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Review of the National Innovation System – Submission  
Secretariat to the Expert Panel  
Review of the National Innovation System  
Department of Innovation, Industry, Science and Research  
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Declaration of Interest	AIAST promotes sound science and the adoption of new and approved innovative technologies.

Claude Gauchat  
National President



The Australian Institute of Agricultural Science & Technology (AIAST) is the peak professional association for scientists involved in agriculture and natural resource management. AIAST is based in Canberra and its primary role is to promote the adoption of new technologies and practices that will make agriculture and natural resource management more sustainable in Australia.

AIAST has over 900 members who range from rural consultants to lead scientists within government, academia and research institutions such as CSIRO. A considerable number of members would be directly involved in science and innovation as their primary activity.

AIAST is pleased to make a submission to the national innovation system review in Australia, and will restrict its comment to one single theme: **re-innovate innovation**.

1. Innovation is achieved by creative people, but does Australia have the right education and corporate culture to promote and reward creativity? Do the nation target young innovators, the ones who need to realise the innovation?
2. Does Australia have a national inventory of all leadership and creativity programs, public and private, and how do these compare to programs in high R&D achieving countries elsewhere?
3. Examples of programs that deal with new ways of innovating include:
  - Xerox Palo Alto Research Centre
  - PARC (by John Seely Brown)
  - Unilever's Catalyst
  - Australian Business Arts Foundation (Zinifex mine and Moorillo winery trials)
  - 'Explora' by the Spanish government
  - DARPA by the US government

Will the above fit the 'hubs and spikes' model being proposed by the Minister? Does Innovation Australia promote the right culture for more competitive and timely innovation? Similarly, do the 35 AusIndustry business programs (\$2billion for 10,000 businesses and 60,000 individuals) deliver value to our society?

4. The key to success is to get the balance right between supply and demand-side innovation capabilities. The Unilever and Xerox programs provide that, whereas typically government policy in the past decade has supported supply-side capabilities.

Demand-side thinking can be enhanced and guided by futuristic mapping such as 'Trend Blend 2008+', copies of which are attached. Further information can be found on [www.nowandthen.com](http://www.nowandthen.com).

5. If creativity arises most from conflict or contrast, then has Australia leveraged from the inherent innovative capacity of the rural sector in times when the drought has slowed down or even stopped normal commercial activity? Could idle but innovative minds be assembled and stimulated to provide new ideas during economic downturns? Would targeted exploratory (=high risk) funding programs be the way forward in such times?

The AIAST would be pleased to provide further insights if required.

Yours sincerely

Claude Gauchat  
Attach.