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Cooperative Research News

5 June 2012



17 year olds setting science direction

Chief Scientist indicates need for strategy

Australia's Chief Scientist, Professor Ian Chubb, has said that the country's research effort is too reliant on the flow of funds that follows undergraduate places in Australia's Universities.

In his speech at Collaborate | Innovate | 2012 on 17 May followed a week later with the release of the Health of Australian Science Report, Professor Chubb has indicated that Australia has to become more strategic in setting its research agenda.

Australia is unusually reliant on University research. The country ranks low on the OECD in terms of researchers in business. Undergraduate choice of course leads to a flow of academics into those courses and the number of academics in an area draws research funding. Hence Professor Chubb's concern - particularly given an early "pigeon holing" whereby undergrads choose a professional degree earlier in Australia than many others countries.

Despite his concern on strategic direction, the Chief Scientist has given Australia's science a good overall

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mark. He is due to provide the Government with a three-year National R&D Plan in September this year.

Professor Chubb provided one of the many excellent talks delivered at **Collaborate | Innovate | 2013**. To see media releases on our brilliant award winners, follow the link [here](#).

Tony Peacock has provided commentary touching on Professor Peter Hoj's comments on the rights of postgraduate students in an [Innovation Thoughts](#) spot.

Two steps forward, nine steps back?

Comment by Tony Peacock

At the end of this month, we will see the establishment of two new CRCs, both in the environmental space. The CRC for Water Sensitive Cities, based at Monash University and the CRC for Low Carbon Living at the University of New South Wales are both welcome and needed developments.

Unfortunately, at the same time we will see the completion of nine CRCs: CAST, Beef, Forestry, Cotton, eWater, Hydrometallurgy, Environmental Biotechnology, Bioimaging and Asthma. Not all these CRCs wanted to continue as CRCs, and several will continue in other forms. Nevertheless, the net loss of five CRCs continues a downward trend that is disappointing, to say the least.

With only one CRC due to finish in 2013, we will see a small upward trend next year ahead of a further net loss in 2014 on the current trajectory. Thirty-nine CRCs this coming financial year compared with seventy-two CRCs in 2006.

Of course, the CRC Program has no entitlement to taxpayer's money. There is no rule that says there should

28th Congress of the International Council of Aeronautical Sciences.

9-10 October
Canberra

**The Scramble for Natural Resources:
More food, less land?**
[The 2012 Crawford Fund 2012 development conference.](#)

Westpac — the CRC Bank



CRCA has made the switch to Westpac and we recommend CRCs do too. Westpac is tailoring products to suit CRCs and offering streamlined service and excellent interest rates. Contact Rose Stellino on 02 6275 5321.



Thinking of...

Applying for a Patent in Australia?

Ask the Smart Questions

By Matt Lohmeyer & Philip Heuzenroeder
Foreword by the NSW Small Business Commissioner

New IP resource

Patenting is not right for everything or any technology and people, especially smart people like scientists and researchers, don't want dumb generic answers.

This new book by Matt

be a particular number of CRCs in the country.

However, it is fair to ask Government to make sure that any program that diverts money away from CRCs will provide a better return to Australia. There is no doubt the CRC Program is the most reviewed Program in the DIISRTE portfolio, perhaps the whole of Government. When Minister Evans releases the upcoming Allen's Consulting Group Impact Study it will be at least the 11th review that has examined the value of the CRC Program (that's an average of less than two years between reviews, not counting the fact that every CRC conducts its own impact studies).

With that degree of scrutiny, justification and documented performance, CRCs are should ask for clear evidence that other programs are doing better. In the most recent cuts to the CRC Program (in the 2011 budget and the 2010 election campaign), money was diverted to the "Inspiring Australia" campaign. It is only a small program, but we are entitled to ask "are we getting a return on investment"?

Other, much bigger, new Programs have been established with some common aims as the CRC Program in recent years. The innovation community needs to be assured that these are performing as well or better than CRCs which face a 2013-14 budget of \$145 million, the lowest since 2001-02.

It would be a tragedy if the reduction in the number of CRCs in the country will have simply been change for change's sake.

Strong praise for Innovativity program

The Advanced Manufacturing Co-operative Research Centre (AMCRC) held its Innovativity management program in Sydney in May. Participants in the program

Lohmeyer and Philip Heuzenroeder poses a series of smart questions (hence the title), so that the reader can arrive at their own conclusions - the answers that are right for them and their technology.

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An apology from the Editor

I have had to cut today's newsletter short, so my apologies to those who submitted material I haven't had time to include.

I Chair the [Mulligans Flat Woodlands Sanctuary](#) in Canberra on a volunteer basis. After a brilliant week last week, where our researchers introduced eastern bettongs to the Sanctuary, we have had a series of vandal attacks.

Over 30 holes have been made in the fence, as well as other damage and abuse of researchers. We believe it is coming from animal activists protesting about the kangaroo cull.

Anyway, it has been a distraction today - back to full CRCA activity asap.

Tony Peacock.

were vocal in their approval having completed the course and the benefits that it will bring to their businesses.

“The presentation went well. I had a good time at the course,” said Steven Kennedy, Production Engineering Manager for hearing solutions company Cochlear.

“The speakers were all excellent – experts in their fields, with lots of examples backing up their explanations.”

Innovativity is a four-day program designed to provide assistance and guidance for companies and entrepreneurs who are working to develop innovative products and services. In conceiving Innovativity, the AMCRC has applied its expertise to devise a course aimed at assisting businesses in putting in place the processes that support greater innovation.

“The topics covered were all relevant, whether you are a start-up or a part of a multi-national corporation,” remarked Kennedy. “The tools and worksheets provided were demonstrated well and can be used straight away in the real world.”

Innovativity is tailored to both Australian and global manufacturing SMEs and is suitable for professionals ranging from engineers to CEOs. The program is designed to equip organisations with inside information and specialist skills previously unavailable to all but the largest companies. The course content covers the complete cycle of commercialisation, from ideas through to successful product launch. This includes the ability to: pre-empt markets; foster, protect and license ideas and know-how; source funding; and execute a timely, profitable commercialisation strategy.

“Innovativity provided me with a wealth of knowledge and practical tools that we can use in our innovation program at Focus Press,” said Louise Pastro, Sustainability Manager

for Sydney-based printing company Focus Press. “The program content was extensive and gave me a solid understanding of how to plan and execute our innovation program at a strategic level, how to source funding, protect our IP, conduct in-depth market analyses and to commercialise our end product.”

AMCRC boasts a team of experts who have proven track records in the development and profitable commercialisation of intellectual property (IP). An impressive line-up of respected and influential presenters included Richard Caro, Richard Paynting, John Kapeleris, John Stonier and Chris Sotiropoulos, with experience ranging from technology investment and product development to IP law and licensing.

The next course will be held in Melbourne on 20-21 and 26-27 June.

www.amcrc.com.au

www.innovativity.com

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