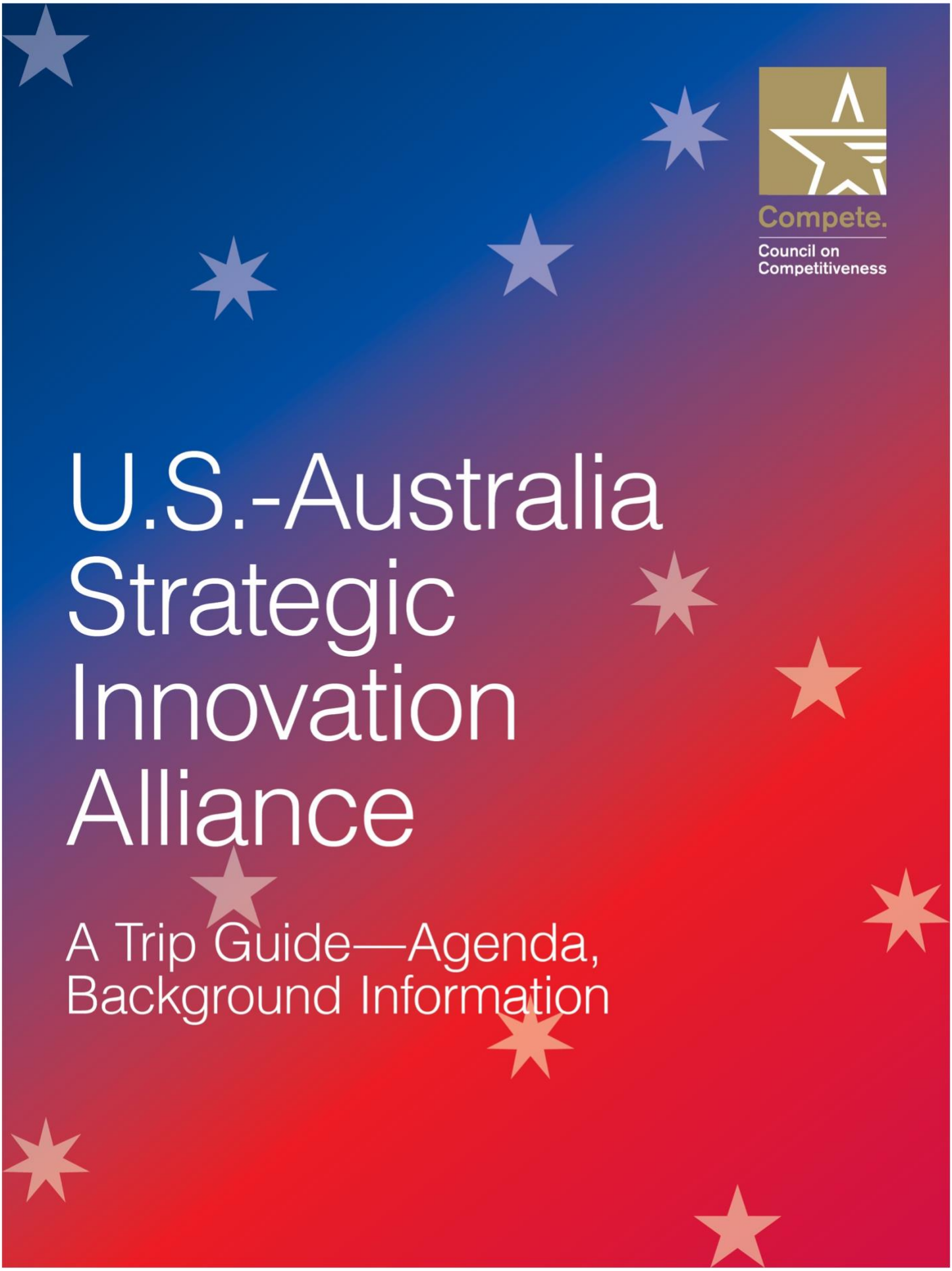


U.S.-Australia Strategic Innovation Alliance

A Trip Guide—Agenda, Background Information

This publication may not be reproduced, in whole or in part, in any form beyond copying permitted by sections 107 and 108 of the U.S. copyright law and excerpts by reviewers for the public press, without written consent from the publishers.
The COUNCIL ON COMPETITIVENESS is a nonprofit, 501(c) (3) organization as recognized by the U.S. Internal Revenue Service. The Council's activities are funded by contributions from its members, foundations, and project contributions. To learn more about the Council on Competitiveness, visit our home page at Compete.org.
© 2025 Council on Competitiveness

Table of Contents

© 2025 Council on Competitiveness
Please do not share or reproduce without the written consent of the Council on Competitiveness.

The U.S.-Australia Strategic Innovation Alliance

Delegation Mission

To launch a second phase of a growing U.S.-Australia Strategic Innovation Alliance – leveraging the assets of allied nations to develop and deploy at speed and scale the complex, massive, strategic, dual-use technologies for innovation-driven productivity growth, and shared prosperity and security.

Why Australia?

In addition to building on existing, strong relationships between the Council and the U.S. public sector with peers in Australia's private and public sectors, Australia's competencies, capacities, and capabilities in critical, tech-based innovation domains compatible with U.S. economic and security interests have only expanded and grown even closer to the United States (bilaterally and multilaterally, like AUKUS) since the phase 1 activities between 2016 and 2020 – e.g. transformational computing (AI and quantum), energy (broad portfolio of energy tech, including connectivity to advanced nuclear), advanced biology (e.g., bioscience, biotechnology, and biomanufacturing), and more.

Background–Phase One

On March 25-29, 2019, the Council on Competitiveness (Council) launched and co-hosted the inaugural U.S.-Australia Innovation Dialogue with private and public sector leaders across Australia.

This cross-Australia Dialogue (Melbourne, Sydney, Canberra) – whose beginnings trace back to strategic engagements and visits starting in 2016 – brought together leaders from the Council and its "Technology Leadership & Strategy Initiative" (TLSI), CSIRO (Australia's Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation), the Australian Advisory Board on Healthcare and Technology Competitiveness, with U.S. and Australian Delegates from the defence, agriculture, finance, mining, manufacturing, communications, and health care sectors to co-create pathways for innovation collaboration between our two countries.

The weeklong Dialogue focused participants on mapping over-the-horizon innovation challenges and opportunities; exploring the frontiers of disruptive technologies; creating new communities of innovators; building infrastructure to support 21st century innovation; and picking up the pace of commercialization.

© 2025 Council on Competitiveness
Please do not share or reproduce without the written consent of the Council on Competitiveness.

Key threads spanning these issues included: identifying strategies to develop, attract and retain global best-in-class talent; cultivating and supporting diversity of knowledge, experiences, and non-linear thinking; strengthening support for capital intensive research and industrial efforts; and leading the world in articulating the ethical underpinnings of exponential technologies. The discussions made the case for the development of a more robust and strategic innovation engagement between Australia and the United States, centered on common purpose and mission – scaling beyond individual-to-individual efforts, to growing sustained, organizational partnerships to drive long-term security, productivity, and prosperity.

Particular attention was placed on the key role industry must play in driving innovative outcomes - within the context of a rich, collaborative ecosystem of universities, national laboratories, and research organizations.

Dialogue participants concluded by agreeing to develop action groups - and to explore meeting again in 2020 - to develop a program of work to move forward efforts like:

1. Creating collaboration principles that bolster innovations in areas of common mission and strategic importance to the long-term competitiveness of both nations (e.g., building next-generation microelectronics and cyber infrastructure, supporting the future of quantum computing and artificial intelligence, advancing personalized healthcare, developing precision agriculture, securing critical materials and supply chains, etc.)
2. Developing a common framework for ethics in the use of exponential technologies.
3. Articulating and sharing innovation best practices in both nations.
4. Exploring how stakeholders in the U.S. and Australian research enterprise – including companies and universities in both countries, as well as key research institutes like the U.S. Department of Energy national laboratories - can create a framework to open to one another key facilities, talent, etc.

Phase 2 (July 2025 and Beyond)

Well beyond the COVID-19 pandemic and its attendant difficulties in scaling beyond Phase 1, the current atmosphere is ripe to re-engage the United States and Australia around a common, innovation-amplifying agenda.

The Council's flagship initiative, the National Commission on Innovation and Competitiveness Frontiers, and its latest report, *Competing in the Next Economy: Innovating in the Age of Disruption and Discontinuity*, calls for a refreshed vision to accelerate innovation – the critical factor in determining global competitiveness, economic growth, the ability to generate wealth, and overall security.

And a key pillar to the success of this vision is the U.S. need to robustly engage on the international stage and to collaborate with allies in co-developing and co-deploying the massive, complex, strategic, dual-use platform technologies that will empower the next economy.

© 2025 Council on Competitiveness
Please do not share or reproduce without the written consent of the Council on Competitiveness.

The U.S.-Australia Strategic Innovation Alliance Delegation

Council on Competitiveness Delegates

1. Dr. Roberto Alvarez, Executive Director, GFCC
2. Ms. Claire DeCarteret, Managing Director, Gallup
3. Dr. Peter Dorhout, Vice President for Research, Iowa State University
4. Mr. Chad Evans, Executive Vice President & Chief Operating Officer, Council on Competitiveness
5. Dr. Kate Evans, Director of the Oak Ridge National Laboratory Office of Institutional Strategic Planning
6. Dr. Suresh Garimella, President, University of Arizona
7. Dr. Brett Goldstein, Special Advisor to the Chancellor on National Security and Strategic Initiatives and Research Professor, School of Engineering, Vanderbilt University
8. Dr. Keoki Jackson, SVP, MITRE
9. Ms. Anne Lingafelter, Principal, Gallup
10. Dr. Mark Peters, President & CEO, MITRE Corporation
11. The Hon. Deborah Wince-Smith, President & CEO, Council on Competitiveness
12. Dr. Michael Wolf, Senior Vice President, Hevolution

Australian Advisory Board on Competitiveness Partners

13. Mr. Charles Kiefel AM, Founder and Executive Chairman, The Principals Funds, and Chairman and Co-Founder, Australian Advisory Board on Competitiveness
14. The Hon. Arthur Sinodinos AO, Partner and Chair of the Australia Practice, The Asia Group
15. Dr. Stella Barber, Director of Communications, Principals Funds Management

Special Guests

16. Mrs. Carolyn Dorhout
17. Mrs. Lakshmi Garimella

© 2025 Council on Competitiveness
Please do not share or reproduce without the written consent of the Council on Competitiveness.

U.S.-Australia Strategic Innovation Alliance Delegation Bios

Council on Competitiveness Delegates

Dr. Roberto Alvarez

Executive Director, GFCC

Roberto Alvarez is a systems thinker and doer with over 25 years of experience at the intersection of technology, business and policy. A native of Brazil, he is a community builder who has worked with and implemented joint initiatives alongside organizations and partners in the Americas, Africa, Asia, Europe and Oceania throughout his career.

As Executive Director at the Global Federation of Competitiveness Councils (GFCC), Roberto oversees the organization's policy portfolio and operations, engages with global leaders across the GFCC network in 35+ countries to conceptualize and develop new initiatives, builds global partnerships, creates content on innovation and competitiveness strategy and leads the GFCC team.

Roberto is also a Senior Policy Fellow at Queen Mary University of London Global Policy Institute and an active early-stage tech investor. He is a Venture Partner at NYC-based Seldor Capital, one of the first space-tech VCs worldwide, helping transform state-of-the-art technologies into high-impact businesses. He is an Industry 4.0 advisor to Bossa Nova Investments, the most active micro-VC company in LatAm, and the founder of Aventures, an early-stage investment company in Brazil that invests in cleantech and AI. Roberto is also part of the team behind FrissOn Capital, an early-stage VC company focused on deep tech ventures in LatAm. He has been involved in over 25 early-stage deals in various countries. Roberto's career includes senior management positions at the Brazilian Agency for Industrial Development (ABDI), business consulting (manufacturing and logistics), tech entrepreneurship, higher education and civil society organizations. He has authored and organized books and publications on innovation, industrial development and manufacturing strategy and operations. Roberto holds a Ph.D. in Industrial Engineering from COPPE-UFRJ and was trained in Quality and Productivity at the Japan Productivity Center, as well as Exponential Technologies at the NASA Ames-based Singularity University. He is a certified coach in exponential organizations.

Ms. Claire DeCarteret

Managing Director, APAC, Gallup

Claire de Carteret leads the EMEA teams in designing and implementing measurement, advisory and learning solutions that help Gallup's clients meet and exceed their organisational goals. Claire provides strategic direction for her region on shaping client

© 2025 Council on Competitiveness
Please do not share or reproduce without the written consent of the Council on Competitiveness.

solutions, executing sales plans, marketing for events and products, and increasing customer engagement. She is a dedicated strengths performance coach and leader for team members in the region. Claire also facilitates and leads Gallup learning courses. She is an executive coach, certified through Coach Global and is also a Gallup Strengths Coach.

Since 2007, Claire has worked in several roles within Gallup as a leader to internal consulting teams and client leaders in Australia, New Zealand, China, Japan, Thailand, India, Singapore and the Philippines. In her present role of regional director, she is responsible for the growth of Gallup's learning and business solutions across the United Kingdom, Europe, the Middle East and Africa. She leads a talented team of consultants who work closely with organisations to help them create and sustain high performance through strengths-based strategies, leadership and manager development and performance coaching.

Prior to joining Gallup, Claire worked as the regional director for the TUI Group based in the Aquitaine and Brittany regions of France. In this role, Claire managed the relationship between the consortium of French suppliers and the British Tour Operator to ensure the standards, risk and operations of the tourism services in France.

Claire received her bachelor's degree in education and international studies and her graduate diploma of business administration from the University of Technology in Sydney. She obtained her MBA from the Australian Institute of Business in 2017. She is fluent in English and French.

Dr. Peter Dorhout

Vice President for Research, Iowa State University

Dr. Peter K. Dorhout serves as Professor of Chemistry and Vice President for Research at Iowa State University and an Affiliate of Ames National Laboratory, a U.S. Department of Energy National Laboratory. Prior to joining Iowa State in 2021, he served five years as Vice President for Research following four years as dean of the College of Arts & Sciences at Kansas State University. He served as the Interim Provost at Colorado State University- Pueblo (2011), preceded by 20 years at Colorado State University-Fort Collins as Vice Provost for Graduate Studies, Assistant Vice President for Research, and Professor of Chemistry. Dorhout served as a collaborator at Los Alamos National Laboratory from 1987 through 2011 and is the current past chair of the Chemistry Section for the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

Dr. Dorhout has led professional organizations and foundations as a member of the Boards of Directors for the American Chemical Society, where he was the 2018 President, the Research Corporation for Science Advancement, the Iowa State University Research Park, the Iowa Innovation Council, the Science Center of Iowa, the Kansas State University Research Foundation, K-State Innovation Partners, the Coronado Area Council Scouting BSA Executive Board (and President), and the Mid-Iowa Council Scouting BSA Executive Board. He currently serves as the co-chair of the Safe and Inclusive Working Group of the Council on Research Executive Committee, Association of Public and Land-grant Universities.

© 2025 Council on Competitiveness
Please do not share or reproduce without the written consent of the Council on Competitiveness.

Dr. Dorhout is a recognized expert in solid state and nuclear materials science and environmental chemistry. He has had active research programs in solid-state f-element and radiochemistry, and nanomaterials science. He has published more than 120 peer-reviewed journal articles, book chapters, and reviews while presenting over 130 international and national invited lectures on his chemistry and related topics, including laboratory safety. Dr. Dorhout earned a bachelor's degree in chemistry from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, a doctorate in inorganic chemistry from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and served as a postdoctoral scientist at Ames Lab at Iowa State. His list of professional awards include Fellow of the American Chemical Society, Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, Research Corporation Cottrell Scholar, Camille

Mr. Chad Evans

Executive Vice President & Chief Operating Officer, Council on Competitiveness

As Council EVP and COO overseeing all programs and initiatives, Chad develops and manages the Council's policy agenda and workstream, including: development and execution of the Council's flagship "National Commission on Innovation & Competitiveness Frontiers;" creating both the "Building University-Industry-Lab Dialogue for Advanced Computing" effort and the "Exploring Innovation Frontiers Initiative" with the National Science Foundation; forming the "American Energy & Manufacturing Competitiveness Partnership" with the U.S. Department of Energy; and, helping to shape and launch the "National Engineering Forum."

In addition, Chad has built and shepherded over the past nearly 15 years the Council's "Technology Leadership and Strategy Initiative," engaging Fortune 500 chief technology officers, university vice presidents of research, and national laboratory deputy directors to make the policy and business cases for America's innovation-enabling investments in talent, technology and infrastructure.

He has also helmed C-suite innovation summits, dialogues and immersions across Latin America, Europe, Asia and Oceania. Has focused, in particular in Brazil and Australia - having created 4 U.S.-Brazil Innovation Summits and 20+ innovation learning laboratories across both nations; and having launched the first-ever U.S.-Australia CTO Dialogue series.

Chad holds an M.S. from the Georgetown University School of Foreign Service, with an Honors concentration in International Business Diplomacy from Georgetown's Landegger Program. He has a B.A. in Political Science and International Affairs from Emory University.

He is both Secretary and Treasurer to the Board of the Council on Competitiveness; Treasurer to the Board of the Global Federation of Competitiveness Councils; a member of the Texas A&M Engineering Experiment Station Advisory Board; an Honorary Fellow of the National Academy of Inventors; an ARCS Foundation National Science and Engineering Advisory Council member; a U.S. German Marshall Fund Fellow; and a past member of the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory Industry Advisory Council and the World Economic Forum Advisory Board on Russian Competitiveness.

© 2025 Council on Competitiveness
Please do not share or reproduce without the written consent of the Council on Competitiveness.

Dr. Katherine Evans

Director of the Oak Ridge National Laboratory
Office of Institutional Strategic Planning

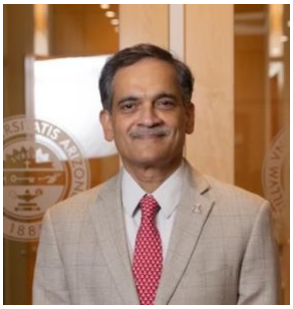
Katherine J. Evans directs the Office of Institutional Strategic Planning at Oak Ridge National Laboratory.

Prior to her current role, she served as director of ORNL's Computational Sciences and Engineering Division, which covers scalable computing to address large scientific challenges across the physical, engineering, health, and quantum information sciences. Evans is also an active researcher in the areas of Earth system model evaluation, developing and implementing scalable numerical algorithms to improve the efficiency and accuracy of weather and climate models, and analysis of large-scale persistent weather patterns in global atmospheric models. As part of her numerical methods research, she also makes connections to other applications, including ice sheets, more general fluid flow, disease propagation, and oncology.

Evans earned her PhD in Earth and Atmospheric Sciences with an emphasis in math from the Georgia Institute of Technology in 2000, where she was awarded the William Rhodes fellowship and the senior Dean's fellowship for most outstanding senior PhD student. She joined ORNL in 2007 after a stint as a post-doctoral researcher and staff member at Los Alamos National Laboratory in the Decision Applications and Theoretical Divisions. She led the Computational Earth Sciences group at ORNL for 6 years before her current role. She is a member of the American Meteorological Society, American Geophysical Union, and the Society of Industrial and Applied Mathematicians, where she has received the 2024 prize for the Mathematics of the Planet Earth activity group.

Dr. Suresh Garimella

President, University of Arizona



Suresh Garimella serves as the 23rd president of the University of Arizona and University Distinguished Professor in the Department of Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering, positions he assumed on October 1, 2024. He was unanimously appointed by the Arizona Board of Regents following a robust national search. On selecting Garimella to lead the university, Board Chair Cecilia Mata praised his collaborative leadership, experience, and vision, calling him a "tireless champion for students" who is well suited to lead the university into a bright future.

Previously, he was president of the University of Vermont (UVM) from 2019 to 2024. Under his leadership, the university underscored its reputation as a premier flagship research university dedicated to providing a world-class student experience and committed to fulfilling its land-grant mission, a focus he brings to the U of A as well.

Throughout his career, Garimella has emphasized the importance of access and affordability for students, and he has worked to promote excellence in the student learning experience. A professor of mechanical engineering, he is both a highly cited scholar and researcher and a passionate educator, mentoring over 90 graduate students and 50 post-doctoral scholars, 29 of whom were placed in prestigious faculty positions across the world. During his tenure as UVM's president, he led an annual undergraduate seminar class devoted to engaging students in civil discourse on multifaceted contemporary issues.

As a researcher, Garimella has made seminal contributions to the field of electronics thermal

© 2025 Council on Competitiveness
Please do not share or reproduce without the written consent of the Council on Competitiveness.

management and energy efficiency at micro and nano scales, and in sustainable energy systems technology and policy. He is co-author of over 625 refereed publications and 16 issued patents, and he has been recognized as an elected Member of the National Academy of Engineering and elected Fellow of the National Academy of Inventors, the American Association for the Advancement of Science and the American Society of Mechanical Engineers.

Garimella also has made important contributions in national and international policy matters. He served as a member of the National Science Board, which oversees the National Science Foundation and acts as an independent body of advisers to both the President and Congress on policy matters related to science and engineering. He also chairs the research advisory board of Sandia National Laboratories, is a member of the board of directors at Modine and the executive committee for the Council on Competitiveness, and he previously served as a Jefferson Science Fellow at the U.S. Department of State and as Senior Fellow for Energy and Climate Partnership of the Americas.

Prior to his time leading the University of Vermont, President Garimella served at Purdue University as the Goodson Distinguished Professor of Mechanical Engineering and Executive Vice President for Research and Partnerships. Under his leadership of Purdue's $660 million research enterprise, the university achieved five consecutive record years in sponsored funding and seeded approximately 50 startups annually. He developed strategic and comprehensive partnerships with major corporations, NGOs, and national governments in Colombia, India, and the Middle East, conceived and implemented ambitious campuswide initiatives in life sciences and integrative data science, and oversaw Purdue's Discovery Park, a unique set of facilities and institutes where the convergence of disciplines helped solve global challenges related to health and life sciences, sustainability, food, energy, and defense and security.

His educational background includes a Ph.D. from the University of California, Berkeley, an M.S. from The Ohio State University, and a bachelor's degree from the Indian Institute of Technology, Madras.

Dr. Brett Goldstein

Special Advisor to the Chancellor on National Security and Strategic Initiatives, Vanderbilt University

Brett Goldstein is a pioneering innovator recognized for dismantling bureaucratic barriers and driving cross-industry transformation, from the Department of Defense to Silicon Valley. Goldstein has advised Cabinet Secretaries, C-suite executives, and start-ups on national security, finance, cybersecurity, AI, and data analytics. With leadership roles spanning government, the private sector, and academia, he remains committed to enhancing government through data and technology.

Goldstein began his technology career at OpenTable, where he helped grow the company from an early-stage startup to a multinational corporation. Following the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, he joined the Chicago Police Department where he earned the rank of Commander. He made history as the nation's first municipal Chief Data Officer in Chicago's government and later served as the city's Chief Information Officer. In these roles, Goldstein was critical in leading successful efforts to use data and technology to improve the lives of Chicago-area residents. To accomplish this, he established one of the premier analytics programs in the country, accelerating Chicago's growth as a global hub of innovation and technology.

© 2025 Council on Competitiveness
Please do not share or reproduce without the written consent of the Council on Competitiveness.

As Director of the Defense Digital Service, he led a team dedicated to tackling critical technical and national security challenges for the Department of Defense, reporting directly to the Secretary of Defense. He also served as Special Advisor to the United States Department of the Navy where he provided technical expertise on special projects, including overhauling the Navy's personnel and manpower systems and infrastructure, developing data analytics and machine learning with Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC), and using commercial technology and algorithms to improve force protection for service members in Afghanistan as part of NATO's Resolute Support Mission.

Goldstein co-founded and served as Managing Partner of Ekistic Ventures, a venture capital fund dedicated to cultivating a portfolio of technology start-ups that bring new solutions to critical urban problems. Before his work at Ekistic, he served as the Chief Technology Officer of GCM Grosvenor, a global investment and advisory firm.

Academically, he served as a Senior Fellow and Special Advisor for Urban Science at the University of Chicago and as a Senior Advisor to the Pearson Institute for the Study and Resolution of Global Conflicts. He also held a fellowship appointment at the Harvard Kennedy School of Government. He is the Special Advisor to the Chancellor on National Security and Strategic Initiatives and a Research Professor in the School of Engineering at Vanderbilt University.

Dr. Keoki Jackson

Senior Vice President, The MITRE Corporation

Dana (Keoki) Jackson is senior vice president and general manager, MITRE National Security Sector. In this role, he is responsible for the strategic growth and execution of MITRE's national security programs, including support to the U.S. Department of Defense, the U.S. Department of Justice, and the Intelligence Community, and leading the National Security Engineering Center.

After more than two decades at Lockheed Martin, Jackson brings robust technical leadership and business experience, including directly contributing to the design, development, deployment, and flight operation of major national security spacecraft and programs. He also held management roles on the GPS III position, navigation, and timing program, and the Space-based Infrared System missile warning program. Jackson held several executive and senior management roles at Lockheed Martin, including chief technology officer and chief engineer, and vice president of engineering and program operations. He most recently served as vice president of supply chain and program performance and was responsible for program and supply chain management strategy, execution, and success across the enterprise.

Before joining Lockheed Martin, Jackson was a NASA research fellow at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in the field of human adaptation to the space environment. Jackson is a fellow of the United Kingdom Royal Aeronautical Society and the American Institute for Aeronautics and Astronautics (AIAA). He is a member of the National

© 2025 Council on Competitiveness
Please do not share or reproduce without the written consent of the Council on Competitiveness.

Academy of Engineering, Sigma Xi, the International Academy of Astronautics, and the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers.

He previously served on the Sandia Corporation Board of Directors, the AIAA Foundation Board of Trustees, the Georgia Institute of Technology President's Advisory Board, the University of Maryland Clark School of Engineering Board of Visitors, and the MIT Department of Aeronautics and Astronautics Visiting Committee.

Jackson received his bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees in aeronautics and astronautics from MIT and completed the Stanford Executive Program at the Stanford Graduate School of Business.

Anne Lingafelter

Principal, Gallup

Anne Lingafelter spent nearly 8 years working for the Gallup organisation in Australia & Singapore. Anne leans heavily on Gallup models, like CliftonStrengths and the Q12 framework to help individuals & teams increase engagement, well-being and performance outcomes.

A GALLUP certified strengths coach & Coaching Australia Executive coach, Anne uses multiple frameworks and models to meet client needs, including Crucial Conversations, the 5 Dysfunctions of Teams, Resilience@Work, Needs of Followers, and dealing with Imposter Syndrome.

Anne is an experienced speaker and presenter, having been a TV News Reporter previously in the USA & the host of GALLUP's Australia Called to Coach webcast for over 6 years.

Dr. Mark Peters

President and CEO, MITRE Corporation

Mark Peters is the president and chief executive officer of The MITRE Corporation, the global not-for-profit technology company that manages R&D centers around the world. He leads a nearly 10,000-strong multidisciplinary team united in MITRE's mission: solving problems for a safer world. Peters is responsible for governance and oversight of MITRE's diverse markets, including artificial intelligence, aerospace, telecommunications, homeland security, cyber, transportation, defense and intelligence, health, and government innovation.

A recognized expert in nuclear energy and national security, Peters spent more than 25 years leading scientific discovery for federally funded R&D centers (FFRDCs). Before joining MITRE in 2024, he served as the executive vice president for laboratory management and operations at Battelle Memorial Institute. Prior leadership roles include director of the Idaho National Laboratory and president of Battelle Energy Alliance LLC, a large, multipurpose laboratory focused on nuclear energy, national and homeland security, and energy and environmental science and technology.

Peters also served two years as chair of the National Laboratory Directors' Council, an independent body that coordinates initiatives and advises the Department of Energy and other national laboratory stakeholders. Prior to joining Battelle, he was associate laboratory director for Energy and Global Security at Argonne National Laboratory.

Peters was awarded the 2023 Henry DeWolf Smyth Nuclear Statesman Award, which recognizes individuals for outstanding service in

© 2025 Council on Competitiveness
Please do not share or reproduce without the written consent of the Council on Competitiveness.

developing and guiding the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. He is a member of the National Academy of Engineering and a Fellow of the American Nuclear Society. He also serves on the Idaho Power Board, the National Academies Board on Human-Systems Integration, and several other organizations that support innovation and economic development.

Peters holds a bachelor's degree in geology from Auburn University and a doctorate in geophysical sciences from the University of Chicago. He has also completed extensive executive management education and training, including the Strategic Laboratory Leadership Program at the University of Chicago Booth School of Business.

The Hon. Deborah Wince-Smith

President & CEO, Council on Competitiveness

The Hon. Deborah L. Wince-Smith is the president & CEO of the Council on Competitiveness, a coalition of CEOs, university presidents, labor leaders and national laboratory directors, committed to driving U.S. competitiveness. She has more than 20 years of experience as a senior U.S. government official, as the first Senate-confirmed Assistant Secretary for Technology Policy in the U.S. Department of Commerce and Assistant Director for International Affairs in the Reagan White House.

