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# SRN

NSW Space Research Network

NSW SPACE RESEARCH NETWORK

# RESEARCH PILOT PROJECT GRANTS

Guidelines for applicants

Funding year: 2024 - 2025

[www.srn.org.au](http://www.srn.org.au)

## **1. Scheme Purpose**

- 1.1. SRN Research Pilot Project funding scheme is an annual, competitive program that supports cross-discipline university collaboration in NSW. The scheme is administered by the NSW Space Research Network and funded by the NSW Government.
- 1.2. The key objective of the SRN Research Pilot Project Funding is to discover and enable new ideas for space and to help develop these ideas into concepts or technology that can attract further investment from the Government or industry. Research Pilot Projects should demonstrate high potential to satisfy an existing or emerging Space capability need or a current or emerging space industry need.
- 1.3. Applications for Pilot Project are solicited by formal call-outs posted on the SRN website and associated networks and publications.

## **2. Support Available**

- 2.1. Successful proposals can be funded up to \$150,000 for projects scoped for 6-12 months.
- 2.2. Projects are expected to be completed within 12 months.
- 2.3. Funding will be paid to the lead university in a single tranche. The lead university is responsible for the distribution of the funds to Collaborating organisations.

## **3. Eligibility Criteria**

- 3.1. Research Pilot Project proposals must be led by a SRN member university, and the funding can be accessed by the SRN member universities only.
- 3.2. Project proposals must demonstrate inter-university collaboration and must involve at least two SRN member universities.
- 3.3. Projects funded by SRN Research Pilot Project Grant Scheme must be space relevant and must be capable of generating additional funding or investment to facilitate larger collaborative research projects and/or progress towards commercialisation.
- 3.4. A chief investigator can lead a maximum of one Pilot project per round. There is no limit on how many projects a researcher can participate in.
- 3.5. Industry partnerships are encouraged; however, SRN funds cannot be used to cover industry partner expenses. All funding awarded by the SRN flows to the universities in the first instance.

## **4. Use of Funds**

- 4.1. Funding from the SRN Research Pilot Project Grant Scheme will be in the form of a cash contribution to the Lead Institution. The contracting process will be administered by the University of Sydney as host of the SRN.
- 4.2. Funds must be used to support the research project described in the application directly and can include the following items:
  - *Direct salary costs* for employees working on the project including chief investigators, early career researchers, research assistants etc. Where chief investigator salaries are claimed, this must be specifically justified and is subject to approval. SRN's preference is to use funds for research associates and fellows working directly on the project.
  - *On-cost salary expenses* up to a maximum of 30% of direct salary costs and consistent with the university policy. On-costs must be itemised in the application and can only include the following items: superannuation, payroll tax, payroll tax on superannuation, workers compensation, long service leave, and parental leave. Universities must submit their on-cost salary expenses itemised by each category as the attachment of the

application form.

- *Equipment, software, material, data and consumables* essential for the project. Funding will **not** be provided for equipment and consumables that are considered to be for broad general use or already held by the university.
- *Travel costs* essential to the project for the employees working on the project.
- *Stipends for HDR students* working on the project.

4.3. Budget items that are not supported by the Research Pilot Project funding and should NOT be requested in the budget include:

- *Infrastructure (overhead) costs* related to the general operations of the university shared among projects and functions.
- *Salaries of industry partners* working on the project or any other industry partner expenses
- *Costs not directly related to the project* including but not limited to conference fees and travel, workshop expenses, entertainment costs, professional membership fees, professional development courses, visas, relocation costs, insurance and other indirect costs.

4.4. All expenses must be itemised in the budget section of the grant application. Grant funds must be spent in accordance with this budget, and any requests for variations must be made to the Space Research Network Chief Operating Officer and approved in advance.

4.5. Proposed work should not substantially duplicate work with current or past funding support from Commonwealth, Australian State or Territory, or other sources.

4.6. While every effort will be made to fully fund all projects, the SRN reserves the right to tailor the funding it offers to support project delivery. In cases where funding support is varied, CIs will be consulted to ensure that revised budgets are still able to meet project objectives.

## 5. Selection Criteria

5.1. The Research Pilot Project Grant Scheme is administered by the SRN. The SRN will collect applications and conduct an initial assessment for completeness and eligibility.

5.2. SRN Technical Review Panel will evaluate applications against information and evidence provided concerning the selection criteria:

1. Novelty and potential to become world-leading
  - Degree of research excellence, making reference to novelty, significance, and ambition
2. Identified need in space
  - Demonstrates high potential to satisfy an existing or emerging space capability need or a current or emerging space industry need
3. Potential for impact and implementation pathway
  - Relevance and potential impact for the NSW space sector
4. Team track record
  - Team's ability to deliver proposed project, including appropriateness of track record, balance of skills within the project team, and feasibility given requested/available resources

## 6. Application Process

6.1. Application for the SRN Research Pilot Project Grants is a one stage process; however, applicants are encouraged to discuss their application with the SRN Team prior to submission. SRN can assist with any facilitated introductions and/or other support if required.

