



**Australian Government**

**Department of Innovation  
Industry, Science and Research**



# INNOVATION POLICY REPORT

DECEMBER | 2010



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## DEPARTMENTAL DEVELOPMENTS

### Enhancing International Business to Business Collaboration research project

The Department is currently working on a research project, 'Enhancing International Business Collaboration', being undertaken under the guidance of the Coordination Committee on Innovation (CCI). The research project is seeking to identify the perceived barriers, opportunities and benefits, and policy options for enhancing international small to medium sized enterprise (SME) business to business innovation collaboration.

Government stakeholder consultations have now been completed. Consultations with advisory boards, industry and other external stakeholders will be completed by early 2011. A short survey, seeking feedback on key issues, regarding the perceived barriers, opportunities and benefits, and policy options for enhancing SME business to business innovation collaboration has been distributed to Board members as well as representatives of other government advisory councils.

The project's Steering Committee met on 17 November 2010. At this meeting key themes from government consultations were discussed, along with the proposed advisory board discussion paper and survey, suggestions for industry consultations, a draft format of the final report and an overview of international programs that have been identified as possible case studies.

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### APS 200 Project on Public Sector Innovation

In early August, following the May 2010 release of *Empowering Change: Fostering Innovation in the Public Sector*, the APS Secretaries Board met and approved a project to oversee action to implement and embed innovation in the Australian Public Service (APS).

At the 10 Sept 2010 meeting, the project committee confirmed its intent to bring interim reports to meetings of the Secretaries Board.

At its October meeting, the Secretaries Board endorsed key recommendations for action by agencies, and noted ongoing work currently in progress. The recommendations contained within the paper reflected the Project Committee's consideration on a range of area within *Empowering Change* including Recommendations 2 (Openness), 3 (Risk), 4 (Leadership), and 5 (Tools).

The paper also sought to highlight areas for future examination. These areas include:

- A collaborative experimental space in government, similar to that of the Danish MindLab concept.
- The development of a public sector innovation metrics survey in conjunction with work being done in the OECD and other countries to measure innovation in the public sector.
- An annual public sector innovation conference and awards or similar event to celebrate innovation in the APS and the development of an Innovation Action Plan for the Australian Public Service.

The Project Committee submitted its second report to the November meeting of the Secretaries Board for endorsement. The paper contained a series of recommended actions around *Empowering Change* Recommendations: 1 (Strategy), 7 (Funding), and 10 (Procurement), as well as guidance material for agencies.

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## CSTACI Innovation Indicators Teleconference

A teleconference of the Commonwealth, State and Territory Advisory Council on Innovation (CSTACI) Innovation Indicators Working Group was held on Tuesday 10 October. It included presentations by Hsien Toh of the Innovation Analysis Branch on Innovation in Australian Business and Donna Valenti, on the Commercialisation Australia Indicators and Measurement, both from the Department of Innovation, Industry, Science and Research.

The Innovation in Australian Business presentation focused on the Innovation in Australian Business Survey results. It also addressed other relevant Australian Bureau of Statistics data such as the R&D performance and the All Sector Summary for 2008-09 and the current Business R&D (BERD) and Gross Expenditure on R&D (GERD) data.

The Commercialisation Australia presentation outlined the program and its progress to date including the programs key performance indicators and how and why the data is being collected.

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## Coordination Committee on Innovation Evaluation Working Group

The second meeting of the Coordination Committee on Innovation (CCI) Evaluation Working Group was held on 29 October 2010. The Working Group was established to update a set of key principles for consideration (developed in 2007 by the Coordination Committee on Science and Technology) for evaluation of science and innovation projects and programs. This document will act as a best practice guide to support agencies with program evaluation activities.

The meeting was co-chaired by Tricia Berman of the Innovation Policy Branch and Su McCluskey of the Council of Rural R&D Corporations. During the meeting, Dr Jenny Gordon of the Productivity Commission gave a presentation on the evaluation of social and environmental outcomes.

