

GLOWS Grant Program 2024-2026

National Gathering Grant Guidelines

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1. Introduction

About Lowitja Institute

Lowitja Institute is Australia's only national Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community controlled health research institute named in honour of its Patron, Dr Lowitja O'Donoghue AC CBE DSG. It is an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community controlled organisation working for the health and wellbeing of Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples through high-impact quality research, knowledge exchange, and by supporting a new generation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health researchers.

Established in January 2010, Lowitja Institute operates on key principles of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leadership, a broader understanding of health that incorporates wellbeing, and the need for the work to have a clear and positive impact.

Lowitja Institute Members Community

Our vibrant and engaged Members Community is integral to creating research outcomes that centralise and amplify the voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. We welcome applications from individuals and organisations to join us as we continue to work towards realising [Dr Lowitja O'Donoghue's](#) vision.

Lowitja Institute offers a range of benefits to our valued Members Community which include connection, support and workforce development opportunities. We run events and professional development workshops throughout the year and provide access to a wide range of learning and educational resources.

To learn more about our Membership Community, and to apply for Membership, please visit our [website](#). There are no fees to join.

Lowitja Institute's Research Agenda

Lowitja Institute's research is built on key priorities identified by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. We aim to produce high-impact research, tools and resources that will have positive health outcomes for Australia's First Nations. The Institute facilitates engagement between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, tertiary education, medical research institutions, government, and partner organisations to maximise the impact of research, knowledge, and innovation. Importantly, the Institute drives our research agenda by ensuring that the research we commission is led and owned by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities.


We also engage with our Indigenous family around the world, facilitating networks and collaborations that improve the health and wellbeing of First Peoples globally. Our research methods have been refined over more than 20 years.

See the [Research page](#) on our website for more information.

Lowitja Institute's research agenda is underpinned by a rigorous approach to research that adheres to the Institute's research principles of:

- ⌚ Beneficence – to act for the benefit of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the conduct of our research
- ⌚ Leadership by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
- ⌚ Engagement of research end users (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and communities, policymakers, other potential research users)
- ⌚ Development of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander research workforce
- ⌚ Measurement of impact in improving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's health.

Lowitja Institute's Research Agenda 2024 – 26 aims to achieve positive health and wellbeing benefits for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples across four key themes:

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1. **Self-determination** – this theme seeks to uphold historical, contemporary and future truth-telling as a fundamental process for the decolonising of health and wellbeing policy and practice. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have the right to regain control to lead research and decision-making processes to contribute to social transformation throughout generations.
 2. **Sovereignty** – this theme seeks to acknowledge the political and intellectual sovereignty of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. It upholds sovereignty in the political discourse including determining the agenda, the creation, governance, control, and protection of knowledge.
 3. **Cultural determinants** – this theme seeks to recognise the importance and relatedness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural determinants which includes our knowledge systems as integral part to strong health and wellbeing.
 4. **Racism** – this theme recognises the ongoing legacy of colonisation and the impacts on health, and healthcare delivery and access. It seeks to uphold Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander rights to culturally safe systems free of racism through privileging community-led solutions to policy development and implementation to health service management and delivery, research, education, and training, to improve health system quality and safety.

About the GLOWS Grant Program 2024-26

The Guiding Local Opportunities for Wellbeing (GLOWS) Grant Program 2024–26 offers scholarships and research grants to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community organisations and their partners for work relating to HIV and viral hepatitis over the next three years. In partnership with [Gilead Sciences](#), Lowitja Institute aims to further increase health equity, address disparities that continue to drive disease transmission, and work towards elimination of HIV and viral hepatitis in all of our communities.

The GLOWS Grant Program aims to empower Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander researchers and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations, to transform their ideas into aspirations that meet the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples through a decolonised and intersectional approach to grants.



The GLOWS Grant Program aims to support initiatives that align with at least one of the following funding priorities:

- **Prevention and education:** Reforming and reinvigorating prevention strategies in HIV and viral hepatitis, while navigating racism and structures that act as barriers to disease prevention and education.
- **Individual and community agency:** Supporting Indigenous-led organisations to strengthen skills, capabilities and infrastructure and ensure the ongoing sustainability of HIV and viral hepatitis services. Additionally, create opportunities to support individual personal development and agency to encourage the next generation of leaders and mentors.
- **Reformed health care:** Dismantling structural barriers to improve access to HIV and viral hepatitis prevention and care services and building culturally safe and respectful environments for Indigenous people to navigate care.

