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**Chairman of the Australian Business Foundation**

2008 has got off to a tremendous start with the establishment by the Federal Government of its comprehensive review of the national innovation system.

This is literally a 'once in a decade' opportunity to take a thorough look at innovation and consider what will best serve the economic performance and future prosperity of Australia.

We're delighted to see the Government's commitment to building and developing a strong national innovation system. It augurs well for the ability of Australia to meet the longer term challenges that are emerging - and being detected in the work of the Foundation and elsewhere. The thoughtful tasking of the Review gives every indication that its deliberations should be both comprehensive and suitably targeted.

In that light, I am delighted to note that the Foundation's Chief Executive, Narelle Kennedy, has been appointed to the review panel - a recognition of her own pioneering role in leading and shaping the innovation debate over many years.

The Foundation will lodge a submission with the review panel, based on our own research findings in this area, and will follow the debate closely in the lead-up to the mid-year publication of its report.

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## Research Advisory Committee

There are also plenty of fresh developments within the Foundation as well. Importantly, 2008 has seen new additions to the Foundation's Research Advisory Committee, which oversees the Foundation's research effort. We welcome the following new members of the Research Advisory Committee:

- Professor Richard Bawden, Fellow and Director, Systemic Development Institute
- Professor Julie Steele, Head of the Biomechanics Research Laboratory, University of Wollongong
- Dr Matthew Steen, Policy Adviser - Tax & Competitiveness, NSW Business Chamber
- Dr Lyndal Thorburn, Managing Director, Innovation Dynamics Pty Ltd
- Dr Ron Watts, Chairman, Energy Action Pty Ltd

They join Professor Mark Dodgson and Chair of the Research Advisory Committee, Dr Bob Frater.

Pending formal approval by the Federal Government, as required for the research organisation status of the Foundation, the Research Advisory Committee has already met to give first consideration to the setting of the research agenda for the next few years.

As the Foundation enters its second decade, it is well poised to increase the quality, impact and scale of its research effort. The Research Advisory Committee makes a crucial contribution to this effort.

## Upcoming Events

Looking forward to our 2008 events program, we will hear next from some of the young guns of innovation research, Dr John Steen and Sam Macaulay, who - with their co-author Tim Kastle - have written one of the papers to be included in a forthcoming book from the Foundation. The book will look at the human factor in business innovation - probably the least secret ingredient of successful innovation, but also the least understood.

This team have produced an accessible and highly information paper on the role of networks of people in engendering innovation, using a form of social network analysis. When they speak on 16 April 2008, in a sneak peak at the book, expect a lively and informative presentation from some of the next generation of innovation thinkers.

Expect more in the same vein on 5 June 2008, when Dr James Bradfield Moody (General Manager International Development at CSIRO) speaks on some new angles in innovation.

Later in the year, we will hear from other authors included in the forthcoming book - such as Professor Graham Hubbard, who will speak in July about his paper on the myths and realities of innovation in winning organisations.

With all of this and more coming down the pipe, don't forget to check our new look website regularly for updates and additions to the events programme, the outcomes of research projects and the flow on from various other activities under way at the Australian Business Foundation.

## Research News

In addition to the book mentioned above, several major pieces of research are underway in 2008, with results due to be published late in the year or early in 2009. To read the latest updates on research in progress, visit the Foundation's web site: [http://www.abfoundation.com.au/research\\_knowledge](http://www.abfoundation.com.au/research_knowledge)

Meanwhile, our report "Born to be Global: A closer look at the international venturing of Australian born global firms" , was released late last year. It encapsulated the very informative results of an Australian Business Foundation research project.

This work was undertaken by a team led by Professor Peter Liesch of the University of Queensland, and involved iconic Australian firms such as MYOB and the Wiggles, as well as some companies rather less well known to the Australian general public, such as Beeline Technologies.

As a landmark in understanding the performance of Australian firms on a global economic stage, it has been quite gratifying to see it receive media attention at the time and since then. This also makes one realise what an interesting 'community of interest' these firms would be, if there were some forum in which they could exchange their experiences and learnings.

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## The Last Word

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