As a globally recognized leader and practitioner in competitiveness strategy, innovation policy, technology commercialization, and public-private partnerships, Ms. Wince-Smith has served and is a current member on numerous national and global advisory boards and committees, as a University Trustee, and as a director on public and private corporate boards.

She has served on the University of California's President Council for the National Laboratories, the Board of Governors of Argonne National Laboratory, the US Naval Academy Foundation, the Smithsonian National Board, as a Trustee of Lehigh University, member of the Advisory Committee of the US Export-Import Bank, UNICEF, the Secretary of State's International Economic Policy Committee, as Chair of the Secretary of Commerce's Strengthening America's Communities Initiative (SACI), Chair of the World Economic Forum's Global Agenda Council on Competitiveness, member of Malaysia's Global Science and Innovation Advisory Council (GSIAC), and as a Corporate Director of NASDAQ-OMX.

Currently, Ms. Wince-Smith serves as a Commissioner on the Council on Competitiveness National Commission on Innovation and Competitiveness Frontiers, the National Commission of the Theft of American Intellectual Property, a Council Member of the Japan Science, Technology, and Society forum (STS forum), as a member of the Global Advisory Committees of the Japan Science and Technology Agency (JST) and the Delphi Economic Forum (DEF), the National Academies Strategic Council on Research Excellence, Integrity, and Trust, as Vice-Chair of the Trustees of the American College of Greece (ACG), the Strategic Research Advisory Committee of the University of Oklahoma, the advisory committee of Queen's Management School, Queen's University, Belfast, and as a Director of private technology companies in medical lasers, cybersecurity, and bio-therapeutics.

Ms. Wince-Smith graduated magna cum laude and Phi Beta Kappa from Vassar College and

© 2025 Council on Competitiveness
Please do not share or reproduce without the written consent of the Council on Competitiveness.

earned a Master's Degree in Classical Archaeology from King's College, Cambridge University. She received an Honorary Doctorate in Humanities from Michigan State University, an Honorary Doctorate of Public Administration from the University of Toledo, an Honorary Doctorate of Law honoris causa from the Queens University Belfast, an Honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters honoris causa from Worcester Polytechnic Institute and, most recently, an Honorary Doctorate of Public Service from the University of South Carolina.

© 2025 Council on Competitiveness
Please do not share or reproduce without the written consent of the Council on Competitiveness.

Dr. Michael Wolf

Senior Vice President, Hevolution

Dr. Michael Wolf, MD, MS, is a global operation executive, physician, and U.S. Navy veteran with broad expertise across healthcare, academic, aerospace, and technology sectors. In his capacity as a business development leader and faculty member in the Department of Medicine at the Mayo Clinic, Dr. Wolf has played a pivotal role in advancing economic-related longevity initiatives on international platforms, including the World Economic Forum, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, and the AARP Collaborative. His fourteen-year service in the U.S. Navy is marked by notable positions such as Senior Regional Flight Surgeon and as an advisor on the staff of senior military leaders. Dr. Wolf earned a B.A. in Chemistry from the University of California, Davis, an M.D. from the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences, and an M.S. in Health Informatics from the Medical University of South Carolina. His medical residency and other post-doctoral training was completed at the University of Pennsylvania and the Wharton School where he was an Associate Fellow of the Leonard Davis Institute for Health Economics.

Australian Advisory Board on Competitiveness Partners Bios

Mr. Charles Kiefel AM

Founder and Executive Chairman, The Principals Funds, and Chairman and Co-Founder, Australian Advisory Board on Competitiveness

Charles Kiefel AM is the Founder and Executive Chairman of Principals Funds Management. He founded the Firm to provide global economic analysis and advice to U.S., European, Asian, and Australian money management companies, including investment and manager selection, enterprise and human capital risk management, and board governance. In 2023, Principals Funds Management pivoted to strategic global partnerships.

Of note, Charles identified and advised in securing seven—each in excess of $1B—mandates for new clients and overall sourced more than $18B mandates from corporate superannuation (pension) funds, insurance companies, and government employee retirement and super funds.

In November 2024 Charles was appointed Vice Chairman of the GFCC having been voted into the role by Delegates from 30 member countries. Charles has been involved with GFCC since 2013.

In 2016, he became a Distinguished Fellow. He then was the Australian Federal Government representative on GFCC's Board of Trustees. Most recently, Charles became a GFCC Board of Trustees Member, a Corporate Member, and joined the ranks of Sustaining Members for Australia—the other four GFCC Sustaining

© 2025 Council on Competitiveness
Please do not share or reproduce without the written consent of the Council on Competitiveness.

Members are for Brazil, Greece, Portugal, and U.S.

Charles is the Chairman and Co-Founder, Australian Advisory Board on Competitiveness. Initially, he was appointed by the Australian Federal Government to strategise and champion new ideas to drive productivity, prosperity, and economic growth for Australia and U.S.

Since 2024, he is an Advisory Board Member for EC Pohl & Company Private Wealth.

Between 2021 and 2024 Charles was a Board Member for Clean Energy Regulator, Australian Federal Government.

Charles was Board Chairman for Military Superannuation & Benefits Board for 10 years. During this time, he established this pension fund's office, staffing, systems, processes, policies, and engagements with the Defence Ministers and Chief of the Defence Force for all military members and veterans, growing Fund from <AU$400M to AU$2.6B. Additionally, he significantly increased the number of valuable member services.

Charles was a Non-Executive Board Director for: (1) Lochard Company, where with other Directors, he devised M&A and organic growth expansion strategy leading to Lochard dominating air traffic control technologies; (2) CHAMP Private Equity Fund II, where he represented LP investors for Castle Harlan Australian Mezzanine Partners; (3) Pacific Equity Partners, where he acted for pension fund investors on Australian & International Advisory Board.

Charles was also affiliated with LSV Asset Management for 16 years. Through a business partnership with Charles, LSV established a strong presence in Australia and New Zealand. With the instrumental help of Charles, LSV developed a sizeable business in Australia and New Zealand and gathered assets of more than $10 Billion. LSV clients included major superannuation funds and corporate plans.

Other past Board Chairman roles include Charles as Non-Executive Chairman, Wilson HTM Charitable Trust, where he selected contributions, including towards the Great Barrier Reef restoration, and as Inaugural Board Chairman, Hyperion Asset Management, which was the first Member of the consortium that became Pinnacle Investment Management Group, an ASX-listed global investments firm.

His community engagement involvement is extensive, including as a Founding Member, National Committee for The Menzies Foundation, which is a non-partisan memorial honoring Sir Robert G. Menzies, Australia's longest serving Prime Minister. In July 2024, Charles was appointed a Member of the Alliance for Responsible Citizenship (ARC) Ambassador's Circle. In November 2024, Charles accepted the role of Patron of the Gyuto Tantric Buddhist Monastery Library following a meeting with his Holiness the Dalai Lama and in recognition of his substantial financial support of the library in preserving priceless Tibetan texts and providing Tibetan Buddhist education.

Since 2024, he is the Special Strategic Counsel to the Chairman and EIG, which is based in Washington, D.C., U.S.

EIG is a leading institutional investor in the global energy and infrastructure sectors with $23.0 billion under management as of 31 March 2025. EIG specializes in private investments in energy and energy-related infrastructure on a global basis. During its 43-year history, EIG has committed over $50.1 billion to the energy sector through 418 projects or companies in 44 countries on six continents. EIG's clients include many of the leading pension plans, insurance companies, endowments, foundations and sovereign wealth funds in the U.S., Asia, and Europe. EIG is headquartered in Washington, D.C. with offices in Houston, London, Sydney,

© 2025 Council on Competitiveness
Please do not share or reproduce without the written consent of the Council on Competitiveness.

Rio de Janeiro, Hong Kong, and Seoul (source: https://eigpartners.com/about-us/).

Charles is also an Advisory Board Director for The Editor's Circle of Econvue, LLC, based in Chicago, IL, U.S., which is a global consortium of economic and geopolitical experts from a wide range of specialties discussing trending issues.

In 2019, Charles was honored to be awarded by the Commonwealth of Australia as a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) in recognition "for significant service to Australia – United States relations, and to philanthropy." Previously, he was honored to be awarded by the Commonwealth of Australia the Order of Australia (OAM) "for service to the Superannuation and Funds Management Industries and as a supporter of charitable and educational institutions."

The Hon. Arthur Sinodinos AO

Partner and Chair of the Australia Practice, The Asia Group

The Hon. Arthur Sinodinos AO is Partner and Chair of TAG's Australia Practice and a leading expert on Australian public policy and politics who brings a wealth of public and private sector experience spanning national security, industry innovation, economic policy, and banking. Ambassador Sinodinos is responsible for developing and executing the firm's business strategy in Australia and supporting C-Suite executives from across TAG's geographic portfolio to manage evolving risks and seize emerging growth opportunities.

Ambassador Sinodinos most recently served as Australian Ambassador to the United States, where he was closely involved in Australia's negotiations related to AUKUS, the Quad, and the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework. Ambassador Sinodinos previously worked as Australia's Minister for Industry, Innovation and Science and was a Senator for New South Wales in the Australian Parliament from 2011 to 2019. During his parliamentary career, he also held other key roles in and outside Cabinet, including Cabinet Secretary and Assistant Treasurer.

Over a career spanning four decades, Ambassador Sinodinos has held a number of influential positions in public service. On the election of the Hon. John Howard AC as Prime Minister of Australia in 1996, Ambassador Sinodinos was appointed the Prime Minister's Senior Economic Adviser and in 1997, the Prime Minister's Chief of Staff, a position he held for nine years. Between 1987-1989 and 1995-1996 Ambassador Sinodinos also served as Senior Economic Adviser to Mr Howard while in opposition. He started his Australian Public Service career in 1979, rising to the Senior Executive Service in the Department of the Treasury.

In 2006, Ambassador Sinodinos left government to work with Goldman Sachs JBWere, followed by the National Australia Bank and various corporate appointments.

In 2008, Ambassador Sinodinos was appointed an Officer of the Order of Australia for his service to politics through the executive function of government, to the development of economic policy and reform, and to the Greek community. In 2019, he was made a Distinguished Fellow of the Australia & New Zealand School of Government in recognition of his promotion of public sector leadership.

Ambassador Sinodinos lives in Washington with his wife Elizabeth, and their three children

© 2025 Council on Competitiveness
Please do not share or reproduce without the written consent of the Council on Competitiveness.

Dr. Stella M. Barber

Director of Communications, Principals Funds Management

Dr. Barber is an accomplished communicator, public presenter, and heritage expert with over 30 years' experience as a professional historian. Renowned for crafting compelling narratives across print, broadcast, exhibitions, and live events. Skilled in distilling complex historical and corporate material into engaging, accessible formats for diverse audiences.

She has a strong track record in media liaison, script development, and on-camera presenting. As a trusted communications advisor, she has worked with clients ranging from national broadcasters and major corporates to cultural institutions and not-for-profits.

Clients include: Heritage NSW, National Communications Museum, Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, Myer, ABC, Channel Nine, SBS/PBS, RMIT University, Essential Media, The Pratt Foundation, Queen Victoria Market, Burwood Cricket Club, and many more.

© 2025 Council on Competitiveness
Please do not share or reproduce without the written consent of the Council on Competitiveness.

High-Level Agenda

Monday, 21 July 2025 – MELBOURNE

Morning: Monash University Visit

- 7:15 AM – Delegation Gathering in the Grand Hyatt Melbourne Lobby for Bus Transfer to Monash University
  Please bring a valid passport to facilitate check-in at various events for the day
- 8:15 – 8:30 AM – Delegation Arrival and Greeting at Monash University, with Coffee and Light Refreshments
- 8:30 – 9:15 AM – Welcome Presentation: Intro to Monash and the Monash Technology Precinct
- 9:15 – 10:05 AM – Tour: Monash Innovation Labs (MIL)
- 10:05 – 11:30 AM – Discovery Session – Researcher Presentations Aligned with Council Priorities
- 11:30 AM – 12:10 PM – Networking and Refreshments

Afternoon: Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) Visit

- 12:10 PM – 12:30 PM – Campus Walk and Check-in to CSIRO Clayton Labs
- 12:30 – 1:00 PM – CSIRO Executive Welcome & Delegation Introduction
- 1:00 – 1:30 PM – CSIRO Research Overview: Topics — AI, quantum, critical minerals, energy storage, smart grid, space, and agriculture
- 1:30 – 2:00 PM – CSIRO Lab Tour & Wrap-up

Aikenhead Centre for Medical Discovery (ACMD) & Options Before Dinner

- 2:00 – 3:00 PM – Bus Transfer to Melbourne CBD & Aikenhead Centre for Medical Discovery
- 3:00 – 4:00 PM –ACMD Visit
- 4:00 – 4:15 PM – Transfer Back to Grand Hyatt
- 4:15 – 5:00 PM – Delegate Options: 1) Drinks at The Melbourne Club: 36 Collins Street, Melbourne (Business Formal Attire); or 2) Rest & Prepare for Dinner

Evening: Welcome Dinner at Eureka 89

- 5:00 – 5:15 PM – Individual Transportation via taxi or Uber to Eureka 89
- 5:15 – 6:00 PM – Optional Early Arrival at Eureka 89 at 5:15 PM: 1) Visit Melbourne Skydeck (Level 88); or 2) Skydeck Voyager Theatre Experience (6D), Ground Floor
- 6:00 – 8:00 PM – Council on Competitiveness Welcome Dinner, Hosted by The Hon. Deborah L. Wince-Smith, President and CEO, Council on Competitiveness
- 8:15 PM – Individual Transportation via taxi or Uber Back to Grand Hyatt and Other Hotels

© 2025 Council on Competitiveness
Please do not share or reproduce without the written consent of the Council on Competitiveness.

Tuesday, 22 July 2025 – MELBOURNE → CANBERRA

Morning: Travel to Canberra

- 8:00 AM – 12:00 PM – Individual Flights: Melbourne → Canberra
  Delegates are individually responsible for hotel-to-airport transportation.

Afternoon: Delegation Program in Canberra

- 1:30 PM – Delegation Gathering in Hyatt Hotel Canberra Lobby
  Please bring a valid passport to facilitate check-in at various events for the day
- 1:40 PM – Bus Transfer to Australian Academy of Technological Sciences and Engineering (ATSE) Headquarters
- 2:00 – 3:20 PM – Meeting with ATSE and Australian Council of Learned Academies
- 3:20 – 3:45 PM – Bus Transfer to Australian Parliament House (APH)
- 3:45 – 4:15 PM – Delegation Subset Meeting with The Hon. Andrew Hastie MP, Shadow Minister for Home Affairs and Security
  A subset of the Delegates has 30 minutes of free time during this meeting
- 4:15 – 4:30 PM – Full Delegation Bus Transfer to Meeting with Dr. Andrew Leigh MP, Assistant Minister for Productivity, Competition, Charities and Treasury
- 4:30 – 5:00 PM – Meeting with Dr. Andrew, Assistant Minister for Productivity, Competition, Charities, and Treasury

Evening: Refresh & Delegation Dinner

- 5:30 – 5:45 PM – Bus Transfer to the Hyatt Hotel Canberra to Refresh
- 5:45 – 6:00 PM – Immediately Rejoin the Delegation for a Bus Transfer to Dinner at The Boat House
- 6:00 – 9:00 PM – Delegation Dinner at The Boat House (Dinner Host: Mr. Charles Kiefel AM)
  Keynote: Senator the Hon Tim Ayres, Minister for Industry and Innovation and Minister for Science, Senator for New South Whales
- 9:00 PM – Return Bus Transfer to the Hyatt Hotel Canberra

Wednesday, 23 July 2025 – CANBERRA → SYDNEY

Early Morning: Strategic Breakfast Meeting

- 7:00 AM – Gather in the lobby for 7 AM departure via bus for 7:15 AM breakfast at the Commonwealth Club
  The bus will return to the Hyatt briefly after breakfast. Delegates must be checked out — or ready to check out — and ready to quickly load their luggage onto the bus by around 8:15 AM.
  Please bring a valid passport to facilitate check-in at various events for the day
- 7:15 – 8:15 AM – U.S.–Australia Strategic Innovation Alliance Breakfast Meeting at the Commonwealth Club (Breakfast Host: Mr. Charles Kiefel AM)
- 8:15 – 8:30 AM – Pick-Up at Commonwealth Club and Return Via Bus to Hyatt to Retrieve Luggage and Remaining Delegates (Including Spouse/Partner Luggage, if Applicable)
- 8:30 – 8:40 AM – Depart Hyatt Hotel for Delegate Drop-Offs

© 2025 Council on Competitiveness
Please do not share or reproduce without the written consent of the Council on Competitiveness.

Morning: Parallel Delegate Tracks

The Delegates will participate in one of two tracks throughout the morning:

Track 1: Resources and Energy Meetings

- 8:40 – 8:45 AM – Bus Drop-off Track 1 Delegates at the Clean Energy Regulator, Discovery House
- 9:15 – 10:00 AM – Meeting with Mr. David Parker AM, Chair & CEO, Clean Energy Regulator
- 10:00 – 11:00 AM – Bus Transfer to Parliament House for Ministerial Meeting
- 11:00 AM – 12:00 PM – Meeting with Hon Madeleine King MP, Minister for Resources, and Minister for Northern Australia

Track 2: University Leadership Forum

- 8:45 – 9:00 AM – Bus Drop-off: Track 2 Delegates at Australian Council of Learned Academies (ACOLA)
- 9:15 – 11:00 AM – University Leadership Forum with Australian University Associations, including: Universities Australia (UA), Group of Eight (Go8), Australian Technology Network of Universities (ATN), Innovative Research Universities (IRU), and Regional Universities Network (RUN)
- 11:00 AM – Track 2 Bus Pick-Up at ACOLA

Midday: Entire Delegation Reconvenes

- 12:00 – 12:45 PM – Bus Transfer to Mount Stromlo Observatory, Australian National University (ANU)
- 12:45 – 2:30 PM – Advanced Instrumentation and Technology Centre (AITC) Site Visit & Lunch Meeting
- *ANU will provide lunch for Delegates*

Afternoon and Evening: Transfer to Sydney

- 2:30 PM Onward – Delegation Transfer via Bus From ANU to the Canberra Airport for Flights to Sydney
  Delegates are responsible for airport-to-hotel transportation upon arrival in Sydney
- Evening is free, unplanned in Sydney

Thursday, 24 July 2025 – SYDNEY

Morning: Summit Gathering

- 7:30-8:00 AM – Delegates to arrive at 12-Micron around 8:00 AM for registration. **No bus availability.**
  Plan your transport accordingly: 12-Micron is either a 20-minute walk or a 5-10 minute Uber/taxi ride from the Sheraton Grand Sydney Hyde Park.
  Please bring a valid passport to facilitate check-in at various events for the day

© 2025 Council on Competitiveness
Please do not share or reproduce without the written consent of the Council on Competitiveness.

Day Program: Strategic Innovation Alliance Summit
Sponsored by Mr. Charles Kiefel AM

Venue: 12-Micron, Watermans Room (Level 2)
Address: International Tower 1, 100 Barangaroo Avenue, Barangaroo NSW 2000

- 8:00 AM – Registration, Networking, and Continental Breakfast
- 8:40 AM – Dialogue Programming and Sessions
- 12:00 PM – Lunch
- 12:50 PM – Dialogue Programming and Sessions
- 2:10 PM – Signing Ceremony and Release of: "A Compact for a Strategic U.S.-Australia Innovation Alliance"
- 2:30 PM – Dialogue Close

Evening
- Free / Unscheduled Time in Sydney

Friday, 25 July 2025 – SYDNEY

Morning: Western Sydney University Visit
- 9:30 AM – Delegation Gathering in the Lobby of Sheraton Grand Sydney Hyde Par for Bus Transfer to Western Sydney University – Parramatta South Campus
  Please bring a valid passport to facilitate check-in at various events for the day
- 9:30 – 10:30 AM – Transfer to Western Sydney University – Parramatta South Campus

Western Sydney University Engagement Program
- 10:45 – 10:50 AM – Welcome Remarks
- 10:50 – 11:50 AM – Presentation "Blasts" — Highlights of University Activities Aligned with Delegation Interests
- 11:50 AM – 12:30 PM – Campus Tour, Including a Visit to the Whitlam Institute
- 12:30 – 1:30 PM – Lunch Meeting with University Leadership
- 1:30 – 2:45 PM – Roundtable Discussion Between the Delegation and University Leadership
- 2:45 PM – Visit Conclusion and Departure

Afternoon: Return to Sydney CBD
- 2:45 – 3:45 PM – Delegation Transfer Back to Sheraton Grand Sydney Hyde Park
- Evening: Free / Unscheduled Time in Sydney

© 2025 Council on Competitiveness
Please do not share or reproduce without the written consent of the Council on Competitiveness.


Melbourne
July 21-22

Monday, 21 July 2025 – MELBOURNE

Attire for the day: Business
Important reminder: Please bring a valid passport to facilitate check-in at various events for the day.

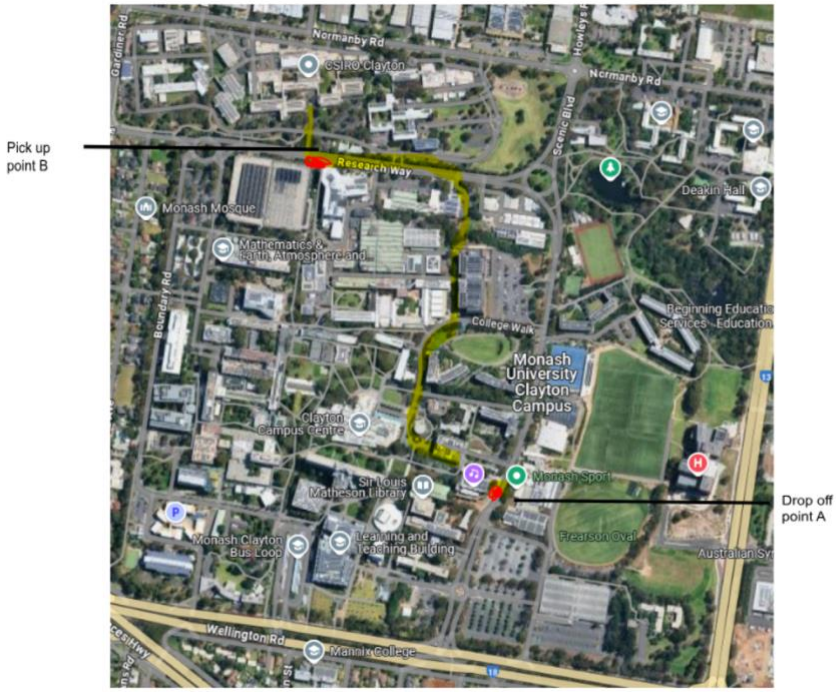
Morning: Meeting at Grand Hyatt, Then Monash University Visit

7:15 AM – Delegation Gathering in the Grand Hyatt Melbourne Lobby & Bus Transfer to Monash University

Hotel Address: Grand Hyatt Melbourne, 123 Collins Street
Hotel Phone: +61 3 9657 1234

8:15 AM – Delegation Arrival and Greeting at Monash University

Meeting Point at Monash: Robert Blackwood Hall Bus Bay
Address: 49 Scenic Boulevard, Clayton
Delegates will be met by Kellie Anderson and walk to the Chancellery Building.



Bus Drop off (Point A)
The delegation to be dropped off at the bus bay outside 49 Scenic Boulevard, Clayton, Monash University. Upon arrival, Kellie Anderson will meet the group and escort them to 27 Chancellors Walk, Chancellery Building.

Bus Pick up (Point B)
The bus can park in the bus layby at 20 Research Way, located at the entrance to CSIRO for pick up of the delegation.

Walk between Chancellery Building and CSIRO (Yellow line)
Starting near Chancellors Walk and Scenic Boulevard, head south-east along Scenic Boulevard, passing key campus landmarks such as the Robert Blackwood Hall and Matheson Library. Continue toward Research Way, where CSIRO is located at 20 Research Way, near the New Horizons building and Jock Marshall Reserve. *Should the weather be unsuitable, the bus will drive the delegation to CSIRO.*

© 2025 Council on Competitiveness
Please do not share or reproduce without the written consent of the Council on Competitiveness.

Monash University Introduction

8:15 – 8:55 AM – Coffee, Light Refreshments, and Welcome Presentation: Introduction to Monash University

Location: Alan Finkel Room, The Chancellery Building
Address: 27 Chancellors Walk
Host and Presenter:
Professor Melissa Miles

Academic Director, Research Culture, Office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Enterprise) and Senior Vice-President

Professor Melissa Miles is the Academic Director (Research Culture) at Monash University. In this role she works with the team in the Office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Enterprise) advancing Monash's research agenda and institutional excellence.

Melissa has developed an international reputation for research excellence, impact and leadership. She led the development of a new Framework for Responsible Research Culture at Monash. As Associate Dean, Research at Monash's Faculty of Art, Design and Architecture, she led a major program of strategic development and implementation that resulted in unprecedented growth for the faculty. This involved cultivating a thriving and diverse research ecology centered on excellence and social responsibility.

Her personal research focuses on the importance of visual culture in the public sphere and transnational relations, particularly in times of geopolitical crisis and transition. She is author of four books, editor of two scholarly collections, and has published a raft of articles in journals including Journal of Visual Culture and Law Culture and the Humanities. Melissa's research has been funded by an ARC Future Fellowship, Linkage grant, three ARC Discovery grants, and Australia Council funding amongst others.

8:55 – 9:15 AM – Presentation: Introduction to the Monash Technology Precinct

Presenter:

Mariella Smids
Director Precincts (External Engagement)

Mariella has 20 years of experience in building strategic partnerships and ecosystems that involve public and private sector stakeholders, nationally and internationally. She has led complex engagement projects for international organisations, governments and universities in the Netherlands, Brussels, Scotland and Melbourne.

She has been at Monash University for eight years, where she is responsible for the development of the Monash Technology Precinct, the largest employment and innovation hub in Victoria outside Melbourne's Central

© 2025 Council on Competitiveness
Please do not share or reproduce without the written consent of the Council on Competitiveness.

Business District, and advises other Monash campus ecosystems in Victoria. As part of her role Mariella has led the establishment of the Monash Precinct Network and sits on the Steering Committee of the Global Institute on Innovation District.

Mariella is a Board Director and Treasurer of Eastern Innovation, a business hub for innovative growth companies in Melbourne's South East, a Member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors and the International Association for Public Participation.

9:15 – 9:25 AM – Campus Walk to Monash Innovation Labs (MIL)

Delegates will exit the Alan Finkel Room via the colonnade doors and walk to Monash Innovation Labs (MIL) at location of 23 College Walk

Led by: Professor Adrian Neild, Deputy Dean (Enterprise); Director, MIL, Faculty of Engineering

Monash Innovation Labs (MIL) Tour

9:25 – 10:05 AM – Tour: Monash Innovation Labs (MIL)

Hosts:

Professor Adrian Neild
Deputy Dean Enterprise, Faculty of Engineering Director, Monash Innovation Labs

Professor Adrian Neild completed his PhD in air-coupled ultrasound at the University of Warwick, UK. Subsequently, he was a Postdoc at the Centre for Mechanics, ETH Zurich, Switzerland, where he worked on ultrasonic actuation of microfluidics.

Adrian is a Professor in the Department of Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering at Monash University, and conducts research in non-linear ultrasound including acoustic radiation forces and acoustic streaming, microfluidic systems, sample handling techniques, optical indoor positioning, scientific instrumentation.

Mr. Shankar Cumarasamy
Director, Business Development & Partnerships, Faculty of Engineering Commercial Lead, MIL

Shankar Cumarasamy works with industry, government and Monash researchers, to develop major cross disciplinary collaborative programs and consortia, delivering economic and societal benefits. Shankar is a graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors, holds degrees in technology and science and has extensive experience bringing together industry, government and academia. Over the past 20 years, he has delivered a number of successful R&D, business improvement, NPD, regulatory and IP development programs in Australia & New Zealand.

© 2025 Council on Competitiveness
Please do not share or reproduce without the written consent of the Council on Competitiveness.

10:05 – 10:15 AM – Campus Walk: Return to Chancellery Building

Delegates will enter the Alan Finkel Room via the colonnade doors.

Monash Discovery Session - Researcher Presentations Aligned with Council Priorities

Delegates re-enter the Alan Finkel Room via the colonnade doors. All seven brief presentations will be held in the Alan Finkel Room, The Chancellery Building.
Led by: Professor Melissa Miles

10:20 – 10:30 AM – Presentation 1 From:

Professor Matt Hill
Head of Department, Department of Materials Science and Engineering

Professor Matthew Hill is a leading Australian materials scientist and chemical engineer, jointly appointed at Monash University and CSIRO. He is internationally recognized for his pioneering work on metal-organic frameworks (MOFs), the world's most porous materials used in applications ranging from clean energy and carbon capture to advanced separations and storage technologies.

