

# SEA Mutual Recognition of Professional Services Grant Program Application

## Form Preview

### Introduction

#### Southeast Asia Mutual Recognition of Professional Services Grant Program

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**Applications under this Grant Opportunity open on 27 March 2025 and close at 11.30PM AEDT, 8 May 2025**

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Australia has strong economic ties with Southeast Asia, underpinned by a network of bilateral Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) with Singapore, Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand and regional FTAs with Southeast Asian countries through the ASEAN-Australia-New Zealand FTA (AANZFTA), the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) and the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (RCEP).

Mutual Recognition Agreements (MRAs) are crucial to further strengthening these ties by facilitating the two-way movement of skilled professionals.

The Australian Government allocated funding for the Southeast Asia Mutual Recognition of Professional Services (SEAMRPS) Grant Program in the 2024-25 Budget, to support the negotiation of MRAs in priority professional services sectors with Southeast Asia. The SEAMRPS Grant Program supports recommendation 68 of the [Invested: Australia's Southeast Asia Economic Strategy to 2040](#) report which highlights the importance of professional services in driving economic growth and innovation in the region.

#### Objective and intended Outcome

##### *Objective*

- the key objective of the program is to liberalise and facilitate the professional services trade between Australia and Southeast Asia and contribute to closer economic integration.

##### *Intended outcome*

- the intended outcome of the program is to enable Australian professional service accreditation, licensing and registration bodies to negotiate mutual recognition of professional qualifications, licensing and registration with their Southeast Asian counterparts.

#### Funding and grants

A total of \$250,000 is available over two years (FY 2024/25 and FY 2025/26) for the SEAMRPS Grant Program, concluding 30 June 2026:

- grants will be between \$30,000 - \$50,000, depending on the scope of the proposed grant activity and its complexity
- organisations are expected and strongly encouraged to co-fund and/or provide an in-kind co-contribution to the grant activities. In limited circumstances we may accept arrangements that do not include a co-contribution
- the grant amount provided will generally make up no less than 50 per cent and no more than 75 per cent of the overall cost of the activities, with the remaining cost met by the applicant's financial or in-kind co-contribution

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- you cannot use funding from other Commonwealth, state, territory or local government sources to fund your share of eligible expenditure.

During 2024/25 and 2025/26, there will be one or possibly two grant rounds, noting a second round would only be opened if demand for funding in the first instance does not exhaust the grant funding.

If you are successful, you must complete your activity by no later than 30 June 2026.

**You must meet the applicant eligibility criteria and be delivering an eligible activity to participate in this grant opportunity. Please see Page 2 - Eligibility.**

If you have any questions about this grant opportunity, please email us at: [professionalservicesmru@dfat.gov.au](mailto:professionalservicesmru@dfat.gov.au)

## Eligibility to apply for a grant

We will only be accepting applications from Australian professional service accreditation, licensing and registration bodies.

Paragraph 11.6 of the Commonwealth Grants Rules and Principles state that “in some circumstances, it may be appropriate to use a non-competitive and/or a non-application based selection process. For example, it may be important to strike a balance between the desire to maximise access to a grant and the need for a timely and cost-effective decision-making process. It may also be appropriate to target particular individuals, organisations, regions, or industry sectors, depending on the government policy outcomes to be achieved.”

Australian professional service accreditation, licensing and registration bodies are a discrete sub-set of such organisations in Australia.

The targeting of these specific bodies stems from their critical role in negotiating MRAs. As the entities authorised to establish and enforce the standards for professional practice i.e. defining the qualifications, knowledge and skills required for professional registration, these bodies are uniquely qualified to negotiate MRAs.

Given their unique role in negotiating MRAs, the SEAMRPS Grant Program will only be accepting applications from these eligible Australian bodies. This targeted approach ensures that the program effectively supports the development of MRAs with Southeast Asia.

