Australian Government
Department of Industry, Science and Resources

Business Grants Hub

Grant Opportunity Guidelines

Inspiring Australia – Science Engagement Program: The Prime Minister's Prizes for Science 2027-2029 – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Knowledge Systems Prize

Opening date:	Annual open and close periods for nominations apply. Refer to section 6.4 for more details.
Grant opportunity closing date and time:	5:00pm Australian Eastern Standard Time on 13 April 2029 Please take account of time zone differences when submitting the nomination.
Commonwealth policy entity:	Department of Industry, Science and Resources (DISR)
Administering entity:	Department of Industry, Science and Resources (DISR)
Enquiries:	If you have any questions, contact us on 13 28 46.
Date guidelines released:	5 November 2026
Type of grant opportunity:	Open competitive

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1. Inspiring Australia – Science Engagement Program: The Prime Minister's Prizes for Science 2027-2029 – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Knowledge Systems Prize processes

The Inspiring Australia – Science Engagement Program is designed to achieve Australian Government objectives

This grant opportunity is part of the above grant program which contributes to the Department of Industry, Science and Resources' Outcome One: *Support economic growth, productivity and job creation for all Australians by investing in science and technology, growing innovative and competitive businesses, industries and regions, and supporting a strong resources sector*. The department engages with stakeholders to plan and design the grant program according to the Commonwealth Grants Rules and Principles (CGRPs).

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Grant opportunity opens for the nomination round

We publish the grant guidelines on industry.gov.au and GrantConnect.

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The nominator completes and submits a Stage 1 nomination via the nomination form

The nominator submits a nomination form during the relevant nomination period on behalf of a nominee, addressing all eligibility and assessment criteria, and confirms they have two supporters and two independent referees available if the nomination progresses to Stage 2.

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We assess all nominations

We assess the nominations against eligibility criteria. The independent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Knowledge Systems Prize Committee (the Committee) assesses eligible nominations against the assessment criteria for each prize and compares them with other eligible nominations in the same nomination period.

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Eligible and competitive nominations are shortlisted and invited to Stage 2

If the nomination has been shortlisted, we will invite the nominator to prepare a more detailed nomination addressing the assessment criteria, including the supporter statements and the contact details of the two supporters and the two independent referees.

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Stage 2 nominations are sent to referees

We refer the nominator and supporter Stage 2 statements to the independent referees to seek their opinions on the claims made in the nominations.

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Stage 2 nominations are assessed and prize recipients are recommended

The Committee assesses Stage 2 nominations in each nomination period and recommends prize recipients to the decision maker.

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Final decisions are made

The decision maker decides which nominations are successful from each nomination period.

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We notify nominators and prize recipients of the outcome

The nominator will be advised of the outcome of the nomination. Prize recipients will be notified under embargo, in writing and invited to receive their award at the annual Prime Minister's Prizes for Science presentation dinner event relevant to their nomination period.

1.1. Introduction

These guidelines contain information for the Inspiring Australia – Science Engagement Program: The Prime Minister's Prizes for Science 2027-2029 – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Knowledge Systems Prize (Knowledge Systems Prize).

This document sets out:

- the purpose of the grant opportunity
- the eligibility and assessment criteria
- how we consider and assess nominations
- how we may notify nominees
- responsibilities and expectations in relation to the opportunity.

This grant opportunity and process will be administered by the Department of Industry, Science and Resources (the department/DISR).

We have defined key terms used in these guidelines in the glossary.

We administer the program according to the *Commonwealth Grants Rules and Principles (CGRPs)*[1]

The nominator should read this document carefully before completing a nomination.

2. About the grant program

The Inspiring Australia – Science Engagement Program (the program) provides funding for a range of initiatives delivered under the Inspiring Australia banner.

The program is delivering engagement initiatives that strengthen the science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) skills pipeline and support national prosperity, resilience and wellbeing. Through this program, the Government aims to:

- build value and trust in STEM and its role in addressing national challenges
- strengthen the STEM pipeline by aligning initiatives with economic needs
- champion Australian scientists and innovators as national role models
- elevate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge systems, with strong partnerships with Indigenous peoples and their communities
- support equitable participation in STEM and reduce barriers.

There will be other grant opportunities as part of this program and we will publish the opening and closing dates and any other relevant information on industry.gov.au and GrantConnect.

2.1. About the Prime Minister's Prizes for Science

The Prime Minister's Prizes for Science are an ongoing element of the Inspiring Australia – Science Engagement Program. The Prime Minister's Prizes for Science expects to award

[1] https://www.finance.gov.au/government/commonwealth-grants/commonwealth-grants-rules-and-principles-2024

approximately $1.4 million each year (2027, 2028 and 2029), noting the total funding awarded in any year may vary if more than one recipient is awarded a prize, for achievements across 3 prize categories:

- the Science Prizes
- the Science Teaching Prizes
- the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Knowledge Systems Prize.

The Prime Minister's Prizes for Science are Australia's most prestigious awards for achievements in scientific research and research-based innovation, the practice of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge systems and excellence in science teaching.

We particularly encourage the nomination of candidates from diverse backgrounds and of all gender identities (see glossary).

Previous rounds of the Prime Minister's Prizes for Science were delivered as separate annual grant opportunities. The 2027–2029 program is being delivered through a multi-year grant opportunity, with a single nomination round conducted each year.

2.2. About the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Knowledge Systems Prize

These guidelines contain information for the Knowledge Systems Prize.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge systems are informed by the ways of being, knowing and doing of the diverse cultures of 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 continually developing and maintained through ongoing observations, predictions, interpretations, questionings and understandings of our world through enduring connection to communities and place over thousands of years.

The Prize will be 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 authentic connection and respectful engagement with community and Australian Indigenous peoples. The Minister may also award more than one recipient under this prize.

Nominations are submitted in a two-stage process:

Stage 1: The nominator completes an online nomination form addressing all eligibility and assessment criteria and confirms they have two supporters available (a third supporter may be required for the sole purpose of confirming each nominee's Indigeneity) and two independent referees available if the nomination progresses to Stage 2.

