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APPI
Policy Challenge
Grant

Tips for submitting
a strong application



Tips for submitting a strong application

INTRODUCTION

Policy fit

Public impact

Government focus

Team capability

Clear writing

Past projects

▶ About the APPI Policy Challenge Grant program

The APPI Policy Challenge Grant supports researchers to address Australia's most significant public policy challenges. Grants are awarded to help researchers maximise the impact of their work on critical societal issues confronting government.

Successful projects will produce practical, actionable solutions for government, generate new insights, foster engagement between academics, policymakers and other stakeholders, including local communities, and contribute to improved policy outcomes.

The Policy Challenge Grant program is distinctive: the Institute provides tailored support to recipients to communicate their research findings to policy audiences and enhance the impact of their work through targeted engagement with policymakers.

The following tips are intended to help applicants prepare a strong submission.



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▶ **Be clear about how your project relates to one or more of the 2026 themes**

- Outline the public policy challenge your research aims to address. The policy challenge should be clearly explained and be directly relevant to one of the policy themes for 2026.
- Demonstrate which governments in Australia are concerned about this issue or explain how it fits within a state or federal wider policy agenda. Provide evidence of government interest by citing speeches, strategies, or relevant Parliamentary reports.
- Highlight the timeliness of your research and its potential to drive meaningful change. Specify whether your project addresses emerging or current challenges, and explain how the timing of your research outputs will equip government with valuable insights when they are most needed.
- Consider whether you can obtain letters of support from relevant government connections (or other key stakeholders) that demonstrate the importance and relevance of this policy area.
- Be selective on the evidence you include in the application demonstrating policymaker interest in your policy area. Prioritise recent, specific and directly relevant examples.
- [See APPI's guide on evidencing policymaker interest](#) for more advice on including strong evidence in your application. Aim to highlight two or three high quality examples that clearly show why your project is timely and aligned with current policy priorities.



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▶ Highlight the potential public policy impact of your project

- Outline how your research will help the government tackle a specific policy challenge. Be clear about the scale of the challenge and its impact on Australians.
- Explain the intended impact of your proposed work. Will it help identify interventions that work? Will it catalyse action on a policy challenge? Will it improve practice?
- Outline how the people of Australia could benefit from the research insights. Who will implement the project outcomes? What outcomes may improve?
- Explain how your project will support fairer outcomes, particularly for groups disproportionately affected by the policy challenge.
- Outline indicators or signals of success (e.g., improved data quality, pilot testing of interventions). Demonstrate your understanding of what policy impact looks like.
- If your project will provide solutions that are scalable or transferable to other jurisdictions or sectors, highlight this.



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- ▶ **Be clear about which part(s) of government will be interested in your project**
 - Clearly identify the policymakers you are targeting. Specify whether your proposal relates to a state, federal or inter-governmental policy priority, and indicate which government you intend to pitch your policy opportunities to.
 - Demonstrate a strong grasp of the policy landscape surrounding your chosen challenge. This includes showing awareness of relevant legislation, existing programs, current reform efforts, key stakeholders, and any political, economic, or social factors shaping the issue.
 - Highlight specifically which departments your research is relevant to (don't worry if you don't have existing relationships, APPI can support you to make the right connections).
 - Describe your planned engagement with policymakers throughout the project, specifying the formats you will use (e.g., meetings, interviews, focus groups, workshops, roundtables). Strong applications show that engagement is not a one-off activity but an ongoing process that informs the research design, testing of ideas, and translation of findings.
 - Describe clearly how you plan to communicate your findings. Who needs to know about your research and what steps will be taken to communicate your findings to the right people within government and beyond?



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▶ Summarise your team's expertise including policy expertise and experience

- Demonstrate that the team has the necessary skills, experience, and expertise to deliver the project as planned.
- Highlight the policy/ social impact of any previous research.
- Highlight any previous research outputs that your team have contributed to which are relevant to your proposed research.
- For teams that have limited experience working in policy environments, state how APPI can support and add value to the project.
- Highlight where team members are involved in committees, taskforces, professional bodies, organisations etc relevant to the policy challenge being explored e.g., Associate Professor X is a member of the NSW Government's Expert Housing Advisory Group. Professor Y was a member of the steering group of the First Nations Clean Energy Council between 2018 and 2021.



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**CLEAR
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▶ Make your application easy to read and understand

- Avoid jargon and technical language. Your application will be assessed by people with diverse expertise who may not be experts in your area of research.
- Use plain English. Useful tips can be found in the Australian Government's Style Manual or via the [Plain English Campaign](#).
- Keep abbreviations and acronyms to a minimum – define them when they are first used.
- Avoid lengthy sentences or blocks of text which can be hard to follow. Where appropriate, use subheadings, dot points etc to present information clearly.
- Give your project a title that is descriptive, specific and concise.



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**PAST
PROJECTS**

▶ Review examples of successful APPI projects

- Review [projects APPI has previously funded](#) to understand the types of policy challenges, research approaches and translation activities that have been successful. This can help you gauge the level of ambition expected, see how past applicants have demonstrated policy relevance, and ensure your proposal aligns with the scheme's focus on practical, impactful public policy research.
- Review the [Policy Insights Papers](#) published by previous grant recipients to understand the style, structure and level of policy translation expected from funded projects. Your project will be required to produce a paper of this kind, including clear, actionable policy opportunities for government. APPI will support you with editorial input, design, and dissemination to ensure your insights reach the right audiences.



2 Contact us

For further grant-related enquiries, please either refer to the FAQs section on the APPI website or contact us via email.

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Good public policy starts with evidence.

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