## Assessment of grant applications

The Department’s selection panel will assess each application on its merits and compare it to other eligible applications before recommending which grant applications should be awarded a grant. The assessment committee will be made up of officials of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and potentially external experts.

Only eligible applications will move to the next stage.

We will consider your application on its merits, based on:

- how well it meets the criteria
- how it compares to other applications
- whether it provides value with relevant money<sup>[1]</sup>

When assessing the extent to which the application represents value with relevant money, we will have regard to:

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- the overall objective/s to be achieved in providing the grant
- the relative value of the grant sought
- extent to which the proposed activities in the application match identified priorities
- the extent to which the evidence in the application demonstrates that it will contribute to meeting the outcomes/objectives
- the extent to which the grant activities could contribute to the further strengthening of ties by facilitating the two-way movement of skilled professionals
- the application's potential risks to the Commonwealth, including financial and operational.

[1] See glossary in the Grant Guidelines for an explanation of 'value with money'.

## Who will approve grants?

The Program Delegate, Assistant Secretary, FTA Services, Mobility and Coordination Branch, Free Trade Agreements and Stakeholder Engagement Division decides which grants to approve, taking into account the recommendations of the selection committee and the availability of grant funds for the purposes of the grant program.

The Delegate's decision is final in all matters, including:

- the approval of the grant
- the grant funding amount to be awarded
- the terms and conditions of the grant

There is no appeal mechanism for decisions to approve or not approve a grant.

## Eligibility

\* indicates a required field

### Eligibility self-assessment

The information on this page relates to your eligibility to participate in this Grant Opportunity. Please take time to carefully read these details.

Under the "Eligibility self-assessment" section below, you will be asked to answer several questions. Your responses will determine your eligibility to participate in this Grant Opportunity.

If you are assessed as ineligible after answering the questions below, you will not be able to proceed and complete this application.

### Eligibility criteria

We cannot accept an application if you do not satisfy relevant eligibility criteria.

We cannot provide a grant if you receive funding from another government source for the same purpose.

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### **Who is eligible to apply for a grant?**

As noted on Page 1 ('Introduction') of this application form, the SEAMRPS Grant Program will only be accepting applications from Australian professional service accreditation, licensing and registration bodies to ensure the program effectively supports the development of MRAs with Southeast Asia.

### **Who is not eligible to apply for a grant?**

Eligibility is restricted to the entities referred at 'Who is eligible to apply for a grant?' - see 4.1 of the SEAMRPS Program Grant Guidelines

### **What the grant money can be used for**

#### *Eligible grant activities*

To be eligible for funding, the grant activity must address the intended outcome of the program and be undertaken between the agreed start and end dates.

Eligible activities must directly relate to the grant project and may include, but are not limited to:

- negotiations (virtual or in person)
- conferences and workshops
- quantitative and qualitative research
- activities, such as on-site audits of overseas teaching or training institutions
- other activities determined as eligible by the Program Delegate.

You can only spend the grant on eligible expenditure you have incurred on eligible grant activities during the period of the grant.

#### *Eligible expenditure items*

- specialist professional services
- software required for research or analysis related to the grant activity
- contributions to economy flights within Australia and internationally, modest accommodation costs (3-4 star hotel), meals and travel allowances - refer to ATO Tax Determination, noting limitations outlined in Section 5.3 - 'What the grant money cannot be used for'
- translation
- venue hire and catering
- advertising and promotion to your relevant stakeholders
- production costs, support staff wages and/or fees directly related to the grant project (**note** - business-as-usual wages or fees will not be supported)
- labour costs of employees to deliver the core elements of the grant project (**note** - business-as-usual labour costs will not be supported)
- other activities determined as eligible by the Program Delegate.

We may update the Grant Opportunity Guidelines on eligible and ineligible expenditure from time to time. Any such update would ensure value with relevant money and would adhere to the policy outcomes identified in these Grant Opportunity Guidelines. If your application is successful, the version in place when you submitted your application applies to your grant activity or project/services.

