



Australian Government
Department of Education,
Skills and Employment

COPY

To Acting Minister for Education and Youth

CC Minister for Regionalisation, Regional Communications and Regional Education

Subject Trailblazer Universities Program – Expression of Interest (EOI) assessment shortlisting

Action date Please action by 28 January 2022. The reason is to enable the Department of Education, Skills and Employment to contact shortlisted applicants, to ensure sufficient time to complete their business case.

Recommendation(s) - That you:

- | | |
|--|-------------------------------|
| 1) agree the shortlisted university applicants, as recommended by the Trailblazer Assessment Panel (<u>Attachment A</u>) | agreed / not agreed |
| 2) note the Department will work with your office to finalise and publish a media release (<u>Attachment B</u>) announcing the shortlisted applicants. | noted / please discuss |

Signature:

___/___/2022

Comments

Noted by McKenzie MO. 28/1/22

Executive summary

- The expert assessment panel has identified eight applications from the Expression of Interest (EOI) stage of the Trailblazer Universities Program to progress to the second and final assessment stage. The value of the shortlisted proposals is \$819 million including the commitment of Commonwealth funding, industry and university funding and in-kind commitments. A description of the shortlisted Trailblazer University proposals is provided at Attachment A.
- The Department of Education, Skills and Employment will work closely with your office to finalise a media release announcing shortlisted Trailblazer Universities, subject to your approval. A draft media release is provided at Attachment B.
- The proposed shortlist was selected from a pool of 21 applications. An overview of all applications received is provided at Attachment C.

Key points

- On 19 November 2021, the Prime Minister, the Hon Scott Morrison MP, announced the Trailblazer Universities Program, \$242.7 million in funding to support four universities, including at least one regional university, to supercharge prioritised research under the Government's National Manufacturing Priorities (NMP) and develop closer ties with industry. This includes a total of \$30 million for participating universities to partner with CSIRO and access specialist equipment (Test Lab) to support research translation and commercialisation outcomes.

5. Applications involve a two-stage process, with all Table A and Table B universities invited to submit an EOI by 17 January 2022. Shortlisted applicants will be invited to complete a more substantial business case for stage two.
6. The Department received 21 EOI applications from lead universities, including three regionally headquartered universities (Charles Sturt University, ^{s 47G} and the University of Southern Queensland).
7. Applications were received against each of the six National Manufacturing Priorities including five for Food and Beverage, four for Defence, four for Recycling and Clean Energy, four for Medical Products, four for Defence, three for Space, and one for Resources Technology and Critical Minerals Processing.
8. The 21 applications were generally of a high standard and included strong collaboration and co-funding from industry and university partners as required by the program guidelines. The total value of the proposals submitted was \$2.9 billion, demonstrating the commitment of all partners.
9. All applications were assessed by a panel of university, industry, science and research leaders which comprised Mr Tony Cook PSM, Deputy Secretary of Higher Education, Research and International Group (Chair), Ms Janean Richards, First Assistant Secretary, Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources (DISER), Emeritus Professor Paul Wellings CBE, former Vice-Chancellor of the University of Wollongong, Mr Andrew Stevens, Chair of Industry, Innovation and Science Australia, Ms Judi Zielke, Chief Operating Officer at CSIRO (EOI stage only) and Mr Dom English, First Assistant Secretary, Higher Education Division. Biographies of the assessment panel are provided at Attachment D.
10. The Trailblazer Program Guidelines outlined the selection criteria against which applications would be assessed. These criteria were used by the panel in its assessment of applications and included:
 - Commercialisation readiness, including evidence of:
 - pathways to support commercialisation projects, and proactive approaches to engaging with businesses to select and conduct research projects
 - focus of Intellectual Property and industrial arrangements that promote university-industry collaboration and reward academics working with industry.
 - Research capability to support a National Manufacturing Priority, including evidence of:
 - examples of promising research commercialisation projects, to be supported by the university
 - unique assets, resources, and capabilities already resident in the university, which support the ambitions of the Trailblazer Universities Program
 - identifying how the engagement with the CSIRO, including the need and utility of CSIRO Test lab, can elevate the translation and commercial potential of the university.
 - Industry alignment, including evidence of:
 - collaborative partnerships with industry, including matched funding commitments
 - opportunities for staff interchanges between university and industry, including development and provision of industry PhD programs
 - development and implementation of educational qualifications relevant to the chosen NMP, developed and delivered in collaboration with industry partners
 - strengthening of new pathways with the vocational education and training (VET) sector.
11. Successfully shortlisted universities will be required to provide a business case by 15 March 2022 and deliver a 'pitch' to the assessment panel, for their final recommendation to you in late March.

The Department will provide feedback from the assessment panel to successful and unsuccessful universities. Successful universities will be provided with guidance by the secretariat on the commentary made by the panel secretariat in the EOI stage to ensure that their business case applications are thorough and address all required information.

Government policy issues and impact on other portfolios

12. The Department worked with the Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources (DISER) and the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) on the shortlisting of EOI applications with representatives from both organisations on the assessment panel.
13. Following announcement of the shortlist, CSIRO will no longer be involved in the assessment process and instead work closely with applicants to finalise the Test Lab component of their bid.

Key risks and mitigation

14. To provide funds to selected Trailblazer Universities by 1 July 2022, updates to the *Other Grant Guidelines (Research) 2017* recognising the Trailblazer Universities Program will also be provided to your office for approval.
15. There may be some criticism expressed by unsuccessful universities, particularly given that only eight could be shortlisted across six National Manufacturing Priority areas. Unsuccessful applicants will be encouraged by the Department to continue to engage with the Government's University Research Commercialisation reform agenda particularly following the launch of Australia's Economic Accelerator (AEA) (MS22-000014 refers).

Budget impact, financial considerations

16. The Trailblazer Universities Program represents \$242.7 million in new administered funding to the universities from 202122 to 202526. This funding is indexed and includes a total of \$30 million for participating universities to partner with CSIRO on new Test Lab equipment.

Background

17. Successful Trailblazer Universities will form part of an ecosystem of innovation centres that enhance Australia's research workforce and encourage the translation and commercialisation of university research in areas of national priority.
18. As outlined in the program guidelines and EOI template, participating universities are expected to demonstrate:
 - commitment to supercharging world-leading capability behind the six National Manufacturing Priorities
 - adoption of the Higher Education Research Commercialisation Intellectual Property Framework
 - use of incentives and rewards for research staff who engage with industry and commercialise research
 - co-funding commitments from industry and university partners
 - opportunities and pathways that promote strong industry engagement and job-ready skills, including pathways to the Vocational and Education Training sector.

Communications and media strategy

19. Following your agreement to the shortlisted Trailblazer Universities, the Department will publish the outcome of the EOI process on the Department's website and work with your office to finalise the draft media release announcing shortlisted universities (Attachment B).

Stakeholder consultation

20. The Prime Minister's announcement of the Trailblazer Universities Program was warmly received by the sector in November 2021.
21. On 9 December 2021, Universities Australia hosted a Trailblazer Briefing Session with Mr Tony Cook and Mr Dom English, providing the opportunity for university Vice-Chancellors and Deputy Vice-Chancellors to ask questions about the Trailblazer Universities Program. The Trailblazer Briefing Session was supported through the provision of program guidelines and frequently asked questions on the Department's website.

