

A U S T R A L I A



AUSTRALIA 2020 SUMMIT
INITIAL SUMMIT REPORT



Contents	Page No
INTRODUCTION	1
SHARED PRIORITIES	2
THE PRODUCTIVITY AGENDA - EDUCATION, SKILLS, TRAINING, SCIENCE AND INNOVATION	6
FUTURE OF THE AUSTRALIAN ECONOMY	10
POPULATION, SUSTAINABILITY, CLIMATE CHANGE, WATER AND THE FUTURE OF OUR CITIES	13
FUTURE DIRECTIONS FOR RURAL INDUSTRIES AND COMMUNITIES	17
A LONG-TERM NATIONAL HEALTH STRATEGY	20
STRENGTHENING COMMUNITIES AND SUPPORTING WORKING FAMILIES	23
OPTIONS FOR THE FUTURE OF INDIGENOUS AUSTRALIA	26
TOWARDS A CREATIVE AUSTRALIA: THE FUTURE OF THE ARTS, FILM AND DESIGN	29
AUSTRALIAN GOVERNANCE	32
AUSTRALIA'S FUTURE SECURITY AND PROSPERITY IN A RAPIDLY CHANGING REGION AND WORLD	35
CONCLUSION	38



INTRODUCTION

When Prime Minister Kevin Rudd announced the Australia 2020 Summit a little more than two months ago, he invited 1000 Australians to help shape a long term strategy for the nation's future, to tackle the long-term challenges confronting Australia by thinking in new ways. Since then, all over the nation, tens of thousands of people have grasped the opportunity for a public conversation about the future of Australia. On radio and in the press, in homes, workplaces and public fora, a large number of our fellow citizens have debated their vision for Australia and how to realise it with great energy and passion. Local summits were held across Australia, more than 500 schools debated the issues, a national Youth Summit was convened in Parliament House on 12-13 April, an African community summit in Melbourne on 17 April, and a special meeting was held with the Jewish community on 14 April (because the Summit coincides with Passover). More than 3600 individuals or groups made almost 8800 public submissions.

This gathering of 1000 Australians in the Great Hall, then, is not an end in itself, but part of something broader - a public conversation in which all voices are welcome. In the Prime Minister's words, "Government, irrespective of its political persuasion, does not have a monopoly on policy wisdom." Hence this conversation about our future should not end with the Summit. The challenges facing Australia are great and all Australians need to think about how we meet them. Our discussions this weekend should not be the conclusion of the national conversation that has begun to develop over the past 10 weeks, but rather a stimulus to engage an even larger number of Australians on the questions we have debated.



Official Opening

The Australia 2020 Summit was designed to harness the best ideas from across the nation and apply them to the challenges before us, to create a better future for Australia. Ideas are powerful: people have died for them and been liberated by them. And in a less dramatic way, some ideas influence the course of nations over decades, even if when first articulated they occasionally struggle for attention. Just as we will thrive with good ideas, so we will suffer for the lack of them.

In coming together to discuss ideas large and small, we have been required to examine rigorously our own ideas, those of others, and about the world around us. No political perspective, no academic discipline has all the answers. In some cases we have realised that we struggled to identify the right questions. It is only by having these kinds of conversations that we have any hope of understanding our challenges, their possible solutions, and ultimately each other.

This does not mean we will always agree, and we have disagreed this weekend about many things. Though interestingly, there was a large measure of agreement about many of the major challenges, even if sometimes sharp differences of opinion were evident in discussing solutions. We should not be afraid of disagreement. Indeed an important feature of a liberal democracy is respect for conflicting ideas; difference is part of the human condition. And we should not be surprised that we disagree: we are not all



the same, we have deeply held beliefs about the nature of the world which are not easily changed, and we all have different experiences of Australia. Consensus is not always possible, or even desirable. Sometimes not everyone can be accommodated, not every position reconciled. We are pleased that all participants – and the different ideas and perspectives expressed - have been treated with respect throughout the Summit.

The participants in this Summit were chosen by 11 community and 10 ministerial co-chairs, each responsible for a stream:

- The productivity agenda – Warwick Smith and Julia Gillard
- The future of the Australian economy – David Morgan and Wayne Swan
- Population, sustainability, climate change, water – Roger Beale and Penny Wong
- Future directions for rural industries and rural communities – Tim Fischer and Tony Burke
- A long-term national health strategy – Michael Good and Nicola Roxon
- Strengthening communities, supporting families and social inclusion – Tim Costello and Tanya Plibersek
- Options for the future of Indigenous Australia – Jackie Huggins and Jenny Macklin
- Towards creative Australia – Cate Blanchett, Julianne Schultz and Peter Garrett
- The future of Australian governance – John Hartigan and Maxine McKew
- Australia's future security and prosperity – Michael Wesley and Stephen Smith



Official Opening

In the time available, it is not possible for this Initial Report to capture the richness of all the contributions during this Summit. Every contribution has been carefully noted by scribes and a much more detailed Final Report of the Summit will be prepared next month for the Prime Minister and publication to the whole nation on the internet.

SHARED PRIORITIES

Our ways of doing government arrived with European settlement. We are still evolving in ways related to the manner of settlement, our Indigenous people, the nature of the continent and the character of Australians. For many decades, necessitated by a small population scattered across a huge and ancient land, Australian politics was often about public works - the building of railroads, pipelines, communications infrastructure such as the Adelaide-Darwin telegraph line and the Snowy hydro scheme. Australians had to develop what has been called – controversially – a 'talent for bureaucracy'.

This history has left Australians with a faith that the public sphere has a crucial role in building the nation's future. Yet in twenty-first century Australia, there is a sense that the role of government is changing.



Meanwhile, markets have altered our lives significantly, changing our sense of ourselves, colonising our imagination, changing our expectations about what constitutes the good life. They have brought many benefits. Yet they can be disconcerting to people who lose out, and the further extension of markets in areas such as child care remains contested. For some people, there are realms of activities markets should not enter.

Demographics, technology change, and global environmental challenges go to the fundamental questions about the role of government and of the nation, a question to which the answers had seemed obvious.

There is a sense of a nation at a significant point in history, where shifting global balances of economic power will affect Australia's place in the world. There is a great opportunity in the shift of economic power to Asia and the Pacific – provided we use our geography, economy and cultural resources to create and nurture profound links.



Participants Arrival and Welcome

Many of our conversations during this Summit have touched on these issues. There is an expectation civil society will strengthen as government becomes less central in our lives. Yet many perceive in climate change, or the response to Indigenous Australia, exactly the national challenges that require choices through collective public action.

Four key issues have dominated the Summit, crossing over most streams. Each is easy to state, but will require complex policy design, negotiation and involvement of the people of Australia to achieve meaningful change.

DEALING WITH A CHANGING CLIMATE

In his opening address, the Governor-General noted the far-reaching ramifications of possible climate changes as rainfall patterns change. Agriculture, cities and sustainability are all affected, as is Australia's place in the world when we negotiate international carbon trading systems and manage with the consequences of greenhouse gas emissions from other nations.

There is no single policy which can respond to every aspect of climate change. Rather, the Summit discussion suggested almost every aspect of policy choice will be affected by the drive toward sustainability. Climate change is the overarching issue this generation and those to follow, must address, and it will shape the context influencing much done by individuals, government and private organisations.

Also clear in the Summit discussion was a concern as to how adapting to climate change will affect the already disadvantaged in our communities.



A NATIONAL APPROACH

The second shared topic was a strong push across streams for a consistent national approach, particularly in economic policy. In particular, numerous inefficiencies in the Australian economy were identified flowing from differences between states and territories. Participants believe it is time to drive for a seamless national economy. This will mean single national markets and approaches in key areas such as taxation, energy and transport.