Stage 2: Where a nominee has been shortlisted, we invite the nominator to work with the nominee to prepare a more detailed nomination, including the supporter statements and the contact details of the two supporters and the two independent referees.

The glossary provides definitions for nominator, supporter and independent referee.

3. Prize amount

The Knowledge Systems Prize grant opportunity expects to award approximately $250,000 annually in prize money, noting prize money awarded in any year may vary if more than one recipient is awarded a prize.

The prize recipient receives a medallion, lapel pin, award certificate and prize money.

Where we award the prize to a team, each member will receive a medallion, lapel pin, award certificate and an equal portion of the prize money.

Where we award the prize to a community group (up to 4 representatives), the group will receive a medallion, lapel pin, award certificate and the prize money will be awarded to the community group.

We may also recognise highly-ranked nominees through the awarding of highly commended certificates.

The Minister may approve more than one recipient for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Knowledge Systems Prize, subject to the availability of grant funds (see section 7.2).

4. Eligibility criteria

4.1. Who is eligible?

To be eligible for the Knowledge Systems Prize, nominees must:

- be an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person
- be an individual, a member of an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander-led team (including family groups), or a representative of a community group (see glossary)
- be an Australian citizen or permanent resident of Australia[2]
- not be self-nominated
- not be nominated for more than one prize per year across the Prime Minister's Prizes for Science. Where a nominee is nominated in more than one prize, we will ask the nominee to select a single nomination to pursue at Stage 1
- practice knowledge systems as part of a project with a demonstrable benefit to Australian Indigenous peoples, communities and/or place and to Australia more broadly.

Where a nomination is for a team or a community group, up to 4 nominees may be named per nomination. All nominees must be Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. For nominations of community groups, the selected nominees will be representatives for the whole community group.

Previous nominees are eligible for renomination. A new nomination must be submitted by a nominator via the online nomination form. The same or different individuals from the previous nomination may nominate and support the nominee where appropriate.

[2] This requirement is consistent with all of the Prime Minister's Prizes for Science

Past recipients of the Australia Prize (awarded from 1990-1999) are eligible for nomination.

Nominees do not need to have a formal qualification, be a member of a professional association or have received any prior award to be eligible.

We cannot consider nominations that do not satisfy all eligibility criteria.

4.2. Who is not eligible?

A nominee is not eligible for this prize if they are:

- non-Indigenous, regardless of whether they work in partnership with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples within the nominated project
- an Indigenous researcher who is not practicing Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander knowledge systems as a significant part of their nominated project
- past recipients of the:
  - Prime Minister's Prize for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Knowledge Systems
  - Prime Minister's Prize for Science
  - Prime Minister's Prize for Innovation
  - Prime Minister's Prize for Excellence in Science Teaching in Primary Schools
  - Prime Minister's Prize for Excellence in Science Teaching in Secondary Schools.

4.3. Who is eligible to be a nominator?

To be eligible to submit a nomination for the Knowledge Systems Prize, a nominator must:

- not be a close family member of the nominee (see glossary)
- be personally knowledgeable of the nominated achievement and be able to offer informed opinions about its significance.

A person can be a nominator for more than one nomination.

A nominator cannot be a supporter or an independent referee for the same nomination, and a nominee cannot support their own nomination.

4.4. Who is eligible to be a supporter?

At Stage 1, the nominator must confirm that, if the nomination progresses to Stage 2, they have two supporters available (see glossary).

One supporter must be an Indigenous person from the community and/or place associated with the knowledge systems being practiced as part of the nominated project.

At least one supporter should be able to confirm the Indigeneity of each nominee (see glossary) and this supporter must be Indigenous. One additional Indigenous person may be identified by the nominator for the sole purpose of confirming the Indigeneity of the nominee(s).

A supporter must:

- not be a close family member of the nominee (see glossary)
- be personally knowledgeable of the nominated achievement and be able to offer informed opinions about its significance

- not have a role in the nominated project (excluding the supporter who is a knowledge holder from the knowledge system being practiced in the project)
- provide their contact details within the Stage 2 nomination form
- at Stage 2, provide a 5(up to 6,000 characters, including spaces and special characters) or an audio/video submission (up to a maximum of 7 minutes in length) that addresses each assessment criterion. A template for a written submission and further instructions for audio/video submissions will be provided on industry.gov.au when Stage 2 nominations open.

Written statements and audio/video submissions will be equally weighted.

Only in exceptional circumstances (see glossary) will the Program Delegate agree to a nominator's request to change a supporter.

4.5. Who is eligible to be an independent referee?

At Stage 1, the nominator must confirm that, if the nomination progresses to Stage 2, they have two independent referees available (see glossary).

The independent referee's role is to review the statement of claims against the assessment criteria provided by the nominator and supporters when contacted by the department.

To be eligible to be an independent referee, the person must:

- not be a nominator or supporter for the same nomination
- not be related to the nominee or have a professional relationship that would cause a conflict of interest that could unnecessarily bias the independence of the referee
- provide their contact details within the Stage 2 nomination form
- at Stage 2, provide a referee report in writing (up to 2 pages) or by audio/video submission (up to a maximum of 5 minutes in length). A referee report template and further instructions will be provided on industry.gov.au when Stage 2 nominations open.

Written reports and audio/video submissions will be equally weighted.

The Committee may also identify additional independent referees from whom to seek additional information to verify the nomination.

Only in exceptional circumstances (see glossary) will the Program Delegate agree to a nominator's request to change an independent referee.

5. The assessment criteria

The nominator must address all assessment criteria in the nomination form. The Committee will assess your nomination based on the weighting given to each criterion. The nomination form asks questions that relate to the assessment criteria below.

In Stage 1, the assessment criteria need to be addressed.

The nominator is required to respond to each of the relevant assessment criteria with a strict limit of 4,500 characters total (1,500 characters per criterion), including spaces and special characters.