**Contact at [pilot@srn.org.au](mailto:pilot@srn.org.au)**

6.2. Applicants must submit an electronic copy of the application by the due date to [pilot@srn.org.au](mailto:pilot@srn.org.au).

6.3. Applicants should clearly identify in their application (including attachments) any information that

needs to be treated as confidential.

- 6.4. All applicants are expected to follow the internal processes of their institution that pertain to grant proposals and submissions.
- 6.5. The SRN maintains a network of Coordinators from each member institution.
- 6.6. All applicants must consult with the SRN Coordinator from your university who may be available to assist with grant preparation and in liaising with the SRN.

**Contacts:**

<b>Member</b>	<b>Contact</b>	<b>Email</b>
Australian National University	Chris Kourloufas	christopher.kourloufas@anu.edu.au
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University of Newcastle	Joss Kesby	joss.kesby@newcastle.edu.au
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University of Sydney	Adeline Williams	adeline.williams@sydney.edu.au
University of Technology Sydney	Thomas Leoni	thomas.leoni@uts.edu.au thomas.leoni@uts.edu.au
University of Wollongong	Robert Beretov	rberetov@uow.edu.au
Western Sydney University	Greg Cohen	greg.cohen@westernsydney.edu.au

**7. Selection Process**

- 7.1. SRN will collect applications and will conduct an initial completeness review of the applications. Advice will be provided to the SRN Technical Review Panel regarding eligibility.
- 7.2. Members of the SRN Technical Review Panel will assess each application on a competitive basis relative to the criteria and other applications received.
- 7.3. The SRN may request assessment of proposals from subject matter experts.
- 7.4. The SRN Funding Committee will make recommendations regarding funding allocations to projects and will submit these to the SRN Board for approval.
- 7.5. All applicants will be informed of the outcome and the decision on their applications, whether they are successful or not.
- 7.6. The timeline of the selection process is as follows:

8 Oct 2024	Funding Announcements Released
<b>31 January 2025</b>	<b>Applications due</b>
14 May 2025	SRN Funding Committee Assessment
30 May 2025	Result announcement
June 2025	Contracting & project commencement

**8. Funding Agreements, Intellectual Property**

- 8.1. All successful applicants who accept a grant will be required to enter into a Research Project Agreement between the NSW Space Research Network (represented by the University of

Sydney) and the lead university partner. The Agreement will specify the obligations and accountabilities of the recipients.

- 8.2. A separate agreement between the lead university and partner organisations (including university and industry partners) must be signed before the project work can start.
- 8.3. All project contracts, including all sub-contracts must be signed/executed within **90 days** of advice of awarded funding.
- 8.4. All contracting must be fully executed before SRN Research Pilot Project funding is transferred and projects commence.
- 8.5. Intellectual Property arrangements will be negotiated on case-by-case basis between the participating SRN Member Universities and industry partners where relevant/appropriate.

## **9. Reporting Requirements & Acknowledgement**

### Progress Meetings

- A member of the SRN Team will schedule regular informal status update meetings with the Chief Investigator to identify potential areas requiring further support by the Network and to ensure that the project is progressing against project milestones.
- Recipients may also be requested to participate in SRN events, activities, and interviews for promotional purposes.

### Interim Report

- Interim Progress Report to be provided at 6 months after project commencement.
- This will include a written report, and the Recipient may also be invited to deliver a verbal presentation at a meeting scheduled by the Network.
- Refer to Interim Project Report Template at (Schedule 4)

### Final Report

- The Chief Investigator from the SRN Member University will be required to provide a report to the SRN within two months of the end date negotiated in the contract agreement.
- Final Report should be delivered as a written report addressing the following:
  - Project Status
  - Technical Report
- The Lead University submits financial acquittal for the project as a whole, including Collaborating organisations' financial acquittal.
- Refer to Final Project Report Template (Schedule 5)

- 9.1. All expenditure must be in accordance with the project description and broad structure of the proposed project costs detailed in the proposal. Lead University must retain the evidence of the expenditure.
- 9.2. All changes to the project cost or roll-over of the funds must be justified and approved by the SRN (administered by the University of Sydney and UTS).
- 9.3. Publications containing material or research findings from an SRN Research Pilot Project must include acknowledgement of SRN Research Pilot project funding and the NSW Government in a form: "We thank the NSW Space Research Network and NSW State Government for financial support of this project through grant SRN Research Pilot Project Grant 2024-2025."

- 9.4. A brief description of successful Research Pilot Projects will be published on the SRN website and recorded in the SRN annual report with the following information: applicant organisation, university collaborator and grant amount. Applicants may be asked to provide a description of their project or personal experience with an SRN Research Pilot Project for case studies or press releases.
- 9.5. Recipients may also be requested to participate in SRN events, activities, and interviews for promotional purposes.