



National Industry
PhD Program

National Industry PhD Program

2025–26 Program data highlights

September 2026



Acknowledgement of Country

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Foreword from the Program Delegate



I am pleased to present the National Industry PhD Program 2025–26 highlights, showcasing key data and insights on the program's reach and performance.

The National Industry PhD Program is a key Australian Government initiative strengthening Australia's research and innovation ecosystem by bringing together universities and industry to accelerate the translation of research into practical and commercial outcomes. Through its two streams, Industry Linked PhDs and Industry Researcher PhDs, the program is helping to develop a new generation of researchers with the skills and experience to work across academia and industry and drive innovation in Australia's priority sectors.

The data presented in this report reflects the program's breadth and strong engagement with Australia's national priorities. Demand from universities and industry partners remained high, with highly competitive funding rounds and expanding participation across jurisdictions, sectors and disciplines throughout Australia.

It has been a privilege to serve as Program Delegate over the past financial year and to see the program continue to grow in reach and participation across Australia. I thank Campus Plus, our program delivery partner, for their ongoing commitment and support. My sincere thanks also go to the PhD candidates, universities, industry partners and assessors whose dedication, collaboration and commitment to innovation are helping to build Australia's future research workforce.

Simon Puckett

Program Delegate of the National Industry PhD Program

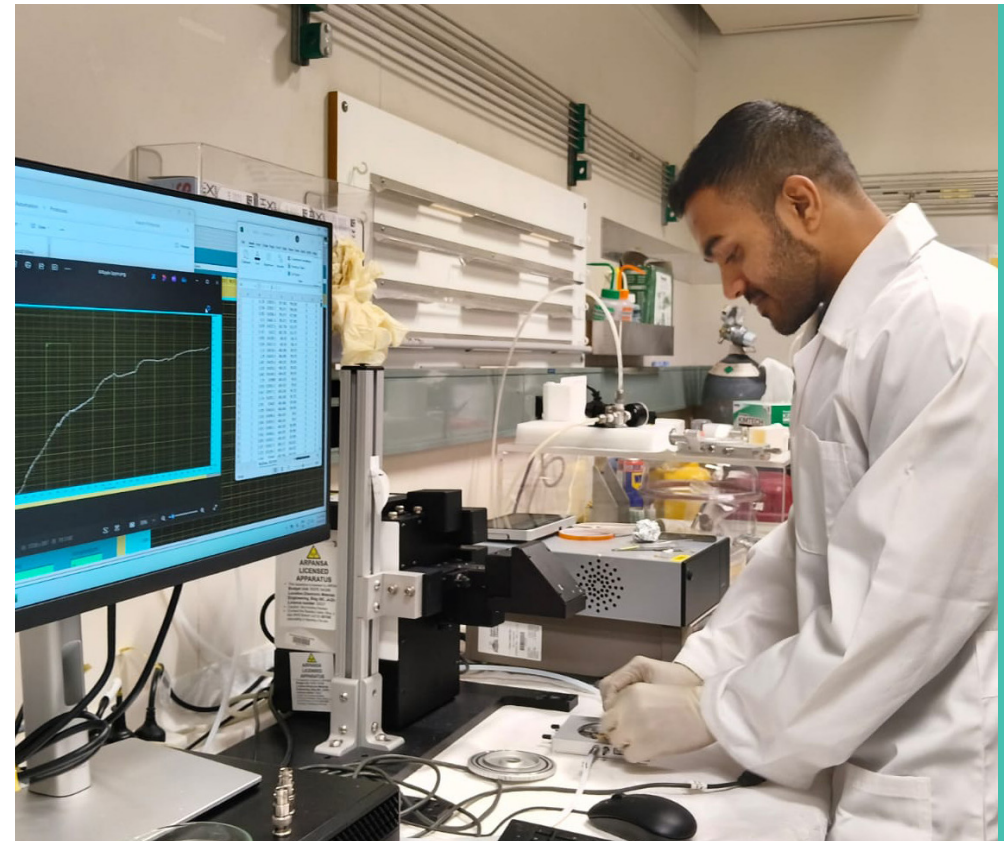
About the National Industry PhD Program

The National Industry PhD Program (NIPhD) supports the development of industry-engaged PhD researchers through funding and training that strengthen university-industry collaboration and accelerates the translation of research into practical and commercial outcomes.

The program forms part of the Increase Workforce Mobility Initiative under the [2022 University Research Commercialisation Action Plan](#).

The program comprises 2 distinct streams to strengthen collaboration between universities and industry:

- **Industry Linked PhDs** enable candidates to undertake research projects co-designed by universities and industry partners. Funding supplements the Research Training Program (RTP) stipend (or an equivalent scholarship), provided by universities to eligible PhD candidates.
- **Industry Researcher PhDs** support industry professionals to undertake a PhD in partnership with a university while remaining employed. Funding subsidises the costs incurred by businesses in supporting employees to complete their PhD.



The program aims to:

- develop industry-ready researchers who can work across academia and industry
- build the research capability of industry professionals and expand opportunities for engagement with academia
- contribute to and strengthen industry-focused innovation and development through greater university-industry collaboration
- support PhD research aligned with national priorities, including the [National Reconstruction Fund \(NRF\) Priority Areas](#)

The department delivers the program through [Campus Plus](#), which manages grant administration including the application assessment process, candidate training, program monitoring and program marketing and engagement.

Further information about the program is available at [National Industry PhD Program](#).





Key highlights

7
application
rounds



Engagement across
8 all states
and territories



221
Industry Linked
awards



92
female PhD candidates
commenced



1,102
total applications
received



693
industry partners
applied



129
regional industry
partners awarded



7
Training Reimagined
and networking events
delivered across Australia



36
universities
applied



448
total approved
awards



99
regional universities
awarded



2
PhD award
completions



Program performance overview

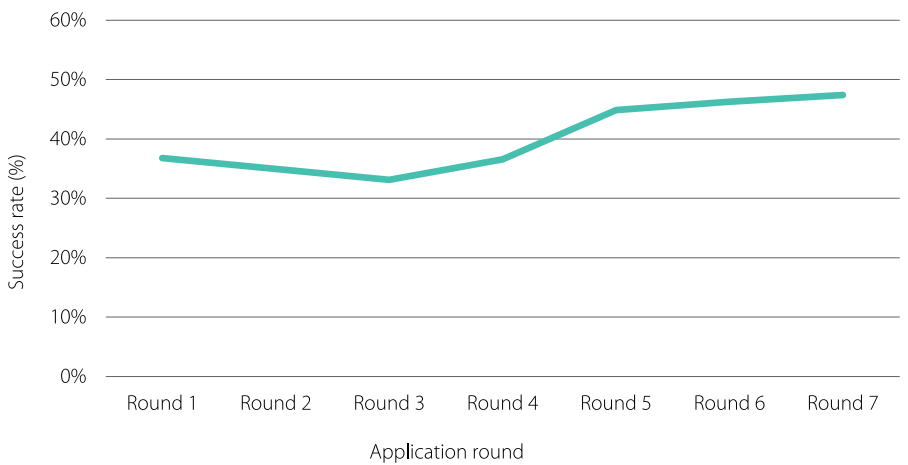
As of June 2026, the NIPhD Program has delivered 7 funding rounds with the first round opening in 2023. The program has received 1,102 applications and approved funding to 448 projects across 36 universities.

