



Australia's National Institute for Aboriginal
and Torres Strait Islander Health Research

Lowitja Institute

**Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
Seeding Grant Scheme**

2023 Grant Guidelines

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Introduction

About Lowitja Institute

Lowitja Institute is Australia's national institute for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health research. It is named in honour of its patron, Dr Lowitja O'Donoghue, and continues to be an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community controlled organisation, working for the health and wellbeing of Australia's First Peoples through high-impact quality research, knowledge exchanges, and 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'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 our [Research Homepage](#) 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 2019 to 2023 aims to achieve positive health and wellbeing benefits for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples across four key themes:

1. **Empowerment** - This theme seeks to address the ways that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples can take responsibility for, and control of their everyday lives to support decision making and behaviour change that contribute to self-determination and social transformation.
2. **Sovereignty** - This theme seeks to address the ways that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples can celebrate and improve sovereignty over their health and wellbeing. This can be interpreted as concepts such as agency and control, access to services, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leadership.
3. **Connectedness** - This theme seeks to address Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' relationship and belonging to environment and Country for strong health and wellbeing and the way belonging, environment and Country is reflected and strengthened through knowledge translation.
4. **Cultural safety and respectful systems** - This theme seeks to address the ways that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' unique physical, mental, social, spiritual, and cultural needs are embedded at all levels of health care from policy development and implementation to health service management and delivery, research and education and training to improve health system quality and safety.

Lowitja Institute's Seeding Grant Scheme

In 2023, *Lowitja Institute Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Seeding Grant Scheme* has been re-designed to offer three separate funding streams. The streams aim to support all levels of research readiness; from community controlled organisations who have never led research before, through to early career researchers partnering with communities to undertake a small research program.

The *Seeding Grant Scheme* for 2023 aims to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community controlled organisations and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Early Career Researchers to lead community driven research. The purpose of the *Seeding Grant Scheme* is to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to grow small ideas, transform, and action research from community priorities into meaningful research projects. The *Seeding Grant Scheme* offers three streams as follows:

Stream 1: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Seeding Symposium

This stream has been curated for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities who have not led research before. Community members will have the opportunity to participate in a symposium, including a workshop to develop their ideas for research. Indigenous research leaders will support communities to develop a research proposal to submit to our Major Grants program.

Stream 2: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Seeding Grant

This stream has been curated for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities who may or may not have led research before but have the resources and relationships to bring together key stakeholders to develop their own research proposal to submit to our Major Grants program. Funding of up to \$15,000 is available in this stream.

Stream 3: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Early Career Researcher Partnership Grant

This is a partnership grant for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Early Career Researchers who wish to conduct a research project in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community controlled organisations. The evidence drawn from this stream should result in a major grant application submitted external to Lowitja Institute. Funding of up to \$50,000 is available in this stream.

Before starting your application

Applicants are encouraged to ensure you have read the guideline 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 stream you wish to apply for
- ⌚ The research project aligns with Lowitja Institute's research agenda themes
- ⌚ You address each of the application questions and upload all required documentation for the seeding grant stream
- ⌚ Review the application timeline as there will be no application extensions available.

To start your application, you will need to complete and submit your application through our SmartyGrants online application portal.

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.

Seeding Grant Scheme timeline

Date	Task
18 September 2023	Applications open
19 November 2023	Applications close
December 2023	Assessment review and approval of applications Symposium dates and locations to be announced
January 2024	Successful and unsuccessful applicants notified
February 2024	Contracts signed and funds released by 29 February 2024
June 2024	Stream 2 funding term ends
March 2025	Stream 3 funding term ends

Assessment process

Lowitja Institute Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Seeding Grant Scheme is an open and competitive round. The assessment process is designed to ensure research excellence and rigour, as well as privilege Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives through high impact research. 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 Indigenous 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 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 Chief Executive Officer and Board of Directors are the final decision-makers and will consider the recommendations of the assessment panel in making a decision. Lowitja Institute Research and Knowledge Translation

team may request further advice or clarification from applicants at any time during the assessment process.

Eligibility criteria overview

Who should consider applying for the Seeding Grant Scheme?

Lowitja Institute *Seeding Grant Scheme* will only be awarded to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community controlled organisations and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Early Career Researchers partnering with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community controlled organisations.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community controlled organisations are encouraged to apply for funding themselves, or in partnership with other appropriate organisations and/or institutions. No formal research qualifications are required. To be eligible for a seeding grant scheme, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community controlled organisation must not be a current recipient of a Lowitja Institute grant.

Who is not eligible to apply?

Lowitja Institute will not accept applications from the following:

- ⊗ Individuals and consultants
- ⊗ Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander 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 and Torres Strait Islander 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 by *Lowitja Institute Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Seeding Grant Scheme* must be spent on costs that are directly associated with the research requirements of the grant.

These activities could include:

- ⊗ The engagement of researchers, consultants, specialists, experts, contractors or stakeholders directly on the project
- ⊗ Project administration (a maximum of 20% of total grant money) for items such as project management, report writing, bookkeeping, audits, and financial management

- ⦿ Facilitation of workshops or community meetings including Lowitja Institute capability and research training
- ⦿ Domestic travel 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).

