



## INVEST IN RESEARCH AND TRANSLATION: STAND UP FOR AUSTRALIA'S FUTURE

Australian researchers call for all-party, non-partisan backing  
17 June 2013

Australia's research and science community today joined together to call on all of our political leaders to put short-term politics aside and back a strategic national research policy to build a stronger, smarter nation.

For the first time Australian research bodies, representing hundreds of thousands of Australians, have come together to urge non-partisan support for science and all forms of research. This starts with all parties making a commitment to the fundamental value of research in the physical, biological and social sciences, through to engineering and humanities.

The research alliance has a broad base, including researchers across business and industry, universities and medical research institutes. The call comes from peak bodies from across the research spectrum, in science, education, social sciences and humanities and from our most eminent scientists and engineers, including our most recent Nobel Laureate.

What we can achieve through research, science and innovation will decide whether Australia is a success in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. We cannot succeed if we persist with a stop-start, badly coordinated approach to research.

We call on Government to work with the sector to build a long-term, strategic vision that makes the most of our natural talent and helps the nation flourish economically and socially.

Australians understand that if we are to have a strong future as a nation we must be able to create and use knowledge generated through research - conducted here in Australia - in partnership with the best from the rest of the world.

Research helps us ride out storms of economic uncertainty and tackle the big challenges facing the nation and the world. Without a committed, strategic approach to supporting the nation's research system, we risk wasting our great national talent and our precious capacity-building investments and resources, and falling behind our region and the world

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We call on all politicians to take action in line with the six fundamental principles:

**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 opportunities facing Australia. This will yield better results and ensure the best use of every dollar spent.

**Building our research workforce – getting and keeping the best**

To ensure we attract and retain the best researchers we must offer appropriate conditions. Many of the nation's world class researchers are stuck in a cycle of one- to three-year grants for their salaries and research materials. This career uncertainty means many leave research or leave Australia to seek a stable future. The nation is the loser every time uncertainty impedes discovery, prevents planning and inhibits fruitful partnerships.

**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 without which critical work cannot continue or even begin. This must be backed with resources that keep valuable facilities running once they are built. A central research infrastructure investment framework, such as National Research Investment Plan (NRIP), is essential.

**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 be able to work with the best globally, building on the credibility Australian researchers already have across a wide array of disciplines. This will require a strategic investment that can facilitate international engagement at a government to government level, as well as support for collaboration on specific research projects.

**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. This not only ensures that the benefits from basic research are translated into practice in Australia, but also harnesses national talent and creates knowledge, opportunity and new jobs.

**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. Improving industrial productivity has become critical to ensuring strong growth and innovation underpinned by research and development and investment plays a key part in meeting this objective.

This is a call for a strategy to retain and develop fundamental national capability in a highly competitive contemporary world.

In research we know that the more the nation invests the more rewards we will all have to share for decades to come.

At this critical time we call on all federal politicians to commit to the six fundamental principles, and to encourage and enable Australians to build a research system that makes the most of all our precious resources.

**Signed**

**Professor Brian Schmidt, Australian Nobel Laureate**

**Professor Robert Williamson, Australian Academy of Science**

**Peter Laver, Australian Academy of Technological Sciences and Engineering**

**Professor Tony Peacock, Cooperative Research Centres Association**

**Professor Les Field, Group of Eight Australia**

**Catrina Jackson, CEO Science and Technology Australia**

**Belinda Robinson, Chief Executive, Universities Australia**

**Professor Brendan Crabb, President, Association of Australian Medical Research Institutes**

**Dr Caroline Perkins, Executive Director, Regional Universities Network**

**Robyn Porter, National Secretary, Association of Professional Engineers, Scientists and Managers Australia**

**Greg Mullins, Research Australia**