As with addressing climate change, creating single national markets sounds simple and manageable but is in practice a matter of huge complexity. It requires thinking not just about headline policies such as major regulation, but countless aspects of government involvement in society – from rules about environmental health and safety, through the way we pay for and organise education and training, through to the axle weights permitted for heavy trucks.



Official Opening

DEVELOPING PEOPLE

It is striking how often through the Summit concern arose that Australia has not been sufficiently clever in using the skills and ingenuity of our people. Early childhood services and education are obvious starting points for building capacity, but many argued a broader case for investment in a healthy population with access to necessary social support.

For a number of streams, this focus on developing our human capital led to wider issues – migration, skills shortages, participation of women, access to

child care, family leave, support for disabilities. One strongly held view was the need to enhance creativity and innovation in our communities. People find meaning in their lives through expression, and our nation benefits from innovation. These can happen spontaneously, but many argue for an education system which encourages and trains for creativity, a community willing to accept risk and failure in pursuit of the new, and governments rethinking how and why they support creative Australia.

STRENGTHENING CIVIL SOCIETY

A major theme at the Summit was the urgency of redressing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander disadvantage and to embrace the range of indigenous and non-indigenous stories which are our culture. Across many streams, it was discussed as a prerequisite to Australia's further development.

The 2020 Summit also heard from many voices keen to recognise the world outside government – the work of the 700,000 not-for-profit organisations operating in Australia, the role of the media in



Opening Plenary



creating space for public conversations, the capacity of our people through better access to education and training, encouraging creativity and recognising the skills of artists and writers in connecting individual experience to global trends.

This desire to enrich the relationships in communities by encouraging a strong role for new organisations and approaches is a major opportunity for Australia. It can be characterised as strengthening civil society – using government to encourage a broader view of how our community works. The individual proposals at the Summit to generate non-government initiatives were many and varied. The hope that philanthropy might find a firmer home in Australia, and become an accepted part of corporate and individual life, captures best this shared aspiration for a world in which a vigorous civil sector stands, separate from government, and allows greater depth and range in our community. Not every problem can or should be solved by government, but encouraging society to trust in its own judgement, and act in its own right is our challenge.

Elements of these four overarching themes emerge in each of the reports to follow. Responding to climate change, creating a seamless economy through a national approach, developing people, and strengthening civil society, taken together, articulate the vision for this nation expressed by many at the Australia 2020 Summit.



THE PRODUCTIVITY AGENDA - EDUCATION, SKILLS, TRAINING, SCIENCE AND INNOVATION

AMBITIONS

Higher levels of information and globalisation create unprecedented opportunities to increase productivity growth. Productivity growth requires excellent social and physical infrastructure, flexible, fair and equitable labour markets, and a world leading education and innovation system.



Stream Session - The productivity agenda - education, skills, training, science and innovation

Material resources are finite but intellectual capital is unlimited. We therefore need a 2020 strategy to invest more in our capacity for knowledge and imagination, and to ensure that we generate sustainable higher returns from that investment in the form of productivity growth.

We also need to overcome entrenched disadvantage and ensure that all Australians are equipped to participate in and benefit from these changes.

BY 2020

Australia will maximise its wealth, excellence and equity by driving up productivity growth to the leading edge of developed countries, by:

- **Equipping** all Australians through an education and training system that leads the world in excellence and inclusion
- **Deploying** Australia's human capital efficiently and fairly including by overcoming the barriers that lock individuals and communities out of real opportunities
- **Connecting** through new collaborations across our education, business and innovation systems.

We'll know that we're on the right track when productivity is maximised by:

- Children's development being at the heart of the productivity agenda.
- People wanting to and being able to move in and out of good jobs, training and education throughout their lives, to suit their family commitments and their talents and needs.
- People being able to access the right learning and work opportunities for them in a diverse economy.
- Realising the potential of innovation to meet Australia's needs.
- Australia attracting and enabling the best minds.
- More effective connections between institutions and people.



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- Research and development investment having increased to a level that sustains our competitiveness as a nation.
 - Policies and programs are informed by the best, most rigorous data.

PRIORITY THEMES: EQUIP, DEPLOY, CONNECT

To achieve this we need to focus on the following **priority themes**:

- Create new connections and collaborations across our education, business and innovation systems.
- Boost the flow of ideas, imagination, people and capital around our economy.
- Invest more in knowledge, skills, imagination and learning capability.
- Set new standards of excellence and inclusion for participation and learning outcomes.
- Design new forms of institutions through collaboration to provide services and support.
- Build infrastructure which integrates services and encourages shared community use.
- Promote workplaces which value innovation and creativity, which are attractive to employees and demonstrate fair workplace practices.

All of these activities must reflect a sense of fairness and values.

TOP IDEAS

Equip

- **Supporting kids:** Overcome the public private divide in education by, for example, funding students according to need and encouraging more private investment.
- **Extending HELP:** Extend Higher Education Loan Programs (HECS-HELP and FEE-HELP) to all students in post-secondary education.
- **2020 Scholarships:** merit based scholarships to vocational education and training and higher education institutions in skills shortage areas.
- **Community Corps:** allow community service to reduce a person's HECS-HELP debt.
- **Science and Maths Connections:** Improve science and maths education by connecting scientists and others with teachers, especially in our primary schools.
- **Rewarding excellence in teaching:** Focus on the connections between quality teaching and productivity.
- **Celebrating teaching:** Celebrating the vocation and contribution of teaching.
- **Teaching first:** Establish a national program to attract talented graduates and career-switchers into teaching, and reward teachers for working in national priority areas, including disadvantaged communities, remote areas and in shortage subjects.
- **Innovation Australia:** Establish a national institute for innovation and creativity.



Deploy

- **Windows on workplaces:** Empower employees to choose their preferred workplaces by facilitating the dissemination of information about employment experience, for example work-life-balance and family friendliness.
- **Skills development:** Employers take responsibility for developing the skills of their workforce and in return are able to access a flexible, demand driven training system.
- **Work in the bush:** Provide incentives for people to work in rural and regional Australia by supporting people to re-locate from areas of few jobs to areas where there are labour shortages.
- **Mobile labour market:** Enabling the free movement of labour from the Asia-Pacific region into Australia, underpinned by Australian workplace standards.
- **Learning for life account:** Develop lifetime participation accounts for every Australian from birth – into which the government and others can make payments for education, training, parental leave, and superannuation contributions, with capacity to go into deficit and income-contingent repayments which maximise the choices available to individuals and link flexible personal choices to a new range of early childhood and learning services.

Connect

- **Parent and children centres:** Communities have access to integrated services to support children's health, development, learning and care. Childhood development should be supported through a place-based culture that offers integrated services and community support
- **Life Learning centres:** service centres supporting working age Australians with their family and career needs
- Release latent value in our human capital by:
 - **One curriculum – more money for schools:** Creating a national curriculum and rationalising curriculum and assessment institutions, with freed up funds going to children in schools
 - **Business – school connections:** Creating a coordinated partnership program between Australia's top 100 companies and schools. This program could also include universities and vocational education and training institutions
 - **Golden Guru:** retired people acting as mentors in the workplace
 - **Science, business and arts into schools:** Connect scientists, business and the arts with the education system
 - **Australia Unlimited:** Create and organise alumni network of both Australians living overseas and former foreign students
- **Connecting Australia:** Building and enabling the use by all Australians of a world class broadband system to foster full participation in the digital economy
- **Business – research connect:** improving collaboration between public and private business, industry and research to foster innovation to OECD levels.



PRE- SUMMIT SUBMISSIONS

Over 900 submissions were assessed for the productivity agenda stream and additionally, many of the submissions to the future of the Australian economy stream were directly relevant to the topics under consideration in this stream, namely education, skills, science and innovation.

