



Innovation is essential in every industry, not just to thrive but to survive. Today, if you stand still you go backwards, and in the era of the internet of everything without rapid and continual adaption - standing still means death, not just of individual businesses but of whole industries along with the jobs and communities they support.

Here in Western Australia we have always been driven by our entrepreneurial spirit, we just get on with it, with little or no fanfare or calls for subsidies. Unlike other states, WA has always had an unprotected trade exposed economy. This means that we have had to be innovative to continue to be productive and internationally competitive.

Since becoming a Senator for our great state, I have found innovation everywhere, often in the most unexpected of places. It has amazed me how little we understand or appreciate how good we actually are at it. **In Western Australia we don't always know what we are achieving, let alone what we are capable of - our shipbuilding and manufacturing industries are a classic example of that.**

Our competitive advantages are not in labour costs, but in our ability to innovatively produce high quality, high value bespoke goods. **The issue for us today is how we collaborate to help companies and second tier support industries adapt following the mining industry's construction phase, to survive and thrive in new markets.**

There are several areas that we need to address to improve Australia's innovative ecosystem. Last week in the Senate I spoke about the importance of labour market reform to our ability to prepare our nation for the jobs of the future. We need a labour market that is flexible, agile and diverse. You can watch an excerpt from my speech [here](#).

I look forward to continuing my work with WA's innovation community as we move towards the economy of the 21st century. We must look forward together – at where the jobs of the future will be and how we adapt for the internet of everything.

Watch this space.

What is good for Western Australia is good for our nation!

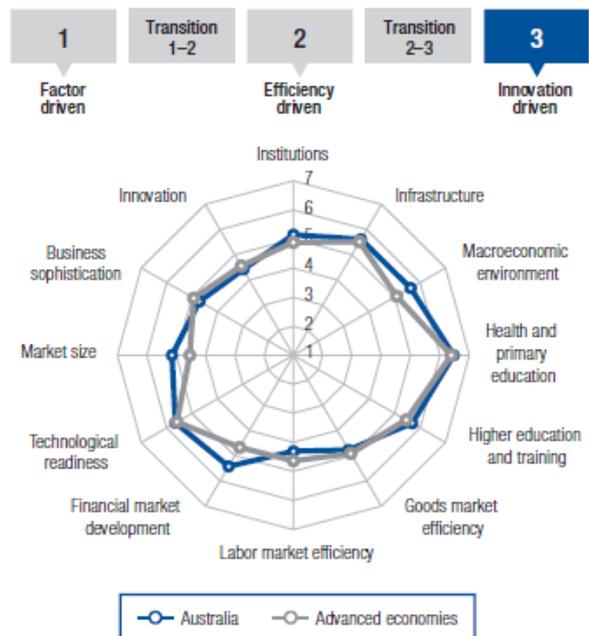
Linda

How Competitive are we?