Over the life of the program, five different grant types will be offered. These include large and medium projects, focused on providing opportunities for research and community programs aimed at addressing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community needs. The program will also include incubator, seeding or demonstration grants, scholarships, and education grants. Funding tiers will range from \$800,000 over two years, to seeding grants and scholarships of \$30,000 and \$25,000.

GLOWS National Gathering Grant

The GLOWS National Gathering Grant aims to fund a two-day gathering. This is an opportunity to come together and share experiences and knowledge of working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living with HIV/viral hepatitis and research into HIV/viral hepatitis.

This grant is designed for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people or non-Indigenous organisations who are working in partnership with an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled organisation in Australia.

The gathering will be structured over two days, and will include:

- Day 1: Sharing learnings and key insights from the field.
- Day 2: Community workshop to develop ideas and identify shared priorities.

This will be a chance to work alongside people with lived experience of HIV/viral hepatitis, people providing support to those living with HIV/viral hepatitis, and senior Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander research leaders, to discuss topics such as developing research ideas, research ethics, and knowledge translation.

GRANT VALUE, DURATION AND REQUIREMENTS

- ⌚ The GLOWS National Gathering Grant value is up to \$150,000 the amount awarded will be assessed against criteria including, but not limited to, alignment with the GLOWS program objective.
- ⌚ The number of GLOWS National Gathering Grants available may vary.
- ⌚ The maximum period is up to one-year duration and funds are paid directly to the recipient or led organisation.
- ⌚ Acceptance of the grant is subject to the recipient/ lead organisation and Lowitja Institute accepting and agreeing to all terms and conditions set out in the GLOWS Grant Contract and Agreement.
- ⌚ Continuation of funding during the tenure of the grant is dependent on the recipient meeting key deliverables stipulated in the GLOWS Grant Contract and Agreement.

2. Before starting your application

Applicants are encouraged to ensure they have read the guidelines carefully to develop a thorough understanding of the grant application process and requirements. Before you begin your application, please ensure that:

- ⌚ you download the application checklist (see downloadable application checklist [application checklist](#)).

- ⌚ applicants meet all eligibility criteria.
- ⌚ you address each of the application questions in SmartyGrants and upload all required documentation.
- ⌚ you have a project proposal and budget ready (see downloadable [budget example](#) and project proposal [project proposal template](#)).
- ⌚ you review the application timeline as there will be no application extensions available.

An application may be considered ineligible and excluded from further consideration if it does not meet all eligibility criteria as set out in the GLOWS National Gathering Grant terms and conditions of award.

GLOWS National Gathering Grant 2025 timeline

Our grant application timeline is as follows:

Date	Task
23 September 2025	Round 2 applications open
20 October 2025	Round 2 applications close
21 Oct- 3 Nov 2025	Assessment review and approval of applications
19 December 2025	Successful applications notified
Jan- Feb 2025	(note this is an estimate only and may vary depending on individual awardee)

3. Selection criteria and assessment process

The GLOWS Grant Program is an open and competitive process designed to ensure project design excellence and rigour, as well as privileging Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives and high-impact projects. All applicants will be assessed using a marking rubric that is outlined below. Applicants are all ranked, with the highest scores most likely to be funded.

The process includes:

- ⌚ Once the funding round closes, applications will undergo internal assessment for eligibility.
- ⌚ All eligible applications will progress to peer review by a panel, comprising of senior Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander researchers, Lowitja Institute staff and board members.
- ⌚ Applications will be scored and ranked based on the assessment criteria.
- ⌚ Recommendations for funding will be considered and approved by Lowitja Institute's Board of Directors.

Successful and unsuccessful applicants will be notified in writing via email. It is important to note, all successful applications will have 10 business days from their email (including public holidays) to respond to Lowitja Institute advising of acceptance of grant funds by signing the Grant Agreement. If a successful applicant does not meet this deadline, the next-ranked successful applicant will be contacted in a second round of notifications to be awarded the grant funding. Lowitja Institute encourages all applicants to adhere to these timeframes as there will be no exceptions or extensions available if grant funds are not accepted within the allocated timeframe.

Please note, Lowitja Institute's Board of Directors will have final sign-off of all Awardees and will consider the recommendations of the assessment panel in making a decision. Lowitja Institute may request advice or clarification from applicants at any time during the assessment process.

Any unsuccessful Round 1 grant applications (current grant application) are eligible to reapply, for grant funding periods in 2025 and 2026.