Attachments

- Attachment A Trailblazer shortlisted applicants
- Attachment B Draft media release to announce Trailblazer shortlist
- Attachment C Overview of applications received
- Attachment D Assessment Panel Biographies

Clearance

Primary Contact Officer:	s 22	s 22
University Research Commercialisation Taskforce		Ph: s 22
HERI Higher Education		Mobile: s 22
Clearance Officer:	s 22	s 22
Higher Education Division		Ph: s 22
HERI Higher Education		Mobile: s 22

Trailblazer shortlisted applicants

Lead university (^{s 47G} regional) National Manufacturing priority (NMP) Project name	Proposal funding	Description
--	---------------------	-------------

s 22

Deakin University
NMP: Recycling and clean
energy
Project: *Recycling and
Renewable Energy
Commercialisation Hub
(REACH)*

Total:
^{s 47G}

Grant request:
\$50,000,000

The Recycling and Renewable Energy Commercialisation Hub (REACH) will build on Deakin's success in innovative and sustainable manufacturing solutions, with an industry led, Circular Economy approach to the NMP of Recycling and Clean Energy. Accelerating innovative recycling and clean energy technology commercialisation, is conservatively estimated to deliver revenue of ^{s 47G}

^{s 47G}

s 22

s 22

s 22



The Hon Stuart Robert MP
Acting Minister for Education and Youth

DRAFT MEDIA RELEASE

[Weekday], [Date] January 2022

Trailblazing universities shortlisted to boost economic recovery

Ground-breaking research commercialisation proposals across the six national manufacturing priority areas, including food and beverage, recycling and clean energy, defence, medical products, space and resources and technology, are among those to be shortlisted to play a leading role in Australia's economic recovery.

Acting Minister for Education and Youth, the Hon. Stuart Robert MP, today announced the eight projects shortlisted to compete for a share in \$242.7 million in funding under the Australian Government's new Trailblazer Universities program.

'The program will see the best minds in research and industry work together to develop Australian technologies, products and businesses to create jobs and boost the economy,' Minister Robert said.

'The high quality of the 21 proposals we received demonstrates the strong appetite for universities and business to work more closely together on projects of national importance.

'The four proposals that ultimately succeed in receiving funding will lead Australia's efforts in research commercialisation and support our critical national manufacturing priorities.'

'They will also help demonstrate what it takes to build successful and enduring partnerships between university and private sector researchers that prioritise a focus on the national interest.'

The shortlisted applicants are:

- University of Queensland, Food and beverage – *Accelerating growth in Australia's Food and Beverage manufacturing*
- Charles Sturt University, Food and beverage – *Reshaping Australian Manufacturing: Food and Beverage Commercialisation Hub*
- Deakin University, Recycling and clean energy – *Recycling and Renewable Energy Commercialisation Hub (REACH)*
- University of New South Wales, Recycling and clean energy – *Australian Trailblazer for Recycling and Clean Energy (ATRaCE)*
- University of Adelaide, Defence – *Defence Trailblazer for Concept to Sovereign Capability (CSC)*
- University of Melbourne, Medical products – *Medical Products Trailblazer*
- University of Southern Queensland, Space – *Innovative Launch, Automation, Novel Materials, Communications and Hypersonics Hub (The iLAuNCH Hub)*
- Curtin University, Technology and critical minerals – *Resources Technology Trailblazer*

The proposals were selected by a panel of university, industry, science, and research leaders including:

- Department of Education, Skills and Employment (DESE) Deputy Secretary Tony Cook PSM (Chair),
- Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources First Assistant Secretary Janean Richards,
- Former University of Wollongong Vice-Chancellor Emeritus Professor Paul Wellings CBE,
- Industry Innovation and Science Australia Chair Andrew Stevens,
- CSIRO Chief Operating Officer Judi Zielke; and
- DESE First Assistant Secretary Dom English.

The total value of the proposals submitted for the Trailblazer Universities Program was \$2.9 billion in funding and in-kind commitments from both the universities and their industry partners to drive research to commercialisation success.

The shortlisted universities will be invited to provide a detailed business case to further support their proposal. Outcomes of the selection process will be announced in late March.

The Trailblazer Universities Program is the first step of the Government's university research commercialisation reform agenda.

Further information on the Trailblazer Universities Program is available at: [Trailblazer Universities Program - Department of Education, Skills and Employment, Australian Government \(dese.gov.au\)](https://www.dese.gov.au/trailblazer-universities-program)

[ENDS]

Media contact: Minister Robert's Office (02) 6277 7610

Application Overview - Trailblazer Universities Program

National Manufacturing Priority	Lead university	Proposal size	Grant request	Assessment
s 22	*Regional university			

s 22 Recycling and clean energy	Deakin University s 22	s 47G	\$50,000,000	Recommended
------------------------------------	---------------------------	-------	--------------	-------------

s 22

Trailblazer Assessment Panel

Tony Cook PSM, Deputy Secretary, Higher Education, Research and International (Chair)

Tony Cook is the Deputy Secretary of the Higher Education, Research and International Group. Prior to commencing with the department, Tony was the Director General of the Department of Education, Queensland. Tony previously held the role as Associate Secretary for Schools and Youth in the former Department of Education and Training.



In October 2013, Tony was made Honorary Fellow of the Australian Council for Education Leaders. In January 2014, he was awarded the Public Service Medal for outstanding public service in driving the schools policy and funding reform in Australia.

Tony is a registered primary school teacher with a major in early childhood education. He holds a Bachelor of Education from the Queensland University of Technology.

Paul Wellings CBE, Former Vice-Chancellor, University of Wollongong

Emeritus Professor Paul Wellings CBE was Vice-Chancellor of University of Wollongong from 2012 to 2021, and previously Vice-Chancellor of Lancaster University from 2002-2011. Educated in the UK, Professor Wellings' career experience includes a NERC research fellowship and senior positions at the CSIRO and Department of Industry, Science and Resources.



He has extensive board experience, including with the Australian Research Council (ARC) Advisory Committee, the Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation (ANSTO), the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR), and some of the UK's peak education and research bodies. He is currently a board member of the University of Wollongong Global Enterprises and Trustee of the University of Wollongong USA Foundation. Professor Wellings also serves on the Ministerial Advisory Council for Free Trade Agreements, NSW Innovation and Productivity Council, NSW Domestic and Family Violence and Sexual Assault Corporate Leadership Group, the Global Foundation Advisory Council, Bundanon Trust and Regional Development Australia-Illawarra Board.

Professor Wellings was appointed Commander of the British Empire (CBE) in the 2012 Queen's Birthday Honours list for services to higher education. He received an Honorary DSc from Lancaster University in 2014 and an Honorary DUniv from University of Surrey in 2019.

Andrew Stevens, Chair of Innovation and Science Australia

Andrew Stevens is currently the Chair of Innovation and Science Australia. He is an experienced Non-executive Director, with extensive background as an international leader in technology and professional services.



Andrew has expertise in change management, business and ICT program design, risk evaluation, governance and delivery, business transformation, regional and global expansion. He was formerly the Managing Director of IBM Australia and New Zealand, Chief Operating Officer at Price Waterhouse and PricewaterhouseCoopers.

Currently director or member of a number of boards including: ^{s 47F} , Stockland Group Ltd, ^{s 47F} ^{s 47F} , ^{s 47F} ^{s 47F} .

. Andrew is also the Chair of the Data Standards Body for Consumer Data Right implementation in Australia, and a member of the Male Champions of Change.