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## R&D Tax Credit

The R&D Tax Credit is designed to improve the R&D, innovation and productivity performance of Australian industry through providing increased public support. It is intended to increase investment in R&D, high-skill jobs and firm growth and sustainability.

On 30 September 2010, the Government reintroduced the *Tax Laws Amendment (Research and Development) Bill 2010* into the House of Representatives. The Bill incorporates some minor changes that had been circulated as proposed Government amendments resulting from the Senate Economics Legislation Committee report (published on 15 June 2010). The changes relate to clarification of the objects clause and the definition of core R&D activities in the Bill.

The R&D Tax Credit bills are currently before Parliament and the starting date is one of the critical issues that will be determined after debate in the House of Representatives and the Senate.

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## Commercialisation Australia

Commercialisation Australia (CA) has attracted strong interest since its launch in January 2010. To date, 54 projects have been announced, totalling \$19.9 million in value. The projects cover a wide range of areas including treatments for disease, defence training systems, advanced materials, cutting-edge electronics, new online services, and a range of other innovations in agriculture, mining, media and manufacturing. The most recent public announcement on 15 October detailed 22 new projects totalling over \$8 million in funding. The CA Board will next consider applications in late November.

A Steering Committee has been established to oversee an interim evaluation of CA. The Committee will provide external scrutiny and comprises representatives from the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, the Department of the Treasury, the Department of Finance and Deregulation and an independent expert (Dr Jonathon Spring, a member of the Innovation Australia Board). Stakeholder consultations have been completed, covering program participants, unsuccessful applicants, State Government representatives, Case Managers, AusIndustry Customer Service Managers and the CA Board. Analysis is underway and the review will be complete by early 2011.

The Department is seeking to engage additional Case Managers across Australia. A Request for Tender (RFT) closed on 25 October and selection has commenced with a view to finalising the process by January 2011.

The Volunteer Business Mentor Network is now operational. People interested in becoming mentors can find information on the CA website, <http://www.commercialisationaustralia.gov.au>, including an Expression of Interest Form, Mentor Guidelines and a Mentor Declaration. At the end of October 2010, the Department invited the first cohort of mentors to join the network. Induction briefings are planned in November 2010. A VBM database is being developed for Case Managers to identify suitable mentors for CA participants.

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## Industry Cooperative Innovation Program

An evaluation of the Industry Cooperative Innovation Program (ICIP) is planned for 2010-11, as identified in the Portfolio Budget Statement. The evaluation will be conducted by the Dept of Innovation Corporate Strategy Branch (Evaluations and Strategic Planning), and will commence early in 2011. It is expected that the draft report will be presented to the Department Executive in mid 2011. The Department is currently drafting the Terms of Reference.

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## Collaborations between the Public and Private Sectors: The Role of Intellectual Property

The Advisory Council on Intellectual Property (ACIP), with support from the Department and IP Australia, is beginning an investigation into how intellectual property acts as an enabler or disabler of knowledge sharing, translational research and collaborations, particularly between the private and public sectors.

As part of the investigation, ACIP will independently seek views from:

- private sector stakeholders to identify which aspects of collaborations with Australian publicly funded research organisations (PFROs) - including CSIRO, ANSTO, AIMS, DSTO, Australian universities and medical research institutes - work well and which do not;
- representatives of PFROs - to identify which aspects of collaborations with the private sector work well and which do not; and
- major funders of PFROs, including the Australian Research Council (ARC) and National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC).

In the first instance, written submissions from private sector stakeholders are being sought through an online questionnaire available at [http://www.acip.gov.au/collaborations\\_private.html](http://www.acip.gov.au/collaborations_private.html)

This call for submissions closes on Friday, 17 December 2010.

In 2011, views from PFROs will be sought through a similar online questionnaire, and a series of roundtable discussions will aim to further explore the issues raised in the online submissions before a final report is prepared.

