

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **Missing opportunities in Australian Innovation**

The Australian Council of Learned Academies (ACOLA) has reported that innovation in Australia is suffering from a lack of direction, short-termism and a haphazard approach.

*Translating research for economic and social benefit* examined innovation initiatives in 14 nations and found a clear link between national policy and performance. The 14 were: Finland, Denmark, Sweden, Germany, United Kingdom, Israel, United States, Canada, South Korea, Japan, Singapore, China, Brazil and Chile.

Launching the report at Parliament House in Canberra, Australia's Chief Scientist Professor Ian Chubb AC said it was a timely reminder that success owes more to choice than chance.

"Fiddling at the margins of policy will not secure the economic transformation we need to keep pace, let alone compete in an ambitious world," Professor Chubb said.

"Nations which do better than us are characterised by intelligent policies settings and programs which encourage a culture of innovation and collaboration.

"Like them, we should not idly wait in the expectation that something will come along to deliver the outcomes that other countries have achieved through national innovation strategies. They have clearly identified where, when and how governments need to intervene to realise aspiration."

The ACOLA report examined programs and policies designed to translate research into economic benefits in each of the 14 countries, and concluded Australia was squandering opportunity.

Amongst its 15 key findings, the report highlighted the need for a coherent national innovation strategy with an agency to manage it and less reliance on indirect support for business such as through the R&D Tax Incentive.

"The contrast with Australia is stark, and our review shows how our policies and supportive programs are piecemeal, opportunistic and almost invariably short-lived," the report said.

Dr John Bell, the Chair of the report's Expert Working Group, said there were measures in other countries that could be adopted to lift Australia's performance.

"What we found is that is that other nations have ongoing, stable support measures, with multiple incentives enabling parties to capitalise on potential wherever it lies," Dr Bell said.

Dr Bell noted, for example, that the Small Business Innovation Research Program has now operated continuously in the United States for 33 years and is recognised as a lynchpin of the American start-up economy. It has been replicated successfully in many nations.

The Australian Government is expected to release an innovation and science statement in the coming weeks.

**The report is available on [www.acola.org.au](http://www.acola.org.au)**

For more information or to arrange an interview with Dr Bell contact Penny Underwood, MediaWise on (03) 9818 8540 or [mediawise@mediawise.net.au](mailto:mediawise@mediawise.net.au).

To arrange an interview with Professor Chubb contact [clinton.porteous@chiefscientist.gov.au](mailto:clinton.porteous@chiefscientist.gov.au) or call 0410 029 407.

## **About ACOLA**

ACOLA is an independent, not-for-profit organisation that supports evidence-based interdisciplinary research. ACOLA combines the strengths of the four Australian Learned Academies: Australian Academy of Science, Academy of Social Sciences in Australia, Australian Academy of the Humanities and Australian Academy of Technological Sciences and Engineering.

## **EXPERT WORKING GROUP**

- Dr John Bell FTSE (Chair)
- Professor Mark Dodgson FASSA
- Professor Les Field AM FAA
- Professor Paul Gough (from June 2015, nominated by AAH)
- Professor Sue Rowley (until April 2015, nominated by AAH)
- Professor Tom Spurling AM FTSE

## **ENDS**