


INNOVATION CENTRAL NETWORK IMPACT REPORT

2025



Innovation
Central

A collaboration led by  CISCO

CONTENTS

04

FOREWORD

06

INNOVATION CENTRAL
NETWORK

07

INDUSTRY INNOVATION
PROJECTS

08

GOVERNANCE &
LEADERSHIP

09

INNOVATION CENTRAL
TEAMS

10

NATIONAL INDUSTRY
INNOVATION NETWORK

12

2025 IMPACT

13

HIGHLIGHTS

16

INDUSTRY
ENGAGEMENT

Foreword



Karen Stocks
Chair, Innovation Central Network

As a core pillar of the National Industry Innovation Network (NIIN), Innovation Central plays a critical role in translating research excellence, technological capability and industry requirements, into outcomes that strengthen productivity, workforce capability and national resilience.

This Impact Report captures the growing national momentum of the Innovation Central Network and the powerful outcomes being delivered when universities, industry and government unite around Australia's future.

Across our national network of Innovation Centrals, collaboration is moving beyond conversation into action. This year's outcomes show how applied research, emerging technology and industry partnership are delivering tangible business results, accelerating digital capability and skills, while strengthening sovereign capability and sustainable economic growth.

Each Innovation Central hub brings its own strengths and focus, united by a shared purpose: to create trusted, industry-led environments where ideas are tested, partnerships thrive, and innovation moves confidently from concept to real-world impact. Together, these achievements demonstrate the scale, diversity and momentum of the network as a national platform for innovation within the broader NIIN ecosystem.

The Innovation Centrals continue to act as catalysts – connecting researchers, students, startups, industry and government to address complex national challenges across healthcare, defence, cyber security, advanced manufacturing and emerging technologies. The projects, programs and partnerships showcased reflect not only technical excellence, but the critical role of co-design, safe testing environments, and clear pathways to commercialisation, as well as the agility to act at pace, delivering solutions that are timely and practical.

Through NIIN, our Innovation Centrals contribute to a broader national mission, to strengthen Australia's innovation pipeline, accelerate digital adoption, and ensure research and talent are translated into economic and societal benefit. Together, we are building the foundations for a more capable, competitive and resilient Australia.

On behalf of the Innovation Central Network and the broader NIIN, I extend my sincere thanks to our university partners, industry collaborators, advisory leaders, teams and students. Your commitment, creativity and willingness to work across boundaries is what makes this network so impactful.

As we look ahead, the opportunity before us is significant. By continuing to strengthen our connections, expand our reach and deepen our partnerships, we are well positioned to play an even greater role in supporting Australia's national priorities, responding with the agility and pace required to lead a rapidly evolving global environment. and shaping our innovation future.

I invite you to explore this report and the remarkable work being delivered across our network to support Australia's national priorities and strengthen our innovation capability.



James Stewart
Innovation Central Program Manager & NIIN Partnership Manager

As we look back on 2025, it is clear that the Innovation Central Network, an integral part of the National Industry Innovation Network (NIIN), reached a new level of maturity and impact. This year has been defined by both reflection and ambitious growth. We proudly celebrated the 10-year anniversary of Innovation Central Perth, marking a decade of pioneering industry-university collaboration, and welcomed the return, and expansion, of MasterTech at Cisco Live Melbourne, which showcased the incredible technical ingenuity of our community.

Our reach also expanded beyond Australian borders with the launch of Innovation Central Singapore. This expansion is a critical step in our mission to support Australian and APJC businesses as they navigate the complexities of digital transformation. By connecting our regional ecosystems, we are enabling cross-border innovation that drives productivity, resilience, and global competitiveness.

None of this would be possible without the dedicated teams at each Innovation Central facility. These teams are the heart of this program, bridging the gap between emerging technology and real-world application every single day. The people tackling challenges head-on, endlessly innovating and solving problems of national and regional significance is what makes this network truly unique.