Table 1. Applications assessed and approved as of 30 June 2026

	Number submitted	Number assessed	Target for approval	Actual number approved
Round 1	87	85	26	32
Round 2	143	143	44	50
Round 3	145	145	40	48
Round 4	186	184	65	68
Round 5	176	175	60	79
Round 6	173	172	70	80
Round 7	192	190	70	91
Total	1,102	1,094	375	448

Program competitiveness remained strong, with success rates increasing from 33.1% in Round 3 (2024) to 47.4% in Round 7 (2026), the highest rate recorded during the reporting period. This demonstrates continued demand for the program and its expanding support for industry-connected PhD opportunities.

Figure 1. Application success rates by funding round



A further indicator of the program’s success is the improving quality of repeat applications. Approval rates for resubmitted¹ applications increased from 23% in Round 2 to 45% in Rounds 7, reflecting stronger alignment with program requirements and assessment criteria overtime.

Table 2. Resubmitted applications as of 30 June 2026

	Round 2	Round 3	Round 4	Round 5	Round 6	Round 7
Number resubmitted	27	22	34	32	27	29
Approved	22% (6)	36% (8)	53% (18)	59% (19)	59% (16)	45% (13)
Not approved	77%	62%	47%	41%	41%	55%

The majority of successful projects commenced within 12 months of approval (91%), demonstrating timely onboarding, contract execution and project mobilisation. This aligns with program requirements, which generally require projects to commence within 12 months of funding approval, with extensions of up to 3 months available in exceptional circumstances. Overall, these results reflect strong program engagement and effective establishment of projects and partnerships.

¹ Resubmitted applications are applications submitted for the identified round that were unsuccessful in a previous application round(s). Data provided by the program’s service provider, Campus Plus.

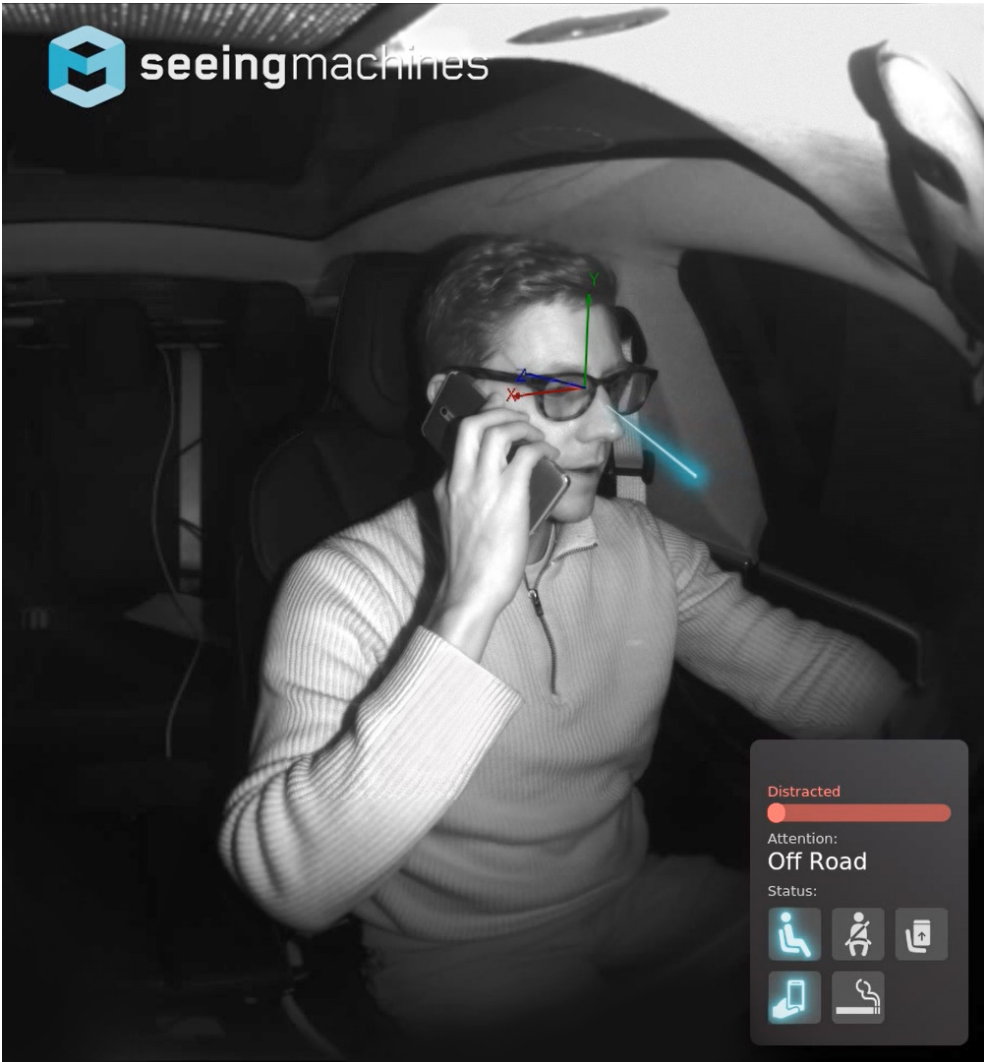
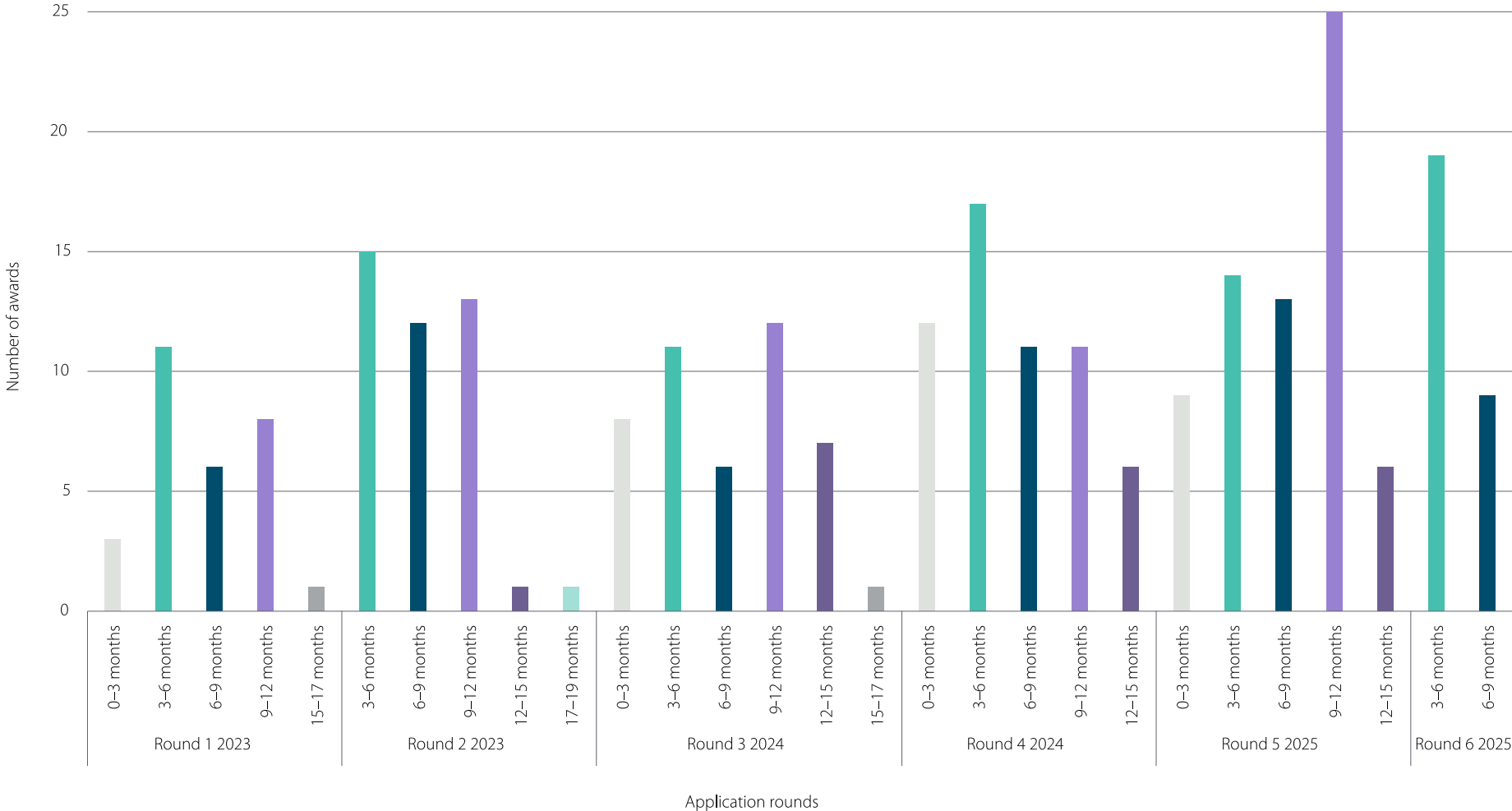