If your application is successful, we may ask you to clarify project costs that you provide in your application. You may need to provide evidence such as quotes for major costs.

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Not all expenditure on your grant activity or project/services may be eligible for grant funding. The Program Delegate makes the final decision on what is eligible expenditure and may give additional guidance on eligible expenditure if required.

You must incur the expenditure on your grant activities or project/services between the start date and end or completion date for your grant activity/grant agreement for it to be eligible.

### What the grant money cannot be used for

You cannot use the grant for the following:

- activities that support or promote the benefit of a single commercial or government enterprise
- activities that may distort trade or disadvantage Australian professional services organisations
- costs not directly incurred in carrying out the grant project (including overhead costs)
- capital expenditure, including purchase of real estate, land, vehicles and construction works
- purchase of equipment (for example, musical instruments, computers, videos, photographic or printing equipment)
- costs incurred in the preparation of a grant application or related documentation
- subsidy of general ongoing administration of an organisation such as electricity, phone, rent, and/or administrative charges levied by the applicant's organisation
- activities for which other Commonwealth, state, territory or local government bodies have primary responsibility
- business-as-usual or ongoing salaries or wages that are not directly related to the grant project (including for research staff) and honorariums
- covering of retrospective costs or recurrent funding of activities, and
- completed projects.

We generally do not fund travel and accommodation for attendance at conferences or meetings, participation in fieldwork or other events. Such activities must be of direct relevance to the project and objectives.

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[\[1\]](#) The Australian Government recognises that some organisations may seek to form consortia in order to apply for a grant under the SEAMRPS Grant Program. Consortia are eligible to apply and the relevant conditions applicable to consortia are at 7.2 'Joint Applications'

## Eligibility self-assessment

You must answer all five questions.

If you answer No to any of the first four questions, you will be ineligible to submit an application under this Grant Opportunity. Doing so would mean that question five becomes irrelevant

**1. Is your organisation an Australian professional service accreditation and/or licensing and/or registration body? \***  Yes  No

**2. Do you have an Australian Business Number (ABN)? \***  Yes  No

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**3. Are you registered for the purposes of GST? \***  Yes  No

**4. Do you have an account with an Australian financial institution \***  Yes  No

**5. Are you a joint (consortia) application with a lead organisation? \***  Yes  No

### Conflicts of interest

Any conflicts of interest could affect the performance of the grant opportunity or program. There may be a [conflict of interest](#), or perceived conflict of interest, if the Department's staff, any member of a selection panel or advisor and/or you or any of your personnel:

- has a professional, commercial or personal relationship with a party who is able to influence the application selection process, such as an Australian Government officer or
- has a relationship with or interest in, an organisation, which is likely to interfere with or restrict the applicants from carrying out the proposed activities fairly and independently or
- has a relationship with, or interest in, an organisation from which they will receive personal gain because the organisation receives a grant under the grant program/grant opportunity.

You will be asked to declare, as part of your application, any perceived or existing conflicts of interests or that, to the best of your knowledge, there is no conflict of interest.

If you later identify an actual, apparent, or perceived conflict of interest, you must inform the Department in writing immediately at [professionalservicesmru@dfat.gov.au](mailto:professionalservicesmru@dfat.gov.au).

**I declare that, to the best of my knowledge, no personnel involved in the proposed Activity have any conflict of interest \***

- Conflict of Interest  
 No known conflict of Interest

If you are awarded a grant and you later identify an actual, apparent, or perceived conflict of interest, you must inform the Department in writing immediately at [ftamodernisation@dfat.gov.au](mailto:ftamodernisation@dfat.gov.au)

**Any partner organisations participating in this application have declared to me that, to the best of their knowledge, they have no conflict of interest \***

- Conflict of Interest  
 No known conflict of Interest  
 Not applicable

If you are awarded a grant and any partner organisations later identifies an actual, apparent, or perceived conflict of interest, you must inform the Department in writing immediately at [professionalservicesmru@dfat.gov.au](mailto:professionalservicesmru@dfat.gov.au).

