



Research Alliance calls for long-term vision to lock in prosperity

Science and research underpin a flourishing future

The nation's top scientists and researchers have called on the Abbott Government to honour its election commitments and to provide a stable, long-term vision for science and research, as the release of the National Commission of Audit and the Federal Budget approach.

In an era of rapid change and financial constraints, it is more important than ever to strengthen the foundations on which science, research and innovation are built.

Science and research produce breakthroughs and discoveries that lead to the products, processes, knowledge and jobs that maintain Australia's place as an advanced first-world economy.

Prime Minister Tony Abbott said in June last year that:

The Coalition understands that science and research are the foundation for Australia's future advancement in manufacturing, innovation and in a range of industries from pharmaceuticals to telecommunications.

The Coalition will provide the long-term, stable policies and vision that our nation's scientists and researchers need to excel in their work.

The Australian Government's *Plan for Real Action* promises to unleash Australia's potential through a five-pillar economy. Each of these five pillars is dependent on long-term investment in science and research to increase productivity and ensure strong economic growth.

The Research Alliance calls on the Prime Minister to bolster the foundations, to provide the stable, planned investment in the ideas and discoveries that will create a prosperous future.

In July 2013, Australia's research and science community formed the Research Alliance to present a united voice on the importance of a strategic national research policy to build a stronger, smarter Australia.

The Alliance is committed to seven fundamental principles:

1. Investing strategically and sustainably.
2. Building our research workforce – getting and keeping the best.
3. Building a productive system and getting the most out of it.
4. Being among and working with the world's best.
5. Bringing industry and academia together.
6. Expanding industry research.
7. Investing in our best research and our best researchers.

The Alliance supports the need for carefully considered investment of finite resources in times of economic stress.

We stand ready to work with government and industry to carefully manage what we have and to plan for the next decade and beyond.

But it is important to understand that Australian science and research does not work as a series of disconnected parts. It is a well-integrated and interconnected ecosystem. Australia must maintain a healthy balance between fundamental and applied research, medical and non-medical, the hard technical disciplines and the social sciences and humanities. We do need to maintain a strong connection between the research sector and the industry sector and the wider community.

The Research Alliance supports calls from the Business Council of Australia and the Chief Scientist of Australia for a research and innovation strategy – a three-way partnership between government, business and the nation's researchers for a more productive and innovative nation. The nation needs a robust framework on which critical projects can be built, very costly research infrastructure can be best utilised and the best return on investment achieved from our precious resources.

The Research Alliance is interested in the big picture for Australia, and the central role science and all other forms of research can play in a flourishing future.

The Research Alliance is committed to a set of fundamental principles (appended in full below) that will secure a smarter, more productive and resilient future for Australia.

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Media comment:

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Research Alliance members are: Australian Academy of Science; Australian Academy of Technological Sciences and Engineering; Australian Academy of the Humanities; Academy of the Social Sciences in

Australia; Professional Scientists Australia; Association of Australian Medical Research Institutes; Australian Society for Medical Research; Cooperative Research Centres Association; Council of Rural Research and Development Corporations; Regional Universities Network; Research Australia; Science and Technology Australia, and Universities Australia.

Research Alliance Fundamental Principles

1) Investing strategically and sustainably

Governments must support planned, stable and appropriate investment in research over the long term, which is essential if we are to tackle large, complex problems and embrace opportunities facing Australia.

2) Building our research workforce – getting and keeping the best

To ensure we attract and retain the best researchers we must offer appropriate conditions. Career uncertainty means that many leave research or leave Australia to seek a stable future.

3) Building a productive system and getting the most out of it

Governments must set a stable and sustainable funding framework for infrastructure (buildings, equipment and the technical experts to keep them operating) especially for national facilities.

4) Being among and working with the world's best

Global collaboration is more necessary than ever with the rise of international research, commerce, communication and other systems that transform our lives and opportunities. Our best researchers must work with the best globally.

5) Bringing industry and academia together

When industry and researchers work together effectively we innovate and multiply our strengths. We must ensure there are clear and reliable policy incentives that facilitate deep and sustained collaboration between industry, public sector, university and research institutes. We must harness national talent to create knowledge, opportunity and new jobs.

6) Expanding industry research

Governments need to create an environment which encourages industry to invest more in research and which makes Australia an attractive place for international companies to undertake research. Innovation underpinned by research and development improves industrial productivity and is critical to ensuring strong growth.

7) Investing in our best research and our best researchers

Government has a clear role in setting priorities for research, and in supporting research which underpins discovery. The independent expert assessment process should be used to identify excellence and to coordinate the best researchers, research programs and groups.