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Research infrastructure and industry driven research: whither now?

The 2017 Budget provided no answer to two crucial decisions the Government must make:

- how to fund national research infrastructure for the coming decade; and
- how to ensure the Research and Development Tax Incentive encourages business to use university researchers to drive business outcomes.

It is deeply disappointing that the Government could not resolve either issue.

Through the National Collaboration Research Infrastructure Strategy successive Governments invested in the essential research resources which researchers across Australia need to strengthen Australia's international research impact.

The investment in new facilities ended some years ago. Funds sit in the Education Investment Fund unused.

The Chief Scientist's Roadmap sets out what is needed next. The Government should endorse the Roadmap and set out the funding mechanism to make it happen.

The Government should use the next wave of infrastructure investment to stimulate the whole Australian research system intentionally hosting new infrastructure across many centres. The resulting benefits for regions will be large and it will reduce pressure on major population centres.

Research infrastructure is good investment. We must move beyond roads and rails to support knowledge move faster and be used more widely.

The Government needs to ensure the major research and development incentive for business pushes more businesses to use university researchers. It has the report setting out how to revamp the Research and Development Tax Incentive. It needs to accept its conclusions and act.

END

For comment contact

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