

ECONOMICS AND INDUSTRY STANDING COMMITTEE

INQUIRY INTO TECHNOLOGICAL AND SERVICE INNOVATION IN WA



Submission by:

Ian Callahan

I wish to address the following three points under consideration by the Committee:

- What drives innovation
- Collaboration between government, universities and business
- Models of development by which technology and service innovation could be encouraged in WA

COMMENTS:

There are a lot of people with bright ideas, companies that are innovating and good initiatives that foster innovation within WA. Just imagine what could be possible if innovation had a focus, a high profile, great facilities and an innovation ecosystem to champion innovation and creativity.

A world class innovation district could be the answer Perth needs. A clustering of companies, institutions, universities, small start-up entities and service providers to meet the needs of our most creative who crave proximity so that ideas and knowledge can be transferred and built on seamlessly and easily. Great innovation districts become talent magnets for the best companies and individual talent which in turn attracts venture capital and other investment into the area which means more jobs for WA.

WA has dabbled in the past in attempting to create knowledge clusters but these haven't been successful as all of the attributes necessary haven't been in place.

Innovation District models are proving successful in other locations around the world to drive innovation, economic and social development. Success is dependent on the implementation of the components of an effective innovation ecosystem. These go well beyond physical facilities and include a mix of:

- Physical assets
- Economic assets
- Networking assets

The attached articles describe how Innovation Districts are playing their part in fostering innovation and economic development and what it takes to make them successful:

- The Rise of Innovation Districts
- One Year After: Observations on the rise of innovation districts
- 22@Barcelona, The Innovation District
- Innovation Districts appear in Cities

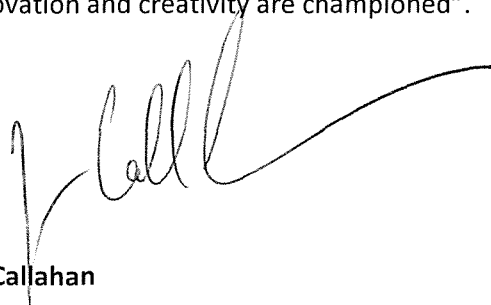
In Perth we have an opportunity to create our own world class innovation district. In the Bentley Activity Centre we have an area that is six kilometres from the CBD that includes many of the components that can be the catalyst for a successful innovation district. We don't have to start from scratch but rather to build on what is already there, engage the existing occupants of the area into a bigger vision and consolidate other activity into the area.

What is a platform to build from:

- A pro-active Curtin University rapidly making its mark in the international arena and attracting both Australian and international partners to Western Australia
- Partner companies and other universities already operating from Curtin University campus and Technology Park
- CSIRO and super-computing facilities located in Technology Park
- A large component of the SKA project based in Technology Park
- The new Cisco Global Innovation Centre for the Internet of Everything (with Woodside as the first corporate partner) operating on the Curtin Campus
- Technical colleges in the immediate surrounding area
- Land and services available in an almost green fields site just six kilometres from the CBD
- A Curtin University Master Plan that already embraces the innovation district concept. Curtin could easily take the leadership in developing and providing the backbone of the facilities, culture and ecosystem required to create a successful innovation district for Western Australia.

If we are serious about creating knowledge jobs in Western Australia we can't afford to pass this opportunity by. Lessons of the past demonstrate that dabbling in this innovation space doesn't work. A serious commitment is required but this does not necessarily have to represent major capital or financial operating support from Government. With a strong government focus to support the district, facilitate its development and co-locate appropriate government enterprises to the area, the district could flourish.

Attached is an external report prepared by the international group Turnberry Consulting on the Curtin University Master Plan. While the scope described in the report (and addressed by the consultant) isn't specifically targeted at the topics under consideration by the Committee, it is useful in that it draws on international comparisons to demonstrate the opportunities that exist in the Bentley Activity Centre and Curtin Campus to create a place where 'innovation and creativity are championed'.



Ian Callahan

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