

Media Release

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National push needed to change ideas culture

The Australian Institute for Commercialisation (AIC) is calling on all Australians – from individual inventors and entrepreneurs to those working in industry, research organisations, or government to adopt 2007 as the Year of the Idea.

The move has been supported by co-inventor of the revolutionary vaccine for cervical cancer and out-going Australian of the Year, Professor Ian Frazer.

“The development of a vaccine for cervical cancer, started with an idea and vision – to do something tangible for the health of Australian women, and for women throughout the world,” Professor Frazer said.

“I am very proud that my colleague Dr Jian Zhou and I pursued this idea. Our discovery will contribute to the significant global impact of the cervical cancer vaccine, which should make a dramatic difference to the lives of millions of women.

“As individuals and as a nation, we need to value ideas. The solution to many of today’s challenges will start with an idea and be driven by a commitment to find that solution,” Professor Frazer said.

AIC Chief Executive Officer Dr Rowan Gilmore said new ideas were vital to Australia’s future, especially with the growth of China and India.

“If there were such a thing as an ideas Olympics, Australia would not be in the Top Ten.”

“To grow as a nation and to remain globally competitive, Australians need to value ideas and the impact they have on their life, their workplace and their country,” Dr Gilmore said.

“The world stage is changing and particularly while we are reaping the benefits from ‘crops and rocks’, now is the best time to improve how we harness our ideas to sustain growth and innovation.

“In times of strong economic growth we as a nation are optimally placed to invest in finding solutions to our problems. Challenges such as global warming, drought, water conservation, renewable energy and our decreasing global competitiveness are calling for radical solutions. These will stem from ideas.”

“There is a lot of talk around innovation, but we seem to have lost sight of the fact that innovation stems from an idea. We need to get back to basics and embrace ideas as part of our culture.

“Everybody has at least one idea everyday, but how many people actually do something with them? Ideas have the capacity to transform our lifestyles, our businesses and our economies and yet many of these ideas are hidden or even discarded. Now is the time to harvest more ideas and reap the rewards.

Through the Year of the Idea, the AIC is encouraging Australians to revisit an idea they’ve never done anything with and uncover new ones in an attempt to make a difference and to create jobs, economic growth and competitive advantage.

“Research institutions and industry can participate by cultivating a climate for idea generation within their organisations. Externally, there is a tremendous need for greater collaboration between researchers and business people.

“For government, 2007 should be focussed on nurturing and harvesting ideas across the nation and in each state and territory.”

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Ideas are not just about inventions, ideas can become real ways to improve the fiscal viability of a new business. They can create time saving new methods of doing business and can have an impact on the way we look at the world.

“Australians should value their ideas, big and small. From backyard inventors to major corporations and governments, we should focus on welcoming new ideas that will promote growth, contribute to our economy and shape our lifestyle,” he said.

Inventions such as the lawnmower, the surf lifesaving reel, the Black Box, renewable skin tissue, and cervical cancer vaccine – all Australian innovations that have or will change our lives - started with an idea and a commitment to doing something with that idea.

Dr Gilmore said the AIC was hoping its call to Australians would be heard with a groundswell of interest and support in a year full of ideas.

How Australians can become involved:

- Find out more about Australian inventions, innovations and discoveries that have and will continue to change our lives
- Adopt 2007 as the Year of the Idea – a year to encourage fresh thinking – in your organisation
- Come up with a big idea and do something with it
- Listen to someone’s idea – just because something’s been done the same way for the last 20 years, doesn’t mean there isn’t a better way
- Create an ideas bank within your organisation to capture and assess ideas generated by management and staff.
- Value ideas and generate new ideas to solve everyday challenges, and then look for help to take them to market
- For our backyard inventors – take the first step to see if there’s any merit in your idea and pursuing those that do.

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The Australian Institute for Commercialisation (AIC) is a leading service organisation helping innovators achieve commercial success. Around Australia the AIC helps business, research organisations and governments convert their ideas into successful outcomes. The AIC was established in 2002 as a national not-for-profit organisation and receives the support of federal and state government agencies, research organisations, small business, industry and service providers to deliver national programs to drive commercialisation success.

Further information about Australian inventions and innovations is available at www.ausicom.com

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