



# Inspiring Australia

## A national strategy for engagement with the sciences

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Australia aspires to be an innovative society with a technologically skilled workforce, a scientifically literate community and scientifically well informed decision makers. The Inspiring Australia strategy aims to build a strong, open relationship between science and society, underpinned by effective communication of science and its uses.

The Inspiring Australia report was released on 8 February 2010, at the 2010 Australian Science Communicators National Conference by the Minister for Innovation, Industry, Science and Research, Senator Kim Carr. The Inspiring Australia strategy was developed through consultations with a wide range of scientists, science communicators, educators, journalists, academics and government officers in all states and territories. It is a vigorous, high-level national strategy for public engagement with the sciences and a key element of Australia's innovation agenda. The strategy aims to build a strong, open relationship between science and society, underpinned by effective communication of science and its benefits. It calls for a partnership approach between governments, agencies, organisations and communicators throughout Australia to work towards the strategy's goals.

Already the Inspiring Australia strategy has been welcomed by state and territory governments and by many national bodies including CSIRO, the ABC, the Federation of Australian Scientific and Technological Societies (FASTS), the Council for the Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences (CHASS), the Australian Science Media Centre and the Australian Science Communicators (ASC).

### The Findings

The key findings of the Inspiring Australia report are that:

- National leadership and coherent action is required to ensure that science is communicated effectively and strategically in Australia.

- Australia is a high-performing country in a wide range of areas across the sciences, and this should be acknowledged nationally and internationally and attract appropriate reward and recognition.
- Australia has a small population in global terms and cannot afford to squander its brain power. Therefore it is important to develop the potential and interest of Australians irrespective of geography, ethnicity, age or social condition.
- A capable science workforce is a prerequisite for the Australian Government's innovation agenda. Thus students need enhanced experiences in science and mathematics to help ensure an adequate supply of professionals with appropriate skills.
- Cooperation is essential for the successful implementation of this strategy. To build on national leadership and coherent action, a national framework – local action approach, improved information flow and organisational networking via the web and other mechanisms are required to achieve the goal of a scientifically engaged Australia. A supportive research and evaluation program is also needed to monitor progress and inform investment decisions.

Inspiring Australia's success will be built on collaboration as together we work towards a scientifically engaged Australia.

## The Challenge

The goal is to use the broad principles and recommendations of the Inspiring Australia report to drive a national, coordinated strategy to develop a scientifically engaged Australia, to value scientific endeavour and to increase national and international interest in Australian science and scientists.

We need to critically engage all levels of our society with key scientific issues. We need to encourage young people to pursue scientific studies and careers.

Many are already committed to the advancement of scientific research in Australia and significant investment is being made in many areas including astronomy, space science, marine science, climate change, nanotechnology and advanced ICT. Now is the time to showcase this to Australians and the world.

## The Way Forward

Successfully realising the goals of Inspiring Australia requires the support and participation of not only science communicators but also of all levels of government, science and research organisations, industry, educational institutions and community groups. It is important for us to act early and together.

## How can you support the Inspiring Australia strategy?

1. Identify a contact officer who can liaise and work with the Inspiring Australia team on future initiatives. This officer can help your organisation be an active partner in supporting the Inspiring Australia strategy and in providing information about your science communication activities to the Inspiring Australia team.

2. Articulate how your existing science communication activities align with Inspiring Australia principles. Plan future science communication activities so as to make a strategic contribution towards the principles of Inspiring Australia. Principles include pride in Australian achievement; international recognition; science and society; engaging Australian communities; building partnerships; focus on youth and the future; and unlocking Australia's full potential.
3. Consider how you may use the Inspiring Australia brand to benefit your programs and projects when it becomes available, in new or existing science communication activities and promotions.
4. Contribute to forums, expert working groups or other means to progress the Inspiring Australia strategy, including information and stories for an annual digest of science communication activities in Australia.
5. Subscribe to a regular e-newsletter about Inspiring Australia activities and opportunities to contribute.

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