2026-27 Premier's Awards for Health and Medical Research

Frequently asked questions (FAQs)

Applications for the 2026-27 Premier's Awards for Health and Medical Research are now open.

As the Victorian State election will be held on Saturday 28 November 2026, the Victorian Government will assume a caretaker role from 6.00pm on 3 November 2026 until such time that either it becomes clear that the incumbent government will be returned, or when a new government is commissioned.

In line with the caretaker conventions, the incoming government will determine whether to continue the 2026-27 Premier's Awards for Health and Medical Research after the caretaker period.

Applicants should be aware that:

- all information about the 2026-27 Premier's Awards for Health and Medical Research represents the position of the current government only, and is subject to change; and
- an incoming government may decide to not continue with the 2026-27 Premier's Awards for Health and Medical Research.

Questions about the awards

What are the 2026-27 Premier's Awards for Health and Medical Research?

The Premier's Awards for Health and Medical Research were established in 1995 by the Victorian Government, in partnership with the Australian Society for Medical Research, to provide support and recognition to Victoria's most talented early career health and medical researchers, inspiring them to build a successful long-term career.

What types of awards are available through the 2026-27 Premier's Awards for Health and Medical Research?

The Premier's Awards for Health and Medical Research will include 5 categories of awards (category awards):

- First Peoples Researcher Award
- Basic Science Researcher Award
- Clinical Researcher Award
- Public Health Researcher Award
- Health Services Researcher Award.

There will be an overall winner from the 5 categories who will receive the Premier's Award for Health and Medical Research Excellence.

What prizes do the category award winners and finalists receive?

Each of the 5 category award winners will receive $5,000 (excluding GST) in prize money. Each category finalist and winner will also receive a framed certificate.

The recipient of the Premier's Award for Health and Medical Research Excellence will receive an additional $15,000 (total prize money of $20,000 excluding GST) and will be presented with a trophy.

Questions about categories of awards

Who can apply for the category awards?

Applicants must be able to meet all application requirements and supply all supporting documentation as outlined in the program guidelines. These include:

- currently conducting research at a Victorian academic or research institute
- being either an Australian or New Zealand citizen or having permanent residency in Australia
- meeting the qualification requirements for their category award
- meeting the research project requirements for their category award
- meeting all other requirements for the category award in question.

Previous Premier's Award for Health and Medical Research Excellence or category award winners are ineligible to apply. Previous category award finalists may apply.

Further information regarding the eligibility criteria is detailed within the program guidelines, available on the Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions website.

Questions about eligibility

Am I eligible to apply for the awards if I am completing my PhD or have submitted my PhD, but all PhD requirements have not yet been deemed to have been met?

Current PhD students are not eligible to apply for the Basic Science, Clinical, Health Services and Public Health Researcher Awards.

Current PhD students within a health and medical research field at a Victorian academic or research institute, with a minimum candidature of 2 years as of 1 September 2026, may apply for the First Peoples Researcher Award so long as they meet all requirements of this category award.

Further information regarding the eligibility criteria is detailed within the program guidelines, available on the Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions website.

With reference to the eligibility criteria, what counts as 'extenuating circumstances' with respect to career interruptions?

Extenuating circumstances could include parental leave periods and health related disruptions. Circumstances are reviewed on a case-by-case basis. Applicants will be required to provide a signed statement of no more than 500 words attesting to the nature of the

extenuating circumstances and duration of the career disruption faced, as part of their application.

To support the integrity and competitiveness of the Premier's Awards for Health and Medical Research, departmental staff will not provide personalised advice in response to applicant queries regarding their individual extenuating circumstances.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to review the program guidelines and this FAQs document which provide clear details on eligibility requirements for each award.

Am I eligible for the First Peoples Researcher Award?

Applicants for this award category must be of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander descent; identify as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person; and, be accepted as such by the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander community in which they live (or originate).

Applicants for this award must also meet all other applicable eligibility criteria, as detailed within the program guidelines available on the Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions website.

Are part-time researchers eligible to apply for this program?

Yes. If the applicant is conducting research in accordance with and meets the eligibility criteria specified in the program guidelines, they are eligible to apply.

There is no eligibility restriction pertaining to an applicant's FTE applicable to research activity.

What are the citizenship and residency requirements for this program?

Applicants must be either an Australian or New Zealand citizen or have permanent residency in Australia.

Applicants will be required to attest that this criterion has been met as part of their application.

If any attestation, declaration or statement made, or information provided by the applicant is found to be incomplete, inaccurate, false or misleading, the application will not be recommended for ministerial consideration, and any prize money that has been provided will be repayable on demand.

Do I have to be conducting research in Victoria to be eligible to apply for this program?

Yes. All applicants must currently be conducting research at a Victorian academic or research institute.

Further information regarding the program's eligibility criteria is detailed within the program guidelines available on the Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions website.

Can my nominated research project be taking place overseas or interstate?

All applicants must nominate one research project to form the basis of their application.

It is recognised that research activity is collaborative by its nature and can span multiple jurisdictions. This criterion does not preclude a research project that involves interstate or

overseas jurisdictions. It does, however, mean that a research project that was or is predominantly led outside of a Victoria academic or research institute is ineligible.