In 2026, we remain focused on scaling our impact, fostering deeper partnerships, and ensuring that our collaborative model continues to deliver lasting value. Thank you to everyone across our network for your continued passion and hard work. The Innovation Central Network is not just keeping pace with technological change, we are actively shaping it for a more prosperous, connected future.

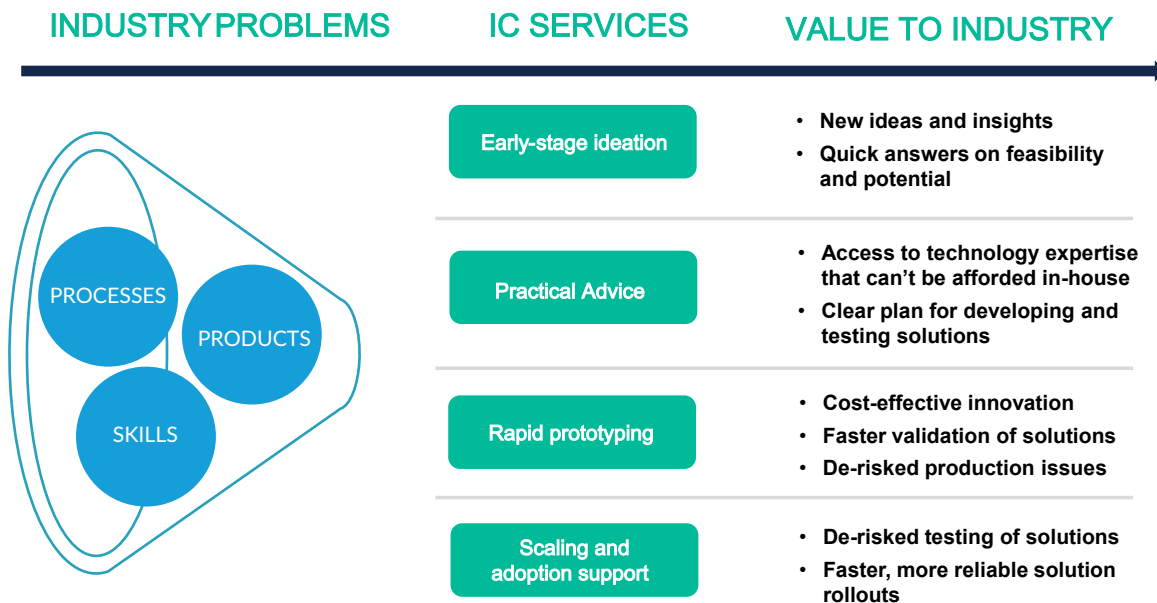


Innovation Central Network

Innovation Central is a national network of purpose-built innovation hubs located across Australia and the region, including Perth, Brisbane, Canberra, Melbourne, Sydney, Adelaide, and Singapore. Each Innovation Central is co-located on a university campus and operates as a focal point for industry-led digital innovation.

The network brings together universities, industry partners, technologists, students, and researchers to collaboratively address real-world business and societal challenges. Through a co-design approach, Innovation Centrals translate research capability and emerging technology into practical, scalable solutions.

Innovation Centrals enable organisations to rapidly build, test, and refine prototypes in safe, trusted environments. Industry partners gain access to cutting-edge technologies and deep technical expertise from Cisco and the broader ecosystem, accelerating innovation, de-risking investment, and turning ideas into deployable, real-world outcomes.



UNDERPINNED BY:



Industry Innovation Projects

Innovation Centrals apply a well-established methodology to its projects, refined through years of feedback from both industry partners and participating students. Each project is aligned to real-world industry needs, providing structured support for students and incorporating regular touch points with partners to validate and strengthen outcomes.