Figure 2. Time from project approval to commencement by funding round



CASE STUDY

A milestone achievement: The first PhD completion in the National Industry PhD Program

From PhD research to commercial deployment: TeraStream

TeraStream is the first project completed under the NIPhD Program, providing an early demonstration of how the program can translate research excellence into real-world impact. Delivered through a partnership between the University of New South Wales (UNSW), Canopus Networks, and PhD candidate Yifan Wang, the project combined academic expertise with industry knowledge to address challenges facing telecommunications providers and digital service operators.

The project focused on developing artificial intelligence and machine learning techniques to analyse network traffic at scale and provide insights into service performance and user experience.

The research has been integrated into Canopus Networks' commercial network observability platform, enabling real-time monitoring of user experience, identification of video streaming services, classification of cloud gaming environments, and enhanced network troubleshooting capabilities.

A key factor in the project's success was Yifan's ability to work across both academic and industry settings. Through close collaboration with company engineers, he translated rigorous research into deployable technologies, including cloud gaming monitoring capabilities now operating on the NVIDIA GeForce NOW platform.

"Yifan has very successfully married his academic research with industry outcomes."
Professor Vijay Sivaraman, UNSW



The project generated 4 peer-reviewed publications, an international patent application, and technologies supporting services used by millions of users worldwide. It also provided Yifan with valuable experience in research translation, commercial deployment and cross-sector collaboration.

As the first completed NIPhD project, TeraStream highlights the value of co-designed university-industry research. The project has delivered tangible commercial outcomes, strengthened Australia's capability in telecommunications and artificial intelligence, and demonstrated how the NIPhD Program can develop highly skilled researchers while accelerating innovation for industry.

"The project demonstrates how university-industry partnerships can generate impactful innovation while developing the next generation of industry researchers and technology leaders." Maheesha Perera, Canopus Networks

Performance by stream

Industry Linked PhD stream

The stream demonstrated strong growth in both demand and funding outcomes. Applications increased from 36 in Round one to around 100 in Round 7, with 570 applications received overall. The program exceeded its funding target by 19.5%, awarding 221 projects against a target of 185.



Top 3 NRF priority areas

- Medical Science
- Enabling Capabilities
- Renewable & Low Emissions Technologies



Top 3 fields of research

- Engineering
- Information and Computing Sciences
- Medical and Health Sciences



Top 3 university locations

- Victoria
- New South Wales
- South Australia

Table 3. Industry Linked PhD applications and funded awards, as of June 2026

	Number submitted	Target for approval	Actual number approved
Round 1	36	15	15
Round 2	65	20	21
Round 3	79	20	21
Round 4	102	30	34
Round 5	99	30	44
Round 6	89	35	40
Round 7	100	35	46
Total	570	185	221

“The collaboration provided [the candidate] with access to real-world datasets, operational expertise, and deployment opportunities that would not have been possible in a purely academic setting. At the same time, the industry partner benefited from cutting-edge research insights and evidence-based innovation. The result has been a highly successful partnership that strengthened industry-focused innovation, delivered measurable commercial impact, and demonstrated the value of sustained university-industry engagement in developing future technology leaders.”

Professor Vijay Sivaraman, UNSW

Industry Researcher PhD stream

The stream gained significant momentum over the reporting period, with applications increasing from 51 in Round one to 92 in Round 7. Funding approvals also more than doubled, growing from 17 to 45, and meeting or exceeding targets in every round. These outcomes demonstrate the program’s expanding reach and contribution to strengthening Australia’s industry-focused research workforce.



Top 3 NRF priority areas

- Medical Science
- Enabling Capabilities
- Renewable & Low Emissions Technologies



Top 3 fields of research

- Medical and Health Sciences
- Engineering
- Information and Computing Sciences



Top 3 university locations

- New South Wales
- Queensland
- Victoria

Table 4. Industry Researcher PhD applications and funded awards, as of June 2026

	Number submitted	Target for approval	Actual number approved
Round 1	51	11	17
Round 2	78	24	29
Round 3	66	20	27
Round 4	84	35	34
Round 5	77	30	35
Round 6	84	35	40
Round 7	92	35	45
Total	532	190	227

“It’s being able to tap into the best and brightest that Australia has to offer that sometimes sits outside of industry settings. So being able to collaborate with these researchers on topics of investigation that may fall beyond the immediate time horizon or immediate business needs. And so being able to foster that sort of collaboration and ... develop programs that cater to both to the needs of academia and industry has just been a very productive experience overall.”

Jonny Kuo, NIPhD Industry Supervisor

CASE STUDY

Transforming aquaculture through sustainability

Breeding giant grouper, one of the world's most impressive reef fish, is no small feat. From complex life cycles to precise environmental needs, it is a challenge that sits right at the intersection of science and production.