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## Industry Innovation Councils

There are eight Industry Innovation Councils (Councils) which contribute to building a strong innovation culture in Australian industry. They provide strategic advice on innovation

priorities to the Minister; champion innovation in industry; and build connections and collaborate across Councils and with other innovation organisations.

There have been two reports recently released to support the work of the Councils.

[\*Innovation for business: achieving a systematic innovation capability\*](#) is a report by Professor Danny Samson, Department of Management, Melbourne University, explores how firms in Australia become and remain systematically innovative. The report includes ten case studies of Australian based companies and 20 principles of systematic innovation capability.

[\*Examining the characteristics of innovative firms in Australia\*](#) is a report by the Melbourne Institute of Applied Economic and Social Research on the characteristics of innovative firms in Australia. The report looks at innovative activity within Australia and compares these results with the United Kingdom and Europe.

The Automotive Industry innovation Council has released [\*Automotive Australia 2020\*](#) technology roadmap which identifies specific automotive technologies with real commercial potential for Australia.

The Built Environment Industry Innovation Council provided the Victoria University a \$50 000 grant to support the development of a green skills curriculum for retrofitting houses and buildings. The curriculum will be promoted as an upskilling opportunity for construction industry trades people and aims to, in part, consolidate the number of divergent courses offered by Victoria University and other training providers. It was completed on 5 November 2010.

The *Information Technology Industry Innovation Council* has embarked on a communications strategy to promote the benefits of IT as a tool for transforming business. A package of six articles has been distributed to trade magazines and other journals and newspapers.

Further information on the eight Industry Innovation Councils is at [www.innovation.gov.au/industryinnovationcouncils](http://www.innovation.gov.au/industryinnovationcouncils)

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## Sustainable Research Excellence (SRE) program

The department has conducted a preliminary analysis of transparent costing data submitted by universities, and has identified a range of Australian Competitive Grant (ACG) indirect cost positions across the higher education sector. Detailed analysis of data and modelling of SRE funding scenarios is underway, based on the approved funding methodology for 2011. The sector will be advised of 2011 funding allocations for Base and Threshold one components of SRE by mid-December 2010. Threshold 2 allocations for eligible institutions, will be confirmed following Compacts discussions early in the new year.

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## University Compacts

Mission-based compacts are a key vehicle for reform of Australian universities and are outlined in *Powering Ideas: An Innovation Agenda for the 21st Century*, the Government's innovation agenda announced in the May 2009-10 Budget. Mission-based compacts with universities will promote excellence and enhance institutional autonomy while facilitating the distribution of performance-based funds and the alignment of institutional activity with national priorities.

Mission-based compacts will encourage each university to think about its role, define its mission, and describe how it will fulfil that mission and meet the government's broader policy goals. Compacts will be agreements between the Australian Government and universities. The compact will have legally binding components such as the teaching and learning performance funding.

A draft mission-based compact template was released to the higher education sector for comment on 26 October 2010. The draft compact template and an explanatory paper outlining the key elements are available on the Innovation Department's website at <http://www.innovation.gov.au/MissionBasedCompacts>. The template will be revised in response to submissions due by 26 November.

The final template will be provided to universities for completion by mid December 2010.

Universities will be asked to submit their completed draft compacts by 1 February 2011, prior to meetings which will commence in mid February. The Government aims to finalise compact agreements with each university by late April 2011.

The research, research training and innovation section of the compacts sets out the Government's objectives for reform and seeks the university's plans for supporting these activities together with their proposed targets against 14 principal performance indicators. Universities have been asked to advise their baseline performance on patents and other commercialisation activities. Annual reporting against these indicators will be done in the context of the Institutional Performance Portfolio Information Collections commencing in 2011.

In 2009, the Government and universities negotiated interim agreements as a precursor to mission-based compacts. The discussions with universities have revealed that they are already considering their areas of research strengths and potential areas for collaboration. The Australian Government will negotiate mission-based compacts with universities in the second half of 2010 to take effect from 2011.