THE PROCESS

Scope Definition and Planning

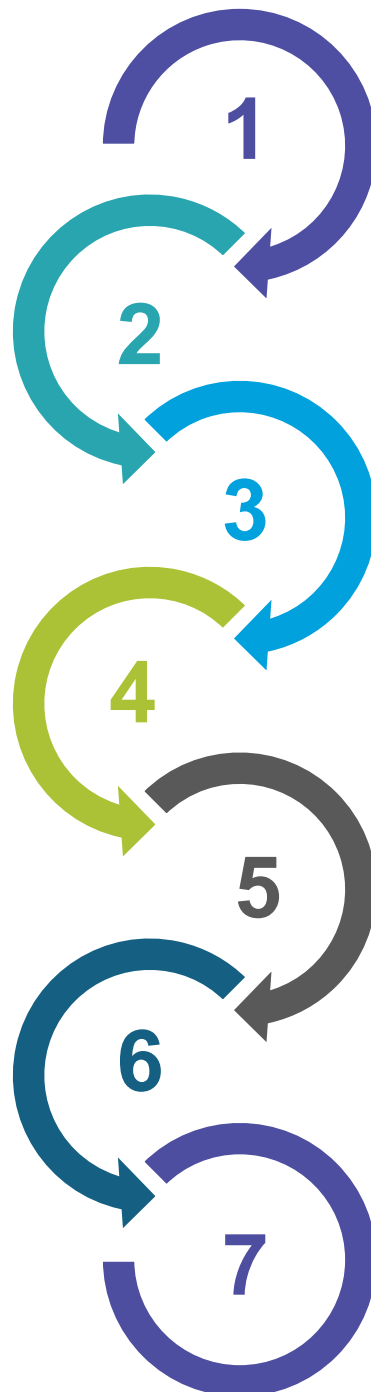
- Project charter created
- Milestones and deliverables refined
- Timelines constructed
- Special considerations identified (e.g. NDAs, equipment)

Supervision and Mentoring

- Academic supervisor assigned (based on speciality and interests)
- Cisco (or other) technical expert assigned for mentoring and technical advice

Project Execution and Oversight

- Weekly check-ins (virtual/in-person) with feedback loops
- Mid-project validation by industry partners to refine direction



Project Identification and Selection

- Projects sourced through IC's industry network
- Shortlisted based on alignment with real-world problems and program objectives

Recruitment and Resourcing

- Required skills /knowledge /domains identified
- Candidates interviewed from multiple disciplines
- Candidates proposed to industry partners for approval
- Team members selected and onboarded

Orientation and Industry Briefing

- Team orientation covering success factors, expectations, communication protocols, and project management fundamentals
- Industry partner kick-off briefing with background, context, and project importance

Showcase and Handover

- Development of final pitch for IC showcase
- Presentation and final report delivered to industry partner, highlighting rationale, approach, and outcomes

Governance & Leadership

The Innovation Central Network (ICN) operates through a collaborative governance model that brings together leadership from industry, academia and the Innovation Central teams across the network. Strategic oversight is provided by the ICN Advisory Council, which guides priorities, partnerships and long-term direction.

Operational leadership is supported by the network's Innovation Central Directors and local teams who deliver programs, research translation and industry engagement across each site. Together, this structure ensures alignment across the network while enabling each Innovation Central to respond to the unique opportunities within its region.

INNOVATION CENTRAL NETWORK ADVISORY COUNCIL



Karen Stocks
Advisory Council Chair -
former VP, Global Measurement &
Audience Solutions, Google



Adam Powick
Industry Representative -
former CEO, Deloitte Australia



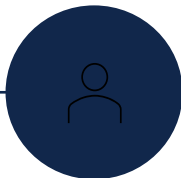
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Director, ICC



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Curtin Singapore



TBC
Industry Representative

ICB Team



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ICC Team



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Anna Schmidt
Project Officer
ICP, Curtin University



Stanley Chong
Technical Project Officer
ICP, Curtin University

ICSG Team



Tom Goerke
Director
ICSG, Curtin Singapore

National Industry Innovation Network

The National Industry Innovation Network (NIIN) is one of the largest industry-university innovation ecosystems in Australia. Established in 2020 and anchored by globally leading technology company Cisco, the NIIN is a collective of universities, industry, and technology partners driven by one goal: to realise digital opportunities that benefit the lives of all Australians.