With support from the NIPhD Program, Adam Reynolds is unlocking new approaches to giant grouper breeding from within industry, supporting more sustainable aquaculture practices and strengthening Australia's blue-economy capability. Working full-time at The Company One while completing a part-time PhD with James Cook University (JCU), Adam is applying new genetic insights directly to broodstock and breeding decisions, delivering real-world impact as the research unfolds.

By combining JCU's leading expertise in aquaculture genetics with The Company One's commercial and on-the-ground experience, this project demonstrates how industry and research can work together to deliver real-world impact in real time. Reflecting on this experience, Adam Reynolds shared how the NIPhD Program has supported his research journey.

"Coming back into research has been a journey. The program helps me build new skills while staying embedded in industry," Adam said.

"The combination positions me as a specialist capable of translating research directly into commercial outcomes."



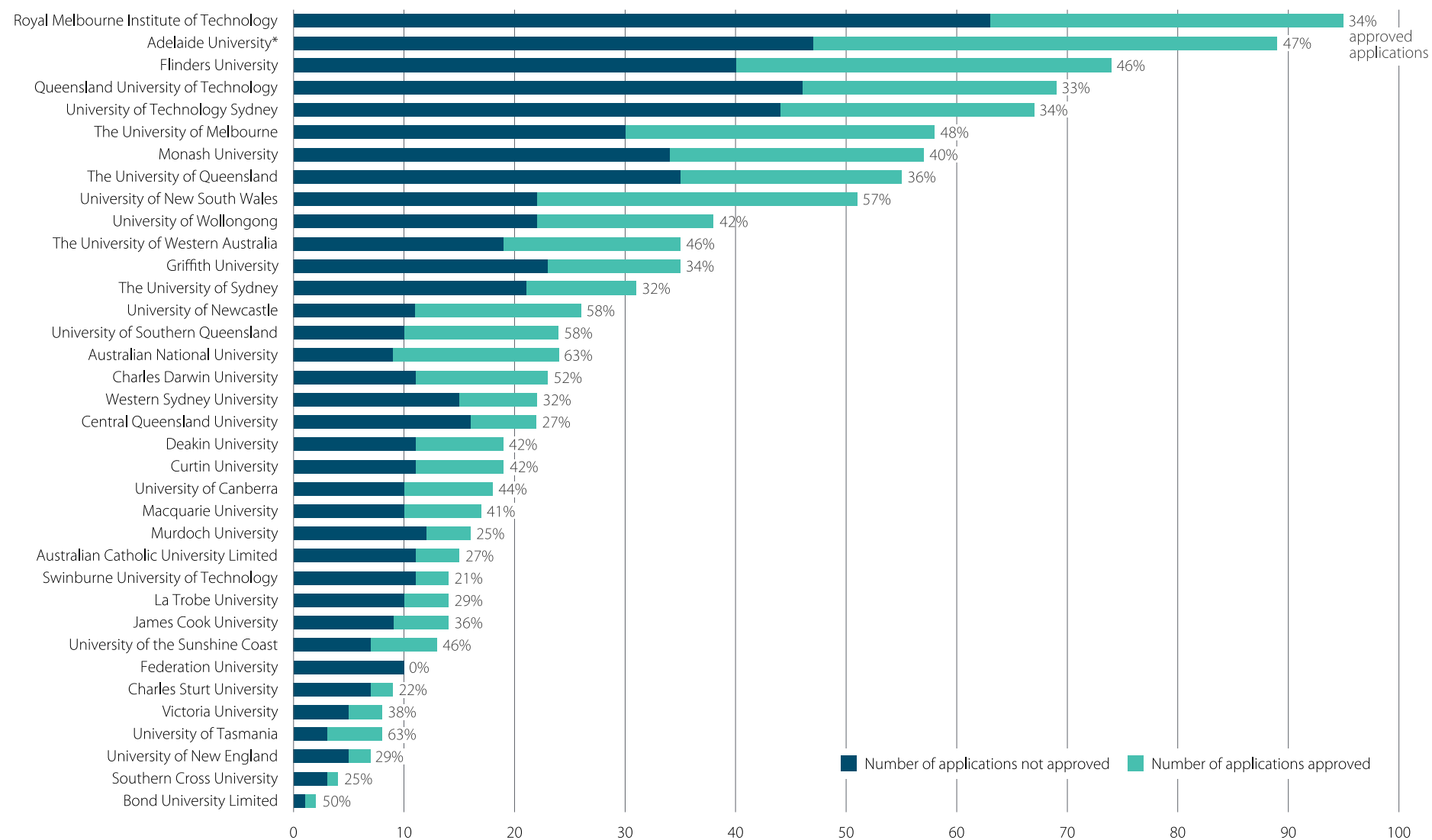
Program reach

Participating universities

The program achieved strong engagement across Australia's higher education sector, attracting participation from research-intensive, technology-focused and regional universities. Group of Eight (Go8) universities recorded the highest levels of participation. The program also achieved strong participation from Regional Universities Network (RUN) members, highlighting its reach into regional Australia and contribution to broader equity objectives. Australian Technology Network (ATN) universities and other metropolitan institutions also participated strongly, demonstrating broad sector-wide engagement.



Figure 3. Applications and approval rates by university (Rounds 1–7)



* Adelaide University includes University of South Australia and University of Adelaide applications and awards prior to the university merger in early 2026.

Industry partner profile

The NIPhD Program has approved projects involving 377 industry partners across all Australian states and territories. These partners represent organisations of all sizes, including small and medium-sized enterprises, and span a diverse range of sectors. The professional, scientific and technical services sector account for the largest share of participation, alongside agriculture, construction, health and manufacturing.

The program has also strengthened university-industry collaboration, with 69% of funded projects involving existing partnerships and 31% establishing new partnerships. The strong proportion of new partnerships highlights the program's ability to support new collaborations, expand its reach and strengthen collaboration across Australia's innovation ecosystem.

