

# Table of Contents

MS25-000971 + Signed Brief - MS25-000971.pdf - Included in Package	3
MS25-000971 + Attachment A - Background Information 2025.docx - Included in Package	5
MS25-000971 + Attachment B - Stage 2 Nominee List and Decision Register.docx - Included in Package	11
<b>s 22</b>	
MS25-000971 + Attachment D - Committee Recommendations (Science Teaching).pdf - Included in Package	35
<b>S 22</b>	
<b>S 22</b>	
MS25-000971 + Attachment G - Grant opportunity guidelines - Science Teaching Prizes.pdf - Included in Package	71
<b>S 22</b>	
MS25-000971 + Attachment I - Summary of Legislative Requirements.docx - Included in Package	121
MS25-000971 + MS25-000971 - Attachment J - Letter to Prime Minister.pdf - Included in Package	127
<b>MS25-000971 + Prime Minister's Prizes for Science 2025 - Prize recipient decision - Response Document</b>	<b>133</b>
MS25-000971 + Attachment J - Letter to Prime Minister.docx - Included in Package	137
<b>s 22</b>	

# Table of Contents

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MS25-000971 + MS25-000971 - Attachment K - Letters to Committee Members.pdf - Included in Package	241
MS25-000971 + PMPS - MS25-000971 _SEC_OFFICIAL_.msg - Included in Package	275

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**Australian Government**  
**Department of Industry,  
Science and Resources**

**Ministerial Submission**

MS25-000971

**FOR ACTION - Prime Minister's Prizes for Science 2025 - Prize recipient decision**

**TO:** Assistant Minister for Science, Technology and the Digital Economy

**TIMING**

Routine – Action sought by 22 August 2025 so successful prize recipients can be notified by 29 August 2025 and presentation event and media preparations finalised.

**Recommendation**

- That you **approve** prize recipients (recipients) of the Prime Minister’s Prizes for Science in Attachment B.

**Approved / Not approved**

- That you **agree** to personally notify recipients by 29 August 2025.

**Agreed / Not agreed**

- That you **note** we will notify recipients from 1 September 2025 if you are unable to contact them prior to this date.

**Noted / Please discuss**

- That you **sign** the letter to the Prime Minister at Attachment J, advising of your decisions.

**Signed / Not signed**

- That you **sign** the letters to committee members at Attachment K.

**Signed / Not signed**

S 47F

Signature

Date: 22/8/2025

**ATTACHMENT A****The Prime Minister's Prizes for Science – Background Information**

The Inspiring Australia – Science Engagement Program contributes to the government's vision for an Australian society engaged in and enriched by science. It supports community-wide participation and student engagement in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. It does this by funding and supporting a range of science communication and engagement activities and events.

The Prime Minister's Prizes for Science (Prizes) is an ongoing element of the program. The Prizes are Australia's most prestigious and highly regarded awards for demonstrated achievements in scientific research, research-based innovation, the practice of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge systems and excellence in science teaching.

The Prizes recognise the achievements of Australian scientists, innovators and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who practice knowledge systems and the benefits of their work to Australia and the world. They also recognise the critical role teachers play in inspiring students to take an interest, consider and pursue careers in science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

In 2025, up to \$1.4 million may be awarded across 8 prizes. There are 5 prizes for science and innovation (Science Prizes), 2 prizes for science teaching (Science Teaching Prizes) and this year marks the inaugural awarding of the Prime Minister's Prize for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Knowledge Systems (Knowledge Systems Prize), expanding the scope of the Prizes to recognise contributions of Indigenous knowledge systems.

**Science Prizes:**

- Prime Minister's Prize for Science (prize amount \$250,000)
- Prime Minister's Prize for Innovation (prize amount \$250,000)
- Malcolm McIntosh Prize for Physical Scientist of the Year (prize amount \$50,000)
- Frank Fenner Prize for Life Scientist of the Year (prize amount \$50,000)
- Prize for New Innovators (prize amount \$50,000).

**Science Teaching Prizes:**

- Prime Minister's Prize for Excellence in Science Teaching in Primary Schools (prize amount \$250,000)
- Prime Minister's Prize for Excellence in Science Teaching in Secondary Schools (prize amount \$250,000).

**Knowledge Systems Prize:**

- Prime Minister's Prize for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Knowledge Systems (prize amount \$250,000),

The prizes include a medallion, lapel pin, award certificate, and prize money. Where a team is awarded a prize, each member will receive a medallion, lapel pin, award certificate and an equal portion of the prize money.

