

Natural Hazards Technology Program

Program Guidelines



Opening	10:00 AEDT, Thursday 1 February 2024
Closing date and time	10:00 AEDT, Thursday, 14 March 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



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Program overview

The Natural Hazards Technology Program (the 'Program') is a new \$1.89 million competitive grants program in 2023/24 to accelerate technology innovation and adoption to better prepare for and respond to natural hazards by trialling field-ready technology with end-user NSW agencies. It builds on the success of the Bushfire Technology Pilots Program and expands the remit to provide tangible assistance in overcoming challenges from natural hazards.

This Program supports recommendation 5 of the [2020 NSW Bushfire Inquiry](#) and recommendation 2 of the 2022 Flood Inquiry which highlighted the need for advancing technology to improve the preparation, response and recovery from natural hazards such as flood and bushfires.

It involves NSW agencies posing challenges to address current gaps in responding to, managing, and recovering from natural hazards. There is also a big ideas stream where companies can propose innovative technologies for trialling to help identify future technology capabilities. The Program challenge statements are at www.chiefscientist.nsw.gov.au/natural-hazards-technology-program.

The Program provides up to \$250,000 in funding for companies to field test their technology solutions over a 12-month period with partnering NSW agencies. The potential partner agencies include NSW Rural Fire Service (RFS), State Emergency Services (SES), NSW Fire and Rescue, NSW Forestry Corp, Reconstruction Authority, NSW Telco Authority, Transport for NSW, Department of Planning and Environment and the Department of Customer Service.

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.

The Program will run from February 2024 to June 2025, which includes the 12-month pilot.



Image credit: Kelly Nowak

Objective

The purpose of the Program is to accelerate the adoption of innovative technology to better prepare for and respond to natural hazards, specifically floods and bushfires. It aims to provide tangible assistance in overcoming challenges faced during all phases of natural hazards management, including Planning, Prevention, Preparedness, Response, and Recovery.

The overall objectives of the Program are to:

- find technology solutions to challenges faced by NSW agencies in the management of natural hazards
- support innovative NSW businesses field-test their technologies with NSW agencies to:
 - refine and improve their product for market
 - build relationships with NSW agencies to increase opportunities for future collaborations
- build and improve NSW Government awareness of innovation possibilities in natural hazards management and operations through exposure to new technology.

The intended outcomes of the Program are to:

- accelerate the adoption of innovative technologies by NSW agencies to better prepare for and respond to future natural hazards
- support NSW innovative businesses successfully contribute to and develop our future industries and ongoing economic prosperity.

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

Your responsibilities

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
- Grant value
- 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-technology-program.

Program funding

The NSW Government has announced up to \$1.89 million in 2023/24 for the Program. The Program will run from January 2024 to June 2025, which includes the 12-month pilot.

The maximum grant amount is \$250,000 excluding GST.

Proposals may be partially funded if there is insufficient funding available for the whole proposal or where only a component of the proposal is considered suitable/eligible.



Image credit: Shutterstock

Eligibility criteria

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

OCSE cannot award a grant if you receive funding from another government source for the same purpose.

Who is eligible to apply?

To be eligible for the Program

applicants must:

- have an Australian Business Number (ABN)
- be non-tax exempt
- have an account with an Australian financial institution
- be headquartered in NSW
- hold the Intellectual Property or the rights to commercialise the technology
- demonstrate the technology is ready to be trialled
- demonstrate any funding from the NSW Physical Sciences Fund (PSF), Small Business Innovation and Research (SBIR) Program and 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
- a NSW public research organisation applying through its appropriate technology transfer office or the Chief Executive Officer (or equivalent) of the research organisation that will become a separate entity before entering into a legally binding funding agreement with DEIT.
- an individual who agrees to form such an entity so that DEIT can enter into a legally binding funding agreement.

Who is not eligible to apply?

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

- insolvent
- an individual
- a partnership
- an unincorporated association
- a Commonwealth, state, territory or local government agency or body excluding government corporate entities.

