

PRIME MINISTER
MINISTER FOR SCIENCE AND
RESEARCH
MINISTER FOR INNOVATION AND
INDUSTRY

REVITALISED PRIME MINISTER'S SCIENCE COUNCIL

Prime Minister Julia Gillard today announced reforms to Australia's peak science advisory body to make it more relevant and responsive to the immediate challenges and opportunities facing the nation.

The new Prime Minister's Science, Engineering and Innovation Council (PMSEIC) will have a more dynamic and contemporary focus following a recent review of its operations and membership.

The new smaller Council will meet three times a year to provide more timely independent scientific policy advice to Government on existing and emerging issues that a nation like Australia must confront.

The Council will also continue to provide essential advice to Government on issues facing Australia's long term future, looking five to 30 years ahead.

The changes reflect the Gillard Labor Government's confidence in science and innovation as key drivers to improve Australia's living standards, health, productivity and environment.

Our scientific community is highly regarded for its tremendous contribution to build a richer, fairer, cleaner and safer Australia.

The new Council, led by Chief Scientist, Professor Ian Chubb will be in a stronger position to utilise this scientific expertise.

The Council will be able to refer long-term issues, five to 30 years ahead, requiring a scientific response to the Australian Council of Learned Academies to undertake in depth, interdisciplinary research and report to Government through the Chief Scientist.

The Prime Minister today announced \$1.95 million over four years to 2014-15 for in-depth and evidence based research to support the work of the Learned Academies.

The new Council will be in a stronger position to discuss topics such as technology, health and communications issues that have implications across Government.

More regular meetings will also help it provide more timely scientific policy advice to meet the needs of industry as well as responses to regional developments and international relations.

High on the agenda of the new Council will also be the Chief Scientist's report on the Health of Australian Science - looking at strategies to ensure its sustainability.

The PMSEIC's revised membership will include:

- Prime Minister (chair);
- Minister for Tertiary Education, Skills, Science and Research (alternate chair);
- Minister for Industry and Innovation
- Other Ministers relevant to the meeting, at the invitation of the Prime Minister;
- Australia's Chief Scientist;
- CEO of the Australian Research Council;
- CEO of the National Health and Medical Research Council and;
- Six individual standing members, chosen for their contributions to science and research:
 - Dr Megan Clark;
 - Dr Cathy Foley;
 - Dr Ben Greene;
 - Professor Robert Saint;
 - Professor Fiona Stanley; and
 - Professor Graeme Turner.

The PMSEIC will convene early this year. For more information, visit <http://www.innovation.gov.au/Science/PMSEIC/Pages/default.aspx>

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