

GLOWS Grant Program 2024–2026

Seeding 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 landing 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:

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 and aspirations into research projects that meet the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples through a decolonised and intersectional approach.

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, whilst navigating racism and structures that act as barriers to disease prevention and education.
- **Individual and community agency:** supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-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.

In the first year of the program, five different grant types will be offered. These include large and medium research grants, 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 Seeding Grant

The GLOWS Seeding Grant stream aims to provide Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community controlled organisations and their partners, the opportunity to identify or explore a research priority within their community, related to HIV and viral hepatitis infections, diagnosis and treatment. This funding will contribute to bringing together key stakeholders and partners to develop a research project ready to be undertaken.

The GLOWS Seeding Grant awards up to \$30,000 in funding over a maximum three-month term. Please note the grant timeframe cannot be extended. Successful applicants will be required to develop a research proposal at the end of the seeding grant period.

GRANT VALUE, DURATION AND REQUIREMENTS

- The GLOWS Seeding Grant value is up to \$30,000, the amount awarded will be assessed against criteria including, but not limited to, alignment with the GLOWS program objective.
- The number of GLOWS Seeding Grants available may vary.
- The maximum period is up to three months in duration and funds are paid directly to the organisation.
- Acceptance of the grant is subject to the organisation and Lowitja Institute accepting and agreeing to all terms and conditions.
- 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 these guidelines carefully to develop a thorough understanding of the grant application process and requirements. Before you begin your application, please ensure:

- your organisation meets the eligibility for the seeding grant
- your research project aligns with ONE of the GLOWS funding priorities
- you address each of the application questions and upload all required documentation to your SmartyGrants application
- you have a project plan and budget ready (see downloadable [budget guide](#) and [project plan 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 Seeding Grant Terms and Conditions](#).

GLOWS 2026 Seeding Grant timeline

Date	Task
29 April 2026	Round 3 applications open
10 June 2026	Round 3 applications close
June 2026	Assessment review and approval of applications
August 2026	Successful and unsuccessful applications notified
September 2026	Contracts signed and funds released by 30 September 2026
January 2027	Round 3 funding term ends

3. Selection criteria and assessment process

The GLOWS Grant Program is an open and competitive process. The assessment process is 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 assessment 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 the Lowitja Institute Board of Directors and the GLOWS program Executive Committee.

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 time frame.

Please note, the Lowitja Institute Board of Directors and the GLOWS Executive Committee will have final signoff 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 are eligible to reapply, for future Round 2 and Round 3 grant funding periods in 2025 and 2026.

Eligibility criteria

- An Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander person or early career researchers partnering with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community controlled organisations are leading the research (Chief Investigator).
- Applications should be from 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.

- The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community controlled organisation should have an Australian Business Number (ABN), including an account with an Australian financial institution.
- The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community controlled organisation should 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).
- The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community controlled organisation should 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 undertake a research project in accordance with the GLOWS Seeding Grant Contract and Agreement.
- The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community controlled organisation must not be a current recipient of a GLOWS program grant.
- No formal qualifications are required.

Who is not eligible to apply?

Lowitja Institute will not accept applications from the following:

- Individuals and consultants
- Non-Aboriginal groups or organisations
- 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
- 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 the project
- project administration (a maximum of 20% of total grant money) for items such as project writing, bookkeeping, audits, and financial management
- facilitation of workshops and/or community meetings including Lowitja Institute capability and research training
- domestic travel and accommodation for researchers to engage with community and key stakeholders for the project
- project specific resources and equipment applicable to the project
- reimbursement for participants in the research (applicable to the research design).

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)
- descriptions or histories of institutions or programs carried out by the institutions/programs themselves or their staff
- 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
- costs incurred in the preparation of a grant application or related documentation
- international travel.

Not all expenditure on your grant activity may be eligible for grant funding.

Lowitja Institute's Chief Executive Officer makes the final decision on what is considered eligible expenditure and may provide additional guidance on eligible expenditure if required.

Application requirements

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

- Provide a Certificate of Incorporation.

- Provide copies of Public Liability Insurance, Professional Indemnity Insurance and Workers Compensation Insurance.
- Provide a short summary of the seeding project (300 words max).
- Submit a project plan utilising Lowitja Institutes template (download [project plan template](#)).
- Choose ONE overarching GLOWS funding priority and demonstrate how your project directly relates to this priority.
- Tell us about your research priority and plans for research (300 words max).
- Describe any work your community has undertaken to date on the identified research priority (300 words max).
- Outline how the GLOWS Seeding Grant will support the organisation to transform community priorities into a program of research (300 words max).
- Outline how the research will be led and designed by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in your community (300 words max).
- Describe who the project will partner with and their intended role on the grant if funded (300 words max).
- Outline the organisations capacity and resources to complete the project you have described in this application (300 words max).
- Outline the feasibility of completing the project within a three-month timeframe (300 words max).
- Outline how you will monitor and report risk to ensure the project is delivered on time (300 words max).
- Submit a project budget (template provided in SmartyGrants)
- Submit a risk management plan (template provided in SmartyGrants).

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

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
Project design and objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence of how the research addresses one of the research priorities and how this is clearly embedded throughout the research design. 	20%
Impact and significance of the research is a key community priority to improve health and wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence the research will benefit Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities including the research being a key priority for health and wellbeing. 	20%
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander community leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence the project is led and designed by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Prioritises Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leadership throughout the research, including design and implementation. Demonstrates community leadership, relationality, and reciprocity throughout the research. Demonstrates research team capability and capacity to deliver the project. 	20%
Building workforce opportunities and capability of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commitment to building opportunities, including training, for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff in undertaking, 	20%

community research	<p>leading and being part of a community research project.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⌚ Evidence the project utilises Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-owned businesses and personnel where external resources are required and necessary for the project. 	
Feasibility of the seeding project developing into a major grant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⌚ Identifies access to require infrastructure and partnerships necessary for the project. ⌚ Evidence of risk management and milestones relevant to complete the project. Provides a justified budget to meet the scheme's objectives. ⌚ Evidence that the project outcomes will lead to future research. 	20%


Completing the grant application process

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

To start your application, you will need to complete and submit your application through the [Lowitja Institute SmartyGrants portal](#).

It is the applicants' 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

4. 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