**Based on the response to the question above, you are not eligible to apply and will not be able to submit this application.**

*The question below cannot be changed and will prevent submission of this application.*

\*

This number/amount is calculated.

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### Applicant Details

\* indicates a required field

#### Applicant Organisation and Contact Details

If you are leading a consortia/have partners, please also complete the 'Joint (consortia) details' section below

**Organisation Name \***

Organisation Name

**Which sector/s do you represent? \***

Please list all that are applicable eg. accounting, actuarial, architecture, building, dental, economics, engineering, health/medical, legal, mining, veterinary

**ABN \***

The ABN provided will be used to look up the following information. Click Lookup above to check that you have entered the ABN correctly.

Information from the Australian Business Register	
ABN	
Entity name	
ABN status	
Entity type	
Goods & Services Tax (GST)	
DGR Endorsed	
ATO Charity Type	<a href="#">More information</a>
ACNC Registration	
Tax Concessions	
Main business location	

Must be an ABN.

Please include your organisation's ABN here (you can also use the lookup function to do that)

#### Contact details

**Postal Address \***

Address

  

Address Line 1, Suburb/Town, State/Province, and Country are required.

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**Primary Contact \***

Title

First Name

Last Name

**Position \***

**Phone Number \***

Please include Country Code eg. +61...

**Email \***

Must be an email address

## Evidence of Support and Accountant Declaration

We require your organisation to confirm that it supports the proposed activity and that funds have been made available to deliver the grant activity.

Letter of Support: you need to provide a Letter of Support from an officer who represents your organisation eg. CEO or Chair, that addresses the following:

- details of your organisation
- an overview of how your organisation will successfully complete the grant activity
- an outline of the relevant experience and/or expertise your organisation will bring to the activity
- the roles/responsibilities of members of your organisation and their contributions
- details of a nominated management level contact officer in your organisation

Accountant Declaration: you need to provide an Accountant Declaration confirming that your organisation has budgeted sufficient funds to cover your proposed activities

The template for this purpose can be downloaded [here](#).

**Signed Letter of Support and Accountant Declaration \***

Attach a file:

Click the button to upload the completed Letter of Support/ Accountant Declaration for your organisation

## Joint (consortia) details

**Are you leading a Joint (consortia) application? \***

Yes

No

If Yes, please add all Joint (consortia) member details in the next section

Click "Add More" below to insert additional consortia members.

**Joint (consortia) member Name \***



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**Location \***

**Industry/Sector \***

**How will the consortia member work with you / other partners to deliver the activity? \***

Word count:

Must be no more than 400 words.

**Relevant experience / expertise \***

Word count:

Must be no more than 400 words.

**Roles / responsibilities \***

Word count:

Must be no more than 400 words.

**Contact officer name \***

Title	First Name	Last Name
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

**Contact officer phone \***

### Letter of Support and Accountant Declaration

If you are leading a Joint (consortia) application, each of those other organisations needs to provide a Letter of Support signed by an appropriate officer of their organisation eg. CEO or Chair, and an Accountant Declaration signed by a suitably qualified person.

Letter of Support: the partner organisation needs to provide the following:

- details of the partner organisation
- an overview of how the partner organisation will work with the lead organisation and any other partner organisations in the group to successfully complete the grant activity
- an outline of the relevant experience and/or expertise the partner organisation will bring to the activity
- the roles/responsibilities of the partner organisation and the resources they will contribute
- details of a nominated management level contact officer

Accountant Declaration: all partner organisations need to confirm that their organisation has sufficient funds to cover their contribution to the activity.

The template for this purpose can be downloaded [here](#).

