

# Research and Innovation Fund STREAM 1: call for proposals

## Guidelines for the South Australian Cooperative Research Centre (CRC) Assistance Program - Round 27

### Background and Objectives

The Department of State Development (DSD) is focused on developing a high performing research and innovation system that supports the growth of innovative and competitive businesses and industries.

The South Australian Research and Innovation Fund (RIF), managed by DSD, supports collaboration between businesses, researchers, and universities to solve industrial problems, commercialise new products and services, attract investment into research and research infrastructure in the State, and encourages the establishment and growth of start-ups.

The *South Australian CRC Assistance Program* is a RIF Stream 1 funded Program. Stream 1 funds programs that create innovative solutions or translate research into industry or commercial outcomes that address economy-wide challenges for South Australia.

### The Cooperative Research Centres (CRC) Program

The CRC Program supports research, industry and the community to solve industry-identified problems in long-term industry-led collaborative research, for up to 10 years. CRC programs must:

- be a medium to long-term industry-led collaborative research program
- aim to solve industry identified problems and improve the competitiveness, productivity, and sustainability of Australian industries
- include an industry-focused education and training program, including a PhD program that builds capability and capacity
- increase research and development (R&D) capacity in small to medium enterprises (SMEs)
- encourage industry take up of research.

Leveraging Australian Government, industry and research institution investment, the CRC Program drives industry-led collaboration to build scale in research and innovation and, as such, is aligned with the investment principles of RIF Stream 1.

## The South Australian CRC Assistance Program

The South Australian CRC Assistance Program aims to support the participation of a South Australian Government agency in the CRC.

The program may invest in a CRC as follows:

- up to \$300,000 over the lifespan of the CRC for a CRC node located in South Australia
- up to \$600,000 over the lifespan of the CRC for a CRC headquarters located in South Australia.

Please note this investment is available to applications made through the CRC Program Rounds and not the national CRC-Project (CRC-P) Rounds.

A South Australian CRC Assistance Program Expression of Interest round (**SA EOI round**) will be opened, and successful applicants will receive a letter of in-principle support. The letter of in-principle support will be a non-binding commitment for funding and will note that the applicant will be invited to submit a full application if the CRC bid progresses to Stage 2 of Round 27 of the Australian Government CRC Program.

Bids that progress to Stage 2 of Round 27 of the Australian Government CRC Program and who have been given an in-principle non-binding letter of support through the SA EOI round will then be invited to submit a full application to the South Australian CRC Assistance Program (**SA Full Application round**).

The SA Full Application round will determine DSD's conditional commitment for funding.

Investment from DSD will be conditional on:

- an award of funding from the Australian Government under Round 27 of the Australian Government CRC Program
- key elements of the final, successful CRC remaining consistent with the information provided during the South Australian CRC Assistance Program application process
- any other conditions related to the CRC's partnerships with the South Australian Government.

Investments are also subject to the provision of a satisfactory annual performance report and delivery of an annual presentation to the Department of State Development on activities and outcomes of the CRC.

## Eligibility

Proposals for the *South Australian CRC Assistance Program* require the CRC bid to have:

- the headquarters or a node in South Australia
- at least one South Australian based public or private research organisation involved (including universities, research institutes, and Australian Government research organisations)
- at least one South Australian Government agency involved as a participant in the CRC
- alignment with:
  - all current and relevant South Australian Government strategies
  - the [Department of State Development strategic objectives](#)
  - the Industry Investment Principles and RIF Investment Principles, available here: [Research and Innovation Fund | Department of State Development](#)
  - Australian Government priorities as included in the Australian Government's CRC Program Round 27
  - CRC Grant Opportunity Guidelines at <https://business.gov.au/grants-and-programs/cooperative-research-centres-crc-grants>



## Submission, Assessment and Selection Process

The submission, assessment and selection process will be managed by the Department of State Development. Proposals will be assessed competitively on merit against the eligibility and assessment criteria set out above and in accordance with the [RIF Investment Principles](#). The process will involve three phases:

### 1. Expression of Interest

Applicants must submit an Expression of Interest through the online form via this [link](#). Expressions of Interest must be lodged **by 7<sup>th</sup> of April 2026, 5pm ACDT**. Upon submission the applicant will receive a receipt of their application along with a copy of their submission.

An Assessment Panel will determine which, if any, SA EOI round applications will be provided with an in-principle non-binding letter of support. The letter of support will note that the applicant will be invited to submit to the Full Application round if they progress to Stage 2 of Round 27 of the Australian Government CRC Program.

### 2. Full Application

Applications that progress to Stage 2 of Round 27 of the Australian Government CRC Program and who were successful following the SA EOI round will be invited to submit an application to the SA Full Application round. It is the responsibility of the research office of the South Australian public or private University to inform DSD of the outcome from the Australian Government CRC Program Stage 1. SA Full Applications must be lodged with DSD, along with a copy of the most recent proposals to Round 27 of the Australian Government CRC Program.

The exact date by which the SA Full Application must be submitted will be determined after the opening and closing dates for Stage 2 of Round 27 of the Australian Government CRC Program are announced. Upon submission, you will receive a receipt of their full application along with a copy of their submission.

### 3. Selection

Based on the application to the SA Full Application Round, an Assessment Panel will provide advice on which, if any, proposals the South Australian Government should support. A final decision to support proposals, if any, will be made by the Minister for Industry, Innovation and Science. In exceptional circumstances, the Minister may consider or accept (at their sole discretion) any proposal, including without limitation a proposal that is not in accordance with these guidelines.

Each party involved in the selection process must declare any real, potential, or perceived conflict of interest that exists or is likely to arise in relation to any aspect of an application submitted.

## Assessment Criteria

The application will require applicants to address the following selection criteria:

- 1. Purpose of the CRC, Governance and Partner Investment in the CRC**
- 2. Research Themes and Research Leaders**
- 3. Collaboration Between Industry, Research and Government**
- 4. Innovation and Translation Benefits to South Australia**



## 5. Future STEM Workforce Benefits in South Australia

### Key Contact

Dr Charlotte Scobie

Senior Program Officer, Department of State Development

T +61 (8) 8429 2259

E [charlotte.scobie@sa.gov.au](mailto:charlotte.scobie@sa.gov.au)

Department of State Development

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