Many submissions in this stream highlighted the need for improved access to appropriate technologies in order to improve customer services, business productivity and the delivery of government services. The perceived benefits of high speed digital technologies were outlined, such as greater opportunities for sharing of expertise, as well as increased flexibility and convenience. Some potential issues were raised, such as the need for intellectual property law to keep pace with technology, to ensure greater sharing without infringing the rights of others.

Another theme to emerge was how best to prepare for a global economy that increasingly will be based on advanced skills, advanced technology, low carbon energy sources and integrations with global supply chains. Many submissions noted the importance of taking steps to support low carbon energy options, particularly with respect to the benefits to the economy as a whole of reduced carbon emissions.

Teacher quality was seen as important, whether in early childhood, school, VET or higher education.

The submissions also highlighted the need to attract and retain talented, creative and highly skilled people (including researchers and scientists, entrepreneurs and professional skilled workers) in the context of the global 'war for talent'.



Stream Session - Future of the Australian Economy



FUTURE OF THE AUSTRALIAN ECONOMY

AMBITIONS

Australia should be the best place in the world to live and do business. This will require urgent action to increase economic capacity through the creation of a truly national, efficient, sustainable and inclusive economy supported by seamless regulation. We should set national goals for Australian prosperity in which all Australians share:

- Increasing GDP per capita so that Australia is among the top 5 countries in the world on this measure, with strong, stable economic growth; and
- Inflation between 2% and 3%.

PRIORITY THEMES

This stream advocated a fundamental commitment to creating a seamless national economy and single national markets in major areas of economic activity (for example, labour, energy, water, transport and communications). The goal should be to minimise overlaps and bottlenecks and improve competitiveness. They will require clarification of roles, responsibilities and accountabilities between different levels of government. At present, however, Australia's economy in major markets is highly fragmented: the COAG national reform process has identified more than 25 areas in which Australia has eight sets of different State and Territory regulations. In addition, we have multiple education and accreditation systems. A country of Australia's size cannot afford this.



Stream Session - Future of the Australian Economy

Meeting the target suggested for economic growth in the coming decades requires world-class infrastructure. To address this need quickly and efficiently, Australia must set broad national priorities to allow investment to flow to the highest return opportunities and; undertake further regulatory reform to encourage an appropriate mix of public and private investment.

A third major theme concerned the need for a holistic tax system that is fair, simple and efficient. Australia needs a tax system that supports the global competitiveness of our economy, provides

incentives, minimises distortions and supports fiscal responsibility.

TOP IDEAS

This stream proposes the creation of an independent body to carry out a "clean sheet of paper" review of the roles and responsibilities of federal, state and local governments in areas of major economic activity. This body could be a new Federation Commission or an expanded version of the Productivity Commission. It would be constituted by and report to the Council of Australian Governments (COAG), but would have the power to create and initiate the necessary reform agenda and monitor its implementation.



In respect of the latter role, it would absorb the activities currently conducted by the COAG Reform Council.

In regard to taxation, the Federal Government should undertake a comprehensive review of state and federal taxes, within a 2 year timeframe including interim reporting. This review should consider measures to simplify taxes, reduce inefficient taxes, harmonise, ensure a progressive system, as intended, and address negative interaction with the welfare system.

The infrastructure imperative is to create a regulatory and institutional framework to allow timely and efficient investment, especially in key export areas. A specific priority is a simpler, national regime for third party access to give up front regulatory certainty and to promote competitive pricing and adequate returns. The stream endorses a need to coordinate national infrastructure priorities through Infrastructure Australia, underpinned by rigorous cost-benefit analysis and focusing on Australia's competitive advantages.

With regard to regulation, the speed of regulatory reform should be increased, including to create seamless national markets in key areas, improve productivity and remove barriers to competitiveness, and to reduce the cost of doing business.

The group recommended re-establishing annual budgets as the sole priority-setting mechanisms for government policies.

The group also discussed the importance of Australia nurturing and investing in talent. The group recommended that there should be a single, national education and accreditation system to promote mobility of talent. This objective, treated in depth in The Productivity Agenda stream, is vital to the future of our economy.

PRE-SUMMIT SUBMISSIONS AND OTHER IDEAS

Submissions from the public and participants covered a wide range of topics, including those that are covered in detail in other streams (in particular the impact of climate change on Australia's economy). The most commonly raised topic was infrastructure. Many submissions urged increased investment in transport (especially rail and ports, renewable energy, water and information and communications technology (ICT) infrastructure. Several people raised the idea of exploiting superannuation funds for infrastructure investment more systematically, for example through the creation of a government-run "infrastructure supermarket" to link this source of funding directly to ownership of new infrastructure. Another submission proposed reform of the third-party access provisions of the *Trade Practices Act* combined with accelerated depreciation and cash incentives for major infrastructure (over \$1billion) with a minimum 20 year life.

Many submissions identified the need to provide next generation, high capacity broadband to all Australians, with government support and investment. One suggested ambition was to deliver such connectivity to every home in Australia by 2013.



Other major topics covered in the submissions were the tax system, housing affordability and the financial system. Interesting ideas in relation to this last area included:

- A national financial literacy program in schools, to ensure that every young adult is financially literate by 2020; and
- A government-guaranteed program to create securities from prime mortgages (similar to that in Canada), to ensure a relatively low-cost and stable source of financing for housing.



POPULATION, SUSTAINABILITY, CLIMATE CHANGE, WATER AND THE FUTURE OF OUR CITIES

Australia faces an unprecedented challenge from climate change. We risk losing our natural heritage, our rivers, landscapes and biodiversity. We have a brief opportunity to act now to safeguard and shape our future prosperity.

AMBITIONS

Our aspiration is that by 2020 Australia is the world's leading green and sustainable economy. That we will set time bound targets and be on track to dramatically decrease our ecological footprint while continuing to grow our economy and improve our quality of life. Through our creativity and skills, we will have harnessed the full potential of our natural assets and human resources to turn the challenge of climate change to our advantage.

By 2020 Australia will be making a major contribution to a comprehensive global response to climate change, including working with our partners on clean energy. Australia will have dramatically reduced our emissions, and communities, regions and business will be actively assisted to adopt the unavoidable consequences of climate change.

Environmental considerations will be fully integrated into economic decision making in Australia, at the household, business and government levels. We will have resilient and innovative water systems that reduce our dependency on climate-sensitive water resources in our towns and cities.

A robust emissions trading system and a suite of complementary measures will be driving a low carbon revolution with Government taking the lead working in partnership with business and the community. Climate and sustainability policy will also incorporate the needs of disadvantaged and low-income Australians.

A new dialogue will have been established with our indigenous peoples on our response to climate change, water and sustainability challenges.

Australia's globally outstanding ecosystems and species are managed to reduce threats and build resilience to promote adaptation to climate change.

By 2020 the health of Australia's ecological systems will be improved. The health of our river and groundwater systems will be managed to achieve ecological sustainability, supporting food and fibre production and resilient communities. Australia will also have become a global leader in tropical water system conservation and sustainability.



Stream Session - Population, Sustainability, Climate change, Water and the Future of our Cities



PRIORITY THEMES

An integrated, whole-of-government approach underpinned by clear targets and measurement with independent reporting is fundamental.

Strong national leadership and international engagement was identified as a priority theme. Capacity building and the importance of changing incentives such as price were also widely considered to be central to the discussion.

Stakeholder engagement, including with regional Australians, capacity building and education are needed to support the significant behavioural change required to implement these policies. Indigenous people must also be involved in policy development and implementation.

The urgent need to complete implementation of long-standing commitments to water reform was also identified.

TOP IDEAS

We could adopt a National Sustainability, Population and Climate Change Agenda and develop robust institutions to support it. Australia would have a whole-of-government approach to climate change and sustainability policy, encompassing government expenditure, taxation, regulation and investment.

As part of this agenda we could include an audit function to report on governments' performance against these climate change and sustainability objectives.

