

BETTER FUTURES GRANTS

2026 Application Guidelines



ABOUT WESTPAC FOUNDATION

Westpac Foundation has been investing in change that matters and helping people and local communities in need for over 145 years.

Right now, in classrooms across Australia, one in three children are struggling with basic reading and maths — and in communities facing greater barriers to learning, that gap is even wider.

Without action, too many children will continue to fall behind in the fundamental skills that open doors to every opportunity in life.

By focusing earlier, helping children in primary school build strong reading and maths skills, we can help change life trajectories and strengthen Australia's future.



WESTPAC FOUNDATION EDUCATION STRATEGY

Optimising opportunities for all children to learn



Ready to Learn

Creating the conditions for students to attend school and fully engage in learning.



Learning Foundations

Ensuring all primary students build strong literacy and numeracy skills.



Stronger Communities

Harnessing the power of families, communities, and partnerships.

Supporting activities that will reduce barriers to learning by:

- Creating inclusive school environments - students are safe, belong and have a voice.
- Equipping educators to build engagement, support self-regulation, and deliver culturally responsive teaching.
- Enabling access to enriching opportunities supporting school and social engagement.
- Meeting basic needs like food, transport, and school essentials.

- Supporting evidence-based teaching grounded in the science of learning.
- Building teacher confidence to use data and tools to monitor learning outcomes.
- Identifying students early who are falling behind.
- Targeting support to enable students to catch up.

- Engaging parents, carers and trusted adults as partners in learning.
- Supporting First Nations communities to lead education design and delivery.
- Connecting schools with health, youth, and family services to support wellbeing.
- Fostering networks of schools sharing leadership, resources, and improvement strategies.

Short to Medium Term Outcomes

Improved school attendance.
Increased engagement + motivation to learn.
Improved social and emotional confidence.
Increased teacher confidence.

Medium to Long Term Outcomes

Improved literacy and numeracy.
Improved teaching and learning models.
Enhanced evaluation and evidence across the education ecosystem.

BETTER FUTURES GRANTS

A national grants program focused on supporting local innovation

8 Grants

Totalling \$800,000 over 2 years



Open Application Round

\$100,000

Over two years



Calibration and shortlisting will ensure geographic and demographic overlay, national approach and representation.

Priority cohorts

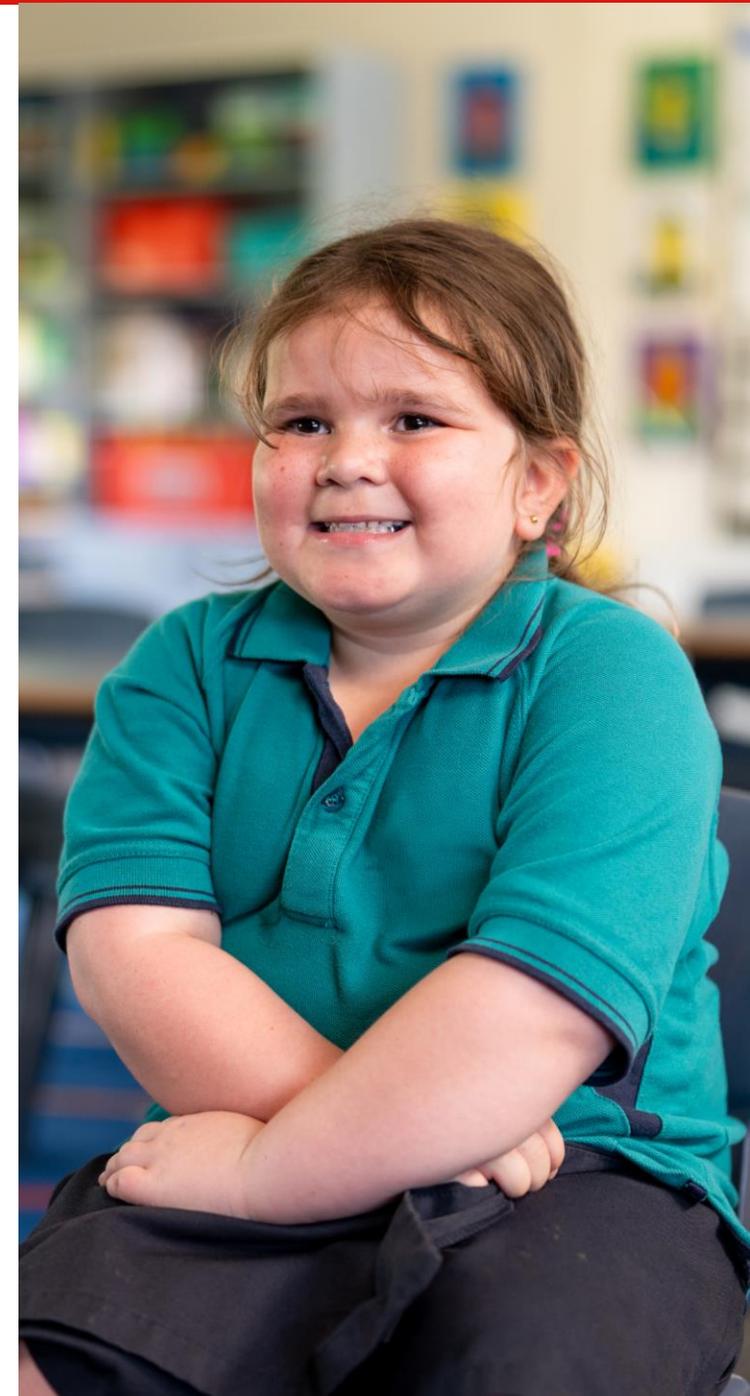
- ✓ Primary school aged children (5-12 years) experiencing education disadvantage
- ✓ Students from low socio-economic backgrounds
- ✓ First Nations students
- ✓ Students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- ✓ Students living in regional and remote locations.