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 directly relate to the project and can include:

- to build and provide extra units of the technology
- specific professional expertise (for example, a drone pilot, technical specialist, business development or commercialisation expert)
- training of NSW Government personnel as part of the trial/pilot
- costs to integrate technology with NSW Government ICT platforms
- data analysis and/or management costs.



Image credit: Copyright State of New South Wales (Transport for NSW)

Eligible locations

Grant activities must be delivered in NSW.

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
- 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:

- capital costs
- labour expenditure for temporary employment for the project
- costs that may be incurred by a supporting NSW agency to enable the trial (for example, travel to sites, supporting infrastructure, etc.)
- 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).

All eligible costs will be paid inclusive of GST.

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
- activities that will not be delivered prior to the end of the grant funding period.



Image credit: Colin Wynter Seton/DCCEEW

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	Assessment Questions	Points
Solution	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Suitability (10 points): To what extent does your solution address the challenge statement, including any solution requirements?• Readiness (10 points): Is your proposed solution ready to be field trialled?• Innovation (10 points): How is your solution innovative and/or superior to what is currently on the market?	30 points
Delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Skills and experience (10 points): Does your company and project team have the appropriate skills and experience to carry out the project?• Resourcing (10 points): Does your team have access to the equipment, technology and infrastructure needed to carry out the project? Have you considered agency requirements to conduct the trial?• Project plan and budget (10 points): Does the application provide a reasonable project plan, including a budget, risk management plan and performance measures to ensure value for money for NSW citizens?	30 points
Commercial	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Potential (10 points): Does the application provide a reasonable plan on the next steps to be commercially scalable the future, including identifying potential barriers and how these will be mitigated? Commercial scalability could include how you service one or more agencies or grow nationally/internationally.• Stability (10 points): Is the company financially sound and does it have the financial resources needed to carry out the project? (10 points)	20 points

Table 1: Assessment Criteria

How to apply

Before applying, you must read and understand these Guidelines.

These documents are found at www.chiefscientist.nsw.gov.au/natural-hazards-technology-program. Any alterations and addenda¹ will be published on www.chiefscientist.nsw.gov.au/natural-hazards-technology-program. www.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:

1. complete the SmartyGrants online application form at <https://chiefscientist.smartygrants.com.au/>
2. provide all the information requested
3. address all the eligibility criteria
4. address all the relevant assessment criteria
5. include all necessary attachments
6. 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.

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:

- profit-and-loss statements from the last two years (FY 22-23 and FY 21-23)
- balance sheets from the last two years (FY 22-23 and FY 21-23)
- Video (of no longer than 3 minutes) explaining your solution, what it does, how it will help solve one or more of the challenges and what you would like to achieve from the trial.

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.

Key dates

You must submit an application between the published opening and closing dates. We cannot accept late applications. Note dates are subject to change.

Activity	Timeframe
Applications open	Thursday 1 February 2024 10:00 AEDT
Applications close	Thursday 14 March 2024 10:00 AEDT
Notification of outcome	May 2024
Earliest start date of grant activity	July 2024
End date of grant activity	June 2025

Table 2: Expected timing for the Program

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.

The OCSE 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.

OCSE, 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 www.chiefscientist.nsw.gov.au/natural-hazards-technology-program.

OCSE will not publicise details of the applicant organisation that has asked the question.



Image credit: Michele Cooper/DCCEEW

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.

Assessment of applications

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 here: [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 membership of the Panel will be determined by OCSE in its sole discretion and may include end-user NSW agencies, independent experts with business, and technology innovation and commercialisation experience, and an independent Assessor from OCSE (not involved in the grant delivery). The Panel will be chaired by OCSE.

The assessment process for eligible applications is listed below and described in Figure 1.