Judi Zielke, Chief Operating Officer, CSIRO (EOI assessment only)

Judi Zielke is the Chief Operating Officer at CSIRO and heads the Operations Group responsible for finance, property, governance, and corporate affairs. Until her transfer to the CSIRO in October 2018, Judi was the Department's Deputy Secretary responsible for regional development and local government, territories and corporate services.



Judi has had extensive experience in the public sector, encompassing a range of policy advice and implementation positions in the Australian Government in areas of Trade, Attorney General's, Industry and Innovation, and Infrastructure. She is also a Member of the Board of the Queensland Reconstruction Authority.

Janean Richards, First Assistant Secretary, Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources

Janean joined the Australian Government Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources in 2018 as Chief Operating Officer before taking over the Science and Commercialisation Division in November 2020. Recently leading an Australian Public Service (APS) wide review of mental health capability, Janean is committed to the delivery of citizen-centred public services.



Janean has more than 15 years' experience in senior executive positions across the APS. She has worked in strategic policy development, legislative reform, regulatory services, program and service delivery roles in areas including science and industry policy, legal and social policy and disability services.

Prior to joining the APS, Janean worked with government and non-government clients as the commercial dispute resolution Partner with Deacons Lawyers, Canberra. Janean has a Masters in Law from the Australian National University. She received the President's Medal from the Law Society of the Australian Capital Territory in 2015 and Australian Corporate Lawyers Association, Government Lawyer of the Year Award in 2014.

Dom English, First Assistant Secretary, Higher Education Division

Dom English has worked in the Australian Government for more than twenty years across a range of portfolios. This includes the Finance, Immigration and Prime Ministers portfolio.

In these roles Dom has advised on a range of economic, strategic and social policy issues, such as education, workplace relations, tax reform, federal relations, immigration and border control, Indigenous affairs and employment programs.



Dom joined the Department of Education in January 2014 as Group Manager in the Higher Education, Research and International Group. He is currently responsible for policy and programs in the areas of higher education, research, research infrastructure, access and equity. He has undergraduate and postgraduate qualifications in economics.

OFFICIAL: Sensitive

MS22-000028

Ministerial Submission

Urgent/Low Complexity



Australian Government
Department of Education,
Skills and Employment

To Acting Minister for Education and Youth

CC Minister for Regionalisation, Regional Communications and Regional Education

Subject Trailblazer Universities Program – Expression of Interest (EOI) assessment shortlisting

Action date Please action by 28 January 2022. The reason is to enable the Department of Education, Skills and Employment to contact shortlisted applicants, to ensure sufficient time to complete their business case.

Recommendation(s) - That you:

- 1) agree the shortlisted university applicants, as recommended by the Trailblazer Assessment Panel (Attachment A)
- 2) note the Department will work with your office to finalise and publish a media release (Attachment B) announcing the shortlisted applicants.^{s 47F}

agreed / not agreed

noted / please discuss

Signature:

24 / 1 2022

Comments

Executive summary

- 1. The expert assessment panel has identified eight applications from the Expression of Interest (EOI) stage of the Trailblazer Universities Program to progress to the second and final assessment stage. The value of the shortlisted proposals is \$819 million including the commitment of Commonwealth funding, industry and university funding and in-kind commitments. A description of the shortlisted Trailblazer University proposals is provided at Attachment A.
- 2. The Department of Education, Skills and Employment will work closely with your office to finalise a media release announcing shortlisted Trailblazer Universities, subject to your approval. A draft media release is provided at Attachment B.
- 3. The proposed shortlist was selected from a pool of 21 applications. An overview of all applications received is provided at Attachment C.

Key points

- 4. On 19 November 2021, the Prime Minister, the Hon Scott Morrison MP, announced the Trailblazer Universities Program, \$242.7 million in funding to support four universities, including at least one regional university, to supercharge prioritised research under the Government’s National Manufacturing Priorities (NMP) and develop closer ties with industry. This includes a total of \$30 million for participating universities to partner with CSIRO and access specialist equipment (Test Lab) to support research translation and commercialisation outcomes.

OFFICIAL: Sensitive

EDUCATION AND YOUTH QTB
International

Category: Higher Education, Research and

PDR: QB22-000027

Trailblazer Universities Program

- On 2X March 2021 I announced the successful Trailblazer Universities [insert list – to be updated following announcement].
- In November 2021, the Prime Minister announced the \$242.7 million Trailblazer Universities Program, the first step in the Government's university research commercialisation reform agenda.
- The Trailblazer Universities Program is part of a \$2.2 billion package of reforms announced by the Prime Minister on 1 February 2022 under the Governments University Research Commercialisation (URC) Action Plan.
- The URC Action Plan, released on 2 February 2022, outlines a series of reform priorities aimed at supporting the translation of Australian research into new commercial products that will provide the basis of the innovative new businesses and jobs of the future.
- The Trailblazer Universities Program will support Australia's best minds to produce cutting-edge research that can be used to deliver real world outcomes in line with Australia's National Manufacturing Priorities, including defence, space, resources technology, food and beverage, clean energy, and medical products.

Contact Officer s 22	Phone s 22	Date Created 21 January 2022	Date Updated/Reviewed 17 March 2022
-------------------------	---------------	---------------------------------	---

PDR: QB22-000027

- The Program will provide up to \$50 million over four years to each Trailblazer University to strengthen their commercialisation capacity, hire leading researchers and innovators and establish industry-aligned courses that respond to the job-ready skills of the future.
- Trailblazer Universities will be provided an additional \$30 million in funding (across the four selected universities) to access specialist CSIRO industry Test Lab equipment.
- Expressions of Interest (EOI) to the Trailblazer Universities Program closed 17 January 2022. The Department of Education, Skills and Employment (the Department) received 22 high quality applications across the six National Manufacturing Priorities.
- I am pleased to see the universities working closely with their industry partners to develop ambitious and exciting proposals that will boost Australia's economic recovery. The total value of the proposals submitted for the Trailblazer Universities Program was over \$2.9 billion in cash and in-kind commitments from both the universities and their industry partners to drive research to commercialisation success.
- The assessment panel comprised of university, industry and research sector experts shortlisted the following eight applications:

PDR: QB22-000027

1. University of Queensland, Food and beverage – Accelerating growth in Australia’s Food and Beverage manufacturing
 2. Charles Sturt University, Food and beverage – Reshaping Australian Manufacturing: Food and Beverage Commercialisation Hub
 3. Deakin University, Recycling and clean energy – Recycling and Renewable Energy Commercialisation Hub (REACH)
 4. University of New South Wales, Recycling and clean energy – Australian Trailblazer for Recycling and Clean Energy (ATRaCE)
 5. University of Adelaide, Defence – Defence Trailblazer for Concept to Sovereign Capability (CSC)
 6. University of Melbourne, Medical products – Medical Products Trailblazer
 7. University of Southern Queensland, Space – Innovative Launch, Automation, Novel Materials, Communications and Hypersonics Hub (The iLAuNCH Hub)
 8. Curtin University, Resources technology and critical minerals processing – Resources Technology Trailblazer
- Shortlisted universities provided a detailed business case to further support their proposal to the Department on 15 March 2022.