What can't grant funds be used for?

- ⦿ 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, and 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)
- ⦿ 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.

Stream 1 – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Seeding Symposium

The symposium aims to provide Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community participants the foundational knowledge and support to develop and lead research for their community.

What is the Seeding Symposium?

The two-day symposium is a chance to come together and share experiences and knowledge of undertaking research in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health research sector. This will be a chance to work alongside senior Indigenous research leaders to address topics such as developing research ideas,

research ethics, and knowledge translation. This symposium aims to build on community priorities to develop a program of research for submission to the *Lowitja Institute Major Grant Scheme* in 2024.

The symposium 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 research ideas, questions and methods; building a research proposal.

The symposium is designed for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who are working at an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community controlled organisation in Australia. This seeding grant stream is aimed at supporting participants and their organisation who may have never led or conducted research before or are beginners to research. Up to two participants can be funded per organisation in this stream.

The seeding grant will cover registration, travel and accommodation to our symposium run by Lowitja Institute and senior Indigenous researchers. The location and date of the symposium will be advised at the end of the seeding grant round so that Lowitja Institute can cater the symposium best to the applicants' learning goals and objectives. The symposium will be held in March 2024.

Eligibility criteria

To submit your application for the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Seeding Symposium*, applicants must meet the following criteria:

- ⦿ Symposium participants must identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (up to 2 participants per organisation can apply)
- ⦿ Symposium participants must be an employee of 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 participants' organisation has the available resources and ability to be involved in the seeding symposium with potential for future research involvement
- ⦿ The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community controlled organisation is not a current funded grant holder of Lowitja Institute.

Application requirements

- ⦿ Provide Certificate of Incorporation
- ⦿ Describe how participation in the Seeding Symposium will build the capacity and capability of the nominated participants (300 words max)
- ⦿ 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 attending the Seeding Symposium will support the organisation to transform community priorities into a program of research (300 words max)
- ⦿ Outline how your research priority aligns with Lowitja Institute's research agenda themes (300 words max)

- ⦿ Outline how the project will be led and designed by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (300 words max)
- ⦿ List any partnerships and key stakeholders you plan to work with.

Assessment criteria

Applications are assessed against the following criteria:

Assessment criteria	What is Lowitja Institute looking for?	Weighting
Identified key community priority to improve health and wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⦿ Identifies a need to build and conduct research to address Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community's priorities ⦿ Aligns with Lowitja Institute's research agenda themes ⦿ Evidence of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community leadership. 	60%
Building workforce opportunities, leadership and capacity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⦿ Identifies how the symposium will benefit Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants to support research in their community ⦿ Articulates how the symposium will foster and generate meaningful research for community. 	40%

Stream 2 – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Seeding Grant

This grant stream aims to provide Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community controlled organisations the opportunity to identify or explore a research priority within the community. This funding will contribute to bringing together key stakeholders and partners to develop a research project ready to be undertaken.

The grant is designed for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community controlled organisations only, and who are intending to apply for the *Lowitja Institute Major Grant Scheme* in 2024.

The *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Seeding Grant* awards up to \$15,000 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 and apply for the *Lowitja Institute Major Grant Scheme* in 2024.

Eligibility criteria

To submit your application for the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Seeding Grant*, applicants must meet the following criteria:

- ⦿ An Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander person must be leading the research (Chief Investigator)
- ⦿ 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 or Indigenous Business Number, 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
- ⦿ Have the available resources and ability to undertake a research project in accordance with Lowitja Institute's Seeding Grant Agreement
- ⦿ Intend to submit an application for the *Lowitja Institute Major Grant Scheme* in 2024
- ⦿ Not currently hold a Lowitja Institute grant.

Application requirements

- ⦿ Provide Certificate of Incorporation
- ⦿ Provide copies of Public Liability Insurance, Professional Indemnity Insurance and Workers Compensation Insurance
- ⦿ Short summary of the seeding project (300 words max)
- ⦿ Submit a project plan (template available in SmartyGrants portal)
- ⦿ 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 *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Seeding Grant* will support the organisation to transform community priorities into a program of research (300 words max)
- ⦿ Outline how your research priority aligns with Lowitja Institute's research agenda themes (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)
- ⦿ Submit a risk management plan (template provided in SmartyGrants portal)
- ⦿ Outline how you will monitor and report risk to ensure the project is delivered on time (300 words max)
- ⦿ Outline your 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)
- ⦿ Submit a project budget.

