

## Case Study

# National mentoring program fosters an innovation culture

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# IMNIS

## INDUSTRY MENTORING NETWORK IN STEM

A novel mentoring program is leading the way in giving PhD students a better understanding of the commercial and industrial world of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM).

The Industry Mentoring Network in STEM (IMNIS) is an award-winning initiative of the Australian Academy of Technological Sciences and Engineering (ATSE).

Officially launched in 2015 by the Victorian Premier, the Honorable Daniel Andrews and past ATSE President Dr Alan Finkel, IMNIS has successfully piloted in multiple universities in three states – Victoria, Western Australia and South Australia – and was recognised with a prestigious B/HERT Award in 2016.

Working with recognised industry leaders on the Expert Advisory Panel chaired by Director Ronnie Wood, IMNIS connects motivated, commercially-aware mentors with second year doctoral students and can be run in any Australian university across all STEM-based industry sectors. IMNIS is capable of including large numbers of PhD students and provides the opportunity for a diverse range of industry professionals to ‘give back’ to the STEM community.

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## National roll-out

Thanks to funding provided by major partner MTPConnect, IMNIS is rolling out across Australia in partnership with AusBiotech. CSL and KPMG also strongly support this initiative. Dr Marguerite Evans-Galea is the inaugural Executive Director.

Australia is seeking to increase industry-university collaborations and foster an innovation culture that values basic research alongside translational research, commercialisation, start-ups and entrepreneurs. Taking an inclusive approach, IMNIS educates and informs our future scientific leaders about the value of industry to research and introduces the breadth of opportunities beyond academia. Importantly, it upskills students and extends their professional network across a range of professional sectors.

A key long-term objective of IMNIS is to narrow the cultural gap between industry and universities and prepare a new generation of diverse, inclusive, industry-ready PhD graduates. Dr Evans-Galea says “There are no ‘sides’ in science and such commentary is counter-productive. Imagine what Australia could achieve if we all worked together to create one vibrant STEM ecosystem, full of diverse people, ideas and solutions. IMNIS will help students realise the true potential of their STEM qualifications.”

IMNIS is actively recruiting experienced professionals in industry and government. If you would like to participate, contact Dr Evans-Galea at [marguerite.galea@imnis.org.au](mailto:marguerite.galea@imnis.org.au).