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## Collaborative Research Networks Program

The Australian Government introduced the Collaborative Research Networks program (CRN) as part of a suite of reforms to higher education and research announced in the 2009-10 Budget. The initial round of the CRN program will provide up to \$51 million from 2011 until mid 2013.

CRN is designed as a structural adjustment fund to encourage less research-intensive, smaller and regional higher education institutions to develop their research capacity and adapt to a research system driven more strongly by performance outcomes by teaming up with other institutions in areas of common interest.

The intention is that all participants in a collaborative network will benefit from the partnership, with flow-on effects for the research and innovation system as a whole. The CRN program will, in part, ensure that local communities, businesses and industries across Australia, and especially in regional areas, will continue to have access to world-class researchers and research facilities through collaborative networks. CRN could support the provision of high-quality research training in smaller and regional universities, by providing access to supervisors, advisors, infrastructure and other resources.

The CRN program has been developed in consultation with the higher education sector. The CRN program guidelines were released on 16 July 2010 along with a call for expressions of interest from eligible universities. All 16 eligible institutions submitted expressions of interest.

On 4 November the Government invited full [CRN applications](#) from eligible institutions and these are due on 3 December 2010. Applications will be discussed with institutions at compacts meetings. The successful projects will be announced and CRN funding will commence in the first half of 2011.

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## Commonwealth-ANU Strategic Relationship

The Commonwealth-ANU strategic relationship will be enhanced through the Commonwealth providing up to \$112.9 million over four years to establish the Australian National Institute for Public Policy, the Australian Centre on China in the World and the National Security College at the Australian National University (ANU).

The HC Coombs Policy Forum has commenced conducting seminars, and the college has commenced conducting courses. The Department of Innovation is working with other agencies to confirm the process for other departments and agencies to attend institute and college courses. The department is also working with other departments and agencies on the thematic priorities that will inform the activities of the forum.

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## Australia-India Strategic Research Fund

### Indo-Australian Science and Technology Fund and the Indo-Australian Biotechnology Fund

Round 5 of the Indo-Australian Science and Technology Fund and the Indo-Australian Biotechnology Fund opened for applications on 20 September 2010 and closed on 15 November 2010. The outcomes of Round 5 will be announced in April 2011.

### Grand Challenge Fund

The new 'Grand Challenge Fund' component is designed to support ambitious, large-scale research projects that deliver practical solutions to some of the major challenges shared by both countries.

For Round 1 of the Grand Challenge Fund the priority areas are “food and water security” and “the environment”. Funding of up to AUD 3 million over the course of the project will be available to the Australian consortium members. The Government of India will provide matching support to the Indian consortium members. Projects will typically run for three years and for no longer than four years.

The Grand Challenge Fund will follow a two stage application process. An open call for Expressions of Interest (EOI) for joint projects will be made by both governments. Applicants ranked highly by a joint Australia-India assessment panel will later be invited to submit full applications. Outcomes of Round 1 will be announced in May 2011.

### Indo-Australian Fellowships Program

The Indo-Australian Fellowships Program will support early career post-doctoral researchers from Australia and India to spend up to 12 months in host institutions to pursue high quality research. The Program will also provide support for senior, established researchers to undertake short (up to 2 week) visits aimed at establishing and strengthening researcher relationships between leading Australian and Indian research institutions.

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### National Research Infrastructure Council

The National Research Infrastructure Council (NRIC) was established by the Minister in May 2009 to drive and undertake strategic planning and mapping across all categories of research infrastructure and contribute policy advice to Government. It will facilitate coordination across different levels of investment in research infrastructure from institutional to national and landmark and will provide advice to the Education Investment Fund Advisory Board.

The next NRIC meeting will be held in November 2010, where it will focus on the development of the Strategic Framework for Research Infrastructure Investment. NRIC will also discuss other important research infrastructure issues, such as the Department’s planned Review of the Research Infrastructure Roadmap in 2011 (see separate update) and the options for mapping current research infrastructure.