He currently serves as Director of the Monash Centre for Membrane Innovation (MCMI) and is an Australian Research Council Future Fellow. His research continues to bridge academia and industry, translating laboratory breakthroughs into scalable, real-world technologies

10:30 – 10:40 AM – Presentation 2 From:

Professor Chris Hutchinson
Alcoa Distinguished Professor, Materials Science and Engineering; Co-chair Woodside FutureLab at Monash

Professor Christopher Hutchinson is the Alcoa Distinguished Professor in the Department of Materials Science and Engineering at Monash University, Melbourne. He is internationally recognized for his expertise in physical and mechanical metallurgy, with a research focus on engineering alloys such as steels, aluminium, copper, titanium, and magnesium.

His work combines advanced experimentation including electron microscopy, synchrotron X-ray radiation, and neutron diffraction with theoretical and computational modelling to understand and improve alloy performance. He has led innovations in ultra-high strength steels, fatigue-resistant aluminium alloys, and 3D metal printing, with applications across automotive, aerospace, rail, and manufacturing industries

© 2025 Council on Competitiveness
Please do not share or reproduce without the written consent of the Council on Competitiveness.

10:40 – 10:50 AM – Presentation 3 From:

Professor Shonali Krishnaswamy
Associate Dean (Innovation);
Director of Monash AI Institute, Faculty of IT

Professor Shonali Krishnaswamy is the Associate Dean (Innovation) in the Faculty of Information Technology and the Director of the Monash AI Institute at Monash University. With over two decades of experience spanning academia, industry, and research leadership across Australia and Singapore, she is a distinguished expert in artificial intelligence, intelligent systems, and data science. She leads strategic initiatives to foster entrepreneurship, drive research commercialization, and empower the next generation of technology leaders.

Her academic journey includes serving as Director of the Centre for Distributed Systems and Software Engineering at Monash University and contributing to numerous interdisciplinary research projects focused on context-aware systems, mobile decision support, and scalable data analytics. She holds a Ph.D. in Computer Science from Monash University and has published extensively in top-tier journals and conferences.

10:50 – 11:00 AM – Presentation 4 From:

Professor Michael Fuhrer
Professor, School of Physics and Astronomy;
Co-founder, Monash Centre for Atomically Thin Materials;
Director, ARC Centre of Excellence in Future Low-Energy Electronics Technologies

Professor Michael Fuhrer is an internationally renowned physicist and ARC Laureate Fellow in the School of Physics and Astronomy at Monash University. He is the Director of the ARC Centre of Excellence in Future Low-Energy Electronics Technologies (FLEET) and co-founder of the Monash Centre for Atomically Thin Materials.

His research focuses on atomically-thin materials such as graphene, topological insulators, and 2D semiconductors, exploring their electronic and optical properties to develop ultra-low energy electronics. Fuhrer has made pioneering contributions to understanding the conductivity of graphene, developing MoS_2 transistors, and characterizing topological materials.

© 2025 Council on Competitiveness
Please do not share or reproduce without the written consent of the Council on Competitiveness.

11:00 – 11:10 AM – Presentation 5 From:

Professor Alexandr Simonov
Associate Professor, School of Chemistry, Faculty of Science; Co-founder of Jupiter Ionics

Professor Alexandr (Sasha) Simonov is an Associate Professor in the School of Chemistry at Monash University. He is a leading researcher in electrochemistry, catalysis, and chemical kinetics, with a strong focus on sustainable energy technologies. His work contributes directly to several UN Sustainable Development Goals, particularly those related to clean energy and climate action1.

Dr. Simonov co-founded Jupiter Ionics in 2021 alongside Professor Douglas MacFarlane to commercialise their breakthrough technology for producing green ammonia, a carbon-neutral alternative to traditional ammonia synthesis. Their patented electrolytic cell, known as the MacFarlane Simonov Ammonia Cell, uses renewable energy to convert nitrogen from the air and hydrogen from water into ammonia with exceptional selectivity and efficiency.

His research spans electrochemical water splitting, ammonia synthesis, and the development of stable electrodes for perovskite solar cells. He is actively involved in multiple collaborative projects aimed at advancing green hydrogen and ammonia technologies for scalable and affordable clean energy solutions.

11:10 – 11:20 AM – Presentation 6 From:

Professor James Whisstock
Deputy Dean Research, Faculty of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences

Professor James Whisstock performed his PhD in bioinformatics and structural biology at the University of Cambridge. In 1997 James moved to Australia and established his group at Monash University.

James took up the role of Deputy Dean Research in the Faculty of Medicine Nursing and Health Sciences in January 2022. In 2024 he was named a Fellow of the Australian Academy of Health and Medical Sciences. His previous appointments include an ARC Federation Fellowship, ARC Laureate Fellowship together with an Honorary NHMRC Senior Principal Research Fellowship and Scientific Head of the Australian EMBL partnership (2017-2024). James was awarded the 2006 Science Ministers prize, the 2008 Health ministers prize and the 2010 Gottschalk medal.

James' research focuses on decoding the atomic structures of complex protein molecules with a particular interest in membrane attack complex/perforin-like proteins, which play a critical role in immunity and developmental biology. His team further investigates the proteases and their inhibitors that control blood coagulation and wound remodeling. Over the course of his career at Monash, James has contributed to the development of several key Monash technology platforms, including protein production, eResearch and X-ray crystallography. Most recently he led the establishment of the Monash Ramaciotti Cryo-Electron Microscopy platform.

© 2025 Council on Competitiveness
Please do not share or reproduce without the written consent of the Council on Competitiveness.

11:20 – 11:30 AM – Presentation 7 From:

Lt. Gen. Larry James, (USAF Ret'd)
Professor of Practice, Space Innovation, Monash University Strategic Advisor for SmartSat Cooperative Research Centre

Larry D. James was appointed as Strategic Advisor for SmartSat Cooperative Research Centre in Adelaide Australia and Professor of Practice in Space Innovation at Monash University in Melbourne Australia in June 2024. In the SmartSat role he provides advocacy, technical advice and support for SmartSat's R&D, innovation and educational activities. At Monash he makes significant international leadership contributions and fosters excellence in the teaching, research, industry engagement and professional activities of aerospace and related fields.

Prior to his work in Australia, he was the Deputy Director of the Jet Propulsion Laboratory from 2013 to 2024. There he oversaw the day-to-day management of JPL's resources and activities. This included managing the Laboratory's solar system exploration, Mars, astronomy, physics, Earth science, interplanetary network programs, and all business operations. These activities employed 6500 scientists, engineers, technicians, and business support personnel, generating $2.7 billion in annual revenues.

Prior to his retirement from the Air Force Lt. Gen. James was the Air Force Deputy Chief of Staff for Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance at the Pentagon. He was responsible to the Secretary and Chief of Staff of the Air Force for policy formulation, planning, evaluation, oversight, and leadership of Air Force intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance capabilities.

Lt. Gen. James received his Bachelor of Science in Astronautical Engineering (1978) from the US Air Force Academy (Distinguished Graduate) and his Master of Science in Aeronautics and Astronautics (1983) from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge MA. He was also a Draper Fellow at the Charles Stark Draper Laboratory in Cambridge MA. He is also a Fellow of the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics.

James' 35 year military career included assignments as a Space Shuttle Payload Specialist, GPS Program Manager, Titan IV Launch Director and Commander of the 50th Space Wing at Schriever AFB, CO. James has also served on the staffs of US Space Command, Air Force Space Command, and HQ Air Force. He was commander of the 14th Air Force at Vandenberg AFB, responsible for all military satellite, launch and C2 operations, and was Director, Signals Intelligence Systems Acquisition and Operations Directorate, National Reconnaissance Office, Washington, D.C. He was the Director, Space Forces for Operation Iraqi Freedom at the Combined Air Operations Center, Prince Sultan Air Base, Saudi Arabia.

11:30 AM – 12:10 PM – Networking and Refreshments

Location: Atrium, The Chancellery Building
Host: Professor Melissa Miles

© 2025 Council on Competitiveness
Please do not share or reproduce without the written consent of the Council on Competitiveness.

12:10 PM – Campus Walk and Transfer to CSIRO Clayton (Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation – Australia's national science agency)

Delegates will walk from Monash University across the street to the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) Clayton Lab for the next site visit.

Led by: Mr. Tony Tucker, Partnerships & Business Development, CSIRO | Tony.Tucker@csiro.au
Afternoon: Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) Visit

12:20 AM – 12:30 PM – Check-in at CSIRO Clayton Labs

Location: CSIRO Clayton West, GK Williams Meeting Room

About Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization (CSIRO)
As Australia's national science agency, CSIRO is solving the greatest challenges through innovative science and technology to improve the lives of people everywhere. We work with industry, government and the research community to turn science into solutions that address Australia's greatest challenges, including food security and quality; sustainable energy and resources; health and wellbeing; resilient and valuable environments; future industries; and a secure Australia and region.

The Science and Industry Research Act 1949 defines our purpose and the functions we undertake for the benefit of Australia:

- To carry out scientific research for any of the following purposes:
  - Assisting Australian industry;
  - Furthering the interests of the Australian community;
  - Contributing to the achievement of Australian national objectives or the performance of the national and international responsibilities of the Commonwealth; and
  - Any other purpose determined by the Minister;
- To encourage or facilitate the application or utilisation of the results of such research.

Our secondary functions include international scientific liaison, training of research workers, publication of research results, technology transfer of other research, provision of scientific services and dissemination of information about science and technology.

© 2025 Council on Competitiveness
Please do not share or reproduce without the written consent of the Council on Competitiveness.

12:30 – 2:00 PM – CSIRO Executive Welcome & Delegation Introduction

12:30 - *Welcome and acknowledgements (Jim Henderson)*

12:31 - *Executive remarks (Doug Hilton)*

12:35 - *Delegation remarks (Deborah Wince-Smith)*

12:40 - *Presentations: CSIRO Research level overview in key areas emphasizing areas of interest in US federal government:*

- **Critical Minerals** (Dr. Mark Dorreen)
- **Energy Storage** (Dr. Adam Best)
- **Grid** (Dr. John Ward)
- **AI** (Dr. Gary Delaney)
- **Quantum** (Prof. Chris Vale)

13:20 - *Facilitated round table discussion on collaboration models to further science - how can the group work together? (Jim Henderson)*

13:50 - *Conclusion and wrap up comments (Jim Henderson)*

14:00 - *Delegation departs and escorted to coach (Tony Tucker)*

Host:

Dr. Doug Hilton
Chief Executive, CSIRO Clayton Labs

Dr. Doug Hilton AO commenced as CSIRO Chief Executive on September 29, 2023.

Dr Hilton is a molecular and cellular biologist and previously Director of the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute of Medical Research (WEHI). At WEHI, his medical research focussed on understanding how blood cells communicate and using this knowledge to improve disease treatments. He and his team held more than 20 patents and translated their research through collaboration with venture capitalists and the biopharmaceutical industry. Through an honorary appointment in the Zoology Department at University of Melbourne, he also studies a family of tiny day-flying moths involved in the pollination of Australian plants.

Beyond research, Dr Hilton has emphasized the importance of strong institutional cultures, and furthered diversity in science including as a member of the Champion of Change Coalition and a board member of Australians Investing in Women.

© 2025 Council on Competitiveness
Please do not share or reproduce without the written consent of the Council on Competitiveness.

Attending Directorate and Senior Researcher Biographies:

Dr. Dietmar Tourbier Director,
CSIRO Energy Business Unit

Dr. Tourbier is the Director of the Energy Business Unit at the CSIRO. He is leading a multidisciplinary team of scientists, engineers, economists and business professionals in solving current and future energy challenges to enable the transition to lower emissions energy future.

Prior to this role Dr Tourbier was the Director of the Australian Solar Thermal Research Institute (ASTRI) providing the vision, direction and strategic oversight for the delivery, adoption and impact of the ASTRI objectives. ASTRI is a 11-year, $110 million international research collaboration to deliver cost reductions and dispatchability improvements, as well as position Australia in concentrating solar thermal (CST) power.

Prior to joining CSIRO, Dr Tourbier worked at General Electric (GE) for over 20 years and held various leading positions in corporate research including the leadership roles of GE's solid oxide fuel cell (SOFC) division in California, the global power electronics technology research group and, most recently, GE's European research division.

Dr. Marcus Zipper
Director, CSIRO Manufacturing Business Unit

For the last 20+ years, Dr Zipper has had senior leadership, commercial, business development and marketing roles primarily in scientific research organisations, including over 15 years in CSIRO. This includes previous roles in four CSIRO research divisions / business units, two Cooperative Research Centres, the polymer industry and a professional services firm.

Currently Dr Zipper is Director CSIRO Manufacturing Business Unit. Prior to that he has held a number of different roles in CSIRO including the Director for the CSIRO Services Business Unit for five years. He has experience in business management, research management, science leadership, research portfolio management, strategic capability planning, business development and commercialisation experience in research organisations. Dr. Zipper also has experience in a range of research areas and sectors including chemicals, materials, mining and minerals processing, polymers / composites, metal production, manufacturing, service industries, packaging, aerospace and automotive.

© 2025 Council on Competitiveness
Please do not share or reproduce without the written consent of the Council on Competitiveness.

Dr. Kathie McGregor
Research Director, CSIRO Manufacturing Business Unit

Kathie has more than 20 years' experience as a research leader at CSIRO, Australia's national science agency. Her expertise in electrochemistry and high temperature chemistry has been applied in battery technology, light metal production, alloy design and sensor development, and she has led numerous R&D projects with Australian and international companies.

Kathie is the Research Director for the Advanced Materials and Processing Program in CSIRO Manufacturing, and a member of the Manufacturing Business Unit Leadership Team. She is responsible for capability management, staff development, technical outcomes, strategy development and commercial outcomes. The Program works with industry partners to develop novel materials with designed properties and new processes for scale to manufacture. Key areas of research include metal powder production, metal additive manufacturing, metal processing, metal organic frameworks, porous materials, organic membranes, continuous chemical processing, flow chemistry, catalysis, hybrid and composite materials, advanced high-performance polymers and digitally enabled manufacturing.

Previously Kathie was the Leader of CSIRO's Active Integrated Matter Future Science Platform, a technology platform that combined materials, robotics, processing, sensing technologies, and autonomous science to lead ground-breaking advances at the interface of big data, advanced autonomous systems, and materials science.

Mr. Jim Henderson
Director, Partnerships and Business Development

As Director of CSIRO's Partnerships and Business Development group, Jim leads teams of experienced business development and commercialisation professionals who work alongside CSIRO researchers to help drive impact. CSIRO seeks to partner and collaborate with organisations across government, industry, and research, in both Australia and around the world to ultimately provide insights, solutions, technologies, and innovations that address Australia's most pressing challenges.

Jim has a long association with technology development and commercialisation, established in roles including at the University of California, San Francisco, where he led deals to partner the Nobel Prize winning Capsaicin receptor research of Professor David Julius.

As COO of UNSW Innovations in Sydney, Jim led the commercialisation team and worked closely with UNSW's renowned School of Photovoltaic and Renewable Energy, a world leader in developing industry relevant Silicon PV solutions for partners such as LG, Longi and Jinko. Separate from PV, Jim led UNSW's most complex technology commercialisation deals, including structuring and closing a major joint venture with an international partner.

Along the way, Jim has supported start-ups at the strategic and operational level, including start-up CEO, Advisor, and Non-Executive Director positions with international and domestic companies.

© 2025 Council on Competitiveness
Please do not share or reproduce without the written consent of the Council on Competitiveness.

Dr. Mark Dorreen
Group Leader – Process Innovations, Mineral Resources Business Unit

Dr. Dorreen is a Chemical and Materials Engineer with a background spanning academia, research & development, consulting and technology commercialisation over 25 years, with experience in electric arc furnace steelmaking and a particular focus on primary aluminium smelting and the decarbonising of heavy industry.

Prior to joining CSIRO in 2022, Dr. Dorreen was the founding CEO of EnPot Limited, a start-up commercialising a patented technology developed at the University of Auckland that was designed to transform aluminium smelters from being fixed to variable energy consumers. He led EnPot through its formation and initial capital raise and the first commercial scale implementation of the technology at a German aluminium smelter.

Before EnPot, Dr. Dorreen was the Director of the Light Metals Research Centre at the University of Auckland. LMRC was a world leading centre in the primary aluminium production field, carrying out fundamental research, technology development, specialty materials analysis, and customised industrial and post-graduate level training courses. His particular expertise is in the areas of anode rodding room operations, and electrolytic anode effect emissions.

At CSIRO he has six teams under his watch: Electrolysis, Electrochemical Sensor Development, Leaching Fundamentals, Energy Efficient Electrical Connections, CFD, and Suspensions & Tailings. Their work is focussed on improving the efficiency of industrial mineral processing operations to support the wider decarbonisation and energy transition goals.

Dr. Adam Best
Principal Research Scientist – Battery Materials and Design, Manufacturing Business Unit

Dr. Best is a Principal Research Scientist at CSIRO, with a focus on advancing Australia's battery industry through innovative research in electrochemical energy storage and materials development. At CSIRO, Dr. Best leads research programs aimed at developing advanced materials for batteries, particularly lithium-ion and lithium-sulphur technologies. His work emphasizes the importance of creating novel electrolytes and materials that enhance battery performance and sustainability. Dr. Best has played a key role in initiatives aiming to position Australia as a prominent player in the global battery supply chain, leveraging Australia’s rich supply of mineral resources.

Dr. Best’s research primarily revolves around lithium metal batteries and the development of electrolytes that enable high-energy storage solutions. Recently, he has been involved in projects that focus on graphite as a critical mineral for battery production, advocating for its sustainable extraction and processing to meet growing global demands. Dr. Best has a notable academic background, holding a PhD from Monash University and completing leadership programs at Harvard Business School. He co-founded the Australian Battery Society and has been an important figure in various industry conferences, championing collaboration between academia and industry to foster innovation in battery technologies.

© 2025 Council on Competitiveness
Please do not share or reproduce without the written consent of the Council on Competitiveness.

Dr. John Ward
Research Director – Energy Systems, Energy Business Unit

Dr. Ward is Research Director of the Energy Systems Research Program at the CSIRO and is responsible for driving the program's science direction and ensuring the program is developing a suite of science capability to meet future industry needs. His research is particularly focused on adding intelligence to the interaction of energy systems within the electricity distribution network.

Leading the Energy Systems (GEES) Research Program, Dr. Ward is delivering of a research portfolio, with over 50 staff over multiple sites, tackling Australia's national energy challenges – including through fundamental research into building thermal physics, behavioural science, electricity network optimization, solar forecasting and energy storage.

Dr. Ward has a history of delivering innovation from basic research through to commercialization. Recent research by Dr Ward on optimized grid integration and thermal management of energy storage has been the foundation for start-up Evergen. His research on optimised building control systems was commercialised by BuildingIQ and has achieved widespread international uptake, including deployment in the iconic Rockefeller Center. BuildingIQ listed on the ASX in 2015 with an indicative market capitalization of $85M.

As lead engineer and project manager for the Hornsby Library TrigenAir development, Dr. Ward delivered Australia's first desiccant-based cogeneration system. This provided building heating and cooling utilising waste heat from a micro turbine generator whilst minimising greenhouse gas emissions and reducing the site electricity load during times of peak electricity demand. This foundation level research now underpins CSIRO desiccant solar cooling technology.

Dr. Gary Delaney
Research Group Leader – Analytics and Decision Sciences, CSIRO's Data61

Dr Gary Delaney is the Research Director for Data61's Analytics and Decision Sciences program at the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) in Melbourne. He graduated from Trinity College Dublin with a PhD in Computational Physics in 2006. He then completed a postdoc at ANU's Applied Mathematics Department before joining CSIRO in 2008.

Gary's primary research interests are in computational modelling and structural characterization of granular systems, and applications of Machine Learning in understanding and optimizing natural and industrial processes. His work focusses on the intersection between data-driven and computational modelling, considering both the advancement of core science through leadership in the development and implementation of algorithmic techniques and the application of these technologies to problems of scientific and industrial importance.

© 2025 Council on Competitiveness
Please do not share or reproduce without the written consent of the Council on Competitiveness.

Prof. Chris Vale
Director of Quantum Technologies Future Science Platform – Manufacturing Business Unit

Chris Vale is Professor of Physics and Director of the Quantum Technologies Future Science Platform at CSIRO. Prior to joining CSIRO he led an experimental research program at Swinburne University of Technology using gases of atoms cooled to nanoKelvin temperatures to study properties and dynamics of many-body quantum systems. Prof Vale has been a Chief Investigator in two ARC Centres of Excellence in Future Low-Energy Electronics Technologies (FLEET) and Quantum Atom Optics (ACQAO), has held an ARC Future Fellowship and several ARC Discovery and Linkage Infrastructure and Equipment projects. He undertook postdoctoral fellowships at the University of Queensland, the University of Sussex and Imperial College (UK) studying Bose-Einstein condensates on atom chips and their potential for quantum sensing. He has been actively engaged in the promotion of physics and quantum science through FLEET, the Australian Institute of Physics, conference organisation and public outreach.

1:00 – 1:30 PM – CSIRO Research Overview

Topics: AI, quantum, critical minerals, energy storage, smart grid, space, and agriculture

1:30 – 2:00 PM – CSIRO Lab Tour & Wrap-up

Bus Pick-up Location: 20 Research Way, Clayton 3800

Late Afternoon: Aikenhead Centre for Medical Discovery (ACMD) & Options Before Dinner

2:00 – 3:00 PM – Transfer to Melbourne CBD & Aikenhead Centre for Medical Discovery (ACMD)

Location: Corner of Victoria Street and Nicholson Street, Fitzroy

© 2025 Council on Competitiveness
Please do not share or reproduce without the written consent of the Council on Competitiveness.

3:00 – 4:00 PM – Aikenhead Centre for Medical Discovery (ACMD) Visit

About the Aikenhead Centre for Medical Discovery (ACMD)

The Aikenhead Centre for Medical Discovery (ACMD) is Australia's first hospital-based biomedical engineering research and innovation hub. Situated within the St Vincent's Hospital precinct in Melbourne, the centre brings together clinicians, engineers, researchers, and industry partners to accelerate the development of transformative medical technologies.

Housed in a purpose-built, 11-storey facility with over 16,000 square metres of research and collaboration space, the ACMD is designed for seamless integration between clinical practice and technological innovation. Backed by a A$206 million investment—including support from the Victorian Government, philanthropic donors, and institutional partners—the centre serves as a model for how cross-sector partnerships can reshape healthcare delivery.

What sets the ACMD apart is its physical and functional connection to a working hospital. Clinicians and scientists collaborate daily, ensuring that innovation is directly informed by real-world medical challenges. The facility includes advanced laboratories for robotics, 3D printing, human kinetics, clinical simulation, and prototyping, along with cleanrooms and specialized spaces for vision, hearing, and neurological research. A central atrium links workspaces, lecture theatres, and shared learning zones, fostering a vibrant, collaborative environment.

The ACMD supports a structured innovation pipeline that guides projects from problem identification through to validation and commercialization. Its programs focus on critical areas such as epilepsy, osteoarthritis, implantable devices, AI-driven diagnostics, and regenerative medicine. Researchers work closely with clinicians and entrepreneurs to translate ideas into medical solutions that improve patient outcomes.

The centre is a collaborative venture between leading institutions including the University of Melbourne, RMIT, Swinburne University of Technology, Australian Catholic University, University of Wollongong, St Vincent's Institute, the Bionics Institute, and the Centre for Eye Research Australia. Together, they form a robust ecosystem that supports education, workforce development, and global leadership in medtech innovation.

© 2025 Council on Competitiveness
Please do not share or reproduce without the written consent of the Council on Competitiveness.

Hosts:

Ms. Brenda Shanahan AO
Chair, ACMD

Brenda Shanahan's exceptional contributions are wide and varied. She has taken an active role in medical research in Australia, with roles (among others) at St Vincent's Health, St Vincent's Institute of Medical Research and the Aikenhead Centre for Medical Discovery (ACMD). Ms. Shanahan is the current Board Chair of the ACMD and is a former member of the Australian Stock Exchange and a Chair and non-executive director of listed and unlisted companies and philanthropic groups. In January 2021, Ms Shanahan was awarded an Officer of the Order of Australia for distinguished service to medical health research, to the business and finance sectors, to corporate governance, and to philanthropy. A donation by the Shanahan Charitable Foundation in 2021 enabled the establishment of the fully endowed Chair (Shanahan Chair in Frontier Medical Solutions) by Melbourne University embedded in the ACMD.

Mr. Jeff Malone
Chief Executive Officer, ACMD

Across a 30-year career, Jeff has started and operated engineering, research, and manufacturing centres in Mexico, Venezuela, Thailand, China and Indonesia for major multinationals before coming to Australia in 2009. Previously, Jeff led the largest medical device contract manufacturer in the country, managing dozens of new medical devices into prototype and scale manufacture. His subsequent roles include Chief Operating Officer with Grey Innovation leading technical medtech design and development teams, and Chief Operating Officer of D+I supporting collaboration efforts with Australian and international medtech research programs. Most recently Jeff served as the CEO of Victoria's health tech peak body BioMelbourne Network, working with researchers, industry and government bodies across pharma, biopharma, medtech and digital health sectors. Jeff holds a B.S. in Electrical Engineering, is a graduate of the AICD, a six-sigma yellow belt and lean champion.

4:00 – 4:15 PM – Bus Transfer Back to Grand Hyatt

4:15 – 5:00 PM – Two Delegate Options

- **Option 1** – Drinks at The Melbourne Club (Host: Mr. Charles Kiefel AM):
  Location: 36 Collins Street, Melbourne (Attire: Business formal; ties required for men, black dress shoes; no sneakers)

- **Option 2** – Rest & Prepare for Dinner

© 2025 Council on Competitiveness
Please do not share or reproduce without the written consent of the Council on Competitiveness.

Evening: Council on Competitiveness Welcome Dinner at Eureka 89

5:00 – 5:15 PM – Delegation Individual Transfers via Taxi or Uber to Eureka 89

Location: 7 Riverside Quay, Southbank, Victoria 3006
Website: eureka89.com.au

*5:15 – 6:00 PM – Optional Early Arrival at Eureka 89 at 5:15 PM**:*

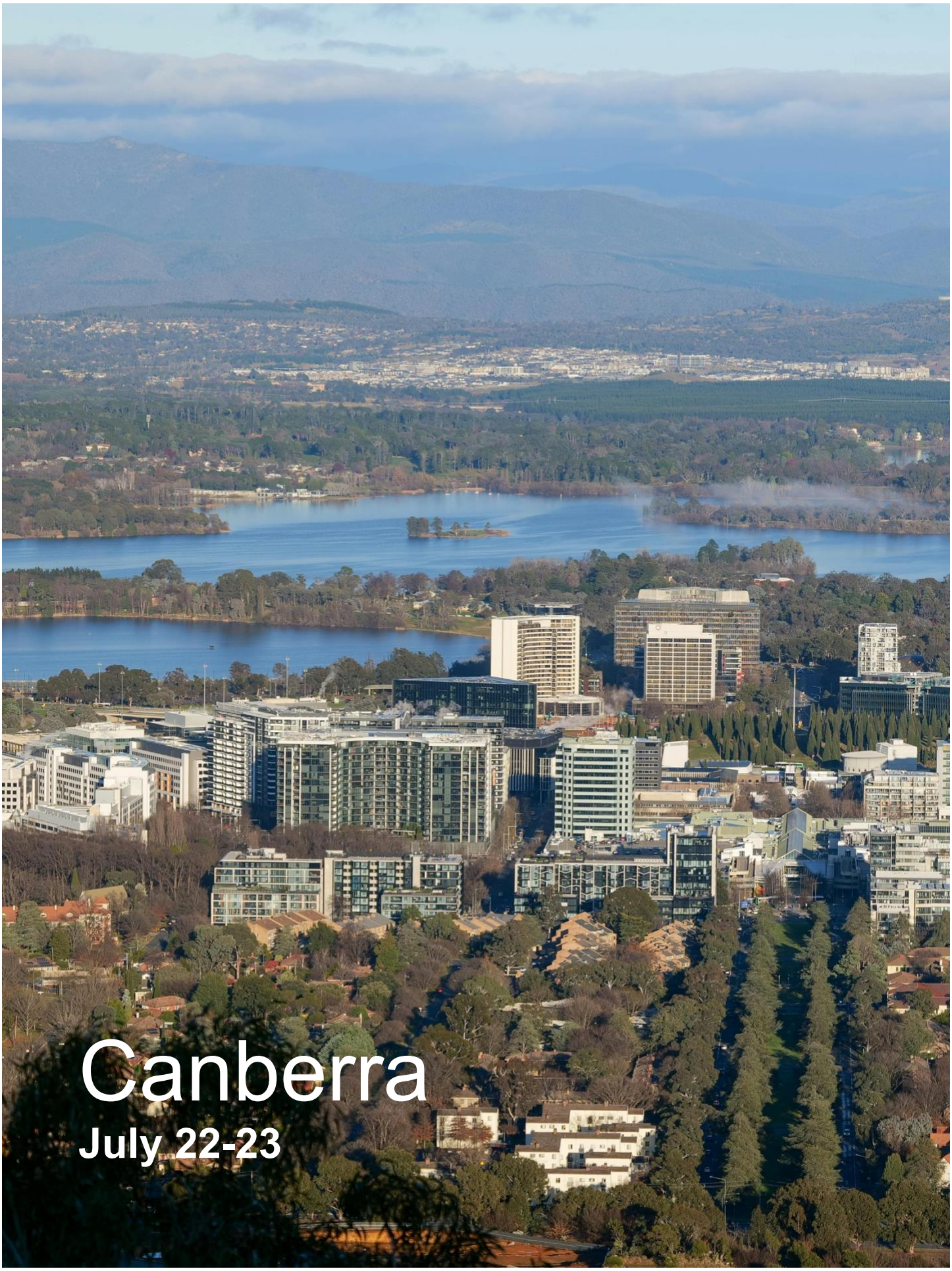
1. Visit Melbourne Skydeck (Level 88)
2. Skydeck Voyager Theatre Experience (6D), Ground Floor

** You must indicate to staff at the Melbourne Skydeck or Voyager Theater that you are with the 6 pm reservation for the Council on Competitiveness made under Charles (Chad) Evans.*

6:00 – 8:00 PM – Council on Competitiveness Welcome Dinner, Hosted by The Hon. Deborah L. Wince-Smith, President and CEO, Council on Competitiveness

Individuals responsible for pre-dinner beverages; wine will be provided with dinner

© 2025 Council on Competitiveness
Please do not share or reproduce without the written consent of the Council on Competitiveness.