We could implement a set of national environmental accounts, including carbon and water accounts, to inform government, business and community decision-making. These could be linked with the current national economic accounts. We will explicitly link the environment to productivity and innovation to underpin our future competitiveness.

Through a National Sustainable Cities Program the federal government could lead a nationally consistent approach to urban and regional planning which drives water efficiency and reductions in emissions. This could be supported by the implementation of tax and other policies that encourage the use of public transport relative to other modes of transport.

That a National Indigenous Knowledge Centre be established and maintained with indigenous people. This centre would examine multidisciplinary research and program delivery pertaining to climate change, sustainability and water.

Australia will have a population policy, and immigration program that works truly in the national interest and that is a model for the world.

Further investment could be directed into research, development and deployment to enable a low emissions energy revolution.

We could transform the ecological footprint of the built environment by taking the lead on national planning, building and product standards to minimise waste and reduce water and energy consumption in



our homes and in our neighbourhoods. Early action could include support for energy efficiency measures in low-income households and consider housing affordability implications. A particular initiative in this point could be to require carbon neutrality for all new buildings constructed beyond 2020.

Before 2020 all Australians could have the tools to enable them to measure and manage their personal carbon footprint. This could include access to smart meters for energy and water consumption.

We could expand the use of a wider range of market mechanisms to acquire water entitlements from over-allocated systems with a view to encouraging sustainable water use and assisting communities to adjust.

The urgency of responding to climate change makes it imperative that the ETS and the ensuing long-run carbon price drive a transition to clean energy technologies.

ADDITIONAL DATA/RESEARCH REQUIRED

It was agreed that comprehensive improvements in environmental data and statistics were necessary to enable better management.

DISAGREEMENTS

The points of contention during the discussion were the respective merits of clean coal versus renewables, population restrictions versus reductions in per capita footprint, the transfer of all Commonwealth funding to public transport (rather than roads), and GM crops.

A substantial number of the group felt strongly that no new coal-fired power stations be built in Australia until carbon capture and sequestration is commercially available, proven, safe and efficient. However, there was no consensus.

SUMMARY OF SUBMISSIONS TO 2020 SUMMIT SECRETARIAT

Sustainability and climate change were two of the most topical issues addressed in submissions. There was considerable support for an increasingly market-based approach to environmental issues, with water and carbon pricing two of the most intensely debated issues. Several demand-side initiatives to moderate Australia's consumption of high-carbon products were proposed, including product labelling and taxation measures designed to promote low-carbon consumer choices and lifestyle changes. Such specific ideas were proposed as electronic traffic congestion pricing (with positive credits potentially available for public transport usage), while bigger picture concepts such as engaging in a global carbon trading market were also vigorously advocated.

From an environmental leadership perspective, an Asia-Pacific regional authority was proposed to research and promote renewable energy technologies and policies. Domestically, a set of national environmental accounts was suggested to regularly report on the condition of our natural capital. There was a call for increased disclosure of the environmental performance of large enterprises, possibly under a set of formalised accounting standards, while increased scrutiny of government environmental practices (renewable energy usage, emission levels) was a further idea.



Large-scale consumer education campaigns were suggested to raise awareness of the urgency of sustainability issues. A raft of broader ideas were also put forward for this stream, including overhauling immigration policy in the context of increasing domestic demand for skilled labour, and the reinvention of our architectural and building design industries into a visionary, world-leading institution in sustainable practices.



FUTURE DIRECTIONS FOR RURAL INDUSTRIES AND COMMUNITIES

AMBITIONS

The development of strategies for fostering food security and the future sustainability and productivity of remote, rural and regional Australia has been the focus of summit discussions. The group identified two challenges of particular importance in developing such strategies: first, building on the strengths and contributions of our remote, rural and regional communities; and second the development of strategies for the efficient provision of infrastructure and services outside our cities.

PRIORITY THEMES

- The challenges posed by climate change with particular emphasis on its impacts on the food, fibre and forestry value chains
- Nationwide harmonisation of regulation, standards and enforcement
- Development of appropriate incentive schemes to promote environmentally sustainable behaviour and strategies
- Attraction, recruitment and retention of people, families and business to remote, rural and regional communities
- Broad parity of access to infrastructure and services for remote, rural and regional Australia



Stream Session - Future Directions for Rural Industries and Communities

TOP IDEAS

Response to Climate Change

Water scarcity, resulting from climate change will have significant negative impacts on our primary industries, if we don't develop a strategy for using our water more efficiently. Water security can be enhanced by incentives to improve water-use efficiency and greater use of high rainfall areas of the north of Australia.

A government unit should be established to consider national and global food security, looking

at the context, drivers and emerging trends and new policy options.

The government should investigate and develop a holistic sustainable farm operational plan strategy, including an integrated carbon strategy. Research effort needs to be expanded and there needs to be a clear connection between the latest research and farm adaptation, particularly as it relates to improving productivity.



Nationwide harmonisation and standardisation

Nationwide harmonisation and standardisation is urgent. This includes uniform regulation, licensing, standards and enforcement for transport (both road and rail) and agriculture. State and local government regulatory reforms would be encouraged through Federal Government incentives and penalties, linked to the rate of progressive reform.

Future infrastructure investment decisions should be approached from a national perspective. In rail infrastructure, such an approach would help facilitate catch-up and improve both the modality of our current network and intermodal hubbing. The “The Future of the Australian Economy” stream provides further recommendations on national harmonisation and standardisation. As part of this, there must be broadband access for remote, rural and regional Australia.

Incentives for Sustainability

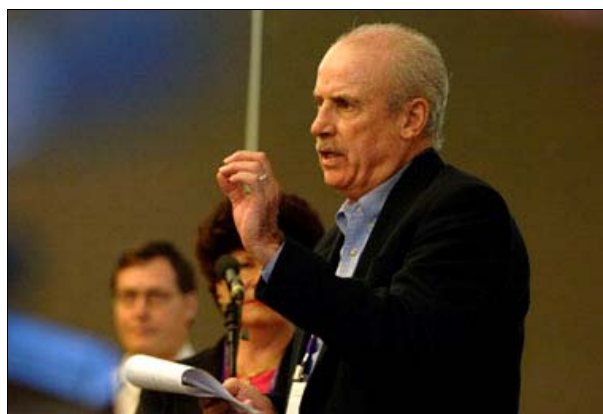
Further research is required into the potential of north and north-west Australia with particular reference to agriculture. The Federal government should commission a total soil and hydrological survey of north and north-west Australia by 2010, to inform future production opportunities.

Attract, Recruit and Retain People and Families to Rural communities

Incorporation of rural studies into a national rural education program that includes life-long learning, and the establishment of centres of excellence in agricultural studies in rural and regional locations. In classrooms across Australia, children should be encouraged to grow something real.

A voluntary business mentoring program should be established and supported by retired experts to encourage young entrepreneurs in remote rural and regional Australia. This would promote the essential role of small businesses in remote, rural and regional communities.

Public events including major tourist festivals play an important role in rural community life, particularly for young people. Increases in public liability premiums and growing bureaucracy jeopardise the capacity of rural communities to hold public events. The Federal Government should explore ways of minimising the rapidly increasing costs of community public liability insurance.



Stream Session - Future Directions for Rural Industries and Communities

ADDITIONAL DATA/RESEARCH REQUIRED

Important unresolved issues were raised about genetically modified crop breeding.



DISAGREEMENTS

There was some disagreement over the appropriate use of GM crops in Australia and concern that some states were preventing growers from having choice.

PRE SUMMIT SUBMISSIONS

The creation of a program to encourage student exchange between schools in urban and regional areas - This program would improve urban dwellers' understanding of rural life and encourage students to undertake agricultural studies.

Facilitation of knowledge sharing by farmers - This would include the establishment of a government body to collect and disseminate data on successful farming practices. The body would incentivise farmers to provide useful information.

