional information from applicants. These requests will be managed by OCSE who will communicate with the relevant applicants directly in writing to seek their response.
- OCSE will collate the individual scores from all Panel members and calculate an average score for all applications.
- The Panel will meet to discuss the applications and their scores and agree on a recommendation for each eligible application. Based on this the Panel will agree on the applications to recommend for funding within the funding envelope. OCSE will be present in these meetings.
- OCSE will develop a brief outlining the assessment process, Panel scores and the recommended applications for funding that will be submitted to the Designated Decision Maker for review and approval.

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Who will assess applications?

A Panel will assess eligible applications on their merits against other eligible applications before recommending which applications should be awarded grant funding.

The membership of the Panel will be determined by OCSE in its sole discretion and will include experts in natural hazards education for school students, STEM and the NSW Education curriculum. The Panel will be chaired by an independent person with experience in natural hazards education for school students.

We may ask external experts and advisors to inform the assessment process. Any expert and advisor will be required to perform their duties in accordance with the Code of Ethics and Conduct – Department of Enterprise, Investment and Trade (nsw.gov.au)

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

The Panel recommends to the NSW Government applications for approval and award.

The Panel has the discretion to recommend partial funding of proposals if there is insufficient funding available or the whole proposal or where only a component of the proposal is considered suitable/eligible.

Who will approve the grant?

OCSE will provide the Panel's recommendations to the Designated Decision Maker on the suitability of each proposal for funding.

The Designated Decision Maker will approve the recommendations and funding amounts.

The Designated Decision Maker is the Chief Scientist & Engineer.

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 45 days from application close date and will be offered a feedback information session.

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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 the Program and your award.

The NSW Government will notify successful applicants in May 2024.

Funding agreement

Successful applicants will be required to enter into a funding agreement with the NSW Government. The NSW Government will require the funding agreement to be executed by 31 May 2024. The NSW Government (including OCSE) 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 OCSE. You should not make financial commitments reliant on this Program until OCSE have formally advised that you are successful, and a funding agreement is signed and executed.

Specific legislation, policies and industry standards

Whilst you are required to be compliant with all relevant laws and regulations, you will be requested to demonstrate compliance with the following legislation and policies:

- Work Health and Safety Act 2011
- Working with Children Check.

How we pay the grant

The grant will be payable in full upon the successful execution of the funding agreement.

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 exclusive of GST.

Keeping us informed

You should let us know if anything is likely to affect your grant activity or organisation.

We need to know of any key changes to your organisation or its business activities, particularly if they affect your ability to complete your grant, carry on business and pay debts due.

You must also inform us of any changes to your:

- name
- addresses
- nominated contact details
- bank account details.

If you become aware of a breach of terms and conditions under the funding agreement, you must contact us immediately.
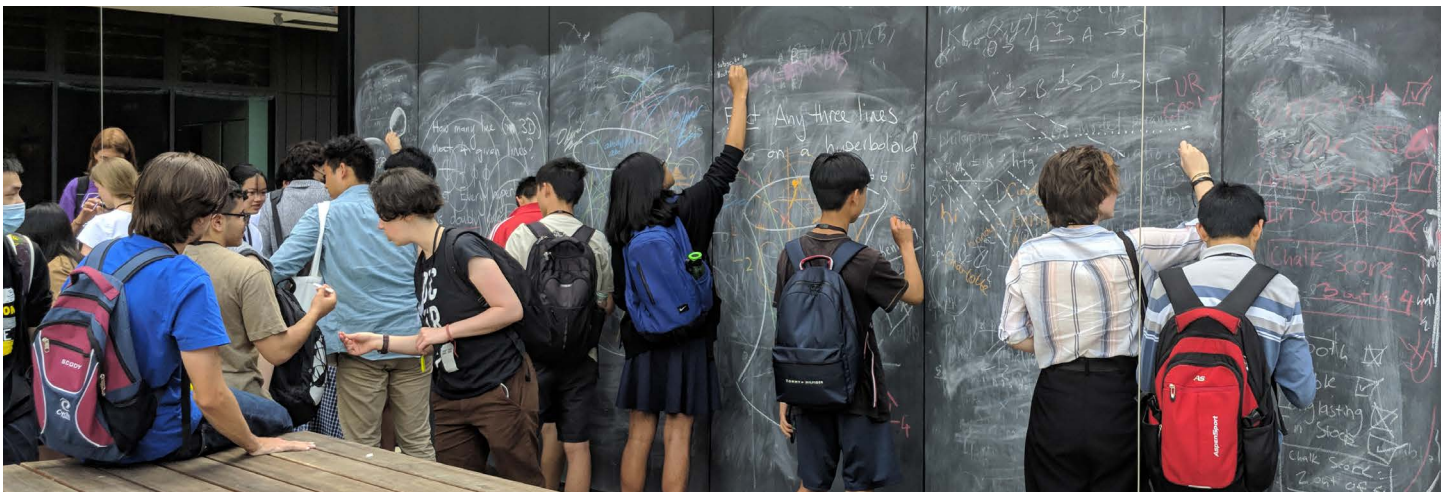
National Mathematics Summer School

How we monitor your grant activity

You must submit reports in line with the timeframes in the funding agreement. We may provide sample templates for these reports in the funding agreement.

We will expect you to report on:

- progress against agreed project milestones and outcomes
- contributions of participants directly related to the grant
- expenditure of the grant.

The project plan submitted as part of your application will form the basis of the project reporting requirements.

When you complete the grant activity, you must submit a final report and an audited financial report for the Program. Final reports must:

- identify if and how outcomes have been achieved
- include the agreed evidence as specified in the funding agreement
- identify the total eligible expenditure incurred
- be submitted within 30 business days of completion in the format provided in the funding agreement.

Evaluation

The OCSE 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.

OCSE 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.

Acknowledgment

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

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

The NSW Government and or/OCSE logo should be used on all materials related to grants provided to the grant activity. Whenever the logo is used, the publication must also acknowledge the NSW Government/OCSE.

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Enquiries and feedback

Any enquiry you have about the assessment process or the outcome of your application for this Program should be sent to grants@chiefscientist.nsw.gov.au or by calling 02 9228 5765.

Complaints will, in the first instance, be reviewed by the OCSE team. If we cannot resolve the complaint within 30 business days of receipt, we will provide details of a nominated complaints and review officer from the Complaints Team who will advise the next steps.

If you do not agree with the way OCSE 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 OCSE.

NSW Ombudsman
Level 24
580 George Street
Sydney NSW 2000

The applicant must lodge a complaint with OCSE in writing and submit it to grants@chiefscientist.nsw.gov.au.

Probity

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

An independent probity advisor may be engaged as part of this Program to provide guidance to OCSE on any issues concerning integrity, fairness and accountability that may arise throughout the application, assessment and decision-making process.

Privacy

We treat your personal information according to the DEIT Privacy Management Plan available at nsw.gov.au/departments-and-agencies/enterprise-investment-trade/policies-plans-and-procedures-of-enterprise-investment-and-trade/privacy/privacy-management-plan 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.

OCSE may also use or disclose information about applicants and recipients under the 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.

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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 OCSE 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.

Ag Robotics STEM Program