Canberra
July 22-23

Tuesday, 22 July 2025 – MELBOURNE → CANBERRA

Attire for the day: Business
Important reminder: Please bring a valid passport to facilitate check-in at various events for the day.

Morning: Travel to Canberra

8:00 AM – 12:00 PM – Individual Flights: Melbourne → Canberra

Transport To-and-From the Airport: Delegates are individually responsible for hotel-to-airport transportation. Small group taxis may be coordinated in real time.

Afternoon: Delegation Program in Canberra

1:30 PM – Delegation Gathering in the Hyatt Hotel Canberra Lobby

Hotel Address: 120 Commonwealth Avenue, Yarralumla ACT 2600
Hotel Phone: +61 2 6270 1234

1:40 PM – Bus Transfer to Australian Academy of Technological Sciences and Engineering (ATSE) HQ

ATSE Address: 81 Franklin Street, Forrest 2603
Location: ATSE Office – Level 2, 28 National Circuit, Forrest, Canberra

2:00 – 3:20 PM – Meeting with ATSE AND Australian Council of Learned Academies (ACOLA)

2:00 pm *Arrival*

2:10 pm *Welcome and Introductions*

- **Ms. Prerana Mehta,** CEO, ACOLA to provide welcome and acknowledgement of Country
- Brief introduction on ACOLA and why we are here

Ms. Mehta to Introduce Representative From United States

2:20 pm *U.S. Council of Competitiveness: State of Play Briefing*

Presentation by Council representative:

- About the U.S. Council on Competitiveness – purpose, mission
- Strategic drivers behind US innovation policy
- Key themes from the "Competing in the Next Economy" report
- Emerging opportunities for international partnerships

2:50 pm *Open Discussion*

3:20 pm *Ms. Kylie Walker, CEO, ATSE, to provide closing remarks*

3:25 pm *Group photo*

© 2025 Council on Competitiveness
Please do not share or reproduce without the written consent of the Council on Competitiveness.

About the Australian Council of Learned Academies (ACOLA)

The Australian Council of Learned Academies (ACOLA) is Australia's leading forum for interdisciplinary collaboration and evidence-based policy advice. It brings together the collective expertise of the nation's five Learned Academies: the Australian Academy of Science, the Academy of the Humanities, the Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia, the Australian Academy of Technological Sciences and Engineering, and the Australian Academy of Health and Medical Sciences.

ACOLA provides independent, expert analysis on complex national challenges that require insight from across disciplines. It commissions and delivers in-depth research reports that inform government policy and public understanding on issues such as artificial intelligence, energy transition, synthetic biology, precision medicine, the future of education, and ethical frameworks for emerging technologies. ACOLA also facilitates national foresight studies, including the Horizon Scanning series and the Energy Transition Research Plan.

As an organization, ACOLA promotes values of integrity, rigor, transparency, inclusiveness, collaboration, and creativity. It convenes interdisciplinary working groups and engages with policymakers, industry leaders, and civil society to ensure its advice is both trusted and actionable. During the COVID-19 pandemic, ACOLA played a pivotal role in mobilizing research advice through the Rapid Research Information Forum, enabling swift, expert responses to urgent questions facing the nation.

ACOLA is also committed to embedding Indigenous perspectives and knowledge into its work. It maintains partnerships with First Nations institutions and supports research practices that reflect the importance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges in shaping Australia's future.

With its broad base of over 3,000 Fellows from across the five academies, ACOLA serves as a unique national asset. It stands at the intersection of science, technology, health, humanities, and social sciences—equipping Australia to navigate complexity, seize opportunities, and respond to global and

Host:

Ms. Prerana Mehta
CEO, ACOLA

Prerana Mehta is CEO of the Australian Council of Learned Academies (ACOLA) and brings a depth of global experience in partnerships, collaborating with research institutions, government, not-for-profit and private sector focused on technology in critical and emerging growth sectors. She is a natural leader, communicator and networker with a comprehensive understanding of the power of public private partnerships to transform policy and resolve barriers to growth.

Prerana was Director of Strategic Partnerships Australia's National Science Agency, CSIRO until August 2024. As Division Head, she led the Global, National and State Priorities branches, with a mandate to grow strategic science partnerships through mutually beneficial research models to solve complex challenges. During that time she forged multiple year programs with Governments and leading research institutions in the USA, South East Asia, India and the Pacific aligned to Australian and regional policy priorities.

© 2025 Council on Competitiveness
Please do not share or reproduce without the written consent of the Council on Competitiveness.

Previously Deputy CEO and Chief of Ecosystem Development at AustCyber, Australia's Cyber Security Growth Network, Prerana supported the development of a vibrant and globally competitive cyber security sector. Prior to this role, Prerdana was Minister Counsellor, Senior Trade and Investment Commissioner in Singapore, leading Austrade's operations in promoting trade and investment opportunities from Australia to the ASEAN region.

Prerana is on the Board of SisterWorks, a Victoria based NGO that enables migrant, refugee and asylum seeker women gain independence and learn new social and vocational skills to improve their economic outlook. She stepped in as interim CEO in September 2021 to lead the organisation through a critical transformation period until early 2022.

Prerana is a member of AICD and provides board advisory services to several start-ups.

Meeting Participants:

Dr. Lauren Palmer
Director Policy and Projects, ACOLA

Lauren Palmer is Director of Policy and Projects at the Australian Council of Learned Academies. Lauren has been with ACOLA since 2016 and leads the organisation in delivering its strategic objectives, including identifying ways to better harness the perspectives of all disciplines to address complex issues facing society.

Lauren has a strong history or working for non-government organisations in the public policy industry, most recently in directing interdisciplinary projects and contributing interdisciplinary perspectives to public debate on emerging national and regional issues. She is highly proficient in leading and managing interdisciplinary policy teams to undertake research and analysis, synthesise large amounts of complex information and prepare authoritative documents and reports.

Lauren has a science background, completed her PhD in Chemistry from University of Melbourne and more recently has published on science, technology and innovation policy.

Ms. Ramesha Perera
Engagement Manager, ACOLA

Ramesha is the Engagement Manager at the Australian Council of Learned Academies, where she provides high-level executive and strategic support, leading communications, stakeholder engagement, and key operational initiatives. With over a decade of experience in strategic communications, marketing, and stakeholder engagement across government, research, and cultural institutions, she specialises in creating impactful strategies to promote research and policy outcomes.

Ramesha holds a Bachelor of International Studies and Marketing Communications from the University of Canberra.

© 2025 Council on Competitiveness
Please do not share or reproduce without the written consent of the Council on Competitiveness.

About the Australian Academy of Technological Sciences and Engineering (ATSE)

The Australian Academy of Technological Sciences and Engineering (ATSE) is one of the nation's foremost independent institutions dedicated to advancing sustainable economic and social progress through science, technology, and engineering. Established in 1975, ATSE is a learned academy composed of more than 900 Fellows—leaders in applied science, engineering, and innovation drawn from industry, academia, and government. Headquartered in Canberra, the Academy serves as a trusted, non-partisan voice shaping Australia's future through evidence-based advice and national leadership in science and technology policy.

ATSE's mission is rooted in the belief that technological innovation, when guided by expertise and ethical responsibility, can deliver a sustainable and prosperous future for all Australians. The Academy focuses on key national priorities such as clean energy, research commercialisation, digital transformation, climate adaptation, food security, and water management. It works closely with government and industry to offer rigorous, independent analysis and recommendations on some of the country's most pressing challenges.

Beyond policy, ATSE is deeply committed to fostering the next generation of STEM talent. Through initiatives such as the Elevate program—which offers scholarships to women and non-binary people in STEM—the Academy actively works to reduce barriers and increase diversity in the science and engineering workforce. It also supports school-based STEM engagement through the STELR program and mentors early-career researchers through the IMNIS (Industry Mentoring Network in STEM) platform. These programs reflect ATSE's broader commitment to equity, inclusion, and the long-term health of Australia's innovation pipeline.

ATSE's Fellows play a central role in its work. Each year, the Academy elects new Fellows based on their achievements and contributions to applied science and engineering. The Fellowship is deliberately diverse, encompassing a wide range of disciplines, geographic regions, and professional backgrounds. Through its Indigenous Engineering Group and Reconciliation Action Plan, the Academy also incorporates Indigenous knowledge and perspectives into its work.

As a not-for-profit charitable organization, ATSE is governed by a Board and supported by a professional secretariat. Its current strategic plan outlines four priorities: leading evidence-informed action, expanding the impact of the Fellowship, building a more inclusive STEM sector, and ensuring the Academy's resilience and effectiveness in a changing world.

In 2025, ATSE further strengthens its global engagement by hosting the CAETS (International Council of Academies of Engineering and Technological Sciences) conference in Brisbane, bringing together experts from across the globe to collaborate on solutions to shared challenges.

© 2025 Council on Competitiveness
Please do not share or reproduce without the written consent of the Council on Competitiveness.

Meeting Host:

Ms. Kylie Walker
Chief Executive Officer, ATSE

Kylie is the Chief Executive Officer of ATSE, where she works with expert Fellows to provide expert advice to national leadership, lead crucial national conversations to solve complex challenges, and move towards a technology-powered, human-driven future. She specialises in connecting expert advisers in technology, engineering and science with key decision-makers in governments, business, media and society.

Kylie is a visiting Fellow at the Australian National Centre for the Public Awareness of Science. She has been Chair of the Australian National Commission for UNESCO, is a member of Chief Executive Women, and has been named one of AFR's 100 Women of Influence.

See Ms. Walker's perspective on the Australian research community linked here *(this article is also pasted at the end of this section).*

Meeting Participants:

Mr. David Kilham
International Affairs Manager, ATSE

David Kilham is International Affairs Manager at the Australian Academy of Technological Sciences and Engineering. He has worked at the interface of policy and science with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the former Department of Environment and Heritage and the Australian Antarctic Division. David has extensive experience in foreign and trade policy and international engagement, including as Australia's Deputy Ambassador to Greece, Romania and Bulgaria at the Australian Embassy in Athens and as First Secretary to the Australian Permanent Mission to the World Trade Organisation in Geneva.

Ms. Anna-Maria Arabia OAM
Chief Executive, Australian Academy of Science

Anna-Maria is Chief Executive at the Australian Academy of Science, an independent organisation of distinguished Australian scientists, championing science for the benefit of all. Starting her career as a neuroscientist, Anna-Maria has worked nationally and globally in scientific research, policy development, politics and advocacy.

Her leadership has led to significant reform at the science–policy interface. She has established novel mechanisms to facilitate evidence-informed decision making in parliaments and the justice system; spearheaded new approaches to science communication; and implemented global initiatives to make visible underrepresented scientists.

© 2025 Council on Competitiveness
Please do not share or reproduce without the written consent of the Council on Competitiveness.

She provides policy advice to the highest levels of government in Australia and contributes to global policy fora, most recently leading the establishment of the International Science Council Regional Focal Point for Asia and the Pacific. In 2025, Anna-Maria was awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia for her services to science, particularly through organisational leadership roles. She has also earnt the Knight of the Order of the Star of Italy for her constant commitment to promoting the role of science in society and her determination in enabling young and diverse people to access science. Anna-Maria is routinely called upon to serve as an agent of change.

Ms. Anna-Maria Arabia OAM will also speak at the July 24 U.S.-Australia Innovation Alliance Dialogue (see below for details).

Ms. Inga Davis
Executive Director, Australian Academy of the Humanities

Inga joined the Academy as Executive Director in February 2023.

She has nearly 20 years' experience working in and consulting to the higher education sector, having held senior appointments at the University of Adelaide (Chief Executive, External Relations) and the University of Canberra (Director, Advancement, Marketing and Communications and previously, Director of the Vice-Chancellor's Office).

Before joining the Academy Inga held the position of Principal at Research Strategies Australia, where she worked with and for a range of stakeholders in the higher education, defence and health sectors.

Inga has served as a member of the University of Canberra Council and was a Director of the University of Canberra Union. She is a member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors and holds a Bachelor of Communications (Public Relations and Information Management) and a Graduate Certificate in Business Administration from the University of Canberra.

Ms. Catherine Luckin
Chief Executive Officer, Australian Academy of Health and Medical Sciences (AAHMS)

Catherine has been Chief Executive Officer of the Australian Academy of Health and Medical Sciences (AA HMS) since May 2018. She has 15 years of experience supporting research and innovation, particularly in the health and medical sciences – through roles in policy, public affairs, strategy and international relations. AAHMS is Australia's Learned Academy for health and medical science – the impartial, authoritative, cross-sector voice of health and medical science in Australia.

Catherine brings cross-sector experience from roles at the UK Academy of Medical Sciences; the Royal College of Physicians of London; pharmaceutical company, Pfizer; the University of Sydney; and the University of Technology Sydney. She brings an international network from the UK, Europe and Australia.

During her career, Catherine has established and led initiatives in a range of areas, including policy

© 2025 Council on Competitiveness
Please do not share or reproduce without the written consent of the Council on Competitiveness.

projects, global programs and funding schemes, in collaboration with national and international partners. Her policy work has covered issues including integrating research into health systems; the use of data in research; research careers; immigration and mobility; global health issues; emerging technologies; and tackling the COVID-19 pandemic. She has a BSc in Natural Sciences and an MSc in Science Communication.

Mr. Khaled Chakli
Deputy Chief Executive Officer and Director of Policy and Communications, Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia (ASSA)

Khaled Chakli is an experienced executive driven by a passion for fostering growth and instigating positive change within the health, science, and research sectors. His track record has solidified him as a dynamic leader and strategic thinker, showcasing an innate ability to make pivotal decisions while collaborating with diverse stakeholders to achieve ambitious objectives.

Having served as an Advisor to Senator Kim Carr, the former Federal Minister for Innovation, Industry, Science and Research, and the Victorian Minister for Emergency Services, Khaled transitioned to executive and leadership roles in prominent organisations such as the Australian Academy of Science, and the Australasian Institute of Digital Health where he currently serves as the Director of Leadership and Advocacy.

Dr. Chris Hatherly
Chief Executive Officer, Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia (ASSA)

Chris commenced as Executive Director of the Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia in July, 2019. Previously he was Director, Science Policy at the Australian Academy of Science, and National Research Manager with Alzheimer's Australia.

Chris has a PhD in cognitive psychology from the ANU and has 10 years' experience working at the interface of research, policy, service delivery and community.

Dr. Honae Cuffe
Policy Director, Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia (ASSA)

Honae is Policy Director at the Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia.

She holds a PhD in history from the University of Newcastle and has worked in both the academic and public history sector. Honae has published widely on issues of history, contemporary policy and academic research practices

© 2025 Council on Competitiveness
Please do not share or reproduce without the written consent of the Council on Competitiveness.

American science is in crisis. It's a great opportunity for Australia to snap up top scientists

*A*rticle *By Kylie Walker*
CEO of the Australian Academy of Technological Sciences and Engineering

Science in the United States in in trouble. The National Science Foundation, a key research funding agency, has suffered devastating funding cuts under the current administration. Critics say the cuts risk losing an entire generation of young scientists.

In addition, about 280,000 scientists and engineers have been affected by US federal workforce cuts. Billions of dollars in further cuts have been proposed to US hospitals, universities and research institutions.

The US has long been the global destination for science. But perhaps no longer. The rest of the world, including Australia, is looking to lure scientists from the US.

And many of those scientists are looking to move. In March, a Nature survey suggested more than 75% of US researchers were considering leaving the country.

What moves are under way to capitalise on this American brain drain? Where does Australia sit – and, importantly, are we doing enough?

What are other countries doing?

In May, the European Commission announced a two-year, €500 million package to woo scientists and researchers called Choose Europe. The announcement of the package highlighted how "academic and scientific freedom is increasingly under threat", and offers researchers higher allowances, longer contracts and reduced regulatory barriers to innovation.

Canada also has active efforts. The Toronto-based University Hospital Network, for example, aims to raise C$30 million to attract and recruit clinician scientists and medical talent.

China, too, is actively seeking US scientists with dedicated recruitment programs and large salaries. This is accelerating the existing trend of Chinese-born scientists leaving the US.

Programs such as the EU's and Canada's ostensibly aim to attract and recruit top talent from "around the world". Given the timing, however, it's no secret which country's scientists they have their eyes on.

What about Australia?

In Australia, the scientific community is understandably concerned about events in the US and their impact on Australian research. The US is Australia's largest research partner, with a conservatively estimated A$386 million in funding for Australian research organisations coming from the US government.

© 2025 Council on Competitiveness
Please do not share or reproduce without the written consent of the Council on Competitiveness.

At the same time, the US cuts represent an opportunity for Australia as for other countries. The Australian Academy of Science recently launched its Global Talent Attraction Program to take advantage of "a rare opportunity to strengthen our nation by attracting world-leading researchers to our shores". The program will offer relocation packages for selected researchers, together with research funding, access to Australian infrastructure and family relocation support.

As well as attracting US talent, it may also be an opportunity to reverse the brain drain and bring back talented Australians who may have moved to the US for what were once better career prospects.

The global picture

Attracting, recruiting and retaining US researchers and innovators at all levels is the right thing for Australia to pursue right now. But broader international relationships are also worth some effort, including with countries in our region such as Japan, South Korea and Singapore, as well as in Europe.

These can be facilitated through existing initiatives such as the strategic arm of the Global Science and Technology Diplomacy Fund. Backed by the Australian government and delivered by the Australian Academy of Technological Sciences and Engineering (where I am the CEO) and the Australian Academy of Science, the fund brings together innovators and research initiatives in priority partner countries and Australia. Areas of interest include advanced manufacturing, artificial intelligence and hydrogen production.

With the US pulling out of international collaborations, there is a chance for Australia to establish itself as a science and technology hub within our region.

Australia has much to offer the world. We can provide insights into the behaviour and management of bushfires, floods and droughts. We bring a sophisticated understanding of extreme weather modelling, and are a global gateway to exceptional oceans and atmospheric research.

We have huge clout in renewable energy and battery technologies. Australian-invented solar panels represent the majority of household solar around the world and Australian batteries technology is among the best.

Australian researchers, policymakers and citizens are right to be concerned by what's happening in the US. But we don't need to wait anxiously. We have an extremely rare opportunity to foster talent in Australia on our terms.

© 2025 Council on Competitiveness
Please do not share or reproduce without the written consent of the Council on Competitiveness.

3:20 – 3:45 PM – Bus Transfer to Australian Parliament House (APH)

Location: Parliament Drive, Canberra ACT
Note: Please bring a valid passport to facilitate check-in at Parliament House.

About the Australia Parliament

Australia's Parliament is the nation's federal legislative body, responsible for creating and shaping the laws that govern the country. Established in 1901 following the federation of Australia's six colonies, the Parliament operates as a bicameral institution composed of two houses: the House of Representatives and the Senate.

The House of Representatives includes 151 members, each representing an electoral division across Australia. These members are elected every three years using a preferential voting system. The House primarily initiates legislation related to government spending and taxation, and the political party or coalition that holds the majority here forms the government.

The Senate consists of 76 members, with twelve senators representing each of the six states and two senators from each territory. Senators serve six-year terms, with half of the seats contested every three years, except for territory senators who align with the House of Representatives' terms. The Senate functions as a house of review, examining legislation passed by the House, proposing amendments, and representing the interests of the states.

Parliament convenes at the iconic Parliament House in Canberra, a purpose-built complex symbolizing Australian democracy. The system operates under a constitutional monarchy and representative democracy, with the Governor-General acting as the Crown's representative who formally approves laws passed by Parliament.

Currently, the Prime Minister is Anthony Albanese of the Australian Labor Party, who has held the position since May 2022 and recently secured a second term following the 2025 federal election. The Speaker of the House of Representatives is the Honorable Milton Dick, also from the Labor Party, responsible for maintaining order and overseeing proceedings in the House. The President of the Senate is Senator the Honorable Sue Lines, who presides over Senate debates and ensures orderly conduct.

© 2025 Council on Competitiveness
Please do not share or reproduce without the written consent of the Council on Competitiveness.

Parliamentary Meetings

3:45 – 4:15 PM – Delegation Subset Meeting with The Hon. Andrew Hastie MP

Location: Office R1.48, Australian Parliament House (APH)

The Hon. Andrew Hastie MP
Shadow Minister, Home Affairs and Security

Andrew Hastie is an Australian politician and former military officer who has represented the Division of Canning in Western Australia in the House of Representatives since winning a by-election in 2015. Before entering politics, Hastie served in the Australian Army from 2001 to 2015, where he was commissioned through the Australian Defence Force Academy and the Royal Military College, Duntroon. He served as a Troop Commander in both the 2nd Cavalry Regiment and the elite Special Air Service Regiment, with deployments to Afghanistan, the Middle East, and the Indo-Pacific region.

Since his election to Parliament, Hastie has held several significant roles, including Chair of the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security from 2017 to 2020 and Assistant Minister for Defense from 2020 to 2022. In June 2022, he was appointed Shadow Minister for Defense, Defense Industry, and Defense Personnel.

Hastie holds a Bachelor of Arts with Honors in History and Philosophy from the University of New South Wales and a Graduate Certificate in Business Economics from Harvard Extension School. He lives in Mandurah, Western Australia, with his wife Ruth and their three children.

Participants:
1. Mr. Charles Kiefel AM
2. The Hon. Deborah Wince-Smith
3. Dr. Mark Peters
4. Dr. Suresh Garimella
5. Dr. Kate Evans
6. Mr. Joe James, Second Secretary, U.S. Embassy, Australian Capital Territory

Remaining Delegates have 30 minutes of free time during this meeting.

4:15 – 4:30 PM – Delegation Transit to Meeting with Dr. Andrew Leigh MP

All Delegates will be escorted by Olivia Humble or Katie Adrigan Hondros (Office of The Hon. Andrew Hastie)

Location: Office R2.108, House of Representatives side, APH

© 2025 Council on Competitiveness
Please do not share or reproduce without the written consent of the Council on Competitiveness.

4:30 – 5:00 PM – Meeting with Dr. Andrew Leigh MP

Attending Delegates:
1. Dr. Peter Dorhout — Vice President for Research, Iowa State University
2. Dr. Kate Evans — Director, Oak Ridge National Laboratory Office of Institutional Strategic Planning
3. Dr. Suresh Garimella — President, University of Arizona
4. Dr. Keoki Jackson — Senior Vice President, MITRE
5. Mr. Charles Kiefel AM, Chairman, Australian Advisory Board on Competitiveness
6. Ms. Anne Lingafelter, Principal, Gallup
7. Dr. Mark Peters — CEO, MITRE
8. The Hon. Deborah Wince-Smith — President & CEO, Council on Competitiveness
9. Dr. Michael Wolf — Senior Vice President, Hevolution

Dr. Andrew Leigh
Assistant Minister for Productivity, Competition, Charities & Treasury

Andrew Leigh is the Assistant Minister for Productivity, Competition, Charities and Treasury, and Federal Member for Fenner in the ACT. Prior to being elected in 2010, Andrew was a professor of economics at the Australian National University. He holds a PhD in Public Policy from Harvard, having graduated from the University of Sydney with first class honours in Arts and Law. Andrew is a past recipient of the Economic Society of Australia's Young Economist Award and a Fellow of the Australian Academy of Social Sciences.

His books include Disconnected (2010), Battlers and Billionaires: The Story of Inequality in Australia (2013), The Economics of Just About Everything (2014), The Luck of Politics (2015), Choosing Openness: Why Global Engagement is Best for Australia (2017), Randomistas: How Radical Researchers Changed Our World (2018), Innovation + Equality: How to Create a Future That Is More Star Trek Than Terminator (with Joshua Gans) (2019), Reconnected: A Community Builder's Handbook (with Nick Terrell) (2020), What's the Worst That Could Happen? Existential Risk and Extreme Politics (2021), Fair Game: Lessons From Sport for a Fairer Society and a Stronger Economy (2022) and The Shortest History of Economics (2024).

Andrew is a keen Ironman triathlete and marathon runner, and hosts a podcast called The Good Life: Andrew Leigh in Conversation, about living a happier, healthier and more ethical life. Andrew is the father of three sons - Sebastian, Theodore and Zachary, and lives with his wife Gweneth in Canberra. He has been a member of the Australian Labor Party since 1991.

Evening: Delegation Dinner at The Boat House

5:30 – 5:45 PM – Bus Transfer to Hyatt Hotel Canberra to Refresh

Bus Pick-up: Office R2.108, APH
Bus Drop-off: Lobby, Hyatt Hotel Canberra

5:45 – 6:00 PM – After Quick Stop, Immediately Rejoin the Delegation in the Hyatt Hotel Canberra Lobby

© 2025 Council on Competitiveness
Please do not share or reproduce without the written consent of the Council on Competitiveness.

for a Bus Transfer to Dinner at The Boat House

6:00 – 9:00 PM – Delegation Dinner at The Boat House

Individuals responsible for alcoholic beverages.

Location: The Boat House
Address: Grevillea Park, Menindee Drive, Barton ACT 2600
Phone: +61 2 6273 5500
Host: Mr. Charles Kiefel AM, Founder and Executive Chair, The Principals Funds, and Chairman and Co-Founder, Australian Advisory Board on Competitiveness
Keynote Speaker:

Senator the Hon. Tim Ayres MP
Minister for Industry and Innovation;
Minister for Science;
Senator for New South Whales

Tim Ayres is the Minister for Industry and Innovation and Minister for Science in the Albanese Labor Government. He was previously the Assistant Minister for Trade and Assistant Minister for a Future Made in Australia.

Senator Ayres grew up on his family's beef cattle farm on the north coast of NSW and completed high school in Glen Innes. He studied industrial relations at the University of Sydney and lives in Sydney.

Before entering Parliament, Tim held several elected leadership roles in the Australian Manufacturing Workers' Union, representing the interests of workers across a variety of sectors including manufacturing, defence, food processing, aviation and metal industries.

He was elected as a Senator for New South Wales in the 2019 election, where he continues to advocate for strong manufacturing industries and good blue-collar jobs, especially in Australia's regions.

Special Guests:

Mr. Shaun Jenkinson
CEO Australia's Nuclear Science and Technology Organization (ANSTO)

Shaun Jenkinson is currently Chief Executive Officer of ANSTO. He joined ANSTO in March 2010 and worked with the team in ANSTO Health to ensure a reliable supply of radioisotopes to the domestic market, as well as delivering export sales growth. As Group Executive Nuclear Business, his responsibilities covered all commercial operations including ANSTO Health, ANSTO Minerals, ANSTO Silicon, Mo-99 Operations, ANSTO Radiation Services, Business Development and International business partnerships.

Shaun has a degree in Biotechnology and is a graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors. He has over 25 years of experience in the pharmaceutical industry,

© 2025 Council on Competitiveness
Please do not share or reproduce without the written consent of the Council on Competitiveness.

medical equipment and medical devices. During that time, Shaun held senior positions with large global companies, both in the UK and Australia, delivering top and bottom line growth across a range of products in different market segments.

Shaun has whole of business experience and most recently has focused on driving excellence through business integration, process redesign, removing waste and implementing quality management within organisations. The output of which is to deliver competitive advantage by meeting the customers' needs and building long term business partnerships for sustainable future growth.