In Stage 2, more detailed responses against the assessment criteria are required. The nominator is required to:

- respond to each assessment criterion with either:
  - a written statement with a strict limit of 9,000 characters total (3,000 characters per criterion), including spaces and special characters, or
  - an audio/video submission up to a maximum of 10 minutes in length (approximately 3min and 20secs per criterion). If the video or audio submission is in a language other than English, you must provide a written transcript of the content in English.
- provide two supporter statements that address the assessment criteria using the template provided on industry.gov.au. Each supporter statement can be either:
  - a written statement with a strict limit of 6,000 characters total (2,000 characters per criterion), including spaces and special characters, or
  - an audio/video submission up to a maximum of 7 minutes in length (approximately 2min 20secs per criterion). If the video or audio submission is in a language other than English, you must provide a written transcript of the content in English.

Written statements and audio/video submissions will be equally weighted.

We will assess responses to the assessment criteria at both stages of the nomination process. The Committee will assess eligible nominations against the assessment criteria for the Knowledge Systems Prize and compare them to other eligible nominations in the relevant nomination period for that prize.

Nominations must score a minimum of 50 per cent against each of the assessment criteria. Only the highest-ranking nominations will be invited to proceed to Stage 2.

If invited to Stage 2, additional evidence as outlined in section 6.3.2 will be required to support assessment criterion responses.

Additional advice for responding to assessment criteria can be found on industry.gov.au and GrantConnect.

5.1. Assessment criterion 1

Demonstrated practice of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander knowledge systems (20 points)

Demonstrate the practice of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander knowledge systems and their application to the project.

Nominations should describe:

- the question being addressed, its significance and how the practice of the knowledge systems have benefited broader scientific understandings and processes
- how the project was conducted, including the practice of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander knowledge systems
- how the application of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander knowledge systems led to the project's success.

This may be demonstrated by:

- describing how the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander knowledge systems were applied to solve specific challenges
- if relevant, how the knowledge systems in the project have been woven with Western science.

Individual nominations should describe:

- the role of the individual in the project
- why the prize should be awarded to an individual rather than a team or community group.

Team nominations should describe:

- the role of each team member
- why the prize should be awarded to a team.

Community group nominations should describe:

- the role of the community group in the project
- why the prize should be awarded to that community group.

5.2. Assessment criterion 2

Demonstrated benefit (10 points)

Demonstrate how this project has benefited communities and/or place.

Nominations should describe:

- the demonstrated benefit to place and/or community and/or the contribution to culture
- the benefit, or potential benefit, to Australia more broadly.

This may be demonstrated by:

- including case studies and narratives describing the benefits of the project
- including project assessments from Elders, community leaders, end-users, stakeholders or sponsors
- the benefits to community and/or place throughout the project's duration
- the direct and/or indirect economic benefits of the project to community and/or place
- describing the scale, reach and continuity of the project, for example, providing participant numbers, frequency of community engagement and the size of governing bodies involved
- describing how knowledge systems are widely shared, passed across generations and maintained within the community
- other metrics as appropriate.

5.3. Assessment criterion 3

Demonstrated cultural governance (10 points)

Demonstrate the cultural governance of the project.

Nominations should describe:

- the respectful adherence to cultural governance protocols to demonstrate the legitimacy and significance of the project

- the project's authority to protect, use and share the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander knowledge systems, in accordance with the cultural authority owners' direction and (where relevant) systems to facilitate cultural governance.
- If applicable, details on the storage conditions for Indigenous data collected and/or used as part of the nominated project, including accessibility for knowledge owners, security measures and server location.

This may be demonstrated by:

- confirmation of the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander knowledge systems, including, where possible, identifying the Traditional Custodians, and the moral and intellectual right of the individual, team or community group to build on and apply the knowledge systems
- a statement explaining how the collective cultural responsibility and rights of the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander knowledge systems has been addressed
- letter(s) of support from a relevant cultural authority and/or a regional Indigenous representative body about the project and the extent to which respectful connection with communities and/or place have been fostered to support cultural governance
- if the nominee is associated with a university, a memorandum of understanding or research agreement between the associated university and the cultural authority owners
- the application of the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) Code of Ethics for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Research.

Nominations should provide sufficient evidence to demonstrate the cultural governance of the project, which may require multiple relevant and appropriate sources. Evidence can be provided as attachments to the nomination at Stage 2 (see section 6.3.2).

6. How to nominate

Annual prize nomination periods apply to all nominations. Nominations for each annual prize follow a two-stage process. Nominators can only submit a nomination while a nomination period is open.

Nominators will need to set up an account to access the online portal.

Nominators should read and understand these guidelines before submitting a nomination. Nominators are encouraged to collaborate with nominees when preparing the nomination to ensure accuracy of the information provided.

Nominators must ensure the nominee:

- is willing to be nominated
- will provide the evidence necessary to support the nomination
- understands the obligations that come with the prize.

Nominators and nominees should carefully review all eligibility and assessment criteria. Working with the nominee, the nominator must respond to each assessment criterion and provide detailed evidence to support the claims made, as outlined in sections 6.1 and 6.3.

The nominator is responsible for making sure the nomination is complete and accurate. We encourage nominators to work with support mechanisms available within their own

organisations to assist with developing high-quality and competitive nominations. The use of artificial intelligence and other forms of automation is permissible in developing the nomination, but you remain responsible for the accuracy, security and suitability of all information submitted as part of the nomination.

Giving false or misleading information is a serious offence under the *Criminal Code Act 1995*. If we consider that the nominator has provided false or misleading information, we may not progress the nomination. If the nominator finds an error in the nomination after submitting it, the nominator should call us immediately on 13 28 46.

After submitting the nomination, we may contact the nominator for clarification if we find an error or any missing information, including evidence that supports eligibility/merit. The acceptance of any additional information provided after the submission of the nomination is at the discretion of the Program Delegate. Additional information should not materially change the nomination at the time it was submitted and therefore may be refused if deemed to be purely supplementary.

