

FAQ document

Infrastructure Forward Commitment Program.

What is the CAUDIT Cloud Infrastructure Forward Commitment Program?

CAUDIT has advised member institutions to review forward procurement plans on the assumption of ongoing price pressure, with procurement in H2 2026 expected to be problematic. The market data supports this:

What can credits be redeemed against?

Credits are redeemable across the full CAUDIT Cloud service catalogue, including:

- MCS Sovereign IaaS (cloud infrastructure hosted in MCS Australian data centres)
- Colocation services (rack space, power, cooling, physical security in MCS facilities)
- Managed infrastructure services
- HPC/AI services
- Managed SOC services
- And more...

Credits are not limited to hardware. Institutions that purchase credits for a hardware refresh but subsequently determine that IaaS or colocation better meets their needs can redirect credits accordingly.

What is the minimum commitment?

\$500,000. There is no maximum.

Who is eligible?

The program is available to **CAUDIT member institutions**. If you are unsure of your institution's CAUDIT membership status, contact CAUDIT directly.

Do I need a finalised design or bill of materials to participate?

No. You can purchase credits based on a budget envelope without a finalised technical design. Many institutions will be in early planning stages, and the program is designed to accommodate this. MCS will work with you to finalise specifications and configurations.

If you do have a defined requirement or BoM, Macquarie Cloud Services can validate pricing and allocate credits against specific line items immediately.

What is the deadline?

All credit purchases must be completed prior to 22 April 2026. This is a hard deadline driven by Macquarie Cloud Services' bulk procurement schedule with Dell Technologies. Expressions of interest should be submitted as early as possible to allow sufficient time for scoping, internal approvals, and credit purchase execution.

Why is there a deadline?

Macquarie Cloud Services is consolidating demand from all participating institutions into a single bulk order with Dell Technologies in late April 2026. This aggregate volume is what unlocks preferential pricing and guaranteed supply allocation. Credits purchased after this date cannot be included in the bulk procurement and will not benefit from the same pricing or supply priority.

How does pricing work?

MCS negotiates with Dell Technologies on the basis of the total aggregate commitment across all participating CAUDIT members. The larger the combined order, the better the unit pricing for every participant. Individual institutions do not negotiate directly with Dell – MCS acts as the procurement vehicle and passes through the benefit of collective scale.

Specific pricing is provided during the scoping process following your expression of interest. Pricing is not published on this page as it is dependent on aggregate program volume and individual configuration requirements.

Does participating in this program lock me into MCS long-term?

No. The credit purchase secures pricing and supply for the agreed redemption period. There is no ongoing contractual obligation beyond the credit term. However, services such as IaaS and colocation that are initiated through credit redemption will operate under their own service agreements for the duration of those services.

How does procurement work? Do I need to run an RFX?

The program is offered through CAUDIT pre-approved contract frameworks. Institutions can procure through these existing arrangements without running an individual RFX or tender process.

Your procurement team should confirm the applicable framework with CAUDIT or MCS during the scoping process.

What happens after I submit an expression of interest?

An MCS representative will contact you within 2 business days to discuss your requirements, estimated commitment, and timeline. Depending on your planning stage:

- **If you have a defined requirement or BoM:** MCS will validate pricing and prepare a credit allocation proposal.
- **If you have budget but no finalised design:** MCS will conduct a rapid scoping exercise to define the credit structure.
- **If you are in early planning:** MCS will provide a no-obligation briefing and help you build the internal business case.

Can I increase my commitment after the initial purchase?

Additional credits can be purchased up until the 22 April 2026 deadline under the same program terms. After the deadline, any additional procurement will be subject to prevailing market pricing and availability, which is expected to be materially higher.

What if my requirements change after I purchase credits?

Credits are redeemable across the full MCS service catalogue. If your technical requirements change — for example, you shift from on-premises hardware to sovereign IaaS, or you need colocation instead of campus deployment — your credits can be redirected. You are not locked into a specific product or configuration at the time of credit purchase.

Can multiple departments or faculties within my institution participate separately?

Credits are redeemable across the full MCS service catalogue. If your technical requirements change — for example, you shift from on-premises hardware to sovereign IaaS, or you need colocation instead of campus deployment — your credits can be redirected. You are not locked into a specific product or configuration at the time of credit purchase.

What types of infrastructure are universities using this program for?

Common use cases include:

- Research compute infrastructure (HPC, AI/ML, GPU clusters)
- General IT infrastructure refresh (end-of-life server and storage replacement)
- Data centre consolidation or migration to sovereign colocation
- Storage and data management platforms
- Sovereign cloud deployments for compliance-sensitive workloads (health data, defence-adjacent research, ISMS requirements)

Is this program related to the current tariff and supply chain disruption?

Yes. The program is a direct response to the structural supply chain pressures affecting the global technology market. CAUDIT has advised member institutions that pricing volatility is extreme, vendor price increases of 15–30% have already landed in early 2026 with further increases of 20–40% expected in April/May, and procurement in H2 2026 is expected to be problematic. This program provides a mechanism for institutions to act collectively and decisively ahead of further deterioration.

Who do I contact if I have questions?

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