About Australia's Nuclear Science and Technology Organization (ANSTO)

ANSTO (Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation) is Australia's national nuclear research and development organization and a leader in nuclear science and technology, both domestically and internationally. It plays a vital role in addressing Australian priorities in areas like health, environmental sustainability, advanced manufacturing, defense, and national security. ANSTO operates key national scientific facilities, including the OPAL research reactor, Australia's only multi-purpose nuclear research reactor, and the Australian Synchrotron. Core functions and activities include R&D, Nuclear Medicine Production, Operation of National Research Infrastructure, Expert Advice and Stewardship, and Workforce Development: ANSTO is committed to developing a skilled nuclear workforce in Australia through programs like early career initiatives and by providing training and educational opportunities.

Dr. Andrew Peele
Group Executive, Nuclear Science and Technology Group, ANSTO

Andrew Peele was appointed Group Executive for ANSTO Nuclear Science and Technology in July 2021 and was Director of the Australian Synchrotron from 2013 -2021. He is an adjunct Professor of Physics at La Trobe University. In his current role Andrew leads ANSTO's research and development capability in support of national research priorities including health and the use of nuclear medicines, environment, and the use of nuclear technologies and materials as well delivering real-life benefits to Australian research and industry through access to ANSTO's unique research infrastructure capabilities such as the Australian Centre for Neutron Scattering, the Australian Synchrotron, the Australian Centre for Accelerator Science and the National Deuteration Facility.

Andrew's previous appointments include leading the X-ray Science group in La Trobe University's Department of Physics, a Queen Elizabeth II Research Fellowship held at the University of Melbourne and La Trobe University and post-doctoral research at NASA's Goddard Space Flight Centre. Prior to undertaking his PhD studies at the University of Melbourne, Andrew was a qualified lawyer.

Andrew's research improves the versatility and quality of x-ray imaging, including new methods in phase imaging and coherent diffractive imaging with applications such as tomographic imaging of cells and materials. He has published over 100 refereed articles and has been involved as a node leader, principal investigator and advisory board member in the Australian Research Council Centres of Excellence for Coherent X-ray Science, Advanced Molecular Imaging and Future Low-Energy Electronics Technologies respectively.

© 2025 Council on Competitiveness
Please do not share or reproduce without the written consent of the Council on Competitiveness.

He has served as a president of the Australian Institute of Physics and the Asia-Oceania Forum for Synchrotron Radiation Research, is a board member of the Australian Institute of Nuclear Science and Engineering, the Stawell Underground Physics Laboratory Company and the Australian Mathematical Sciences Institute. He is a fellow of the Australian Academy of Technology and Engineering.

Ms. Natascha Spark
Senior Manager, International Affairs, ANSTO

Prof. Elanor Huntington
Executive Director, CSIRO

Professor Huntington leads the data-focused research, development and digital capability of CSIRO, and is a member of the CSIRO Executive. She has stewardship of a range of business lines including Data61, Space and Astronomy, and National Collections and Marine Infrastructure. Prof Huntington also leads major national infrastructure provided by CSIRO on behalf of the scientific community to assist with the delivery of research, some of these include:

- Australia Telescope National Facility
- Marine National Facility
- Pawsey Supercomputing Centre
- National Research Collections Australia
- Atlas of Living Australia.

Prior to joining CSIRO in November 2021, Elanor was Dean of the College of Engineering and Computer Science at the Australian National University (ANU) where she helped bring about significant transformation within the College and sector. Elanor is an established senior leader, with Board appointments to Industry Innovation and Science Australia, Significant Capital Ventures, Questacon, Australian Academy of Technology & Engineering, Pawsey Supercomputing, NCI Australia, International Centre for Radio Astronomy Research and other government scientific advisory roles. She was elected Fellow of the Australian Academy of Technology and Engineering in 2020, and sits on the governance taskforce, diversity and inclusion committee and RAP committee for that Academy. Elanor was named an Honorary Fellow of Engineers Australia and led the extended Group of Eight (Go8+) Engineering Deans as first female Chair up until 2019.

Elanor holds a PhD in experimental quantum optics and a Masters in information technology. She was a Program Manager for nearly 20 years in the ARC Centre of Excellence for Quantum Computing Technology and her resent research includes the control of quantum systems at the interface between theory and applications. She is a Visiting Professor at the ANU. Elanor is committed to growing the profile of STEM in the community and is passionate about attracting a more diverse cohort of people to take up careers that draw on STEM skills. She is a prolific and sought-after public speaker and thought leader on the future of science, technology, engineering and the nature of work. In 2017 she delivered a TEDxSydney Talk on 'Why we need Engineers now more than ever' and later in 2019, co-founded the Engineering for Australia Taskforce to provide expert advice on addressing barriers to women's participation in university engineering programs.

9:00 PM – Return Transfer to Hyatt Hotel Canberra

© 2025 Council on Competitiveness
Please do not share or reproduce without the written consent of the Council on Competitiveness.

Wednesday, 23 July 2025 – CANBERRA → SYDNEY

Attire for the day: Business
Important reminder: Please bring a valid passport to facilitate check-in at various events for the day.

Early Morning: Strategic Breakfast Meeting

7:00 AM – Gather in the lobby for 7 AM departure via bus for 7:15 AM breakfast at the Commonwealth Club

The bus will return to the hotel briefly after breakfast and before the day's meetings. Delegates must be checked out — or ready to check out — and ready to quickly load their luggage onto the bus by that time (around 8:15 AM)

Hotel Address: 120 Commonwealth Avenue, Yarralumla ACT 2600
Hotel Phone: +61 2 6270 1234

7:15 – 8:15 AM – U.S.–Australia Strategic Innovation Alliance Breakfast Meeting at the Commonwealth Club

Commonwealth Club Address: 25 Forster Crescent, Yarralumla ACT 2600
Club Phone: +61 2 6120 2100
Host: Mr. Charles Kiefel AM, Founder and Executive Chair, The Principals Funds, and Chairman and Co-Founder, Australian Advisory Board on Competitiveness

Special Guests (see bios below):
1. Senator Jane Hume
2. The Hon. Michaelia Cash MP (Shadow Minister for Foreign Affairs)
3. The Hon. Andrew Hastie MP (Shadow Minister for Home Affairs, *see above for bio*)
4. The Hon. Angus Taylor MP (Shadow Minister for Defence)
5. The Hon. Dan Tehan MP (Shadow Minister for Energy)

The Hon. Jane Hume
Senator, Victoria

Jane Hume is a Liberal Senator for Victoria.

Born and raised in Melbourne, Jane completed a Bachelor of Commerce at the University of Melbourne, later returning to gain further qualifications in Political Science.

Subsequent to graduation, Jane held various senior positions in the financial services industry, working for the National Australia Bank, Rothschild

© 2025 Council on Competitiveness
Please do not share or reproduce without the written consent of the Council on Competitiveness.

Australia, Deutsche Bank and, immediately prior to her election, as a Senior Policy Advisor at Australian Super. She has also served on a number of boards including the Royal Children's Hospital, Federation Square, and Perinatal Anxiety & Depression Australia.

In recognition of her extensive experience in corporate and philanthropic organisations, on entering the Senate she was immediately appointed as Chair of the Senate Standing Committee on Economics (Legislation).

She has served in a number of Ministerial roles, including as the Minister for Superannuation, Financial Services and the Digital Economy, and as the Minister for Women's Economic Security. She has also served as the Shadow Minister for Finance, Shadow Special Minister of State and Shadow Minister for the Public Service.

Outside of her career pursuits, Jane enjoys swimming, reading, and most of all, spending time with her three children.

The Hon. Michaela Cash
Shadow Minister, Foreign Affairs

Senator Cash was elected to the Senate as a Liberal Senator for Western Australia in 2007. She commenced her term on 1 July 2008. She was re-elected as a Senator for Western Australia in 2013, 2016 and 2022.

Since entering public life Michaelia has held a number of Ministerial appointments. Michaelia was appointed to the Cabinet as the Minister for Employment; the Minister for Women and the Minister Assisting the Prime Minster for the Public Service on 21 September 2015. On 20 December 2017, Senator Cash was appointed the Minister for Jobs and Innovation. From 28 August 2018 to 29 March 2021, Senator Cash was the Minister for Employment, Skills, Small and Family Business. On 29 March 2021, Senator Cash was appointed Attorney-General as well as the Minister for Industrial Relations. Michaelia was also the Deputy Leader of the Government in the Senate. She held these positions until 23 May 2022.

From 18 September 2013 to 21 September 2015 she was the Assistant Minister for Immigration and Border Protection and the Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Status of Women.

In September 2012, she was appointed Deputy Manager of Opposition Business in the Senate.

In September 2010, she was appointed to the dual roles of the Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Immigration and Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for the Status of Women.

Prior to entering Parliament, Senator Cash was a senior lawyer at law firm Freehills (now Herbert Smith Freehills) practicing employment and industrial law.

Senator Cash holds an Honours Degree in Law from the University of London and a Bachelor of Arts (Social Science) from Curtin University in Perth, graduating with a triple major in public relations, politics and journalism. In addition, she holds a Graduate Diploma in Legal Practice from the University of Western Australia.

© 2025 Council on Competitiveness
Please do not share or reproduce without the written consent of the Council on Competitiveness.

The Hon. Angus Taylor
Shadow Minister, Defense

Angus Taylor is the Shadow Minister for Defense and Federal Member for Hume.

Angus was the Minister for Industry, Energy and Emissions Reduction in the former Coalition Government. Angus has played a key role in reducing energy prices, lowering Australia's emissions to record lows and establishing mRNA vaccination manufacturing in Australia.

Angus has also served as the Shadow Treasurer, Minister for Law Enforcement and Cyber Securities, and as the Assistant Minister to the Prime Minister with special responsibility for Cities and Digital Transformation.

Prior to entering Parliament, Angus was a Director at Port Jackson Partners and a partner at global consulting firm McKinsey & Co.

Angus has a Bachelor of Economics (First Class Honours and University Medal) and a Bachelor of Laws (Honours) from the University of Sydney.

He has a Master of Philosophy in Economics from the University of Oxford, where he studied as a Rhodes Scholar and wrote a thesis on competition policy.

Angus grew up in southern NSW on a sheep and cattle property at Nimmitabel.

The Hon. Dan Tehan MP
Shadow Minister, Energy

Dan Tehan is the Shadow Minister for Energy and Emissions Reduction, and Federal Member for Wannon.

Dan is a country boy at heart and is passionate about representing the people of Wannon.

Dan grew up on a family farm in rural Victoria, with his three brothers and two sisters. His father ran Merino sheep and Hereford cattle while his mother started her own small business in a nearby town to earn off-farm income.
From an early age, Dan's parents and grandparents taught him that people in rural communities deserve a fair go and that you need to be prepared to stand up and fight for what you believe in.

Dan's mother represented rural Victoria in State Parliament, his father was actively involved in the Victorian Farmers Federation, and his grandfather helped form the National Farmers' Federation.
Dan's education, personal experience and career have given him a real understanding of the needs of people living in our region. Importantly, it has also taught him how to get the action to address these needs.

© 2025 Council on Competitiveness
Please do not share or reproduce without the written consent of the Council on Competitiveness.

His education at a country primary school and high school taught him the importance of attracting and retaining the best teachers in our local schools. His Honours Degree at Melbourne University and Master's Degree in Foreign Affairs and Trade at Monash University highlighted the importance of country students having access to an independent youth allowance that enables them to afford a tertiary education. In between school and university, Dan spent a year working as a farmhand, witnessing first-hand the detrimental impact of the Hawke/Keating Government's high-interest rate policy of country Australia.

The focus of Dan's career has always been on achieving outcomes for rural and regional communities. As a diplomat, Senior Adviser to the Deputy Prime Minister and Chief of Staff to the Minister for Small Business and Tourism, he worked on real issues that have a direct impact on our communities such as reducing the level of regulation on small businesses, assisting farmers to sell their goods overseas and improving the standard of mobile phone and internet services in country areas.
Dan has served as Minister for Trade, Tourism and Investment, Minister for Education, Minister for Social Services, Minister for Veterans' Affairs, Minister for Defence Personnel, Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for Cyber Security and Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Centenary of Anzac. Dan has also served as Shadow Minister for Immigration and Citizenship.

8:15 – 8:30 AM – Pick-up at Commonwealth Club

Return to Hyatt to retrieve luggage and remaining Delegates (including spouse/partner luggage, if applicable)

Morning: Parallel Delegate Tracks

8:30 – 8:40 AM – Depart Hyatt Hotel for Delegate Drop-offs

The Delegates will participate in one of two tracks throughout the morning:

Track 1: Resources and Energy Meetings

Participants:
1. Mr. Charles Kiefel AM
2. The Hon. Deborah Wince-Smith
3. Dr. Mark Peters
4. Dr. Kate Evans
5. Dr. Suresh Garimella
6. Dr. Keoki Jackson

8:40 – 8:45 AM – Drop-off Track 1 Delegates to Meet with Mr. David Parker AM, Chair & CEO, Clean Energy Regulator

Meeting Location: Clean Energy Regulator, Discovery House
Address: 47 Bowes Street, Phillip ACT 2606

© 2025 Council on Competitiveness
Please do not share or reproduce without the written consent of the Council on Competitiveness.

About the Clean Energy Regulator (CER)

The Clean Energy Regulator (CER) is Australia's independent statutory authority responsible for implementing the country's primary climate change laws and emissions reduction programs. Established in April 2012 under the Clean Energy Regulator Act 2011, the CER plays a central role in advancing Australia's national emissions targets, including a 43 percent reduction below 2005 levels by 2030 and net-zero emissions by 2050.

Based in Canberra, the CER administers a suite of legislation and market-based mechanisms that incentivize emissions abatement and the transition to a low-carbon economy. These include the Australian Carbon Credit Unit (ACCU) Scheme, the Safeguard Mechanism, the Renewable Energy Target (RET), the National Greenhouse and Energy Reporting (NGER) scheme, and the Guarantee of Origin Scheme. More recently, it has taken on responsibility for the Nature Repair Market, which issues tradable certificates for projects that restore biodiversity under the Nature Repair Act 2023.

The CER's role extends beyond administration. It educates participants, ensures compliance through audits and investigations, accredits greenhouse and energy auditors, and publishes critical emissions and energy data to improve transparency. In the 2023–24 reporting period, the CER issued 18.7 million Australian Carbon Credit Units and facilitated 69 million tonnes of emissions abatement. It also supported the addition of 5.8 gigawatts of new renewable energy capacity to the national grid.

9:15 – 10:00 AM – Meeting with Mr. David Parker AM, Chair & CEO, Clean Energy Regulator

Mr. David Parker AM
Chair, Clean Energy Regulator

David Parker was appointed Chair of the Clean Energy Regulator on 3 July 2017.Mr. Parker has over 20 years experience in economics, public administration and policy and regulatory matters.

Before joining the agency, Mr Parker was Deputy Secretary at the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources, the Department of Environment and Energy, and Treasury. He also worked at the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development in Paris.

Mr. Parker has qualifications in economics and law. He has been a Member of the Order of Australia since 2012.

10:00 – 11:00 AM – Transfer to Parliament House for Ministerial Meeting

Meeting Location: Office of the Hon. Madeleine King MP
Address: Office M1.24, Parliament House, Canberra
Contact: Ann Clavin, ann.clavin@industry.gov.au +61 2 6277 7930.

Track 1 Delegates will have downtime between meetings.

© 2025 Council on Competitiveness
Please do not share or reproduce without the written consent of the Council on Competitiveness.

11:00 AM – 12:00 PM – Meeting with Hon Madeleine King MP, Minister for Resources, and Minister for Northern Australia

The Hon. Madeleine King MP
Minister for Resources and Minister for Northern Australia

Madeleine King has been the Federal Member for Brand since 2016, proudly representing the wonderful region where she was born and raised.

In 2019, she was promoted to the role of Shadow Minister for Trade. After the 2022 election, she was promoted to the roles of Minister for Resources; Minister for Northern Australia.

Madeleine grew up in Shoalwater.

Her father worked at BP's Kwinana oil refinery and her mother and grandmother ran a popular drapery store, The Family Traders, on Railway Terrace, Rockingham.

After graduating from Safety Bay Senior High School, she moved to Perth to attend university, where she graduated with a law degree.

In her leadership of the Perth US Asia Centre, she helped to bring a unique Western Australian perspective to the international discussion on Australia's role in the emerging Indo-Pacific region. As Member for Brand, she is building on the important work of Gary Gray, Kim Beazley and Wendy Fatin.

Her priority is to ensure the people of Brand are given a strong voice in Canberra.

Madeleine believes in opportunities for people to improve their lives through job opportunities, quality education and training, universal healthcare and access to affordable childcare.

She believes those less fortunate deserve respect and dignity.

She wants to see a strong and resilient economy that rewards enterprise and hard work, but is also based on fairness for everyday people

© 2025 Council on Competitiveness
Please do not share or reproduce without the written consent of the Council on Competitiveness.

Track 2: University Leadership Forum

Participants:
1. Mr. Chad Evans
2. Dr. Peter Dorhout
3. Dr. Brett Goldstein
4. Ms. Anne Lingafelter
5. Dr. Michael Wolf
6. Dr. Roberto Alvarez

8:45 – 9:15 AM – Drop-off: Track 2 Delegates at Australian Council of Learned Academies (ACOLA)

Location: Ian Potter House, 9 Gordon Street, Acton, Canberra
Host: Ms. Prerana Mehta, CEO, ACOLA | prerana.mehta@acola.org.au
See above for Ms. Prerana Mehta's bio and an overview of ACOLA.

9:15 – 11:00 AM – University Leadership Forum with Australian University Associations

About Australia University Associations

- **Universities Australia (UA):** The peak body representing Australia's universities. They advocate for the higher education sector, influencing policy, providing expert advice, and promoting the value of higher education and research. UA is also the successor to the Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee, founded in 1920.
- **Group of Eight (Go8):** This association represents Australia's most research-intensive universities. The Go8 comprises the following universities: Australian National University, Monash University, University of Adelaide, University of Melbourne, University of New South Wales, University of Queensland, University of Sydney, and University of Western Australia.
- **Australian Technology Network of Universities (ATN):** This network brings together six Australian universities with a focus on innovation, enterprise, and strong industry collaboration.
- **Innovative Research Universities (IRU):** The IRU is a network of eight comprehensive Australian universities.
- **Regional Universities Network (RUN):** RUN is an association of seven universities located in regional Australia. They work to promote regional development and ensure access to higher education in regional areas.

© 2025 Council on Competitiveness
Please do not share or reproduce without the written consent of the Council on Competitiveness.

Australian University Associations Round Table Agenda:

9:15am *Arrival - Tea/Coffee*

9:30 am *Welcome and Introductions*

- Ms. Prerana Mehta CEO, ACOLA, to provide welcome and acknowledgement of Country
- Brief self-introductions from Australian attendees (name, institution/role)
- Prerana to introduce representative from U.S.

9:40am *U.S. Council of Competitiveness: State of Play Briefing*

Presentation by Council representative:

- About the U.S. Council on Competitiveness – purpose, mission, current U.S. research and innovation priorities
- Strategic drivers behind US innovation policy
- Key themes from the "Competing in the Next Economy" report
- Emerging opportunities for international partnerships

10:10am *Australian Research Landscape: Snapshot & Synergies*

Short presentation by Australian representative covering:

- Recent developments and national priorities in Australia's research and innovation ecosystem
- Key capabilities relevant to shared interest areas (e.g. quantum, critical minerals, energy)
- Reflections on areas of alignment with U.S. strategic priorities

10:20am *Open Discussion: Opportunities for Collaboration*

Guiding discussion prompts:

- Where are the strongest overlaps in strategic priorities between the U.S. and Australian research sectors?
- How can universities and national labs collaborate in dual-use research areas (e.g. advanced tech, defence applications)?
- What frameworks or mechanisms (e.g. joint facilities, talent exchanges) could support deeper collaboration?
- What barriers exist to collaboration (e.g. regulatory, IP, export controls) and how might they be addressed?
- Are there near-term joint projects or pilot initiatives we should pursue?

10:50am *Next Steps & Action Items*

- Summarize key discussion points
- Thank you and close

10:55am *Group Photo*

© 2025 Council on Competitiveness
Please do not share or reproduce without the written consent of the Council on Competitiveness.

Meeting Participants:

Mr. Alec Webb
Chief Executive Officer, Regional Universities Network (RUN)

Alec is the Chief Executive Officer at the Regional Universities Network where he advocates for and champion s the impact and importance of regional higher education.

Alec has more than 10 years of experience as a leader and collaborator in a variety of sectors including the public service, higher education advocacy and economic and public policy consulting within Australian and the United Kingdom. Prior to being the Executive Director of RUN, Alec was the Head of Policy and Member Engagement at a London based higher education network and was previously the Acting Executive Director and Head of Policy at the Australian Technology Network of Universities.

He holds a Master of Business Administration from University of Queensland, a Master of Management from the Australian National Universities and a Bachelor of Business and Finance from Queensland University of Technology.

Mr. Paul Harris
Executive Director, The Innovative Research Universities (IRU)

Paul is Executive Director of the Innovative Research Universities network, a role he has held since September 2021.

Previously, he spent over seven years in diplomatic roles in Australia's embassies in the United States and Japan, including as Director of ANU's North American Liaison Office in Washington DC and Counsellor (Education and Science) in Tokyo. He has also been an Adjunct Fellow at Georgetown University's Center for Security and Emerging Technology.

Earlier, Paul held senior positions at the Australian National University, leading programs to connect researchers and policymakers, and worked as Acting General Manager of Science Policy in the Australian Government. He spent seven years at CSIRO as General Manager of Government and International Relations and represented Australia on the OECD Global Science Forum.

Paul has also worked in the Australian Parliament, publishing, and journalism, and served on the Fulbright International Science and Technology Award selection panel. He holds a Master's degree in International Affairs from ANU.

© 2025 Council on Competitiveness
Please do not share or reproduce without the written consent of the Council on Competitiveness.

Professor Kent Anderson
Interim Executive Director, Australian Technology Network of Universities

Kent Anderson is an international lawyer specialising in the Asia-Pacific. He is Interim Executive Director at ATN and Special Advisor to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Global, at the University of Newcastle.

Kent has an diverse background, having been an academic in Australia, US and Japan; a marketing manager with a US regional airline in Alaska; a commercial lawyer in Hawaii; and most recently senior adviser for higher education to two Australian Ministers of Education.

Kent served on a number of boards including National Library of Australia, Ministerial Council for International Education, Higher Education Standards Panel, New Colombo Plan, Canberra Grammar School, and President of the Asian Studies Association of Australia.

Professor Anton Van Den Hengel
Director, Centre for Augmented Reasoning -and-
Director, Australian Institute for Machine Learning, Division of Research and Innovation, University of Adelaide

Anton van den Hengel is the Chief Scientist at the Australian Institute for Machine Learning (AIML) and Director of the Centre for Augmented Reasoning. He is a Professor of Computer Science at the University of Adelaide, a Chief Investigator of the NHMRC Centre of Research Excellence on Healthy Housing, a Fellow of the Australian Academy of Technology and Engineering and a Fellow of the Royal Society of South Australia. The Centre for Augmented Reasoning (CAR), established in 2021, represents a $20m investment by the Australian Government in AI research. Professor van den Hengel was also the founder of AIML, Australia's largest machine learning research group. Professor van den Hengel has been a CI on over $80m in research funding from sources, including Google, Facebook, Canon, BHP Billiton, and the ARC. Anton was a Director of Applied Science within Amazon for four years where he formed the Australian arm of Amazon's International Machine Learning group.

Professor van den Hengel has won several awards, including the 2021 Australasian AI Outstanding Service Award, the Pearcey Foundation Entrepreneur Award, the SA Science Excellence Award for Research Collaboration, the CVPR Best Paper prize in 2010 and in 2025 was elected to the CORE Academy to recognise his significant and cumulative contribution to the development of the computing disciplines in Australasia. According to Google Scholar, he has authored over 440 publications, has over 37,000 citations and an h-index of 89. He has had 8 patents commercialised, formed 5 start-ups, and had a medical technology achieve first-in-class FDA approval. Current research interests include vision and language problems, image-based modelling, and semantic reconstruction.

© 2025 Council on Competitiveness
Please do not share or reproduce without the written consent of the Council on Competitiveness.

Dr. Philip Chindamo
Chief Economist, Group of Eight

Dr Philip Chindamo is currently the Chief Economist at the Group of Eight (Go8) Universities, based in Canberra.

Philip is an experienced and results driven economist, having successfully provided strategic advice and leadership across a wide range of economic policy issues, including at both Federal and State levels of government.

His public sector experience spans senior roles at the Productivity Commission, the Parliamentary Budget Office, and various roles within the Victorian Departments of Premier and Cabinet and Treasury and Finance. This has included expertise in budget policy analysis and strategy, economic modelling and forecasting, labour market analysis, productivity and innovation policy, taxation reform, industry policy, and public sector financial reform.
Philip has a PhD in economics and two master's degrees, including an Executive Master of Public Administration (EMPA) from the Australia and New Zealand School of Government (ANZSOG), awarded in 2010.

The Hon. Ryan Winn
Chief Executive Officer, Science & Technology Australia (STA)

Ryan is a distinguished Chief Executive and Australian policy leader with extensive experience in the public service and higher education sectors. He commenced his role with STA in May 2024. As CEO of the organisation, he is a passionate advocate for advancing science – standing up for and speaking out on the views of the 225,000+ scientists and technologists the organisation represents. This role builds on over a decade of experience in leading work to improve access, investment and use of cutting-edge research and innovation across the country.

Prior to STA, Ryan was Chief Executive Officer at the Australian Council of Learned Academies (ACOLA). Before that, he led complex policy in the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet and the Department of Education, where he addressed critical issues in higher education, research infrastructure, early childhood education, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander affairs.

© 2025 Council on Competitiveness
Please do not share or reproduce without the written consent of the Council on Competitiveness.

Ms. Jane O'Dwyer
Chief Executive Officer, Cooperative Research Australia

Jane O'Dwyer is the CEO at Cooperative Research Australia, working at the intersection between research and industry with a mission to advance Australia by unlocking its potential for innovation.

She has 25 years of Australian and international experience stretching across universities, politics, media, peak bodies and corporate affairs.

Prior to taking up the role of CEO of the Cooperative Research Australia, she was Vice-President (Engagement and Global Relations) at The Australian National University. During her 15-year ANU career, Jane established the university's office in Washington DC as part of the Australian Embassy and was the long-time leader of Strategic Communications and Public Affairs. Before joining ANU, she spent four years in Tokyo working in journalism and public diplomacy.

She has previously worked in corporate affairs at the Australian Local Government Association and Sports Medicine Australia, and as a political advisor covering Trade, Regional Development and Resources and Energy portfolios. Jane holds a Master of Management (ANU), a Master of Journalism (Wollongong), and a Bachelor of Arts (Curtin), and is a Graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.

She is Chair of the Canberra Writers Festival, which she helped found, an Honorary Fellow in the Practice of Government Relations at the ANU Crawford School of Public Policy and a member of the ACT Government Priority Investment Program Advisory Panel.

11:00 AM – Track 2 Pick-Up at ACOLA

Logistical Note: After picking up Track 2 Delegates at ACOLA at 11, the bus will pick up Track 1 Delegates who are meeting with The Hon. Madeleine King MP from 11 AM - 12 PM. All Delegates will then bus to the Australia National University's Research School of Astronomy & Astrophysics, Mount Stromlo Observatory, to visit the Advanced Instrumentation Technology Centre.

© 2025 Council on Competitiveness
Please do not share or reproduce without the written consent of the Council on Competitiveness.

Midday: Entire Delegation Reconvenes

12:00 – 12:45 PM – Transfer to Mount Stromlo Observatory, Australian National University (ANU) for a working lunch and visit to the Advanced Instrumentation Technology Centre (AITC)

Location: Advanced Instrumentation and Technology Centre (AITC)
Address: Mount Stromlo Observatory, Cotter Road, Weston Creek ACT 2611

About the Mount Stromlo Observatory

The Mount Stromlo Observatory, operated by the Australian National University's Research School of Astronomy and Astrophysics (RSAA), is one of Australia's most iconic centres for astronomical research and innovation. Located just southwest of Canberra, the observatory sits atop Mount Stromlo at an elevation of 770 metres and has played a central role in the development of astrophysics in Australia since its founding in 1924 as the Commonwealth Solar Observatory.

Although much of the original infrastructure was lost in the 2003 Canberra bushfires, Mount Stromlo has undergone significant rebuilding and renewal. Today, it is home to advanced research facilities including the Advanced Instrumentation and Technology Centre (AITC), where engineers and scientists design and build cutting-edge space technology—such as small satellites, laser-based communication systems, and plasma propulsion devices. This focus on innovation continues Stromlo's long tradition of scientific excellence, while extending its capabilities into the rapidly evolving domain of space science and technology.

While large-scale astronomical observation now takes place primarily at ANU's Siding Spring Observatory in New South Wales, Mount Stromlo remains a vital part of the university's research and teaching ecosystem. The site also serves as a hub for public engagement and education. Visitors can walk the heritage trail, tour restored buildings such as the historic Director's Residence, and participate in regular stargazing events using outreach telescopes. These programs connect the public with the science of the cosmos while celebrating the observatory's rich heritage.