Nominators can view and print a copy of the submitted nomination on the portal for their own records. Nominators should keep a copy of the nomination and any supporting documents.

If further guidance around the nomination process is required, or if there are any issues with the portal, contact us or by call 13 28 46.

6.1. Submitting a Stage 1 nomination

For a Stage 1 nomination, nominators must:

- complete the online Stage 1 nomination form through the portal
- address all eligibility and assessment criteria
- provide all necessary attachments, as outlined in section 6.3.1

6.2. Submitting a Stage 2 nomination

If the nomination is shortlisted at Stage 1, nominators will be invited to submit an online nomination form for Stage 2 of the corresponding nomination period. For a Stage 2 nomination, nominators must:

- complete the online Stage 2 nomination on our online portal
- address all eligibility and assessment criteria
- provide all the information requested including:
  - two supporter statements and, if required, an additional supporter statement for the sole purpose of confirming each nominee's Indigeneity
  - the contact details of two supporters
  - the contact details of two independent referees.
- provide all necessary attachments, as outlined in section 6.3.2.

6.3. Attachments to the nomination

The nominator must attach supporting documentation to the nomination form in line with the instructions provided within the form. The nominator should only attach requested

documents. Individual file sizes for attachments in the portal cannot be greater than 25MB, while the total of all attachments cannot exceed 50MB.

We will not consider information in attachments that we do not request or that exceed character or file size limits. Templates must be used in the format provided and must not be modified, unless otherwise stated in the template. Any additional information included through modified templates such as additional tables, attachments, appendices, hyperlinks or other unsolicited material will not be considered during assessment.

When submitting PDFs where possible they should be OCR compatible, as outlined in the glossary.

6.3.1. Stage 1 attachments

At Stage 1, we will request the following documents with the nomination:

- a background and experience statement (up to 2 pages) for each nominee, which must use the template provided on industry.gov.au.

6.3.2. Stage 2 attachments

At Stage 2, we will request the following documents with the nomination:

- a completed declaration form from each nominee, stating Indigeneity, Australian citizenship or permanent resident status. A nominee declaration form template will be provided on industry.gov.au. Further information is provided regarding obligations of the prize recipients (see section 8.3)
- two supporter statements (see section 4.4) that each address the assessment criteria (up to 6,000 characters including spaces and special characters for a written statement or up to a maximum of 7 minutes for an audio/video submission). A template for a written submission and further instructions for audio/video submissions is provided on industry.gov.au when Stage 2 nominations open
- a video (up to a maximum of 5 minutes in length) showcasing the knowledge system being practiced in the project. This could include:
  - the nominator and nominee discussing the project
  - footage on Country or place where the knowledge system is practiced
  - Elders or knowledge holders endorsing the project.
- if required, a statement from an additional supporter confirming Indigeneity. A template is provided on industry.gov.au when Stage 2 nominations open.

Optional attachments may include:

- evidence to support the nomination (see section 5), for example, a project assessment; letters of support from cultural authority owners and communities, relevant research agreements; or a statement outlining the application of ethical practices
- if applicable, provide up to four key documents demonstrating outputs from the project. Each document should be no longer than 2 pages. For example:
  - publications or reports demonstrating project outputs and outcomes
  - records of project activities
  - educational, training or knowledge sharing resources

- evaluation reports
- patents, articles or publications directly relevant to the nomination.

It is recommended to provide multiple supporting attachments for your assessment criteria responses to strengthen the competitiveness of your nomination and support any claims made.

6.4. Timing of grant opportunity processes

The nominator can submit a nomination at any time while a nomination period is open. Nominations will be assessed annually after the closing of each nomination period unless otherwise advised on the busines.gov.au website. We cannot accept late nominations.

Table 1: Nomination Periods for the 2027 Prizes

	Open / Closing date and time
Stage 1:	**Open:** 5 November 2026
	Close: 5:00PM Australian Eastern Daylight Time on 7 January 2027
Stage 2: (invitation only)	**Open:** 13 April 2027
	Close: 5:00PM Australian Eastern Standard Time on 6 May 2027
Please take account of time zone differences when submitting the nomination.	

Table 2: Nomination Periods for the 2028 Prizes

	Open / Closing date and time
Stage 1:	**Open:** 9 June 2027
	Close: 5.00PM Australian Eastern Daylight Time on 17 November 2027
Stage 2: (invitation only)	**Open:** 22 March 2028
	Close: 5:00PM Australian Eastern Standard Time on 12 April 2028
Please take account of time zone differences when submitting the nomination.	

Table 3: Nomination Periods for the 2029 Prizes

	Open / Closing date and time
Stage 1:	**Open:** 7 June 2028
	Close: 5.00PM Australian Eastern Daylight Time on 15 November 2028
Stage 2: (invitation only)	**Open:** 21 March 2029
	Close: 5:00PM Australian Eastern Standard Time on 13 April 2029
Please take account of time zone differences when submitting the nomination.	

Table 4: Expected timing for assessment and outcomes

Activity	Timeframe
Assessment of annual Stage 1 nominations	Within approximately 10 weeks of the annual Stage 1 nomination period closing date.
Assessment of annual Stage 2 nominations	Within approximately 11 weeks of the annual Stage 2 nomination period closing date.
Approval and announcement of successful nominees	Approximately 3 months following the stage 2 assessment in the relevant annual prize nomination period. Refer to section 8.2

6.5. Questions during the nomination process

If you have any questions during the nomination period, contact us or call 13 28 46.

7. The selection process

7.1. Assessment of grant nominations

We first review nominations against the eligibility criteria. Only eligible nominations will proceed to the assessment stage.

We refer nominations to the Committee, an independent committee of experts with deep appreciation for and experience working with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander knowledge systems.

The Committee will perform their duties in accordance with the CGRPs.