Assessment criteria

Applications are assessed by a panel of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander academics and community members against the criteria listed below:

Assessment criteria	What is Lowitja looking for?	Weighting
Event design and objectives align to key community priorities to address disparities that continue to drive the transmission of HIV/viral hepatitis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⊗ Identifies a need to be addressed in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, based on their priorities. ⊗ Evidence of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community leadership. 	30%
Proposed proposal will support building workforce opportunities, and capability of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community research or agency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⊗ Identifies how the gathering will benefit Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants to support those living with HIV/viral hepatitis and their community. ⊗ Articulates how the gathering will foster and generate meaningful research for community. 	30%
Proposed agenda will support improved outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples with HIV/viral	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⊗ Identifies how the gathering will benefit Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples living HIV/viral hepatitis. 	20%

hepatitis		
Participating organisations have experience of coordinating similar events?	⊖ Ability to demonstrate experience in delivering similar events.	20%

Completing the grant application process

The purpose of the grant guidelines document is to support the completion of the GLOWS National Gathering Grant application.

Please note: the order of this document follows the application form.

You will need to complete and submit your application through our [SmartyGrants online application portal](#).

Applicants can access our [Resources and Guides for Researchers](#) on our website, to support the completion of the project details and summary of the application.

It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that the submitted application is complete, accurate, and meets the GLOWS Grant Program Guidelines. Completed applications, including any supporting documentation, must be submitted on or before the due date.

No late applications will be considered.

The SmartyGrants online portal requires frequent saving to keep your application as up to date as possible. It is recommended that every 10 minutes you save your submission and refresh the application portal.

Once you have submitted your application, the system will send you an automated email including an application number and copy of your completed application form. If you do not receive this email, you have not submitted your application correctly.

Please see the [Help Guide for Applicants](#) and [Applicant FAQs](#) for further information on how to use the SmartyGrants portal. You can also contact the SmartyGrants Help Hub via phone: +61 3 9320 6888 or via email: service@smartygrants.com.au

If you require any assistance with your application or the SmartyGrants portal, please do not hesitate to contact Lowitja Institute at Glows@lowitja.org.au

Eligibility criteria

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community controlled organisations are encouraged to apply for funding themselves, or in partnership with an appropriate individual, organisation and/or institution.

To be eligible to apply, applicants must meet the following criteria:

- ⊗ An Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community controlled organisation, an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander individual partnering with an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community controlled organisation, or a non-Indigenous organisation partnering with an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community controlled organisation.
- ⊗ An Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community controlled organisation that is governed by a majority of identified board members (above 51%) of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, who have been elected by the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community with an Incorporation Number.
- ⊗ Have an Australian Business Number (ABN) or Indigenous Business Number (IBN), including an account with an Australian financial institution.
- ⊗ Have no outstanding reports, acquittals or serious breaches relating to any Australian Government funding (a serious breach might be one that has resulted in termination of a grant agreement).
- ⊗ Not be bankrupt or subject to insolvency proceedings.

- ⌚ The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community controlled organisation must have the available resources and ability to be involved in the gathering with potential for future research involvement.
- ⌚ The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community controlled organisation must not be a current recipient of a GLOWS program grant.

Applicants must also maintain at all times, and provide evidence of:

- ⌚ Certificates of currency for public liability insurance to a minimum \$10 million in respect of any claim or series of related claims.
- ⌚ Professional Indemnity insurance to a minimum \$10 million in respect of any claim or series of related claims.
- ⌚ Worker's compensation insurance for all employees and sub-contractors involved in delivery of the services.

Who is not eligible to apply?

Lowitja Institute will not accept applications from the following:

- ⌚ Individuals and consultants.
- ⌚ Non-Aboriginal groups or organisations who are not partnering with a community controlled organisation.
- ⌚ For-profit organisations, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses.
- ⌚ Federal and state government agencies and bodies.
- ⌚ Public schools or universities.
- ⌚ Unincorporated Aboriginal organisations or groups.

- ⌚ Organisations that have not met project requirements, including acquittal and reporting for grant funding received from Aboriginal Affairs NSW in the previous two years, and Auspice organisations.

What can grant funds be used for?