Assessment criteria

Applications are assessed against the following criteria:

Assessment criteria	What is Lowitja Institute looking for?	Weighting
Impact and significance of research to address a key community priority to improve health and wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⓐ Identifies a need to build and conduct research to address Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community priorities ⓑ Aligns with Lowitja Institute's research agenda and themes ⓒ Evidence of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community leadership. 	40%
Building workforce opportunities, leadership and capacity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⓐ Evidence the project is led and designed by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people ⓑ Identifies how the seeding grant will support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants to transform research in their community ⓒ Demonstrates appropriate collaborations and partnerships. 	30%
Feasibility of seeding project developing into an application for a major grant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⓐ Outlines a plan to submit to Lowitja Institute Major Grants Scheme in 2024 ⓑ Demonstrates organisational capability and capacity to deliver the seeding project in the 3-month timeframe ⓒ Identifies access to require infrastructure and partnerships necessary for the project ⓓ Evidence of risk management and milestones relevant to complete the project in the 3-month timeframe ⓔ Provides a justified budget to meet the scheme's objectives. 	30%

Stream 3 - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Early Career Researcher Partnership Grant

This grant stream aims to provide Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Early Career Researchers the opportunity to explore and strengthen a community research priority to generate the evidence needed to develop a research proposal for a major grant scheme external to Lowitja Institute.

Early Career Researcher's must partner with at least one Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community controlled organisation in Australia. This grant is not for researchers and organisations that intend to apply for a Lowitja Institute Major Grant, but rather for applicants intending to apply for an external large grant at the conclusion of the seeding grant funding period. Applicants will be asked to identify what major grant will be sought following the seeding grant.

The *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Early Career Partnership Grant* awards up to \$50,000 in funding over a maximum of 12 months, noting the timeframe cannot be extended. Successful applicants will be required to report findings back to Lowitja Institute.

Eligibility criteria

To support your application for the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Early Career Partnership Grant*, applicants must meet the following criteria:

- ⌚ An Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander early career researcher as Chief Investigator (final year of PhD or conferred in the past 5 years)
- ⌚ Currently employed at a University or Research Institute in Australia
- ⌚ Have a partnership with at least one Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation
- ⌚ Have the available resources and ability to undertake a research project in accordance with Lowitja Institute's Seeding Grant Agreement
- ⌚ Intend to submit an application for an external major grant at the conclusion of the seeding grant funding period.

Applications for the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Early Career Partnership Grant* are submitted by the Chief Investigator. Once submitted, your Research Office will be sent a confirmation email with verification and approval required. Only verified and approved applications will progress to peer review.

Application requirements

- ⌚ Details of PhD conferral
- ⌚ Administering institution details
- ⌚ Project details
- ⌚ Project synopsis (300 words max)
- ⌚ A three-page research project proposal using the Research Proposal Template or own format.
- ⌚ Outline which Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community controlled organisation/s you are partnership with and include letter of support if available (300 words max)
- ⌚ Outline how your research priority aligns with Lowitja Institute's research agenda themes (300 words max)
- ⌚ Outline the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community priority the research will address and how the priority was identified (300 words max)
- ⌚ Outline how the research will benefit Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities (300 words max)
- ⌚ Outline how the research has been led and designed by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (300 words max)
- ⌚ Outline how community leadership, relationality and reciprocity will be upheld in the project (300 words max)
- ⌚ Explain how the grant will contribute to building your research career pathway (500 words max)
- ⌚ Provide details of the project team members and their roles and responsibilities

- ⦿ Outline the team capacity, capability and resources to deliver the project (500 words max)
- ⦿ Provide details on the ethics approvals to be sought.
- ⦿ Submit a risk management plan (template provided in SmartyGrants portal)
- ⦿ Outline how the outcomes of the research will be provided back to the community (300 words max)
- ⦿ Outline the type of knowledge translation activities you anticipate undertaking for the project (300 words max)
- ⦿ Outline how the intended outcomes from the grant will be built into an external major grant, including which funding scheme you anticipate applying to (500 words max)
- ⦿ Submit a project budget.
- ⦿ Outline key milestones (template provided in SmartyGrants portal)
- ⦿ Outline how you will monitor and report risk to ensure the project is delivered on time (300 words max)
- ⦿ **Please note: applicants are required to download a copy of the submission and forward to the administering institutions Research Office.**

Assessment criteria

Applications are assessed against the following criteria:

Assessment criteria	What is Lowitja Institute looking for?	Weighting
Research quality and design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⦿ Evidence of a detailed research proposal, including a clear research question, rationale and methods ⦿ Evidence of how the research addresses one of Lowitja Institute's research agenda themes and how this is clearly embedded throughout the research design ⦿ Demonstrates an understanding of the ethics required to undertake the research project including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-specific ethics approvals 	20%
Impact and significance of the research is a key community priority to improve health and wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⦿ Articulates the community research priority ⦿ Evidence the research will benefit Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities including the research being a key priority for health and wellbeing ⦿ Evidence of community leadership and partnership. 	20%
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander 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 	20%

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⦿ Demonstrates research team capability and capacity to deliver the project. 	
Building workforce opportunities, capacity, and capability of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⦿ Outlines the impact of the seeding grant to build the CI's research career pathway ⦿ Commitment to building opportunities, including training, for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff in undertaking, leading and being part of a community research project ⦿ Evidence the project utilises Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned businesses and personnel where external resources are required and necessary for the project. 	20%
Feasibility of the seeding project developing into an external 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 ⦿ Outlines a plan to submit to a major grants scheme. 	20%

Application support

If you require any assistance in completing an application for the Lowitja Institute 2023 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Seeding Grant Scheme, please contact the Research and Knowledge Translation team via email research@lowitja.org.au.