Hosts:

Professor Stuart Wyithe
Director, Research School of Astronomy and Astrophysics, Australia National University

Professor Stuart Wyithe is Director of the Research School of Astronomy and Astrophysics. He was awarded his PhD from The University of Melbourne in 2001, and was a Hubble Fellow at Harvard University before returning to Australia in 2002.

Professor Wyithe' s research focus is on the evolution of the earliest galaxies and how this evolution may be studied with the next generation of telescopes. He has received several awards for this work, including an Australian Laureate Fellowship, the Pawsey Medal for physics from the Australian Academy of Science, the Malcolm McIntosh Prize for Physical Scientist of the Year and the

© 2025 Council on Competitiveness
Please do not share or reproduce without the written consent of the Council on Competitiveness.

Australian Institute of Physics Boas Medal. Professor Wyithe has also played numerous leadership roles including President of the Astronomical Society of Australia and Chair of the Australian National Committee for Astronomy. In the latter role he chaired the Australian Astronomy Decadal Plan 2015-2025.

Professor Rob Sharp
Director, Academic Program, AITC
GMTIFS Project Scientist, Australia National University

Rob is an astronomer with twenty years of experience developing instrumentation for observatories around the world. His focus is spectroscopy, the process of splitting up the light from stars and galaxies into it's component colours. This allows astronomers to examine the fundamental physical properties of distant objects.

As well as working with light visible to the human eye, Rob specializes in instruments (cameras and spectrographs) at infrared wavelengths longer than the human eye can detect.

Rob is leading the Giant Magellan Telescope Integral Field Spectrograph (GMTIFS) project at ANU. This ambitious program will deliver the GMTIFS instrument to the Giant Magellan Telescope (GMT) high in the Chilean Andes. The 25 meter diameter mirror of the GMT will, when coupled to it's laser guide star adaptive optics system, allow it to record images ten-times sharper than the orbiting Hubble Space Telescope. The Adaptive optics is essential to remove the blurring effect of the Earths atmosphere.

As part of the wider instrumentation and sensor program at the ANU Advanced Instrumentation Technology Centre (AITC), Rob is also developing sensors for Earth observation remote sensing. The teams focus is currently on small form-factor sensor suitable for deployment on Australian led satellite missions that address areas of Australian national priority such as bushfire risk management (the OzFuel program), agricultural monitoring and water security.

12:45 – 2:30 PM – Advanced Instrumentation and Technology Centre (AITC) Site Visit + Small Lunch Meeting

- *Lunch will be provided for the Delegation*

About the Advanced Instrumentation and Technology Centre (AITC)

The $30-million Advanced Instrumentation and Technology Centre (AITC) at the University's Mount Stromlo Observatory is a world-class facility for the design, manufacturing, assembly, integration and testing of ground-based and space-based instruments, and small satellites. It includes the only space simulation facility in the southern hemisphere, the Wombat XL, which mimics the airlessness of space, as well as the dramatic temperature changes experienced by satellites moving in and out of the Earth's shadow.

© 2025 Council on Competitiveness
Please do not share or reproduce without the written consent of the Council on Competitiveness.

Afternoon: Transfer to Sydney

2:30 PM Onward – Delegation Transfer to Canberra Airport for Flights to Sydney

Pick-up Location: Mount Stromlo Observatory
Drop-off Location: Canberra Airport
Late Afternoon – Early Evening – Individual Flights: Canberra → Sydney
Note: Delegates are responsible for airport-to-hotel transportation upon arrival in Sydney.

Evening: Free / Unplanned Time in Sydney

Suggestions for Individual Exploration:

1. **Sydney Theatre Company at the Opera House:** *Circle Mirror Transformation*
   View performance info

2. **Art Gallery of NSW – Art After Hours**
   View program

3. **Two-for-One Tickets – Archibald Prize Exhibition**
   View details

© 2025 Council on Competitiveness
Please do not share or reproduce without the written consent of the Council on Competitiveness.


Sydney
July 24-25

Thursday, 24 July 2025 – SYDNEY

Note: *relevant bios and information follow the day's agenda*
Attire for the day: Business
Important reminder: Please bring a valid passport to facilitate check-in at various events for the day.
Transportation note: No group transportation is provided. Refer to the day-of instructions below.

Morning: Summit Gathering

7:45 – 8:00 AM – Delegation Gathering at "Central Hotel" for Transfer

Location: Lobby, Sheraton Grand Sydney Hyde Park
Address: 160–162 Elizabeth Street, Sydney NSW 2000
Phone: +61 2 9286 6000
Transfer Guidance: The 12-Micron venue is approximately a 6-minute taxi/Uber or a 20-minute walk (1.6 km) from the Sheraton. Please plan accordingly.

Day Program: Strategic Innovation Alliance Summit

Sponsored by Charles Kiefel AM

8:00 AM – 2:30 PM – U.S.–Australia Strategic Innovation Alliance Summit

Venue: 12-Micron, Watermans Room (Level 2 — *there is a private elevator entrance*)
Address: International Tower 1, 100 Barangaroo Avenue, Barangaroo NSW 2000

8:00 AM – *Registration, Networking, and Continental Breakfast*

8:40 AM – *A Fireside Chat: Putting Competitiveness into Context — The Challenges AND Opportunities for 2025*

Dialogue leadership will share perspectives on the global economic, political, and social and realities facing the United States and Australia.

Opening Remarks:

Mr. Charles Kiefel AM
Chairman
Australian Advisory Board on Competitiveness

The Hon. Deborah L. Wince-Smith
President and CEO
Council on Competitiveness

© 2025 Council on Competitiveness
Please do not share or reproduce without the written consent of the Council on Competitiveness.

9:00 AM –

Higher Education: Optimizing Its Role as a Lynchpin of U.S. and Australian Competitiveness

In the face of shifting demographic, structural, and political realities, along with increasing global competition, advanced economies need colleges and universities to meet their urgent research, knowledge creation, and talent development needs.

And, increasingly, towns, cities, states, and territories are turning to academic institutions as key drivers in regional innovation ecosystems. This session will examine the complex roles colleges and universities must play in an ever more complex world.

Key questions to consider:

1. In what ways can universities better position themselves as leaders in research and innovation, not only contributing to academic knowledge but also driving — and commercializing — technological advancements and solutions to societal challenges?
2. How can higher education institutions strengthen their partnerships with communities and industries to foster regional innovation ecosystems, and what role does this play in overall national competitiveness?
3. With the rapid evolution of industries and job markets, how should universities rethink their role in ensuring Australia and the United States have the workforce needed for the next economy?
4. What is the future of U.S.-Australia international academic collaboration – and key areas for joint research to advance competitiveness?

Panelists:

Mr. Jim Cooney
Non-Executive Chairman
TCI Renewables

Dr. Peter Dorhout
Vice President for Research
Iowa State University

Dr. Suresh Garimella
President
University of Arizona

Ms. Colleen Harkin
Director, IPA Schools Program and Research Fellow
Institute of Public Affairs

© 2025 Council on Competitiveness
Please do not share or reproduce without the written consent of the Council on Competitiveness.

Moderator:

Mr. Arun Abey AM
Executive Chairman
Walsh Bay Partners
-and-
Chairman, External Advisory Board
College of Business and Economics
Australian National University

9:40 AM – *Global Healthcare Competitiveness*

Better health is both a result and a driver of competitiveness. This conversation is grounded in the belief that everyone deserves the chance to flourish.

Key questions to consider:

1. How can we make aging healthier? What would be the economic, personal, and societal implications of a shift from lifespan to healthspan?
2. What life science and medical innovations are in the pipeline to support healthier, more prosperous societies? Are there clear avenues where greater bilateral collaboration between Australia and the U.S. can drive innovation?
3. Are there new, different funding models necessary – or available – to support tackling healthcare challenges?

Panelists:

Dr. Geoff Brooke
Senior Partner
BioScience Managers

Mr. Paul Davies
Director, Government Affairs for Australasia
Abbott Australia

Dr. Steve Gourlay
Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer
Actinogen

Dr. Michael Wolf
Senior Vice President
Hevolution

Moderator:

Dr. Rachel Swift
Executive Director
Future Securities AI

© 2025 Council on Competitiveness
Please do not share or reproduce without the written consent of the Council on Competitiveness.

10:20 AM –

National Laboratories and National Research Organizations: Providing a Strategic Roadmap for Competitiveness and Security

In an era of disruption and discontinuity, the United States and Australia hold significant advantages in the global pursuit of new opportunities: the 17 national laboratories of the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), more than 40 federally funded R&D centers in the United States, and the expansive research capabilities of institutes like CSIRO (the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation), which have among the world's most highly skilled, mission-driven multidisciplinary workforces and advanced scientific infrastructure.

How can the two nations best leverage these assets – domestically and in partnership – to enhance economic competitiveness while still fulfilling the laboratories' research and/or security missions?

Key questions to consider:

1. The breadth of these labs and research organizations' missions and the critical role they play in society are not always well understood. Given the global innovation imperative, what role must these labs and research organizations play within their respective national innovation ecosystem and in strategic, bilateral engagements?
2. What is needed to enhance collaboration among these labs and research organizations with academia and industry to speed the deployment of cutting-edge technologies to the marketplace?
3. How can we ensure a balance between research security with advances in scientific user facilities and workforce development?

Panelists:

Dr. Kate Evans
Director, Office of Institutional Strategic Planning
Oak Ridge National Laboratory

Dr. Mark Peters
President & CEO
MITRE

Ms. Anna-Maria Arabia OAM
Chief Executive
Australian Academy of Science

Moderator:

The Hon. Deborah L. Wince-Smith
President and CEO
Council on Competitiveness

© 2025 Council on Competitiveness
Please do not share or reproduce without the written consent of the Council on Competitiveness.

11:00 AM – *Special Snapshot: State of the Workplace — Australia, the United States, and Global Trends*

Ms. Claire De Carteret
Managing Director
Gallup

11:20 AM – *Innovation Anywhere, Opportunities Everywhere: Accelerating the Frontiers of Science and Technology*

Out innovating our global competitors is essential for the future of the United States and Australia. Both nations are today at the forefront of developing and commercializing technologies that will shape the long-term trajectory of their economic and productivity growth, prosperity and national security. This conversation focuses on exploring how both nations can unleash the innovation and commercialization necessary to establish themselves as global tech leaders.

Key questions to consider:

1. Why is U.S. and Australian leadership in next-generation technology such an important competitiveness issue – and where is the need the greatest in both nations?
2. What key challenges do leaders in both nations need to address and overcome to be global pacesetters in the research, development, and commercialization of new technologies?

Panelists:

Professor Russell Boyce
Managing Director
Mission Assurance

Dr. Peter Dorhout
Vice President for Research
Iowa State University

Mr. Phil Morle
Partner
Main Sequence

Mr. Rick Wylie
CEO
KeyOptions

© 2025 Council on Competitiveness
Please do not share or reproduce without the written consent of the Council on Competitiveness.

Katherine Woodthorpe
President
ATSE

Moderator:

Mr. Chad Evans
Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer
Council on Competitiveness

12:00 PM – *Lunch*

12:50 PM – *Natural Resources as a Defence Partnership: Is There a Better Way Forward to Strengthen the US-Australian Defence and Security Alliance?*

Australia is a resource rich country. Could there be a more productive and bi-lateral use of Australia's natural resources: gas, uranium, and precious minerals, and utilisation of uninhabited land?

A competitive use of Natural resources, including uranium, gas, precious minerals, and energy transition issues including AI and data centres is a subject that requires healthy debate.

Key questions to consider:

1. America needs more resources for its own defence program, and Australia needs a stronger alliance with the United States. Is there a way to bridge these requirements?
2. Is Australia's ban on uranium mining insurmountable? Can it and will it be challenged by future governments?
3. Can the strategic use of Australia's natural resources be a win-win for U.S.-Australia relations?

Panelists:

Dr. Brett Goldstein
Special Advisor to the Chancellor on National Security and Strategic Initiatives and Research Professor, School of Engineering
Vanderbilt University

Mr. Saul Kavonic
Head of Energy Research
MST Financial

The Hon. Arthur Sinodinos AO
Partner and Chair of the Australia Practice
The Asia Group

© 2025 Council on Competitiveness
Please do not share or reproduce without the written consent of the Council on Competitiveness.

Prof. Stephen Wilson
Adjunct Professor, Energy Management,
School of Mechanical & Mining Engineering
The University of Queensland Australia

Moderator:

Mr. Charles Kiefel AM
Chairman
Australian Advisory Board on Competitiveness

1:30 PM – *Moving Beyond Policy and Creating a New U.S.-Australia Strategic Innovation Alliance for the 21st Century*

Leaders will discuss the next chapter in America's and Australia's innovation economies – and concrete ideas to advance mutual economic and productivity growth, prosperity, and security.

Key questions to consider:

1. To what degree can Australia's natural resources be leveraged as a strategic asset to trade for increased Defence and Security.
2. What would a Capital Free Highway mean for the U.S.-Australian alliance and future productivity gains?
3. What assets do Australia and the United States have on hand to leverage in advancing innovation and enhancing the bilateral relationship?
4. What does it take to spark a new direction in U.S.-Australian innovation alliance? What would be concrete, first steps?
5. What new models for collaboration, resource sharing, and funding can the two countries explore to accelerate a bilateral innovation partnership?

Panelists:

Mr. Bill Calcraft
Senior Advisor
Denham Capital

Mr. Mal McComas
Private Investor -and-
Lawyer -and-
Public Company Director
Actinogen Medical -and-
Director
Core Lithium

© 2025 Council on Competitiveness
Please do not share or reproduce without the written consent of the Council on Competitiveness.

Ms. April Palmerlee
CEO
AmCham Australia -and-
Chairman
AmChams of Asia Pacific

Dr. Mark Peters
President & CEO
MITRE Corporation

The Hon. Deborah L. Wince-Smith
President and CEO
Council on Competitiveness

Moderator:

Mr. Charles Kiefel AM
Chairman
Australian Advisory Board on Competitiveness

2:10 PM – *Signing Ceremony and Release of: "A Compact for a Strategic U.S.-Australia Innovation Alliance"*

Dialogue leadership will sign and release a set of core recommendations and initiatives to advance a next-generation, non-partisan, private-sector driven innovation alliance between the United States and Australia.

The Hon. Deborah L. Wince-Smith
President and CEO
Council on Competitiveness

Mr. Charles Kiefel AM
Chairman
Australian Advisory Board on Competitiveness

And Key Members of the U.S. Delegation and
Senior Australian Partners

2:30 PM – *Dialogue Close*

© 2025 Council on Competitiveness
Please do not share or reproduce without the written consent of the Council on Competitiveness.

Speaker Bios

Listed Alphabetically; Excluding U.S.-Australia Innovation Delegation

Mr. Arun Abey AM
Executive Chairman, Walsh Bay Partners; Chairman, External Advisory Board, College of Business and Economics, Australian National University

Arun Abey has had a diverse career as an academic, an entrepreneur and a leading international executive with one of the world's largest firms. He is involved in a number of philanthropic activities and is the author of various international best sellers. What connects these diverse activities together is Arun's passion for ideas that help people enjoy happier, more meaningful and financially secure lives. He has a long standing commitment to helping those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Arun was born in Sri Lanka to parents who were involved in the arts, culture and journalism, but had very limited money. His early life involved stints in both Sri Lanka and Australia, before his parents finally settled in Australia. The family was involved in a number of cultural activities, including arranging the first dance tour of Australia by an Asian dance company, the Chitrasena Dance Company of Sri Lanka in 1963.

Ms. Anna-Maria Arabia OAM
Chief Executive, Australian Academy of Science

Anna-Maria is Chief Executive at the Australian Academy of Science, an independent organisation of distinguished Australian scientists, championing science for the benefit of all. Starting her career as a neuroscientist, Anna-Maria has worked nationally and globally in scientific research, policy development, politics and advocacy.

Her leadership has led to significant reform at the science–policy interface. She has established novel mechanisms to facilitate evidence-informed decision making in parliaments and the justice system; spearheaded new approaches to science communication; and implemented global initiatives to make visible underrepresented scientists.

She provides policy advice to the highest levels of government in Australia and contributes to global policy fora, most recently leading the establishment of the International Science Council Regional Focal Point for Asia and the Pacific. In 2025, Anna-Maria was awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia for her services to science, particularly through organisational leadership roles. She has also earnt the Knight of the Order of the Star of Italy for her constant commitment to promoting the role of science in society and her determination in enabling young and diverse people to access science. Anna-Maria is routinely called upon to serve as an agent of change.

© 2025 Council on Competitiveness
Please do not share or reproduce without the written consent of the Council on Competitiveness.

Prof. Russell Boyce
Managing Director of Mission Assurance

Based on 35 years of experience across a variety of disruptive technologies, Dr Russell Boyce is a high impact senior leader and trusted advisor for government, industry and the research sector, providing strategic thinking, leadership development (both strategic and personal), education, skills uplift and inspiration, in the application of advanced technology and innovation to solve modern challenges, and in growing a talent pipeline to tackle those challenges.

He has well over three decades of high-speed aeronautics and space mission research, teaching and strategic leadership experience, including launching a scramjet flight experiment, developing and flying five advanced satellites, successfully spinning off space technologies into startup companies, helping establish the Australian Space Agency, and chairing the Australian Academy of Science's National Committee for Space and Radio Science for several years.

Dr Boyce has held the roles of DSTO Chair for Hypersonics at UQ and Chair for Intelligent Space Systems, and Director of UNSW Canberra Space, at UNSW. He is currently the Managing Director of strategic consulting company Mission Assurance; chair of the board of Infinity Avionics; builds and leads capacity-building programs for emerging space-utilisation countries; and teaches leadership as a Visiting Professor at both INSEAD and the Thunderbird School of Global Management. He is a Fellow of the American Institute for Aeronautics and Astronautics.

Dr. Geoff Brook
Senior Partner, BioScience Managers

Geoff's experience includes company formation and acquisitions, as well as public listings on the NYSE, NASDAQ and ASX exchanges. He has been a founder, executive, director and chairman of priva te and public companies and has an extensive international network. Geoff now works with a number of Australian and US companies, helping them reach their full potential. From 2009 until 2015, he was an independent director of the Victoria Workcover Authority (Worksafe).

Geoff is licensed in clinical medicine the Medical Board of Victoria, Australia, and his post-graduate work was in anaesthetics/intensive care. He earned his Bachelor of Medicine/Surgery from the University of Melbourne, Australia, and a Masters of Business Administration from IMEDE (now IMD) in Lausanne, Switzerland.

© 2025 Council on Competitiveness
Please do not share or reproduce without the written consent of the Council on Competitiveness.

Mr. Bill Calcraft
Senior Advisor, Denham Capital

Bill Calcraft is a Senior Advisor based in Sydney, Australia, providing advisory services to Denham and portfolio companies in the Australasia region.
He previously served as Managing Director at Allianz Capital Partners, where he was instrumental in creating and developing the firm's renewable energy investment business. Bill also held senior positions at the Union Bank of Switzerland, Banco Santander and Dresdner Kleinwort Benson. He currently serves on the Board of Directors of Nexif Energy.

Bill received a Bachelor of Commerce of Law from the University of New South Wales and a Diploma in Social Studies, Philosophy, Politics & Economics from Basenose College, Oxford University. He holds both Certificate and Diploma in Company Direction qualifications from the Institute of Directors, London.

Mr. Jim Cooney
Non-Executive Chairman

Jim Cooney is a Chartered Engineer, graduating from the University of Sydney, the University of London and Imperial College. He is currently Executive Director of Willow Technology, based in Seattle USA, developing and operating Digital Twin Software across North America, Europe and Australia. Jim is also Chairman of TCI Renewables.

Jim practiced as a consulting engineer in Sydney, Paris and London from 1985 to 1992, involved in significant projects including: Rialto Towers, Melbourne; NAB House Sydney; Canary Wharf London; the Paris-Lille TGV Line; and St Paul's Station, London.

In 1996 Jim co-founded the TCI Group, which became one of Australia's leading systems integrators, specialising in renewable energy and communications infrastructure. Building on the Australian success Jim co-founded TCI UK in 1998 with offices across Great Britain, Northern Ireland and Eire. In 2004 TCI (Australia) listed successfully on the ASX, winning Jim the 2005 Australian Entrepreneur of the Year award.

Jim established TCI Renewables (UK) in 2004, developing, building and operating wind farms in the UK, Ireland, Canada and the United States. TCI Renewables now has an impressive record of development success in a challenging environment, with 450 MW of generation capacity in the UK and 825 MW in North America. TCIR has won the UK Renewable Business of the Year award multiple times and continues to be one of the most successful private renewable energy businesses in the UK.

© 2025 Council on Competitiveness
Please do not share or reproduce without the written consent of the Council on Competitiveness.

Mr. Paul Davies
Director, Government Affairs for Australasia, Abbott Australia

Paul Davies joined Abbott in March 2018 as Director for Government Affairs for Australasia. In this role he partners with Abbott's regional business leaders to manage and shape policies affecting Abbott's core businesses in Australia and New Zealand – devices, diagnostics and nutrition. He leads external stakeholder engagement in both countries to achieve business priorities. Prior to joining Abbott, for 12 years Paul was a Director with C & M International, a leading public policy consulting firm in Washington DC, representing clients in the food, beverage, consumer products, advanced materials, information technology and broadcasting sectors. Paul was a senior official in the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade where he represented the Australian Government in trade negotiations for over 12 years, including the U.S.-Australia Free Trade Agreement. Paul was trade policy adviser to the Australian Minister for Trade, Mark Vaile from 2000-2002.

Dr. Steve Gourlay
Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer, Actinogen

Dr Gourlay has more than 30 years of experience in the development of novel therapeutics and brings considerable skills and experience to Actinogen as the Company moves into further clinical development of its lead compound Xanamem. Formerly the founding Chief Medical Officer (CMO) at US-based Principia Biopharma Inc., Dr Gourlay was responsible for the supervision of multiple pre-clinical, first-in-human, Phase 2 and 3 clinical trial programs in orphan immunological diseases, multiple sclerosis and cancer. The data generated by these trials, and Dr Gourlay's roadshow presentations, supported a successful NASDAQ IPO of Principia Biopharma Inc. in 2018 – subsequently followed by an acquisition by Sanofi for US$3.7 billion in 2020.

Prior to Principia Biopharma, Dr Gourlay was a Partner at GBS Venture Partners, the Australian specialist life sciences and healthcare venture capital firm, where he contributed to the success of multiple clinical stage therapeutic companies including Elastagen, Spinifex and Peplin. Before GBS, and after a post doctorate in clinical pharmacology at the University of California, San Francisco, he held positions of increasing responsibility at Genentech, Inc. in the areas of pharmacoepidemiology and early clinical development.

Dr Gourlay has significant drug regulatory experience with the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA), European Medicines Agency (EMA) at many levels, including filing more than 10 Investigational New Drug (IND) applications, achieving several orphan drug status approvals for his Company's product(s), and completing several biologics license applications.

Dr Gourlay is based in Sydney and holds a Bachelor of Medicine, Bachelor of Surgery (MBBS) from the University of Melbourne, a PhD in Medicine from Monash University, an MBA from Macquarie University and is a fellow of the Royal Australian College of Physicians (FRACP). He is also a specialist physician in general internal medicine.

© 2025 Council on Competitiveness
Please do not share or reproduce without the written consent of the Council on Competitiveness.

Ms. Colleen Harkin
Director, IPA Schools Program and Research Fellow, Institute of Public Affairs

Colleen Harkin joined the Institute of Public Affairs as the Director of the IPA Schools Program and Research Fellow. She holds a Master degree of Education, a Bachelor of Education, and has undertaken a post graduate course in High Incidence Difficulties and a Diploma of Teaching.

Colleen has been a classroom teacher in both primary and secondary schools, across government and private schools. She has also worked as an education consultant in Australia and in Japan.

Colleen also has experience in the IT sector, in business development and project management, and owned her own small business in the development of award-winning bespoke databases and widgets for a range of international clients.

Most recently worked with Hon Senator Jane Hume MP and returned to the classroom to occasionally engage in relief teaching. As a teacher and a mother, Colleen is passionate about lifting standards in the Australian education system. Through her work at the IPA Colleen aims to undertake research and build resources that empower educators, parents and students with the knowledge and capability to become independent and proud citizens.

Colleen has served for many years as an executive committee member on a number of school and community sporting clubs and on the fundraising arm for the Royal Children Hospital She continues to organise an annual fundraising event for RCH. She has been politically active throughout her life in both fund raising and policy input. She enjoys a good steak tartare, time at the beach, building and home renovations.

Mr. Saul Kavonic
Head of Energy Research, MST Financial

Saul has been in the energy sector for over 15 years. Prior to joining MST in 2024, Saul was the Head of Energy and Resources Equity Research at Credit Suisse for over 5 years, covering the energy, bulk miners and green metals sectors. He frequently presents at leading industry conferences in the region, is the top ranked energy analyst in Australia according to industry surveys, and is a regular gas and energy commentator in print and broadcast media. Saul has previously worked in the energy sector in commercial, research and government policy roles. He has worked in commercial and strategy roles at Woodside Energy, Australias largest oil and gas company, and was the principal analyst in Australasia for Wood Mackenzie, the worlds leading energy consultancy. He has also worked at M.H.Carnegie & Co, one of Australias largest Venture Capital funds, and has worked in economic development policy roles for the United Nations and African Union Commission. Saul is a member of the industry advisory board for the University of Western Australia Oceans Graduate School and a co-founder of Refugees Welcome Australia. Saul holds degrees in Law (Honours) and Chemical Engineering (Honours) from the University of Melbourne.

© 2025 Council on Competitiveness
Please do not share or reproduce without the written consent of the Council on Competitiveness.

Mr. Mal McComas
Private Investor
Lawyer
Public Company Director, Actinogen Medical
Director, Core Lithium

Malcolm is a private investor and an experienced company director and was previously an investment banker with leadership roles at several global organizations.

Specifically, he was head of investment banking at County NatWest (now Citi Group) for 10 years and a director of Grant Samuel for a similar period following earlier roles at Morgan Grenfell (now Deutsche Bank) in Melbourne, Sydney and London.

He has deep experience in equity capital markets and mergers and acquisitions, and has worked across many industry sectors for companies, institutional investors and governments over a 30 year career in investment banking.

He was previously a lawyer specializing in tax. He has worked with many growth companies in the resources sector and was most recently a director of BC Iron, the WA based iron ore producer and Consolidated Minerals, a global manganese mining company.

Mr. Phil Morle
Partner, Main Sequence

Phil Morle is a partner at Main Sequence where he leads the Feed 10 Billion People challenge. He's passionate about delivering healthier people and a healthier planet, leading him to develop an interest in a number of adjacent areas such as decarbonization, synthetic biology, new materials and recycling. Since joining, he has led the firm's company creation program called Venture Science, developing notable startups such as v2food, Samsara Eco and Eden Brew.

A proud former theatre director, his career has taught him how to build something from nothing, build tightly unified teams and tell a story. This unique skill set allows him to help companies pinpoint their unique story to fuel strategy and momentum in the market.

Serving as the chairperson for companies co-founded by Main Sequence, Phil oversees the strategic outcomes and purpose for Eden Brew, Samsara Eco, v2food, and RapidAIM, and as a director to Nourish Ingredients, Coviu Global, Q-CTRL, and Maxwell Plus, among many others.

Prior to Main Sequence, Phil co-founded the first tech incubator in Asia Pacific – Pollenizer. Here he played an instrumental role in developing the startup ecosystem across Asia Pacific and advised some of the world's biggest organizations on practical ways to deliver new growth and the cultural change that is required to get there. Before that, he served as the CTO at the massive file-sharing company – Kazaa. At its height, this company was the majority of data traveling through the internet and played a material role

© 2025 Council on Competitiveness
Please do not share or reproduce without the written consent of the Council on Competitiveness.

in the emergence of how media is shared today. In 2016, he led and designed the program for ON, CSIRO's national deep tech accelerator program.

Phil graduated from Northumbria University with a BA (honors) in Performing Arts.

Ms. April Palmerlee
CEO, AmCham Australia
Chairman, AmChams of Asia Pacific

April Palmerlee has been CEO of the American Chamber of Commerce in Australia since 2017. In 2024, she was elected Chairman of AmChams of the Asia Pacific. American-born, she has lived in S ydney for over 20 years and is a dual citizen. She is a member of Chief Executive Women and a graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors. She received a BS from Georgetown and a Master's from Columbia.

In Australia, she has worked for the US Studies Centre at USyd, the Lowy Institute, the Centre for Independent Studies, and Potomac Partners. In the United States, she held the rank of Assistant Secretary of State. Before that, she was a senior executive at the Council on Foreign Relations in New York. She has also worked for couturier Oscar de la Renta, financial publisher The Bank Credit Analyst, and not-for-profit The Spanish Institute.

She sits on the boards of CIS, The United Way Australia and Georgetown University Australian and New Zealand Studies Center. April also teaches MBA students at the University of Sydney Business School.

