

# Research and Innovation Fund Stream 1: Call for Proposals

## Guidelines for the South Australian Assistance Program for Australian Research Council (ARC) Centres of Excellence (CoE) commencing in 2026

### 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.

### *Research and Innovation Fund*

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. This supports the vision outlined in the [South Australian Economic Statement](#), which is for the state to be known as ambitious and capable, embracing technology, and driving innovation through targeted industry and research collaborations.

The South Australian Assistance Program for ARC CoEs commencing in 2026 (**SA ARC CoE Assistance Program**) is a RIF Stream 1 funded Program. RIF Stream 1 enables strategic projects and programs that strengthen the State's research and development capacity and capability, particularly in areas of strategic importance to the state. Funding through RIF Stream 1 is provided to co-fund the costs of delivering projects and programs with clearly defined outcomes that assist with:

- the creation of innovative solutions;
- the translation of research into industry or commercial outcomes;
- the adoption of critical technologies; and
- developing awareness of, and participation in, Science, Technology, Engineering, and Maths (STEM) career paths.

The SA ARC CoE Assistance Program will progress in conjunction with the Commonwealth Government's ARC Centres of Excellence Program for CoEs commencing in 2026.

### *Australian Research Council Centres of Excellence Program*

ARC CoEs support outstanding research in national areas of priority. They are focal points for high quality researchers to develop and maintain Australia's research strengths, and support significant collaborations between universities, publicly funded research organisations, other research bodies, governments, and

businesses in Australia and overseas, in areas of national importance. CoEs are part of the ARC's Linkage Program under the National Competitive Grants Program and grant opportunities occur periodically every three years.

Leveraging Commonwealth Government, industry, and research institution investment, the ARC CoE Program drives highly innovative and potentially transformational research, significantly advancing capability and, as such, is aligned with the investment principles of RIF Stream 1.

## Program Overview

An initial SA ARC CoE Assistance Program Expression of Interest (**EOI**) round (**SA EOI round**) will be opened, and successful applicants will receive a letter of in-principle support that may be included in the application to the Commonwealth ARC EOI round. The letter of in-principle support will be a non-binding commitment and will note that the applicant will be invited to submit a full application if they are shortlisted following the Commonwealth ARC CoE EOI round.

Shortlisted applications following the Commonwealth ARC EOI round 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 SA ARC CoE Assistance Program (**SA Full Application round**) which will determine DSD's conditional commitment for funding. The application process and estimated timeline is shown in Attachment 1.

Funding from DSD will be conditional on:

- an award of funding from the Commonwealth Government for the ARC CoE Program commencing in 2026;
- key elements of the final, successful ARC CoE remaining consistent with the information provided in the original SA EOI round application and SA Full Application round application; and
- any other conditions related to the CoE's partnerships with the South Australian Government.

The SA ARC CoE Assistance Program may invest in a CoE as follows:

- up to \$600,000 over the lifespan of the CoE for a CoE headquartered in South Australia; or
- up to \$300,000 over the lifespan of the CoE for a CoE with a node in South Australia. If the ARC CoE establishes more than one node in South Australia, funding will be limited to one node.

Funding from the SA ARC CoE Assistance Program is also subject to the provision of a satisfactory annual performance report and delivery of an annual presentation to DSD on activities and outcomes of the CoE.

## Eligibility Criteria

Proposals for the SA ARC CoE Assistance Program require the CoE bid to have:

- the headquarters or a node in South Australia based at a South Australian public or private University; and
- alignment with:
  - the [South Australian Economic Statement](#) and/or [State Prosperity Project](#);
  - DSD strategic objectives;
  - the [Industry Investment Principles and RIF Investment Principles](#); and



- Commonwealth Government priorities as included in the [ARC CoE Grant Guidelines](#).

## Assessment Criteria

Applicants must submit an application at the SA EOI round and SA Full Application round through the online form provided by DSD and address all relevant assessment criteria in the application.

The SA EOI round requires applicants to address the following selection criteria:

1. Purpose of the ARC CoE and Partner Organisations
2. Research Themes and Research Leaders
3. Innovation and Translation Benefits to South Australia

The SA Full Application round requires applicants to address the following selection criteria:

1. Purpose of the ARC CoE and Partner Investment in the ARC
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

## Submission, Assessment and Selection Process

The submission, assessment and selection process for the SA EOI and SA Full Application rounds will be managed by DSD. Applications 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 four phases:

### 1. EOI Application

Applications to the SA EOI round must be lodged online with DSD by **30 August 2024, close of business** through this [link](#). Once submitted, you will receive a receipt of confirmation email along with a copy of your submission.

