

THE WAY AHEAD - A WORK PLAN FOR TIAC

INTRODUCTION

During the period of May to October 2012, the Western Australian Technology and Industry Advisory Council (TIAC) undertook a strategic planning process to refine the Council's purpose statement and identify activities for inclusion into its work plan for the next two to four years. The Council also consulted with key stakeholders to canvass a wider range of views in formulating advice on a recommended path for the future of TIAC.

TIAC STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION FORUMS

In 2011, TIAC conducted a number of stakeholder consultation forums with key stakeholders in the mineral, gas, environmental, health and medical sectors. Common issues and recommended actions for the State Government across the four sectors included:

- the need to identify priorities for research and development to meet the State's requirements;
- the need to adopt a whole of Government approach to science and technology, including the development of a strategic vision and long term plan;
- the need to facilitate increased collaboration, particularly with industry in outcome-focused investment; and
- the need to leverage Federal Government funding and encourage key industry players to assist in funding these initiatives.

The recommendations from the strategic planning process and the previous stakeholder consultation forums have informed TIAC's development of their purpose statement and corresponding work plan.

TIAC'S PURPOSE STATEMENT

TIAC's refined purpose statement promotes a better understanding of the role of the Council and enables it to pursue its purpose more effectively. The Council's proposed purpose statement was presented to the Minister for Science and Innovation in August 2012.

TIAC looks to the future to provide strategic, evidence-based advice to government aimed at identifying and encouraging innovative approaches to development in industry, science, technology and government that drive sustainable and diverse economic growth in Western Australia.

TIAC will enact this purpose statement by:

- *commissioning studies;*
- *monitoring existing trends in innovation and investment;*
- *identifying strategies for enhanced innovation; and*
- *responding to specific government requests for strategic advice.*

TIAC'S FUNCTIONS

In its advice to the Minister of Science and Innovation in August 2012, TIAC included recommendations about changes to the functions of TIAC under the *Industry and Technology Development Act 1998* (ITD Act). In particular, it was recommended that part 1 (a) and (b) of the functions should be amended to read:

- 1) The Council is to:
 - a) provide advice to the Minister, at the initiative of the Council or at the request of the Minister on any matter relating to the objects of this Act; and

- b) carry out, collaborate in or procure research, studies or investigations on any matter relating to the objects of this Act, including matters relating to –
- i. establishing a vision and strategy for economic growth in the State generated from industrial development and underpinned by innovative approaches to science and technology;
 - ii. identifying areas where the State has a competitive advantage and/or well-defined needs and influencing government policies to support economic growth in these areas through innovative approaches to industry, science and technology;
 - iii. identifying capacity and capability constraints relating to industrial, scientific and technological activities in the State; and
 - iv. the application of industrial, scientific and technological advances to the services of the Government.

TIAC'S WORK PLAN

In the context of the revised purpose statement and the suggested TIAC functions, the Council has drafted its work plan for the next two to four years. This work plan will commence in January 2013 and will be reviewed on an annual basis.

TIAC identified three over-arching initiatives to focus the Council's activities. The initiatives are outlined below and include the proposed activities that TIAC will undertake in implementing their work plan.

Initiative 1

Demonstrate and promote the economic benefits from science, research and technology and identify ways that the State Government can stimulate development in these areas.

Work has already commenced on the first two activities listed under this initiative.

Activities

- Undertake a research project to establish a coherent integrated rationale for the State Government to demonstrate the value of increased investment in science, technology and innovation as a key factor in achieving continuing growth and diversification of the State's economy.
- Undertake a research project to formulate a strategy and recommendations for the State Government to strengthen science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) education in Western Australian schools through the enhancement and optimisation of formal and external STEM education support.
- Undertake a research project to examine the value of technology clusters (technology parks, start-up/venture capital hotbeds) and their return on investment.
- Investigate opportunities for academia, government and industry to collaborate in a more effective way to address recognised government needs.

Initiative 2

Examine and develop innovative approaches to specific opportunities and challenges facing Western Australia, over the short and long term, in the following areas:

- growing and ageing population;
- water and food security;
- preventive health;

- resource management;
- biodiversity mapping and management;
- sustainable energy solutions; and
- environmental health.

Activities

- Undertake research projects to define specific opportunities and challenges for Western Australia in these areas and understand how these are currently being addressed; identify the associated gaps, capability issues and potential for competitive advantage; recommend innovative approaches to optimising opportunities and addressing challenges.

Initiative 3

Investigate the implications of Western Australia's changing economy to identify new technologies, emerging industries and niches and research how they relate to:

- satisfying the future needs of the job market;
- emerging economies within the region (e.g. India and China); and
- opportunities and challenges created by increased digital capacity and capability through new infrastructure supporting digital technologies.

Activities

- Undertake a research project to identify new technologies or innovative solutions to assist in attracting and retaining employees and develop a more flexible workforce to satisfy the future demands of the job market.
- Undertake a research project to identify the implications of Western Australia's changing economy, the impact on economic development and global competitiveness by investigating opportunities and challenges from emerging economies within the region (e.g. India and China).
- Undertake a research project to investigate the opportunities and challenges created by increased digital capability and analyse the potential economic, environmental and social impacts this presents. Provide recommendations for suitable strategies that Western Australia could adopt to take advantage of new digital technologies and infrastructure.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

TIAC's activities will aim to provide the State Government with strategic evidence-based advice to inform and influence policy, and make a significant and valued contribution to achieve sustainable and economic growth in Western Australia.

The Council agreed that the following principles need to be satisfied to maintain the focus of the Council's activities.

- Practical
- Measurable
- Achievable
- Beneficial
- Relevant to the ITD Act

NEW MEMBERS

TIAC agreed that, in order to successfully deliver the proposed activities in their work plan, it would be beneficial if additional members were appointed to TIAC. It should also be noted that the terms of four current TIAC members expire in June 2013.

CURRENT PROJECTS

TIAC's new work plan commences in January 2013. TIAC is currently working on a number of projects which will continue until completed. Information about current TIAC projects appears on the TIAC website at www.tiac.wa.gov.au.

Project name	Expected completion date
<i>Opportunities for SME's in the Resource Sector</i> research report	November 2012
<i>Creating an Environment for Innovation</i> scoping report	December 2012
<i>Innovations in the Regions</i> research report	January 2013
<i>Feasibility Study into Research Infrastructure in the Kimberley</i>	March 2013