



GRANT FUNDING & THE FOR-PURPOSE SECTOR

2024 BENCHMARK REPORT

Prepared by Strategic Grants May 2025

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INTRODUCTION

In 2023 Strategic Grants conducted the inaugural Grants Benchmarking survey of GEMS (Grants Expertise Management System) subscribers, to prepare the first sector grants funding benchmarking report.

This benchmarking was commenced to address the gap in fundraising benchmarking and performance data that is specific to the grant-seeking activities of not-for-profits, or for-purpose organisations, in Australia and New Zealand.

This annual survey and data analysis aims to bridge this gap by providing comprehensive insights into the world of grants income, enabling not-for-profits to make informed decisions and further optimise their grant-seeking strategies.

What do we mean by 'Grants Income'?

We are examining all grants income from institutions that includes:

- Local, State and Federal Government grants in Australia, and Local and Central Government grants in New Zealand for specific projects (rather than recurrent program / service delivery government funding)
- Grants from philanthropic Trusts and Foundations that includes:
 - Anything that has come from a legal structure that is grant-making (as opposed to a major gift from an individual not given through a philanthropic structure). For Australia this would include grants from Public and Private Ancillary funds
- Corporate Foundations
- Medical Research Funders
- International funders giving in Australia / New Zealand

Revenue \$ figures from Australia and New Zealand have been reported as equal, \$1 AUD = \$1 NZD for simplicity and aggregate reporting. Therefore, there is up to a 7% reduction in actual value for New Zealand organisations reported figures.

Summary results

The results from 2024 are comparable to 2023, with consistent reporting across all key areas, as detailed in this report.

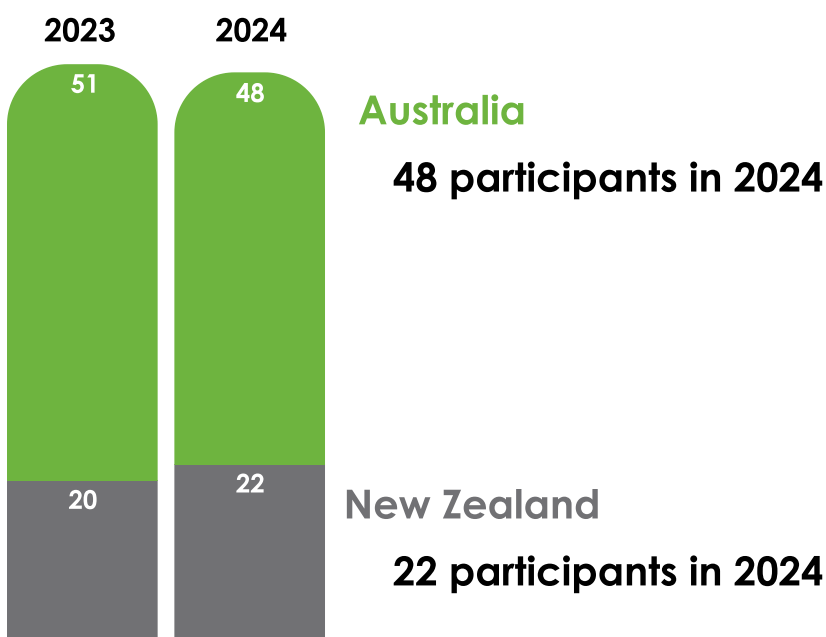
PARTICIPANT SNAPSHOT

Who participated?

Subscribers to Strategic Grants' GEMS (Grants Expertise Management System) Portal have been surveyed with a total of 70 respondents from Australia and New Zealand. 30% of 2023 respondents returned in 2024 to complete the survey.

All data included has been self-reported by our GEMS subscribers. We acknowledge that as GEMS subscribers, the survey respondents are highly engaged, are committed to their grant-seeking strategy and have embedded organisational best practices to support this strategy. As with any data collection, we are relying on the respondents to provide accurate and consistent data.

