

ESTIMATES BRIEF – Hot Issue**GRANTS****Supplementary Budget Estimates – October 2025****Grants****Subject/Issue**

Improving integrity and accountability in grants administration.

Key facts and figures

- From 1 October 2024, the *Commonwealth Grants Rules and Principles 2024* (CGRPs) replaced the *Commonwealth Grants Rules and Guidelines 2017* (CGRGs).
- In 2024–25:
 - 476 grant opportunities were published on GrantConnect
 - 71,066 grants awarded were reported on GrantConnect (excluding variations).
- The value of grants awarded in 2024-25 was \$20.49 billion (excluding variations).

Key points*Election commitments*

- The CGRPs apply to all forms and types of grants, including election commitments.
 - Grant opportunity guidelines for the implementation of election commitments must be developed and comply with the CGRPs.
 - Officials must ensure that the award of a grant is consistent with the *Public Governance, Performance & Accountability Act 2013* (PGPA Act) and PGPA Rule, in particular, the proper use and management of public resources, and the CGRPs.
- Election commitments have at times been delivered as one-off ad hoc grants.
 - Under the CGRPs, one-off ad hoc grant guidelines must be published on GrantConnect, removing the previous publishing exemption that applied to these types of grants and improving transparency.

Finance's role in implementation of the Commonwealth Grants Framework

- Accountable authorities and approving ministers are responsible for ensuring the requirements of the CGRPs are met.

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- Finance maintains the Commonwealth grants framework and supports entities to apply the CGRPs.
- In 2024-25, Finance delivered information sessions on designing and delivering grant opportunities to over **6,400** attendees from more than **50 entities** (in 2023-24 there were 2,693 attendees from 37 entities).

Ministerial reporting and tabling requirements

- Under the CGRPs, ministers must report certain decisions to the Finance Minister, who must in turn table reports received each quarter.
 - Ministers must report decisions to approve grants in their own electorate (paragraph 4.11) and to approve grants that officials recommended be rejected (paragraph 4.12) as soon as practical after the decision is made.
 - Finance collates these reports and provides to the Minister for Finance to be tabled.
 - Any decision by a minister under paragraphs 4.11 and 4.12 must also be recorded on GrantConnect as soon as practicable, with a summary of the basis of the approval.
- The requirement for quarterly tabling was introduced with the CGRPs in October 2024, replacing the previous annual tabling requirement for reports of decisions taken in the previous calendar year.
- On 4 September 2025, *The Monthly* published an article '[Cabinet of Curiosities](#)' referring to ministerial reporting on grants under the CGRPs.
- The article referred to documents tabled on 27 February 2025 and in August and September 2025.
 - The documents tabled on **27 February 2025** included the annual report of decisions for the 2024 calendar year that was previously required under the *Commonwealth Grants Rules and Guidelines 2017* and Senate Order 23E and the first quarterly reports received under the new CGRP requirements for the period October to December 2024.
 - The 2024 annual report included decisions taken by Minister Keogh on 3 June 2024 and former Attorney-General Dreyfus in March and May of 2024.
- The documents tabled in **August and September 2025** related to the reports received during the first and second quarters of 2025 and were tabled as soon as practicable as required by the CGRPs.

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- In her letter providing the documents for tabling, the Finance Minister referenced correspondence from Assistant Minister Gorman relating to a decision to award a grant in the electorate of former Attorney-General Dreyfus, taken by Assistant Minister Gorman at the Attorney-General's request.
 - This was not a decision that needed to be reported or tabled under the CGRPs, but Assistant Minister Gorman asked that it be tabled to provide additional transparency.
- Due to an administrative oversight, Assistant Minister Gorman's correspondence was not included in the package of documents tabled in August.
- Once the error was identified, the correct documents were re-tabled in the Senate on 3 September 2025 and the House on 4 September 2025.

Grants Modernisation Project

- Finance is working with granting entities to examine options to implement a technology and data enabled approach to grants administration for consideration by Government.
- To support this work, a Request for Information (RFI): *Investigating Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) Solutions for Grants Administration* ([FIN-2025-MCGA-01](#)), was released to the market on 8 July 2025, closing 6 August 2025.
 - The RFI seeks to understand the capacity and capability of Software as a Service solutions for grants administration in the Australian marketplace.
 - The RFI received a range of responses, indicating strong market engagement.
 - The RFI was for the purpose of information gathering and provided no commitment to any future procurement.

GRANTS**Background**

The CGRPs are a legislative instrument made under section 105C(1) of the PGPA Act. The CGRPs articulate requirements for all non-corporate Commonwealth entities in relation to grants administration.

The grants framework was originally established as the *Commonwealth Grant Guidelines (CGGs)* in July 2009. In 2014, the CGGs were updated and renamed the *Commonwealth Grants Rules and Guidelines* and were further updated on 30 August 2017. The CGRPs were released in October 2024 and introduced several amendments to support transparency and integrity in grants administration.

Corporate Commonwealth entities are encouraged to apply the CGRPs but are not bound by them. However, Division 6A of PGPA Rule applies briefing, decision-making and reporting requirements on CCEs where a minister is the decision-maker for a CCE grant. Division 6A was updated to align with the CGRPs on 1 July 2025.

The recent *Monthly* media article referenced administrative errors in the August 2025 tabling of the ministerial reports. The errors were addressed by the re-tabling of documents. The department has reviewed the processes that led to the oversight and put in place measures to ensure it does not reoccur in future.

Supporting information**Questions on Notice**

- No QoNs asked.

Freedom of Information (FOI) Requests

- No FOIs asked.

Recent Ministerial Comments

- Nil.

Relevant Media Reporting

- [Government goes to market for new grant platform technology](#), Denham Sadler, Innovation Australia, 20 July 2025
- [Cabinet of Curiosities](#), Karen Middleton, The Monthly, 4 September 2025

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