National Innovation and Science Agenda - Summary

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More information can be found at the National Innovation and Science Agency site. Subscription to mailing lists related to various programs can be found here.
Changes to existing programs

Research Block Grants

The research block grants are being provided in two programmes.

- Research Support Programme (RSP) of $887 million in 2017 to support indirect costs
  - 50% Category 1 income; 50% Category 2, 3, 4 income
- Research Training Programme (RTP) of $949 million in 2017 to support training
  - 50% completions; 50% Category 1, 2, 3, 4 income

The new arrangements will commence on 1 January 2017.

CRC Projects

A new type of CRC grant has been developed, CRC Projects.

The projects are 3 year projects with two industry partners, at least one of those partners must a SME.

The new round of CRC opens in February 2016

Continuous rounds of Linkage grants

Linkage applications can be made at any time during the year starting from 1 July 2016.

Research impact assessment

Evaluation measure to assess research impact and industry engagement will be developed by the ARC alongside the ERA assessment.

The published schedule for these measures is to be developed in 2016, piloted in 2017 and first round of reporting in 2018.

Support of national research infrastructure over the next decade

- $1.5 billion for NCRIS, ongoing from 2017-18
- $520 million for Australian Synchrotron, commencing in 2016-17
- $294 million for SKA, commencing in 2016-17

Synchrotron and SKA funding will; NCRIS funding is ongoing from 2017-18. In 2016 Australia’s Chief Scientist will chair an expert group to identify national research infrastructure capability needs to determine where funding is required in future years.
New/increased Funding pools

$250M Biomedical Translation Fund
The fund will invest in promising biomedical innovation and commercialisation matching funding from private sector for investment.

The Biomedical Translation Fund will be established in 2016. Investments in biomedical businesses will commence once the new fund is established.

$200M CSIRO Innovation fund
The CSIRO Innovation fund will have two parts:

An early stage innovation fund of about $200 million to support co-investment in new spin-out/startup companies products and services created by Australian research institutions.

The fund will comprise $70 million in new government funding, as well as private sector investment and new revenue from CSIRO’s WLAN programme.

A $20 million expansion to CSIRO’s Accelerator programme to include other publicly funded research organisations to more rapidly prepare their research for commercial adoption.

Expansion of the Accelerator programme will commence in 2016-17. The early stage innovation fund will be implemented in 2016.

$36M Global Innovation program
$36 million over five years to:

- establish physical presences in
  - Silicon Valley
  - Tel Aviv
  - three other locations
- Provide seed funding to assist Australian businesses and researchers to collaborate with international businesses and researchers

Funding will be available from July 2016.

Business Research and Innovation Initiative
The initiative has three stages:

1. Work with Innovation and Science Australia to nominate five national policy and service delivery challenges
2. Businesses will be invited to submit proposals to address those challenges. Winners will receive grants of up to $100,000 to test their ideas over three to six months of development
3. Successful ideas may be eligible for a further grant of up to $1 million to develop a prototype or proof of concept over the following 18 months.
Launch on 1 July 2016.

**Innovations Connections**
Innovation Connection provides funding for collaborations with SMEs.

Funding is provided for

- matched grants available to support graduate and postgraduate researchers placements in businesses
- matched grants available to support business researchers to be placed in publicly funded research organisations

The Entrepreneurs’ Programme is currently running.

**Innovation in agriculture and regional areas**
The Rural Research and Development (R&D) for Profit boosts funding to the rural research and development corporations (RDCs) and fund nationally coordinated, strategic. The programme has been extended for a further four financial years and provide an additional $100 million in grant funding.
**Research national data and analytics groups**

**Data sharing initiative**
The federal government is

- making appropriately anonymised and non-sensitive public data openly available by default so the private sector can use it to create new products and business models
- providing free access to public data, with fees only applying for specialised data services
- making a nationally significant geocoded address database available.

The Public Data Policy Statement has been released. Australian Government entities are now required to make non-sensitive data open by default.

**Data61**
Data61 is the result of a merger between National ICT Australia (NICTA) and CSIRO’s digital research unit.

Data61 will:

- publicly release collated public databases on open data platforms
- build a Data Research Network that will link businesses with data researchers
- deliver data analytics training to businesses.

Funding will commence on 1 July 2016.

**Policy advisory**

**Innovation and Science Australia (ISA)**
Will publicly advocate reforms on key issues such as:

- innovation investment
- innovation, collaboration and skills
- delivering and operating research infrastructure
- how to better plan and use Australia’s investment in research and development.

Legislation will be introduced to establish the ISA effective from 1 July 2016.