ISSUES

Universities are already strong at commercialising research

- Universities are already strong at commercialising research, but we want to help them do more, building on their connection with industry.
- Professor Andrew Norton has criticised under investment in the Trailblazer Universities Program, claiming that more funding is required to substantially grow Australia's research commercialisation outcomes (Australian Financial Review, "PM's uni research plan a 'pitiful amount of money'").
- Noting the massive range in university spending – ranging from around \$10 million per year to over \$1 billion per year – an investment of \$15 million a year is a very considerable boost to universities' current research budget.
- It is the Government's expectation that the Trailblazer Universities Program will leverage existing investment in the higher education sector, including \$3 billion from the Education portfolio for research.
- It will also build on and strengthen whole-of-Government investment in Australia's National Manufacturing Priorities, ensuring research outputs are more targeted toward areas of national strength.

PDR: QB22-000027

- There are limitations to research commercialisation datasets, including the survey data referenced by Andrew Norton. Survey of Commercialisation Outcomes from Public Research (SCOPR) data is only a few years old, and respondents are not always consistent.
- While there are certainly examples of research commercialisation success, there is room to do more, and we want to help universities achieve that outcome.
- The Trailblazer Universities Program will support Australian universities to leverage the boom in research translation and commercialisation anticipated over the next decade.

Size and source of funding

- \$242.7 million for the Trailblazer Universities Program represents a significant, new investment in Australian university research.
- An investment by the Trailblazers program of \$60 million per university over four years – or \$15 million per year – equates to around 8 per cent of universities' median research spending in 2018.
- The Trailblazer Universities Program is part of a broader package of reforms worth \$2.2 billion over 11 years.

Number of universities is too small

- Some universities are already showing themselves to be early leaders on business collaboration and commercialisation. They are

PDR: QB22-000027

taking more risks, engaging in new partnerships, and leaning into future-focused innovation.

- The Government wants to work with these universities, and the funding provided will help them increase their research impact at-scale and at-speed.
- This is the first step in the Government's research commercialisation reform agenda and there will be more opportunities for universities to access funding to support research commercialisation including through Australia's Economic Accelerator.

Alignment with other programs

- The Trailblazer Universities Program builds on and complements other significant investments which aim to foster university-industry collaboration and commercialisation outcomes, including the
 1. Australian Research Council's Industrial Transformation Research Program
 2. Cooperative Research Centres Program
 3. Modern Manufacturing Initiative grants.

Alignment to the National Manufacturing Priorities

- Australia's National Manufacturing Priorities are areas in which Australia can compete on the global stage, create new jobs and new wealth.

PDR: QB22-000027

- We will back in these priorities to create critical mass and support our university researchers to deliver breakthrough R&D, as well as our leading industry players and venture capital firms leaning in and investing in these areas.
- Public consultation with universities and industry bodies supported a priority-aligned research agenda.

Interaction with Intellectual Property Framework

- Universities have argued that mandating the Higher Education Research Commercialisation IP (HERC IP) Framework would act as a deterrent for business collaboration. These criticisms were strengthened following the announcement of the Trailblazer Universities Program, which requires IP generated from the program be subject to the HERC IP Framework.
- The Trailblazer Universities Program will still be subject to the HERC IP Framework (noting its delay to March 2022). The framework will provide standardised licensing and contractual agreements for intellectual property rights to establish a strong foundation for negotiating and managing successful university-industry collaborations and partnerships. Through the consultation on university research commercialisation, IP was frequently identified as a key barrier to universities and business working together.
- Industry partners will be free to use their own preferred agreement where they do not wish to use a standard template.

Industrial relations arrangements

- A lack of incentives for university researchers to embark on entrepreneurial or commercial pathways was a significant issue raised in the public consultation.
- We want our Trailblazer Universities to have strategies to promote a high-performance culture and support the achievement of commercialisation outcomes, for example through remuneration, reward and promotional arrangements for researchers engaging in commercialisation activities.
- We are not mandating changes to industrial relations law. We are asking universities to look at their policies and strategies and consider how they can promote commercialisation outcomes.
- Many universities have been thinking about this – we are keen to hear from universities about what they can do with this program that can lead to a high-performance culture that rewards researchers who work closely with industry. I expect this will look different in each Trailblazer University – universities know their business best.

BACKGROUND

- Since 2020, the Australian Government has worked closely with an Expert Panel of university and industry leaders, chaired by Mr Jeff Connolly, CEO of Siemens Australia and New Zealand, to determine the best way to support universities in their endeavour to translate and commercialise research.
- The Trailblazer Universities Program is the first in a series of steps to shift the dial on university research commercialisation in Australia.

Application and assessment process

- The Trailblazer Universities Program involves a two-stage application process – a short expression of interest with shortlisted applicants invited to provide a more comprehensive business case for final assessment. The business case will be due to the Department on 15 March 2022.
- An assessment panel with significant experience and expertise across government, higher education, industry, and innovation sectors was established by the Department to review applications. The panel is chaired by Mr Tony Cook PSM, Deputy Secretary of the Higher Education, Research, and International Group in the Department, and includes:
 - Ms Janean Richards, First Assistant Secretary, Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources

PDR: QB22-000027

- Emeritus Professor Paul Wellings CBE, former Vice-Chancellor of the University of Wollongong
 - Mr Andrew Stevens, Chair of Industry Innovation and Science Australia
 - Ms Judi Zielke, Chief Operating Officer, CSIRO (at EOI stage only)
 - Mr Dom English, First Assistant Secretary, Department of Education, Skills and Employment.
- Funding for the program will be awarded for up to four years, from 1 July 2022 until 30 June 2026.
 - Day-to-day administration of the Trailblazer Universities Program will be provided by the Department, with support from CSIRO to manage the Test Lab component.

MEDIA

- 13 December 2021, The Australian Financial Review, ('Researchers research, they are not entrepreneurs'). It is not the individual responsibility of universities, government, or business to address the commercialisation issue; collective responsibility and action is essential. While academic researchers can become more entrepreneurial, they should not become entrepreneurs. What is needed is a commercial development capability that can support researchers engage in the commercialisation process. This may include experienced commercialisation managers who speak the language of both academia and business to effectively negotiate IP agreements.
- 26 November 2021, The Australian Financial Review, ('PM's uni research plan a 'pitiful amount of money)'). Andrew Norton, a higher education policy expert at the Australian National University, indicates that the Trailblazer Universities Program is 'misguided' in its view of innovation and that the mandated IP templates will be a big deterrent to potential industry partners. The article raises that Trailblazers may be a big effort for little reward program for universities and highlights that the Group of Eight universities generate twice the amount of commercialisation revenue compared to Stanford University.
- 26 November 2021, Innovation Aus ('Uni commercialisation plan will create 'different class' of research). Dr Alison Barnes, national president of the National Tertiary Education Union, states that the Trailblazer Universities Program 'lacks detail', specifically regarding the source of the \$242 million funding. Dr Barnes also stated that the proposal will only create a different 'class' of researcher, which will drive insecure employment for those that don't meet business criteria but perform just as vital work.



Australian Government

Department of Education,
Skills and Employment

To Acting Minister for Education and Youth

Subject Trailblazer Universities Program consultation with other Ministers on final selections

Action date Please action by 22 March 2022. The reason is to allow for selection of Trailblazer University Program projects immediately after assessment.

Recommendation - That you:

- 1) **sign** the attached letters to the Prime Minister, the Hon Scott Morrison MP, and other relevant Ministers on the final project selection for the Trailblazer Universities Program.

signed / not signed

Signature:

____ / ____ 2022

Comments

Letters e-signed. Thank you.
s 22

Executive summary

1. You are required to consult with relevant Ministers and the Prime Minister on the final selection for the Trailblazer Universities Program. Attached are letters to the Prime Minister and other relevant Ministers advising them of the shortlisted Trailblazer Universities and inviting their views.