The Hon. Arthur Sinodinos AO
Partner and Chair of the Australia Practice, The Asia Group

The Hon. Arthur Sinodinos AO is Partner and Chair of TAG's Australia Practice and a leading expert on Australian public policy and politics who brings a wealth of public and private sector experi ence spanning national security, industry innovation, economic policy, and banking. Ambassador Sinodinos is responsible for developing and executing the firm's business strategy in Australia and supporting C-Suite executives from across TAG's geographic portfolio to manage evolving risks and seize emerging growth opportunities.

Ambassador Sinodinos most recently served as Australian Ambassador to the United States, where he was closely involved in Australia's negotiations related to AUKUS, the Quad, and the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework. Ambassador Sinodinos previously worked as Australia's Minister for Industry, Innovation and Science and was a Senator for New South Wales in the Australian Parliament from 2011 to 2019. During his parliamentary career, he also held other key roles in and outside Cabinet, including Cabinet Secretary and Assistant Treasurer.

Over a career spanning four decades, Ambassador Sinodinos has held a number of influential positions in public service. On the election of the Hon. John Howard AC as Prime Minister of Australia in 1996, Ambassador Sinodinos was appointed the Prime Minister's Senior Economic Adviser and in 1997, the Prime Minister's Chief of Staff, a position he held for nine years. Between 1987-1989 and 1995-1996

© 2025 Council on Competitiveness
Please do not share or reproduce without the written consent of the Council on Competitiveness.

Ambassador Sinodinos also served as Senior Economic Adviser to Mr Howard while in opposition. He started his Australian Public Service career in 1979, rising to the Senior Executive Service in the Department of the Treasury.

In 2006, Ambassador Sinodinos left government to work with Goldman Sachs JBWere, followed by the National Australia Bank and various corporate appointments.

In 2008, Ambassador Sinodinos was appointed an Officer of the Order of Australia for his service to politics through the executive function of government, to the development of economic policy and reform, and to the Greek community. In 2019, he was made a Distinguished Fellow of the Australia & New Zealand School of Government in recognition of his promotion of public sector leadership.

Ambassador Sinodinos lives in Washington with his wife Elizabeth, and their three children.

Dr. Rachel Swift
General Manager, Strategy, Innovation and Ventures, HCF

Accomplished senior executive and board director with a distinguished career spanning health care delivery, strategy, and financial services in Australia and internationally. Decade of experience in tier-1 strategy as a top-performer with The Boston Consulting Group (BCG), coupled with executive-level corporate, not-for-profit and political roles.

Proven expertise developing strategies and driving growth, a focus on fostering innovation and translating concepts into tangible results. Able to navigate seamlessly between private sector and government, as recognised by numerous appointments to government and private boards.

Collaborative leadership style with the ability to form powerful networks with diverse stakeholders fostering partnerships and driving mutually beneficial outcomes. A proven media performer.

With a powerful combination of business acumen, strategic thinking, and deep industry expertise that enables the translation of ambiguity into actionable strategies and measurable growth.

Rachel brings hands-on implementation experience, through her role as the acting CEO of an integrated health system responsible for hospital network and insurance. She has also built operations from the ground up in low resource settings developing a global health program across East Africa with the Clinton Health Access Initiative and deploying to West Africa in 2014 to drive the public health response as Expert Advisor to the UN's Special Representative of the Secretary-General during the Ebola Emergency Response, shaping the strategy and operations that successfully brought the epidemic under control

Dr Swift regularly speaks at international forums and is Vice-Chair of Australian Advisory Board on Competitivness. Her Board roles cover GP training & registration, telehealth services and the University of Melbourne, School of Medicine Innovation and Enterprise Board. She has been made a Fellow of the Royal Society of Public Health & the Australasian College of Health Systems Management.
In partnership with Professor Hon Greg Hunt, Dr Swift is co-leading the Fertility Society of Australia & New Zealand review and 10 year strategic roadmap to ensure affordable access to high-quality fertility care.

© 2025 Council on Competitiveness
Please do not share or reproduce without the written consent of the Council on Competitiveness.

Dr, Swift has held teaching appointments at the Universities of Oxford and Adelaide, Lincoln and St Hilda's Colleges at Oxford and Magdalen College School & is a published medical & global health researcher. In her spare time she gives back to the community as a volunteer in the Country Fire Service (CFS).

Prof. Stephen Wilson
Adjunct Professor, Energy Management, School of Mechanical & Mining Engineering, The University of Queensland Australia

Prof. Wilson is an energy economist with 30 years experience on assignments in over 30 countries. During that time he has been involved in most parts of the wider energy sector along the value chain from primary energy to end users, in electricity, gas and the transport sector. Over 20 years of his experience is in consulting, providing commercial and policy advice, drawing on economic analysis and strategy in energy and resources for financial, corporate and government clients. Prof. Wilson spent five years leading energy industry and market analysis for a large corporation. For the past four years he has been involved in academia, in research and teaching. He is now continuing my involvement in research supervision on a part-time basis, while my main focus now is on advisory work, including commercialization of new technology and startup ventures.

Dr Katherine Woodthorpe
President
Australian Academy of Technological Sciences & Engineering (ATSE)

Dr. Woodthorpe has advanced Australia's ability to derive substantial value from translation of research outputs into tangible outcomes and benefits for scientists, research organisations, governments and industry. She has made substantial contributions to the Australian technology and science translation landscape over the past 25 years. During this time, she has had a significant influence on government policies that now enable and encourage technology-based companies to achieve their potential. She has been a leader at the nexus of industry and academia through her senior governance roles with technology companies, CRCs and NCRIS, UTS Council and University-owned ventures.

© 2025 Council on Competitiveness
Please do not share or reproduce without the written consent of the Council on Competitiveness.

Mr. Rick Wylie
CEO, KeyOptions

Founder and chief visionary and creator himself, Rick started the company to address the concerns of the growing threat caused by technology in government.

Evening: Free / Unplanned Time in Sydney

Explore Barangaroo and the Darling Harbour — just a ten-minute walk from 12-Micron.

1. Discover more about Barangaroo
2. Discover more about the Darling Harbour.

© 2025 Council on Competitiveness
Please do not share or reproduce without the written consent of the Council on Competitiveness.

Friday, 25 July 2025 – SYDNEY

Attire for the day: Business
Important reminder: Please bring a valid passport to facilitate check-in at various events for the day.

Morning: Western Sydney University Visit

9:30 AM – Delegation Gathering in the Lobby of Sheraton Grand Sydney Hyde Park for Bus Transfer

Hotel Address: 160–162 Elizabeth Street, Sydney NSW 2000
Hotel Phone: +61 2 9286 6000

About Western Sydney University

Western Sydney University is a vibrant and forward-thinking institution located at the heart of one of Australia's most diverse and rapidly growing regions. Established in 1989, the university has evolved into a research-intensive and community-engaged university that spans multiple campuses across Greater Western Sydney, including Parramatta, Bankstown, Campbelltown, Hawkesbury, Penrith, and Westmead.

The university offers a wide range of undergraduate and postgraduate programs, with strengths in fields such as health, education, business, law, engineering, the humanities, and the social sciences. It places a strong focus on flexible and career-focused learning, providing students with opportunities for hands-on experience, work-integrated learning, and global engagement. Western Sydney University also maintains a firm commitment to inclusion, offering pathways and support for students from diverse backgrounds to thrive in higher education.

In recent years, the university has gained significant international recognition. It ranks within the top two percent of universities worldwide and has been named the world's number one university for impact in the Times Higher Education Impact Rankings, reflecting its commitment to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. Its research excellence is supported by world-class institutes, including the Hawkesbury Institute for the Environment and the MARCS Institute for Brain, Behaviour and Development. These centres conduct groundbreaking work in areas such as climate adaptation, sustainable agriculture, health innovation, and advanced technology.

The university continues to invest in modern, sustainable infrastructure. The Parramatta campus, which includes historic buildings and a modern city-based extension, serves as a major academic and administrative hub. The recently opened Bankstown City Campus, with its state-of-the-art teaching and research facilities, supports over 10,000 students and has become a key feature of the university's urban engagement strategy. At Westmead, the university anchors a growing health and innovation precinct that fosters collaboration between researchers, clinicians, and industry.

Western Sydney University is also deeply connected to its local community. It plays a leading role in regional development, providing educational and career pathways to the area's multicultural population. The university champions sustainability, running on 100 percent renewable electricity and pursuing ambitious zero-waste targets. It engages with global partners across more than 200 institutions and offers extensive study-abroad and scholarship programs to support international collaboration and learning.

© 2025 Council on Competitiveness
Please do not share or reproduce without the written consent of the Council on Competitiveness.

9:30 – 10:30 AM – Transfer to Western Sydney University – Parramatta South Campus

Delegates will be escorted to the meeting venue upon arrival.

Campus Location: Western Sydney University – Parramatta City Campus (EJa) Parramatta NSW 2116

Hosts:

Professor Deborah Sweeney
Provost, Western Sydney University

Professor Deborah Sweeney is the Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Vice-President (Research, Enterprise and International) at Western Sydney University. She provides leadership and guidance to achieve the University's strategic priorities for research and innovation and focuses on quality assurance and enhancement. In addition, she is responsible for supporting the research portfolios within the Schools and Institutes.

Deborah joined Western Sydney in 2009 and has more than 20 years' experience in research and research management. She received her Bachelor of Optometry from UNSW in 1980, joining the Cornea & Contact Lens Research Unit within the School of Optometry, UNSW. Since completing her PhD in 1992, she has held various executive roles within the Cornea and Contact Lens Research Unit and Vision CRC and its predecessor the CRC for Eye Research and Technology, including five years as Chief Executive Officer of Vision CRC.

Her major research area has been corneal physiology, her work has been instrumental in developing an understanding of the physiology of the human cornea and the effects of contact lens wear and refractive surgery on corneal function characteristics and the development of alternative forms of vision correction. Deborah has published over 100 refereed articles and several book chapters, and is co-inventor on two patents.

Distinguished Professor Brian G. Falzon
Dean of Engineering, Design and Built Environment at Western Sydney University;
Chair of Advanced Composite Materials and Aerospace Structures

Distinguished Professor Brian G. Falzon is Dean of Engineering, Design and Built Environment at Western Sydney University and Chair of Advanced Composite Materials and Aerospace Structures. Previously, he served as Distinguished Professor at RMIT University (2021–2023), where he also led RMIT's Space Industry Hub and the Victorian Node of the SmartSat CRC. He was Head of the School of Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering at Queen's University Belfast (2015–2021) and held the prestigious UK Royal Academy of Engineering–Bombardier Chair in Aerospace Composites (2012-2017). He was Foundation Chair in Aerospace Engineering at Monash University (2008–2012), Director of Research, and Head of Aerospace Engineering. He spent over a decade at Imperial College London, progressing from postdoctoral fellow to academic staff member.

Prof Falzon earned his PhD, BEng (first-class honours), and BSc from the University of Sydney.

© 2025 Council on Competitiveness
Please do not share or reproduce without the written consent of the Council on Competitiveness.

A world-leading expert (top 1% in Materials Science, Elsevier 2023), he focuses on the computational analysis, design, manufacture, and testing of advanced composite structures. His work influenced the Boeing 787 and FA-18E/F Australian programs and contributed to the UK's Next Generation Composite Wing and NASA's Advanced Composites Project.

He has received multiple awards, including three from the Royal Aeronautical Society and an Australian Leadership Award (2009) from the ADC Forum. As co-founder of Veryan Medical Ltd, he holds patents for a vascular biomimetic stent honoured with a 2022 Good Design Award from the Japan Institute of Design Promotion . In 2018, he was named 'Belfast Ambassador of the Year' for promoting advanced manufacturing and securing the 23rd International Conference on Composite Materials for the city.

Areas of Research:

- High fidelity finite element modelling of composite impact damage and crush.
- Nano-enhanced multifunctional composite structures.
- Composite manufacturing and process modelling.
- Composite repair.
- Material characterisation and structural testing.

University Engagement Program

10:45 – 10:50 AM – Welcome Remarks

Speaker: Professor Deborah Sweeney, Provost and Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Vice-President (Research, Enterprise & International)

10:50 – 11:50 AM – Presentation "Blasts"

Highlights of university activities aligned with the Delegation interests

11:50 AM – 12:30 PM – Campus Tour

Includes a visit to the Whitlam Institute, a dynamic research and policy think tank, and a prime ministerial public museum. As a not-for-profit, we work "to help the great and continuing work of building a more equal, open, tolerant and independent Australia," as tasked by Australia's 21st Prime Minister Gough Whitlam, 12 November 2010.

© 2025 Council on Competitiveness
Please do not share or reproduce without the written consent of the Council on Competitiveness.

12:30 – 1:30 PM – Lunch Meeting with University Leadership

Location: Parramatta South Campus

Special Guest:

Distinguished Professor George Williams AO
Vice-Chancellor, Western Sydney University

Professor George Williams AO is the Vice-Chancellor and President at Western Sydney University. He is proud to lead an institution renowned for providing broad access to higher education and for achieving real-world impact through positive social, environmental and economic change in Western Sydney and globally. Professor Williams commenced as Western Sydney University's fifth Vice-Chancellor in July 2024, bringing decades of experience as a constitutional law scholar and teacher, senior leader in higher education, barrister and as a national thought leader.

1:30 – 2:45 PM – Roundtable Discussion

Focused dialogue between the delegation and university leadership

2:45 PM – Visit Conclusion and Departure

Afternoon: Return to Sydney CBD

2:45 – 3:45 PM – Delegation Transfer Back to "Central Hotel"

Destination: Sheraton Grand Sydney Hyde Park
Address: 160–162 Elizabeth Street, Sydney NSW 2000

Evening: Free Time in Sydney

Note: The delegation program formally concludes. Delegates are free to enjoy the evening at their leisure.

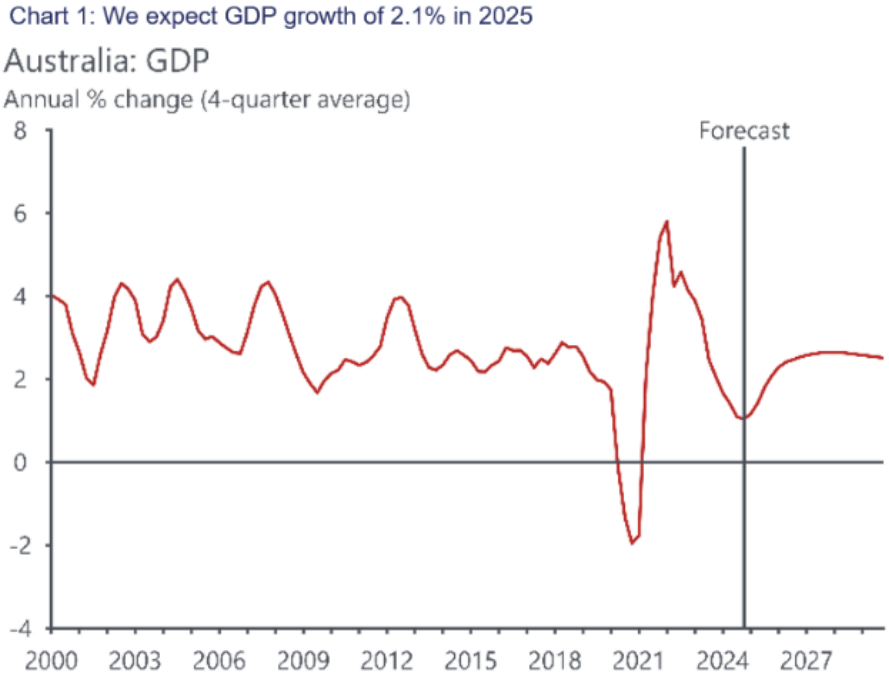
© 2025 Council on Competitiveness
Please do not share or reproduce without the written consent of the Council on Competitiveness.

Addendum: Economic Snapshots

A Macro View into Australia's Economy and Innovation System

Macro Trends & GDP

Australia's nominal GDP is approximately $1.77 trillion USD, with a per capita GDP around $64,500 USD, placing the country among the world's most prosperous nations. In purchasing power parity (PPP) terms, the GDP is closer to $1.98 trillion USD. According to the OECD Economic Outlook, Australia's GDP growth is expected to remain moderate in the near term, with estimates of 1.8 percent in 2025 and 2.2 percent in 2026. This trajectory reflects structural challenges such as an aging population, stagnating productivity, and subdued business investment. Machinery and equipment spending has declined by 3.7 percent, contributing to a an approximately 30 percent investment gap compared to OECD averages.



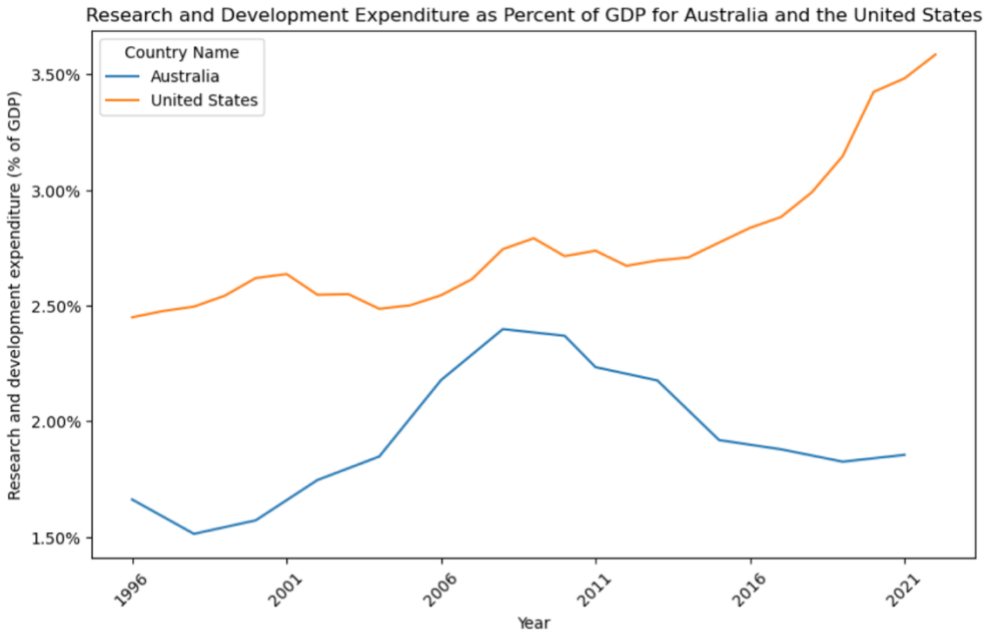
The United States maintains a higher GDP per capita than Australia, with U.S. levels around $81,700 USD. Over recent years, U.S. GDP per capita growth has outpaced Australia's: the United States saw annual per capita growth of roughly 2.3 percent compared to Australia's 1.3 percent. While Australia's GDP per capita has risen from about 75 percent to nearly 80 percent of the United States level since the mid-1980s, and as identified by Australia's Productivity Commission, a persistent productivity gap remains the main reason for this difference.[1]

[1] Productivity Commission, "Australia's Productivity Challenge," Productivity Insights, April 2024, 15–18.

© 2025 Council on Competitiveness
Please do not share or reproduce without the written consent of the Council on Competitiveness.

Research and Development

The United States consistently invests a much larger share of its economy in research and development (R&D) than Australia. As of 2022, U.S. R&D expenditure stood at approximately 3.6 percent of GDP, while Australia's was just under 1.9 percent of GDP in 2021. This gap has persisted for over a decade and has significant implications for both countries' innovation capacity and long-term economic competitiveness. Australian science and industry groups warn that unless the country boosts R&D spending to at least 3 percent of GDP, Australia risks becoming a country of consumers instead of creators, leading to diminished economic growth and reduced job creation potential.[2]



Source: The World Bank

Inflation, Employment, and Wages

- **Inflation:** Headline inflation dropped to 2.4 percent in the first quarter of 2025, the lowest in four years and within the Reserve Bank of Australia's target range of 2 to 3 percent. The United States is forecast to have inflation of 2.6 percent in 2025. Housing, insurance, and food are the main contributors to inflation in Australia, while energy prices have stabilized from previous volatility.[3]
- **Unemployment:** The unemployment rate in Australia stands at 4.1 percent as of April 2025, up from 3.6 percent a year earlier but still historically low. The number of employed people reached 14.3 million, with labor force participation at 66.7 percent. The United States

[2] Science & Technology Australia. "R&D push will boost Australia by $100 billion and 42,000 new jobs." June 5, 2025. https://scienceandtechnologyaustralia.org.au/rd-push-will-boost-australia-by-100-billion-and-42000-new-jobs/.
[3] CNBC, "Australia's economic growth stays flat at 1.3 percent in the first quarter," June 4, 2025, https://www.cnbc.com/2025/06/04/australia-economy-rba-gdp-q1-2025.html.

© 2025 Council on Competitiveness
Please do not share or reproduce without the written consent of the Council on Competitiveness.

unemployment rate is also 4.1 percent, with a participation rate of 62.7 percent, representing 163.3 million people.

- **Wage Growth:** Wages are growing at 3.6 percent year-on-year, slightly above inflation and supporting household incomes. Public sector wage growth is higher than private sector wage growth, and wage pressures are strongest in health, education, and construction. In the United States, wage growth is projected at 4.1 percent in 2025.

Overall Investment

Australia consistently reports a higher gross capital formation (GCF) as a share of GDP than the United States. This reflects structural differences in their economies, with Australia's growth model being more investment and resource intensive. A key driver in this trend is that Australia's economic output is heavily reliant on mining and energy exports, particularly iron ore, coal, and LNG. These sectors demand significant capital outlays for extraction, infrastructure, and logistics.[4]

In comparison, private non-mining business investment is subdued, at about 10 percent of GDP, compared to 13 percent in the United States. Mining investment remains significant, accounting for 4.5 percent of GDP, while investment in dwellings and buildings has slowed. Building approvals fell by 5.7 percent year-on-year in April 2025, with total dwelling approvals at 14,633 for the month.[5]

Fiscal and Monetary Policy

- **Government Debt:** Net government debt is projected at 23 percent of GDP in 2025, among the lowest in the OECD and far below the United States federal debt, which exceeds 100 percent of GDP. Interest payments on government debt remain below 1.5 percent of GDP.
- **Budget:** The federal budget returned to surplus in 2023–24, with a surplus of $6 billion USD, but modest deficits are expected in the coming years as spending on health, defense, and infrastructure increases. The United States continues to run a federal deficit of about 5 percent of GDP.
- **Interest Rates:** The Reserve Bank of Australia's cash rate stands at 4.35 percent in May 2025, with recent reductions to stimulate growth as inflation eases. Mortgage rates for new borrowers average 6.1 percent. The United States Federal Reserve's policy rate is similar, at 4.5 percent.[6]

[4] Australian Bureau of Statistics. Mining Industry Overview. https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics
[5] OECD, "OECD Economic Outlook, Volume 2025 Issue 1: Australia," June 3, 2025, https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/oecd-economic-outlook-volume-2025-issue-1_83363382-en/full-report/australia_b563f928.html.
[6] Trading Economics, "Australia GDP Growth Rate," March 5, 2025, https://tradingeconomics.com/australia/gdp-growth.

© 2025 Council on Competitiveness
Please do not share or reproduce without the written consent of the Council on Competitiveness.

Sectoral Composition and Regional Distribution

The services sector is the dominant force in the Australian economy, accounting for approximately 63 percent of GDP and employing 79 percent of the national workforce. Key segments include finance, insurance, health, education, tourism, and public administration. Sydney and Melbourne are the primary service and financial hubs, hosting major national and regional headquarters of global firms.

Mining continues to be a vital economic pillar, historically contributing about 8 percent of GDP. The sector is heavily export-oriented and concentrated geographically in Western Australia (iron ore and lithium), Queensland (coal and gas), and the Northern Territory (uranium). Agriculture, while representing only 2–3 percent of GDP, plays a crucial export role, with major commodities including beef, wheat, wool, and wine. Agricultural innovation clusters are emerging in regional New South Wales, Victoria, and Queensland.

Manufacturing has declined in relative terms since the 1980s but is experiencing a resurgence in high-tech and niche areas such as biomedical devices, food processing, and defence manufacturing. The construction sector, contributing 7–8 percent of GDP, is essential to infrastructure development and urban growth.

Comparative Table: Australia vs. United States (2025)

Indicator	Australia	United States
Real GDP Growth	1.3–1.8 percent	2.3 percent
Inflation	2.4 percent	2.6 percent
Unemployment Rate	4.1 percent	4.1 percent
Wage Growth	3.6 percent	4.1 percent
Productivity Growth	0.6 percent	1.3 percent
R&D Spending (of GDP)	1.8 percent	3.5 percent
Net Government Debt (of GDP)	23 percent	Over 100 percent
Export Share of GDP	24 percent	12 percent
Population	27 million	340 million
Labor Force Participation	66.7 percent	62.7 percent
Median House Price	652,000 USD	430,000 USD

© 2025 Council on Competitiveness
Please do not share or reproduce without the written consent of the Council on Competitiveness.

AUKUS

In 2025, the AUKUS partnership — uniting Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States — has become the cornerstone of Australia's defense modernization and technological transformation. What began as a trilateral agreement to deliver nuclear-powered submarines has evolved into a comprehensive framework for cooperation across advanced military capabilities, critical technologies, and workforce development.

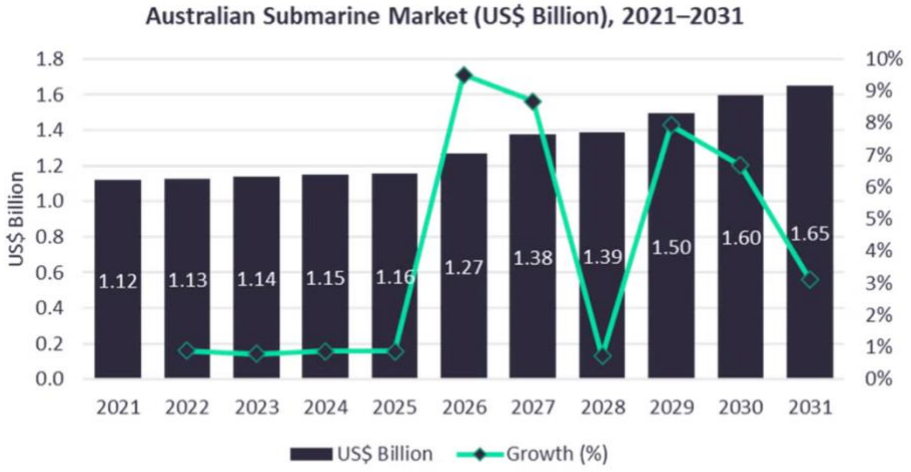
AUKUS has reinforced Australia's alignment with the United States and UK, positioning the country as a leading security partner in the Indo-Pacific. In 2025, joint military exercises and intelligence sharing have increased, and Australia has hosted high-level defense dialogues with AUKUS partners and regional allies. The partnership is viewed as a response to growing regional tensions, especially in the South China Sea and the broader Indo-Pacific, and is intended to maintain a stable balance of power.

The Four Pillars of AUKUS

The partnership is now structured around four main pillars, each with its own set of programs, investments, and strategic objectives.

Pillar I: Nuclear-Powered Submarine Program

Pillar I remains the flagship initiative of AUKUS. It is focused on delivering a fleet of conventionally armed, nuclear-powered submarines (SSNs) to the Royal Australian Navy. In 2025, construction is underway on new shipyard facilities in South Australia and Western Australia, designed to support both the assembly and long-term maintenance of the submarine fleet. The first Australian naval and engineering personnel have completed nuclear propulsion training in the United States and United Kingdom, and regulatory reforms are progressing to ensure nuclear safety and compliance.[7]

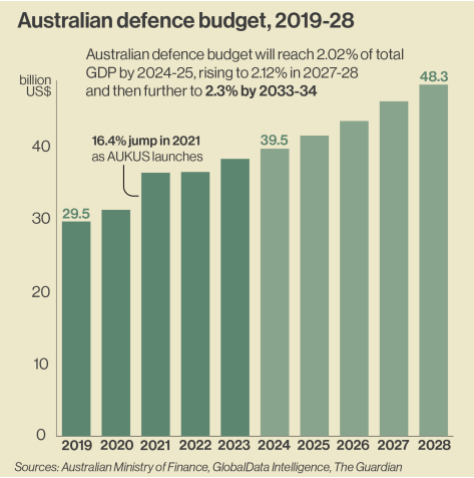


Source: GlobalData Intelligence

[7] Australian Department of Defence, "AUKUS Update: Nuclear-Powered Submarine Program," April 2025.

© 2025 Council on Competitiveness
Please do not share or reproduce without the written consent of the Council on Competitiveness.