Breakdown by country



Industry sectors

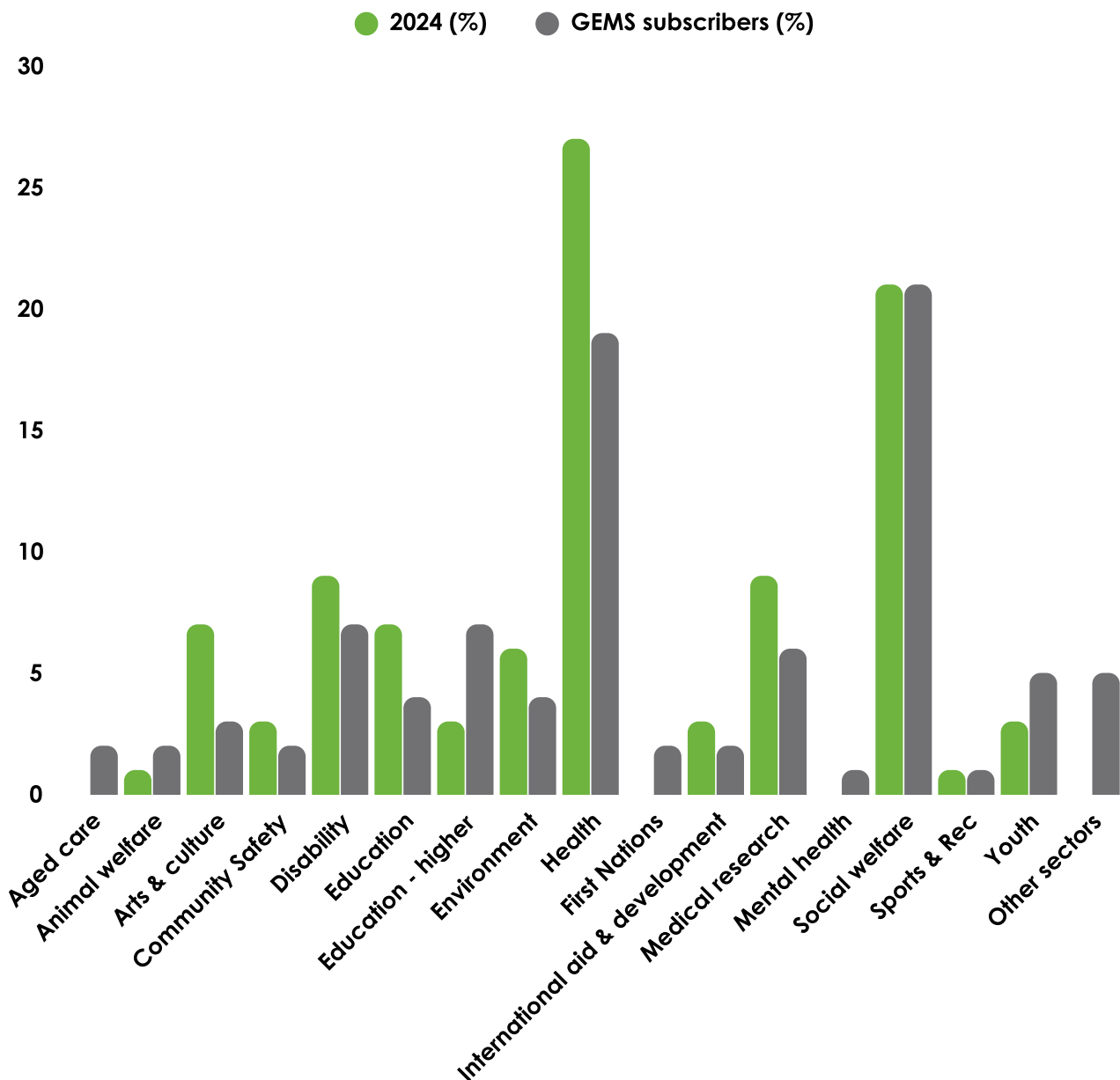
Respondents from sectors: Animal welfare, Arts & culture, Community safety, Disability, Education, Education - higher, Environment, Health, Medical research, Social welfare, Sport & rec and Youth.

PARTICIPANT SNAPSHOT

Breakdown by industry sector

The following graphic shows the percentage breakdown by the sector of respondent organisations for the 2024 survey.

As a comparison, we have included the breakdown of sectors that GEMS subscribers belong to. All sectors are represented in the respondents' data, and those percentages closely align with the breakdown of percentages of GEMS subscribers by sector.



KEY FINDINGS



Resourcing & grants data

- 67% of organisations have one team managing both government and philanthropic grants. This is comparable to 65% from the 2023 survey.
- Median revenue target per FTE role: \$540,000, compared to \$547,500 from the 2023 survey.
- Average value of total grant submissions = \$4,896,515, a 159% increase from the 2023 survey (\$1,887,593).
- Average value of total grant funding received = \$1,516,489, a 124% increase from the 2023 survey (\$674,512).
- 50% of respondents (Australia only) reported Private Ancillary Funds as a common type of funder, compared to 26% in the 2023 survey.



Success rates & KPIs

- Average grants applied for in the last year: 42. Average success: 26 = 62% success rate. This is a 12 percentage point increase from the 2023 survey (50%), representing a 24% improvement year-on-year.
- Average grant size: \$74,303, a 41% increase from the 2023 survey (\$52,750).
- 63% of participants were successful in obtaining new funding found in GEM Portal in FY24, a 8% increase from the 2023 survey (58%).
- 100% of respondents have multiple KPIs when it comes to grants. However, and similar to the 2023 survey, only 51% identified having a KPI of submitting all funder reports on time.