Research project requirements for each category award are detailed in the program guidelines available on the Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions website.

I am still unsure if I am eligible to apply. Can I seek personalised advice from the department regarding my individual circumstances?

No. To support the integrity and competitiveness of the Premier's Awards for Health and Medical Research, departmental staff will not provide advice to applicants regarding their individual circumstances relating to their eligibility for award consideration.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to review the program guidelines and this FAQs document which provide clear details regarding eligibility requirements for each award.

I would like to apply for a category award. Are there any restrictions on where or when my PhD was completed?

Yes. Postdoctoral applicants must have met all the requirements of a PhD at a Victorian academic or research institute within either of the last 5 years as of 1 September 2026, or last 6 years as of 1 September 2026 (if they have faced career disruptions for one or more years since their PhD requirements were met, due to extenuating circumstances).

Current PhD students within a health and medical research field at a Victorian academic or research institute, with a minimum candidature of 2 years as of 1 September 2026, may apply for the First Peoples Researcher Award so long as they meet all requirements of this award.

Further information regarding the eligibility criteria is detailed within the program guidelines, available on the Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions website.

Does prize money need to be spent on research-related activities?

Prize money awarded through this program is intended to support the ongoing work and development of the recipient. It is at the recipient's discretion how they choose to do this.

Questions about the applications and assessment process

What are the key dates for the program?

Key dates for the 2026-27 Premier's Awards for Health and Medical Research will be listed on the Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions website. Key program dates are indicative only and may be subject to change.

How do I apply?

You can apply online using the online application form available on the Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions website.

Can I complete my application over multiple sessions or resume an application in progress?

Applicants will be required to register through the application portal in order to 'Save as Draft' or 'Submit' an application form. Applicants will be able to access their application through a

link which will be sent to them once their application has been commenced, following registration.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to complete their application in one session to minimise the risk of technical issues and errors.

What supporting documents will I need to provide in my application?

All applicants will be required to meet the following documentation requirements

- Project title
- Project summary
- Project report
- Referees and reference letters (x2) – letters as attachments
- Curriculum Vitae (CV) – as an attachment.

Additional attestation and documentation requirements apply depending to the type of award being applied for. Please refer to section 6 (Documentation and information requirements – all applicants) of the program guidelines available on the Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions website.

How will the personal information I provide through my application be managed?

As part of the Premier's Awards for Health and Medical Research (the Awards), the Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions (DJSIR) will be collecting personal information to administer the Awards (including but not limited to Awards monitoring and evaluation), assess eligibility, and contact applicants about their application. Personal information will be shared with third-party assessors, who are a selection panel comprising of members of the Victorian health and medical research community.

If personal information of a third party is included in the application, the applicant must ensure the third party has consented to their personal information being handled in accordance with the Privacy collection notice and the Awards program guidelines.

Any personal information collected, held, managed, used, disclosed, or transferred will be held in accordance with the *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014* and other applicable laws. For any concerns regarding the regarding the privacy of personal information, DJSIR's Privacy Team can be contact at privacy@ecodev.vic.gov.au.

How will my application be assessed?

Eligibility will be reviewed by the Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions and an eligibility report will be provided to an independent (external) expert selection panel.

Eligible applications will be assessed by the expert selection panel comprising leading members of the Victorian health and medical research community, representing a broad range of health and medical research fields.

The panel will review eligible applications against set assessment criteria in section 4.3 (Assessment criteria) of the program guidelines and recommend award finalists and winners for consideration and approval by the responsible minister.

Can I nominate someone else in place of the Head of the department or organisation where my nominated research project was or is undertaken, as my referee?

Applicants must nominate 2 referees and one of these must be from the Head of the department or organisation where the nominated (one) research project was or is undertaken. Each referee must provide one reference letter.

What character, word, page or related restrictions apply for application documentation requirements?

Applicants must adhere to the following character and word limits withing documentation supplied as part of their application:

- **Project title:** up to 210 characters including spaces
- **Project summary:** up to 1,750 characters including spaces
- **Project report:** up to 7,000 characters including spaces
- **Reference letters:** must ensure that the letters are completed on the academic or research institute's letterhead and use the reference letter template accessible through the Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions website.
- **Curriculum Vitae (CV):** should aim to be no more than 3 pages with 12-point font.

Please note that the character limitation is a feature of the application portal. The application portal will not accept content exceeding the character limits.

Please refer to the program guidelines for a detailed list of documentation requirements, available on the Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions website.

Is the character limit for the project report inclusive of references, tables and figures?

The 7,000-character limit (inclusive of space) is inclusive of references. This field should be completed with text only – tables and figures cannot be included due to system limitations.

Must I adhere to the document requirements outlined in the program guidelines, including document formats, character and word limits or page limits specified?

Yes. Applicants are expected to adhere to the documentation requirements relevant to the award nominated as part of their application.

Applicants must meet all required attestation, declaration and document requirements in the required form and substance to be eligible for award consideration.

Are there any restrictions on the number of applications per applicant?

