

## Bulletin 6 of 6

*The role of science, research and technology  
in lifting Australian productivity.*

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# An innovative workforce for the future

A skilled and productive workforce is critical to economic growth in an advanced economy like Australia. Skilled labour is one of the key contributors to productivity gains through innovation. Skilled personnel bring knowledge to improve products and processes, adopt new processes to lift productivity and their ability to learn new competencies and adapt to a changing environment.

Technology based industries require science, technology, engineering and maths skills to innovate but the long term market is difficult to predict. Many of today's technical and scientific jobs did not exist a decade ago. Preparing students for life-long learning is a key requirement to meet evolving workforce needs along with graduates that have problem solving capabilities and adaptive capacity.

The engineering workforce is an important aspect of innovation. Engineers Australia\* reports that Australia does not produce sufficient engineers to meet its current requirements. In particular, Australia has low participation rates of women in engineering.

Successful innovation is driven not only by technical and scientific skills, but also by business and entrepreneurial skills and by a culture that is conducive to innovation. Innovative firms create interdisciplinary teams that mix scientific and technical skills with people that understand systems, cultures and the way society uses and adapts new ideas.

Innovation cannot flourish without good management. Innovation and emerging technologies cause disruption for which many Australian managers are ill equipped. Strengthening our entrepreneurial culture and lifting the quality of management in small and medium businesses would make a strong contribution to lifting Australia's productivity.

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On 3 June 2014 ACOLA released *The role of science, research and technology in lifting Australian productivity*. This bulletin is designed to continue the discussion around the role that science, research and technology plays in the Australian economy and in lifting productivity.

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\*[https://www.engineersaustralia.org.au/sites/default/files/shado/Representation/Discussion%20Papers/supply\\_of\\_engineers\\_\\_migration\\_1.pdf](https://www.engineersaustralia.org.au/sites/default/files/shado/Representation/Discussion%20Papers/supply_of_engineers__migration_1.pdf)