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# Emerging Priorities Program (EPP)

## General Feedback for Applicants

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### Overview

The objective of the Emerging Priorities Program (EPP) grant opportunity is to fund projects that assist school communities to respond to emerging priorities in school education, including recovery from COVID-19.

The intended outcomes of this grant opportunity are improved:

- educational outcomes for school students
- engagement of school students and their families with school education
- wellbeing of school leaders, teachers, and school students.

Examples of emerging priorities include:

- targeted educational support for students, including responding to the impacts of COVID-19
- mental health and wellbeing support for students, teachers, and school leaders, including responding to the impacts of COVID-19
- support for disengaged students to improve educational outcomes
- support for school attendance and completion
- support for career development of students, including to explore pathways for post-school destinations
- research and analysis to address the impacts of unexpected events, including COVID-19, on educational outcomes for students.

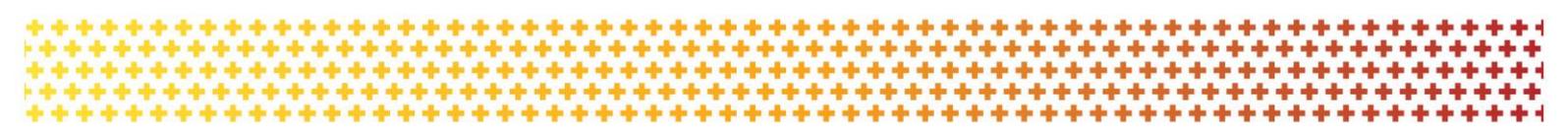
The grant opportunity application period opened on 28 January 2022 and closed on 17 February 2022 (extended from 10 February 2022).

The grant opportunity received over 600 applications. Following the Decision Maker's decision, 36 applications were selected for funding.

There was very strong interest in the program and successful applications were of a very high standard. Applications were assessed according to the procedure detailed in the EPP Grant Opportunity Guidelines and outlined in the Selection Process below. Limited funding was available for this program.

This feedback is provided to assist grant applicants to understand what generally comprised a strong application and the content of quality responses to the assessment criteria for this grant opportunity.

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## Selection Process

The Department of Education, Skills and Employment used an open competitive selection process to select 36 providers to deliver projects under the EPP.

Applications were screened for eligibility and compliance against the requirements outlined in the EPP Grant Opportunity Guidelines.

The Assessment Panel made final recommendations to the decision maker by taking into account the following factors:

- initial preliminary score against the assessment criteria
- extent to which the evidence in the application demonstrated that it will contribute to meeting the objective and outcomes of the EPP
- relative value of the grant sought
- risks, financial, fraud and other, that the applicant or project poses
- risks that the applicant or project poses for the Commonwealth
- value for money.

Each applicant was required to address the following selection criteria:

- **Criterion 1 Effectiveness** – Demonstrate how the project will meet the objective and outcomes of the EPP.
- **Criterion 2 Informed by Evidence** – Demonstrate how the project is informed by and based-on evidence.
- **Criterion 3 Clarity** – Demonstrate how the project is clearly scoped and costed.
- **Criterion 4 Risk Mitigation** – Demonstrate how the project will effectively mitigate any risks.
- **Criterion 5 Evaluation** – Demonstrate how the project will be evaluated, including evaluation processes, outcomes, and measures of success.

## Selection Results

The selected organisations provided strong responses to the selection criteria, and demonstrated their ability to meet the eligibility requirements outlined in the EPP Grant Opportunity Guidelines. Further detail about what constituted a strong response to each criterion is provided below.



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## Criterion 1

### Effectiveness – 30% weighting

Demonstrate how the project will meet the objective and outcomes of the EPP.

When addressing the criterion, strong applicants will demonstrate:

- the effectiveness of the project in meeting the objective and outcomes for the EPP
- that the project can have a national impact, or otherwise meets Australian Government priorities for school education
- the extent to which the project responds to impacts and/or challenges arising from COVID-19 on school education
- that they have a strong track-record and reputation in the school education sector.

Strength	Example
<p>Strong applications were required to demonstrate the effectiveness of the proposal in meeting the objective and outcomes for the EPP.</p>	<p>Strong responses demonstrated:</p> <p>A very high-standard of understanding on the objectives and outcomes of the EPP, and a very high-standard of understanding on how the proposal effectively meets those objectives and outcomes.</p> <p><b>Key Strengths</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Described clear links from the proposal to EPP outcomes.</li><li>▪ Described clear links from the proposal to EPP objective.</li><li>▪ Demonstrated understanding of the EPP.</li></ul>
<p>Strong applications were required to demonstrate how their proposal could have a national impact, or otherwise meets the Australian Government’s priorities for school education.</p>	<p>Strong responses demonstrated:</p> <p>A very high-standard of understanding on how the proposal could have an effective national impact, or otherwise a very high-standard demonstrating how the proposal meets Australian Government priorities for school education.</p> <p><b>Key Strengths</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Proposal clearly demonstrated a national impact, or how it meets Australian Government priorities.</li></ul>



<b>Strength</b>	<b>Example</b>
<p>Strong applications were required to demonstrate how the project responds to the impacts and/or challenges that have arisen from COVID-19 on school education.</p>	<p>Strong responses demonstrated:</p> <p>A very high-standard of understanding on the impacts and challenges for school education arising from COVID-19, and a very high-standard of understanding on how the proposal meets those impacts and challenges.</p> <p><b>Key Strengths</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Detailed impacts and challenges from COVID-19 directly related to the need for the proposal.</li></ul>
<p>Strong applications were required to demonstrate a strong track-record and reputation in the school education sector.</p>	<p>Strong responses demonstrated/described:</p> <p>Applications demonstrated clear evidence of a very strong track-record and reputation for school education.</p> <p><b>Key Strengths</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Detailed track-record in the school education sector.</li><li>▪ Proven ability to deliver effectively in the school education sector.</li></ul>



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## **Criterion 2**

### **Informed by Evidence – 30% weighting**

Demonstrate how the project is informed by and based-on evidence.

