

# Alberta Research and Innovation Authority

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2013-14 Annual Report

*contact* Mr. Lee Kruszewski, Executive Director, ARIA Secretariat

*Internet* [aria.albertainnovates.ca](http://aria.albertainnovates.ca)

*e-mail* [lee.kruszewski@gov.ab.ca](mailto:lee.kruszewski@gov.ab.ca)

*phone* 780-638-3795

*toll free* 310-0000

*fax* 780-427-0979

*mail* 5<sup>th</sup> Floor, Phipps McKinnon Building, 10020-101A Avenue, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada T5J 3G2



Deaf callers with TTY equipment

*phone* 780-427-9999 (Edmonton)

*toll free* 1-800-232-7215 (other Alberta locations)

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## Message from the Chair

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On behalf of the national and international research and innovation leaders who comprise the Alberta Research and Innovation Authority (ARIA), I am pleased to present ARIA's Annual Report for 2013-14.

The goal of ARIA is to provide the Government of Alberta with independent advice on research and innovation strategy. ARIA also seeks to enhance Alberta's connections with the international research and innovation community.

ARIA's focus over the last year was:

- ensuring the government has access to strategic advice on research and innovation from a national and international perspective;
- connecting Alberta's research and innovation system to the global innovation community; and
- building local innovation networks.

The highlights of ARIA's achievements during the reporting period include:

### **Strategic Advice on Research and Innovation**

- ARIA prepared a report and delivered recommendations to the Minister in response to a request for advice on the functions and design of a new strategic innovation entity in the province (now called the "Innovation Council"). ARIA also met with the Minister's Expert Panel on Transforming Alberta's Innovation System to discuss options under consideration by the panel.
- ARIA prepared a report and delivered recommendations to the Ministers of Innovation and Advanced Education (IAE) and Health on a proposal to introduce a "Living Lab" for health innovation to Alberta. Alberta Health and Alberta Innovates – Health Solutions are using ARIA's advice to guide the implementation of new collaborative approaches designed to accelerate the transmission introduction of research and innovation into Alberta's health sector.
- Provided preliminary comments on the Alberta Social Innovation Endowment implementation.

### **Connecting Alberta to the Global Innovation Community**

- ARIA members facilitated meetings between Australia and Alberta government representatives on leading edge policy and program delivery ideas, German industry executives and thought leaders on innovation investment opportunities, and the United Kingdom Chief Scientific Advisor and Alberta Innovates corporations on innovation in Alberta's energy sector.

## Building Local Innovation Networks

- ARIA partnered with Innovate Calgary to bring together a cross-section of entrepreneurs and capital providers to get their views on Alberta's innovation environment, hosted a policy leaders' dialogue to understand the implications for Alberta research published by the Council of Canadian Academies on the Canada's innovation strengths and weaknesses, and collaborated with the Alberta Economic Development Authority on a series of company visits to better understand industry innovation needs.

In the year ahead, ARIA looks forward to continuing its work of providing the Government of Alberta with timely and actionable advice that supports positive research and innovation outcomes for the province and makes Alberta more competitive in the global economy. Priority initiatives will include:

- continued support for the implementation of the Innovation Council;
- the delivery of advice on system-level assessment of Alberta's innovation performance and the policies and practices that support greater innovation at the firm level; and
- advice and implementation leadership for the Alberta Social Innovation Endowment; and
- ongoing support to Alberta Health and Alberta Innovates - Health Solutions on the implementation of collaborative health innovation initiatives.

Sincerely,



Marvin Fritzer, PhD, MD  
Chair

## Mandate

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The Alberta Research and Innovation Authority (ARIA) was established by the *Alberta Research and Innovation Act* on January 1, 2010. ARIA's purpose is to provide strategic advice and recommendations to the Minister of Innovation and Advanced Education (IAE) on research and innovation matters.

Consisting of up to twelve national and international members and supported by a secretariat, ARIA works with the Alberta Innovates corporations, publicly funded post-secondary institutions within Campus Alberta, industry, and government to help the Government of Alberta reach its research and innovation goals.

## Core Business

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ARIA provides advice and recommendations related to the research and innovation system in Alberta.

More specifically, ARIA:

- Identifies leading-edge research areas and innovation policies that will support the diversification of Alberta's economy.
- Provides the Minister of IAE with regular reviews and reports on the performance of Alberta's research and innovation system and makes recommendations to increase Alberta's competitiveness.
- Explores, gathers and synthesizes information on best practices from other jurisdictions and utilizes benchmarking strategies to assess the status and progress of Alberta's research and innovation system.
- Identifies emerging global science, research, technology and innovation trends of greatest impact to Alberta.

# Results Reporting

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**ARIA Goal 1:** The Government of Alberta has access to strategic advice on research and innovation.

