Request for Quote

RFQ-2627-01 – Strong Foundations Program Evaluation

Release date / time	15 October 2026
Closing date / time	5.00pm AEDT, 13 November 2026

COORDINARE

phn
SOUTH EASTERN NSW
An Australian Government Initiative

1. Organisation overview

COORDINARE, as the South Eastern NSW Primary Health Network, is dedicated to fostering healthier communities. Our role is to improve the health and wellbeing of our community which is one of the largest rural and regional populations in NSW. To do this, we collaborate with the community, general practices and other stakeholders to design solutions that make it easier for people to get the health care they need. We also use our knowledge and commissioning expertise to attract new funding partners to expand our impact.

Our region stretches from Helensburgh in the north to the Victoria border in the south and inland to Cooma/Monaro, Queanbeyan, Yass and Goulburn.

More information about COORDINARE can be found on our website, including COORDINARE's Strategic Directions 2024-2027.

South Coast Medical Service Aboriginal Corporation (SCMSAC) is an Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation based in Nowra. SCMSAC provides culturally appropriate health, wellbeing, family support and child and family services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities across the Shoalhaven and South Coast region.

SCMSAC delivers services through a holistic, community-controlled model that supports physical, social and emotional wellbeing and strengthens access to culturally safe care for local Aboriginal communities.

2. Project Introduction

Purpose

In partnership with South Coast Medical Service Aboriginal Corporation (SCMSAC), COORDINARE is seeking proposals from suitably qualified individuals or organisations to evaluate the Strong Foundations program, a culturally grounded early-intervention social and emotional wellbeing program for Aboriginal children delivered by SCMSAC. Proposals from PhD candidates or early career researchers will be considered where appropriate supervision and support arrangements are in place. The evaluation will build on an exploratory evaluation completed in 2018, provided at Appendix 3 – Strong Foundations Program Evaluation Report 2018, and support future commissioning and evaluation practice for culturally grounded early-intervention programs for Aboriginal children.

Objectives

Building on the findings and recommendations of the 2018 Strong Foundations evaluation, this evaluation aims to:

- assess outcomes for participating children, families and schools, including culturally meaningful social and emotional wellbeing outcomes
- understand how culturally grounded approaches contribute to observed outcomes and how outcomes are experienced and sustained over time
- examine the sustainability and scalability of the Strong Foundations model
- generate evidence and learning to support program improvement, future commissioning decisions for culturally grounded early-intervention programs.

Program background

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people experience disproportionately high rates of psychological distress and suicide-related harm, highlighting the importance of preventative, culturally grounded programs that strengthen wellbeing early and support long-term positive outcomes. Despite growing evidence of the value of these approaches, measuring their impact remains challenging. Many outcomes central to culturally grounded programs—such as cultural connection, emotional literacy, resilience and sense of belonging—are not readily captured through standard administrative datasets, creating gaps between community-valued outcomes and what is visible to funders and policy-makers.

The Strong Foundations program is a culturally grounded, early-intervention social and emotional wellbeing program for Aboriginal children that has been delivered in South Eastern NSW since 2007 and funded by the Australian Government through COORDINARE since 2016. The program is delivered primarily through weekly school-based group activities, complemented by broader community engagement, and is grounded in Aboriginal ways of knowing, being and doing. The program focuses on strengthening emotional regulation, cultural identity, coping skills and connection to family and community during childhood, consistent with evidence that early intervention acts as a critical protective factor for social and emotional wellbeing across the life course.

An exploratory evaluation undertaken in 2018 identified Strong Foundations as a promising early-intervention model, reporting positive impacts on emotional regulation, coping skills and connection to culture, alongside high levels of satisfaction among participants, schools and staff.

The evaluation also highlighted challenges relating to data quality, outcome measurement, quantitative evidence and the ability to understand outcomes over time. Recommendations included the use of a longer-term mixed-methods approach, strengthened outcome measurement, and greater understanding of how the program contributes to outcomes and longer-term sustainability.

This RFQ builds on the findings and recommendations of the 2018 evaluation by commissioning a contemporary evaluation that strengthens the evidence base for Strong Foundations, improves understanding of outcomes over time, and generates learning to support program improvement, sustainability, and future commissioning decisions.

