

First Nations Early Career Researcher Development and Industry Fellowships

Application details and application form

September 2025

Introduction

Natural Hazards Research Australia's Emerging First Nations Researcher Development and Industry Fellowships support the career development of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The program is open to Community-based researchers, late-stage students, early career researchers and/ or developing researchers employed in industry. The fellowship recognising the equivalent cultural learning and knowledge pathways within both tertiary education, on-Country and community-based settings.

Applicants are not required to have formal tertiary education qualifications or aspirations. This approach enables candidates to draw on all their relevant knowledge and experience to demonstrate equivalent learning pathways as researchers. This innovative approach meets emerging First Nations researchers where they are now and supports future career development. Recipients will have the opportunity to further build their research credentials, and to pursue new research-based collaborations.

The Centre's research, translation and implementation activities rely on having access to a highly skilled workforce with diverse perspectives. Our research and education programs focus on supporting sustainable research teams through career development pathways and succession planning.

The First Nations Fellowship Program addresses the unique challenges early career researchers face in establishing credentials and collaborations. This program will:

- Support community-based researchers, late-stage students, early career researchers, and/or developing researchers employed in industry
- Develop sustainable, diverse research capabilities, teams and collaborations focused on natural hazard risk reduction and disaster resilience
- Strengthen the impact, quality, capability, and capacity of Australia's First Nations researchers and practitioners
- Enable internationally recognised research that demonstrates leadership in applying and translating First Nations contributions to the field

Through these fellowships, the Centre will grow research excellence while fostering the next generation of First Nations leaders in disaster resilience research.

Fellowship details

The fellowships recognise the value that can be achieved by supporting early career researchers to expand their research networks, create strong local and international collaborations, and to have the opportunity to compare the opportunities and challenges for natural hazards research in different geographic, societal, cultural and climatic settings.

Emerging First Nations Researcher Fellowships are available to:

- Full-time students from final year undergraduate (Honours or equivalent with a research component), through to final year PhD students, who have successfully completed the equivalent of two years of full-time study in an Australian university
- Researchers employed in research positions in Australian research institutions or universities, for up to five years after graduation from their highest qualification (five years excludes periods of parental leave, other family caring duties or ill health).
- Researchers employed in industry, for up to five years after graduation from their highest qualification (five years excludes periods of parental leave, other family caring duties or ill health).
- Community-based Researchers who meet the recognition criteria to demonstrate equivalent learning pathways as an Emerging First Nations researcher.

Recognition Criteria for Community-based Researcher Applicants

Applicants wishing to apply for the fellowship as a Community-based researcher should be able to provide supporting documentation across the below categories:

Demonstrated Knowledge Building and Sharing Experience

- Evidence of ongoing contributions to knowledge development through active participation in knowledge preservation and transmission, mentorship roles within community, leadership in cultural or research projects, or an established track record of knowledge sharing activities.
- Demonstrated expertise in traditional and cultural knowledge systems including understanding and application of cultural protocols, recognition as a knowledge holder within established cultural frameworks, and authority derived from legitimate cultural transmission processes.
- Documentation of knowledge contributions, including publications (academic, community-based, or cultural materials), literature, art and written works, video documentation and multimedia presentations, conference presentations and community talks or other forms of knowledge dissemination

Recognition and Endorsement

- A formal letter of support from the applicant's relevant community, employer or researcher partners, demonstrating recognition of the applicant's knowledge and contributions, and/or evidence of recognition by local cultural authorities and adherence to appropriate protocols.

Formal Recognition (where applicable)

- Honorary doctorates or other academic recognition, formal degrees in related fields, official acknowledgments from cultural institutions, awards or recognition from professional or community organisations.

Fellowships are available for:

- up to \$15,000

Other support available to fellowship holders

Fellowship holders will benefit from a range of additional opportunities, including networking opportunities, mentoring, promotion of research, and connection into the Centre's knowledge network.

Fellowship holders will be able to apply for additional funding support to attend a relevant annual conference, and to participate in events and activities run by the Centre.

Key dates

Applications for fellowships open on **30 September 2025**.