Relationships, stewardship & repeat funding

- 48% of respondents' grant funding comes from existing funders, a slight decrease from the 2023 survey (51%).
- 51% of organisations 'Always' report and acquit / account for their grants on time, a decrease from the 2023 survey (70%).

DISCUSSION

- In our 20+ years' experience, and similar to our recommendations in the 2023 report, in organisations where there are separate teams managing government grants and funding to those managing philanthropic grants, it is critical that the teams work in a collaborative working model to share information including:
 - Funding priorities
 - Project plans and budgets
 - Organisational and project key messages including how the organisation measures and evaluates performance and outcomes
 - Centralised relationship management coordination
 - Centralised prospect matching
 - Centralised acquittal / accountability and reporting processes
- Similar to 2023 findings, it is encouraging that while achieving budget targets is a KPI for 73% of respondents, 100% of respondents had multiple KPIs, which included improving success rates.
- Strategic Grants advocates that funding reports should always be accounted for on time. Acknowledging there may be agreed extensions with some funders we still consider only 51% of respondents always reporting on time to be too low. We (and funders!) would like to see this percentage increase over the coming years.



DISCUSSION

- It is encouraging that both application numbers and success rates increased, and is reflective of respondents adhering to best practice grant-seeking.
- While the average amounts received are higher in 2024 than 2023, the repeat funding from existing grant donors was lower, indicating an increase in new relationships, which is positive.
- From the reported cost of grants program / value of successful applications in the last financial year, the data represents exceptionally high return on investment (ROI) figures—497%, or approximately five times return on investment.
- We note the significant surge in grants from Private Ancillary Funds. We forecast this will further increase over years to come as structured giving becomes a key topic of education and discussion in the Wealth Management Market, with the forecast transgenerational transfer of wealth ([2024 JBWere Bequest Report](#)).
- While the reported average grant amounts received are higher in 2024 vs 2023, the repeat funding from existing grant funders was lower, indicating an increase in new relationships.
- We would recommend that the set of KPIs presented in the survey, is used uniformly across all organisations seeking funding as each KPI relates back to the seven Key Success Factors in the [Strategic Grants' Best Practice Tracker](#).



Questions to consider for grants success

- **Is your organisation achieving a 62% grants success rate?**
- **How does your organisation compare to your peers?**
- **Are you measuring and monitoring grants success through the Strategic Grants' Best Practice Tracker?**
- **Do you want to be part of our next Benchmarking survey?**

COMMENTS FROM PARTICIPANTS



Do you have any final comments or insights you would like to share on your grant-seeking practice or performance?



“Balancing resource limitations with the time-intensive nature of grant applications remains a challenge. Streamlining internal processes for data collection, reporting, and project evaluation has been crucial in improving efficiency and ensuring we can continue to pursue meaningful funding opportunities while maintaining high-quality service delivery.”

“This portal is now my primary tool and I find it extremely useful.”

“I've just completed my first full year as a grant-seeker. It's been an incredibly challenging and rewarding experience, with many moving parts and considerations to give my attention to. It's been a huge help and relief to have access to GEM Portal - where everything I need as a grant seeker-is available in one place, as well as extra support from the friendly team at Strategic Grants.”

“The market is becoming increasingly difficult to stand out and funders are asking for more with applications when there are hundreds of applications for every grant round. The old way of applying for grants without contacting the funder is becoming outdated and you need to do more to be successful for funding.”

“The calendar is a bible regarding not missing available grants.”

“In line with the 'Pay What it Takes' campaign, more grantors need to understand that they have to contribute to the overheads and key personnel of the organisation to enable a project to be delivered successfully.”

APPENDIX - OTHER FOR-PURPOSE SECTOR BENCHMARKING AND USEFUL RESEARCH RESOURCES

Strategic Grants works collaboratively with peak bodies and service providers in the For-Purpose Sector.

Due to the unique data set that we can draw from GEMS Subscribers, we will continue to conduct annual benchmarking surveys for our subscribers, with high level results being reported to the wider For-Purpose sector.

Please refer to this list of other great benchmarking and research reports for further sector information.

- <https://www.benchmarkingproject.org/>
- <https://morestrategic.com.au/benchmarking/>
- <https://www.jbwere.com.au/campaigns/bequest-report>
- <https://www.blackbaud.com.au/industry-insights/resources/the-status-of-anz-fundraising-2024-benchmark-report>
- <https://xponential.com.au/major-gifts-benchmarking-study/>
- <https://research.qut.edu.au/australian-centre-for-philanthropy-and-nonprofit-studies/research/>
- <https://www.philanthropy.org.au/learn-about-philanthropy/research-and-information/>
- <https://philanthropy.org.nz/research-reports>



Grants database and strategies to build for-purpose capacity

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