JMI Policy Challenge Grant

James Martin Institute
for Public Policy

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The JMI Policy Challenge Grants is an annual award program to support applied public policy research.

Starting in 2022, the James Martin Institute for Public Policy (JMI) will award grants annually to outstanding academics, at any stage in their career, interested in undertaking applied public policy research or translating their existing research for a policy context and audience.

The purpose of the JMI Policy Challenge Grant is to:

- Tackle the biggest public policy challenges through the generation and communication of new insights.
- Foster engagement between academics and policymakers.
- Support improved policy outcomes informed by applied public policy research.

The JMI Policy Challenge Grant is unique: the Institute will offer dedicated support to grant recipients to translate their research outputs for a policy audience, and to maximise the impact of their research through targeted communications and engagement support.

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Grant guidelines

Grants will be awarded for work on **any topic that tackles a major policy challenge** facing NSW within this decade, where the proposed research has strong potential to catalyse policy innovation for the benefit of the people of NSW.

The JMI Policy Challenge Grants can be awarded for:

- new applied research, or
- translation of existing research for a policy audience.

Potential project topics may be derived from, **but are not limited to**, the following themes:

The new economy

- Just transitions to a net zero economy
- Building an inclusive innovation economy
- The value of the care economy
- Unlocking the power of the regions

New directions after the pandemic

- Creating resilient and dynamic cities
- Embedding lessons in digital health
- Harnessing policy opportunities from mRNA manufacturing capacity

Towards equality of opportunity

- Addressing educational attainment gaps
- Removing the digital divide for learners
- Opening pathways for skills development, including the role of the NSW Institute of Applied Technology (IAT) in increasing access to high-skill careers

These themes are indicative only, and are intended to give examples of potential areas of inquiry which could be pursued. They are not intended to limit the topics academics may wish to propose.

Across all policy domains, the Institute is keenly interested in Indigenous perspectives and the impact of public policies on Indigenous Australians.

Can you identify a major policy challenge facing NSW?

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Eligibility

Applications are welcome from academics from JMI's member universities:

- **The University of Sydney**
- **Western Sydney University**
- **The University of Technology Sydney**

Who can apply:

- Individual academics or project teams

(in the case of a team, the project leader must be from a member university)

- Academics at all career stages are encouraged to apply, including early career researchers.

Funding

In 2022, the overall funding amount for the entire grant program is $300,000.

Each grant application must be between $25,000-$100,000.

Eligible costs

Grant funding can be used for the direct costs of research. More specifically, eligible project costs that can be covered by the grant funding include:

- personnel, postdoctoral research associates and research assistants, technicians and laboratory attendants;
- access to research and infrastructure facilities and technical workshop services;
- essential field research;
- expert third party services;
- equipment and consumables;
- dissemination of project research outputs and outreach activities;
- specialised computer equipment and software;
- travel costs essential to the project;
- web hosting and development;
- workshops, survey costs, focus groups and conferences;
- data science and analysis costs;
- reasonable essential costs for academics who are carers or who themselves require care, where such costs are directly linked to the execution of grant project activities and these direct costs would not be covered by the home institution.

Please note that teaching buy-out is **not** covered by this grant.

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Grant recipient requirements

Successful recipients of the JMI Policy Challenge Grant are required to agree to the following requirements of the grant:

1. **Publication of JMI Policy Insights Paper**
   This is a JMI branded report, of approximately 10-15 pages, which should capture the key insights from your research for a policy-focused audience. It must be accessible to a non-academic audience. The report will be made publicly available via the JMI website and be shared with relevant policymakers and other relevant stakeholders. It will be published under a Creative Commons licence. JMI will provide support to grant recipients to develop the Policy Insights Paper, and ensure it reaches relevant policy audiences.

2. **Participation in research communications**
   As this is an applied policy grant with a focus on generating public value, the Institute is keen to ensure that research insights are effectively communicated to policy audiences. In that light, all grant recipients must participate in research communications activities, with dedicated support from JMI. Depending on the nature of the project, this could include:
   a. Researcher/s profile placed on the JMI website, highlighting recipients' work.

   b. Op-eds & other short-form outputs – JMI will support grant recipients to share findings via mainstream platforms.

   c. Interviews or podcasts – to showcase key findings and insights.

   d. Policymaker roundtables or select briefings – JMI will work with grant recipients to organise events that allow them the opportunity to engage in dialogue on their findings and share practical insights with relevant policymakers and stakeholders.

3. **Maximum project timeframe**
   The project must be delivered within a maximum of 2 years from the date the grant is awarded.

Any academic outputs in addition to the above requirements are at the discretion of the grant recipient(s) and are not a core requirement of the JMI grant.

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Selection criteria

Grant applications will be assessed against the following selection criteria:

Essential criteria

Relevance to public policy	Research must have a demonstrable relevance to public policy in NSW. It should be clear how the research can be applied by policymakers to either an existing policy priority area, or a potential future policy challenge in NSW.
Innovative approach to a policy challenge	The proposed project must demonstrate an innovative approach to tackling a policy challenge. Such innovation could include, but is not limited to, policy reform, institutional change, human-centric design, new methods of program or service delivery, interdisciplinary approaches to public problems, attention on neglected issues or opportunities, stakeholder engagement and community empowerment, or propelling new partnerships to address grand challenges or wicked social problems.
Positive impact on a policy challenge	Must demonstrate a strong potential to generate public value through improved public policy.
Approach to engagement with policymakers	Applicants must outline their proposed approach to engagement with relevant policymakers and practitioners. This must include how the research will be leveraged for public policy impact.