The Committee consider the nomination on its merits, based on:

- how well it meets the criteria
- how it compares to other nominations
- the nominee's achievement in the context of opportunity and experience, in particular any career interruptions, community responsibilities and other relevant circumstances.

The Committee will assess nominations relative to opportunity (see definition in the glossary), recognising the diverse career and life experiences of nominees. Careers are not linear, and achievements must be understood in the context of the opportunities, circumstances and achievements available to them. Therefore, the Committee will consider factors that may have influenced a nominee's opportunity, experience or career trajectory, including, but is not limited to, career interruptions (see glossary). Time spent away from a nominee's field will not be viewed as a disadvantage.

The Committee will also recognise that experience gained outside a nominee's primary field, including through career breaks, caregiving responsibilities, community roles and other life

experiences, may enrich and strengthen their overall contribution to the field. The Committee will recognise that the effects of career interruptions may extend beyond the interruption itself, including ongoing effects on productivity, professional networks, and opportunities. Assessment will therefore be undertaken by the Committee with considered, case-by-case judgement to ensure achievements are considered in the context of the nominee's circumstances.

The Committee must consider diversity, equity and representation as part of its deliberations, recognising the importance of a diverse and skilled science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) workforce. Where nominees are assessed with comparable scores, closely ranked or equally weighted, the committee must consider gender imbalance, diversity and representation and apply prioritisation to underrepresented groups to address imbalances. All decisions will remain grounded in the stated selection criteria, while contributing to a more diverse and representative group of recipients.

The Committee will be gender balanced, consistent with the gender diversity target on Australian Government boards. The Committee will undertake compulsory implicit bias training before reviewing nominations. The Committee has a role in supporting diversity, equity and representation aligned with the aims of the program, including overseeing diversity, equity and representation and ensuring assessment processes are applied appropriately, fairly and consistently and that assessments remain aligned with the stated selection criteria. The Committee may also seek additional advice from independent technical experts.

As part of the nomination process, the department will request the nominator advise the department if the nominator and the nominee would like the department to proceed with the nomination in the event of the nominee passing. Information on who to contact to proceed with the nomination process will also be requested.

The Committee will assess nominations only on the requested information provided. Any additional information provided in the nomination will not be considered.

Due diligence checks may occur throughout the grant program, including following the decision making stage to monitor compliance. This may include a review of publicly available personal information on social media profiles, including LinkedIn. We use this information to verify the information the nominator provides in the nomination and to identify issues and risks. See section 10.3 for information on how we use the information provided to us.

The selection of recipients reflects the nominations received and information available to the department and the Minister. The Program Delegate may exclude a nomination from consideration based on the information available. The Minister reserves the right to not award a prize or withdraw a prize, if the nominee/recipient's conduct may bring, or has brought, the Prime Minister's Prizes for Science, the department or the Australian Government into disrepute.

7.1.1. Stage 1 assessment

In Stage 1, the Committee will assess eligible nominations against the assessment criteria and compare them to other eligible nominations from the same nomination period. Nominations must score a minimum of 50 per cent against each of the assessment criteria

and will be competitively ranked. Only the highest-ranking nominations will be invited to Stage 2.

7.1.2. Stage 2 assessment

If shortlisted in Stage 1, the nominator will be invited to prepare a more detailed nomination addressing the assessment criteria for Stage 2 of the corresponding annual prize nomination period.

We refer the nomination and supporters' Stage 2 statements to two independent referees with relevant expertise, who have agreed to provide their informed opinions on the claims made in the nomination.

The Committee will assess Stage 2 nominations against the assessment criteria, compare them to other Stage 2 nominations in the same nomination period, and recommend the prize recipients. The Committee will only recommend one individual for the Knowledge Systems Prize. The Committee may also recommend highly-ranked nominees to receive highly commended certificates.

For a nominee to be recommended for the Knowledge Systems Prize, the nomination must score highly (50 percent or greater), against all assessment criteria. We will not award a prize in that year if the Committee does not consider any of the nominations to be sufficiently meritorious.

7.2. Who will approve prize recipients?

The Minister for the Australian Government's science portfolio as per the Administrative Arrangements Orders, will make the final decision on the prize recipients. In making their decision, the Minister can take into account the Committee's recommendations, the aims of the program, and the Government's objective of championing prize recipients as national role models and promoting a diverse and skilled STEM workforce and the availability of grant funds.

The Minister's decision is final in all matters, including:

- the approval of the prize recipient
- whether more than one recipient is approved for a prize
- the prize money to be awarded.

We cannot review decisions about the merits of the nomination.

8. Notification of prize outcomes

We will advise nominators of the outcome of nominations in writing following the completion of each stage.

8.1. Feedback on the nomination

If the nomination is unsuccessful, a nominator may request an opportunity to discuss the outcome with us.

8.2. How prizes will be awarded

We will notify the prize recipients in writing and invite them to receive their prizes at the annual Prime Minister's Prizes for Science presentation dinner event (the Event). This information is under embargo until we publicly announce the recipients of the Prime Minister's Prizes for Science at the Event. This means prize recipients may not make any announcements in advance of the Event.

We deposit the prize money into the recipients' bank account(s) after the Event, following receipt of bank account details. If the recipient is a community group, we will deposit the prize money into the appropriate bank account of the community group.

8.3. Obligations of prize recipients

In the lead up to the Event, we will contact prize recipients regarding preparations. Prize recipients must handle this information confidentially, and the Minister may withdraw a prize if the recipient breaches that confidence.

Following the Event, prize recipients may be asked to assist in publicly promoting science, innovation, science teaching and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge systems as important foundations for Australia's prosperity, resilience and wellbeing. Prize recipients should be prepared to undertake a small number of public engagements, sharing their experiences and insights to inspire and educate others about the importance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge systems.

The department will work with prize recipients to manage any personal or cultural considerations during Event preparations, as well as during any activities following the Event.

