



THE PRIME MINISTER'S PRIZES FOR SCIENCE



Programme Guidelines

The Prime Minister's Prizes for Science - Science Teaching Prizes

Version March 2017



This programme forms part of the National Innovation and Science Agenda.
Visit innovation.gov.au to find out more.

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1. Introduction

These guidelines set out the nomination process and funding rules for the Prime Minister's Prizes for Science - Science Teaching Prizes, which is an element of the Inspiring Australia – Science Engagement Programme.

The Department of Industry, Innovation and Science is responsible for administering the Prime Minister's Prizes for Science, in accordance with the requirements of the [Commonwealth Grants Rules and Guidelines](#).¹

The nomination process involves two stages. We will publish opening and closing dates for both stages on [business.gov.au](#).

We have defined key terms used in these guidelines in Appendix A.

If you are nominating a teacher for a Science Teaching Prize you should read this document carefully before filling out the nomination form.

These guidelines provide advice on the nomination process and the obligations of prize recipients for the Science Teaching Prizes only. You will find separate programme guidelines for the Prime Minister's Prizes for Science - Science Prizes on [business.gov.au](#).

2. Programme overview

The Inspiring Australia – Science Engagement Programme supports the broader goals of science engagement in Australia through science communications, inspiring wide community participation in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM), and inspiring excellence in STEM. It will do this by funding and supporting a range of science communication and engagement activities and events.

The Prime Minister's Prizes for Science are Australia's most prestigious and highly regarded awards for outstanding achievements in scientific research, research-based innovation and excellence in science teaching.

The Prizes recognise the achievements and success of Australian scientists and innovators to both Australia and internationally, as well as the critical role science educators play in inspiring and encouraging students to take an interest in science and consider science as a career.

Through the Inspiring Australia – Science Engagement Programme, the Prizes will award \$750,000 each year from 2016-17 to 2019-20 for outstanding achievements in science, research-based innovation and excellence in science teaching.

There are five prizes for science and innovation (referred to as the Science Prizes) and two prizes for science teaching (referred to as the Science Teaching Prizes).

Science Prizes

- Prime Minister's Prize for Science
- Prime Minister's Prize for Innovation
- Malcolm McIntosh Prize for Physical Scientist of the Year
- Frank Fenner Prize for Life Scientist of the Year
- Prize for New Innovators

¹ <http://www.finance.gov.au/resource-management/grants/>

Science Teaching Prizes

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

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

2.1 Overview of the Science Teaching Prizes

The Prime Minister's Prizes for Excellence in Science Teaching in Primary and Secondary Schools are awarded for excellence in teaching in any area of science that is part of the nominated teacher's state or territory science syllabus.

Each prize is awarded to an individual teacher who, through the impact of their inspirational teaching and the sharing of their methods and results with the science teaching profession, has made an outstanding contribution to science education. Recipients of these awards personify the best of the science teaching profession, and are role models for those already teaching science and those considering a science teaching career. Nomination itself is recognition of these qualities by peers.

Each Science Teaching Prize includes a solid silver medallion, lapel pin, award certificate and \$50,000 in prize money.

Each prize recipient must share their prize money equally with the Australian school at which the achievements cited in the nomination were realised. The recipients are free to use their share of the prize money for whatever they choose; however, the school must use their share to enhance science learning in the school.

We will recognise highly ranked nominees through the award of highly commended certificates.

2.2 The nomination process

The nomination process involves two stages.

Stage 1: where you, as a nominator, provides a brief statement addressing the selection criteria and information about the nominee's school and teaching environment.

Stage 2: where, if your nominee has been shortlisted we invite you (the nominator) and two supporters to prepare a more detailed nomination addressing the selection criteria.

3. Eligibility criteria

3.1 Who is eligible to be nominated?

To be eligible to be nominated for a Science Teaching Prize a nominee must:

- be an Australian citizen or permanent resident of Australia
- have undertaken their teaching achievement for which they are nominated, in Australia
- not be self-nominated
- be a full time staff member at a primary or secondary school and be active in teaching science in the classroom at the time of their nomination. For a secondary school teacher, science teaching must be a substantial part (at least 0.5 full time equivalent) of their workload.

