1. PROJECT

The Department invites expressions of interest from leading researchers and research organisations wishing to be appointed to a panel of preferred suppliers of policy-related research and evaluation regarding:

- Low SES Schools
- Literacy and Numeracy
- Quality Teaching
- Early Childhood Education
- Vocational Education and Training

2. OVERVIEW

The Department wishes to establish a panel of preferred suppliers of research and evaluation services to improve the effectiveness and timeliness of research and evaluation related to the implementation of new policy and programs. For the purposes of this request for expressions of interest, research is broadly defined and includes original quantitative and qualitative work, evaluations, surveys, systematic literature reviews and related meta-analyses.

It is intended that the panel of preferred providers be maintained through to the end of 2010. Additional preferred suppliers may be added to the panel during this period.

Expressions of interest will be assessed by a panel convened by Dr Jenny Donovan, General Manager, Planning and Innovation. The Department will not enter into discussion or correspondence regarding applicants' abilities or experience following its decision.

The formation of a panel of preferred suppliers does not imply that the Department necessarily intends to commission any specific research or evaluations. The Department may choose to manage research and evaluation internally or to contract such work externally using any procedure that complies with public service procedures.

The Department also reserves the right not to proceed with any aspect of the process set out in this document, including not establishing a panel of preferred suppliers.
3. RESEARCH AND EVALUATION PRIORITIES

The Department has a number of research priorities relating to national partnerships developed by the Council of Australian Governments (COAG). These include:

- Ways of addressing educational disadvantage arising from low socio-economic status (SES) through:
  - incentives to attract high-performing principals and teachers
  - adoption of best-practice performance management and staffing arrangements that articulate a clear role for principals
  - school operational arrangements which encourage innovation and flexibility
  - provision of innovative and tailored learning opportunities.

- Improving literacy and numeracy outcomes in particular through developing an understanding of what works

- Enhancing the quality of teaching through improving pre-service training and professional learning for teachers and improved performance management

- Improving the performance of Preschool education, with a particular focus on Indigenous participation

- Ways of increasing the skill levels of all Australians, including Indigenous Australians.

In addition to these broad priorities, the Department welcomes original insights and new directions for education policy development.

4. ASSESSING EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

Individuals or organisations wishing to be considered for appointment to the panel of preferred suppliers will be assessed according to the following criteria below:

(i) Demonstrated expertise in research and evaluation relating to education and training policy and practice

(ii) Demonstrated expertise and experience undertaking significant policy related research, evaluation, including for government agencies

(iii) Sound understanding of the latest research and evaluation methods, qualitative and quantitative, research design and the ability to apply different methods for data collection and analysis appropriate to the particular issue/enquiry including meta analysis

(iv) Ability to scope and design research and evaluation projects including identifying the risks and limitations of research
(v) Excellent report production capability, the ability to synthesise material into relevant themes and issues, and the ability to develop and manage dissemination strategies

(vi) Demonstrated ability to deliver projects on time and within agreed budgets

(vii) Compliance with Departmental protocols and confidentiality requirements and with requirements relating to intellectual property, public liability and professional indemnity

(viii) Demonstrated ability to work with Steering Committees and with other stakeholders.

It is the responsibility of applicants to demonstrate their capacity in sufficient detail for the Department to make an informed decision however there is a strict 10 page limit (including any appendices).

5. PROPOSALS

Successful panellists will be asked to submit detailed proposals and full costings for each paper/project commissioned by the Department.

6. INFORMATION REQUIRED

Applicants must provide:

(i) Information on the individual/organisation, including:

- principal researchers or evaluators
- recent publications and projects in areas related to the identified research priorities
- areas of specialisation and expertise including methodology
- collaborative relationships, if any.

(ii) Detailed information on all matters considered relevant to the individual or organisation’s capacity to undertake commissioned research and evaluation activities with particular reference to the criteria indicated in Section 4 Assessing Expressions of Interest.

(iii) The name, title, postal address, telephone number and e-mail address of the principal contact person for the organisation

(iv) Details of insurance coverage/policy

(v) Contact details for two referees for whom the individual/research organisation has undertaken projects, preferably similar to that outlined.