Through its network of Innovation Centrals, Research Chairs, Specialised Centres, and Alliances, the NIIN fosters collaborations that accelerate innovation, develop digital skills, and create transformative opportunities to solve problems of national significance at scale.

NIIN FOOTPRINT

-  University Partnerships
-  Specialised Centres
-  Innovation Centrals
-  Student Engagement
-  Industry Projects
-  Research Chairs
-  Cyber Security Alliance
-  Health Alliance
-  Skills and Talent Development



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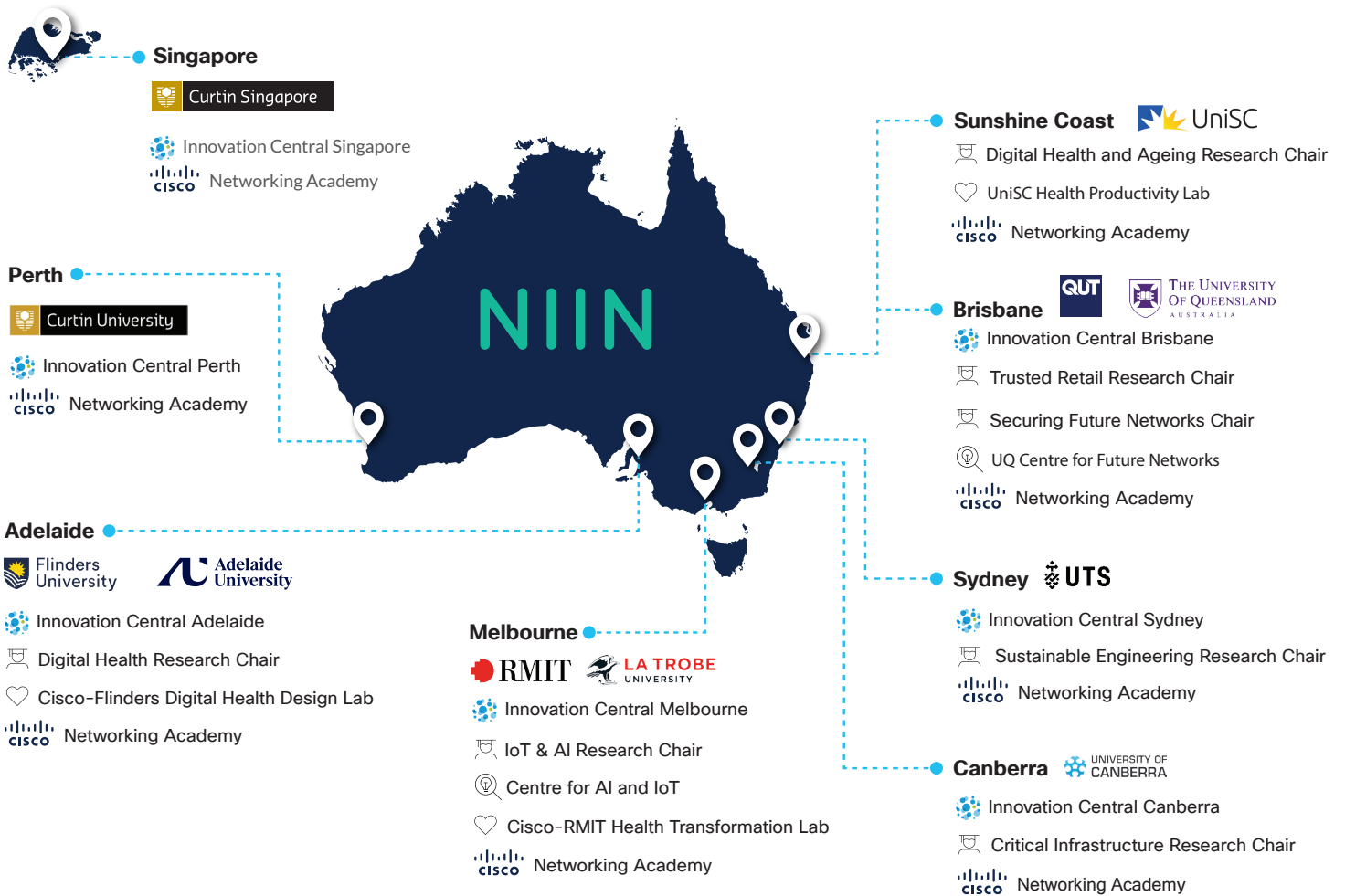