When addressing the criterion, strong applicants will demonstrate:

- an evidence-based need for the project
- an evidence-based proposed implementation of the project
- how the project complements or differentiates from relevant existing Australian Government/State/Territory initiatives.



Strength	Example
<p>Strong applications were required to demonstrate the evidence-base that supported the need for the proposal.</p>	<p>Strong responses demonstrated:</p> <p>Strong applications detailed a very high-standard of evidence-base in support of the proposal. Detailed and appropriate evidence was provided that clearly supported the need of the proposal for the school education sector.</p> <p><b>Key Strengths</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Evidence-base supports all key areas of the proposal.</li><li>▪ Clear link between evidence-base and the outcomes of the proposal.</li><li>▪ Reliable and recent data/research.</li><li>▪ Peer-reviewed research.</li></ul>
<p>Strong applications were required to demonstrate the evidence base for the proposed implementation of the proposal.</p>	<p>Strong responses demonstrated:</p> <p>Strong applications detailed a very-high standard of evidence-base in support of implementation of the proposal. Detailed and appropriate evidence was provided that clearly supported the implementation of the proposal for the school education sector.</p> <p><b>Key Strengths</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Evidence-base supports all key areas of the proposal.</li><li>▪ Clear link between evidence-base and the implementation of the proposal.</li><li>▪ Reliable and recent data/research.</li><li>▪ Peer-reviewed research.</li></ul>



Strong applications were required to demonstrate how the proposal complements or differentiates from relevant existing Australian Government, State or Territory initiatives.

Strong responses demonstrated:

Strong applications described in detail how the proposal complements and/or differentiates from other government initiatives. For example, how the proposal engages with existing initiatives, however is a differentiation from current service offerings.

**Key Strengths**

- Knowledge of existing government initiatives.
- Clearly outlined the links and/or differentiation between the proposal and government initiatives.



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### Criterion 3

#### Clarity – 20% weighting

Demonstrate how the project is clearly scoped and costed.

When addressing the criterion, strong applicants will:

- demonstrate that the project is clearly scoped and costed, including key performance indicators, milestones, and completion dates
- demonstrate the capacity to ensure that any necessary approvals will be in place to implement the project.

Strength	Example
<p>Strong applications were required to demonstrate clearly a scoped and costed proposal, which included detail on key performance indicators, milestones and completion dates.</p>	<p>Strong responses demonstrated:</p> <p>Strong applications clearly and fully detailed the proposal scope. Costings presented were clear, and related to the scope of the proposal. Achievable key performance indicators were detailed, along with milestones that were clearly identifiable, and this coincided with the timeframe for the proposal.</p> <p><b>Key Strengths</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Clear scope and costings.</li><li>▪ Achievable measures and milestones.</li><li>▪ Realistic timeframes.</li></ul>
<p>Strong applications were required to demonstrate the capacity to ensure that necessary approvals will be in place to implement the proposal.</p>	<p>Strong responses demonstrated:</p> <p>Strong applications were able to clearly identify and explain the need to obtain necessary approvals, and how such approvals would be sought and granted. For example, approvals from relevant government bodies and/or school authorities.</p> <p><b>Key Strengths</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Approvals already in place, or capacity to obtain approvals clearly defined.</li><li>▪ Timeframes to implement.</li></ul>



## Criterion 4

### Risk Mitigation – 10% weighting

Demonstrate how the project will effectively mitigate any risks.

When addressing the criterion, strong applicants will demonstrate:

- material risks associated with implementing the project have been clearly defined (including but not limited to use of new technology, and the scale/complexity of the project)
- any material risks are able to be effectively managed and mitigated.

<b>Strength</b>	<b>Example</b>
Strong applications were required to clearly define material risks associated with implementation of the project and demonstrate how material risks would be effectively managed and mitigated.	<p>Strong responses demonstrated:</p> <p>Material risks associated with implementing the project and mitigation strategies have been defined in a clear and thorough manner. Strong applications also included a detailed understanding of risk management and mitigation.</p> <p><b>Key Strengths</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Material risks were described, including during implementation.</li><li>▪ Proposal implementation and risk identification clearly linked.</li><li>▪ Risk management and mitigation clearly scoped and detailed.</li></ul>



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## Criterion 5

### Evaluation – 10% weighting

Demonstrate how the project will be evaluated, including evaluation processes, outcomes, and measures of success.

Strength	Example
<p>Strong applications were required to demonstrate how the proposal would be evaluated, and include evaluation processes, outcomes and measures of success.</p>	<p>Strong responses demonstrated/described:</p> <p>Clear and defined evaluation method and process, and how this will be applied to the proposal. For example, linking a reliable evaluation method to relevant processes using either quantitative or qualitative data collection. Measures of success were clear and directly related to the outcomes being sought through the evaluation from the commencement of the project.</p> <p><b>Key Strengths</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Reliable evaluation method.</li><li>▪ Outcomes realistic and achievable.</li><li>▪ Baseline evaluative data collection.</li></ul>