

Topics of current interest

Presented to the ACDS Executive Meeting on 28 April 2026

Covering the period February 2026 to mid-April 2026.

The following are recent articles and reports that may be of interest to Deans of Science. Some of these topics you will already know about. Please let me know of any important ones that I have missed out. This list is not meant to indicate a particular point of view from the ACDS. We encourage you to follow the links to the original articles.

1. Approaches to funding research and development

https://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/Parliamentary_departments/Parliamentary_Library/Research/Issues_and_Insights/2026/FundingResearchAndDevelopment

Parliamentary Library of Australia, February 2026

- This is an interesting article that analyses the different ways that governments can fund research. It was published before the public release of the SERD report.

2. Report on the Strategic Examination of Research and Development (SERD)

<https://www.industry.gov.au/publications/ambitious-australia-strategic-examination-research-and-development-final-report>

Department of Industry, Science and Resources, March 2026.

- *Ambitious Australia* is the final report from the SERD panel. It contains 20 recommendations across six pillars to overhaul Australia's R&D system.
- There have been some interesting responses from industry groups:

<https://www.australianindustrygroup.com.au/news/media-centre/2026/serd-senator-ayres-has-ablueprint-it-isnowtime-to-break-ground/>

<https://www.innovationaus.com/strong-on-research-weak-on-innovation-assessing-serd/>

- And if you have not yet read the report ... Some of you might know there is a new Google app called 'notebooklm' which can summarise anything as an AI generated podcast. Just for fun, I ran the SERD report through this app and it generated the following 23-minute podcast. It is quite impressive!

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1wc9AvAnbjBDbwxZ4BdSgdyh1UUA6sk3N/view?usp=sharing>

3. Horizon Europe

<https://ministers.education.gov.au/anthony-albanese/new-horizon-australian-research-and-innovation>

<https://www.industry.gov.au/news/launching-horizon-europe-negotiations-eu>

Federal Government, March 2026

- The Australian government will proceed with negotiations to join Horizon Europe. The announcement says 'Australia's association to Horizon Europe will be jointly supported by the Group of Eight universities'.

4. ARC open access policy

<https://www.arc.gov.au/news-and-publications/media/arc-open-access-policy-2026-update>

Australian Research Council, March 2026

- The ARC is strengthening its requirement for open access to research from July this year. You can register for an ARC webinar on 20 May on the new policy.

5. A bill to amend the Job Ready Graduates (JRG) package

https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate/Education_and_Employment/ReverseJRG

Australian Parliamentary Committee, February 2026

- The Education and Employment Legislation Committee is holding an inquiry into this proposed bill. The ACDS has made a submission about the effect of the JRG on funding for STEM. (Our submission will be on our website soon.) We worked with DASSH (Deans of Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities) to coordinate our key messages.
- The Innovative Research Universities (IRU) proposed a three-step approach to reform the JRG in March 2026.

<https://iru.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/Impacts-of-the-Job-Ready-Graduates-policy-and-options-for-reform-IRU-analysis.pdf>

6. Respect at Uni

<https://www.education.gov.au/respect-uni-study-antisemitism-islamophobia-racism-and-experience-first-nations-people>

Department of Education, February 2026

- This important report aims to foster safe, inclusive and respectful campus environments for everyone.

7. Inquiry into work options for Australian university graduates

https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate/Education_and_Employment/AusUniGraduates

Australian Parliamentary Committee, March 2026

- The Education and Employment References Committee is inquiring into the rise in the number of Australian university graduates who struggle to find work after graduating.

8. Webinar on supporting students moving from study into the workforce

<https://www.jobsandskills.gov.au/news/webinar-higher-education-outcomes>

Jobs and Skills Australia (JSA), February 2026

- Meanwhile, JSA held a webinar recently to explore the findings from the Higher Education Outcomes report published at the end of 2025. An eminent panel discussed how to support students as they move from university study into work, and the impact of higher education across disciplines on employment and income.

9. Socio-economic backgrounds and job outcomes for university graduates

<https://www.acses.edu.au/publication/socioeconomic-backgrounds-choice-of-disciplines-labour-market-performance/>

Australian Centre for Student Equity and Access, March 2026

- On the same theme, this report examines long-term labour market outcomes as a function of socio-economic background and subject choice at university.

For the ACDS book club: 😊

- Bri Lee, 2025, “Seed”, Simon & Schuster.
This science related fiction book is a thrilling story set in Antarctica. Two scientists try to insure the world’s biodiversity amidst a cold and unforgiving environment.

Thank you to Rebecca LeBard for this suggestion. Please let me know if you have any recent science-related books that you would like to recommend!

In the context of impact and translation, “If scientists want to make a difference in the world, we must leave the gates open.” Ben Rein – Why brains need friends (2025)

Professor Brian Yates

ACDS Director of Strategic Communications and Engagement

Monday 13 April 2026