



Darren Coomber

Welcome to this issue of First to Know.

Collaborative innovation is the cornerstone of InnovationXchange activities and we were pleased to have over 80 attendees from industry, research and government at our recent 'Innovation by Collaboration' seminar co-hosted by Freehills in Melbourne. Presentations are on our [website](#) and we obtained feedback from attendees after the event on the types of collaborations that would most benefit their innovation activities.

Attendees highlighted the need to continually find new ways for the research sector and industry to collaborate, in particular stating that pursuing collaborative opportunities was discouraged by limited access to appropriate capital, little knowledge of funding programs and eligibility restrictions to access funding. A number of participants saw India and China as major opportunities for their organisations but raised that they were unlikely to pursue these due primarily to a lack of networks and qualified partners in these regions.

Open and collaborative innovation was also a strong theme at the recent Water Innovation Day hosted by Siemens and Smart Water Fund. One current funding opportunity highlighted at the event is the Smart Water Fund '[Open Innovation Stream](#)' which seeks ideas that address needs in urban water management. Applications close in early April.

Siemens has initiated a global Open Innovation program for seeking external ideas but I was impressed by how this was integrated with an emphasis on enhanced internal collaboration. Siemens also highlighted in their own '[Picture the Future: Australia](#)' research that collaborative innovation is key to increasing Australia's innovation performance and overall productivity. Although I have referred to the figures myself in presentations, it is still confronting to hear that Australia ranks last in the OECD for industry collaboration with research institutions, and that over 80% of businesses that describe themselves as 'innovation active' do not collaborate with any external partners. I would welcome comments at info@ixc.com.au on whether or not Australia's relatively poor performance in collaboration requires action. Are there barriers to overcome in enhancing collaboration? Can we have a successful future economy without improving collaboration? We will collate responses and feed these back to First to Know readers.

In early March, IXC together with Australian Social Innovation Exchange and NESAs co-hosted a workshop for the participants of the [DEEWR Innovation Fund programme](#). Connecting Social Enterprises (CSE). In this program, IXC and ASIX assists 10 social enterprises find crucial external linkages to peers, resources and collaborators to support them in building sustainable ventures for disadvantaged unemployed groups. Participants come from four states and one territory and are developing enterprises ranging from farms to cafes to accommodation facilities and engaging workforces such as ex-offenders, disengaged youth, indigenous communities and isolated families. Attendees at the event shared capabilities, insights into management of programs and identified opportunities to collaborate. The workshop also included presentations from Dr Terry Flynn from [UTS Centre for the Study of Choice](#) on effective design of social programs and ways to quantify the social impact of initiatives. The program will conclude in the coming months and we have been pleased to assist these organisations address some of the most difficult problems in their various communities, and to take innovation thinking and practice, used primarily for technical and commercial needs, into the social

innovation sector.

Over the last month, IXC has delivered Problem Definition and Innovation training programs to three groups of professionals working in areas including product commercialisation and development of industry training packages. Please contact us at info@ixc.com.au if you wish to discuss a Problem Definition session for your staff or to attend a public session during May in Melbourne or Sydney.

Regards,
Darren

news and events

[Meet the Entrepreneur: UNSW Australian School of Business - Centre for Innovation and Entrepreneurship: Sydney, May 26](#)

Meet the Entrepreneur is a semi-annual speaker series which is co-sponsored and hosted by Ernst & Young at their Sydney CBD offices. This professional networking event features a moderated panel discussion between industry experts on a chosen topic. The theme for the May event will be **Open Innovation**.

More details at the CIE [website](#).

[Experience CSR \(Corporate Social Responsibility\): Melbourne, April 13](#)

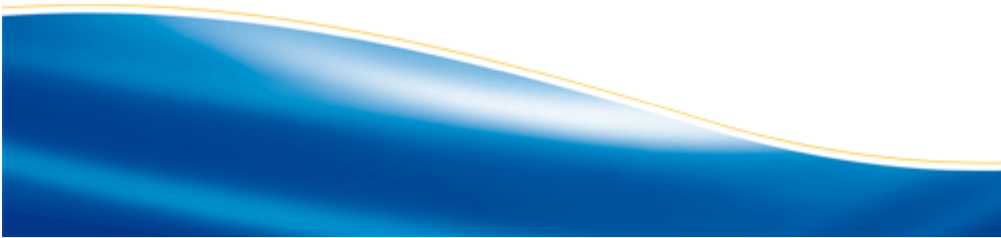
Whether you are learning about CSR or an advanced practitioner, this one-day program will give you a great foundation to create or review your organisation's CSR strategy and tactics. It provides the ability to experiment with CSR strategy and try new things affords participants the opportunity to build confidence in a safe environment ahead of real world application.

For more details and registration see the Australian Centre for Corporate Social Responsibility [website](#).

[UTSpeaks: Ethical vanities: Sydney, April 27](#)

This public lecture reveals the complexity of human behaviour as it relates to the choices and actions we actually make versus those we believe we would make. It challenges the assumption that corporations, governments and NGOs can achieve the level of social responsibility we believe they must, while being composed of demonstrably imperfect beings – ourselves.

More information and registration [here](#).



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