

A U S T R A L I A



AUSTRALIA 2020 SUMMIT
FINAL REPORT



Disclaimer

This report is intended to provide a record of the *Australia 2020* Summit and recommendations on each of the discussion areas for consideration by the Australian Government. It is based on ideas put forward by participants during the Summit discussion sessions, outcomes from preliminary Summit events and ideas generated from public submissions received prior to the Summit.

The views expressed in this report do not necessarily reflect the views of the Australian Government.

Please be aware that this report may contain images of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who may have passed away.

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LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL



THINKING
BIG

28 May 2008

The Hon Kevin Rudd MP
Prime Minister
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Prime Minister

It was a privilege to work with you and more than 1000 Australians, from all parts of the community, on the *Australia 2020* Summit, the largest genuine community consultative forum held in Australia to date.

As you know, the Summit covered a range of topics and the 10 Summit streams approached their discussions in different ways. The ambitions, themes and ideas that emerged reflect the backgrounds and passions of individual participants, the unique dynamics of each stream, and the varying challenges relating to each of the 10 discussion areas.

Your Department has now compiled the work of the scribes from the Summit into a Final Summit Report.

The work of some 95 volunteer scribes, whose collective role was to record the many hundreds of ideas generated and debated by 10 discussion streams, often split into smaller working groups, has made this report possible. I thank them all for their hard work.

This report goes beyond simply documenting the ideas and outcomes of discussions. It also seeks to capture the context of the generation and debate of ideas, and wherever possible, to demonstrate how the flow of discussion and debate led to specific ideas being raised.

As the final record of a vibrant, engaging, and uniquely Australian discussion, I trust that readers will treat this report as a living document, which itself will provide an impetus for further discussion, conversation and action on our longer-term policy challenges.

I hope also that this report is a useful policy development tool for government. On behalf of the 11 members of the independent Steering Committee, I am pleased to commend this report to you.

Yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Glyn Davis". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Professor Glyn Davis AC
Co-Convenor
Australia 2020 Summit

www.australia2020.gov.au

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INTRODUCTION

On the weekend of 19 and 20 April 2008 more than 1000 Australians responded to an invitation from the Prime Minister, the Hon. Kevin Rudd MP, and came to Parliament House in Canberra for the 2020 Summit, a gathering with the purpose of discussing the agenda for the nation. The challenge was to help shape a long-term strategy for the nation's future, to tackle the long-term challenges confronting Australia by thinking in new ways.

The people who attended came from diverse backgrounds—some eminent in a specialised field; others ordinary Australians. Among them were farmers, scientists, health professionals, artists and actors, community leaders and lawyers. Common to all of them was a genuine interest in and commitment to shaping the future of the nation. They came together to talk about 10 major policy challenges facing the country:

1. the productivity agenda—education, skills, training, science and innovation
2. the future of the Australian economy
3. population, sustainability, climate change, water and the future of our cities
4. future directions for rural industries and rural communities
5. a long-term national health strategy
6. strengthening communities, supporting families and social inclusion
7. options for the future of Indigenous Australia
8. towards a creative Australia—the future of the arts, film and design
9. the future of Australian governance—renewed democracy, a more open government (including the role of the media), the structure of the federation, and the rights and responsibilities of citizens
10. Australia's future security and prosperity in a rapidly changing region and world.

The participants were chosen by the 11 community and 10 ministerial co-chairs, each responsible for an agenda stream. They came together to bring forward new ideas and new directions for the nation's future, to build a new way of working together.

This gathering of 1000 Australians was part of a broader national conversation held in the lead-up to the summit. The summit participants continued the conversation started at the Youth Summit, held at Parliament House in Canberra on 12 and 13 April 2008, and at more than 500 school summits across the country. Reports from these events are available on the Australia 2020 website, www.australia2020.gov.au.

Many other communities also joined the conversation, there being local summits in many regions, an African Summit in Melbourne, and a Jewish Symposium in Sydney. Additionally, valuable contributions were made by some 3600 individuals or groups who presented 8800 public submissions before the main summit. The submissions can be viewed on the Australia 2020 website. A summary of submissions presented before the summit for each of the 10 major policy challenges was available to summit participants.



All the ideas and ideals from this national conversation informed discussions at the Australia 2020 Summit. The 'summiteers' were divided into 10 streams, each focused on one of the major policy challenges. A list of all the summit participants is available on the Australia 2020 website.

The *Australia 2020 Summit Initial Report*, produced on the final day of the summit, and the associated PowerPoint presentations used at the closing plenary session, aimed to capture the main results of discussions, including the top ambitions, goals, priority themes and 'big ideas' in each of the 10 discussion streams. The initial report and the PowerPoint slides are available on the Australia 2020 website.

In the time available it was not possible for the initial report to capture the full content, richness and flow of the conversations that took place at the summit. This present report, the *Australia 2020 Summit Final Report*, aims to more comprehensively record the style and content of the conversations and the ideas generated on 19 and 20 April 2008. There is a chapter on each of the 10 streams, providing a consolidated record of discussions and ideas, based on note-taking by volunteer scribes. This report sits alongside the initial report, the slides of the stream presentations, and the public submissions.

The *Australia 2020 Summit Final Report* was prepared by the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, using the scribes' detailed notes. It seeks to reflect the discussions and ideas of summit participants; it does not represent government endorsement or otherwise of those discussions and ideas.

This introduction and each of the 10 stream chapters can be downloaded separately from the Australia 2020 website.

NEXT STEPS

As suggested, the purpose of the Australia 2020 Summit was to explore the challenges facing Australia in the next decade and beyond, to discuss ambitions for Australia as a nation, and to identify policy mechanisms to realise those ambitions.

This report will assist the policy development process by describing the discussions and outlining the many ideas generated at the summit. The depth and range of ideas in each chapter reflect the diversity of summit participants and the wider Australian community.

The final report seeks to capture all of the ideas and issues raised at the summit. This report also seeks to present the ideas in accordance with the priorities given to them by the stream participants in the discussion and debates at the summit. While the scribes have made every effort to include all ideas and properly reflect prioritisation and emphasis, inevitably we may have missed or misinterpreted some ideas.

Summit participants and all other interested parties are welcome to comment on this final report and to continue to provide submissions on the challenges facing the nation: use the Australia 2020 website, www.australia2020.gov.au, to do this.

Despite its title, the *Australia 2020 Summit Final Report* is not the end: the Australian Government wants the national conversation to continue. The summit should not be the end of the debate, and many more Australians are invited to contribute, to help shape our nation's future. The government will endeavour to address all contributions made before, during and after the summit, in its policy development processes.

The Prime Minister has made a commitment that by the end of 2008 the government will have responded to the recommendations put forward by the 10 summit streams. On 19 April 2008, in his opening address to the summit, he said:

Some of these ideas we will be able to embrace. Others we will not. And some we will take in part and change. But, you know something? It is far better we ask the question and have the answers come forward, so that the whole process of national creativity in the ideas debate for our future occurs, rather than throttling it before it starts. There are no right and wrong answers when it comes to a discussion among people of good heart, good mind and good will.

The years ahead will undoubtedly throw up many unforeseen challenges and unimagined opportunities. Australians need to keep discussing, debating and generating new ideas and perspectives for formulating the national strategies and solutions of tomorrow.