Supporting organisations optimising opportunities for primary school aged children to learn.

BETTER FUTURES: ELIGIBILITY

 Eligibility Criteria	 What we will fund	 What we won't fund
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Organisation is endorsed as a Deductible Gift Recipient Status Item 1 (DGR1).• Organisation is registered with the Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits Commission (ACNC).• Organisation has an annual gross revenue between \$1M and \$5M.• Can provide recent financial statements (organisations with annual revenue above \$3M need to provide audited statements, signed by the auditor).• Proposed program is located in Australia.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Implementation of proven models / programs to improve learning outcomes .✓ Development of new models and implementation of pilots.✓ Problem-solving projects for persistent and emerging issues.✓ Targeted activity / programs for places or Priority Cohorts.✓ Activity that shows promise but is challenging to undertake, due to expense, access, etc.✓ Expanding research and evaluation capabilities.✓ Activities targeting primary school aged children, their teachers, or families.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">x Charity works outside Australia.x Sponsorship or fundraising activities.x Individuals or sporting teams.x Individual therapy.x Religious activities.x One-off activities (school incursions and excursions) and residential camps.x Building or maintaining school infrastructure.x Attracting and retaining a quality school workforce.x Activities related to curriculum development.x Activities targeting children over 12 years or between 0-4 years of age.



BETTER FUTURES: ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK

Assessment Categories

Assessor Criteria

Weighing
80%

Program Strength

We consider whether the proposed program demonstrates a clear, evidence informed pathway to improving outcomes for primary school children, with credible measurement, appropriate engagement, and strong delivery capability. We will assess strength, credibility, and likely effectiveness against these criteria, proportionate to organisational size.

- Engagement with schools, families, and communities
- Clearly defined learning outcomes
- Quality of implementation and delivery capability
- Evidence-based rationale and Theory of Change
- Robust measurement and evaluation framework
- Use of baseline and progress measures
- Coherent outcome pathway over time
- Learning, adaptation, and use of findings

Weighing
20%

Governance and Organisational Resilience

We consider whether an organisation demonstrates the governance, leadership and financial resilience required to responsibly steward philanthropic funding and deliver outcomes aligned with its purpose. This assessment is proportionate to organisational size, risk and ambition, and recognises that strong governance is a means of supporting both impact and accountability.

- Strategic clarity and organisational direction
- Leadership, risk and operational capability
- Financial health and resilience
- Board effectiveness and oversight
- Diversity, lived experience and legitimacy

HOW TO APPLY

- You can apply by completing the online application (Smarty Grants) available through our [website](#).
- Applications will be assessed against the criteria by an assessment panel including the Foundation team and external assessors with relevant education experience.
- Incomplete applications and those not meeting grant eligibility criteria will not be assessed.
- Our preference is to directly support charities. Auspiced applications will be considered on a case-by-case basis.



Key dates

24 March	Applications open
9 April	Information session – 2.00pm (AEST)
24 April	Applications Close
April - May	Application Assessments
Early June	Selection
Mid-June	Grant approvals
End June	Grant payments



ONLINE APPLICATION PORTAL: SMARTY GRANTS

Managing your application

- Register or log in to [SmartyGrants](#) to begin an application - creating a profile is required to apply
- Use the Form Navigation menu on the right to jump to any section
- Use 'Next' and 'Previous' to move through the form sequentially
- You must complete all mandatory questions and resolve validation errors
- Use 'Review' and 'Submit' to finalise your application
- After submitting, you'll receive a confirmation email with a PDF copy. If you don't receive the confirmation email, your application has **not** been submitted

Application Tools & Tips

- Preview the whole form using 'Preview the form'
- To pause your application, select 'Save and Close', then 'Log out'
- Return to your draft via 'My Submissions'
- Download a PDF copy at any time
- 'Save' frequently – SmartyGrants does not auto-save

Need assistance?

