

National Science, Technology and Research Committee

Terms of Reference

The National Science, Technology and Research Committee (NSTRC) is an official level body that supports the work of the Government and the Commonwealth Science Council (CSC) by:

- maintaining carriage of a strategic and whole-of-government approach to all aspects of science, technology, engineering, mathematics (STEM) and innovation;
- providing a forum for the consideration of and delivery of STEM and innovation policies from across the federal government;
- identifying areas of national strength in STEM and innovation and current and future capability need;
- identifying opportunities to improve the impact, focus, prioritisation and quality of Australia's investment in science and research;
- identifying opportunities to improve connections between government, research organisations, universities and business; and
- coordinating responses to other matters referred to it by the CSC or relevant ministers.

The NSTRC may also create working groups that comprise officials from relevant departments supplemented by such other expertise as necessary for each task. This expertise could be sourced from organisations such as Universities Australia, the Learned Academies and the Innovation Australia Board.

Reporting mechanisms

The NSTRC will report directly to the CSC.

State and territory engagement

Responsibility for communication of activities between the Commonwealth and the States and Territories will remain with the Council of Australian Governments (COAG), the Commonwealth, State and Territory Advisory Committee on Innovation (CSTACI), and other relevant state and territory bodies. However, the NSTRC will maintain a close connection to CSTACI and the Forum of Australian Chief Scientists, using these bodies to gather and share information on respective STEM and innovation policies and investment, as appropriate.

Membership

The membership of the NSTRC will ensure that the Government's STEM and innovation policies are considered at a whole-of-government and whole-of-system level; the Government's decisions flow through to relevant departments, agencies and research councils; and the implementation of these decisions is informed by sufficient consultation.

The NSTRC members, drawn from senior levels of Commonwealth departments and agencies, are:

- Australia's Chief Scientist (Chair)
- Department of Industry, Innovation and Science (Deputy Chair)
- Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet
- Department of Education and Training
- Department of Health
- Department of Environment
- Department of Agriculture and Water Resources
- Department of Defence
- CEO of the Australian Research Council
- CEO of the National Health and Medical Research Council
- CEO of the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation
- CEO of the Office of Innovation and Science Australia
- CEO of the Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation
- CEO of Geoscience Australia
- CEO of the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research
- CEO of the Bureau of Meteorology CEO
- CEO of the Australian Institute of Marine Science
- Deputy Secretaries of other departments with an interest or direct role in funding or supporting science and research can be co-opted as the agenda requires