Figure 4. Rounds 1–7 awards by industry partner size

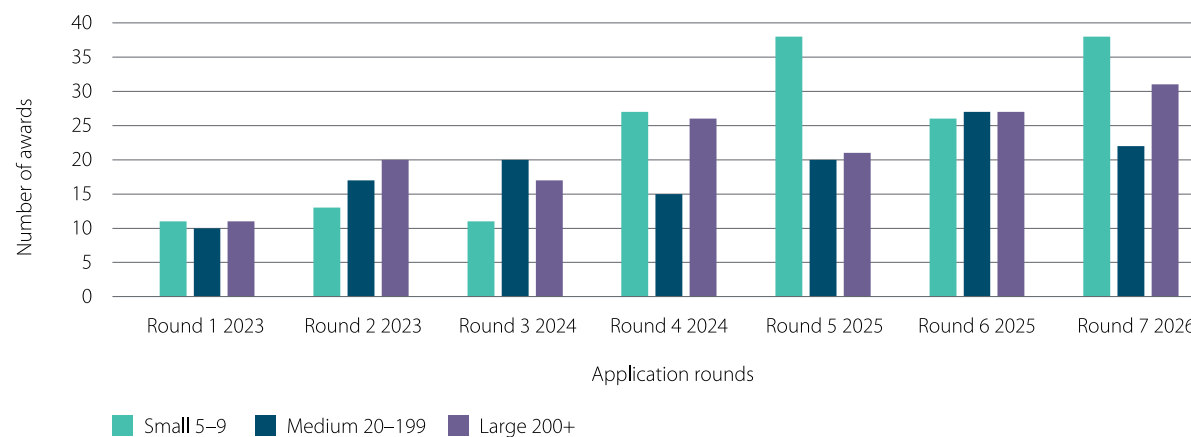
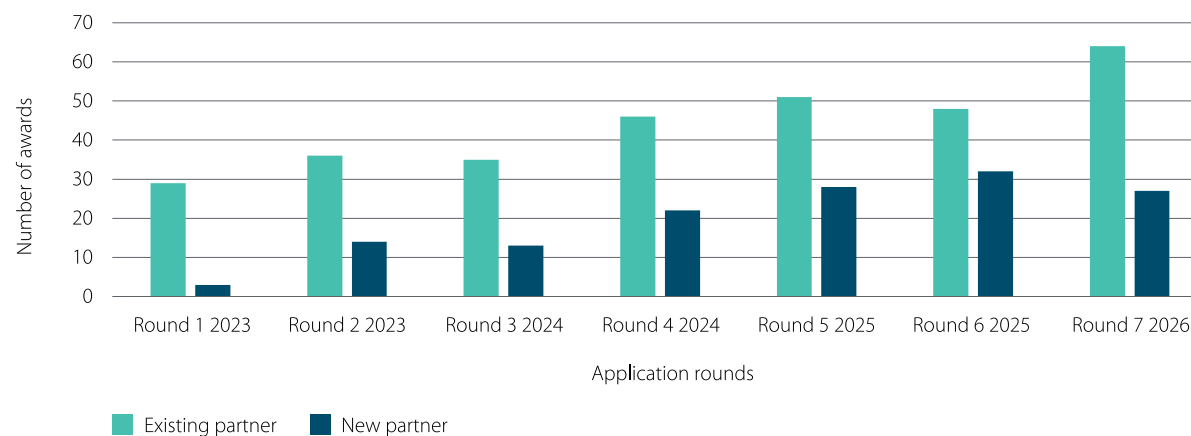


Figure 5. Rounds 1–7 awards by existing and new university-industry partnership



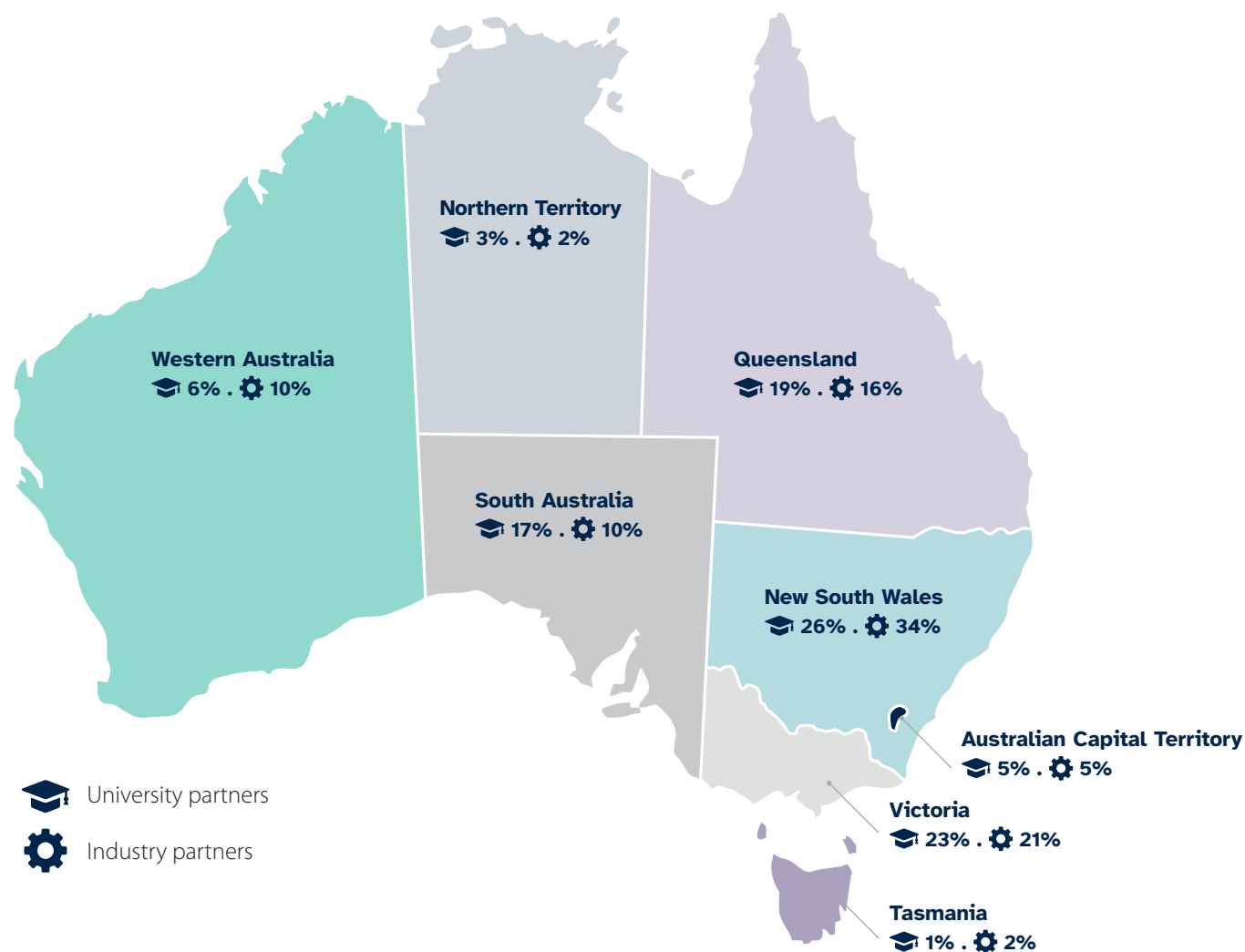
Geographic distribution

The program achieved broad geographic reach, with successful funded projects across multiple states and territories. A total of 448 places were approved from 1,102 applications, representing an overall success rate of 40.7%. Universities in New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland recorded the highest number of approved projects, with New South Wales receiving the highest number of funded places (26%) across 11 participating universities.

Strong outcomes were also achieved in smaller jurisdictions. Tasmania recorded the highest success rate of any jurisdiction (62.5%), with 5 of its 8 applications approved. Overall, funding outcomes broadly reflected application demand and the distribution of participating universities across Australia.

Industry engagement also reflected this geographic distribution, with industry partners from across Australia participating in the program. The highest levels of industry participation were recorded in New South Wales (34%), Victoria (21%) and Queensland (16%), demonstrating the program's success in strengthening university-industry collaboration.