Funding

A total of up to **$50,000 (ex GST)** is available for this consultancy.

This evaluation of Strong Foundations is supported by funding from COORDINARE – South Eastern NSW PHN through the Australian Government's PHN Program.

3. Eligibility Criteria

Scope and specifications criteria

Respondents must meet the following eligibility requirements to be considered for application assessment:

Eligibility criteria	Guidance
Entity	Respondent must be registered with an ABN. Respondent must be registered for GST. Applications from partnerships or consortia are permitted. A lead organisation must be nominated, with the roles and responsibilities of all partners clearly defined. COORDINARE will only contract with the nominated lead organisation, which will remain responsible for all contractual obligations.
Geographic location	Respondents may be based within or outside the SENSW PHN region. However, the evaluation must be delivered in relation to the Strong Foundations program and its participating communities, schools and stakeholders within the SENSW PHN region. Respondents must demonstrate capacity to undertake any required engagement, fieldwork, governance participation and stakeholder liaison within the region, including with COORDINARE and SCMSAC, and to meet any local cultural governance, ethics and child safety requirements relevant to the evaluation.
Reporting Requirements	Respondents must demonstrate a willingness and capacity to work with COORDINARE's Planning and Insights team to meet data and reporting requirements.
Compliance to RFQ	Applications may be deemed ineligible and excluded from assessment if: • Any application that fails to meet the minimum eligibility requirements outlined in this guidance will be excluded from assessment. • Applications that present a real or perceived conflict of interest, which cannot be appropriately managed or mitigated, may be excluded from consideration. • Applications that are incomplete, contain false or misleading information, or fail to provide required documentation may be disqualified. • Submissions that do not comply with deadline, or procedural requirements may be excluded from the process.

4. Scope of services

The successful Respondent is expected to demonstrate Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander leadership within the evaluation team and appropriate cultural governance and oversight throughout the evaluation.

The successful Respondent will be required to:

1. Develop an Evaluation Plan outlining the evaluation methodology, key evaluation questions, stakeholder engagement and recruitment approach, ethics requirements, project schedule and milestones, risk management approach, and data management considerations.
2. Prepare, submit and obtain all required ethics approvals, including Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) approval and any relevant Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ethical oversight requirements, prior to the commencement of data collection.
3. Develop culturally appropriate evaluation tools and resources, including interview and/or yarning guides, participant information and consent materials, recruitment materials, data collection tools, and data collection protocols.
4. Undertake participant recruitment and engagement in partnership with COORDINARE and SCMSAC, in accordance with approved ethics requirements. Participant groups, recruitment approaches and indicative sample sizes may be refined based on recruitment feasibility, participant availability and data saturation.
5. Analyse and integrate qualitative findings, available quantitative program data, and other relevant evidence sources to assess program outcomes, implementation, sustainability, scalability, and opportunities to strengthen outcome measurement and reporting.
6. Prepare a Draft Evaluation Report presenting the methodology, findings, limitations, conclusions, and draft recommendations.
7. Prepare a Final Evaluation Report and presentation incorporating feedback from COORDINARE and SCMSAC, including final findings, conclusions and recommendations to support program improvement, sustainability, outcome measurement, and future commissioning and evaluation practice.

All deliverables are subject to review and acceptance by COORDINARE and SCMSAC.

Out of Scope

The evaluation is intended to focus on the culturally grounded Strong Foundations program model and associated outcomes.

The following activities are specifically out of scope:

- Evaluation of clinical activity routinely reported through the Primary Mental Health Care Minimum Data Set (PMHC-MDS).
- A full economic evaluation, social return on investment analysis or cost-benefit analysis.
- An independent financial audit of program expenditure.
- Activities not directly relevant to the Strong Foundations program model and its intended outcomes.

The evaluation will be overseen by an Evaluation Governance Group comprising senior representatives from COORDINARE and South Coast Medical Service Aboriginal Corporation (SCMSAC). The successful Respondent will work collaboratively with the Evaluation Governance Group throughout the evaluation.