- Complete, eligible applications for each challenge will be sent by OCSE to the NSW agency on the Panel responsible for assessment of that challenge. OCSE will also send all complete, eligible applications for the big ideas challenge to all NSW agencies on the Assessment Panel. Each application will be assessed by at least two representatives from the Agency responsible for the challenge.
- NSW agencies on the Panel will only score applications against the Solution and Delivery [Assessment Criteria](#).
- All complete and eligible applications will be sent to the independent Assessor to assess all applications against all [Assessment Criteria](#).
- All complete and eligible applications will be sent to the commercial and business experts on the Panel to score the applications against the Commercial [Assessment Criteria](#). To manage workload, each expert will be responsible

for assessing up to 10 eligible applications against the Commercial Assessment with at least two experts assessing each application to ensure appropriate coverage.

- 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 and chair these meetings.
- A brief outlining the assessment process, Panel scores and the recommended applications for funding will be submitted to the Designated Decision Maker for review and approval.

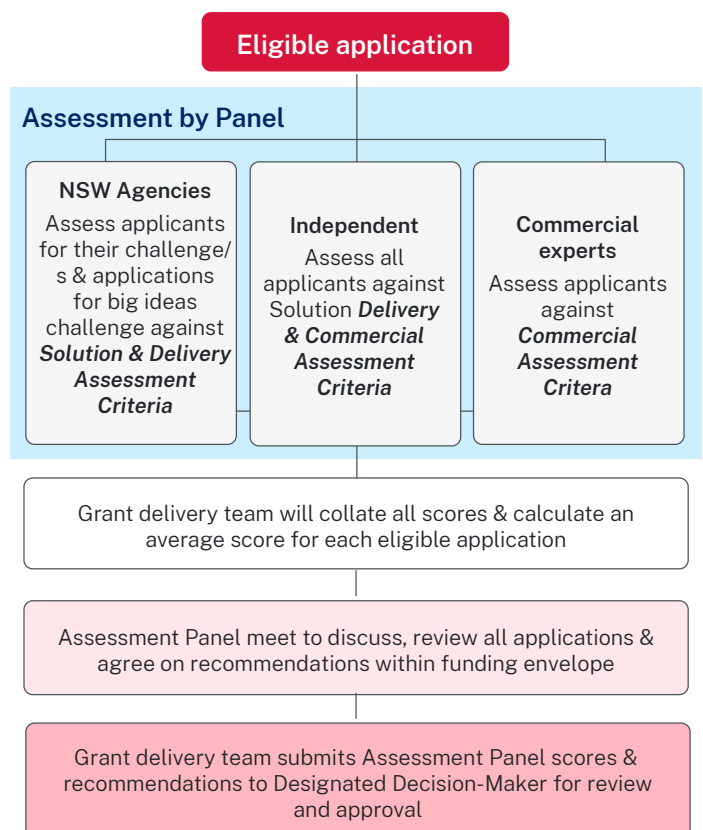


Figure 1: Assessment process for eligible applications

Who will assess applications?

A Panel will assess eligible application 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 the OCSE in its sole discretion and will include representatives from the end-user NSW agencies, independent experts with business, and technology innovation and commercialisation experience, and an independent Assessor from OCSE (Figure 1). The Panel will be chaired by OCSE.

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 for 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 Secretary, DEIT.

Notification of application outcomes

We will advise you of the outcome of your application in writing. Unsuccessful applicants will be notified via email and/or letter of the outcome of their application within 45 days from application close date and will be offered a feedback information session.



Image credit: Joshua Finfer/DCCEEW

Successful applicants

Notification

Successful applicants will be notified via email and/or letter. 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.

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 inclusive 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.

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

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.

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.

You must seek our written consent prior to any significant 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.



Image credit: David Croft/DCCEEW

Enquiries

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 the 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 the 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 will 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. This will ensure decisions are made with integrity, fairness, and accountability, while delivering value for money for NSW.

Privacy

We treat your personal information according to the DEIT Privacy Management Plan available at <https://www.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.

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:

1. you clearly identify the information as confidential and explain why we should treat it as confidential
2. the information is commercially sensitive
3. 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.



Image credit: Melissa Hams/DCCEEW

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.



Image credit: David Croft/DCCEEW

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

More information

 chiefscientist.nsw.gov.au

Contact us

 grants@chiefscientist.nsw.gov.au

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