Figure 6. Geographic distribution of Rounds 1–7 awards by university and industry partner

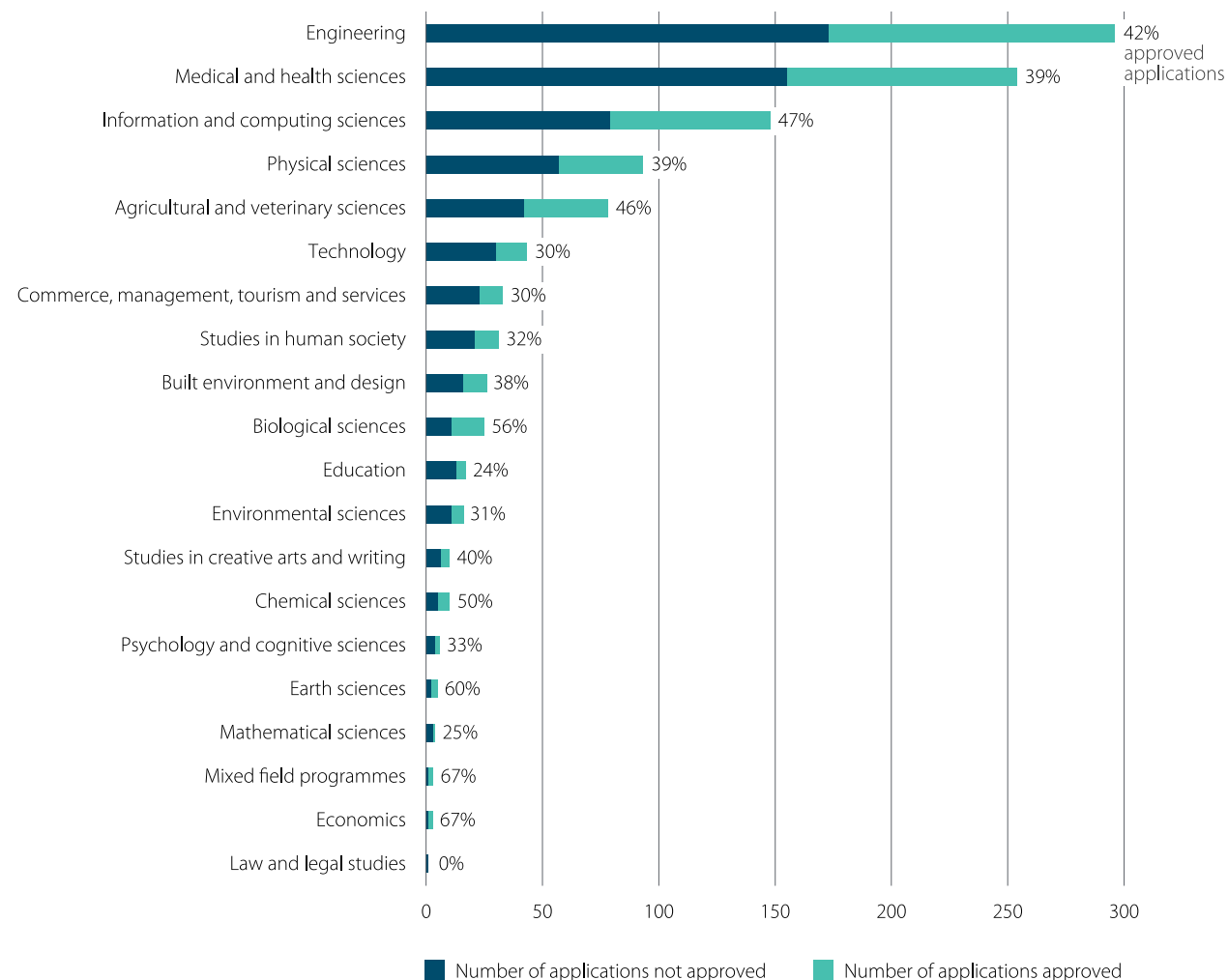


Field of research

Funding outcomes varied across research fields², demonstrating the program's support for a diverse range of disciplines. Engineering and Medical and Health Sciences attracted the largest share of applications (27% and 23% respectively). Several smaller disciplines achieved particularly high success rates, including Mixed Field Programmes (67%) and Economics (67%), followed by Earth Sciences (60%), Biological Sciences (56%), and Chemical Sciences (50%). Overall, these findings demonstrate that program success was not solely driven by application volume, with high quality and competitive applications emerging across a broad range of disciplines.

² Field of research is used to describe common knowledge domains and/or methodologies used in research and experimental development (R&D). Fields of research correspond to the fields defined by the [Australian and New Zealand Standard Research Classification \(ANZSRC\), 2020](#) | [Australian Bureau of Statistics](#) published by the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

Figure 7. Approval rates by fields of research (Rounds 1–7)



Priority cohorts

Supporting First Nations communities

Across all 7 rounds announced to date, 29 grants have been awarded to projects which include activities with potential to positively impact First Nations communities. This is out of a total of 403 awards (7.2%) and does not include projects which have been subsequently withdrawn or forfeited.

These projects aim to generate social, environmental, cultural and economic benefits for First Nations communities through research and collaboration across a range of priority areas.



Strengthening

First Nations participation and leadership in sport



Protecting

cultural heritage in the context of renewable energy development



Improving

health outcomes through culturally informed data systems and medical research



Understanding

the drivers of First Nations educational success



Supporting

First Nations-led land management and environmental enterprises



Supporting

First Nations-led repatriation through culturally appropriate practices

CASE STUDY

Improving access to sport

Paul O'Neill, CEO of Murray Valley Aboriginal Co-operative and PhD student, is expanding the scope of his research to identify better ways to support First Nations people in sport through the NIPhD Program. The funding will help Paul speak to more First Nations participants across Australia, capturing perspectives from both athletes and everyday participants, to help shape research questions and sporting opportunities for First Nations communities.

This project will enhance culturally appropriate governance for First Nations participants in Australian sports, providing better support from the moment they start a sport through to adulthood and beyond.

"The funding allows me to work on a greater scope. This opportunity will help us get the national voice of First Nations participants, whether they are elite athletes or those giving it their all, no matter what," Paul said.

"As a CEO of an Aboriginal health service, sport in a rural setting is paramount to us. It's the fabric to our community. Making sure we are giving access to the opportunity for First Nations people to feel as safe as possible in the sport they choose for as soon as possible is something that is invaluable to our nation."



Regional engagement

Regional³ collaboration was a notable feature of the NIPhD Program, with 18.4% of commenced projects involving both a regional university and a regional industry partner. These outcomes highlight the program's strong contribution to supporting regional innovation, strengthening university-industry collaboration, and building research capability across regional Australia.

Regional university campuses accounted for 18.3% of applications (202 of 1,102 applications) and recorded a success rate of 49.0%, compared with 38.8% for major city campuses.

Applications involving regional industry partners accounted for 22.1% of applications (243 of 1,102 applications) and recorded a success rate of 53.1%, compared with 37.1% for major city partners. These outcomes highlight the program's role in strengthening regional innovation ecosystems.

³ 'Major city' and 'regional area' are based on the Remoteness Structure of the [Australian Statistical Geography Standards \(ASGS\)](#) published by the Australian Bureau of Statistics. Location data for applying these classifications comes from applications for program funding, which identify university and industry partner locations.