We may invite prize recipients to present at official events or participate in public events such as National Science Week. Subject to the availability of funds, we may contribute to the travel and accommodation costs of attending an event (to the limit of government standard rates), where these are not covered by event organisers. We will consider requests to meet costs on a case-by-case basis, based on the benefits and value-for-money offered by the event.

We encourage prize recipients to inform the department of any invitations to attend events that may provide an opportunity to promote the Prime Minister's Prizes for Science and its eight prize categories.

Where a prize recipient decides to use their share of the prize money to benefit others (for example, through the creation of a scholarship or enhancement of a STEM education program), the recipient is requested to notify us of this decision and its outcomes.

Prize recipients must not take any actions that will bring the Prime Minister's Prizes for Science, the department or the Australian Government into disrepute. All nominations that proceed to Stage 2 are required to include a declaration form from the nominee stating, amongst other things, that they have not taken, and will not take, actions that bring the Prime Minister's Prizes for Science, the department or the Australian Government into disrepute. (see glossary).

If any statement made in a nomination, including in the nominee's declaration, is incorrect, incomplete, false or misleading; or the prize recipient has behaved in a manner that has brought, or may bring, disrepute on the Prizes, the department or the Australian Government, the Minister may, in the Minister's absolute discretion, take appropriate action.

Such action may include:

- withdrawing an offer, or revoking a prize
- excluding the nominator, nominee or prize recipient from future involvement in the Prizes, including from attendance at the Event and associated events
- recovery of prize monies already paid
- using the information contained in the nomination for a fraud investigation that would be consistent with the Australian Government's Investigations Standards and Commonwealth Fraud Control Framework.

8.4. Tax obligations

The cash prizes awarded as part of the Knowledge Systems Prize are not assessable as income under either section 6-5 or section 10-5 of the *Income Tax Assessment Act 1997*, or under paragraph 26(e) of the *Income Tax Assessment Act 1936*.

8.5. Use of materials

Material created by the Commonwealth for the Knowledge Systems Prize, such as media statements, interviews, videos and photographs may be used or disclosed by the Commonwealth in the promotion of science, innovation, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge systems or science education programs. The Commonwealth will apply the Protocols for Using First Nations Cultural and Intellectual Property in the Arts in the development, and publication of all materials.

9. Announcement of grants

If successful, your award will be listed on the GrantConnect website 21 calendar days after the annual Event relevant to your nomination period.

We will publish non-sensitive details of recipients on GrantConnect. We are required to do this by the Commonwealth Grants Rules and Principles (CGRPs) Section 5.4. We may also publish this information on industry.gov.au. This information may include:

- name of the recipient
- amount of prize money awarded
- recipient location.

10. Probity

We will make sure that the grant opportunity process is fair, according to the published guidelines, incorporates appropriate safeguards against fraud, unlawful activities and other inappropriate conduct and is consistent with the CGRPs.

These guidelines may be changed from time-to-time by DISR while the opportunity is open. When this happens, the revised guidelines will be published on GrantConnect.

10.1. Enquiries and feedback

For further information or clarification, you can contact us on 13 28 46 or by web chat or through the online enquiry form.

We may publish answers to your questions on our website as Frequently Asked Questions.

Our Customer Service Charter is available online. We use customer satisfaction surveys to improve our business operations and service.

If you have a complaint, call us on 13 28 46. We will refer your complaint to the appropriate manager.

If you are not satisfied with the way we handle your complaint, you can contact:

General Manager
Business Grants Hub
Department of Industry, Science and Resources
GPO Box 2013
CANBERRA ACT 2601

You can also contact the Commonwealth Ombudsman[3] with your complaint (call 1300 362 072). There is no fee for making a complaint, and the Ombudsman may conduct an independent investigation.

10.2. Conflicts of interest

Any conflicts of interest could affect the performance of the program. There may be a conflict of interest, or perceived conflict of interest, if our staff, any member of a committee or advisor and/or you or any of your personnel:

- has a professional, commercial or personal relationship with a party which is able to influence the nomination selection process, such as an Australian Government officer or member of an external panel
- has a relationship with, or interest in, a party which could compromise the integrity of the program
- has a relationship with, or interest in, a party from which they could receive personal gain because the party receives a prize under the grant program.

As part of the nomination, we will ask you to declare any perceived or existing conflicts of interests or confirm that, to the best of your knowledge, there is no conflict of interest.

If you later identify an actual, apparent or perceived conflict of interest, you must inform us in writing immediately.

Conflicts of interest for Australian Government staff are handled as set out in the Australian Public Service Code of Conduct (Section 13(7)) of the *Public Service Act 1999*. Committee

[3] http://www.ombudsman.gov.au/

members and other officials including the decision maker must also declare any conflicts of interest.

We publish our conflict of interest policy[4] on the department's website. The Commonwealth policy entity also publishes a conflict of interest policy on its website.

10.3. Privacy

Unless the information you provide to us is:

- confidential information as per 10.4, or
- personal information as per below,

we may share the information with other government agencies for a relevant Commonwealth purpose such as:

- to improve the effective administration, monitoring and evaluation of Australian Government programs
- for research
- to announce the awarding of prizes.

We must treat your personal information according to the Australian Privacy Principles (APPs) and the *Privacy Act 1988* (Cth). This includes letting you know:

- what personal information we collect
- why we collect your personal information
- to whom we give your personal information.

We may give the personal information we collect from you to our employees and contractors, the Committee, independent referees and other Commonwealth employees and contractors, so we can:

- manage the program
- review and assess information submitted within the nomination
- research, assess, monitor and analyse our programs and activities
- identify and manage any financial, legal/regulatory, governance, national interest or national security risks.

We, or the Minister, may:

- announce the names of successful nominees to the public
- publish personal information on the department's websites.

You may read our Privacy Policy[5] on the department's website for more information on:

- what is personal information
- how we collect, use, disclose and store your personal information
- how you can access and correct your personal information.