COORDINARE and SCMSAC will support the evaluation by:

- providing access to relevant documentation to support the development of the plan, including previous evaluation reports, needs assessments, and relevant service usage and demographic data.
- assisting with the planning, coordination and facilitation of engagement activities, including:
    - providing feedback on stakeholder engagement approaches and activity design
    - supporting the identification and recruitment of participants and stakeholders
    - providing logistical support for interviews, focus groups, workshops, meetings and surveys
    - facilitating or co-facilitating engagement activities, where appropriate.

Key Challenges and considerations

The evaluation is expected to rely primarily on interviews, yarning and/or focus groups with program participants, families, staff, schools and other stakeholders. Ethics approval and any applicable Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander ethical oversight requirements must be obtained prior to the commencement of primary data collection.

The successful Respondent will be required to implement a credible and proportionate recruitment and engagement approach sufficient to address the evaluation objectives and key evaluation questions. The final sample size and participant mix will be agreed during the evaluation planning phase and may be adjusted in response to participant availability, recruitment outcomes and data saturation.

5. Procurement Timeline

The consultancy is expected to commence following contract award in January 2027 and be completed no later than 30 June 2028, subject to ethics approval, participant recruitment and agreed project milestones.

An indicative timeline is outlined below. COORDINARE reserves the right to modify these timeframes.

Activity	Date
RFQ opportunity released	15 October 2026
Closing date and time for proposal	5.00pm AEDT, 13 November 2026
Evaluation of proposal	November 2026
Clarification/negotiation with provider	December 2026
Funding awarded	January 2027
Contract commences	January 2027

6. Indicative deliverable timeline

Activity	Date
Evaluation Plan	February 2027
Ethics approvals	By May 2027
Evaluation tools and resources	By May 2027
Participant recruitment and data collection	June 2027 – February 2028
Data analysis and evidence synthesis	February – March 2028
Draft Evaluation Report	April 2028
Final Evaluation Report and presentation	May 2028
Project completion and contract close-out	By 30 June 2028

Final Evaluation Report and Presentation are due in May 2028. Project completion and contract close-out must occur by 30 June 2028.

7. Submission Requirements

Interested parties should submit:

- Completed Appendix 1 – Application Form
- Itemised service quote/budget ex GST and aligned with the methodology, milestones and deliverables, including all costs associated with project delivery
- CVs of proposed personnel
- ABN and Certificates of currency for required insurances
- Completed Appendix 2 – Child Safety Credential Declaration
- Relevant referee information and/or testimonials for respondents who have not previously worked with COORDINARE

Responses to this RFQ must be submitted to the Commissioning Business Team via commissioning@coordinare.org.au by 5.00pm AEDT on 13 November 2026. Respondents must complete and submit Appendix 1 – Application Form together with all required supporting documentation. Applications submitted to other channels will not be accepted.

Late or incomplete responses will NOT be accepted. The Response should be aligned to the scope and specifications and address all of the assessment criteria outlined in this document. Please ensure you read each assessment criterion carefully and answer each component and section of the application form by considering all information provided.

Documents can be attached which are directly relevant to your response. File formats accepted: word, excel, pdf and jpg files are all acceptable formats.

8. Child Safety Principle

Respondents should be aware that the delivery of services may involve contact with children. When this occurs, successful Respondent is expected to have appropriate and proportionate measures in place to support compliance with any applicable child safety legislation and requirements relevant to their services during the Contract Term.

9. Evaluation Criteria

Quotations received will be evaluated based on as follows:

Criteria	Description	Weight
Relevant experience and qualifications	Demonstrated experience in similar consultancy projects, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-led evaluation, culturally safe methods, Aboriginal community-controlled settings, and qualifications of proposed personnel.	20%
Understanding of scope	Depth of understanding of the project requirements and objectives, as reflected in the proposal.	20%
Proposed methodology and approach	Quality and feasibility of the proposed culturally grounded mixed-methods approach, including ethics capability, Aboriginal ethical oversight, culturally meaningful SEWB outcome measures, and alignment with the goals of the evaluation.	30%
Value for money	Cost-effectiveness of the quotation, including clarity of pricing and overall value.	20%
Availability and timeline	Ability to meet the required timeline, availability of key personnel, and approach to identifying and managing key project risks, including ethics approval and participant recruitment.	10%

10. Interpretation

The following table includes key term definitions relevant to this RFQ.