An Assessment Panel will determine which, if any, SA EOI round applications will be provided with in-principle non-binding letters of support that the applicant may include in the ARC CoE Program EOI Application. The letter of support will note that the applicant will be invited to submit an application to the Full Application round if they are shortlisted following the Commonwealth ARC CoE EOI round.

### 2. Full Application

Applications that have been shortlisted following the Commonwealth ARC CoE EOI round 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 Commonwealth ARC CoE EOI round. SA Full Applications must be lodged with DSD, along with a copy of the draft Commonwealth ARC CoE Full Application, and a one-page summary of the ARC CoE Full Application. The exact date by which the SA Full Application must be submitted will be determined after the ARC announces the open and closing dates for the ARC CoE Full



Application period and communicated with research offices. Upon submission, you will receive a receipt of confirmation for your application along with a copy of your submission.

Each team that has submitted an application to the SA Full Application round will be given the opportunity to present their proposal to an Independent Assessment Panel, as well as answer any questions that the panel may have.

The exact dates of the Independent Assessment Panel presentations will be determined after the ARC announces the open and closing dates for the ARC CoE Full Application period.

No more than six members of each team can present to the Independent Assessment Panel.

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.

### 3. Selection

Based on the application and presentation, the Independent Assessment Panel will provide recommendations to the Minister on which applications, if any, the South Australian Government should consider supporting. A final decision to support applications, 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 applications, including without limitation an application that is not in accordance with these guidelines.

### Key Contact

**Dr Charlotte Scobie**

Senior Program Officer

T +61 (8) 8429 2259

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

Department of State Development

August 2024



Government  
of South Australia  
Department of  
State Development

## Attachment 1: South Australian Assistance Program for ARC CoEs Application Process

Note: All dates are indicative and to be confirmed.

1) Commonwealth: ARC CoE EOI Round **OPENS** (13 August 2024)

2) DSD: SA ARC CoE Assistance EOI (SA EOI) Round **OPENS** (13 August 2024)

3) Applicant: Submit SA EOI

4) DSD: SA EOI **CLOSES** (30 August 2024)

5) DSD: SA EOI Assessment Panel Meeting

An internal assessment panel will assess SA EOI applications on merit against the eligibility and assessment criteria.

6) DSD: Notify successful EOI applicants (prior to 13 September 2024)

Applicants with competitively scoring SA EOI applications will be provided with a non-binding in-principle letter of support for inclusion in the ARC CoE EOI application.

7) Commonwealth: ARC EOI Round **CLOSES** (18 September 2024)

8) Commonwealth: ARC notifies shortlisted applicants following the ARC EOI Round (28 January 2025)

9) Applicant: Notify DSD of ARC EOI Round outcomes

10) Commonwealth: ARC CoE Full Application Round **OPENS** (29 January 2025)

11) DSD: SA ARC CoE Assistance Program Full Application (SA Full Application) **OPENS** (30 January 2025)

Successful applicants following the SA EOI Round who have been shortlisted following ARC EOI Round will be invited to submit a full application.

12) Applicant: Submit SA Full Application



**13) DSD SA Full Application Round CLOSES (expected date: TBA)**

**14) DSD: SA Full Application Round Independent Assessment Panel Meeting**

Independent assessment panel will evaluate Full Applications competitively on merit against the eligibility and assessment criteria. Applicants may be invited to present to the panel. The panel will provide recommendations on funding to the Minister.

**15) DSD: Minister Approval Decision**

**16) DSD: Notify successful applicants**

Applicants with competitive scoring will be provided with a letter of conditional funding support (subject to Commonwealth funding approval) to be included in the ARC CoE Full Application.

**17) Commonwealth: ARC CoE Full Application Round CLOSES (20 March 2025)**

**18) Commonwealth: ARC notifies applicants of outcomes following the ARC CoE Full Application Round (24 October 2025)**

**19) Applicant: Notify DSD of ARC Full Application outcomes**

**20) DSD and successful applicants: Grant agreement (after 1 January 2026)**

Applicants who have received a conditional commitment for funding from DSD and were successful in the Commonwealth ARC CoE Full Application Round will be invited to enter into negotiations with DSD to have a Funding Agreement prepared by the South Australian Financing Authority and executed by the Treasurer (expected execution after 1 July 2026).