- For help with the Smarty Grants portal, access the [Help Guide for Applicants](#). For additional support, email [Westpac Foundation](#)
- By registering, you may receive occasional emails about key dates, eligibility requirements and tips. You can unsubscribe at any time or email [Westpac Foundation](#) to opt out.



APPLICATION QUESTIONS

* Compulsory question
* Attachment

About Your Organisation

1. Organisation details *

- Organisation name *
- Primary address *
- Primary phone number *
- Email address *
- Website*

2. Primary contact for this application*

- Title, first name, last name *
- Position held in organisation *
- Primary phone number *
- Email address *

3. Please describe your organisation's approach to child protection/safety.

- Up to 100 words.*

4. Upload your organisation's risk framework/risk register along with your Child Protection/Safety policies and procedures. **

- Attach file/s (up to four)*

5. If your organisation has a corporate volunteering program, please describe it here.

- Up to 100 words*
- Optional*

About Your Program

6. Program title *

- Title should be short but descriptive.*

7. With which Westpac Foundation strategic priority is your program most aligned? *

- Ready to Learn:** Creating conditions for students to attend school and fully engage in learning.
- Learning Foundations:** Ensuring all students build strong literacy and numeracy skills.
- Stronger Communities:** Supporting learning outcomes via families, communities, local partnerships
- Select only one*

8. The proposed program is *

- A pilot of a new approach
- Growing or extending an existing approach
- Ongoing program: Harnessing the power of families, communities, and local partnerships.
- Select only one*

9. Which is the primary Priority Cohort that will benefit from your program? *

- Low SES
- Regional
- First Nations
- CALD
- Select only one*
- If you are in a low SES community that may embrace all cohorts, select Low SES.*
- If your program is in remote/regional areas only, please select Regional.*

10. In which location is your program taking place? *

- Metropolitan
- Regional
- Remote
- Select all that apply.*

11. Where specifically will the program be taking place? *

- If known, name the suburb(s) or region (e.g. Western Sydney) where the program will be delivered.*

12. Who does your program directly target? *

- Students
- Teachers
- Primary Schools
- Parents/carers
- Community members
- Other
- Select all that apply.*

13. How many participants (e.g. students, teachers, schools etc.) do you anticipate reaching via this program? *

- Note: We don't assess applications by relative reach numbers - we understand the cost to serve differs in different contexts. Our main assessment focus is impact.*

14. Please provide a summary of the program *

- Up to 200 words.*

15. What is the need you are seeking to address with this program? *

- Up to 150 words.*
- What is the broader social issue? What long term outcome are you seeking to contribute to?*

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

* Compulsory question
* Attachment

About Your Program

16. How does your program address this need? *

- Up to 200 words

Upload any data, research, or program evaluation**

- Attach files (No more than three)
- Research or data that points to the need; relevant program evaluations

17. How have you engaged with the school, community or key stakeholders to ensure support for this program? *

- Up to 150 words.
- Include who you are collaborating with to deliver this program (if relevant).

18. What are the top three key risks /challenges you anticipate for this program and how will you address these? *

- Describe how each risk could affect the program's success and any plans to reduce or manage them.

Evaluation and Impact

19. Describe how you will evaluate the effectiveness of the program *

- Up to 100 words.
- Outline your evaluation approach. Will it be undertaken internally or by external advisors?

20. What are the expected key outputs for your program during the life of the grant? *

- Outputs are the tangible results of activities, such as three workshops held, 40 scholarships awarded, 200 students participating, or an online platform created.
- Include target numbers where appropriate.

21. Please describe the top three intended short to medium-term outcomes of your program *

- Outcomes are the short-to-medium term changes resulting from products, programs, or services, e.g. a 20% increase in school attendance.
- Focus on the highest priority, achievable outcomes, and specify how they will be measured.

22. If you have a strategy, theory of change, evaluations or any other supporting material for your program, please upload here:*

Income and expenditure

23. What will the funds be used for? *

- No more than 100 words

24. What other sources of funding will also support the program over the grant period? *

- Provide clear descriptions for each item e.g. 'Council community grant', 'company X sponsorship', 'fundraising donations'.

25. How will you use the Grant to help achieve your program objectives over the funding period? *

- We support a [Pay What it Takes](#) approach. Include any operational costs that may not be easily attributable to the program, e.g. IT, finance, HR, learning and development, measurement and evaluation.
- List anticipated expenditure with short descriptions e.g. 'onsite power and water for 6 months', 'purchase of uniforms', 'part-time staffer x 40 hours', 'consultant for social impact framework'.

26. What is your organisation's plan for financial sustainability? *

- Up to 200 words.
- For example, partnerships, fundraising, fee-for-service, investment strategies.