

MEDIA RELEASE

A ONCE-IN-A-MULTIGENERATION OPPORTUNITY TO SUPERCHARGE RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

EMBARGOED: 10.30PM AEDT MONDAY 16 MARCH 2026

Science & Technology Australia (STA) welcomes the release of the Strategic Examination of Research & Development (SERD) 'Ambitious Australia' Report as a once-in-a-multigeneration opportunity to address many significant challenges facing our sector and the opportunity to co-design the implementation.

STA President Jas Chambers commended the Government for commissioning the SERD, which is necessary to supercharge Australia's research system and the economy, strengthen our sovereign capability and build a knowledge-based economy.

"This is the first pivotal step in tackling the long-standing challenges facing Australia's research, development and innovation (RD&I) system that will lead to lasting and intergenerational opportunity," Ms Chambers said.

"We strongly encourage the Government to respond to the review with the necessary ambition to implement a robust RD&I ecosystem that underpins our economy and our wellbeing for generations of Australians to come."

The 'Ambitious Australia' Report outlines an overhaul of Australia's RD&I system, to make it more targeted and cohesive, something STA stressed in its submissions to the panel. The new structure would include six priority areas, each with a ten-year goal. These sorts of long-term commitments are necessary to deliver the medical preparedness, environmental resilience, technological uplift and food security Australia needs, not for a decade from now, but for the very long-term benefit of our nation.

We welcome the recommendation for a First Nations Committee as an important part of the new governance structure to focus on both ensuring opportunities for First Nations researchers and elevation of First Nations knowledges.

The 'Ambitious Australia' Report also includes a range of other recommendations requested by STA, including building investment in grant schemes and research infrastructure to globally competitive funding levels and applying appropriate indexation.

"Just as households are feeling cost of living pressures, the research system is feeling the pinch of increasing research costs, from consumables to specialist equipment to wages. A new indexation rate must reflect the true cost of doing research, which is rising faster than the current rate applied."

The Report also includes various recommendations STA called for to support Australia's STEM workforce, including increasing PhD stipend rates, supporting diverse and inclusive talent and skills development, attraction, and mobility.

"Our sector is hurting. An STA survey last year found nearly half of STEM professionals are thinking about leaving their role. Action is needed to improve job security and pay, which are the main reasons behind low morale."

The Report also has a welcome focus on ensuring the sustainability of research infrastructure and expanding their capabilities to include rapid prototyping to accelerate frontier research and foster collaboration with emerging industries.

"We are asking the Government to adopt an investor mindset, recognising the STEM research and development infrastructure is patient capital invested in Australia's sovereign capability. We know every dollar invested in RD&I returns up to \$5 to the economy."

"Working together, the STEM sector, Government and business can set the country on a pathway to prosperity through transformational innovation leading to new and expanded businesses and industries."

Media note:

A media doorstop with STA President Jas Chambers will be held at 8.00am AEDT, Tuesday 17 March at the Mural Hall, Australian Parliament House. A transcript of the media conference will be made available afterwards.

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About Science & Technology Australia

Science & Technology Australia is the nation's peak body representing more than 235,000 scientists and technologists. We're the leading policy voice on science and technology. Our flagship programs include [Science Meets Parliament](#), [Superstars of STEM](#), and [STA STEM Ambassadors](#).