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### Review of the Research Infrastructure Roadmap

During 2011, the Department will be undertaking a review of the 2008 *Strategic Roadmap for Australian Research Infrastructure* in order to inform the Government on the future direction of research infrastructure in Australia.

The current proposal is to follow a process similar to that used for the development of the 2008 Roadmap, but with additional time for consultation.

The proposed process is:

- Establish Expert Working Groups – based on the National Research Priorities
- Develop and release a Discussion Paper for broad distribution and response
- Exposure Draft of the Strategic Roadmap
- Strategic Roadmap for Australian Research Infrastructure.

The Department has been undertaking broad consultation with the sector on the proposed process, in particular through the recent National Research Infrastructure Forum, held on 6-7 October. The development of the Roadmap will involve a wide range of stakeholders including the research sector, industry and State and Territory governments.

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## Education Investment Fund

On 7 September 2010, the Prime Minister announced funding of up to \$500 million for a round of the EIF to be directed towards education infrastructure investments in regional Australia.

DIISR is working with the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations as joint administrators of the EIF to design and implement an EIF funding round that meets the Government's objectives and timetable, which have not yet been announced.

Implementation of the regional EIF round will also be considered in the context of the current rounds of the Collaborative Research Networks (managed by DIISR) and Structural Adjustment Fund (managed by DEEWR) which will include applications from regional universities.

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## NATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

### EGO grassroots social innovation – an introduction to research and impact evaluation workshop

On 27 October 2010, an officer from the Innovation Policy Branch attended a workshop focused on research and social impact evaluation. The workshop was run by EGO – a South Australian based collaborative organisation which supports enterprises and innovative organisations in the social economy.

The workshop explored the importance of research and data collection and the need to evaluate the social impact and outcomes of innovation and social initiatives. Three models to quantify and measure the social impacts of programs were discussed. These included:

- Project Profile Tool - this model involves creating a visual description of the initiative. It involves mapping the progress from conception to completion and ongoing monitoring.
- The Outcomes Star - the Outcomes Star assists in capturing longitudinal data at specific time points. The model requires respondents to rank specific criteria on a scale (usually between 1 and 10) and allows the mapping of the change in responses over the time period.
- Social Return on Investment - Social Return on Investment is based on a set of principles which aims to place a dollar figure on the added value and impact of the initiative. Social Return on Investment is calculated by the use of a formula - total impact divided by total input.

Aspects of these models will assist in measuring and reporting qualitative data and impacts for innovation program initiatives.

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### Creative Commons licensing seminar – A Perspective from Copyright and Patent Law

An officer from the Innovation Policy Branch attended a seminar on 28 October 2010, hosted by IP Australia, on the Creative Commons (CC). The seminar was presented by Professor Brian Fitzgerald of Queensland University of Technology's faculty of law, and by John Wilbanks, who runs the Science Commons project at Creative Commons.

The Creative Commons is a non-profit organisation that aims to increase the level of knowledge and creativity that is freely available for all people to use. It does this by providing legal tools that enable creators to licence their creations in ways that allow others to make specific uses of the creator's work, for free. Contrary to popular belief, CC is not 'anti-copyright'; rather, it is a reaction to traditional, restrictive copyright licensing. A CC licence cannot exist without copyright because it is a type of copyright licence.

Professor Fitzgerald noted that when using the Internet, you are potentially in a constant state of copyright infringement. CC is a way of developing a strategic advantage out of that situation.

Professor Fitzgerald referred to the recommendations in both *Venturous Australia* and the Government 2.0 Report that public sector information should be made open, accessible and freely usable, and that all such information should, by default, be licensed under the CC Attribution standard. The Government's official response, released in May 2010, agreed in principle that the CC Attribution licence should be the default licence for all public sector material that is published.

John Wilbanks noted that the Australian Government is at present one of the most progressive governments with regard to the open licensing of public sector information. He discussed current CC research projects, which examine the policy, privacy, technical and legal aspects of data.