Key points

2. Following the endorsement of the university research commercialisation package in 2021, you are required to consult with the Prime Minister and other relevant Ministers on the final selection for the Trailblazer Universities Program. Letters to fulfil this requirement are attached, including for the Prime Minister (Attachment A), Minister for Regionalisation, Regional Communications and Regional Education, Senator the Hon Bridget McKenzie (Attachment B), Minister for Industry, Energy and Emissions Reduction, the Hon Angus Taylor MP (Attachment C), and Minister for Science and Technology, the Hon Melissa Price MP (Attachment D), along with a description of the eight shortlisted Trailblazer projects to be enclosed with each letter (Attachment E).
3. Final applications from the eight shortlisted applicants were due on 15 March 2022 and the universities will present to the assessment panel on 22 March 2022. The Department of Education, Skills and Employment will brief you shortly after this process concludes. Your office has indicated that an announcement of the selected Trailblazer Universities may occur as early as 25 March 2022. Given that this timing does not allow for consultation after applications have been assessed, the attached letters reference the eight shortlisted universities to fulfil the consultation requirement.



Australian Government
**Department of Education,
Skills and Employment**

Ministerial Submission

Urgent/Low Complexity

To **Acting Minister for Education and Youth**

Subject **Trailblazer Universities Program consultation with other Ministers on final selections**

Action date **Please action by 22 March 2022.** The reason is to allow for selection of Trailblazer University Program projects immediately after assessment.

Recommendation - That you:

- 1) **sign** the attached letters to the Prime Minister, the Hon Scott Morrison MP, and other relevant Ministers on the final project selection for the Trailblazer Universities Program.

signed / not signed

Signature: _____

____ / ____ 2023

Comments

Executive summary

1. You are required to consult with relevant Ministers and the Prime Minister on the final selection for the Trailblazer Universities Program. Attached are letters to the Prime Minister and other relevant Ministers advising them of the shortlisted Trailblazer Universities and inviting their views.

Key points

2. Following the endorsement of the university research commercialisation package in 2021, you are required to consult with the Prime Minister and other relevant Ministers on the final selection for the Trailblazer Universities Program. Letters to fulfil this requirement are attached, including for the Prime Minister (Attachment A), Minister for Regionalisation, Regional Communications and Regional Education, Senator the Hon Bridget McKenzie (Attachment B), Minister for Industry, Energy and Emissions Reduction, the Hon Angus Taylor MP (Attachment C), and Minister for Science and Technology, the Hon Melissa Price MP (Attachment D), along with a description of the eight shortlisted Trailblazer projects to be enclosed with each letter (Attachment E).
3. Final applications from the eight shortlisted applicants were due on 15 March 2022 and the universities will present to the assessment panel on 22 March 2022. The Department of Education, Skills and Employment will brief you shortly after this process concludes. Your office has indicated that an announcement of the selected Trailblazer Universities may occur as early as 25 March 2022. Given that this timing does not allow for consultation after applications have been assessed, the attached letters reference the eight shortlisted universities to fulfil the consultation requirement.

Government policy issues and impact on other portfolios

4. The Trailblazer Universities Program impacts a number of portfolio areas, including through its commitment to the National Manufacturing Priorities and the inclusion of at least one regional university. As a result, relevant portfolio Ministers will be interested in both the selection outcomes and ensuring they are consulted in decision making.

Key risks and mitigation

5. There is a risk that consulting with Ministers before receiving the final business cases results in the exclusion of information which would have been relevant to the Ministers' consideration. This risk is mitigated by selection advice being provided by the Trailblazer assessment panel, which is made up of experienced leaders from the university, science and research sectors.
6. If consultation were to occur following advice by the panel, this will impact on the time available to negotiate conditions of grants with successful proposals before the dissolution of the 46th parliament.

Budget impact, financial considerations

N/A

Background

7. The Trailblazer Universities Program will fund at least four universities to increase focus on commercialisation, investing up to \$50 million in funding to each university over four years. The Program has a total investment of \$243.5 million from 2021–22 until 2025–26, which includes \$30 million for participating universities to partner with the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation to access specialist equipment.
8. The first round of applications closed in January and eight proposals have been shortlisted to provide businesses cases to the Department by 15 March 2022. The names of the shortlisted eight universities have been published on the Department's website.

Communications and media strategy

N/A

Stakeholder consultation

9. Applications and business cases are assessed by the Trailblazer Universities Program assessment panel, which is chaired by Mr Tony Cook PSM, Deputy Secretary of the Higher Education, Research and International Group and whose membership includes:
- Ms Janean Richards, First Assistant Secretary, Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources
 - Emeritus Professor Paul Wellings CBE, former Vice-Chancellor of the University of Wollongong
 - Mr Andrew Stevens, Chair of Industry Innovation and Science Australia
 - Mr Dom English, First Assistant Secretary, Department of Education, Skills and Employment.

Attachments

- Attachment A Letter to the Prime Minister
- Attachment B Letter to Minister McKenzie
- Attachment C Letter to Minister Taylor
- Attachment D Letter to Minister Price
- Attachment E Description of Shortlisted Projects (Trailblazer Universities Program)

Clearance

Primary Contact Officer: ^{s 22}	^{s 22}
University Research Commercialisation Branch	Ph: ^{s 22}
HERI Higher Education	Mobile: ^{s 22}
Clearance Officer: ^{s 22}	^{s 22}
HERI Higher Education	Ph: ^{s 22}



The Hon Stuart Robert MP
Minister for Employment, Workforce, Skills, Small and Family Business
Acting Minister for Education and Youth

Reference: MS22-000212

The Hon Scott Morrison MP
Prime Minister
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Prime Minister

I am writing to advise you of the final selection of universities for the Trailblazer Universities Program.

As you know, this ambitious Program will fund a number of universities, including at least one regional university, to boost prioritised research and development activities and drive commercialisation outcomes in partnership with industry, investing up to \$50 million in each university over four years and commencing on 1 July 2022.

Following an expression of interest process, eight lead universities have been shortlisted, with the associated National Manufacturing Priority (NMP), and the proposal name outlined below:

- University of Queensland, Food and beverage – Accelerating growth in Australia’s Food and Beverage manufacturing
- Charles Sturt University, Food and beverage – Reshaping Australian Manufacturing: Food and Beverage Commercialisation Hub
- Deakin University, Recycling and clean energy – Recycling and Renewable Energy Commercialisation Hub (REACH)
- University of New South Wales, Recycling and clean energy – Australian Trailblazer for Recycling and Clean Energy (ATRaCE)
- University of Adelaide, Defence – Defence Trailblazer for Concept to Sovereign Capability (CSC)
- University of Melbourne, Medical products – Medical Products Trailblazer
- University of Southern Queensland, Space – Innovative Launch, Automation, Novel Materials, Communications and Hypersonics Hub (The iLAUNCH Hub)
- Curtin University, Resources, technology and critical minerals processing – Resources Technology Trailblazer.

I have enclosed a detailed description of the shortlisted proposals for your information. The business cases for the shortlisted proposals were due to the Department of Education, Skills and Employment on 15 March 2022 and will be followed by presentations to the assessment panel, which is made up of experienced leaders from research, industry and government sectors. I am confident that the successful proposals will demonstrate high levels of ambition, along with commercialisation readiness, commitment to the nominated NMP and industry alignment, and include detailed information on industry partners and matched funding. In finalising the successful candidates, I will also give consideration to regional impact and spread of Trailblazer Universities across Australian States and Territories.

