

Australia needs a national science and R&D strategy

Professionals Australia calls on political leaders to develop a long-term stable science and research strategy that will support a vibrant and sustainable science workforce with the capability to drive innovation and productivity improvement.

Along with the scientific community, we call for all-party, non-partisan commitment to six principles:

Investing strategically and sustainably

Governments must support planned, stable and appropriate investment in research over the long term, which is essential if we are to tackle large, complex problems and opportunities facing Australia.

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

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

Building a productive system and getting the most out of it

Governments must set a stable and sustainable funding framework for infrastructure (buildings, equipment and the technical experts to keep them operating), especially for national facilities without which critical work cannot continue or even begin. This must be backed with resources that keep valuable facilities running once they are built.

Being among and working with the world's best

Global collaboration is more necessary than ever with the rise of international research, commerce, communication and other systems that transform our lives and opportunities. This will require strategic investment that can facilitate international engagement at a government to government level, as well as support for collaboration on specific research projects.

Bringing industry and academia together

When industry and researchers work together effectively we innovate and multiply our strengths. We must ensure there are clear and reliable policy incentives that facilitate deep and sustained collaboration between industry, public sector, university and research institutes.

Expanding industry research

Governments need to create an environment which encourages industry to invest more in research and which makes Australia an attractive place for international companies to undertake research.

The more the nation invests, the more rewards we will all have to share for decades to come.