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Desirable criteria (non-essential)

Relevance across government

Research could be relevant to multiple NSW Government departments or agencies.

Interdisciplinary approach and/or team

The research proposed adopts an inter-disciplinary research approach, or comprises an interdisciplinary team that will approach a policy problem from a variety of different disciplinary perspectives.

Potential to build on existing relationships with policymakers

Where the academic(s) has existing connections with government stakeholders for whom the proposed project could add value, provide details of the existing stakeholder relationship.

Additional funding

Academics should indicate if they have, secured, or plan to secure, any additional funding to undertake the project. Whilst it is not essential, evidence of any co-funding or the ability to leverage additional funding should be provided as part of the application and will be considered favourably.

These are additional criteria to help the Institute better understand your project and assess its potential impact, but which your proposal does not necessarily need to demonstrate to be successful. Applicants should only address the desirable criteria if they are relevant to the project. For example, some projects could be especially focused on the work of a single government department, or some academics may be seeking to establish new relationships with policymakers rather than building on existing ones.

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How
to apply

Stage 1:
EOIs

7 Mar–15 Apr 2022

Online web-form questionnaire
accessed via the JMI Grant Portal.

Stage 2:
Interviews

9–27 May 2022

45-minute interviews via MS Teams
with JMI Team.

Stage 3:
Additional docs

13 Jun–8 Jul 2022

Submit detailed project docs via JMI Grants
Portal, including project plan and budget.

The Policy Challenge Grant has a **three-stage application process**, intended to limit the amount of time required from applicants.

This three-stage process, cumulatively, constitutes your JMI Policy Challenge Grant application. Each stage of the application process builds on the previous stage, giving the Institute a holistic view of your proposed project.

By clicking the 'Apply Now' button on JMI website's Policy Challenge Grant page, you will be redirected to our online grant portal, where you can submit your application.

Stage 1: Expressions of Interest (EOI)
7 March–15 April 2022

The first stage in our application process is the EOI. Once you have created an account on our grants portal, you will be asked to respond to the short EOI questionnaire.

The EOI questions are intended to give us an indication of the nature of your proposed grants project. You will be asked to provide:

1. The project topic and key research questions

2. The project scope and method (high-level)

3. Details of project team members and roles (indicative, if applicable)

4. The funding amount you are requesting

5. Responses to the selection criteria

All EOIs will be reviewed and assessed against the essential and desirable criteria. Successful EOIs will progress to the second stage and will be notified via email if they have been successful.

EOIs will open on the week starting the 7 March and close on 15 April 2022.

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Stage 2: Interviews
9–27 May 2022

Successful applicants will be asked to nominate a preferred interview timeslot via the grant portal, for a 45-minute online interview with JMI staff.

Where a research team is applying for a grant, the entire team is encouraged to attend the interview, but this is not required.

During this interview, you will be given the opportunity to share more detail about your proposed project. The JMI team will also have the opportunity to ask you questions about the details of your project proposal.

The interview will also provide an opportunity to learn more about the aims of the JMI Policy Challenge Grant, and the various forms of support the Institute will provide to grant recipients.

Applicants that have successfully progressed through the interview stage will be notified via email.

Interviews will be held over three weeks, in the period between 9–27 May 2022. Please ensure that you are available to participate in an interview during this period.

Stage 3: Supplementary documents
13 June–8 July 2022

Applicants that have successfully passed through the interview stage will then be asked to submit supplementary documents to complete their grants application. They will be provided an additional 4 weeks to submit these documents.

Applicants will be asked to submit:

1. **A detailed project plan**
   You will need to provide details of the key project stages and milestones and key activities over those project stages, including timelines. JMI will provide a suggested template to support with the development of this plan.

2. **Detailed project budget**
   You will be asked to provide a breakdown of project costs, including allocation of key project resources. JMI will provide a suggested template to support with the development of this plan.

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3. **Any additional documents requested by JMI**
   During the interview process, the JMI team might require some additional documentation or further detail or explanation of certain aspects of your proposed project. You will be asked to upload any supplementary documentation to the grants portal.

Supplementary documents due no later than 8 July 2022

References

Successful applicants will also be asked to provide details of one referee, who can speak to the quality, timeliness and impact of your work. Your nominated referee cannot be a member of your grant project team. We encourage you to notify your nominated referee that you have selected them to support your grant application.

We will send an automated email to your nominated referee, asking them to complete a short questionnaire to support your application. The questions will focus on your track record of delivering projects and potential to have policy impact through your work. Your referee will be given 2 weeks to complete these short questions.

The documents provided to JMI as part of this, and earlier stages, along with the referee responses, will be collated and will form part of your overall grant application.

These will be considered collectively by the assessors, in order to make a final decision.

Supplementary documents and reference questionnaires will need to be submitted no later than 08 July 2022.

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Assessment & Award

The JMI Research Advisory Group will review all applications that have progressed through to Stage 3 of the application process, and make a recommendation on the successful grant recipients. The Board will approve final grant recipients.

Grant will be awarded in August 2022.

Successful applicants will be notified via email, and contacted by the JMI team.

The JMI team will then work with the researcher(s) to execute a JMI Policy Challenge Grant Agreement and to develop a Research, Communications and Engagement Plan with the project leader.

Once this has been finalised, initial funding will be provided and the project will commence.

Contact us

For any further JMI Policy Challenge Grant enquiries, please either refer to the FAQs section on the JMI website or contact us via email.

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