Funding provided through the GLOWS Grant Program must be spent on costs that are directly associated with the requirements of the grant. These activities include expenses such as:

- ⌚ the engagement of researchers, consultants, specialists, experts, or contractors/ stakeholders directly related to delivering the National Gathering
- ⌚ event administration (a maximum of 20 per cent of total grant money) for items such as project management, and financial management
- ⌚ facilitation of workshops and/or community meetings
- ⌚ domestic travel and accommodation related to the National Gathering
- ⌚ venue and catering costs for the National Gathering
- ⌚ event specific resources and equipment applicable to the National Gathering
- ⌚ production costs (video, podcast, etc).

The GLOWS Grant does not fund

- ⌚ Activities of the organisation that are already funded by government bodies or are part of their normal responsibilities.
- ⌚ Activities for which other Commonwealth, state, territory or local government bodies have primary responsibility (including program delivery, language revitalisation, native title claims research).

- ⌚ Biomedical or clinical projects that do not include a significant Indigenous social or cultural research emphasis (these would normally be referred to the NHMRC for consideration).
- ⌚ Capital works and purchases, including purchases of land or buildings.
- ⌚ Purchasing of equipment (computers, projectors etc).
- ⌚ Ongoing wages of employees.
- ⌚ Operational funding or ongoing administration and employment within an organisation.
- ⌚ Activities with a primarily commercial focus or intent.
- ⌚ Activities with a political or lobbying focus or intent.

Application requirements

In your application, we want to understand all aspects of your project and how it is going to be undertaken. Within your SmartyGrants application you will be asked the following:

- ⌚ Submit a fully completed application form in SmartyGrants with required evidence (hint: download the grant [application checklist](#)).
- ⌚ Submit a 3-5 page overall project proposal for your event (access the [project proposal template](#)).
- ⌚ A start date and end date for your project. The grant runs for one year, the project completion date must be before the date agreed to.
- ⌚ Choose ONE overarching GLOWS funding priority and demonstrate how your project directly relates to this priority.
- ⌚ Provide details of the major milestones involved in completing your project. You may include up to 10 milestones (template provided in SmartyGrants).
- ⌚ Submit a project budget (template provided in SmartyGrants)

- ⦿ Submit a risk management plan (template provided in SmartyGrants).

Organisation capacity

To undertake a National Gathering, we understand that it takes organisational resources and capacity. When applying for the GLOWS National Gathering Grant, we would like to find out more about your organisation and your partnering organisation's ability to support the National Gathering. We ask that you please provide some information about your organisation and your partnering organisation to demonstrate that you have the capacity and resources to deliver the National Gathering project work you have described. Including the ability to support and contribute to enhancing the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health research workforce.


This includes providing a copy of the most recent annual report. If this cannot be provided, it is expected that a recent financial statement is supplied in its place.

Budget

Each GLOWS National Gathering Grant will be a maximum of \$150,000 over a period of maximum 12 months. This means you must complete your National Gathering within 12 months of the project's commencement date. The grant budget can include activities from the Eligible Grant Activities section located under Eligibility. We recommend that you review this section before completing your budget for the application. We have also provided an **Example Budget Guide** (available to download from the [SmartyGrants online application portal](#)). This includes a criteria of budget expenses we expect to see.

4. Delivery of grant activities

If you are successful in receiving a GLOWS National Gathering Grant you will be notified as per the timeline via a written email. After confirmation that you are a recipient of the grant, you will receive a contract, terms and conditions and further



instructions on the grant and receiving the income. **It is important to note, that the contract, terms and conditions is non-negotiable. We encourage you to download the terms and conditions and read before submitting your application.**

Once the project has started and your grant money has been allocated, there are responsibilities that is required to be upheld by each successful organisation. Your responsibilities include but are not limited to:

- ⌚ meeting the terms and conditions of the grant agreement and managing the activity efficiently and effectively
- ⌚ complying with record keeping, reporting and acquittal requirements as set out in the grant agreement
- ⌚ providing copies of all reports and project outputs to Lowitja Institute. Reporting will be in SmartyGrants and Lowitja Institute will provide templates for you to complete.
- ⌚ adhering to the contracts, terms and conditions, including having a full understanding of what criteria are outlined in the contract and what you can use your funds for appropriately.

We will expect you to report on:

- ⌚ progress against agreed key deliverables
- ⌚ achievement against performance indicators
- ⌚ eligible expenditure of grant funds
- ⌚ closure of the project
- ⌚ impact of the project
- ⌚ an audit on financials.

5. Application support

If you require any assistance in completing an application for a GLOWS Program Grant, please contact Lowitja Institute via email at Glows@lowitja.org.au