

Knowledge Commercialisation Australasia (KCA) Pre-Budget 2023-24 Submission

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The successful commercialisation of publicly funded research is a key role conducted by the 800+ individual members of KCA. Our trained professionals are the key translation point between researchers and industry. KCA launched SCOPR^{®1}, the annual Survey of Commercialisation of Outcomes from Public Research in 2020, to fill the gap in research commercialisation data following the discontinuation of the National Survey of Research Commercialisation (NSRC).

Recommendation

To drive the impact of publicly funded research through the establishment of dedicated funding for commercialisation professionals by providing funds in the order of \$100m over five years. This dedicated funding would expand Australian research commercialisation capacity; and include the development and delivery of globally recognised training and support for best practice in commercialisation in public research organisations.

For Australia to realise the benefits of its substantial research investment, we need to improve resourcing and lift the capability of commercialisation professionals across our publicly funded research organisations. This can be achieved through dedicated third-stream funding. Such funding would address the skills gaps across the innovation ecosystem, and provide appropriate resourcing for commercialisation offices, benchmarked to international standards. Currently, the resourcing of Australian research commercialisation offices is at the discretion of the organisation, without any minimum requirements.

The UK addressed this issue with the introduction of bipartisan supported third-stream funding in their Higher Education Innovation Fund² (HEIF). This fund has been in place for more than a decade and has facilitated the development of a vibrant knowledge exchange sector in UK Higher Education Institutions. Over the period the HEIF has been in place, knowledge exchange (KE) income has increased by 80% from £2.2 billion to £3.99 billion and that £1 of HEIF invested results in £6.1 of gross additional impact³. It has also led to the recent development of the Knowledge Exchange Framework (KEF)⁴ and the ongoing development of the Knowledge Exchange Concordat.

New Zealand has funded Commercialisation Partner Networks (CPN)⁵, alongside their PreSeed Accelerator Fund (PSAF)⁶ to ensure that appropriate skills are linked with funding.

¹ <https://techtransfer.org.au/metrics-data/>

² <https://www.ukri.org/what-we-offer/browse-our-areas-of-investment-and-support/higher-education-innovation-fund/>

³ <https://www.ukri.org/publications/additional-impacts-of-the-higher-education-innovation-fund-heif/>

⁴ <https://www.ukri.org/what-we-offer/supporting-collaboration/supporting-collaboration-research-england/knowledge-exchange-framework/>

⁵ <https://www.mbie.govt.nz/science-and-technology/science-and-innovation/funding-information-and-opportunities/investment-funds/commercialisation-partner-network/>

⁶ <https://www.mbie.govt.nz/science-and-technology/science-and-innovation/funding-information-and->

An Australian third-stream funding program would address these capacity and capability issues. It would develop a critical mass of well-trained commercialisation professionals with the skills necessary to translate the high-quality research that is being produced across Australia. Similar schemes have proven successful in France through the Les Societes d'Acceleration du Transfert de Technologies (SATT)⁷ program and the CPN in New Zealand.

These internationally accepted best practice programs should be familiar to the Australian Government having been recommended by the Australian Office of Innovation and Science Australia report: Australia 2030 Prosperity through Innovation⁸. Recommendation 22 of this report is to “increase commercialisation capacity in research organisations by establishing a new stream of funding for translational activities”. The subsequent response to this report from the Australian Government with respect to Recommendation 22 was “The Government supports in principle this recommendation.”⁹

There is also a vibrant practitioner led training and professional development system in the UK through PraxisAuril¹⁰. PraxisAuril runs a range of professional development courses to upskill commercialisation and knowledge exchange staff in all areas from commercialisation through business development and industry engagement. This enables practitioners to progress through to recognition as a Registered Technology Transfer Professional (RTTP). RTTP was developed by the Alliance of Technology Transfer Professionals (ATTP)¹¹ as a globally recognised professional designation. KCA is a founding member of ATTP and is supportive of practitioners working towards earning RTTP recognition.

In 2016, KCA developed a world first skills framework for commercialisation practitioners with funding from the Professional Services Council¹² that has attracted significant interest globally. However, to fully utilise this framework, new courses need to be developed and delivered, and currently there are insufficient resources to do this. In addition, many research organisations do not have discretionary funds available to support the professional development of their commercialisation practitioners. The establishment of this dedicated funding pool would enable high quality training to be developed and delivered, ensuring best practice at scale across Australia.

About Knowledge Commercialisation Australasia

KCA¹³ is the peak body leading best practice in industry engagement, commercialisation, and entrepreneurship for research organisations. This involves activities from licensing technology to existing companies, academic consulting to industry, conducting sponsored research and spinning out new companies. KCA represents a significant majority of the commercialisation offices of public sector research organisations across Australia and New Zealand, and works with similar bodies globally including the US, Europe, and the UK to develop best practice in developing the research business interface. It conducts SCOPR®, the annual Survey of Commercialisation of Outcomes from Public Research.

[opportunities/investment-funds/preseed-accelerator-fund/](#)

⁷ <https://www.satt.fr/>

⁸ <https://www.industry.gov.au/publications/australia-2030-prosperity-through-innovation>

⁹ <https://www.industry.gov.au/publications/australian-government-response-australia-2030-report>

¹⁰ <https://www.praxisauril.org.uk/>

¹¹ <https://attp.global/>

¹² <https://techtransfer.org.au/kca-capability-framework/>

¹³ <https://techtransfer.org.au/>