**Signed Letter of Support and Accountant Declaration \***

Attach a file:

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Click the button to upload the completed Letter of Support/ Accountant Declaration for all other organisations who are a party to this activity

### Previous Funding

**Have you or any Joint (consortia) members previously received funding from the Australian Government for the activity you have proposed in this grant application? \***  Yes  No  
If Yes, please complete the following section for yourself or any applicable Joint (consortia) members.  
Note:

### Previous Australian Government funding

If Yes, please provide details

Organisation name	Overview of previously funded activity	Amount funded	Financial year/s

### Proposed Activity - summary

\* indicates a required field

#### Activity Summary

This page is intended to capture, at a high level, information about your activity  
You will be asked to address specific Selection Criteria on the Activity Details page

**Name of Activity \***

Word count:  
Must be no more than 20 words.

**Activity Description \***

Word count:  
Must be no more than 500 words.

**Proposed Start Date \***

Must be a date and between 1/5/2025 and 1/8/2025.

**Expected End Date \***

Must be a date and between 23/1/2026 and 30/6/2026.

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## Activity Details

\* indicates a required field

### Deliverables

You must address all of the assessment criteria. All assessment criteria are of equal weighting.

The amount of detail and supporting evidence you provide in your application should be proportionate to the size, complexity and grant amount requested.

### Criterion 1

**The extent to which the project will align with grant objectives and outcomes.**

You must address Criteria 1(a) and 1(b) and 1(c).

**Confirm you are addressing all three points \***

- 1a. the activities, strategies and approaches you will undertake or use to develop and deliver a Mutual Recognition Agreement (MRA) or upgrade an existing MRA
- 1b. the interest, willingness or readiness of the Southeast Asian partner to engage in MRA negotiations
- 1c. how your planned activities will meet the objectives and intended outcomes of the grant

**1a. Demonstrate how your activities, strategies and approaches you will undertake or use to develop and deliver a Mutual Recognition Agreement (MRA) or upgrade an existing MRA? \***

Word count:

Must be no more than 400 words.

**1b. Demonstrate how your activity will encourage interest, willingness or readiness of the Southeast Asian partner to engage in MRA negotiations \***

Word count:

Must be no more than 400 words.

**1c. Demonstrate how your planned activities will meet the objectives and intended outcomes of the grant \***

Must be no more than 400 words.

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### Criterion 2

#### Capacity, capability and resources to carry out the project

You must address Criterion 2(a).

**2a. Demonstrate your organisation's track record in negotiating and finalising an MRA, including your access to personnel with the right expertise and experience, including management and technical staff you plan to manage the project and ensure the project activities are delivered on time and within budget, and that risks are identified and mitigated? \***

Word count:

Must be no more than 400 words.

### Criterion 3

#### Impact and opportunities for the profession

Keeping in mind the intended objective and outcome of the grant, you must address Criteria 3(a) and 3(b).

**Confirm you are addressing both points \***

- 3a. how the activity will contribute to the profession in Australia, what benefits will Australian professionals, companies and the Australian economy derive from the activity
- 3b. how the activity will increase market access and business opportunities for Australian professionals and companies in Southeast Asia

Select all that apply

**3a. Demonstrate how the activity will contribute to the profession in Australia, what benefits will Australian professionals, companies and the Australian economy derive from the activity \***

Word count:

Must be no more than 400 words.

**3b. Demonstrate how the activity will increase market access and business opportunities for Australian professionals and companies in Southeast Asia \***

Word count:

Must be no more than 400 words.

### Milestones

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Describe your milestones, including delivery timeframes and dependencies.

Milestone	Delivery Timeframe	Dependencies
Must be no more than 200 words.		

## Undertaking of my responsibilities

**I understand that if my proposed activity receives funding, it must be completed by no later than 30 June 2026. \***

Yes

We may ask that less-complex activities and/or those that receive a smaller amount of grant funding be delivered in a shorter timeframe eg. six months

## Funding & Budget

\* indicates a required field

### Budget

Please provide an expected budget overview.

- The Budget in this section is intended to capture each line item in your activity, including the total of any contributions made by Joint (consortia) members. Note: individual Joint (consortia) member contributions are to be added in the section "Consortia Contributions" below
- Ensure all costs quoted in the budget are in Australian dollars (ex-GST)
- Do not input the '\$' sign when entering costs in the table
- You need to enter them as whole numbers only.