Reform of current drought assistance welfare - Several submissions agreed that the current drought welfare system encourages both inefficient farming methods and over-farming in marginal areas.



A LONG-TERM NATIONAL HEALTH STRATEGY

AMBITIONS

By 2020, Australia will:

- *Support the health of all Australians at all stages of life* – ensure that every child is off to a healthy start, close the life-expectancy gap between Indigenous Australians and non-Indigenous Australians, ensure every Australian remains productive throughout life, and there is a narrower gap between the “haves” and the “have-nots”
- *Have a health system structured around the person rather than the provider* – in which every Australian has access to their own health data, and there are better and transparent data flows across all health players
- *Have health policy focused on prevention* – across not just health, but across Government and the whole community, with “zero tolerance” of unhealthy actions
- *Be a world leader in research and translation (including technology)*
- *Have “One Health System”* – a community-driven system with single governance, management and funding

PRIORITY THEMES

This stream was characterised by five key themes. Participants stressed the importance of healthy lifestyles, health promotion and disease prevention. A related theme was the need to address health inequalities (including lifestyle factors) within and across communities. The health workforce and service provision were seen as key enablers for a healthy population. Much discussion centred on the future challenges and opportunities in health – and the role of health research, research translation and research training in addressing these.



Stream Session - A Long-term National Health Strategy

TOP IDEAS

Create a national preventative health agency. This independent health body would be funded by taxes on products with high social cost, e.g. alcohol, cigarettes and junk food (like a national version of VicHealth). The body would commission research, design interventions based on evidence, develop and deliver preventative health policy, and implement marketing and public health campaigns.

By 2020, the Commission’s work may result in each sedentary job having to include thirty minutes physical activity a day, or every office building having to re-open stairwells to encourage their employees to walk more.



Make healthy food choices easy – By 2020, this may include

- Delivering “fast fruit” to primary schools, ensuring all primary school kids have fresh fruit at least once a week
- Fresh food delivered regularly into Indigenous communities as a result of work with industry
- Reforming food labelling with a simple “traffic light” indicator
- Banning marketing of junk food to children
- Regulating the allowable content of unhealthy ingredients.

Promote better translation of Australia’s research efforts into commercial and health outcomes underpinned by initial public investment supported by increased private and philanthropic investment in research and development.

This will be achieved by:

- building Australia’s skills and capacity in scientific entrepreneurship and IP management
- developing Australian partnerships and philanthropic partnerships (e.g. the Gates Foundation or Atlantic Philanthropies)
- Significant increases in partnership with industry
- Integrating state and federal infrastructure funding (e.g. indirect costs of research)
- Financing and mentoring nascent health care and health technology companies

Promote better research and the translation of research into commercial and clinical benefits - for example the Bionic Eye.

For example, by 2020, this might lead to a creation like the Bionic Eye. This technology, which is a cure for blindness akin to the Bionic Ear, could be achieved by 2020 for a modest national investment, and could reaffirm Australia as an international leader in bioengineering. Other examples include more biotech companies, Australian treatments of Type 2 diabetes, dementia and cancer.

Create a “Healthbook” (like Facebook) for Australians to take greater ownership of their health information and electronically share it with people they trust – for example their doctor, nurse or family members. Users could control their health “friends” and their level of access, share data as desired, and ask for real time advice on health issues. By 2020, this might include sharing your own genetic data with your doctor or family. This would put the individual squarely at the centre of the health system.

Introduce health literacy programs for all Australians. For example, universal first aid training would mean that by 2020 all kids will have done First Aid, trained by volunteers – which will in turn allow volunteers to deliver health care in emergencies like the Bali bombings.

Establish a Health Equalities Commission for all Australians with a focus on Indigenous health and other disadvantaged communities.



Ensure better data for evidence-based allocation of resources – by abolishing red tape and meaningless routine reporting requirements; creating quality and comparable outcomes data; and then using that data to allocate resources across the system based on hard evidence. Public funding would be added and removed on the basis of clearly demonstrated effectiveness.

As an example: if the evidence supported it, the Commonwealth might fund the greater use of physiotherapists to manage incontinence, avoiding the need for surgery, or review funding for hospitalisation for back pain.

Set up a health ASEAN – a collaborative regional group to focus on emerging infectious diseases like Bird Flu, plan for and be ready to respond to bioterrorism and share learning and best practice on chronic and preventable diseases. By 2020, we may see rapidly rising levels of Ross River Fever and Dengue Fever by 2020 as a result of climate change.

Complete rethink of the shape of the medical workforce – creating a self-sufficient and flexible medical workforce for Australia with competence-based training for accreditation.

PRE-SUMMIT SUBMISSIONS

By far the most common theme in submissions to this stream, was the importance of preventative health care. Submissions highlighted its role in reducing the incidence of chronic disease, relieving stress on the health system by improving self-management of health risk factors, and enabling individuals to take greater control over their own health outcomes.

Specific ideas included a renewed focus on community preventative programs – such as expanding the Active After-school Communities Program to promote physical activity in children; new comprehensive family and community health assessment programs conducted by nurses; a primary and secondary schools' screening program to identify and manage "at risk" children with possible mental health problems (much like we currently test vision and hearing); and a range of systemic incentives for healthier behaviour, such as tax incentives and levies on junk food.

A sizeable and flexible health workforce was suggested as a key component of achieving better health outcomes. Specifically, submissions stressed the need to empower and train nursing and allied health workers to write prescriptions, manage the ongoing care of chronic disease patients, and perform minor procedures. They also emphasised the need for more university places and scholarships in medicine.

Other topics discussed by many submissions included rural and Indigenous health; the need for greater recognition and management of mental health issues; a wealth of options for re-allocating health funding; the establishment of a national organ donor scheme; and innovative strategies for making health everyone's responsibility, for example through a measurable "wellness footprint" or health ratings for businesses, schools and urban communities.



STRENGTHENING COMMUNITIES AND SUPPORTING WORKING FAMILIES

AMBITIONS

This stream imagines Australia in 2020 as a diverse and respectful society that provides all people with security and opportunity. Australians should be involved, healthy, safe, educated and housed.

PRIORITY THEMES

Four specific themes were proposed by this stream:

- Making social inclusion a national priority
- Building and strengthening local communities
- Supporting and empowering families
- Reducing disadvantage and poverty

An underlying concern was the need to recognise the value of the community or not-for-profit sector, which comprises more than 700,000 organisations and is responsible for delivering a large proportion of community and social services in Australia. Yet this sector faces large challenges in ensuring its sustainability, ranging from workforce issues (including barriers to involving volunteers) to high compliance costs imposed by government funding programs and regulations.

TOP IDEAS

Making social inclusion a national priority

This stream proposed the development and implementation of both a Charter of Rights (like the Future of Australian Governance stream) and a National Action Plan for Social Inclusion. The plan to increase social inclusion and combat poverty should be developed in consultation with the community. It should include evidence-based goals and measurable targets. The ambition and scope of the Plan should reflect economic analysis of the return on investment produced by improving social inclusion. Issues of social inclusion should be considered in a wide range of policy areas.

A related idea is to create a National Development Index, based on economic, social and environmental measures, which would incorporate social inclusion indicators. The Federal Budget papers should report each year on progress against the measures and indicators.

Building and strengthening local communities

One of the principal determinants of community strength is the adequacy of social infrastructure in local communities. This stream urged the development of an urban design strategy for all towns and cities, including physical infrastructure, that would encourage social connectedness.



It also supported strategies to develop local community capacity through skills development, mentoring and leadership to work more collaboratively with the public and private sectors.

The group supported the idea of a “one-stop shop” for the delivery of government and community services.

Participants in this stream also proposed specific ways of reducing the damage inflicted on communities by problem gambling and binge drinking. These could include reducing the number of poker machines or tighter regulation of alcohol.