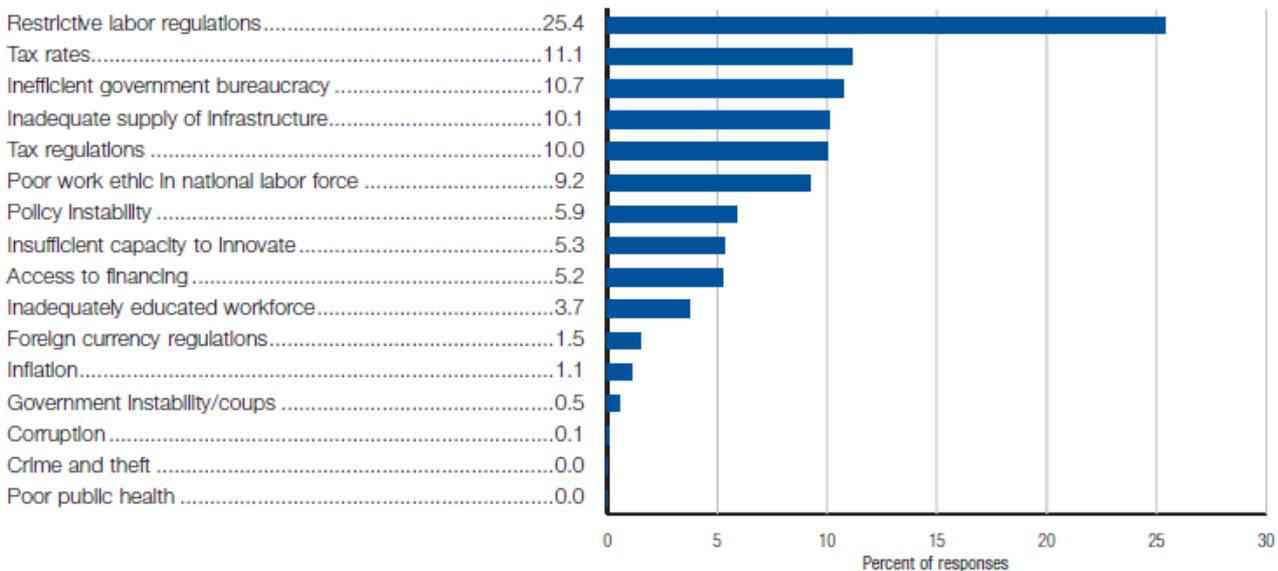
Global Competitiveness Index

	Rank (out of 144)	Score (1-7)
GCI 2014-2015	22	5.1
GCI 2013-2014 (out of 148).....	21	5.1
GCI 2012-2013 (out of 144).....	20	5.1
GCI 2011-2012 (out of 142).....	20	5.1
Basic requirements (20.0%)	17	5.7
Institutions	19	5.1
Infrastructure	20	5.6
Macroeconomic environment	30	5.6
Health and primary education.....	17	6.5
Efficiency enhancers (50.0%)	15	5.2
Higher education and training.....	11	5.7
Goods market efficiency	29	4.8
Labor market efficiency	56	4.3
Financial market development	6	5.4
Technological readiness.....	19	5.6
Market size.....	18	5.1
Innovation and sophistication factors (30.0%)	26	4.6
Business sophistication	28	4.7
Innovation.....	25	4.4

Stage of development



The most problematic factors for doing business



Source: 2015/16 WEF Global Competitiveness Report [VIEW THE COMPLETE REPORT HERE](#)



Visit to Google HQ Sydney

Last Friday I was privileged to visit Google HQ in Sydney to talk about innovation, tech start-ups and the



importance of creativity in the innovation cycle. I toured Google with Senator Zhenya Wang, co-chair of the Parliamentary Alliance for Research and Innovation (PARI).

We met with Alan Noble, Google Sydney's head of engineering. Alan spent 16 years working in Silicon Valley and is also on the board of StartupAUS. He is someone with incredible insight into Australia's start up ecosystem and provided a practical analysis of what the barriers to innovation are from the perspective of Australia's start-up community.

Not surprisingly, Google's Sydney operation is an amazing place. It is home to 1,200 of the tech-giants engineers who work with other HQ's around the world to develop products. Some of Google's most notable projects have origins in Sydney, including Google Maps.

We had a stimulating brainstorm session to examine the policy settings surrounding the innovation ecosystem in Australia- the message is clear, Government needs to modernise policy formulation and implementation to adapt to new ways of doing business. These include the way we look at employee share schemes, capital - including crowdfunding, and - encouraging entrepreneurship and enterprise starting with primary education.

Australia has entered an exciting new phase where innovation is happening so quickly that Government needs to find a way to keep up.

I look forward to the release of the Government's innovation policy later this year. The policy will build on the foundations already in place as part of the Government's Industry Innovation and Competitiveness Agenda.



Innovation Summit2030



The crowd of over 200 people.

Summit2030 was co-convened by myself, Innovate Australia and Senator Zhenya Wang. It was heartening to see the amount of interest from various stakeholders in the WA innovation community. Bankwest and the WA Department of Commerce were major sponsors

"Great outcomes are realised when passionate people from different sectors come together in pursuit of common goals, goals underpinned by a desire to adapt and transform. By people who are not fearful of change, but embrace it.

"I believe that the way forward for Australia is through strong collaboration between research institutions and industry paired with funding from the public and private sector, and creating an environment that promotes innovation in the private sector through incentive by lessening the cost and complexity of doing business.

There is increasing recognition of the importance of collaboration, co-operation and networking in facilitating innovation.

I co-convoked Summit2030 which posed the question to six panellists **"how do we get Australia to the top of the global innovation indexes by 2030"**. Currently we sit in 13th out of 50 on the Bloomberg Innovation Scale and 23rd out of 140 in the World Economic Forums Global Competitiveness Report. As we look at the figures we can see a lot of room for improvement.

along with Business News.

The MC was Charlie Gunningham, CEO of Business News, Charlie has a strong background in start-ups and is an expert on WA's innovation ecosystem.

With around 200 attendees, the enthusiastic atmosphere in the room was palpable. We had representatives from all corners of WA's innovation community, from start-ups, SME's, Universities, the WA Parliament, and the finance and capital sector. It was great to hear many visionary ideas on how to lift Australia's global innovation ranking. It was particularly encouraging to see the level of networking happening before and after the event – innovation starts with connections.

Here in WA I believe that we have all of the ingredients to reach number one, we have the technological infrastructure in place, strong trade exposed industries, high quality research institutions, and a bountiful skills pipeline. Despite this, it is clear to me that we have more to do to make WA an innovation hub.

Panellists from Summit2030 were interviewed by WestTV for their Undercurrent program, watch the full program [here](#).



Address to the

Australian Technology Network of Universities

Recently I had the opportunity to address the Australian Technology Network of Universities meeting at Curtin University on the importance of commercialisation and collaborative innovation to the future of our national economy.

The Australian Technology Network plays an important role in promoting discussion between stakeholders in industry and universities. The meeting I spoke at was 4th in a series on how to foster collaboration and partnerships with industry and provided valuable insight into the nuts and bolts of the policy settings surrounding collaboration.



Addressing the meeting of around 30 representatives from the ATN Universities and Industry.

When we think about innovative nations, what do we think of? I envisage a nation that has low cost and complexity of doing business, agile, flexible and diverse labor markets, high investment in research and development both in the public and private sector, significant investment and procurement in new technologies, and strong and accessible capital markets.

None of this will come to pass if all sectors don't collaborate.



Senator Linda Reynolds
26 Charles Street, South Perth, WA 6151
(08) 9368 6633

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