Applications close at **5:00pm AEDT, 15 November 2025**.

Successful applicants will be notified in early December.

Fellowships must be undertaken within 12 months of being awarded.

Eligibility criteria

Fellowships are intended to support career development. They are not intended to support the completion of PhD studies or the completion of existing projects funded by the Centre or other funding bodies.

Applicants must meet the following criteria to be eligible to apply for Natural Hazards First Nations Early Career Researcher Development or Industry Fellowship:

1. Applicants for the First Nations Fellowships should be able to confirm they:

- Are of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander descent
- Identify as a First Nations Australian person
- Are accepted by a First Nations Australian community

Community confirmation can be provided through:

- An official letter of Confirmation of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Heritage from a registered Aboriginal community organisation, Local Aboriginal Land Council (LALC) or registered Native Title bodies corporate (RNTBC).
- A statutory declaration explaining circumstances where official letters are unavailable, accompanied by alternative evidence of First Nations Australian status

The Centre recognises that identity confirmation processes can be complex and sensitive due to historical factors, and we are committed to handling all documentation and identity verification with the utmost respect and confidentiality.

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2. Applicants must be able to demonstrate an active participation in a research-related role or studies in the 18 months prior to submitting the application. Applications will be considered from individuals who have taken parental leave or similar career breaks in the 18 months prior to submitting their application.
 3. Applicants must be at least:
 - a. currently enrolled as a student in their final year undergraduate (Honours or equivalent with a research component), Masters or PhD, undertaking research relevant to the Centre's published research themes and research priorities, and have satisfactorily completed at least two full-time years (or equivalent) towards their qualification;
 - b. currently employed as a researcher at an Australian research institute or university, in a field closely linked to the Centre's published research themes and research priorities, and have graduated from a research degree no more than five years prior to application;
 - c. currently employed in industry, where the employer is a Participant of the Centre, and the applicant's current role is actively involved in research or research translation in a field closely linked to the Centre's published research themes and research priorities;
 - d. Community-based researchers that can demonstrate equivalent learning pathways by addressing the Recognition Criteria for a Community-based researcher, including providing supporting documentation.
 4. There is no age limit, but applicants must be at an early stage in their research career (maximum five years since graduation for those undertaking or with higher education qualifications, and excluding periods of parental leave, other family caring duties or ill health).
 5. Applicants must submit a completed application form (see more information below), proposing a fellowship study that is no longer than four months.

The Centre encourages applications from women, culturally and linguistically diverse people, people with disability, LGBTIQ+ people, and people with family and caring responsibilities.

Priority study areas for fellowships

Applications for fellowships must directly contribute to the Centre's research strategy to address key focus and capability areas as outlined in the [Centre's Biennial Research Plan 2025-27](#).

Applications must also directly contribute to an anticipated career development outcome that will support the Centre's activities, which can include:

- Connecting with Indigenous knowledge systems and community-controlled research networks
- Ensuring research outcomes directly benefit First Nations communities and support self-determination
- building national and international research and/or industry linkages
- translating international research findings into an Australian context
- research-based work placements with relevant government or industry organisations
- sector-relevant approaches to improving the translation of research outcomes into practice
- new and more effective approaches to education and training for the sector/industry.

How to apply

- Applicants must have discussed their proposed fellowship with their employer, or for students, with their supervisor.
- Complete this application form and send it and all supporting information as a single PDF file via email to research@naturalhazards.com.au.
- If you have any questions or need support completing your application, please email research@naturalhazards.com.au.

Fellowship obligations

If you are offered a fellowship, confirmation of details of the fellowship studies (including budget) must be provided within three months of receiving notification of the approval. A template will be provided for this purpose. You will also be asked to sign a Fellowship Agreement.

In addition to completion of their fellowship study, the Centre expects fellowship holders to:

- return to Australia (if they travel overseas) immediately after completing their study, unless otherwise approved by the Centre
- provide a detailed project report (written, visual, multimedia, or other format) within three months of completing their fellowship, which may be made available to the public
- fulfil any additional obligations made separately with their academic institution, employer or co-funding provider.