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Through this ecosystem, NIIN provides one of Australia's most comprehensive platforms for translating digital innovation into real-world economic and societal outcomes.



IC Network Impact 2025

2025

IMPACT

2500+

Students Engaged



99+

Students Engaged in Projects



50+

Academics Engaged in Projects



\$1.5M

Funding Unlocked

127

Events



50+

Projects



35+

Industry Partners



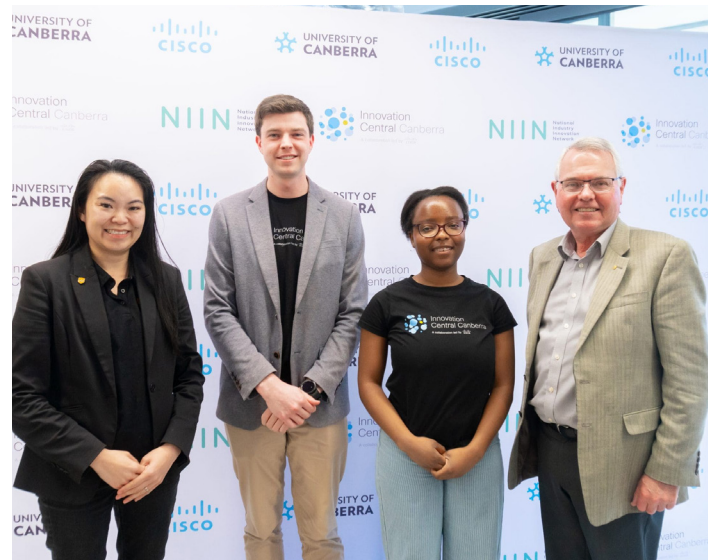
Innovation Central

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IC Network Highlights

Preventing Drone-Related Cyber Security Risks

Drones can bypass traditional security measures, creating emerging risks for critical infrastructure. Innovation Central Canberra partnered with DroneShield to examine these growing cybersecurity threats and identify gaps in operator awareness and response readiness. The collaboration produced a white paper recommending improved operator education, advanced threat modelling and stronger government–industry partnerships. Findings were presented at the AmCham Parliamentary Showcase alongside Cisco and Splunk, highlighting the importance of proactive collaboration to address



SA Ambulance Maintenance

Innovation Central Adelaide partnered with SA Ambulance Service to address the challenge of maintaining ambulance fleet reliability in a high-demand emergency response environment. By equipping vehicles with sensors that capture real-time operational data and digitally recording maintenance information, the project enabled better visibility of fleet performance. This approach supports more proactive maintenance planning, improved vehicle tracking, and reduced downtime across the ambulance fleet.



Exploring the Future of Digital Health

Innovation Central Melbourne hosted the Google Developer Group Innovation Sprint Awards as part of its monthly Innovation Series, bringing together students, industry partners and technology leaders to explore emerging digital health solutions. The sprint focused on improving proximity to the Victorian Virtual Emergency Department (VVED) through telehealth, wearable devices and AI, with more than 145 students participating and engaging in industry visits to Google, VVED, HealthDirect, Northern Health and Optus.



IC Network Highlights



Innovation Central Singapore Launch

In 2025 the Innovation Central Network expanded internationally with the launch of Innovation Central Singapore (ICSG), located at Curtin Singapore. The centre connects industry, government and academia to accelerate the translation of research into real-world outcomes. Through collaboration programs, digital testbeds and Cisco technology, ICSG will support innovation, build digital skills and enable partners to prototype and scale solutions to complex challenges across the region.



