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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 Prizes

Prime Minister's Prize for Science

The Prime Minister's Prize for Science is awarded for a significant advancement of knowledge through science. It is awarded to an individual, or a team of up to four individuals if the achievement is the result of a collaborative team effort.

Prime Minister's Prize for Innovation

The Prime Minister's Prize for Innovation is awarded for the innovative translation of scientific knowledge into a commercially available product, service or process that has had economic, social, and where relevant, environmental benefits. It is awarded to an individual, or a team of up to four individuals if the achievement is the result of a collaborative team effort.

Malcolm McIntosh Prize for Physical Scientist of the Year and Frank Fenner Prize for Life Scientist of the Year

These prizes recognise an exceptional achievement in science that benefits, or has the potential to benefit, human welfare or society by early to mid-career scientists. Each prize is awarded to an individual who has realised the nominated research achievement and been nominated within 10 years (full time or full-time equivalent) of completing their highest relevant tertiary qualification.

Prize for New Innovators

The Prize for New Innovators recognises early achievement towards partial or full commercialisation or translation of scientific research with economic, social or environmental benefits. The commercialisation or translation of scientific research can be demonstrated by either advancement towards a commercial or translational outcome or by the actual attainment of a commercial or translational outcome itself.

The innovation, underlying research and trial pathway are considered equally important. The innovation must have, or have the potential to, generate measurable revenue or measurable socio-economic benefit.

The prize is awarded to an individual who has achieved or made achievements towards commercialising or translating their research outcomes and been nominated within 10 years (full time or full-time equivalent) of completing their highest relevant tertiary qualification.

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.

Overview of the Knowledge Systems Prize

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge systems are informed by the ways of being, knowing and doing of the Indigenous peoples of Australia. As Australia's first scientists, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' knowledge systems are dynamic, adaptive, interdisciplinary, profound and sophisticated. They are developed and preserved by the practice of the diverse cultures and the ongoing observations, predictions, interpretations, questionings and understandings of our world through enduring connection to communities and/or place over thousands of years.

The prize is awarded to an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander-led project that benefits Australian Indigenous peoples, communities or place, and contributes to solving a significant challenge through the practice and preservation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge systems. The project will demonstrate sincere connection and respectful engagement with community and Australian Indigenous peoples and elevate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge systems.

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](#).

Presentation event and communications

The Prizes are presented annually at a dinner event in the Great Hall of Australian Parliament House. Where possible, the event is held during a parliamentary spring sitting week. The Prime Minister and Minister for Science provide addresses and present awards.

Invitees to the presentation dinner event are identified in consultation with the Minister for Science's office. Invitees include recipients and their personal guests, Prizes alumni, members of the science, research, industry and education communities. Relevant federal members of parliament, senators, and state and territory government ministers and officials and media are also invited to attend. Due to capacity limits, up to 500 people can be in attendance.

The department works with specialist suppliers to implement a comprehensive communications, media and stakeholder engagement strategy to raise awareness of recipients and their achievements. The department will brief you and your office on these activities separately.

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.

2025 Science Prizes Committee

Role	Name	Title and Organisation
Lead Chairperson	s 47F	
Physical Science Sub-committee Chairperson		
Innovation Sub-committee Chairperson		
Life Sciences Sub-committee Chairperson		
Member		

2025 Science Teaching Prizes Committee

Role	Name	Title and Organisation
Chairperson	s 47F	
Member		

2025 Knowledge Systems Prize Committee

Role	Name	Title and Organisation
Chairperson	s 47F	
Member		

OFFICIAL: Sensitive

Overview of 2025 nomination statistics*Science and Science Teaching Prizes*

Prize Name	Total Nominations	Total Individual Nominees	Female Nominees (Individuals)	Male Nominees (Individual)	% Female	Gender % change from 2024
Frank Fenner Prize for Life Scientist of the Year	s 47F					
Malcolm McIntosh Prize for Physical Scientist of the Year						
Prime Ministers Prize for Excellence in Science Teaching in Primary Schools						
Prime Ministers Prize for Excellence in Science Teaching in Secondary Schools						
Prime Ministers Prize for Innovation - Individual						
Prime Ministers Prize for Innovation - Team						
Prime Ministers Prize for Science - Individual						
Prime Ministers Prize for Science - Team						
Prize for New Innovators						
Total						

Knowledge Systems Prize

Prize Name	Total Nominations	Total Individual Nominees	Female Nominees (Individuals)	Male Nominees (Individual)	% Female
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Knowledge Systems - Individual	s 47F				
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Knowledge Systems - Team/Group					
Total					

OFFICIAL: Sensitive

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)

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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)
Mrs Paula Taylor	<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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 Paula 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.</p>	Recommended, fully meets the selection criteria	1	\$250,000	s 47G		

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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.

Prime Minister's Prize for Excellence in Science Teaching in Secondary Schools

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Yours sincerely

S 47F



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

Prime Minister's Prize for Science

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Prime Minister's Prize for Innovation

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Malcolm McIntosh Prize for Physical Scientist of the Year

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Frank Fenner Prize for Life Scientist of the Year

s 22

s 22

Prize for New Innovators

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.

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.

Prime Minister's Prize for Excellence in Science Teaching in Secondary Schools

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KNOWLEDGE SYSTEMS PRIZE

Prime Minister's Prize for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Knowledge Systems

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Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Andrew Charlton". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

DR ANDREW CHARLTON

22/08/2025

CC: Senator the Hon Tim Ayres, Minister for Science

KEY POINTS

- 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 ^{S 22} [Attachment D](#) (the Science Teaching Prizes) and ^{S 22} [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. ^{S 22}

- 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.

SENSITIVITIES AND HANDLING:

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DATA REFERENCED

- Committee rankings and nomination statistics from nomination material.

CONSULTATION

- Created in consultation with Science Policy Branch, Communications Branch, and Chief Counsel and Integrity Division.

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

- 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: Letters to Committee Members