



Darren Coomber

Welcome to this issue of First to Know.

Dear David,

I wish you a safe and prosperous 2011.

In the past month 'innovation' was a prominent theme of US President Obama's [State of the Union](#) address. The speech encouraged American innovation whilst acknowledging that no-one can predict the next big industry or where the new jobs will be created. What caught many commentator's attention was the 'Sputnik' moment reference: an investment in research and education, aligned to the focus and motivation of competition, with a clear measure of success: reach the moon first. The US made it to the moon but the lasting economic benefits were the spin offs in technology leading to new industries.

Of course, moving from rhetoric and the need to 'innovate' into action is a completely different matter. In the recent address to [CEDA](#), Prime Minister Gillard stated a determination to build a high-skill, high-tech, low-pollution economy that will succeed independent of our mineral wealth. Is a sustainable, carbon neutral Australia the 'Sputnik' that aligns business and research to create new industries and services that currently don't exist and may not even have been thought of? Strongly divided views may provide the passion that really drives innovation in this area. I'd be pleased to receive others thoughts on what Australia's 'Sputnik' could be.

President Obama's speech coincided with publication of [GE's Global Innovation Barometer](#), a survey of 1000 business executives in 12 countries. Quoting from the press release "The survey showed that the traditional means of innovation are changing, placing more emphasis on individuals and small- to mid-size enterprises (SMEs) and creating a greater need for collaboration. In fact, 75 percent of respondents agreed that the way companies innovate in the 21st century will be "totally different" than the way they innovated in the past with 86 percent saying that 21st century innovation is about partnerships between several entities as opposed to the success of a single organization".

Commentary in [Climate Spectator](#) expands on Australia's low ranking in the GE survey and positions Australia as a 'traditionalist' economy in which innovation is seen by business as important but that it is done by someone else, generally driven by hard science. There is no doubt that transfer of science to industry is a route to innovation. From our experience the ability of two companies to share knowledge to develop new products and business models is a potentially more effective and immediate route to bring new innovations to the market.

As the global InnovationXchange is committed to assisting clients identify and build collaborative partnerships, it was encouraging that partnering as the driver of innovation was a consistent global message.

In response, IXC and Freehills are co-hosting a seminar on "[Innovation by Collaboration](#)" in Melbourne on Tuesday February 15th. We are pleased that Dr Sarah Pearson from Australian National University (ex-Cadbury plc Open Innovation Champion) will talk on her first-hand work in partnering in industry, academia and government to deliver innovation outcomes.

Our experience has shown that organisations who partner successfully are those who have clearly defined the technical and business need to work externally. Before you start that 2011's first ideation session or new project have you considered if you are about to solve the real problem? Now may be the perfect time to attend an IXC program in Problem Definition, and we are offering a discounted rate for 1 or 2 day courses delivered by the March 31st. These can be conducted onsite at your organisation for a group of staff and we will also be conducting public sessions in Melbourne and Sydney. Please contact us on [info@ixc.com.au](mailto:info@ixc.com.au) for further details.

Regards,  
Darren

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## news and events

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### **Towards Zero Emissions ; Wednesday 16th of February, Melbourne**

Can Australian businesses reach zero carbon emissions? If so, how do we do it? Discover the emerging opportunities that the field of sustainability presents your business to move towards being part of the solution for a sustainable society.

This Design Victoria event, part of the Sustainable Living Festival, will assist you better appreciate the strategies that work, and the real challenges, of creating positive change for a low carbon future. See [link](#) for more information and to register.

### **Future housing for older Australians: Overcoming barriers to innovation ; Friday 25th of February, Sydney**

The Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute (AHURI) and the Benvolent Society are hosting this timely symposium which will focus on solutions to achieving affordable housing options for ageing Australians.

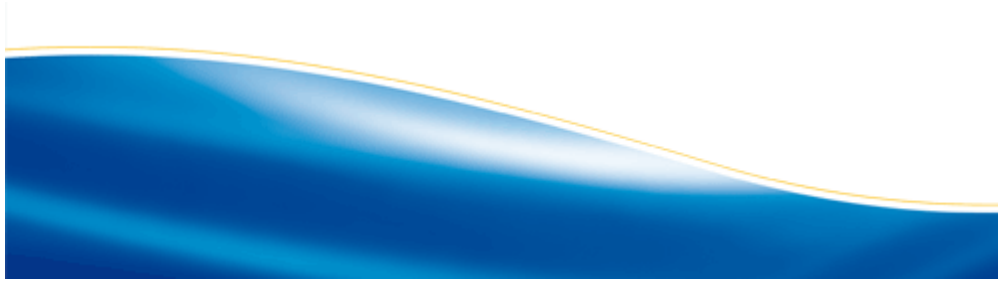
Visit the [website](#) for more information and registration.

### **Contemporary IP developments ; March, Australian eastern capitals, Auckland and webinars**

TechIP is conducting two leading USA Patents and Australian Trade Marks Seminars:

**Recent Decisions & Developments In USA Patent Law & Practice and  
Review of Recent Australian Trade Marks Act Amendments & How They Have  
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