### **Overview of the Science Teaching Prizes**

The Prime Minister's Prizes for Excellence in Science Teaching in Primary and Secondary Schools are awarded for excellence in teaching in any area of science that is part of the nominated teacher's state or territory, science, technology, engineering or mathematics syllabus.

Each prize is awarded to an individual teacher who, through the impact of their teaching and the sharing of their methods and results with the science teaching profession, has contributed to science, technology, engineering or mathematics education. Recipients of these awards are role models for those already teaching science and those considering a science teaching career. Nomination itself is recognition of these qualities by peers.

Highly ranked nominees may be recognised through the award of highly commended certificates, to formally recognise and celebrate role models and achievements in the science teaching profession.

s 22

### **Nomination and judging process**

There is a two-stage nomination and judging process for the Prizes.

The Stage 1 nomination process is open to all eligible nominations and is the basis for the Committees to shortlist nominees for each prize.

Stage 2 nominations are by invitation, based on shortlisting of Stage 1 nominees, and require more extensive information from nominators and supporters (and independent referees).

More detail on the assessment process, including criteria for each prize category, is at Attachment F, Attachment G and Attachment H.

s 22

## **Committee composition**

In accordance with the guidelines all eligible nominations for the Prizes are assessed against the merit criteria for each prize, by an independent committee comprising of subject matter experts in a two-stage assessment process.

s 22





Prime Minister's Prizes for Science 2025 Stage 2 nominee list and decision register

Prime Minister's Prize for Science 2025							
Nominee	Nominator's statement	Recommendation	Rank	Prize Money	Organisation and business address	Agreed/ Not Agreed	Decision Maker Comments (if applicable)

s 22

Prime Minister's Prize for Excellence in Science Teaching in Primary Schools 2025

Nominee	Nominator's statement	Recommendation	Rank	Prize Money	Organisation	Agreed/ Not Agreed	Decision Maker Comments (if applicable)
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9 July 2025

Senator the Hon Tim Ayres  
Minister for Industry and Innovation; Minister for Science  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Minister

The Prime Minister's Prizes for Science Teaching Committee (Committee) met on 13 June 2025 to deliberate on and compare shortlisted nominations for the 2025 awards and agree on a recommended winner for each prize category for your consideration and decision.

The meeting completed a robust competitive merit-based assessment process, including:

- eligibility assessment of nominations by the Business Grants Hub
- short-listing of nominations by the Teaching subcommittee
- independent assessment (scoring and ranking) of short-listed nominations by committee members.

On behalf of the Committee, and with the unanimous support of members, I am pleased to recommend the following nominees to you as highly worthy candidates for the Prime Minister's Prizes for Excellence in Science Teaching.

### **Prime Minister's Prize for Excellence in Science Teaching in Primary Schools**

*Recommended nominee: Mrs Paula Taylor*

Mrs Paula Taylor has made Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) education her life's purpose, her achievements are vast and recognised nationally and internationally. She is passionate and always looking for ways to engage students through well-designed, problem-centred and hands-on lessons. She is generous with her time and willing to share her expertise.

It is her imperative to support teachers to be the best STEM educator they can be, while responding to teachers' needs in their context, whether it be just in time support, or ongoing mentorship and coaching. She is always looking for opportunities to engage learners and is committed to their individual achievement, whether it be helping them to design investigations or simply just spending the time with them when they ask questions. She is a highly skilled educator drawing upon 30 years of experience and strong, impactful teaching practices that have led to student increases in engagement and achievement.

Recognising her expertise in STEM education, Mrs Taylor is regularly called upon to share her knowledge. She is dedicated to the promotion of quality STEM education while also working for a higher purpose in contributing to Australia's STEM workforce challenges. At her core, Mrs Taylor is

an inspirational and gifted teacher. She continues to touch the lives of primary school students at her school base and across the Australian Capital Territory.

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S 22

Yours sincerely

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**THE HON DR ANDREW CHARLTON MP**  
**CABINET SECRETARY**  
**ASSISTANT MINISTER FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND**  
**THE DIGITAL ECONOMY**

MS25-000971

The Hon Anthony Albanese MP  
Prime Minister of Australia  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Prime Minister

I am pleased to inform you of the recipients of the 2025 Prime Minister's Prizes for Science, including the inaugural recipient of the Prize for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Knowledge Systems. Senator the Hon Tim Ayres, Minister for Science, has delegated the decision for this year's prize recipients to me in my capacity as Assistant Minister for Science, Technology and the Digital Economy. This delegation ensures that any potential conflict of interest Senator Ayres may hold, real or perceived, does not impact the integrity of the prizes. Senator Ayres has been copied into this letter to provide him visibility of my decisions.

