



## **R&D Groundhog Day as Government's 'Ambitious Australia' plan mirrors report released 18 years ago.**

A nation's commitment to research, development and innovation is a signifier of its commitment to its citizens' future. Regrettably, Australia's once proud track record on R&D has been falling by the wayside for decades.

Last week, our poor performance was again highlighted by "Ambitious Australia", the final report of the Strategic Examination of Research and Development Panel headed by Robyn Denholm and released by Minister for Industry and Innovation Tim Ayres.

The lack of support for science and industry in recent decades is reflected in the fact that the problems and solutions identified in this report bear a striking resemblance to those of a similar review released by the Rudd government in 2008 – the "Venturous Australia" report.

The report also confirms that Australia's investment in R&D has been falling. R&D spending peaked at 2.24% of GDP in 2008–09 but dropped to 1.69% in 2023–24, well below the level of other OECD countries.

Responding to the report's release, Independent Member for Kooyong Dr Monique Ryan said: "Eighteen years is a long time to wait for an independent report to remind us what we have failed to do for nearly two decades: lift our R&D game."

Both reports describe an R&D system that is outdated, fragmented, and suffering from poor translation of research into productive output as well as declining levels of funding. Solutions present in each report include development of workforce capability, and the urgent need for growth due to high levels of international competition. Notably, the same key recommendation appears in both reports: establishment of a National Innovation Council to coordinate R&D funding.

Dr Ryan: "The similarities between these two reports, released almost two decades apart, are so striking that Australian researchers and innovators would be forgiven for feeling like it is Groundhog Day.

"How much longer can we be looking back to pathfinding research on solar panels, Wifi, the black box and the stump jump plough? We need to look forward, not backward. A commitment to implementing these sensible recommendations would be a start.

"Australian researchers and innovators can't wait another two years, let alone two decades. The Albanese Government must commit to implementing the SERD's 'Ambitious Australia' recommendations with urgency."