60 (23.5%)

PhD candidates enrolled in regional universities



92 (36.1%)

Regional industry partners



47 (18.4%)

Regional university and industry partners

Mapping women representation

Across Rounds 1–7, 92 of the 255 active, paused and completed awards involved women PhD candidates, reflecting the program’s role in building a more diverse and inclusive research workforce.

Of the 92 women candidates there is a relatively even distribution across streams, with 48% in the Industry Linked stream and 52% in the Industry Researcher stream.

This reflects a marginally higher proportion of women candidates already employed and actively working in the sector.

Women candidates are represented across a broad range of research disciplines. Medical and Health Sciences is the most common field, accounting for 35% of candidates, followed by Agriculture and Veterinary Sciences and Engineering (14% each), and Information and Computing Sciences (11%). This reflects strong participation by women across both established research fields and emerging STEM areas.

Table 5. Women⁴ PhD candidates in progress and completed by round

	Round 1	Round 2	Round 3	Round 4	Round 5	Round 6	Total
Total number of awards (In progress and completed)	26	36	43	56	66	28	255
Women	12	10	19	20	22	9	92

Note: In progress includes PhD candidates that had commenced their projects by 30 June 2026. Numbers may vary from approved applications due to delayed commencements and withdrawals. Shaded columns indicate funding rounds where not all candidates had commenced. Round 7 projects were scheduled to commence from July 2026.

4 ‘Women’ counts are derived from a salutation prefix (‘Ms’) recorded by the program’s service provider at the commencement of PhD research projects.

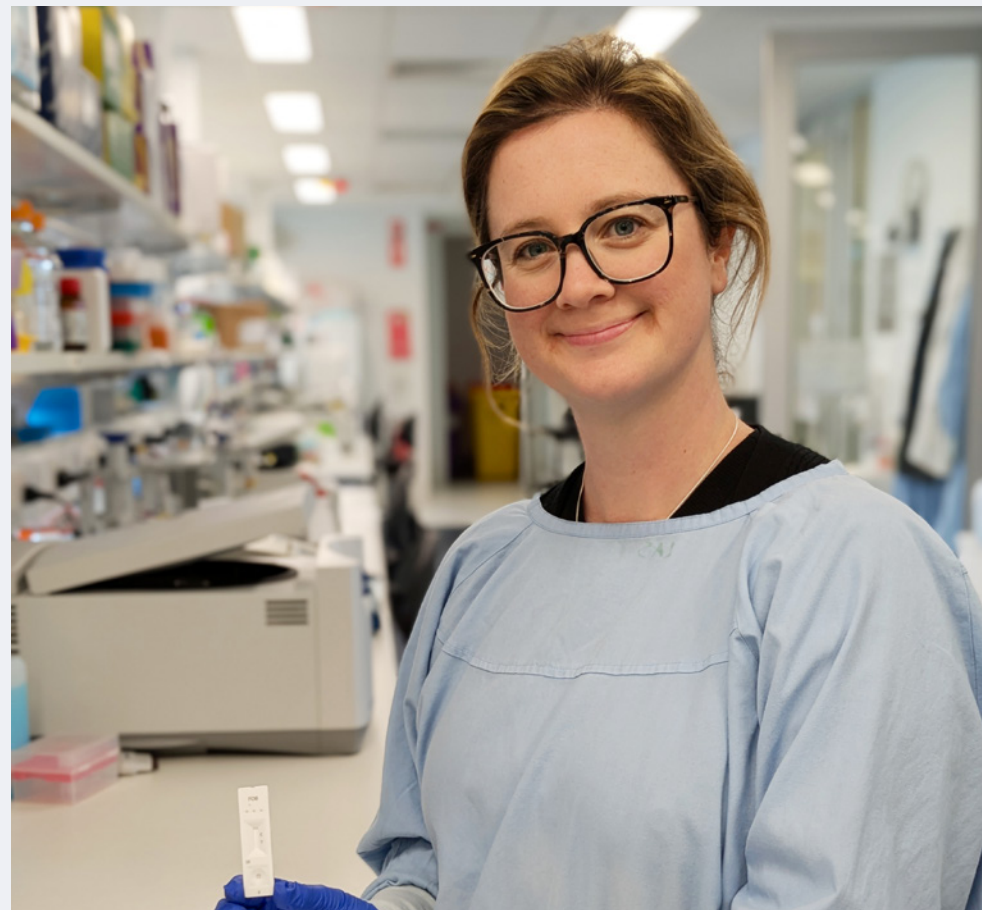
CASE STUDY

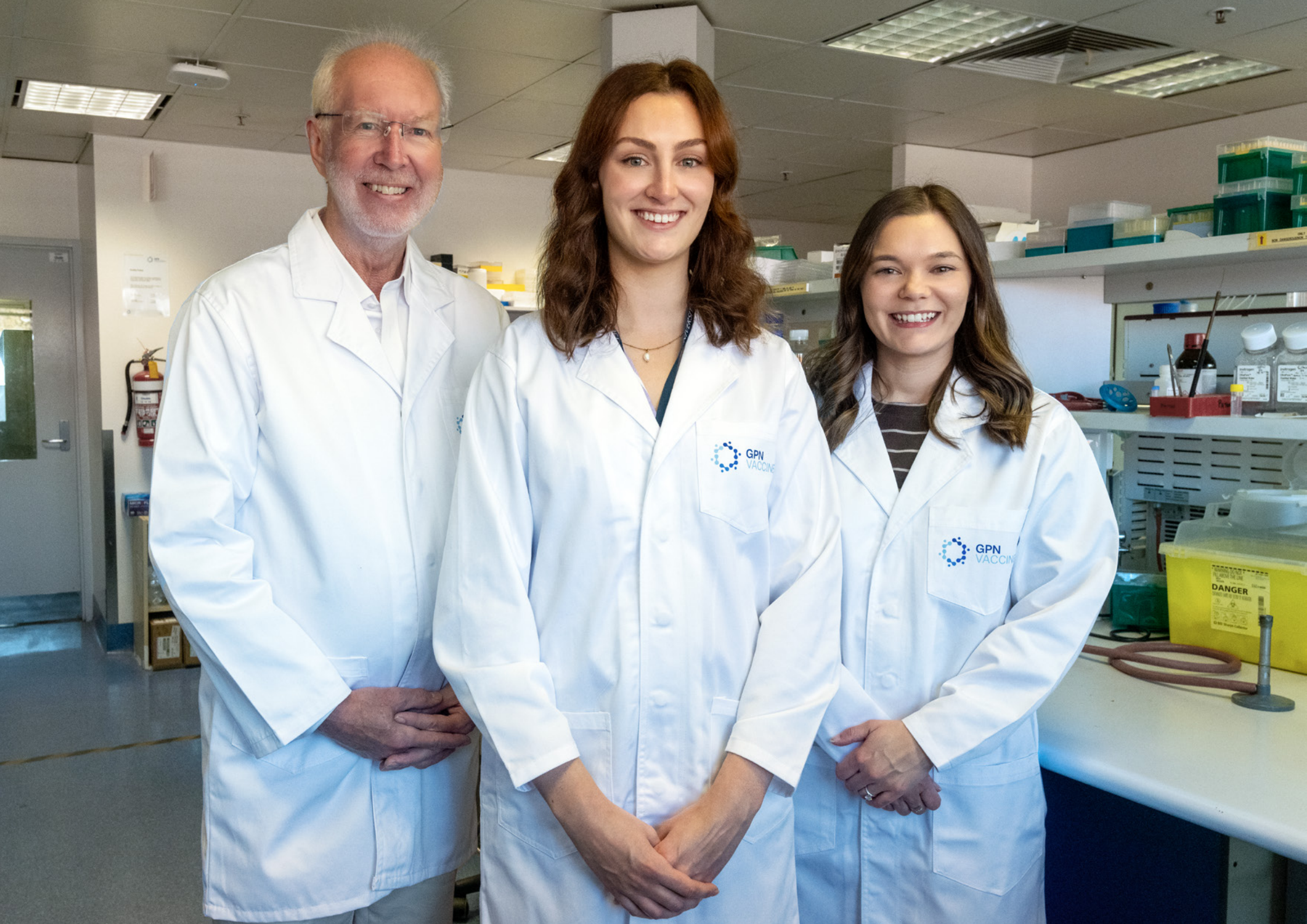
Bowel cancer detection could soon be easier and more accessible through a simple test

