Tips for submitting a strong JMI Policy Challenge Grant application

March 2024

About the JMI Policy Challenge Grant program

The JMI Policy Challenge Grant supports applied public policy research and aims to tackle the biggest public policy challenges facing NSW. It is not a standard research grant but is a scheme for academics focused on generating solutions to complex policy issues. Successful applicants are supported by JMI for the duration of the grant. These tips advise applicants on how to submit a strong application.

1. Be clear about how your project relates to one or more of the 2024 themes.

- Outline the public policy challenge your research aims to address. The policy challenge should be clearly explained and be directly relevant to one of the policy themes for 2024.
- Demonstrate that the NSW Government is concerned about this issue or how it fits within the Government's wider policy agenda. Where possible link your research to relevant speeches/ strategies/ commitments/ Parliamentary reports which demonstrate that your project addresses a priority issue facing policymakers.
- Consider whether you can submit letters of support or other evidence from relevant NSW Government connections (or other influential stakeholders) that demonstrates the importance and relevance of this policy area.

2. Be clear about the project design and its proposed timeframes.

- Start with your research questions and outline each stage chronologically e.g., Stage 1: Ethics approval and desktop/ literature review, Stage 2: Data collection, Stage 3: Wider stakeholder engagement (e.g., interviews, focus groups) Stage 4: Write up and dissemination of key findings.
- Explain the approach you are taking to the project and why your research-informed findings will provide a robust basis for new solutions. For example, describe the strength of the past research the project will help translate, or the

reasons why a particular method you will use will help lead to good practical outcomes.

- Give indicative timings for each project stage.
- Be realistic about your project design. JMI Policy Challenge Grant projects must be completed within two years – be clear you will meet this requirement.

3. Demonstrate the innovation in your project.

- Explain the specific policy innovation in your research. Examples of innovation in previously awarded JMI Challenge grants include:
  - Leveraging food delivery industry data on bicycle journeys to inform research into active transport options.
  - Incorporating First Nations perspectives into habitat restoration efforts.
  - Using policy prototyping to build new approaches to policymaking on AI in education.
  - Linking government data in a new way to analyse children and young people's experiences after they exit out-of-home care settings.

4. Highlight the potential public policy impact of your project.

- Outline how your research will help the NSW Government to tackle a specific policy challenge.
- Demonstrate how the project aligns with the policy priorities of the NSW Government.
- Explain the intended impact of your proposed work. Will it help identify interventions that work? Will it catalyse action on a policy challenge? Will it improve practice?
- Outline who could benefit from the research. How will it serve the people of NSW? Who will implement the project outcomes? What may change for the better?

5. Be clear about which part(s) of NSW Government will be interested in your project.

- Highlight which NSW Government departments your research is relevant to (Don't worry if you don't have an existing relationship, JMI can support you to make those connections if you are awarded a grant).
- Outline how you would like to engage with policymakers during the research.
- Describe clearly how you intend to communicate your findings. Who needs to know about your research and what steps will be taken to communicate your findings to the right people within NSW Government and beyond?
- Who will you showcase your research to in order to maximise its public policy impact?

6. Summarise your team's expertise including policy expertise and experience.

- Summarise your team's expertise – demonstrate they have the necessary skills, experience, and expertise to deliver the project as planned.
- Highlight any previous research outputs that your team have contributed to which are relevant to your proposed research.
- Highlight where team members are involved in committees, taskforces, professional bodies, organisations etc relevant to the policy challenge being explored e.g., Associate Professor X is a member of the NSW Government's Expert Housing Advisory Group. Professor Y was a member of the steering group of the First Nations Clean Energy Council between 2018 and 2021.

7. Make your application easy to read and understand.

- Avoid jargon. Your application will be read by a range of people with diverse backgrounds and expertise who may not be experts in your specific area of research.

- Use plain English. Useful tips can be found in the Australian Government's <u>Style Manual</u> or via the <u>Plain English Campaign</u>.
- Keep abbreviations and acronyms to a minimum – define them when they're first used.
- Avoid lengthy sentences or blocks of text which can be hard to follow. Where appropriate, use subheadings, dot points etc to present information clearly.
- Give your project a title that is specific and concise.