



Inspiring Australia (NSW) NSW Regional Science Hubs Terms of Reference

1. Terms of reference

Inspiring Australia NSW develops influential networks that connect science and engineering researchers to big audiences. In collaboration with hundreds of statewide partners, our network of NSW Regional Science Hubs creates memorable and engaging events and programs to inspire communities with science and to promote the work of scientific researchers and engineers.

1.1 Purpose

The NSW Regional Science Hub Strategy has been developed by Inspiring Australia NSW to create a network of organisations that will collaborate to deliver ongoing community science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) engagement programs, including during National Science Week.

NSW Regional Science Hubs bring together multidisciplinary teams to develop and deliver high-profile science events in regional NSW. With a broad membership base, each Science Hub serves to formalise disparate and informal STEM communication networks in regional areas and further the science communication goals of Inspiring Australia, the Australian Government's national strategy for public engagement with the science, technology and innovation.

The NSW Regional Science Hub Strategy encompasses many elements of the NSW Government's Action Plan, *NSW 2021*, particularly its overarching strategy to strengthen local environment and communities. It also aligns with many of priority actions relating to education.

With links to multiple community groups through regional NSW, the NSW Regional Science Hub strategy fosters a dynamic network that can plan strategically for ongoing programs of events and activities to promote the value of STEM to Australians from all walks of life.

1.2 Regional Coverage

Established in 2013, the NSW Regional Science Grants program established NSW Regional Science Hubs in 8 local government areas. Since then, many more community organisations have become involved in the Science Hub network across the state from Eden to Lismore, Dungog to Goulburn and Wollongong to Cowra. See list of active Science Hubs [here](#).

Based on strong regional enthusiasm for the concept, and the willingness of many diverse organisations to participate, there is potential to have a NSW Regional Science Hub in every local government region to promote the relevance of STEM to Australia's economic and social wellbeing.

1.3 Strategic Framework

The development of the NSW Regional Science Hub Strategy is consistent with priorities established by both Inspiring Australia and the NSW Government's Regional Action Plans, particularly through promoting collaboration and partnership development in regional areas.

1.4 Engaging Australians with science

Ensuring better scientific literacy for everyday Australians is at the core of NSW Regional Science Hub Strategy, including so that

- More young people are motivated to pursue scientific careers
- People everywhere feel more confident in their decision-making relating to scientific issues
- Communities work together to deliver events that suit the interests of those in their region
- The important work undertaken by NSW scientists is valued and appreciated.

Further, increased community science engagement has the proven benefit of ensuring that people will understand the importance of STEM research to Australia's and NSW's future economic development. The NSW Government continues to invest strongly in science and the community would benefit from understanding why.

1.5 Developing community programs

Each Science Hub undertakes to deliver a series of initiatives that showcase science and technology, build cooperation between community, government, research bodies and industry and engage people in activities that are both educational and entertaining.

Using the 'national-framework-local action' approach adopted by Inspiring Australia, Science Hubs determine which kinds of activities best suits the needs and interests of their local community.

As initiatives are identified and planned by the Science Hub members, the Inspiring Australia Manager (NSW) offers support, connections and high-level strategic advice. The Manager also ensures that each Science Hub is engaged with all relevant NSW Government and Commonwealth Government programs, research bodies and universities.

Participating organisations volunteer to contribute staff resources to initiatives, with support of other relevant agencies and industry sponsors secured on a case-by-case basis.

1.6 Funding requirements

Most initiatives delivered under the NSW Regional Science Hub Strategy include the presentation of community events and require funding. The NSW Regional Science Grants program offers funds through a competitive process that can be used to support the costs of presenting community engagement events. In many instances, additional funding and in-kind support is contributed from project partners and local sponsors.

1.7 Governance and Reporting

Each Science Hub is coordinated by a lead organisation that takes responsibility for applying for and acquitting funding, disseminating information and coordinating events.

The Manager Inspiring Australia (NSW) provides the Science Hub members with contacts, information updates, media and communications support and strategic advice, while also ensuring that wherever possible, Science Hubs align their activities to state and national science engagement strategies.

Science Hubs are required to regularly report on their funded programs to the Inspiring Australia Manager (NSW), using processes established for reporting on funded initiatives according to the contract established with AusIndustry and the NSW Government. Members of each Science Hub are responsible for internal reporting within their own organisations as required.

2. Co – Chairs

The NSW Regional Science Hubs network is co-chaired by Inspiring Australia (NSW) and the NSW Office of the Chief Scientist & Engineer.

3. Membership

3.1 NSW Regional Science Hub members

NSW Regional Science Hubs are comprised of science experts, professional organisations, educational institutions, local government, research bodies, industry, arts and community groups.

Strong efforts are made by the Inspiring Australia Manager (NSW) to engage relevant state government departments and other STEM programs in a region with their local Science Hub.

As Science Hubs are expected to convene disparate and informal science communication networks, local membership is anticipated to grow over time.

For more information about the NSW Regional Science Hub Network please contact:

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