Stream Session - Strengthening Communities and Supporting Working Families

Supporting and empowering families

Families need better support to balance work and family obligations through greater workplace flexibility. An important priority is improved access to paid leave for parents (with children of varying ages) and carers (of the disabled and the aged). Parents need time to spend with their children, especially the very young, and should not be forced to return to work too early for financial reasons. Carers often experience significant social exclusion because of an inability to balance work and caring responsibilities.

Another way to help and empower families is through far more extensive use of school infrastructure to provide care for pre-school children, more educationally-focused before and after school care and parental education. School facilities could be used almost 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. In areas of particular disadvantage, early intervention and prevention services could be provided to children of all ages.

Greater support for families is also needed to reduce violence. This stream discussed a number of ideas that might achieve that goal, including a national policy framework, educational programs within schools and improved cultural awareness on the part of those seeking to prevent or respond to violence.

Reducing disadvantage and poverty

A network of community hubs is needed in the most disadvantaged communities and which have the capacity to respond to local community needs. Service delivery data derived from them should assist in measuring social progress through the National Development Index.

Recently arrived migrants, refugees and asylum seekers are particularly vulnerable to various kinds of disadvantage. A comprehensive, long-term national resettlement strategy for them should be delivered through their local communities.

This stream discussed some different ideas such as: provision of “micro-finance” on a nation-wide scale to people who are largely excluded from mainstream financial services. This idea, already well-established



in other countries and currently being piloted in some parts of Australia, involves access to small loans for personal or business purposes at no or very low interest. These programs help to build financial capacity (such as budgeting and savings skills), allow the establishment of small businesses and provide a transition to mainstream financial services.

Another specific idea was the concept of a National Disability Insurance Scheme for people who experience catastrophic injury during their life.

PRE-SUMMIT SUBMISSIONS

Most submissions concerned the issue of work-family balance, strengthening communities (including the capacity of the not-for-profit sector) and housing affordability and homelessness. Various types of financial support for parents were proposed, as were ideas to improve parenting skills and marital relationships. Many people made a link between work-life balance and volunteering.

In relation to communities and the not for profit sector, the majority of submissions proposed ways to encourage and support volunteering in communities. Specific ideas included:

- A discount on tertiary education fees for students who volunteer with community organisations for an extended period (with benefits to both the volunteers and the organisations);
 - Allowing welfare recipients to volunteer with community organisations instead of seeking paid employment; and
 - Reducing the regulatory and financial burden of managing volunteers.
- Many submissions also sought increased funding for community services provision and community infrastructure.

One idea that is relevant to both productivity and reducing disadvantage is the potential to make deductible, gift recipient and tax exemption status for a non-government school conditional on it spending a specified proportion of its total income on scholarships for students from low income families, who otherwise could not afford to attend the school.

Submissions dealing with housing and homelessness contained a wide array of proposals to increase affordability and the stock of low-income housing.

A number of people highlighted the difficulties faced by carers, usually related to caring for a family member with a disability. Among the possible solutions canvassed were:

- Additional funding to cover increased costs of caring (e.g. medical, housing and transport costs);
- Additional services (e.g. training for parents of autistic children, recreational services for disabled young people and supported accommodation); and
- A national disability insurance scheme, perhaps targeted at those who are catastrophically injured.



OPTIONS FOR THE FUTURE OF INDIGENOUS AUSTRALIA

AMBITIONS

Ambitions for Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are that they will be able, productive, confident, proud and independent contributing members of society. They will experience parity with other Australians across the full spectrum of measures, but most importantly in the strength of their families and youth. Following the historic and significant apology, a new national dialogue is required. This new form of engagement will shape Australia's global identity, securing a place for Aboriginal culture and identity in the Australian story.

PRIORITY THEMES

Increased formal recognition of Australia's Indigenous peoples was a strong theme. New accountability structures for governments and service delivery arrangements in Indigenous affairs are necessary. There was a call for renewed focus on Indigenous children and their families.

The overwhelming desire to "close the gap" in all areas was a priority theme. Such outcomes would likely be underpinned by accelerated economic development, redistribution of resources and property rights and expanded corporate partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander entrepreneurs. Cultural identity and racism were two final themes that were emphasised.

There must be a major focus on early childhood development and the continued well-being of children to develop to their full potential.

TOP IDEAS

A continuation of the bipartisan commitment shown through the National Apology to inform our national dialogue in order to change the ethos through which Aboriginal affairs and interests over the past 200 years have been constructed was considered critical. This should be supported by a national public education campaign. Bipartisan support will be essential.

The establishment of a new philosophical framework through which we negotiate a new definition of our relationship and how we might define it in the Constitution or Treaty or settlement is necessary.

There was wide support for new, independent mechanisms with teeth and sanctions to monitor accountability of governments, involving significant Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation.



Stream Session - Options for the Future of Indigenous Australia



Private philanthropic flows to Indigenous organisations in Australia are limited. In addition, improvements in business partnership arrangements between Indigenous enterprises and Australian corporates could significantly enhance the economic development of Indigenous communities, particularly those in remote areas.

Greater corporate participation and partnerships with Indigenous business is necessary. Increased levels of private enterprise could be encouraged in Indigenous communities through incentives such as tax concessions.

Develop a new education framework to give real choice for Indigenous children to get high quality education, including to attend boarding schools or hostels, enabled by a combination of ABSTUDY, private school scholarships and government funding.

We could encourage high-performing young professionals to work as teachers alongside Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander educators.

Establish a future fund for investment to heal and build children's, families' and communities' capacity to participate and function, fund housing and major capital works, and invest in innovation.

Make it mandatory for education and health authorities to implement individual health and education compacts for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children with their families to engage parents and governments with their children's futures.

Recognising that a comprehensive health strategy is required, trachoma, a contagious blindness-causing eye disease, could be eradicated from Indigenous children within five years at a cost of less than \$25m.

A national Indigenous Knowledge Centre network should be established to provide support to regional knowledge centres. Regional centres reflect that each Indigenous group is different and has different knowledge to preserve and to develop.

These need to be linked to the development of community hubs, and would utilise existing facilities.

Some low-cost ideas flagged included signalling Australia's support for the UN Declaration of Rights of Indigenous Peoples, establishing "sister school" relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous schools, and adding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander symbols to commemorative occasions, national symbols and place names.

SUMMARY OF SUBMISSIONS TO 2020 SUMMIT SECRETARIAT

Indigenous governance remains a delicate topic. Submissions suggested a treaty or compact of recognition and understanding between the Australian government and Indigenous Australians, similar to those seen in the USA, Canada and New Zealand. There were proposals for regional governance structures run by Indigenous leaders in parallel with mainstream authorities, and there was considerable appetite for a national registry of all government funding provided to Indigenous organisations and initiatives.



Universal economic independence remains a central aspiration for Indigenous Australia. Ideas for achieving this goal included the broadening of incentive programs encouraging private investment in Indigenous communities, such as tax concessions and “fast-track” assistance for ideas proven to be viable. There was a strong sense that Indigenous culture represents a real economic opportunity, and among the suggestions was a formalised structure for promoting Indigenous cultural and intellectual property rights and developing standards for appropriate use, attribution and royalties for such works.

School attendance, and subsequently improved educational outcomes, were seen by many as critical enablers in turning around Indigenous outcomes. Mandatory individual learning plans and progress reporting for every Indigenous student was proposed, along with the suggestion of increased school funding tied to the performance of Indigenous students in the school.

Remote education outcomes were identified as being the most severely deficient, which could potentially be addressed by providing increased incentives for Australia’s best teachers to relocate and work in remote schools. Several other specific social programs were also proposed, including the posting of an experienced doctor to each remote community. Concerns around the safety of vulnerable women and children could be addressed through voluntary relocation programs to hostel-style accommodation in regional centres, allowing such people to decisively change their circumstances. Such accommodation could also be available as a base for Indigenous people undergoing training or employed in certain industries or sectors.