I intend to announce the successful Trailblazer Universities after 25 March 2022 and will work with your office to finalise the announcement details.

I look forward to updating you on the outcome of the application process and continuing to work together to drive a focus towards research translation and commercialisation.

Yours sincerely

s 47F

Stuart Robert
21 March 2022



The Hon Stuart Robert MP
Minister for Employment, Workforce, Skills, Small and Family Business
Acting Minister for Education and Youth

Reference: MS22-000212

Senator the Hon Bridget McKenzie
Minister for Regionalisation, Regional Communications and Regional Education
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Minister

I am writing to provide you with an update on the final selection of universities for the Trailblazer Universities Program.

The Program will fund a number of universities, including at least one regional university, to boost prioritised research and development and drive commercialisation outcomes with industry partners, investing up to \$50 million in each university over four years and commencing on 1 July 2022.

Following an expression of interest process, eight proposals have been shortlisted spanning all six National Manufacturing Priorities (NMPs). Listed below are the shortlisted universities, the NMP that their proposal falls under, and their connection to regional Australia:

- University of Queensland, Food and beverage (has a regional campus)
- Charles Sturt University, Food and beverage (regional university)
- Deakin University, Recycling and clean energy (partnered with a regional university)
- University of New South Wales, Recycling and clean energy
- University of Adelaide, Defence (has a regional campus)
- University of Melbourne, Medical products (has a regional campus)
- University of Southern Queensland, Space (regional university)
- Curtin University, Resources technology and critical minerals processing (partnered with a regional university).

I have enclosed a detailed description of the shortlisted proposals for your review. The shortlisted universities were required to submit their business cases to the Department of Education, Skills and Employment by 15 March 2022 and will be assessed by a panel of university, industry, science, and research leaders. This will be followed by a presentation to the panel by the universities and their industry partners on 22 March 2022. I intend to make a decision on the successful proposals shortly after this.

I look forward to continuing to work together to ensure there is an increased focus on securing commercial returns from research and economic benefits for our nation's regional communities.

Yours sincerely

s 47F

Stuart Robert
21 March 2022

†



The Hon Stuart Robert MP
 Minister for Employment, Workforce, Skills, Small and Family Business
 Acting Minister for Education and Youth

Reference: MS22-000212

The Hon Angus Taylor MP
 Minister for Industry, Energy and Emissions Reduction
 Parliament House
 CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Minister

I am writing to provide you with an update on the final selection of universities for the Trailblazer Universities Program.

The Program will fund a number of universities, including at least one regional university, to boost prioritised research and development and drive commercialisation outcomes with industry partners, investing up to \$50 million in each university over four years and commencing on 1 July 2022.

Following an expression of interest process, eight proposals have been shortlisted spanning all six National Manufacturing Priorities (NMPs). Listed below are the shortlisted universities, the NMP that their proposal falls under, and their proposal name:

- University of Queensland, Food and beverage – Accelerating growth in Australia’s Food and Beverage manufacturing
- Charles Sturt University, Food and beverage – Reshaping Australian Manufacturing: Food and Beverage Commercialisation Hub
- Deakin University, Recycling and clean energy – Recycling and Renewable Energy Commercialisation Hub (REACH)
- University of New South Wales, Recycling and clean energy – Australian Trailblazer for Recycling and Clean Energy (ATRaCE)
- University of Adelaide, Defence – Defence Trailblazer for Concept to Sovereign Capability (CSC)
- University of Melbourne, Medical products – Medical Products Trailblazer
- University of Southern Queensland, Space – Innovative Launch, Automation, Novel Materials, Communications and Hypersonics Hub (The iLAuNCH Hub)
- Curtin University, Resources, technology and critical minerals processing – Resources Technology Trailblazer.

I have enclosed a detailed description of the shortlisted proposals for your information. The shortlisted universities were required to submit their business cases to the Department of Education, Skills and Employment by 15 March 2022 and will be assessed by a panel of university, industry, science, and research leaders. This will be followed by a presentation to the panel by the universities and their industry partners on 22 March 2022. I intend to make a decision on the successful proposals shortly after this.

I look forward to continuing to work together to strengthen our university and industry partnerships and boost research and development activities to benefit our nation.

Yours sincerely

§ 47F

Stuart Robert
21 March 2022



The Hon Stuart Robert MP
 Minister for Employment, Workforce, Skills, Small and Family Business
 Acting Minister for Education and Youth

Reference: MS22-000212

The Hon Melissa Price MP
 Minister for Science and Technology
 Parliament House
 CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Minister

I am writing to provide you with an update on the final selection of universities for the Trailblazer Universities Program.

The Program will fund a number of universities, including at least one regional university, to boost prioritised research and development and drive commercialisation outcomes with industry partners, investing up to \$50 million in funding in each university over four years and commencing on 1 July 2022.

Following an expression of interest process, eight proposals have been shortlisted spanning all six National Manufacturing Priorities (NMPs). Listed below are the shortlisted universities, the NMP that their proposal falls under, and their proposal name:

- University of Queensland, Food and beverage – Accelerating growth in Australia’s Food and Beverage manufacturing
- Charles Sturt University, Food and beverage – Reshaping Australian Manufacturing: Food and Beverage Commercialisation Hub
- Deakin University, Recycling and clean energy – Recycling and Renewable Energy Commercialisation Hub (REACH)
- University of New South Wales, Recycling and clean energy – Australian Trailblazer for Recycling and Clean Energy (ATRaCE)
- University of Adelaide, Defence – Defence Trailblazer for Concept to Sovereign Capability (CSC)
- University of Melbourne, Medical products – Medical Products Trailblazer
- University of Southern Queensland, Space – Innovative Launch, Automation, Novel Materials, Communications and Hypersonics Hub (The iLAUNCH Hub)
- Curtin University, Resources, technology and critical minerals processing – Resources Technology Trailblazer.

I have enclosed a detailed description of the shortlisted proposals for your information. The shortlisted universities were required to submit their business cases to the Department of Education, Skills and Employment by 15 March 2022 and will be assessed by a panel of university, industry, science, and research leaders. This will be followed by a presentation to the panel by the universities and their industry partners on 22 March 2022. I intend to make a decision on the successful proposals shortly after this.

I look forward to continuing to work together to strengthen our university and industry partnerships and boost research and development activities to benefit our nation.

Yours sincerely

s 47F

Stuart Robert
21 March 2022

Trailblazer Universities Program - shortlisted proposals

Lead university (*regional) National Manufacturing priority (NMP) Project name	Proposal funding (indicative)	Description
---	-------------------------------------	-------------

s 22

Deakin University
NMP: Recycling and clean
energy
Project: *Recycling and
Renewable Energy
Commercialisation Hub
(REACH)*

Total:
s 47G

Grant request:
\$50,000,000

The Recycling and Renewable Energy Commercialisation Hub (REACH) will build on Deakin’s success in innovative and sustainable manufacturing solutions, with an industry led, Circular Economy approach to the NMP of Recycling and Clean Energy. Accelerating innovative recycling and clean energy technology commercialisation, is conservatively estimated to deliver revenue of s 47G

s 47G

s 22

s 22

s 22



Australian Government
Department of Education,
Skills and Employment

To Acting Minister for Education and Youth
CC Minister for Regionalisation, Regional Communications and Regional Education
Subject Trailblazer Universities Program – final selection of grant recipients
Action date Please action by 6 April 2022. The reason is to prepare for a possible announcement.