**SCIENCE PRIZES**

S 22



## **SCIENCE TEACHING PRIZES**

### **Prime Minister's Prize for Excellence in Science Teaching in Primary Schools**

*Mrs Paula Taylor*

Mrs Paula Taylor has made Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) education her life's purpose, her achievements are vast and recognised nationally and internationally. She is passionate and always looking for ways to engage students through well-designed, problem-centred and hands-on lessons. She is generous with her time and willing to share her expertise.

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Yours sincerely

S 22

**DR ANDREW CHARLTON**

**22/08/2025**

CC: Senator the Hon Tim Ayres, Minister for Science



## KEY POINTS

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- Senator the Hon Tim Ayres, Minister for Science, has delegated his role as the decision maker for the Prime Minister's Prizes for Science (Prizes) to you as Assistant Minister for Science, Technology and the Digital Economy (**MS25-000917** refers). We now seek your decision on the recipients of the Prizes for 2025. Background information on the Prizes, including the nomination and judging process, is provided at Attachment A.
- Three independent expert committees assessed the nominations through a two-stage process. Recommended prize recipients and shortlisted nominees are listed in Attachment B for your consideration.
  - All shortlisted nominees fully meet the selection criteria for the Prizes.
  - There is sufficient funding available within the Inspiring Australia program to support the awarding of all recommended Prizes.
- The chair of each committee has written to you regarding the considerations of each committee and their resulting recommendations. These letters are provided at <sup>S 22</sup> Attachment D (the Science Teaching Prizes) and <sup>S 22</sup> Attachment E (the Science Teaching Prizes) to support your decision making.
- You are not bound by the committee's recommendations and may consider other factors such as policy intent as outlined in the guidelines in making your decision on the Prize awardees (see Attachment E, Attachment G and Attachment H). If you do not agree with the committee recommendations and wish to award a prize to a different nominee, you need to record the basis for your decision on the brief and, using Attachment B, indicate who should be awarded the relevant prize instead. Should you exercise this option, we will provide you with updated letters for the Prime Minister and to the committee members.
- In accordance with the *Commonwealth Grant Rules and Principles 2024* (CGRPs), you should consider the assessment criteria, the committee's assessments, and the relevant decision-making requirements in the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* and the *Financial Framework (Supplementary Powers) Act 1997 (Cth)* when making your decision. More details on these requirements, including the selection process and spending proposal, as well as actions you need to take should you not agree with the recommendations made by the committees, are at Attachment I.
- Due diligence on the recommended prize recipients has been conducted and no concerns have been identified – due diligence will continue leading up to the event.
- In addition to prize recipients, the Science Teaching Prizes guidelines (see Attachment G) allows the Science Teaching Committee to recognise highly ranked nominees by awarding highly commended certificates. <sup>S 22</sup>

- S 22

- We recommend, as is customary, that after making your decisions, you personally notify prize recipients of their success. If you choose to do this, we will provide contact details and call scripts to your office. If you are unable to notify prize recipients by 29 August 2025, the department will notify prize recipients from 1 September 2025.
  - Prize recipients must be notified (in confidence and under embargo) by the above critical dates to enable timely preparation of communications and media materials, including prize recipient workplace video production, for use at the presentation event.
  - In line with standard practice, once prize recipients are notified, the department will notify all shortlisted nominators (in confidence and under embargo) of the successful or unsuccessful outcome of their nomination.
- After you have made your decision on the prize recipients, we have provided correspondence for you to write to the following:
  - The Prime Minister, to advise of the prize recipients (letter provided at [Attachment J](#)). This letter will also be copied to the Minister for Science to advise him of your decisions.
  - The committee members, to thank them for their contribution to the selection process (letters provided at [s 22](#))
- Prize recipients and their guests, shortlisted nominees, nominators, referees, supporters, and committee members will be invited to the presentation event.

S 22

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S 22

Clearance Officer

S 22

General Manager, Internal Programs Branch  
Business Grants Hub Division  
Ph: S 22  
31 July 2025

Contact Officer

S 22

A/g Manager, Science Programs Section  
Ph: S 22

**ATTACHMENTS**

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- A: Background Information 2025
- B: Stage 2 Nominee List and Decision Register
- C: S 22 )
- D: Committee Recommendations (Science Teaching)
- E: S 22
- F: S 22
- G: Grant Opportunity Guidelines – Science Teaching
- H: S 22
- I: Summary of Legislative Requirements
- J: Letter to Prime Minister
- K: S 22