



**THE HON CHRISTOPHER PYNE MP**  
**Minister for Industry, Innovation and Science**  
**Leader of the House**

**H.E. Christophe Lecourtier**  
**Ambassador of France to Australia**

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **Applications open for the Australian-French Entrepreneurship Challenge for PhDs**

Dynamic Australian PhD students will have the opportunity to compete in a 24-hour entrepreneurship challenge to design an innovative and profitable start-up concept.

The inaugural Australian-French Entrepreneurship Challenge planned for 2-3 June 2016 at The Australian National University (ANU) is based on a flagship event run in France since 2011 by the French National Association for Research and Technology, and Novancia Business School. In Australia, the event will be highlighted as part of a series of innovative and creative meetings –, *Créative France*.

A call for applications for the Challenge was announced today by Minister for Industry, Innovation and Science, the Hon Christopher Pyne MP, and His Excellency Mr. Christophe Lecourtier, Ambassador of France to Australia.

“I encourage today’s PhD candidates to embrace the Challenge as an opportunity to develop the business development skills required to thrive in a global market and be effective drivers of tomorrow’s innovation,” said Mr Pyne.

“The two-day challenge will give students in any field of the natural sciences, including earth, chemical or biological sciences; technology; engineering; or medicine, or in the humanities or social sciences, an opportunity to leverage their scientific knowledge to broaden their entrepreneurial skills.

Successful applicants will work in teams and be supported by expert mentors in the lead up to the challenge.

“In line with the objectives of the National Innovation and Science Agenda, the Challenge will give students from around Australia an opportunity to engage with Australian and French innovators who have first-hand experience in successful global innovation – from skills on what’s required to become a successful entrepreneur to how they can contribute to boosting the global competitiveness of our research and industries.”

Ambassador Lecourtier expressed his support for Australia's interest in co-organising this new event.

“Australia and France are world-class research performers and both deliver excellent science. We strongly share the view that enhanced cooperation between academia and industry is key to deliver on the innovation agenda. International partnering is crucial in this area, bringing in the new opportunities that can generate sound economic and societal impact”, Ambassador Lecourtier said.

“One member of the successful team will be selected to fly to France to experience first-hand the country's thrilling innovation ecosystem and build on the international networks and linkages initiated during the challenge.”

The Australian-French Entrepreneurship Challenge is co-organised by the Australian Government Department of Industry, Innovation and Science and the Culture, Education, Science and Technology section of the French Embassy, with support from the Australian and French governments, ANU and the Australian Academy of Science.

Interested applicants can find more information at <https://www.science.org.au/opportunities/travel/grants-and-exchange>.

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