Recommendations - That you:

- 1) **approve** the assessment panel's recommendation to fund the top five applications received through the Trailblazer Universities Program as outlined at Attachment A

approved / not approved

s 22

- 3) **note** that five of the eight applications are either regionally headquartered or have material regional impact
- 4) **approve** the proforma letters for successful and unsuccessful applicants to notify the eight shortlisted applicants of the outcome prior to a public announcement
- 5) **approve** the use of your e-signature to ensure applicants are advised of the outcomes as quickly as possible
- 6) **note** the Department of Education, Skills and Employment will exercise the delegation to finalise and agree Conditions of Grant for successful applicants for this program.

noted / please discuss

approved / not approved

approved / not approved

noted / please discuss

Signature ^{s 47F}

4/14/2022

Comments

Announcement strategy to be determined by the Minister. Please work with my office.

Executive summary

- 1. The assessment process for the Trailblazer Universities Program has been completed and a decision on the successful universities to receive funding is required. To assist you in making this decision, the program's assessment panel has provided a list of recommended proposals for your approval.



Australian Government
**Department of Education,
Skills and Employment**

To Acting Minister for Education and Youth
CC Minister for Regionalisation, Regional Communications and Regional Education
Subject Trailblazer Universities Program – final selection of grant recipients
Action date Please action by 6 April 2022. The reason is to prepare for a possible announcement.

Recommendations - That you:

1) **approve** the assessment panel's recommendation to fund the top five applications received through the Trailblazer Universities Program as outlined at Attachment A **approved / not approved**

s 22

3) **note** that five of the eight applications are either regionally headquartered or have material regional impact **noted / please discuss**

4) **approve** the proforma letters for successful and unsuccessful applicants to notify the eight shortlisted applicants of the outcome prior to a public announcement **approved / not approved**

5) **approve** the use of your e-signature to ensure applicants are advised of the outcomes as quickly as possible **approved / not approved**

6) **note** the Department of Education, Skills and Employment will exercise the delegation to finalise and agree Conditions of Grant for successful applicants for this program. **noted / please discuss**

Signature:

___/___/2023

Comments

Executive summary

1. The assessment process for the Trailblazer Universities Program has been completed and a decision on the successful universities to receive funding is required. To assist you in making this decision, the program's assessment panel has provided a list of recommended proposals for your approval.

Key points

2. An assessment panel made up of experienced leaders from research, industry and government assessed the business cases for the eight shortlisted applicants against the three selection criteria of commercialisation readiness, research capability to support a National Manufacturing Priority and industry alignment. Consideration was also given to the extent to which the vision and objectives of the proposal are supported by tangible and practical implementation, as well as regional impact.
3. Attachment A provides a matrix of the panel's assessment and recommendations. Attachment B provides a summary of the proposals.
4. In making your final determination, at least one proposal must be regionally headquartered and an additional two proposals selected must have a demonstrated regional focus/impact. The program guidelines also indicate that successful proposals will give regard to the spread across States and Territories and may have regard for spread across the six National Manufacturing Priorities.

s 22

6. Funding the recommended applications will result in:
 - i. Six projects across five of the National Manufacturing Priorities
 - ii. Involve universities as leads or partners across six States and Territories
 - iii. At least \$1 billion in university and partner co-investment
 - iv. The creation of an estimated 17,000+ jobs over the long term
 - v. Engagement with over 80 small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs).
7. Proforma letters notifying shortlisted applicants of a successful or unsuccessful outcome are at Attachment C.

Next Steps

8. Following notification of your decision, the Department will work with successful Trailblazer Universities to put in place Conditions of Grant. The executed Conditions of Grant defines the obligations of both the lead university and the Commonwealth. The parameters around the Conditions of Grant will include funding of up to \$50 million over four years (to 2025–26), and will be consistent with the program guidelines, and the three criteria of commercialisation readiness, research capability to support a National Manufacturing Priority and industry alignment.
9. The Conditions of Grant will include key performance indicators appropriate to each project and the aims of the program. The details of the Conditions of Grant, including the payment schedule and milestones, will be consistent with the information provided in the business case.
10. Your authority to approve grants under Part 2-3 of the *Higher Education Support Act 2003*, and to determine conditions on which a grant under Part 2-3 is made, have been delegated to the level of SES Band 2. ^{s 22} Higher Education Division will exercise the delegation to approve a grant, determine the amount of a grant, and determine the conditions on which a grant is made.

Government policy issues and impact on other portfolios

11. The Trailblazer Universities Program impacts a number of portfolios through its commitment to the National Manufacturing Priorities and the inclusion of a number of regional universities.
12. Earlier this month, you sent letters to the Prime Minister, the Hon Scott Morrison MP, and three other relevant Ministers inviting their views on the shortlisted Trailblazer proposals (MS22-000212 refers).

Key risks and mitigation

13. Given the effort that all shortlisted universities have undertaken in the preparation of business case applications, unsuccessful universities will be disappointed with the outcome. As occurred at the Expression of Interest stage of the process, the Department will offer feedback sessions for unsuccessful candidates and outline other opportunities available under the University Research Commercialisation Action Plan, in particular, grants that will be available under Australia's Economic Accelerator and encourage participants to consider projects that may be suitable for application under that program.

s 47C

Budget impact, financial considerations

15. The total cost of the recommended proposals can be met within the current program appropriation.
16. Note that successful universities were requested to put in a bid to access CSIRO specialist equipment or expertise, with \$30 million allocated. University bids total over \$30 million. The Department will work closely with CSIRO to negotiate an outcome that provides Trailblazer Universities with the funding required, and identify any efficiencies or alignments between requests. This may result in CSIRO providing additional support to the Trailblazer University Program, if required.

Background

17. The Trailblazer Universities Program will fund a number of universities to increase their focus on commercialisation, investing up to \$50 million of Australian Government funding in each university over four years, commencing on 1 July 2022. In addition, a total of \$30 million has been allocated for participating universities to partner with CSIRO and access specialist equipment to supercharge their research translation and commercialisation capabilities.
18. Applications to the program underwent a two-stage selection process. An expression of interest stage concluded in January which received 22 submissions. Following this, you approved eight shortlisted applicants to provide business cases to the Department on 15 March 2022 and deliver a presentation to the assessment panel on 22 March 2022.
19. Originally, the second stage of assessment was to determine four successful applicants, of which one was to be a regional university. However, the Government has since decided to fund two additional universities that can demonstrate a strong regional focus. The Department requested that all eight shortlisted applicants provide information on their regional impact and their impact on small-to-medium enterprises.

Communications and media strategy

20. The Department will work with your office to finalise a media release and event to announce the successful Trailblazer Universities. The list of successful Trailblazers will also be published on the Department's website.

Stakeholder consultation

21. The Trailblazer Universities Program application process has been effective at driving collaboration between universities and industry, including SMEs. A number of universities have provided feedback that being involved in the application process has been a valuable exercise in engaging with businesses in a way that wouldn't have happened otherwise.
22. The Trailblazer Universities Program's assessment panel was chaired by Mr Tony Cook PSM, Deputy Secretary of the Higher Education, Research and International Group. Its membership includes:
 - i. Ms Janean Richards, First Assistant Secretary, Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources
 - ii. Emeritus Professor Paul Wellings CBE, former Vice-Chancellor of the University of Wollongong

- iii. Mr Andrew Stevens, Chair of Industry Innovation and Science Australia
- iv. Mr Dom English, First Assistant Secretary, Higher Education Division.