Yes. Applicants must only submit one application for consideration. Applicants must only apply for one category award and are responsible for ensuring that they meet the requirements of the award they are applying for.

I work in a research office. Are there any limits or restrictions on the number of applications that can be submitted from a single organisation?

Each applicant is only permitted to submit one application using their personal email address.

Applications must not be submitted by third parties (such as research offices) on behalf of an applicant, nor submitted from shared organisational email addresses.

There is no limitation or restriction on the number of applications with reference to the affiliated organisation.

I work in a research office. Can different applicants nominate the same organisational referee for these awards?

There is no limitation or restriction pertaining to the nomination of a given referee by different applicants.

Can I submit my application from a shared mailbox or can someone else submit my application on my behalf.

No. You should submit a maximum of one application for consideration, using your own email address.

Applications must not:

- be submitted by third parties on behalf of an applicant
- be submitted from shared organisational email addresses – for example, shared mailboxes of research departments.

Can my application be considered for multiple category awards?

No. It is recognised that applicants may have been eligible to apply for more than one category award. Applicants will only be considered for the category award they have nominated in their application.

How will I know if my application has been successfully submitted for consideration?

Submitted applications will be acknowledged via automated email. Please check your spam and junk mail folder/s if the confirmation email cannot be seen in your inbox.

Can I make changes to my application after it has been submitted?

No. You will not be able to make changes to your application after it has been submitted. Please prepare your application in advance to ensure you provide all required information.

Applicants are responsible for ensuring that their application is submitted with all required information by the application closing date.

I've submitted my application and realised that it is missing content, what should I do?

Applicants are responsible for ensuring that their application is submitted with all required information by the application closing date and time. Applicants may seek authorisation from

the Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions to re-submit their application in limited circumstances – for example, if they have encountered genuine technical issue/s with their submission. Please note that such requests will be assessed on a case-by-case basis and there is no guarantee that re-submission will be accepted or permitted.

If you believe that your submitted application meets the grounds for re-submission, please contact the Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions at ohmr@ecodev.vic.gov.au as soon as possible.

Questions about finalists and winners

When will applicants be notified about the outcome of their application?

It is anticipated that all applicants will be advised via email of the outcome of their application. Key dates for the 2026-27 Premier's Awards for Health and Medical Research will be listed on the Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions website.

I have been advised that my application has been unsuccessful. Can I request feedback?

No. Feedback on individual applications will not be provided.

I have been advised that my application has been unsuccessful. Can I request that my application be re-reviewed or re-considered?

No. A ministerial decision in relation to an application is not subject to review or appeal of any kind.

I have been advised that I am an award finalist. What additional commitments must I adhere to?

Finalists will be notified and invited to an awards ceremony (date to be confirmed), at which they will be formally publicly announced.

Finalists must agree to commit to:

- not disclose knowledge or make any reference to their status as a finalist of an award until otherwise advised by the Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions
- attend the awards ceremony (exemptions will apply in certain circumstances)
- work with the Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions in the development of media opportunities designed to support and promote the Premier's Awards for Health and Medical Research and its awards ceremony. This may include the production and submission of video footage, and/or photography for publication and promotional purposes.

For further information, please refer to section 7 (Finalists and winners) of the program guidelines available on the Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions website.

I have been advised that I am an award winner. What additional commitments must I adhere to?

Winners will be notified and invited to an awards ceremony (date to be confirmed), at which they will be formally publicly announced.

Winners must agree to:

- not disclose knowledge or make any reference to their status as a winner of an award until otherwise advised by the Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions
- attend the awards ceremony (exemptions will apply in certain circumstances)
- work with the Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions in the development of media opportunities designed to support and promote the Premier's Awards for Health and Medical Research and its awards ceremony. This may include the production and submission of video footage, and/or photography for publication and promotional purposes.
- acknowledge receipt of the award in their Curriculum Vitae for a 10-year period
- keep the Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions updated with any significant career related news and achievements, via email at ohmr@ecodev.vic.gov.au.

The Premier's Award for Health and Medical Research Excellence winner is expected to provide a short speech at the ceremony upon receipt of their award. They may also be invited to participate in additional media and promotional opportunities by the Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions.

For further information, please refer to section 7 (Finalists and winners) of the program guidelines available on the Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions website.

Are there any other applicant commitments?

The terms and conditions of the Awards are as outlined in the program guidelines and application form available on the Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions website.

Applicants must agree to participate in monitoring and evaluation of the Premier's Awards for Health and Medical Research program for a period of up to 3 years.

I have been advised that I am an award winner. When will I receive my prize money?

The Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions will communicate relevant information to award winners in due course.

Where can I find more information?

For further information regarding the Premier's Awards for Health and Medical Research, including the program guidelines and information regarding past award winners, please visit the Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions website.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to review the program guidelines and this FAQs document which provide clear details on eligibility requirements for each award before contacting the department with any questions. Applicants are advised that departmental staff will not provide advice to applicants regarding their individual circumstances relating to their eligibility for award consideration.

Acknowledging this, if you have any other questions while the application period is open, please contact the Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions, via email at ohmr@ecodev.vic.gov.au.