It is not necessary for the nominee to be a member of a professional association or to have received any prior award. The basis of nomination is excellence and achievement in science teaching.

3.1.1 Previous nominees

Previous nominees are eligible for renomination, subject to relevant eligibility criteria being met, submitting a new nomination, and you and the supporters providing evidence of any further relevant achievements. Different individuals may support the nominee where appropriate, for example where the nominee has changed schools.

3.1.2 Past recipients

Past recipients of either Science Teaching Prize are not eligible to be considered again.

3.2 Who is eligible to be a nominator or supporter?

To be eligible to nominate a teacher for a Science Teaching Prize:

- the nominator and supporters must personally know of the nominated achievement and be able to offer expert opinions about its worth
- the nominator or one of the supporters must be a Principal, Deputy Principal or Head of Science at the nominee's current school, or from the school where the evidence of achievement is most comprehensive. Where the nominated teacher is also a Principal, Deputy Principal or Head of Science, we will accept nominators or supporters from surrounding schools or from the education administration area to which the school belongs.

A nominator cannot also be a supporter, and a nominated teacher cannot support their own nomination.

4. The selection criteria you need to address

The Science Teaching Prizes are awarded on the basis of responses to the selection criteria outlined below. The indicators provided are a guide only; however, nominators and supporters may wish to use them as sub-headings in setting out their statements.

The criteria may be addressed through the combined inputs of the nominator and supporters based on direct personal knowledge of the nominee's work. Nominators must be able to adequately address all criteria. We understand that a supporter may not be able to comment on all criteria. Supporters should provide independent views of the nominee's achievement/s, rather than confirming the views of the nominator.

Responses to the selection criteria will be assessed at both stages of the nomination process. In Stage 1 a summary will be required, and in Stage 2 more detailed responses will be required.

4.1 Selection criterion 1

Knowledge of science, science education and students

- Has a broad and current knowledge of the science and science curricula related to their teaching responsibilities.
- Knows their students well and responds to the influence of cultural, developmental, gender and other contextual factors on students' learning in science.

4.2 Selection criterion 2

Demonstrated innovative and imaginative approaches to achieve high quality learning outcomes in science.

- Adopts or develops innovative and imaginative approaches to teaching which create and maintain intellectually challenging, emotionally supportive and physically safe learning environments.
- Engages students in generating, constructing and testing scientific knowledge by collecting, analysing and evaluating evidence.
- Ensures the science is contextual, engaging and relevant to the students' lives.
- Develops in students the confidence and ability to use scientific knowledge and processes to make informed decisions.
- Inspires students to pursue further studies in science (secondary teachers only).

These approaches should be demonstrated in the nominee's own classroom and school.

We require objective measures and evidence to support this criterion. Below are some examples of suitable evidence. These are suggestions and we do not expect that all suggested material will be provided.

- Evidence of high quality learning outcomes in the form of
 - student and parent feedback
 - principal's and peers' assessment or commentary
 - specific examples of initiative and innovative approaches.
- Objective measures of effectiveness and impact such as
 - improved end of year assessment outcomes
 - improved student engagement or participation in class activities
 - encouragement and support for students' extra-curricular science activities
 - leadership among peers, across schools and/or among non-school partners in promoting high quality school science teaching and learning
 - increased enrolments in senior secondary science (secondary teachers only)
 - evidence of influence in students' post-school study or employment choices (secondary teachers only).

4.3 Selection criterion 3

Contribution to the improvement of science education as an active member of their professional community in Australia

- Works collegially, within the school community and wider professional communities to:
 - improve the quality and effectiveness of science teaching
 - build teachers' capacity to implement the science curriculum.
- Widely recognised as having made a significant contribution to science education in their state/territory, through activities such as:
 - contributions to teacher professional development
 - innovative practices that have been adopted in other schools or regions

- participation in curriculum development
- contributions to science education policy at state/territory or national levels.

5. How we assess your nomination (selection process)

We will first assess your nomination against the eligibility criteria and then against the selection criteria. Only eligible nominations will proceed to selection assessment at each stage of the nomination process. The programme delegate has the authority to determine the eligibility of nominations.