TOWARDS A CREATIVE AUSTRALIA: THE FUTURE OF THE ARTS, FILM AND DESIGN

AMBITIONS

Creativity is central to sustaining and defining the nation, fuelling the imaginations of citizens, nurturing our children and nourishing healthy communities. Indigenous culture is central to this. Creativity is broader than the arts, but the arts are central to creativity.

We will aim to double cultural output by 2020. To achieve this there is a need to implement policies that will produce a sustainable creative sector and support artists, build educational capacity, integrate Indigenous and settler perspectives and recognise the centrality of the arts and creativity to the whole economy.

This will result in increased personal capacity and confidence of all citizens, including artists, a stronger economy and greater international understanding of Australia as a mature, creative, innovative society.

THEMES

A major theme of this stream was expanding and developing education in arts and creativity to enrich and support cultural endeavours. Boosting the creative capabilities and understanding of citizens through improved access to lifelong learning was raised as a critical priority in ensuring a sustainable sector which provides opportunities for innovation and rewards excellence.

The development of new investment models to ensure financial viability was also considered. The stream agreed that the ideal funding model combines private and public support to foster and support creativity and innovation; support emerging, mid-career and established artists, and large and small enterprises.

The stream also discussed the increasing importance of creativity in the new economy, both at home and abroad. This is central to innovation in the new industries which are fuelled by creativity and draw on the arts, entertainment and design. This will present both opportunities and challenges as traditional models of income support change. Success in this new environment demands that creativity is embedded in our education systems, economy and international representation at every level.



Stream Session - Towards a Creative Australia

The stream discussed the best ways of ensuring that the creative output of Australians is made accessible. This included mechanism to support major institutions and provide new and emerging artists around the nation. The stream recognised the important role of public broadcasting and emerging broadband networks to produce and distribute this output.



The place of Indigenous arts and culture at the core of Australian creative expression was recognised by the group. This is a source of identity and pride for all and gives Australia a uniqueness which is unrivalled internationally.

TOP IDEAS

Link the creative arts and education

- Bring art into our schools by introducing 'practitioners in residence' via a national mentoring plan funded by philanthropic funds and tax incentives
- Mandate creative, visual and performing arts subjects in national curricula with appropriate reporting requirements for schools. Explore new opportunities for extension and development such as Creativity Summer Schools, pre-service and in-service training for teachers
- Digitise the collections of major national institutions by 2020
- Make creativity a national research priority with funding access to R&D, ARC and similar funding

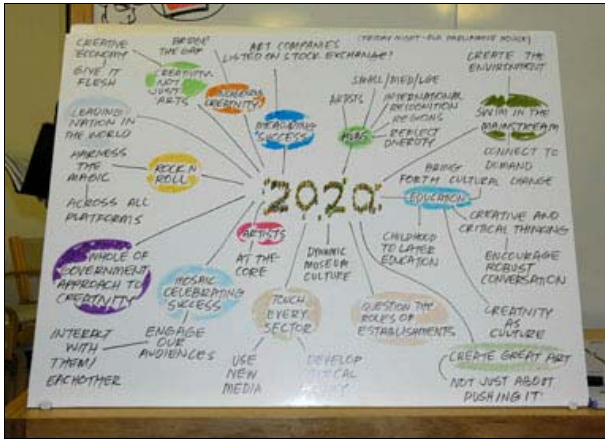
Develop new investment and support models

- Create a National Endowment Fund for the Arts – incorporating public endowment and private philanthropy (including patronage), and provide a wide range of support including loans and grants; a review of philanthropy and tax incentives to support organisations and individual artists and expand the scope of Prescribed Private Funds
- Fund creative endeavours through a 1% creative dividend from all Government Departments for expenditure on arts (including design, performance, installation)
- Develop mechanisms to reward success
- Federal responsibility for public liability obligations for arts organisations

Indigenous core and centrality of arts and design

- Creativity is central to Australian life and Indigenous culture is the core to this. To measure, document and leverage the strengths of this culture, to articulate our role and improve protection of indigenous culture, language and heritage through a National Indigenous Cultural Authority.
- A whole of government approach to the arts, culture, design and the creative economy across all sectors, including improved resourcing, linkages and access by using broadband connections and including building connections between sports and arts
- Facilitation of artists in residence across all industries and institutions to engage in story telling, sense making and capacity building
- Develop a national cultural and design strategy and policy





Stream Session - Towards a Creative Australia

PRE-SUMMIT SUBMISSIONS

The strategic value of the creative arts to Australia's future prosperity, economic, social and cultural development was a central theme of the 465 public submissions and pre-Summit events. Contributions emphasised the need to boost national creative and cultural capability using new investment models, targeted international arts promotion, integrated education and training curricula, an arts innovation agenda linked to creative endeavour and our ideas.

There was a specific proposal to advance Australia's reputation and cultural capabilities including the development of a Creative Institute modelled on the Australian Institute of Sport that fosters the development of Australia's best and brightest creative talent. The institute would be a centre of excellence which provides specialist training and has a major role in marketing Australia's cultural capabilities locally and internationally.

The critical importance of Australia's formal education system in encouraging participation in the creative arts was another strong theme. Commentary advanced the need for the national curriculum in secondary schools which provides opportunities for all young Australians to develop interest in the arts, and also to build lateral thinking skills to deal with ambiguity which will be necessary to secure Australia's place in an increasingly competitive and dynamic global economy.

Several submissions expressed support for new creative "hubs" where artists of various media (and interested audiences) could meet to develop shared ideas and creative endeavours. This could be linked to online and multimedia outlets to enable broader public participation – for example allowing the public to "vote" on screenplay ideas or short clips that then go on to production.

Other major topics included government support, television content, accessibility and design.



Stream Session - Towards a Creative Australia



AUSTRALIAN GOVERNANCE

AMBITION

The participants of the Australian Governance stream set forth the ambition of a new Australian republic – one which clearly enshrines and upholds the rights, responsibilities, and reciprocal relationships of both citizen and government.

This is a vision of governance in which the rights of all Australians are recognised, their civic participation is supported and strengthened, the government is rigorously held accountable and open with a strong independent media, our current federal system is fixed, and the public service excels.

PRIORITY THEMES

A top priority in this stream was the need for an Australian republic, to be enabled by a proposed two-stage process, with wide community involvement and ownership of the outcome.

The group also expressed strong support for a statutory Bill or Charter of Rights, with minority support for a parliamentary Charter. They stressed the importance of Indigenous involvement in this process – as an integral part of the path to reconciliation.

Much was made of the need to fix federalism to create a modern Australian federation.



Stream Session - Australian Governance

This stream also discussed the importance of a rigorously accountable and open government, and a strong independent media. Participants expressed a desire to revitalise the accountability of the Executive to Parliament, as well as to the public. In this they stressed the role of a stronger and more open Freedom of Information framework.

Another major theme was the need to strengthen the participation of Australians in their governance: a revolution in community and government interaction through grassroots and non-traditional community engagement, as well as more formal electoral processes.

Finally, the group highlighted the need for a strong and talented public sector workforce to enable these aspirations and ideas by 2020.



TOP IDEAS

1. Introduce an Australian republic, via a two-stage process, with Stage 1 ending ties with the UK while retaining the Governor-General's titles and powers for five years. Stage 2: Identifying new models after extensive and broad consultation.
2. Instigate an overhaul of Federalism, including for example:
 - A constitutional convention to define roles, responsibilities and structures of our Federal system;
 - A National Cooperation Commission to oversee and recommend on intergovernmental agreement.
3. Open access to Government information (complete reform of FOI laws) and strengthen protections of free press in order to facilitate a more open and publicly accountable government.
4. Introduce innovative mechanisms to increase civic participation, collaborative governance to strengthen civic engagement and trust, facilitate "deliberative democracy" and strengthen citizen engagement. For example:
 - Universal automatic enrolment and re-enrolment of eligible voters;
 - Exploit broadband and emerging IT technologies to enable new forms of citizen involvement
 - Community Parliaments;
 - An online Citizens' Cabinet; and
 - A public television channel with first-hand access to policy information and debate.
5. Encourage excellence in our public sector by expediting issues of remuneration, flexibility and mobility within the Australian Public Service, supported by a Commission of Inquiry. Facilitate and incentivise the transition of top Australians between the public and private sectors.