Attachments

Attachment A Assessment Panel Recommendations (Trailblazer Universities Program)

Attachment B Summary of proposals

Attachment C Proforma letters to successful and unsuccessful applicants

Clearance

Primary Contact Officer: s 22

s 22

University Research Commercialisation Branch

Ph: s 22

| HERI | Higher Education

Mobile: s 22

Clearance Officer: s 22

s 22

| HERI | Higher Education

Overview – Assessment Panel Recommendations

Rank	Lead University	Partner Universities	Selection criteria			Total score	NMP	Alignment to NMP ¹	Proposed Funding	Regional Impact	Panel Assess
			Commercialisation readiness	Industry alignment	Research capability						

s 22

5	Deakin University	Federation University Australia, RMIT, USQ & s 47G	s 47C				Recycling and Clean Energy	High	TB (incl. CSIRO) s 47G Uni & Partners: Total: s 47G	USQ & Federation are partners. Expect s 47G spent in regions.	Recommended
---	-------------------	--	-------	--	--	--	----------------------------	------	---	---	-------------

s 22

1. Degree of alignment to NMP as assessed by Industry portfolio

s 22

Deakin University – recycling and clean energy

Panel Assessment – Recommended

Selection Criteria			Total Score
Commercial Readiness	Industry Alignment	Research Capability	
s 47C	s 47C	s 47C	s 47C

*Commercial Readiness and Industry Alignment weighted 2x Research Capability to score out of 50

Areas noted by the panel in their considerations

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Deakin business case has a high level of alignment to the recycling and clean energy NMP, clear independent governance arrangements, and strong financial and in-kind investment from the lead university and industry partners. The proposal included information on regional impact. • The proposal was not as strong on commercialisation pathways (how the technology will find its way through the commercialisation pipeline to market), the value of the proposal and the link to job creation. • Deakin provided responses to the following questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ return on investment in the long term for this project – a step change will allow Deakin to grow their technology and innovation precinct to support longer term organic growth. Scaling up for future growth will be further supported by changes to the university workforce. ○ commercialisation pathway and IP considerations – the project represents a spectrum of opportunities and combination of IP approaches. Deakin will provide support and leadership in commercialisation, market access and new pathways to market. ○ the governance structure – the university’s Council will be responsible for the direction of the project and the board will direct the projects within that framework. The link between the Council and the governing board will ensure the highest levels of university and industry engagement.

Funding Profile

Trailblazer Funding sought	Lead University contribution		Partner University*		Industry contribution		CSIRO bid	Total
	Cash	In kind	Cash	In kind	Cash	In kind		
\$50M	s 47G		s 47G					

*Federation University Australia, RMIT, USQ, s 47G

Key Impact Areas

SME Impact	Regional Impact	Number of Jobs Created
s 47G	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional university partner – USQ • TAFE partners – Bendigo and Wodonga • Main campus in Geelong- on the boundary of ‘inner regional’ • Many of their SME partners are ‘inner regional’ • Program will invest s 47G in regional areas or with regional partners. 	s 47G

Deakin University**Proposal summary**

Through a ^{s 47G} investment (including CSIRO projects), Deakin University's REaCH will greatly accelerate the translation of ideas into innovative manufacturing solutions in recycling and clean energy technologies. Catalysed by a transformative innovation lead university and future ready workforce, it will leverage a 'Circular Economy' pipeline and strong industry partnerships to create the new jobs and business upon which Australia's future will be built. REACH will focus on delivering solutions in three project domains:

- **Energy Storage** - value chains in electromaterials, cell manufacture and adaption, battery pack assembly, integration, services and recycling,
- **Hydrogen** - a flexible, domestic consumption hydrogen economy for heavy transport, refuelling networks, remote and grid balancing power, industry feedstock and fuel
- **Recycling (organics, inorganics)** – step change in waste management from limited recycling to high value, sovereign capability, supply chains.

Partner universities

Federation University Australia, Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT), University of Southern Queensland, ^{s 47G}

Industry partners

Li-S Energy, R&D Scale Facilitation Vehicle, BNNT Technology, Calix, Oztron Energy, Sydney Seaplanes, Gen 2 Carbon, HB11 Energy Holdings, Carbon Revolution Operations, Clean Energy Resources, White Graphene, Quickstep Holdings, Viva Energy Australia, Jet Technology Corporation, HeiQ, ProPackaging, Opal Paper Australia, Active Research, Sustainable Energy Partners, Cytomatrix, Xefco, The Gordan Institute of TAFE, Holmesglen Institute of TAFE, Southwest TAFE, Bendigo Kangan Institute, Wodonga TAFE Scale facilitation, ^{s 47G}



The Hon Stuart Robert MP
 Minister for Employment, Workforce, Skills, Small and Family Business
 Acting Minister for Education and Youth

Reference: MS22-000213

Professor <insert name>
 Vice-Chancellor
 <University>
 <Address>
 <Address line 2>

Dear Professor <name>

Thank you for your application to participate in the Trailblazer Universities Program and your high level of engagement throughout the application process.

I am writing to notify you of the outcome of the Trailblazer assessment and congratulate <insert university> on being selected under the Trailblazer Universities Program to become leaders in research commercialisation behind the National Manufacturing Priority of <nominated priority *eg Space*>.

The <university's> ambitious proposal, <name of Trailblazer proposal> will provide <example text appropriate to proposal – *eg opportunities to help Australia to move away from dependence on international space economies and launch facilities, as well as create a strong regional footprint for this manufacturing priority area in collaboration with a range of industry partners*>. <include regional impact, if applicable>.

I was very pleased with the high quality of proposals received for this Program, especially the strong engagement with universities and industry partners, ensuring that research and development activity and training are aligned to industry need.

My department will work with Project Lead <name>, to finalise the grant funding arrangements.

Once again, I warmly congratulate you and look forward to seeing what the Trailblazer Universities can accomplish through this Program.

Yours sincerely

Stuart Robert



The Hon Stuart Robert MP

Minister for Employment, Workforce, Skills, Small and Family Business
Acting Minister for Education and Youth

Reference: MS22-000213

Professor <insert name>
Vice-Chancellor
<University>
<Address>
<Address line 2>

Dear Professor <name>

Thank you for your application to participate in the Trailblazer Universities Program and your high level of engagement throughout the application process. I am writing to notify you of the outcome of the Trailblazer assessment.

Unfortunately, the <lead university> proposal, <name of Trailblazer Proposal>, has not been selected for funding under the Trailblazer Universities Program.

The field of applicants was very strong and <university> proposal did not demonstrate <example text appropriate to proposal – e.g. *the clear focus on commercialisation outcomes and operational detail that the successful Trailblazers included. The assessment panel noted the high level of ambition and strong collaboration with university and industry partners that I hope will continue*>. I was very pleased with the high quality of applications received for this Program and the strong engagement with universities and industry partners, ensuring that research and development activity and training are aligned to industry need.

My department will organise a feedback session through Project Lead < name> and discuss other opportunities to drive commercialisation outcomes under the Australian Government's university research commercialisation reform package.

Thank you again, the time and effort <university> has taken to prepare the Trailblazer application and presentation are greatly valued.

Yours sincerely

Stuart Robert