[4] https://www.industry.gov.au/publications/conflict-interest-policy

[5] https://www.industry.gov.au/data-and-publications/privacy-policy

10.4. 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 nomination and/or the outcome of the nomination, without our prior written approval. Further information on what is confidential and how it should be treated will be included in correspondence to relevant nominees following assessment of their nomination. 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; or your employees, agents or subcontractors to give a written undertaking relating to nondisclosure of our confidential information in a form we consider acceptable.

We will treat the information you give us as sensitive and therefore confidential if it meets all of the following conditions:

- you clearly identify the information as confidential and explain why we should treat it as confidential
- the information is commercially sensitive
- disclosing the information would cause unreasonable harm to you or someone else
- you provide the information with an understanding that it will stay confidential.

We may disclose confidential information:

- to the Committee and our Commonwealth employees, contractors and service providers, to help us manage the program effectively
- to the Auditor-General, Ombudsman or Privacy Commissioner
- to the Prime Minister, responsible Minister or Assistant Minister
- to a House or a Committee of the Australian Parliament
- to other Commonwealth agencies for risk management purposes.

We may also disclose confidential information if:

- we are required or authorised by law to disclose it
- you agree to the information being disclosed, or
- someone other than us has made the confidential information public.

10.5. Freedom of information

All documents in the possession of the Australian Government, including those about the program, are subject to the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* (Cth) (FOI Act).

The purpose of the FOI Act is to give members of the public rights of access to information held by the Australian Government and its entities. Under the FOI Act, members of the public can seek access to documents held by the Australian Government. This right of access is limited only by the exceptions and exemptions necessary to protect essential public interests and private and business affairs of persons in respect of whom the information relates.

If someone requests a document under the FOI Act, we will release it (though we may need to consult with you and/or other parties first) unless it meets one of the exemptions set out in the FOI Act.

10.6. National security

As part of our due diligence process, we will consider whether the nominee has affiliations or associations with any foreign entities, which may be contrary to Australia's sovereignty, values and national interests. This means any affiliation or association between the nominee and foreign entities must be open and transparent.

Accordingly, any association or affiliation the nominee has with foreign governments, foreign organisations, foreign institutions or companies, or membership of foreign government talent programs, must be disclosed by the nominee in their declaration form.

10.7. Disclosure of Commonwealth, state or territory financial penalties

In their declaration form, nominees must disclose whether they have been subject to any pecuniary penalty, whether civil, criminal or administrative, imposed by a Commonwealth, State or Territory court or a Commonwealth, State or Territory entity. If this is the case, nominees must provide advice to the department regarding the matter for consideration.

10.8. Engagement

These guidelines draw on feedback received from engagement undertaken by the department with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples from across Australia.

We will continue to review the guidelines based on our experience working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, as well as the experiences of prize recipients. We will also seek advice from Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples, communities and other stakeholders such as representative groups.

11. Glossary

Term	Definition
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander team	A team comprising of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples working together and practicing knowledge systems as part of an Indigenous-led project.
administering entity	When an entity that is not responsible for the policy, is responsible for the administration of part or all of the grant administration processes.
assessment criteria	The specified principles or standards, against which nominations will be judged. These criteria are also used to assess the merits of proposals and, in the case of a competitive grant opportunity, to determine nomination ranking.
Australian Indigenous peoples	Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples.
career interruptions	What constitutes a career interruption is not limited to a fixed set of circumstances and could include: ▪ caring and parental responsibilities ▪ disaster management and recovery ▪ limited or no access to facilities and resources ▪ medical conditions/disability/misadventure ▪ unemployment ▪ community obligations, including Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander cultural practices and protocols; or ▪ any other circumstances which have resulted in a break in research employment.
close family member	An individual considered part of the immediate family, such as a spouse, parent, child or sibling (including step-relatives).
Committee	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Knowledge Systems Prize Committee. The body by the same name established by the Program Delegate to consider and assess eligible nominations and make recommendations to the Minister for the prizes under the program.

Term	Definition
Commonwealth Grants Rules and Principles (CGRPs)	Establish the overarching Commonwealth grants policy framework and articulate the expectations for all non-corporate Commonwealth entities in relation to grants administration. Under this overarching framework, non-corporate Commonwealth entities undertake grants administration based on the mandatory requirements and key principles of grants administration.
community group	An Aboriginal Community-Controlled Organisation (ACCO) that delivers services that builds the strength and empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and peoples. Where a nomination is for a community group, up to 4 nominees may be named on the nomination form to represent the community group as a whole.
cultural authority	The rights and responsibilities a certain person or group holds to make decisions, including on agreements, governance structures, laws and protocols. These may be different for each Community. It involves a process of determining 'relevance' that may involve more than one person or group, may include multiple or different viewpoints, noting that these views and the relevant person, group or body may change over time. Cultural authority often lies with Elders, traditional owners and other individuals who hold significant knowledge and understanding of traditions, laws and protocols.
decision maker	Minister for the Australian Government's science portfolio.
department	The Department of Industry, Science and Resources.
disrepute	Any conduct, omission, statement or appearance that may: ▪ damage the reputation of the Prizes, the department or the Australian Government; or ▪ reduce public confidence in the Prizes, the department or the Australian Government. Conduct, omissions, statements or appearances that may give rise to disrepute could include: ▪ where technology developed by the nominee, or use of that technology, is found to create unacceptable

Term	Definition
	risks that have not been communicated to users of the technology ▪ conduct that may give rise to criminal or civil liability ▪ conduct, omissions, statements or appearances by the nominator or nominee that are dishonest, or could reasonably be perceived as dishonest; or ▪ where the nominee reasonably ought to have taken steps to prevent actions or omissions of a person, company or organisation associated with the nominee that might give rise to disrepute.
diverse backgrounds	These groups may include but are not limited to: ▪ Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples ▪ culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) people ▪ women and gender diverse people ▪ LGBTQIA+ people ▪ people living in regional and remote areas ▪ people living with disabilities ▪ people from low socio-economic backgrounds ▪ neurodivergent people ▪ people who face age-based discrimination.
eligibility criteria	The mandatory criteria which must be met to qualify for a prize.
eligible nomination	A nomination for an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Knowledge Systems Prize that the Program Delegate has determined is eligible for assessment in accordance with these guidelines.
exceptional circumstances	Unexpected, unavoidable circumstances beyond a person's control that will negatively impact their ability to fulfill their commitments, for which there was no opportunity to prepare in advance including: ▪ serious illness and/or injury ▪ worsening of a chronic condition or disability ▪ a death or serious illness/injury of a close family member ▪ a severe disruption to domestic arrangements ▪ being the victim of a crime ▪ unforeseen community service such as jury service, disaster relief, military service. Circumstances unlikely to be considered exceptional include but are not limited to:

Term	Definition
	▪ holidays, weddings or other celebrations ▪ house moves or other events that were planned or are reasonably expected ▪ minor illnesses ▪ paid employment ▪ administrative errors.
grant	For the purposes of the CGRPs, a 'grant' is an arrangement for the provision of financial assistance by the Commonwealth or on behalf of the Commonwealth: a. under which relevant money[6] or other Consolidated Revenue Fund (CRF) money[7] is to be paid to a grantee other than the Commonwealth; and b. which is intended to help address one or more of the Australian Government's policy outcomes while assisting the grantee achieve its objectives.
grant opportunity	Refers to the specific grant round or process where a Commonwealth grant is made available to potential grantees. Grant opportunities may be open or targeted, and will reflect the relevant grant selection process.
grant program	A 'program' carries its natural meaning and is intended to cover a potentially wide range of related activities aimed at achieving government policy outcomes. A grant program is a group of one or more grant opportunities under a single Portfolio Budget Statement Program.
GrantConnect	The Australian Government's whole-of-government grants information system, which centralises the publication and reporting of Commonwealth grants in accordance with the CGRPs.
independent referee	Someone identified by either the nominator or the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Knowledge Systems Prize Committee who will be approached for an independent reference on the achievement/s of the nominee.

[6] Relevant money is defined in the PGPA Act. See section 8, Dictionary.

[7] Other CRF money is defined in the PGPA Act. See section 105, Rules in relation to other CRF money.

Term	Definition
	The referee's role is to review the statement of claims against the assessment criteria provided by the nominator and the supporters when contacted by the department. An independent referee must not be related to the nominee or have a professional relationship that would cause a conflict of interest that could unnecessarily bias the independence of the referee.
Indigeneity	Related to being Indigenous, being an individual who meets the following criteria: ▪ is of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent ▪ identifies as an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person ▪ is accepted as such by the community in which they live or formerly lived.
materially change	Any significant alteration in circumstances, operations, or structure that affects an entity's ability to comply with the eligibility criteria for nominations as defined in the grant opportunity guidelines.
Minister	Minister for the Australian Government's science portfolio.
nomination form	The document issued by the Program Delegate that nominators use to nominate nominees for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Knowledge Systems Prize under the program.
nominator	The person making a nomination of a nominee.
nominee	The individual, team or community group being nominated for an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Knowledge Systems Prize.
OCR (Optical Character Recognition)	Is a technology that recognises text within a digital image. It is commonly used to recognise text in scanned documents and images. This enables your document to be searched and read by assistive technologies. A document that has been printed and scanned is generally not OCR compatible.

Term	Definition
personal information	Has the same meaning as in the *Privacy Act 1988* (Cth) which is: Information or an opinion about an identified individual, or an individual who is reasonably identifiable: a. whether the information or opinion is true or not; and b. whether the information or opinion is recorded in a material form or not.

Prime Minister's Prizes for Science	Collectively refers to all prizes awarded under this program which include:
	
	▪ five prizes for achievements in scientific research and research-based innovation:
	  ▪ Prime Minister's Prize for Science
	  ▪ Prime Minister's Prize for Innovation
	  ▪ Frank Fenner Prize for Life Scientist of the Year
	  ▪ Malcolm McIntosh Prize for Physical Scientist of the Year
	  ▪ Prize for New Innovators;
	▪ a prize for the practice of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge systems:
	  ▪ Prime Minister's Prize for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Knowledge Systems;
	▪ and two prizes for excellence in science teaching:
	  ▪ Prime Minister's Prize for Excellence in Science Teaching in Primary Schools
	  ▪ Prime Minister's Prize for Excellence in Science Teaching in Secondary Schools.

prize money	The monetary prize made available by the Commonwealth of Australia to prize recipients under the program.
prize recipient	An individual, a member of a team, or a community group that has been awarded the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Knowledge Systems Prize.
Program Delegate	A Manager within the department with responsibility for administering the program.
program funding or program funds	The funding made available by the Commonwealth for the program.

Term	Definition
relative to opportunity	The principle of assessing an individual's achievements, productivity and contribution in the context of the opportunities available to them, including career stage, career interruptions, employment arrangements, personal circumstances and other factors that may have influenced their capacity to achieve outcomes.
supporter	An individual identified by the nominator as someone who will support the nomination. They must be personally knowledgeable of the nominated achievement and be able to offer informed opinions about its significance. The supporter's role is to provide supporting views on the nominee's achievements against the assessment criteria. One supporter must be an Indigenous person from the community and/or place associated with the knowledge systems being practiced as part of the nominated project. At least one supporter should be able to confirm the Indigeneity of each nominee and this supporter must be Indigenous. One additional Indigenous person may be identified by the nominator for the sole purpose of confirming the Indigeneity of the nominee(s). A supporter cannot be a close family member of the nominee or have a role in the nominated project (excluding the supporter who is a knowledge holder from the knowledge system being practiced in the project).
underrepresented groups	These groups include but are not limited to: ▪ Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples ▪ culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) people ▪ women and gender diverse people ▪ people living in regional and remote areas ▪ people living with disabilities ▪ people from low socio-economic backgrounds ▪ neurodivergent people ▪ LGBTQIA+ people ▪ people who face age-based discrimination.