

# Response to National Enabling Technologies Strategy Discussion Paper July 2009

## Introduction

This is an important strategy as properly crafted it will assist Australia to have a platform for the future where value can be created and captured. We are at a time of change with many issues affecting all citizens of the globe. These changes, if skillfully navigated give Australian technologies and IP greater opportunities to deploy profitably.

It is important that we strategically address ways to:

- a) capitalise on our current competitive advantages via existing channels and routes to market;
- b) finding better and other ways and paths to the end consumers, bypassing any blocks or impediments imposed by the current state of markets;
- c) partnering/licensing/divesting rights to defined markets and counterparties around the globe;
- d) shaking up industries and redefining them by innovative means

## Our View of Key Strategic Strengths of Australia

- Health and Life Sciences - diagnostic tests, pathology, radiology, some medical devices
- Resources – mining, enabling, processing, resource recovery, associated services
- Environment – technologies for 'dry' continent, recycling, waste treatment, clean technologies, renewable energy
- IT &T - financial transaction systems, business software
- Information/Media – content, education content, digitising of content, social networking
- Services – education, business processing, services outsourcing, professional services

## Key issues and challenges that need to be addressed?

- Need a strategic and coordinated national approach building on strengths and capabilities that we already have
- Individual and group responses and calls to action are often fragmented and focused on individual or group interests not the whole industry or national interests
- Focus on short term rather than the long term. This creates market failure between short term focused investors and longer term often capital intensive innovation and commercial development
- Fragmentation and duplication exacerbated by inter-State competition
- In some instances inadequate research governance and corporate governance in research based organisations, including:



- Inappropriate or ill defined reporting mechanisms and key performance indicators
- Weak decision making processes especially in regards to use of funds and transparency around performance
- In some instances vague understanding of international competitors and other research efforts
- Generally a lack of collaborative approaches to sharing intellectual property and the management costs of same
- In the main deficient strategic decision frameworks for determining when publicly funded research should remain publicly accessible
- Tendency of government backed investment funds to support the same organisations making it difficult for “new entrants”
- Education on commercialisation including how to disrupt markets with new technologies/products, how to partner, collaborate, license, joint venture and get research into commercial outcomes and channels.

### **How should issues and challenges be addressed? What are we doing to address these issues?**

- Need for a national framework which is implemented formally to project manage implementation of strategic objectives
- Develop strategies for increasing collaboration and reducing duplication (Federal / State Government Grant and Incentives harmonisation)
- Agreed key performance indicators and performance monitoring mechanisms
- Incentivise Groups to work together and remove unnecessary regulatory hurdles to collaboration
- Run education programs focusing on maximising income from innovation
- Simplify corporate structures to allow entities to be for profits that are community or social organizations. Examples of these structures exist in UK.

### **Main outcomes for the Strategy?**

- Definable focus leveraging our strengths and capabilities with key identifiable areas of return that include financial, social and environment
- Transparency in use of funds
- Recycle funding by asking successful receivers of Government Funds to repay funds similar to a HECS scheme
- Increased efficiencies in regards to outputs per research and commercialisation dollar
- Increased knowledge sharing and dissemination of information. Clustering where appropriate

## **How could we work with the Policy and Public Awareness sections and others to address issues and challenges?**

Setting up and running a Project Office to implement the framework including development of a detailed project management plan, governance and decision making frameworks and best practice performance reporting as it relates to appropriate use of public funds for research and dissemination of information and knowledge

Making tools for assessment available on line

Assist to set up system to encourage and reward collaboration

Dissemination of case studies and information via web portal.