*In the table below, click "Add more" to insert additional lines to show all budget items associated with your activity*

Line item	Cost of line item	Total cost	Applicant contribution	Consortia organisations contribution (if applicable)	Australian Government Contribution
eg. specialist professional services, translation, domestic travel	Must be a whole number (no decimal place); don't add \$ sign	Must be a whole number (no decimal place); don't add \$ sign	Must be a whole number (no decimal place); don't add \$ sign	Must be a whole number (no decimal place); don't add \$ sign. Enter 0 if not applicable.	Must be a whole number (no decimal place); don't add \$ sign

**Total Cost \***

This number/amount is calculated.

**Total Applicant Contribution \***

This number/amount is calculated.

**Total contribution from joint (consortia) organisation/s \***

**Total Australian Government Contribution \***

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**Validation: Total Cost less [Total Applicant Contribution + Total contribution from each Joint (consortia) organisation + Total Australian Government Contribution]**

This number is calculated and must be equal to zero.

This number/amount is calculated.

This number/amount is calculated.

## In-Kind Contribution

**Will you be providing an in-kind contribution? \***

Yes

No

Contribution	Details	Approximate Value
		Must be a whole number (no decimal place); don't add \$ sign

## Total In-Kind Contribution Value

This number/amount is calculated.

## Consortia Contributions

Consortia Partner	Amount
Organisation name	Must be a whole number (no decimal place); don't add \$ sign

## Total Consortia Contributions

This number/amount is calculated.

**Validation: Total Consortia Contributions less Total contribution from Joint (consortia) organisations**

This number/amount is calculated and must be equal to zero.

## Application Submission Details

\* indicates a required field

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**The deadline for submitting applications is 11.30PM AEDT, 8 May 2025**

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### Privacy of your information

We treat your personal information according to the [Privacy Act 1988](#) (Privacy Act) and the [Australian Privacy Principles](#). This includes letting you know:

- what personal information we collect
- why we collect your personal information
- who we give your personal information to.

Your personal information can only be disclosed to someone else for the primary purpose for which it was collected, unless an exemption applies.

The Australian Government may also use and disclose information about grant applicants and grant recipients under this grant opportunity in any other Australian Government business or function. This includes disclosing grant information on GrantConnect as required for reporting purposes and giving information to the Australian Taxation Office for compliance purposes.

We may share the information you give us with other Commonwealth entities for purposes including government administration, research or service delivery, according to Australian laws.

As part of your application, you declare your ability to comply with the *Privacy Act 1988* and the Australian Privacy Principles and impose the same privacy obligations on officers, employees, agents and subcontractors that you engage to assist with the activity, in respect of personal information you collect, use, store, or disclose in connection with the activity. Accordingly, you must not do anything, which if done by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade would breach an Australian Privacy Principle as defined in the Privacy Act.

#### **I declare my ability to comply with the Privacy Act 1988 \***

Agree

If you are awarded a grant and you have partner organisation/s, this declaration will also include those organisations

#### **This application is submitted by:**

**Name \***

Title	First Name	Last Name
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

**Position \***

**Email \***

Must be an email address.

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Add additional email details if the person lodging the application is different to the person on the Applicant Details page

### Phone Number

Please include Country Code eg. +61. Add phone number if the person lodging the application is different to the person on the Applicant Details page

### Date \*

Must be a date.

## Submit application

When you select 'Review and Submit' from the 'Form navigation' list, the entire draft application will be presented. Please carefully read your application and once you are satisfied the application is complete, select 'Submit' at the bottom of the form.

You should receive an auto-generated email confirming that your application has been lodged. If you do not receive an acknowledgement email, please contact us at [professionalservicesmru@dfat.gov.au](mailto:professionalservicesmru@dfat.gov.au).