An independent Science Teaching Prizes Committee will be established comprising

- the President of the Australian Science Teachers Association (ASTA) (Committee Chair)
- the immediate past President or the President-Elect of ASTA
- a representative from the Australian Primary Principals Association
- a representative from the Australian Secondary Principals' Association
- a representative from the Australian Academy of Science
- a representative from the CSIRO Education and Outreach section
- another prominent member of the science education community.

In Stage 1, the committee will assess eligible nominations against the selection criteria, compare them to other eligible nominations, and shortlist them.

In Stage 2, the committee will assess eligible nominations for the shortlisted nominees against the selection criteria, compare them to other eligible Stage 2 nominations and recommend prize recipients.

If the selection process identifies unintentional errors in your nomination, we may contact you to correct or clarify the errors, but material alterations and additions cannot be accepted.

Nominations must score highly against all selection criteria to be recommended for a Science Teaching Prize. If the committee does not consider any of the nominations sufficiently meritorious, they may recommend that a prize not be awarded in that year.

5.1 Final decision

The Minister will make the final decision on the prize recipients taking into account the recommendations of the committee and the availability of programme funds.

We will notify you of the outcome of your nomination in writing following the completion of each stage.

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

- the approval of prize recipients
- the prize money to be awarded.

We cannot review decisions.

6. How to submit a nomination

Prior to submitting a nomination you should read and understand these programme guidelines and the nomination form.

You should also ensure the nominee is willing to be nominated, will provide the evidence necessary to support the nomination, and understands the obligations that come with the prize.

You can only submit a nomination when nominations are open. We will publish the opening and closing dates for Stage 1 and Stage 2 of the nomination process on business.gov.au.

Nominations are a two-stage process. You will need to submit an online nomination form for both stages.

6.1 Submitting a Stage 1 nomination

To submit a nomination in Stage 1, you must

- complete the online Stage 1 [nomination form](#)² on business.gov.au
- address all eligibility and selection criteria
- provide all the information requested including
 - information about the nominee's school and teaching environment
 - the contact details of two supporters
- provide all necessary attachments including
 - a current two page CV for the nominee
 - certified evidence of their Australian citizenship or residential status.

6.2 Submitting a Stage 2 nomination

For a Stage 2 you must

- be invited to participate in Stage 2 of the nomination process
- complete the online Stage 2 nomination form on business.gov.au
- address all eligibility and selection criteria
- provide all the information requested
- provide all necessary attachments including
 - statements from the nominator and both supporters that independently address the selection criteria.

6.3 Attachments to your nomination

All material provided by the nominator and supporters must be in Times New Roman 11 point font with margins of at least two centimetres.

Statements from the nominator and supporters must

- use the letterhead of the organisation to which they belong
- specify their position within the organisation.

You must attach supporting documentation to the nomination form in accordance with the instructions provided in the form. Supporters who wish to submit their statements separately, should contact us for advice on how to do this.

You should only attach requested documents. We will not consider information in attachments that we do not request.

² <http://www.business.gov.au/Assistance/Inspiring-Australia-Science-Engagement/Prime-Ministers-Prizes-for-Science>

6.4 Submitting your nomination

When you submit your online nomination we will provide you with an automated receipt number and a link to a page to enter your email address to receive acknowledgment and a copy of your complete nomination.

You are responsible for ensuring your nomination is complete and accurate. Giving false or misleading information is a serious offence under the *Criminal Code 1995* (Cth). We will investigate false or misleading information and may not consider your nomination for the prize. If you discover an error in your nomination after submission you should contact us immediately on 13 28 46.

We may request clarification or additional information from you that does not alter the substance of nomination in response to an omission or error. However, we are not bound to accept any additional information, or requests to change nominations, from you after the nomination closing time.

If you require further guidance around the nomination process or if you are unable to submit online contact us at business.gov.au or on 13 28 46.

7. If your nomination is successful

Each prize recipient must share their prize money equally with the Australian school at which the achievements cited in the nomination were realised.

7.1 How the prize will be awarded

Prize recipients will be notified in writing and invited to receive their awards at the Prime Minister's Prizes for Science awards dinner.

The recipients of the Prime Minister's Prizes for Science are publicly announced at the awards dinner.

The prize money is deposited into the teachers' accounts shortly after the awards dinner, following receipt of bank account details.

