



MEDIA RELEASE

SENATOR KIM CARR

Minister for Innovation, Industry, Science and Research

Tuesday, 19 April 2011

RESEARCHERS – ONE OF AUSTRALIA'S MOST IMPORTANT RESOURCES

Australia's research workforce is a vital asset. Our highly trained and skilled researchers help make our country innovative, prosperous and productive.

The academic skills shortage in our country will increase as our current research workforce ages and retires. This is a real problem and it must be addressed. That is why the Gillard Labor Government has developed a research workforce strategy that will grow and strengthen our research workforce to 2020 and beyond.

Launching the strategy, Innovation Minister Senator Kim Carr said Australia must do more to inspire our best and brightest minds to undertake postdoctoral study and pursue research careers in academia, the public service and industry.

"The future of our manufacturing and other industries depends on our ability to innovate through research and development. This is important if industry is to prosper in the low-carbon economy of the future. Industry and researchers must work together to transform the products we produce and the way we manufacture," Senator Carr said.

"The strategy sets out the full range of research workforce issues we have in Australia, including the divide between research and industry.

"It shows the Government is already providing incentives to embed researchers in business — such as the introduction of the Industrial PhDs scheme and Researchers in Business program — and more will be done to develop policies that surround industry linkages and researcher mobility.

To help inform policy development in this area, I am pleased to announce funding for sector bodies to conduct projects investigating best practice approaches to research education. The Council of Australian Postgraduate Associations will receive \$80,000, the Australian Council of Learned Academies \$80,000 and the Deans and Directors of Graduate Studies \$40,000 to look at these issues in their various domains.

"I am also delighted to announce today that the Gillard Labor Government will invest \$1 million in the Australian Technology Network's new Doctoral Training Centre for Industry in Mathematics. The Centre is a pilot for a new model of PhD education, structured to turn research students into innovation leaders.

"Other key priorities include attracting more Indigenous Australians to academia and keeping more women in research careers. We know that structural changes can reduce barriers and ensure the nation reaps the benefit of all of its research talent.

"I am confident this strategy, coupled with the range of support schemes the Labor Government has introduced since 2007 will secure Australia a strong research workforce into the future. I am proud to launch the strategy today."

To view the strategy — *Research skills for an innovative future: A research workforce strategy to cover the decade to 2020 and beyond* — and find out more about the Government's support for research, visit www.innovation.gov.au.

**Media contacts: Aban Contractor, Minister's Office, 0457 989 842
Caroline Perkins, Department, 02 6213 7634/0418 623 279**