PRE-SUMMIT SUBMISSIONS

The overarching theme in many of the 800+ public submissions to the Australian Governance stream was greater civic participation for all Australians, and the accessibility, transparency and open dialogue with government that are required to achieve this goal.

Submissions suggested innovative ways that the Australian government and its people could seek out a new dialogue, including community forums, summits, regular polling of community views, e-voting, and a comprehensive Commonwealth government web portal (“Community Cabinet”) which shares information about upcoming decisions, encourages and hosts submissions from ordinary Australians, and brings together publicly available and easily searchable government reports and data.

One enabler of this open dialogue is greater freedom of government information to the public and to the press – facilitated by a clear government commitment and a stronger FOI framework. Specific ideas included ‘plain language’ budget and government papers, a Commonwealth Information Commissioner, and ‘shield laws’ to protect journalists from revealing their sources. Another innovative idea to encourage open sharing of information in the wider community was to make government funding of certain public or research projects conditional on providing open public access to reports and data.

Many submissions supported a re-evaluation of our 3-tiered government system. Some submissions strongly supported the empowerment of local governments – for example their Constitutional recognition, or direct funding grants from the Commonwealth to local governments for innovative community programs. Some submissions suggested a more simple 2-tiered system, abolishing either State or local government. Other suggestions for structural and electoral reform included many submissions about an Australian republic, fixed Federal terms, and tighter control over private donations to political campaigns.

Another major theme was the human rights agenda – with many submissions supporting an Australian Bill or Charter of Rights either in the Constitution or in legislation. This included discussion of legal reform (e.g. legal enshrinement of basic freedoms) and structural safeguards (such as government review mechanisms and a fair and transparent justice system). Many submissions stressed the need to continue vigorously supporting the role of women and Indigenous people in Australian governance.



Stream Session - The Future of Australian Governance



AUSTRALIA'S FUTURE SECURITY AND PROSPERITY IN A RAPIDLY CHANGING REGION AND WORLD

THREE AMBITIONS FOR 2020

- To foster a reputation as an effective global citizen, including through making an active and innovative contribution to the resolution of global challenges
- To reinvigorate and deepen our engagement with Asia and the Pacific.
- To ensure that the major languages and cultures of our region are no longer foreign to Australians but are familiar and mainstreamed into Australian society.



Stream Session - Australia's Future in the Region and the World

PRIORITY THEMES

A campaign to develop regional literacy

- A comprehensive, cross-agency, national strategic plan for a major reinvigoration of Asia literacy in Australia, to enhance our global engagement in trade, security and people to people exchanges.
 - Commence a more focused effort to recruit foreign language teachers from local communities and overseas and to enhance Australia's foreign language teaching skills.
- Link thousands of young Australians to Asian communities through support for school twinning, exchange programs, mentoring, in-country and community-based learning programs.

Closer Economic and Political Integration with the Pacific

- Social Exchange: Resource a Partnerships for Development initiative to achieve priority Millennium Development Goals through sustainable business, academic, community, and government linkages.
- Labour Mobility: A rights-based labour mobility program for the Pacific.
- Pacific Partnership: Confederation or free association between Australia and the Pacific, beginning with micro-states.



Engagement of major regional economies: US, Japan, China, India

- Establish a regional energy security forum including all four majors and Australia in the ASEAN + 6 context.
- Present a state of the Australia-US Alliance report every three years.
- Establish and fund four studies institutes/centres:
 - Australia-US
 - Australia-Japan
 - Australia-China
 - Australia-India
- Propose the establishment of an Australia-Japan Regional Peacekeeping Centre.

Assert new leadership in global governance

- Reaffirm our commitment to working in international institutions and to the international rule of law.
- Ensure Australia's commitment to gender equality is reflected in domestic and foreign policy.
- A properly resourced nuclear disarmament diplomacy, built on regional cooperation on nuclear expertise and non-proliferation, including the appointment of an Ambassador for Disarmament.
- Deeper institutional engagement to nation and peace building.

A broader conception of security

- Establish a high level advisory council comprised of business, academic, and scientific leaders to advise on emerging food, water and energy security challenges. The role of such a body would include advice on responding to security challenges such as pandemics, energy security, transnational crime, people trafficking and climate change.
- Adopt a new approach using smart power to address food, water and energy security issues in collaboration with our neighbours.
- Enhance local, domestic, and community security as a foundation for national and global security.

ADDITIONAL DATA/RESEARCH REQUIRED

Too little is known about the stock and trend of foreign language skills in Australia.



POINTS OF DISAGREEMENT

Participants in this stream had diverse views about how to define Australia's region. They also debated whether foreign language study should be compulsory or voluntary. There was also disagreement about the appropriate balance between 'hard power' and 'soft power'.

PRE-SUMMIT SUBMISSIONS

Submissions from the public and participant covered a wide array of topics, including:

- the importance of fostering global literacy in young Australians and strengthening our language and cultural skills;
- development of a broader conception of security to encompass a range of emerging non-military challenges;
- advancing a more active and creative multilateral and regional agenda and responding to transnational threats including terrorism and weapons proliferation;
- Australia's role in alleviating global poverty and inequality;
- climate change, energy and the environment;
- Australia's alliance with the United States.

Some submissions suggested that Australia should adopt a more neutral foreign policy posture. A substantial number of submissions emphasised the importance of developing more intensive links with China and India. Several submissions made the point that diplomacy, peacekeeping, engagement with civil society and the development of international norms, principles and rules were more relevant to Australia's security in the future than the use of military power.



Stream Session - Australia's Future in the Region and the World



CONCLUSION

The ideas in this initial report are presented to the Prime Minister for consideration. We hope they will also be considered by the other levels of government in the Australian federation. But governments are not the only – or indeed the most important - agents of change in meeting the nation's challenges.

The ideas presented indicate that many Australians expect business and not-for-profit organisations to play more prominent roles in Australia. There is a sense of government needing to see its role as creating opportunities through fair and consistent policies delivered with a light hand – government as enabling rather than controlling, as encouraging rather than prescribing.

The overarching objectives expressed in this report – addressing climate change, creating a national economy and enabling civil society – require substantial policy work to realise. Each has complex underpinnings, each is a project of many years and, perhaps, several governments.

But as the Youth Summit asked with such clarity, the question must not be “what is the government going to do about this?” but “what are we going to do about this”. Like-minded individuals have the power to create a better future.

The Prime Minister has said that the Government will produce a response to the Report of the Summit by the end of the year. The submissions to, and the detailed record of the Summit, will be available on the Summit website. Australians should continue to provide their views on our work and the challenges our nation faces. The further comments and submissions will be presented to the government.

As this work proceeds, a strong evidence base and relevant information for the development of appropriate policies and programs will be vital; the information requirements of the major ideas contained in this Report should be assessed by relevant Federal Departments. Many participants commented on the importance of efforts aimed at developing Australia's information base.

The Government's response to the Summit, are important, but not sufficient. Many participants have commented on what a marvellous experience the Summit provided, in encouraging and exchange of perspectives, so that the ideas brought by an individual could be refined and sifted through vigorous debate and respectful disagreement. It is clear from our deliberations that there is huge energy and appetite for all of us – and many other Australians – to be involved in pursuing further these and other ideas. We have embarked upon a shared adventure to imaging the future of Australia.