7.2 Obligations of the prize recipient

In the lead up to the awards dinner prize recipients will be contacted regarding preparations for the event.

Following the awards dinner, prize recipients may be requested to assist in publicly promoting the teaching and learning of science as important foundations for Australia's continuing economic, social and environmental wellbeing. Recipients should be prepared to undertake a small number of public engagements.

Prize recipients may be invited 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. Any request to meet such costs will be considered on a case by case basis, based the benefits and value-for-money offered by the event.

We encourage prize recipients to inform us of any invitation to attend an event, and whether the invitation was accepted.

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

7.3 Obligations of the recipient school

The prize recipients' schools will be notified of the award when recipients are notified. The school's share of the prize money will be deposited into the school's account, following execution of a grant agreement with the Commonwealth. A sample [grant agreement](#)³ is available on business.gov.au.

We are not responsible for any project expenditure until a grant agreement is executed. If you choose to start your project before you have an executed grant agreement, you do so at your own risk.

The school's share of the prize money must be used for a project or projects that will improve the school's capacity and ability to teach science.

Examples of the types of activities and projects that schools may choose to use the funds for include:

- the cost of a relief teacher to enable the prize recipient to mentor other science teachers in science teaching best practice or to attend speaking engagements and workshops (to a limit of \$3,500)
- to support teachers' participation in science teaching training programs
- a scientist in residence at the school to work with students and teachers in developing research activities that are locally relevant for students and linked to the science curriculum
- science resource materials for students
- establishment or upgrade the school's science facilities
- host or participate in local or regional science activities and competitions, including during National Science Week.

This list is not exhaustive and schools may use the funds for other activities and projects that aim to improve the school's capacity and ability to teach science.

Two months after completion of the school's project, the school will be required to provide a project report that includes an acquittal of the prize money.

7.4 Tax obligations

The cash prizes awarded as part of the Prime Minister's Prizes for Science 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*.

7.5 Use of materials

Material created by the Commonwealth for the Prime Minister's Prizes for Science, such as media statements, interviews, videos and photographs are the property of the Commonwealth and may be used or disclosed by us in the promotion of science, innovation or science education programmes.

8. Conflicts of interest

8.1 Our conflict of interest responsibilities

A conflict of interest occurs when private interests conflict with obligations under a grant or prize. A conflict of interest can be

³ <http://www.business.gov.au/Assistance/Inspiring-Australia-Science-Engagement/Prime-Ministers-Prizes-for-Science>

- real (or actual)
- apparent (or perceived)
- potential.

We recognise that conflicts of interest may arise with our staff, technical experts, advisory committee members and others delivering the programme between

- their programme duties, roles and responsibilities and
- their private interests.

We manage our conflicts of interest according to the *APS Code of Conduct (section 13 (7) of the Public Service Act 1999)*. We publish our conflict of interest policy on the [Department of Industry, Innovation and Science⁴](#) website.

Programme officials must declare any conflicts of interest. If we consider a conflict of interest is a cause for concern, that official will not take part in the assessment of nominations under the programme.

9. How we use your information

Unless the information you provide to us is

- confidential information as per 9.1, or
- personal information as per 9.2,

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 programmes
- for research
- to announce the awarding of prizes.

9.1 How we handle your confidential information

We will treat the information you give us as sensitive and therefore confidential if it meets one of the four conditions below

1. You clearly identify the information as confidential and explain why we should treat it as confidential.
2. The information is commercially sensitive.
3. Disclosing the information would cause unreasonable harm to you or someone else.
4. You provide the information with an understanding that it will stay confidential.

9.1.1 When we may disclose confidential information

We may disclose confidential information to

- the committee and our Commonwealth employees and contractors, to help us manage the programme effectively

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<http://www.industry.gov.au/AboutUs/InformationPublicationScheme/Ourpolicies/Pages/Library%20Card/ConflictofInterestandInsideTradeExpectationsofInnovationEmployees.aspx>

- the Auditor-General, Ombudsman or Privacy Commissioner
- the responsible Minister or Parliamentary Secretary
- a House or a Committee of the Australian Parliament
- members of the Australian Parliament.

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.

9.2 How we use your personal information

We must treat your personal information according to the Australian Privacy Principles (APPs) and the *Privacy Act 1988*. 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, and other Commonwealth employees and contractors, so we can

- manage the programme
- research, assess, monitor and analyse our programmes and activities.