One notable inconsistency is that there is no set of guidelines on what constitutes an acceptable data sharing plan for data itself (as opposed to journal articles, for example).

The presenters concluded that open licensing can stimulate research and knowledge, but only where the legal system has evolved to meet the needs of 21<sup>st</sup> century society. Legal and data tools need to be simple, accessible and extensible.

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## NSW Business Sector Growth Plan, NSW Government

The NSW Business Sector Growth Plan outlines the actions and initiatives that the NSW Government together with Industry will undertake to promote NSW's long-term economic growth. It was written in partnership between business leaders and the NSW Government, led by the NSW Innovation Council. This Growth Plan builds on the NSW Statement on Innovation.

This plan outlines the vision for NSW. It proposes a 30% growth in the economy by 2020 and will be technologically advanced, innovation and creative, low carbon and globally competitive. The foundations for the growth include investment in strategic infrastructure and long term planning, microeconomic and regulatory reform, a highly skilled workforce and research capability, strong and diversified regional economies and sound fiscal and efficient legal frameworks.

Sector specific strategies have been prepared in partnership with industry for each of the following sectors within the NSW economy: finance, insurance and professional services; infrastructure and construction; advanced manufacturing; information and communication technology; retail; education and research; agri-food; creative industries; mining; tourism; and health and allied services.

Further information can be accessed here:

[http://www.business.nsw.gov.au/NR/rdonlyres/A81FE008-43B7-4514-B43F-67ABA0B13F53/0/NSWBusinessSectorGrowthPlan\\_FinalReport\\_100927.pdf](http://www.business.nsw.gov.au/NR/rdonlyres/A81FE008-43B7-4514-B43F-67ABA0B13F53/0/NSWBusinessSectorGrowthPlan_FinalReport_100927.pdf)

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## Victoria Biotechnology Action Plan 2011, Victorian Government

This [Action Plan](#) aims to build on successes in Biotechnology in Victoria over the last ten years, focusing on leveraging the strength and reputation of the biotechnology sector to support a healthy, liveable, prosperous and sustainable Victoria.

It outlines the provision of \$55 million of additional funding to strengthen Victoria's leadership in biotechnology. The Action Plan aims to further improve the productivity, competitiveness and capability of the biotechnology sector and ensure that the sector is supported by a skilled workforce, first-class research and platform technology infrastructure, and a competitive regulatory environment.

There are four goals outlined in this Action Plan"

- Promote demand-driven development;
- Leverage the convergence of technologies;
- Improve coordination across Victoria's Innovation hubs; and
- Capitalise on Victoria's global economic standing.

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## Statement of Intellectual Property Principles (amended) for Australian Government Agencies, The Attorney-General's Department

In response to both the *Government 2.0 Taskforce* recommendations and the *Review of the Australian Government's Use of Information and Communication Technology*, the Attorney-General's Department has released the amended *Statement of Intellectual Property Principles for Australian Government Agencies*.

This is an endorsement of the recommendation by the taskforce that agencies should in most cases license their Public Sector Information under Creative Commons, rather than the existing Crown Copyright which has been in place for over a hundred years. Creative Commons licensing is a form of copyright that is more liberal than the previous regimes, however still allows for management of reuse of intellectual property. Creative Commons has already become the default position for United Kingdom government data.

This is a change to the previous default position of Government ICT contracts. The new policy requires FMA Act agencies to have a starting contractual position of IP ownership in favour of the supplier for ICT software development contracts. It provides agencies with the flexibility to maintain and re-use software. It denotes an important change in government policy in that from this point on, almost all information that is released publicly by the government, will be legally reusable and modifiable by any citizens and corporations without cost or the need to request permission.