Cisco Live Melbourne 2025

Innovation Centrals from across the network were showcased at Cisco Live Melbourne 2025 as part of the NIIN stand, highlighting the impact of industry-university collaboration in driving digital innovation. The showcase brought together students, researchers and industry partners to demonstrate emerging technologies and collaborative projects developed through Innovation Centrals. The event provided a national platform to showcase the Innovation Central model, strengthening industry engagement and highlighting the next generation of digital talent across the NIIN network.



ICP Celebrates 10 years

Innovation Central Perth (ICP) celebrated ten years of industry-research collaboration in 2025, marking a decade of innovation delivered through its partnership between Curtin University and Cisco. Through initiatives such as AI workshops, industry projects and student placements, ICP continues to bring together researchers, industry partners and students to prototype solutions that address real-world challenges across Western Australia.

Sports Innovation ProtoComp

ICB's 2025 Sport Innovation ProtoComp brought together 25 QUT students for a three-month innovation journey delivered in partnership with QUT Sport. Working closely with industry and government mentors, students developed digital solutions to improve participation, accessibility and engagement across Queensland's sporting landscape as the state prepares for Brisbane 2032. The program strengthened capability, connection and hands-on learning, giving students a real opportunity to shape the future of sport.



MasterTech at Cisco Live

Cisco Live 2025 brought together students from Innovation Centrals across Australia and Singapore for MasterTech – a hackathon-style challenge led by Innovation Central Melbourne at La Trobe University. As a national competition facilitated by the NIIN and sponsored by Coles Group, students travelled to Cisco Live Melbourne to develop prototypes live on the NIIN stand and pitch their concepts on stage. Guided by mentors from Cisco and Coles, the experience strengthened industry connections and showcased the depth of talent emerging from the Innovation Central Network.



Team ReVRlution

Emerging from the Semester 1 Sport Innovation ProtoComp, Team ReVRlution continued their momentum with an immersive VR solution designed to support greater participation and inclusivity in sport for wheelchair users. Since completing the program, the team has showcased their prototype at Cisco Live Melbourne and demonstrated it to the Minister for Sport and Racing and Minister for the Olympic and Paralympic Games, the Hon Timothy Mander.



ICN Industry Engagement

Innovation Central connects industry with research, talent and emerging technology to solve real industry and national challenges.

Through industry-led projects and co-designed initiatives, organisations work alongside universities and government to prototype, test and scale digital solutions across priority sectors. This model accelerates the translation of ideas into real-world impact while strengthening capability across Australia and the region.



Government



Transport & Infrastructure



Mining & Resources



Education



Healthcare



Retail



Defence

How we engage with industry

- Co-designed innovation projects aligned to real-world challenges
- Industry-led problem definition and solution development
- Applied research, prototyping and testing in live environments
- Access to talent, capability and university expertise
- Cross-sector collaboration spanning industry, academia and government



These organisations have engaged with Innovation Central programs, projects, events and research initiatives.