Australia's defense budget reached 2.2 percent of GDP in 2025, with a significant portion allocated to AUKUS-related projects. The submarine program alone is expected to generate thousands of jobs and create a long-term pipeline for advanced manufacturing, engineering, and supply chain development.[8]



Pillar II: Advanced Capabilities

Pillar II broadens the scope of AUKUS to include joint research, development, and deployment of advanced military and dual-use technologies. In 2025, trilateral working groups are actively collaborating in several domains:

- **Quantum Technologies:** Joint projects are underway in quantum sensing, secure quantum communications, and quantum computing for defense applications. Australian universities and startups are receiving new funding streams and access to international expertise.
- **Artificial Intelligence and Autonomy:** The three nations are developing AI-enabled decision support, autonomous undersea vehicles, and advanced surveillance systems.
- **Cybersecurity:** Efforts are focused on joint cyber defense exercises, threat intelligence sharing, and the development of quantum-resistant cryptographic protocols.
- **Hypersonics and Counter-Hypersonics:** Collaborative R&D is advancing hypersonic missile systems and defense mechanisms, with Australian industry contributing to testing and materials science.
- **Undersea Capabilities:** The partnership is investing in unmanned undersea vehicles, advanced sonar, and anti-submarine warfare technologies.[9]

Pillar III: Information Sharing and Integration

This pillar aims to streamline the flow of classified and sensitive information among the three nations. In 2025, AUKUS partners have implemented new protocols for intelligence sharing, joint operational planning, and secure communications. This integration is enhancing Australia's ability to participate in allied operations and respond to regional security challenges.[10] This comes as a supplement to the "Five

[8] OECD, "OECD Economic Outlook, Volume 2025 Issue 1: Australia," June 3, 2025.
[9] US Department of Defense, "AUKUS Advanced Capabilities Fact Sheet," March 2025.
[10] UK Ministry of Defence, "AUKUS Workforce and Industrial Cooperation," February 2025.

© 2025 Council on Competitiveness
Please do not share or reproduce without the written consent of the Council on Competitiveness.

Eyes" intelligence sharing agreement, of which the three nations, along with Canada and New Zealand, are a part.

Pillar IV: Workforce, Industrial Base, and Supply Chain Security
AUKUS has triggered a major expansion of Australia's defense workforce and industrial base. In 2025, new training centers and university programs are preparing engineers, technicians, and cyber specialists for roles in nuclear propulsion, advanced manufacturing, and digital defense. The government has launched initiatives to attract overseas talent and upskill the existing workforce, with a focus on long-term career pathways. Supply chain resilience is a priority, with new investments in domestic component manufacturing and trilateral agreements to secure critical materials and technologies. [11]

Economic and Industrial Impact
The economic footprint of AUKUS is significant. Defense spending has increased, with the largest share directed toward shipbuilding, advanced manufacturing, and technology development. In 2025, Australia's defense industry is supporting more than 30,000 direct jobs, with thousands more in the supply chain. The submarine program alone is expected to create over 20,000 jobs at its peak construction phase.[12]

Challenges and Public Debate
AUKUS faces ongoing challenges, including the complexity of technology transfer, harmonizing export controls, and managing the costs and risks associated with nuclear technology. Public debate continues around issues such as nuclear safety, sovereignty, and the broader strategic implications of the partnership. While bipartisan political support remains strong, there are calls for greater transparency and community engagement, especially regarding the environmental and safety aspects of nuclear-powered submarines.

[11] Australian Department of Defence, "AUKUS Update: Nuclear-Powered Submarine Program," April 2025.
[12] OECD, "OECD Economic Outlook, Volume 2025 Issue 1: Australia," June 3, 2025.

© 2025 Council on Competitiveness
Please do not share or reproduce without the written consent of the Council on Competitiveness.

Australia’s Political Landscape

Political System Overview

Australia is a federal parliamentary democracy and constitutional monarchy. The country formally recognizes the Monarch of the United Kingdom as its ceremonial head of state, represented domestically by the Governor-General. Australia’s Constitution, enacted in 1901, establishes a federal system that divides powers between the Commonwealth (federal government) and six states, with additional governance by two territories.

The national legislature is bicameral, consisting of the House of Representatives (lower house) and the Senate (upper house). The House comprises 151 members elected to three-year terms, while the Senate includes 76 senators with staggered six-year terms. The executive branch is headed by the Prime Minister, who must maintain the confidence of the House of Representatives and oversees a Cabinet of ministers responsible for various policy domains.

Each government minister is typically mirrored by a "shadow minister" from the opposition. Shadow ministers are appointed by the opposition leader and are responsible for scrutinizing and challenging the policies and decisions of their corresponding government minister. They also help develop alternative policies and play a central role in parliamentary debate and accountability.

Australia’s federal structure allows states and territories to retain considerable authority over education, health, transportation, and infrastructure, fostering policy diversity across regions but also necessitating strong intergovernmental coordination.

Broader Political Trends and Outlook

Australia’s compulsory voting system continues to drive high voter participation, with over 90 percent turnout in recent federal elections. This system encourages broad-based political engagement and contributes to the legitimacy of elected governments.

The political environment is increasingly shaped by cross-cutting issues such as climate change, fiscal pressure, technological disruption, and housing affordability. The Albanese government remains committed to its climate target of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 43 percent below 2005 levels by 2030.

Looking ahead, the next federal election is due by mid-2026. Political analysts are closely monitoring public sentiment, economic conditions, and the evolving role of independent and minor party actors in shaping Australia’s policy direction and governance.

2025 Federal Election: Outcome and Implications

The May 2025 federal election represented a turning point in Australia’s electoral landscape. Prime Minister Anthony Albanese led the Australian Labor Party (ALP) to a second-term victory, securing approximately 85 seats in the 151-member House of Representatives. This outcome exceeded the majority threshold of 76 seats.

© 2025 Council on Competitiveness
Please do not share or reproduce without the written consent of the Council on Competitiveness.

The opposition Liberal-National Coalition experienced a decline, winning just 36 seats. Notably, Opposition Leader Peter Dutton lost his Queensland seat of Dickson after 24 years in Parliament.

Support for independents and minor parties reached a record high, collectively surpassing the Coalition's vote share. The Greens, along with a new cohort of community-backed independents often referred to as "teals," expanded their presence, especially in urban and regional districts. The combined primary vote for the Labor and Coalition parties dropped to historic lows, continuing a long-term trend of declining major party dominance.

Voters expressed strong concerns over the rising cost of living, housing affordability, access to healthcare, and the global economic climate. Many cited U.S. trade policy and its ripple effects on Australian exports and inflation expectations as key factors influencing their vote.

Current Government Leadership

Prime Minister the Hon Anthony Albanese MP continues to lead the government:

- **The Hon Dr Anne Aly MP**, Minister for International Development, Minister for Multicultural Affairs, and Minister for Small Business
- **Senator the Hon Tim Ayres**, Minister for Industry and Innovation and Minister for Science
- **The Hon Chris Bowen MP**, Minister for Climate Change and Energy
- **The Hon Tony Burke MP**, Minister for Home Affairs, Minister for Immigration and Citizenship, Minister for Cyber Security, and Minister for the Arts
- **The Hon Mark Butler MP**, Minister for Health and Ageing and Minister for Disability and the National Disability Insurance Scheme
- **The Hon Dr Jim Chalmers MP**, Treasurer
- **The Hon Jason Clare MP**, Minister for Education
- **The Hon Julie Collins MP**, Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry
- **The Hon Pat Conroy MP**, Minister for Defence Industry and Minister for Pacific Island Affairs
- **Senator the Hon Don Farrell**, Minister for Trade and Tourism and Special Minister of State
- **Senator the Hon Katy Gallagher**, Minister for Finance, Minister for Government Services, Minister for Women, and Minister for the Public Service
- **The Hon Madeleine King MP**, Minister for Resources and Minister for Northern Australia
- **The Hon Catherine King MP**, Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government
- **The Hon Richard Marles MP**, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Defence
- **Senator the Hon Jenny McAllister**, Minister for the National Disability Insurance Scheme
- **The Hon Kristy McBain MP**, Minister for Regional Development, Local Government and Territories and Minister for Emergency Management
- **Senator the Hon Malarndirri McCarthy**, Minister for Indigenous Australians
- **The Hon Clare O'Neil MP**, Minister for Housing, Minister for Homelessness, and Minister for Cities
- **The Hon Tanya Plibersek MP**, Minister for Social Services
- **The Hon Sam Rae MP**, Minister for Aged Care and Seniors
- **The Hon Amanda Rishworth MP**, Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations
- **The Hon Michelle Rowland MP**, Attorney-General

© 2025 Council on Competitiveness
Please do not share or reproduce without the written consent of the Council on Competitiveness.

- **Senator the Hon Dr Jess Walsh**, Minister for Early Childhood Education and Minister for Youth
- **The Hon Anika Wells MP**, Minister for Communications and Minister for Sport
- **Senator the Hon Murray Watt**, Minister for the Environment and Water
- **Senator the Hon Penny Wong**, Minister for Foreign Affairs

Economic Competitiveness: Strategic Priorities

With a renewed mandate, the Albanese government has outlined an economic reform agenda that includes initiatives across housing, investment climate, and fiscal sustainability.

In the housing sector, Labor is expanding its Help to Buy and Home Guarantee Schemes, increasing income and property price thresholds to broaden access to homeownership. The government has committed to constructing 55,000 new social and affordable housing units and is allocating $1.5 billion toward infrastructure that supports housing development.

In response to prolonged economic stagnation, the government aims to boost productivity and business investment through regulatory reform, simplification of the tax system, and targeted support for addressing skills shortages.

Although Australia has demonstrated resilience through sustained fiscal stimulus, the structural deficit and rising public debt highlight the necessity of transitioning to more sustainable, private sector-led growth.

Legislative Complexity and Crossbench Dynamics

While Labor's majority in the House allows for relatively smooth passage of legislation, the increased presence of minor parties and independents in both chambers has introduced greater complexity into the legislative process, requiring greater negotiation and consensus-building, particularly in the Senate, where no single party holds a majority. The result is both a challenge and an opportunity.

© 2025 Council on Competitiveness
Please do not share or reproduce without the written consent of the Council on Competitiveness.

Victoria and Melbourne's Economy

Economic Overview

Victoria is Australia's second-largest economy, contributing approximately $195 billion to national GDP in 2025. The state's economy is characterized by a diverse industrial base, strong service sectors, and significant investment in infrastructure and technology. Melbourne, as Victoria's capital, is a major financial, cultural, and innovation hub, while regional Victoria supports agriculture, manufacturing, and renewable energy development. In 2018, Melbourne overtook Sydney as Australia's largest city.

Melbourne's economic growth was 3.1 percent in 2024, exceeding the national growth rate of 2.6 percent, driven primarily by services, exports, and innovation sectors.[13] Victoria's overall economic growth rate in 2024 was 1.5 percent, reflecting more modest statewide expansion amid strong population growth. The finance and insurance sector accounts for 14 percent of GRP, professional services 12 percent, manufacturing 8 percent, and education 7 percent.[14] Melbourne's port remains the busiest in Australia by container volume, handling 3.1 million TEUs (twenty-foot equivalent units) annually.

Innovation and Research Ecosystem

The Victorian Government's innovation agenda is focused on fostering high-growth sectors, supporting start-ups and scale-ups, and promoting digital and climate solutions. Policy tools include targeted investment, regulatory sandboxes, innovation pilots, and skills development programs to ensure a steady talent pipeline and inclusive growth. Victoria's economic growth is forecast to strengthen to 2.5 percent in 2025–26, supported by innovation-led industries and a return to lower inflation.[15]

Melbourne invests heavily in research and development, with R&D spending in Victoria reaching $7.5 billion in 2024, which is 3.5 percent of state GDP and well above the national average of 2.4 percent.[16] The city hosts over 400 biotech and digital health startups, contributing to a 7 percent increase in high-tech exports in 2024.[17] The Parkville Biomedical Precinct secured $1.4 billion in research grants and venture capital in 2024 alone, advancing innovations in genomics, immunotherapy, and digital diagnostics.[18] The fintech sector grew by 15 percent, with over 400 firms and 8,000 employees concentrated in Melbourne, reflecting the city's position as a fintech hub.[19]

The launch of Melbourne's AI Innovation Hub in 2025 is a major milestone, projected to triple the number of AI-related jobs (from 5,000 to 15,000), quadruple university-industry collaborations, and increase AI sector investment from $325 million to $1.3 billion within two years. AI-driven transformation is impacting healthcare (predictive diagnostics, personalized medicine), finance (risk analytics, fraud detection), manufacturing (smart factories, supply chain optimization), and agriculture (precision farming, satellite monitoring).[20]

---

[13] Australian Bureau of Statistics (2025). Regional Economic Accounts. https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/economy/regional-economy
[14] Victorian Government (2025). Sectoral Economic Profile. https://www.vic.gov.au/economy
[15] Farmonaut, "AI Innovation Hub Drives Victoria's Economic Growth by 2025," April 2025.
[16] Victorian Government (2025). R&D Investment Report. https://www.vic.gov.au/research-development
[17] Australian Trade and Investment Commission (2025). Biotech Export Statistics. https://www.austrade.gov.au
[18] Parkville Biomedical Precinct (2025). Investment and Research Grants Summary. https://parkvilleprecinct.org.au
[19] FinTech Australia (2025). Fintech Employment and Startup Report. https://fintechaustralia.org.au
[20] Victorian Government, A growing economy | Victorian Budget 25/26, May 2025.

© 2025 Council on Competitiveness
Please do not share or reproduce without the written consent of the Council on Competitiveness.

Australian Capital Territory and Canberra's Economy

Economic Overview

The Australian Capital Territory (ACT) economy is driven by robust public sector activity, a highly educated workforce, and a diversified, knowledge-based private sector. Despite national headwinds, the ACT's growth trajectory remains above the Australian average, supported by ongoing infrastructure investment and strong labor market fundamentals.

Canberra's economy, valued at $31.3 billion in 2024, continues to rely heavily on government services which account for nearly 46 percent of total output.[21] The city's economy grew by 2.3 percent in 2024, supported by steady government spending and rising private sector activity in defense technology, cybersecurity, education, and health sciences.[22] Canberra has attracted over $228 million in private investment into high-tech startups in the past year, reflecting diversification beyond public sector dependency.[23]

Innovation and Research Ecosystem

Anchored by the Australian National University (ANU), the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO), and the Australian Cyber Collaboration Centre, Canberra is a national leader in research excellence and innovation-driven economic development. In 2024, ANU's external research income surpassed $260 million, with major investments in quantum computing, sustainable agriculture, climate science, and renewable energy solutions.[24] The university is a core partner in the National Quantum Collaboration Initiative, which positions the ACT at the forefront of Australia's ambition to commercialize quantum technologies by 2030.[25]

Canberra's cybersecurity sector—estimated at over $715 million in market value—has emerged as a strategic cluster supporting defense, national intelligence, and private sector digital infrastructure.[26] The region is home to more than 140 cybersecurity firms, ranging from startups to anchor firms like Penten and QuintessenceLabs, with deep linkages to the Department of Defence and Australian Signals Directorate.[27]

The ACT government has also prioritized translational innovation in biotechnology and clean tech. The ReGen Valley Tech Hub, launched in 2023, focuses on regenerative medicine, precision biomanufacturing, and advanced medical devices. To date, it has secured over $78 million in venture capital funding, with key investments from Main Sequence Ventures and local health tech accelerators.[28]

---

[21] Australian Bureau of Statistics (2025). Canberra Economic Accounts. https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/economy/regional-economy
[22] ACT Government (2025). Economic Growth and Development Report. https://www.act.gov.au
[23] Canberra Innovation Network (2025). Startup Investment Report. https://www.cbrin.com.au
[24] Australian National University. (2024). Annual Report 2024. https://www.anu.edu.au/about/governance/annual-report
[25] Department of Industry, Science and Resources, National Quantum Strategy Progress Report, 2024, https://www.industry.gov.au.
[26] AustCyber, Cyber Security Sector Competitiveness Plan, 2023, https://www.austcyber.com/resource/cyber-security-sector-competitiveness-plan-2023.
[27] ACT Government, Canberra Cyber Hub: Sector Profile, 2023, https://www.cbrin.com.au/canberra-cyber-hub.
[28] Canberra Innovation Network, ReGen Valley Update: Q1 Report, 2024, https://www.cbrin.com.au/regen-valley.

© 2025 Council on Competitiveness
Please do not share or reproduce without the written consent of the Council on Competitiveness.

The hub has fostered spinouts like Syenta and Goterra, advancing innovations in additive manufacturing and waste-to-protein solutions.

Complementing this ecosystem is Canberra's Innovation Connect (ICON) program, which provides early-stage grants to startups in advanced manufacturing, AI, robotics, and agri-tech. Since 2020, ICON has distributed more than $4.9 million to over 140 ACT-based companies.[29] The ACT also boasts Australia's highest per-capita research workforce, thanks to the density of national institutions and a policy environment designed to attract global talent.

New South Wales and Sydney's Economy

Economic Overview

New South Wales (NSW) is Australia's largest state economy, contributing nearly $700 billion to national output — about a third of Australia's GDP — and home to roughly a third of the country's population.[30] If considered independently, NSW would rank as the world's 37th largest economy, ahead of nations like Denmark and New Zealand, and 19th globally in per capita terms, surpassing Germany and the UK. The state's economic resilience is notable, though it faces ongoing challenges from cost-of-living pressures, housing affordability, and labor shortages.[31]

Sydney remains Australia's economic epicenter, contributing over 25 percent of national GDP and generating an estimated $413 billion in Gross Regional Product (GRP) in 2025.[32] While growth has moderated from post-pandemic highs, the city's diversified economy — spanning finance, technology, professional services, healthcare, and education — continues to outperform most national metrics. Oxford Economics forecasts a 1.9 percent GRP growth in 2025 for Greater Sydney, compared to a national average of 1.4 percent. The finance sector alone accounts for approximately 13 percent of Sydney's GRP, followed by property services and IT.

Sydney also ranks first in Australia for startup formation, accounting for more than 45 percent of all new tech startups created nationwide in the past year.[33]

Innovation and Research Ecosystem

Sydney's Tech Central Innovation District, stretching from Central Station to Eveleigh, is now home to over 800 startups, five major university campuses, and 60+ research institutes. It anchors Australia's efforts in AI, quantum computing, climate tech, and life sciences.

Key innovation highlights in 2025:

[29] ACT Government, Innovation Connect Program Statistics, 2024, https://www.business.act.gov.au/grants-and-assistance/grants/innovation-connect.
[30] NSW Government, "About the NSW economy," April 2025
[31] New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, "New South Wales Economic Update," May 2024
[32] Oxford Economics. (2025). *Australian Cities Economic Outlook*. https://www.oxfordeconomics.com/resource/australian-cities-economic-outlook-2025
[33] StartupAus. (2025). Australian Startup Ecosystem Report. https://startupaus.org/reports/startup-ecosystem-2025

© 2025 Council on Competitiveness
Please do not share or reproduce without the written consent of the Council on Competitiveness.

- Sydney Quantum Academy, backed by UNSW, University of Sydney, and Macquarie University, launched a national quantum talent accelerator that trained over 1,000 professionals this year.[34]
- Cicada Innovations, located in the Eveleigh precinct, is commercializing biotech and climate tech innovations, supporting over 200 deep tech startups with a combined capital raise of $358 million since 2022.
- Major multinationals including Microsoft, Atlassian, and Moderna have expanded their Sydney R&D operations in 2025.
- The CSL Global Biohub, currently under construction, is expected to add 3,000 high-skilled jobs by 2026.

Sydney now receives 37 percent of all Australian venture capital investment, totaling $3.4 billion in 2024, with continued growth in Series A and B funding.[35]

Greater New South Wales: Statewide Innovation and Research Strategy

In 2025, the NSW Government launched the Health Research and Innovation Strategy 2025–2030, a five-year blueprint to cement NSW as the nation's leading state for medical research and innovation. The strategy priortizes moving discoveries "from benchtop to bedside" and targets collaboration across government, health, academia, and industry.

Major Investments

Recent years have seen substantial investments, such as:
- Australia's first Viral Vector Manufacturing Facility ($37.9 million)
- A $62 million RNA research and manufacturing facility at Macquarie University
- Targeted funding for Aboriginal cardiovascular health research and animal-free medical research

[34] Sydney Quantum Academy. (2025). Annual Report 2025. https://sydneyquantum.org/annual-report-2025
[35] Cut Through Venture & Folklore. (2025). Australian VC Landscape Q1 2025. https://www.cutthrough.venture/reports/vc-q1-2025

© 2025 Council on Competitiveness
Please do not share or reproduce without the written consent of the Council on Competitiveness.

U.S.-Australia Strategic Innovation Alliance Fact Sheets

To support the July 2025 U.S.–Australia Strategic Innovation Alliance Delegation, the Council on Competitiveness has developed a suite of fact sheets highlighting key factors driving Australia's competitiveness. These data-rich briefs outline strategic opportunities for bilateral collaboration — providing both a high-level overview of Australia's economy and insights into specific sectors such as nuclear energy, aerospace, quantum computing, artificial intelligence, microelectronics, and the bioeconomy.

Scan the QR Code to Visit Fact Sheet Landing Page

The fact sheets are organized into five categories: Investment, Research, Talent, Infrastructure, and Resources. Use the links below to download individual fact sheets as PDFs. **Additionally, an online version of this briefing book and a compiled PDF version with all fact sheets can be found here, [compete.org/australia-strategic-innovation-alliance-briefing-book], or by scanning the QR Code to the right:**

Fact Sheets on Key Domains Underpinning Australia's Global Competitiveness

Click on the links below to download the topical fact sheet

Investment
- Overall Investment
- Foreign Direct Investment
- Key Australian Companies Invested in the United States
- Key U.S. Companies Invested in Australia

Research
- Nuclear Energy
- Aerospace, Aviation, Space, and Hypersonics Economy
- Artificial Intelligence
- Quantum
- Advanced Microelectronics
- Manufacturing
- Bioeconomy
- Precision Agriculture

Talent
- Higher Education

Infrastructure
- Infrastructure Overview

Resources
- Resource Management
- Mining

© 2025 Council on Competitiveness
Please do not share or reproduce without the written consent of the Council on Competitiveness.

U.S. Department of States: U.S. Relations With Australia

BILATERAL RELATIONS FACT SHEET

Found here: https://2021-2025.state.gov/u-s-relations-with-australia/

BUREAU OF EAST ASIAN AND PACIFIC AFFAIRS

JULY 23, 2024

More information about Australia is available on the Australia Page and from other Department of State publications and other sources listed at the end of this fact sheet.

U.S.-AUSTRALIA RELATIONS

Australia is a vital ally, partner, and friend of the United States. Our two countries maintain a robust relationship underpinned by shared democratic values, common interests, and cultural affinities. Economic, academic, and people-to-people ties are vibrant and strong. Our partnership promotes peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific region and around the world. The United States and Australia marked the 80th anniversary of diplomatic relations in 2020.

Bilateral defense ties and cooperation are exceptionally close. U.S. and Australian forces have fought side-by-side for more than one hundred years, in every major conflict since World War I, beginning with the Battle of Hamel in 1918. In 2022, the United States and Australia marked the 80th anniversary of several key World War II battles, including the Battles of the Coral Sea, Midway, and Guadalcanal. Moreover, 2021 marked the 70th anniversary of the signing of the Australia, New Zealand, and United States (ANZUS) treaty, Australia's pre-eminent alliance, which enjoys broad bipartisan support. Australia invoked ANZUS for the first time in response to the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks.

Since then, the two countries have taken additional steps to pave the way for closer defense and security ties. These have included the annual rotation of Marines to Darwin, which completed a thirteenth year of exercises in 2024, and enhanced rotations of U.S. Air Force aircraft to Australia. The U.S.-Australia Force Posture Agreement signed at the annual Australia-United States Ministerial Consultations (AUSMIN) in 2014 operationalized the alliance through joint military capacity building, enhanced cooperation across land, maritime, space, and air domains, and other new initiatives. The United States and Australia also conduct Talisman Sabre, a joint, biennial military exercise designed to ensure and demonstrate the ability of the two defense forces to work together with the highest levels of interoperability. In 2023, the 10th iteration of the exercise marked the largest Talisman Sabre on record with several Pacific Island partners participating for the first time.

The United States and Australia share a strong interest in maintaining freedom of navigation, overflight, and other lawful uses of the sea, including in the South China Sea. Australia and the United States collaborate with Japan and India in the Quad to solve the region's most pressing crises. In September 2021, Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States announced an enhanced trilateral security partnership (AUKUS), further solidifying security cooperation between the partners. AUKUS will provide Australia with a conventionally armed, nuclear powered submarine capability while setting the highest non-proliferation standard and support the development of a variety of advanced capabilities to advance security and stability in the Indo-Pacific region and around the world.

© 2025 Council on Competitiveness
Please do not share or reproduce without the written consent of the Council on Competitiveness.

The United States and Australia share a long history of cooperation in other areas as well. In 1949, the United States and Australia signed an agreement that established the Fulbright program. Since then, more than 5,000 Australians and Americans have received Fulbright scholarships. The United States and Australia have concluded a mutual legal assistance treaty to enhance bilateral cooperation on legal and counter-narcotics issues. The two countries have also signed tax and defense trade cooperation treaties, as well as agreements on health cooperation, space, science and technology, emergency management cooperation, and social security. Many U.S. institutions conduct cooperative scientific activities in Australia. The United States and Australia responded to the COVID-19 pandemic, including through the Quad Vaccine Partnership (Australia, India, Japan, and the United States) and the COVID-19 Global Action Plan. The United States and Australia have also worked together to support Global Health Security Agenda efforts to prepare for and respond to future pandemics and infectious disease threats.

U.S. Assistance to Australia

The United States provides no development assistance to Australia but does coordinate closely on development assistance policy in the Indo-Pacific region and globally.

Bilateral Economic Relations

The U.S.-Australia Free Trade Agreement (FTA) entered into force on January 1, 2005. U.S. goods and services exports to Australia increased by almost 90 and 100 percent respectively since 2004 (pre-FTA) owing in large part to the FTA. In 2023, total U.S. goods and services trade with Australia totaled US $47.1 billion, and the United States ran a trade surplus of US $14.4 billion. According to U.S. Department of Commerce estimates, U.S. exports of goods and services to Australia supported more than 172,000 U.S. jobs in 2020. Leading U.S. goods exports are machinery, vehicles, and optical and medical instruments. Leading U.S. services exports are financial services; telecommunications, computer, and information services; and licenses for computer software. Top U.S. goods imports from Australia are meat, precious metals and stones, and optical and medical instruments. Top services imports from Australia include professional and management services, financial services, and technical and other services. Australia has proven to be an appealing and profitable market for U.S. companies for many years, owing to its low barriers to entry, familiar legal and corporate framework, and a sophisticated yet straightforward business culture.

Two-way foreign direct investment (FDI) cumulatively totals $286 billion. In 2022, Australia total stock of FDI into the United States was $112 billion. Leading sectors for Australian investment into the United States are manufacturing, professional, scientific, and technical services, and finance and insurance. According to Australian government statistics, the United States is Australia's largest foreign investor. In 2022, the U.S. FDI position in Australia (outward) was $174 billion (Source: U.S. BEA). U.S. FDI in Australia is led by nonbank holding companies, finance and insurance, and manufacturing. Considerable portfolio investment in both directions also contributes to a strong bilateral investment relationship. U.S. firms have operated in Australia for more than 100 years and according to Australian government estimates currently employ more than 300,000 Australians, many in high-paying sectors. U.S. firms are also the largest taxpayers, wage payers, and contributor to GDP of any foreign country companies operating in Australia.

According to 2023 IMF data, Australia is the world's 13th-largest economy by GDP and has the 10th-highest per capita income. In 2023, Australia was the world's second largest coal exporter and in the top two LNG exporters, according to commercial trade monitoring services. According to Australian government data, almost 820,000 U.S. residents visited Australia in 2019 and 1.1 million Australians visited the United States in 2019.

© 2025 Council on Competitiveness
Please do not share or reproduce without the written consent of the Council on Competitiveness.

Australia's Membership in International Organizations
Australia and the United States belong to several of the same international organizations and fora, including the United Nations, ASEAN Regional Forum, Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), East Asia Summit, G-20, International Monetary Fund (IMF), Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), World Bank, and the World Trade Organization (WTO). Australia is a Partner for Cooperation with the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), an Enhanced Opportunities Partner of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), and a member of the Pacific Islands Forum. In 2022 Australia joined the United States and 12 other partners to launch the Indo Pacific Economic Partnership for Prosperity.

Bilateral Representation

Principal embassy officials are listed in the Department's Key Officers List.

Australia maintains an embassy in the United States at 1601 Massachusetts Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20036 (tel. 202-797-3000). The Embassy building is currently under renovation; the Australian diplomatic mission is currently located at 1145 17th St NW, Washington DC, 20036-4707

More information about Australia is available from the Department of State and other sources, some of which are listed here:

- **CIA World Factbook Australia Page**
- **U.S. Embassy**
- **History of U.S. Relations With Australia**
- **Office of the U.S. Trade Representative Countries Page**
- **U.S. Census Bureau Foreign Trade Statistics**
- **Export.gov International Offices Page**
- **Travel Information**

© 2025 Council on Competitiveness
Please do not share or reproduce without the written consent of the Council on Competitiveness.