The Statement can be accessed here:

[http://www.ag.gov.au/www/agd/rwpattach.nsf/VAP/\(9A5D88DBA63D32A661E6369859739356\)~Statement+of+IP+Principles+for+Australian+Government+Agencies2.pdf/\\$file/Statement+of+IP+Principles+for+Australian+Government+Agencies2.pdf](http://www.ag.gov.au/www/agd/rwpattach.nsf/VAP/(9A5D88DBA63D32A661E6369859739356)~Statement+of+IP+Principles+for+Australian+Government+Agencies2.pdf/$file/Statement+of+IP+Principles+for+Australian+Government+Agencies2.pdf).

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## Bold Ideas Better Lives Challenge, The Australian Centre for Social Innovation

On 5 November 2010, [The Australian Centre for Social Innovation](#) announced 8 winners of its Bold Ideas Better Lives Challenge. The Bold Ideas Better Lives Challenge offered \$1 million of investment to projects who put forward innovative, impactful and implementable solutions that address Australia's most pressing social needs. 258 entries were received from which the following 8 winners were selected:

- *Aged Care Digital Lifestyles*: Engaging older people with technology to improve their quality of life in aged care facilities.
- *AroundYou*: Connecting people with their local neighbourhood and building community through events, activities and services online and in mobile devices.
- *Employment Pathways for Deaf Students*: Creating access to employment for the hearing impaired through development of workplace tools, technology and training.
- *Hello Sunday Morning*: Addressing Australia's binge drinking culture and encouraging individuals to take responsibility and change their drinking behaviour.
- *Renew Australia*: Placing creative, social and cultural initiatives in empty or disused buildings to re-engage people with underutilised urban areas.
- *Sharing Universal Stories of Depression*: Raising awareness of depression among culturally and linguistically diverse communities.
- *Tjungu: Learning Country*: Building community capacity and social entrepreneurship with indigenous communities across the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara lands in central Australia.
- *Who Gives A Crap?*: Turning consumers into philanthropists – a social enterprise selling environmentally sustainable toilet paper that will donate its profits to support environmental conservation and reforestation in Australia and water sanitation in the developing world.

The \$1 million of investment will be shared amongst these winning projects. More information is available at <http://www.tacsi.org.au/challenge/>.

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## INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

### The European Commission's 'Innovation Union'

On 6 October 2010 the European Commission established an "Innovation Union" to focus Europe's innovation efforts on challenges such as climate change, energy and food security, health and the ageing population. It proposes using public sector intervention to stimulate the private sector and to remove bottlenecks which stop ideas reaching the market including lack of finance, fragmented research systems and markets, and under use of public procurement for innovation.

Initiatives under the Innovation Union aim to improve challenges faced in the EU innovation system by increasing investment in knowledge creation, improving access to finance and intellectual property rights for small to medium enterprises, focusing public procurement, and minimising fragmentation and duplication of innovation policy across member states.

Progress of the Innovation Union will be measured through two headline indicators: the R&D investment target, and a new innovation indicator, a single indicator reflecting the successful development and dynamism of innovation entrepreneurial activities, as requested by the European Council (EC). The EC will monitor overall progress on innovation performance using the Research and Innovation Union scoreboard.

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### US Innovation in Economic Development Awards, Federal Technology Watch, November 2010

Winners of the Economic Development Administration's (EDA) 2010 [Innovation in Economic Development Awards](#) were announced by Commerce assistant secretary for economic development John Fernandez last week in Atlanta, Georgia, during the Southeast Workforce and Economic Development Conference.

The 2010 Innovation Award winners showcase some of the United States best practices for promoting economic development through collaborative initiatives and highlight outstanding examples of regional success in the global marketplace. Formerly known as the Excellence Awards, the winners of the four categories of the 2010 awards were:

- Innovation in Regional Innovation Clusters (RICs): CONNECT; La Jolla, California
- Innovation in Commercialization: Bluegrass Business Development Partnership (BBDP); Lexington, Kentucky
- Innovation in Global Export Promotion: Pennsylvania Center for Trade Development's Envoy Program, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania
- Innovation in Green Technology: University of Arizona Tech Park's Solar Zone in Tucson.