ABC News	City of Darebin	Healthscope	Office of the Chief Public	South32
ACMI	City of Frankston	Heiniger	Health Officer	Southern Ports
ACT Government	City of Kalgoorlie-Boulder	Horizon Power	Olinqua	Speed Signature
ADBRI Adelaide Brighton LTD	City of Melbourne		Omnibiotech	Sphere Drones
Adventure Out	CloudRAN.AI	I-Enviro	Optus	Spiropak
Aeolis Wind Systems	CNHS	ICTeach	Oracle	Splunk
AGD	Codan	Infinitive Group	Orion Health	Stadiums Queensland
AI Lamb	Comm Bank	Industry Capability Network	Origin Energy	St John of God
AITI	Community Bridging Services	(ICN)	OZ Minerals	St Vincent's Health Australia
Algosec	Committee for Brisbane	In Situ Marine Optics		State Library Queensland
Alcoa	Consolidated Minerals	Innovative Energy Solutions	Palo Alto Networks	Suncorp
Alfred Health	CORE Innovation Hub	Insurance Commission of WA	People with Purpose	Sunsuper
Ambulance VIC	Coviu	IPTel Solutions	Perth Zoo	Super Retail Group
AOA	CSIRO	ISPT Pty Ltd	Pilbara Ports Authority	Supercheap Auto
Applus+	CSL	Ivanhoe Grammar School	Programmed	SuniTAFE
Architech	Data#3		Projects Victoria	
Arup Australia	DDSR Australia	John XXIII College	PUMA	Talis Consultants
Assuro - Billd Operations Pty Ltd	Defence Australia			Tassal
Attorney Generals Office	Defence Science Technology	KonaCoco Clothing	QIC	Technology for Aging and
Austal	Group	Korus Group	QLD Government	Disability
Aus 3C	Deloitte		Queensland Chief	Tennis Australia
Australia Post	Department of Health	Landgate	Entrepreneur's Office	Tennis Queensland
Australian Defence Force	Department of Mines	LatConnect60	Queensland Cricket	The AVR Lab
Australian Pork	Department of Premier & Cabinet	Lattitude28	Queensland Futures Institute	Transport Victoria
AVI	DoT	Life Saving Victoria Ltd	Queensland Health	Turosi
Austin Health	DPIRD		Queensland Tourism Industry	
BAE Systems	DroneShield	Main Roads Western Australia	Council	Urban Utilities
BAI Communications	Ear Science Institute Australia	MAIC	Queensland Treasury	
Bairnsdale Regional Health Service	Eastern Health	Makoto Time Constraint	Corporation	Vanguard Technologies
BeBendigo	Economical Energy	Management	QUT Sport	Ventura Bus Company
Bendigo Bank	EECMS Orientation and	Mandurah Health		Veterans Administration (US)
BHP	Mobility Training	Mater Foundation	RAA	Vertical Road
BisIndustries	EMHS	Medibank	RAC & XSights	VIC Ed Dept
Blue Rydge	Emporium Creative Hub	Medivitals	RACQ	VIC Virtual ED
BDO	EPA Victoria	Melbourne Innovation Centre	RDS	Victoria DJSIR
Brand True North	Evolutioned	Melbourne Polytechnic	RD Consulting	Victoria Police
Brisbane Airport Corporation	FAR Lane	Mercy Health	Regional Development	Virtulane
Brisbane City Council	Fintech-Services	Merewyn Partners	Australia (RDA) Great Southern	
Brisbane Economic Development Agency	Fiona Wood Foundation	Micro X	Regional Development Victoria	WACHS
Brisbane Racing Club	Fleetwood Corporation Limited	Mineral Resources Limited	Rio Tinto	Water Corporation
	Flight Centre	MIT Sloan Global Programs	Rivernet	Wearable Sensors
Calvary Health Care	Flinders University IDS	MSWA	Roborigger	Western Power
Camp Connect	Foresight Medical	Murujuga Aboriginal	Royal Automobile Club	WesTrac
Canberra Institute of Technology (CIT)	Fortescue Metals Group	Corporation	Royal Melbourne Hospital	Women in Digital
Cann Group	Foundat	NAB	Royal Women's Hospital	Woodside
Canning Libraries	Frankie4	Newlab (Brooklyn Navy Yards)		Workforce Blueprint
CBH Group	Frontier Automation	NH Architecture	SA Ed Dept	
Cellular Agriculture Australia	Fugro	NMHS Clinical Risk Prediction	Safe Farms WA	Xavier College
Cerner		Nocterra	Safescape	Xsights-RAC
Chemcentre	Gartner (and Global)	Northern Health	SmartCrete CRC	
Children's Hospital Queensland	Glyde Digital	Northlink	Smartlox	Youi Insurance
CIRA	Gridvision	NTT DATA	South Bank Corporation	
City of Bendigo		NVI	South Metropolitan Health	
City of Bundoora	Harvest Technology	NYU	Service	
City of Canning	Health Direct			



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Industry
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