We, the Minister or the Prime Minister, may

- announce the names of prize recipients 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.

9.3 Public announcement

We will publish non-sensitive details of successful projects on, [business.gov.au](#) and the [department's website](#)⁶ as per the reporting requirements of the *Commonwealth Grants Rules and Guidelines* and consistent with the [Australian Government Public Data Policy Statement](#)⁷, unless otherwise prohibited by law. This information may include

- your name
- the name of your school
- description of the awarded achievement
- amount of prize money awarded.

⁵ <http://www.industry.gov.au/Pages/PrivacyPolicy.aspx>

⁶ <http://www.industry.gov.au/Pages/default.aspx>

⁷ <http://www.dpmc.gov.au/resource-centre/data/australian-government-public-data-policy-statement>

We publish this information to ensure open access to non-sensitive data within Australian Government agencies to enable greater innovation and productivity across all sectors of the Australian economy.

9.4 Freedom of information

The *Freedom of Information Act 1982* (FOI Act) applies to all documents we create, receive or store about the program. 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. Enquiries and feedback

For further information or clarification you can contact us on 13 28 46 or by web chat or through our online enquiry form at business.gov.au.

Questions you ask us may form the basis of a response that we will publish on our website as Frequently Asked Questions.

The AusIndustry [Customer Service Charter](#) is available at business.gov.au. AusIndustry uses customer satisfaction surveys to improve its business operations and service.

If you have a complaint, contact us on 13 28 46 or at business.gov.au. We will refer your complaint to the appropriate manager.

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

Head of Division
AusIndustry – Business Services
GPO Box 9839
CANBERRA ACT 2601

You can also contact the [Commonwealth Ombudsman](#)⁸ with your complaint (call 1300 362 072). There is no fee for making a complaint, and the Ombudsman may conduct an independent investigation.

⁸ <http://www.ombudsman.gov.au/>

Appendix A. Definitions of key terms

In these *Guidelines* unless otherwise defined:

AusIndustry means the division of the same name within the *department*.

Committee means the Science Teaching Prizes Committee.

Conflict of Interest means the exercise of a power or making of a decision by a person in a way that may be, or may be perceived to be, influenced by either a material personal interest (whether financial or non-financial) or a material personal association.

Department means the *Department* of Industry, Innovation and Science.

Eligible Nomination means a nomination for a *Science Teaching Prize* under the *Prime Minister's Prizes for Science* that the *Programme Delegate* has determined is eligible for assessment in accordance with these *guidelines*.

Minister means the Minister for Industry, Innovation and Science.

Nomination Form means the document issued by the *Programme Delegate* that *nominators* use to nominate teachers for a *Science Teaching Prize* under the *programme*.

Nominator means the person making a nomination of a *nominee*.

Nominee means the teacher being nominated for a *Science Teaching Prize*.

Personal Information means the same as in the *Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)*.

Prize money means the monetary prize made available by the Commonwealth of Australia to *prize recipients* under the *programme*.

Prize Recipient means a teacher that has been awarded a *Science Teaching Prize*.

Programme means the Inspiring Australia – Science Engagement Programme.

Programme Delegate means an employee of the *department* who is authorised by the *Minister*, or is otherwise duly authorised, to carry out the relevant functions in respect of the *programme*.

Programme Funding or Programme Funds means the funding made available by the Commonwealth for the *programme* in any given financial year. This is the funding specified in the Portfolio Budget Statement (as varied by any Portfolio Additional Estimates Statement or by the *Minister*) for that year.

Programme Guidelines or Guidelines means these *guidelines* that the *Minister* gives to the *department* to provide a framework to operate and administer the *programme*, as in force from time to time.

Science Teaching Prize or Prize means the Prime Minister's Prizes for Excellence in Science Teaching in Primary Schools and the Prime Minister's Prize for Excellence in Science Teaching in Secondary Schools.

Science Teaching Prizes Committee means the body by the same name established by the *Minister* to consider and assess *Eligible Nominations* and make recommendations to the *Minister* for prizes under the *Programme*.

Supporter means an individual identified by the *nominator* as someone who will support the nomination.