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## Small Business Innovation Research Program

The US Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) scheme, established in 1982, requires US Government research agencies with budgets of over \$100 million for external R&D to spend 2.5 percent of that budget assisting small business to engage in R&D that has the potential for commercialisation and public benefit.

In October 215 proposals were selected by NASA for negotiation of SBIR Phase II contract awards.

NASA identified the program as 'Investing in small businesses' innovations designed to meet our future mission needs is paramount for NASA's continued success.'

The projects selected have a total value of about \$129-million, and NASA anticipates awarding contracts to 162 small high-tech businesses in 35 states. A total of 340 SBIR Phase II proposals were submitted for NASA funding.

NASA's SBIR program works with its mission directorates to select ventures that address their research and technology needs, and often tackle specific technology gaps in the agency's missions and complement other agency research investments.

The SBIR program for NASA's office of the chief technologist is managed by [Ames Research Center](#) at Moffett Field, Calif. NASA's 10 field centres manages individual SBIR projects.

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## United States, Engineering the Climate: Research Needs and Strategies for International Collaboration Report

On 29 October 2010, Chairman of the US House of Representatives Science and Technology Committee, Chairman Bart Gordon, released a report titled, Engineering the Climate: Research Needs and Strategies for International Collaboration.

Climate engineering, also known as geoengineering, relates to the deliberate large scale modification of the earth's climate systems of the purpose of counteracting and mitigating climate change.

The report was developed following an 18-month inquiry in collaboration with the UK House of Commons Science and Technology Committee. The US Committee undertook literature reviews and consultations with three public hearings and a number of interviews with leading political and expert consultations.

The report identifies US capabilities relevant to research on climate engineering. It is not an endorsement of climate engineering activities but aims to support a forum for open and honest public dialogue regarding climate engineering science. The report makes a number of policy recommendations regarding climate engineering research areas and collaboration opportunities.

Chairman Gordon states that reducing greenhouse gas emissions should be the first priority of any domestic or international climate initiative. He acknowledges that making firm commitments and taking real actions to reduce global greenhouse gas emissions is important. Equally important for the development of policies for climate engineering research will be transparency and public engagement. As nations become technologically,

economically and ecologically interdependent, multilateral collaboration will be critical to developing policies that address an increasingly complex range of challenges.

A copy of the report is available at

[http://democrats.science.house.gov/Media/file/Reports/EngineeringTheClimate\\_StaffReport.pdf](http://democrats.science.house.gov/Media/file/Reports/EngineeringTheClimate_StaffReport.pdf)

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## Technopolis Group Report, Impacts of European RTOs

The Technopolis Group published an independent report, on 20 October 2010, commissioned by the European Trade Association of the Research & Technology Organisations (EARTO), on the economic and social impacts of European Research and Technology Organisations (RTOs) on European society and the European innovation system.

RTOs are characterised by a focus on applied research, the results of which are utilised in industrial innovation and development. Their funding is sourced from both public subsidies and private income from industry. There are approximately 350 RTOs in Europe. One significant RTO is the Fraunhofer Gesellschaft located in Germany.

The report found that the overall economic impact of RTOs on the European economy is about 40 to 50 billion Euros. RTOs were found to benefit at least 100,000 customers a year, including regional governments, small to medium enterprises, and large companies, and employ more than 150,000 scientists, engineers and technicians. The report noted that RTOs play a crucial role in the innovation process because they link basic research with practical commercial application, and enable companies to go beyond the limits of their internal technological resources. The report predicts that RTOs will play an important part in developing Europe's solutions to key challenges such as climate change and an ageing population.

A copy of the report is available at:

[http://www.earto.eu/fileadmin/content/03\\_Publications/TechnopolisReportImpactRTOsOctober2010.pdf](http://www.earto.eu/fileadmin/content/03_Publications/TechnopolisReportImpactRTOsOctober2010.pdf)

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