Requirement	Details
COORDINARE	The South Eastern New South Wales Primary Health Network and the organisation responsible for the RFQ and the RFQ process.
Closing time	The time specified by which RFQ responses must be received.
Response(s) to RFQ	A document/s lodged by a Respondent in response to this RFQ containing a response to provide Goods or Services sought through this RFQ process.

Respondent	An entity that submits a response to this RFQ.
RFQ Process	The process commenced by the issuing of this RFQ and concluding upon formal announcement by SENSW PHN of the selection of a preferred respondent(s) or upon the earlier termination of the RFQ process.
Request for Quotation (RFQ)	This document and any other documents designated by SENSW PHN.

11. Conditions of this Request for Quotation

ABN/Taxation requirements	COORDINARE will only deal with Respondents who have an Australian Business Number (ABN).
Acceptance	Non complying submissions may be rejected. COORDINARE may not accept the lowest priced proposal and may not accept any proposal.
Additional information	COORDINARE reserves the right to request additional information from respondents. If additional information required by COORDINARE when, written information and/or interviews may be requested to obtain such information. Respondents are required to provide additional information at no cost to COORDINARE. COORDINARE may also provide additional information or clarification.
Assessment	COORDINARE reserves the right to engage a third party to carry out assessments of a Respondent's financial, technical, planning and other resource capability. COORDINARE is entitled to consider all information known to COORDINARE in relation to a respondent and their submissions when assessing submissions.
Conflicts of interest	Respondents must declare to COORDINARE any matter or issue which is or may be perceived to be or may lead to a conflict of interest regarding their submission or participation in the RFQ process, or in the event their proposal is successful.
Expenses	All expenses and costs incurred by a Respondent in connection with this RFQ including (without limitation) preparing and lodging a submission, providing COORDINARE with further information, attending interviews and participating in any subsequent negotiations, are the sole responsibility of the Respondent.
Explanations	Verbal explanations or instructions given prior to acceptance of a proposal shall not bind COORDINARE.
General	Respondents should familiarise themselves with this document and Appendix 1 – Application Form and ensure that their proposals comply with the requirements set out in these documents. Respondents are deemed to have examined statutory requirements and satisfied themselves that they

	are not participating in any anti-competitive, collusive, deceptive or misleading practices in structuring and submitting the proposal.
Legal entity	COORDINARE will only enter into a contract with an organisation or individual with established legal status (e.g. under Corporations Law, Health Services Act, Trustee Act), or a natural person at least 18 years of age with mental capacity to understand the agreement.
Lobbying	Any attempt by any Respondent to exert influence on the outcome of the assessment process by lobbying COORDINARE staff, directly or indirectly, will be grounds for disqualification of the proposal from further consideration.
Ownership	All submissions become the property of COORDINARE once lodged. COORDINARE may copy, or otherwise deal with all or any part of a submission for the purpose of conducting evaluation of submissions.
Negotiation	COORDINARE reserves the right to negotiate with short-listed Respondents after the RFQ closing time and allow any Respondent to alter its submission. Contract negotiations are strictly confidential and not to be disclosed to third parties.
No contract	Nothing in this RFQ should be construed to give rise to any contractual obligations or rights, express or implied, by the issue of this RFQ or the lodgement of a submission in response to it. No contract will be created unless and until a formal written contract is executed between COORDINARE and a Respondent. Respondents will not be considered approved until a final service agreement is in place.
Notification of Probity Breach	Should any supplier feel that it has been unfairly excluded from responding or unfairly disadvantaged by the process, the supplier is invited to write to the Business Team at commissioning@coordinare.org.au
Part applications	COORDINARE reserves the right to accept applications in relation to some and not all of the scope of activity described, or contract with one, more than one or no Respondent on the basis of the proposals received.
Process	COORDINARE reserves the right to withdraw from, or alter, the RFQ process described in this document for whatever reason, prior to the signing of any agreement/contract with any party.
Relevant Information	COORDINARE reserves the right to consider any information in its possession which it consider may be relevant to a decision to enter into a contract with a successful provider.