Fellowship holders will also be invited to participate in relevant activities and events organised by the Centre, including public events and conferences, to promote the fellowships and share the fellowship experience and outcomes.

Where the Centre requests fellowship holders to participate in events or activities, the travel and registration costs associated with that participation will be arranged and paid for by the Centre.

Application form

Personal contact details

First name

Surname

Mobile

Email

Address

Street

Suburb

State

Postcode

Country of citizenship

I have attached a copy of my CV, listing publications and other research experience

Do you identify as belonging to any of the following groups (select all that apply):

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

culturally and linguistically diverse people

people with family and caring responsibilities

people with disability

LGBTIQ+ people

women

Academic history

What degrees have you already completed?

Degree 1

University

Degree

Year completed

Degree 2

University

Degree

Year completed

I have attached the following additional information to this application:

details of any other degrees.

a copy of academic transcript(s).

Fellowship information

Intended start date

Expected duration of fellowship

Expected finish date

Institution/organisation you are employed or enrolled at, or community that you work with as a researcher

**I have attached written endorsement of my fellowship by my Australian university,
research organisation or industry employer**

Fellowship details

Proposed fellowship project

(summary; maximum 300 words)

**Please attach a brief description of the proposed fellowship (PDF; maximum two pages),
including the following sections:**

- Background
- Purpose of the fellowship (what you will be doing)
- Expected benefits to your career
- Expected benefits to Natural Hazards Research Australia

**Which of the Centre's research themes
best aligns with your fellowship**

**Which research priority(s) within the research theme, capability areas and focus areas is (are) best aligned to
your proposed fellowship as outlined in the [Biennial Research Plan 2024-26](#)?**

Describe how your fellowship will support your career development
(maximum 300 words)

**Describe how the outcomes of the fellowship could be used to support the Centre's objectives of reducing
disaster risk and strengthening disaster resilience**
(maximum 300 words)

Collaborator / host details

Proposed collaborators or hosts for the fellowship**Collaborator / host 1**

Organisation name

Collaborator / host name

Collaborator / host phone number

Collaborator / host email

Collaborator / host 2

Organisation name

Collaborator / host name

Collaborator / host phone number

Collaborator / host email

Please attach written confirmation from each proposed collaborator / host organisation confirming that they support the proposed fellowship.

Independent referee statements

I have asked two independent referees to each provide a statement of support for your application

Independent referee statements must be sent directly from the referee by email to research@naturalhazards.com.au

The statement must include information about:

- the relationship between the applicant and the referee
- the value of the proposed fellowship to enhancing the quality of research, research translation or implementation of the outcomes of natural hazards research
- how they believe the fellowship will enhance the applicant's career.

Checklist

Please check that you have completed or included the following items before submitting your form.

I am a current student studying at an Australian university, in my final year undergraduate (Honours or equivalent with a research component), Masters or PhD and have successfully completed the equivalent of two years full-time study as part of this degree

OR

I am employed as a researcher by an Australian university or research institute, and it has been less than five years since I graduated (excluding periods of parental leave, other family caring duties or ill health)

OR

I am employed in a research-related industry role, and it has been less than five years since I graduated (excluding periods of parental leave, other family caring duties or ill health)

OR

I am a Community-based researcher that can demonstrate equivalent learning pathways by addressing the Recognition Criteria for a Community-based researcher, including providing supporting documentation.

I have attached community confirmation that I am of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander descent, identify as a First Nations Australian person and am accepted by a First Nations Australian community

I have attached confirmation from each of the collaborator / host organisations that they support the fellowship application

I have outlined the outcomes from this fellowship and how those outcomes will contribute to the objectives of the Centre

I have requested referee statements from two independent referees

I acknowledge that I will need to participate in relevant events organised by the Centre

I have attached a two-page fellowship description

I have attached a copy of my academic transcript(s)

I have attached additional information on my degrees, if required

I have attached a CV

I agree to provide a photo for the Centre's website

Please send your completed application (preferably as a single PDF file) to research@naturalhazards.com.au.

If you have any questions or need any support completing your application, please email research@naturalhazards.com.au.