Associate Professor Erin Symonds and her team at Flinders University, in collaboration with industry partners, are conducting extensive research to develop a test that helps people monitor their bowel health. PhD student, Alicia Dallisson is contributing to this groundbreaking work through an industry-linked PhD, gaining valuable experience and mentorship from both academic and industry experts. This project aims to develop a screening test that not only detects colorectal cancer early, but also identifies pre-cancerous polyps, helping to prevent cancer before it develops. By increasing bowel screening uptake, the goal is to significantly reduce colorectal cancer rates in Australia and globally.

"We definitely couldn't do this project without the NIPhD Program. We do a lot of research in the clinical and academic space, but what we miss is the link to experts in the industry. This linkage is making a difference to projects as it gets them to the translation point," Alicia said.

"The program creates that strong link between the university and industry partner. We were lucky to have established a relationship with industry early, but the program strengthens that connection. I'm able to have experts from the university as well as the industry experts to help me grow and continue this research."



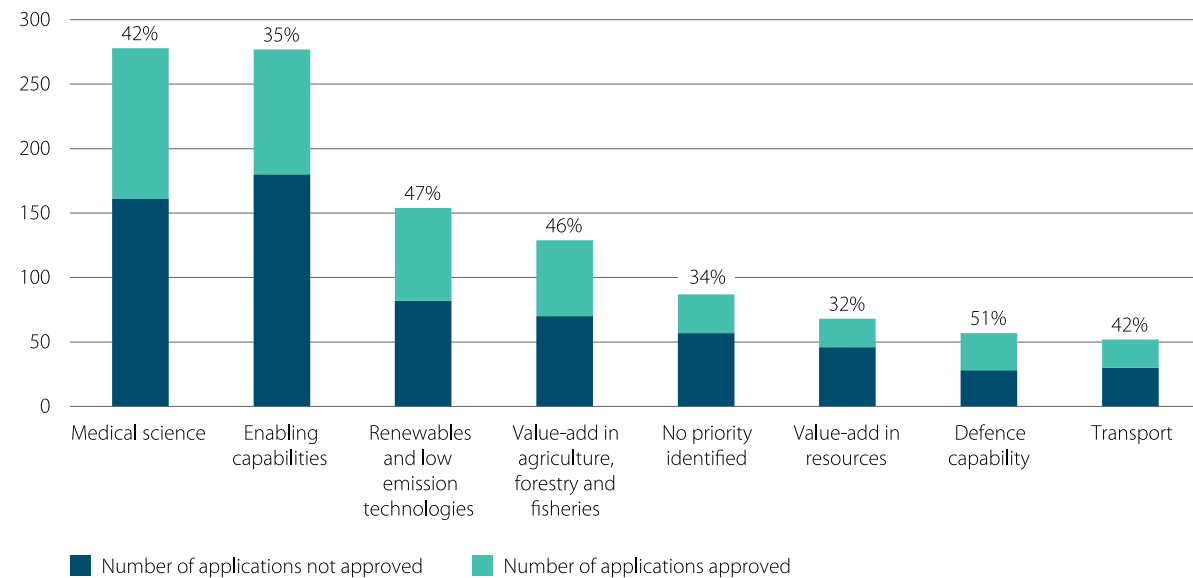


National Reconstruction Fund priority areas

The program funded research across the National Reconstruction Fund (NRF)⁵ priority areas, supporting innovation, sovereign capability and economic resilience. Projects in the areas of Defence Capability recorded the highest success rate (50.9%), followed by Renewables and Low Emission Technologies (46.8%) and Value-Add in Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (45.7%).

⁵ The National Reconstruction Fund supports 7 priority areas of the economy. Each application for program funding identifies a National Reconstruction Fund priority. For additional information on the National Reconstruction Fund and its priority areas, see [National Reconstruction Fund Corporation | Department of Finance](#).

Figure 8. Approval rates by National Reconstruction Fund priority areas (Rounds 1–7)



CASE STUDY

Creative neuroscience meets industry driven drug development

Methamphetamine addiction is one of the most challenging areas in addiction medicine, with no approved pharmacological treatments. Researchers at the University of Sydney, including project lead Dr Nick Everett and PhD candidate Alex Athanasopoulos are working with Xylo Bio to address this gap through innovative research.

The project is investigating compounds that target a similar mechanism in the brain as psychedelics, with the aim to reduce relapse and improve recovery outcomes. This integrated approach helps address one of biotech's biggest challenges: bridging the gap between discovery and impact.

"The NIPhD Program has given me the opportunity to meet all these wonderful people and gain a lot of insight that I just didn't think was possible in a PhD," Alex said.

"I now have preclinical experience, which is a field I want to continue working in. But also, this newfound clinical understanding, which is important as a preclinical researcher because at the end of the day, we're making drugs to help people.

"Having access to all this knowledge is amazing and it wouldn't have been possible without the program."



CASE STUDY

Engineering safer roads through research and industry collaboration

Xu Wang is an academic supervisor from RMIT working with industry partner Delta-v Experts to develop a device for roadside poles to enhance road safety. The device aims to reduce forces transferred to vehicle occupants on impact. This project will improve roadside safety standards and support broader adoption of enhanced pole protection systems, contributing to reduced road trauma.

"In crash reconstruction, we are often asked to investigate collisions after lives have already been changed forever. Rarely do we have the opportunity to help prevent those tragedies before they occur," Xu said.

"Receiving this funding is both an honour and a responsibility. It allows us to work with Delta-v Experts to develop innovative roadside safety technologies that have the potential to reduce deaths and serious injuries caused by vehicle impacts with poles and fixed infrastructure.

"This project demonstrates how universities and industry can work together to turn research into practical solutions that make our roads safer and deliver lasting benefits to the community."



Find out more information about the National Industry PhD Program



National Industry PhD Program – Department of Education, Australian Government



National Industry PhD Program



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