## Desired Outcomes

- The Government of Alberta is provided with actionable advice based on intelligence derived from national and international research and innovation expertise.
- ARIA is engaged in an active process with the Minister to identify and refine priority areas for ARIA advice and strategic intelligence through direct meetings and stakeholder discussions.

## Priority Initiatives

- 1.1 Address questions posed to ARIA by the Minister of IAE on behalf of the Government of Alberta, decision-makers and research and innovation system stakeholders.
- 1.2 Identify the barriers and opportunities related to the improved performance of the research and innovation system as a key part of recommendations and advice to the Minister.
- 1.3 Develop a proposal for an annual “state of research and innovation in Alberta” report for stakeholders and/or the public.

## Results

### Enhancing the Innovation System

- ARIA prepared a report and delivered recommendations to the Minister in response to a request for advice on the functions and design of a new strategic innovation entity in the province (now labelled the “Innovation Council”). ARIA also met with the Minister’s Expert Panel on Transforming Alberta’s Innovation System to discuss options under consideration by the panel.

### Supporting Innovation in Alberta’s Health and Social Sectors

- ARIA prepared a report and delivered recommendations to the Ministers of IAE and Health on a proposal to introduce a “Living Lab” for health innovation to Alberta. Alberta Health and Alberta Innovates – Health Solutions are using ARIA’s advice to guide the implementation of new collaborative approaches designed to accelerate the transmission of research and innovation into Alberta’s health sector.
- Provided preliminary comments on the Alberta Social innovation Endowment implementation.

### Fostering Private Sector Innovation

- ARIA initiated a study of international best practice in public policies and firm-based practice that lead to strong private sector innovation outcomes. A review of the literature was supplemented by interviews with company representatives in Alberta.

## Assessing the Performance of Alberta's Innovation System

- ARIA undertook an examination of performance assessment for innovation systems as it is practiced internationally, nationally and in Alberta, including current developments in the design of assessment models and indicator selection. ARIA is preparing advice on how to constructively enhance Alberta's existing innovation performance measurement reports.

## Identifying Opportunities

- ARIA convened a group of Deputy Ministers from economic and social ministries and the CEOs of the Alberta Innovates corporations to discuss Alberta's resource development policy challenges and to identify ways in which the Alberta innovation system can address these challenges.

## Performance Measure

	<b>Current Results (2013-14)</b>	<b>Target (2014-15)</b>
Respond to Minister directives and other stakeholder requests for advice.	100% response rate within the timelines required to ensure that ARIA's advice is relevant and made an impact on key policy and implementation decisions.	100% response rate within the timelines required to make an impact on key decisions.
Evaluate ARIA's impact on the Government of Alberta's policy development in research and innovation.	Received positive formal and informal feedback on impact from the Minister and other key stakeholders.  ARIA members completed a yearly self-evaluation in November 2013. The evaluation was used to increase the performance of the authority as a group, as well as enhance individual member effectiveness.	Receive positive and constructive feedback on impact from the Minister and other key stakeholders.  Conduct ARIA yearly self-assessment evaluation.
Collect, evaluate and synthesize a subset of key innovation system performance indicators to support advisory activities.	Provided evidence-based strategic advice to the Minister and other stakeholders on key initiatives, including the Living Lab for Health and the Innovation Council.	Provide evidence-based strategic advice to the Minister and other stakeholders on new areas including social innovation.
Provide advice to the Minister that is relevant to the government's strategic policy direction.	Provided advice on topics of high importance to the Minister of IAE and provided analysis of international best practices and Alberta's specific culture to ensure that ARIA's advice is actionable, including assessing Alberta's innovation performance and supports for private sector innovation.	Provide analysis of international best practices and Alberta's specific culture to ensure that ARIA's advice is actionable.

**ARIA Goal 2:** Alberta’s research and innovation system is an active national and international strategic partner and innovation leader.

## Desired Outcomes

- Alberta is connected to partnering opportunities and best practices for its research and innovation system.

## Priority Initiatives

- 2.1 Link the Government of Alberta to important national and international science, research, technology and innovation developments and organizations.
- 2.2 Support collaboration within the Alberta Innovates system by engaging the private sector, Campus Alberta, government leaders and Albertans in system discussions.

## Results

### Connecting Alberta government representatives with international innovation experts

- Organized meetings between Australia and Alberta representatives to exchange leading edge policy and program delivery ideas and develop deeper technical, economic and investment relationships.
- Arranged and participated in meetings with German industry executives and thought leaders to explore opportunities to enhance investment opportunities between the jurisdictions.
- Participated in meetings with the Alberta Innovates corporations and the United Kingdom’s Chief Scientific Advisor for the Government to discuss innovation opportunities linked to oil and gas development.
- Worked with IAE staff to implement a Canada-Alberta research agreement and identify partnering opportunities between local Alberta firms and a German company.
- Provided comments on the effectiveness and impact of the Alberta Innovates Centres model to determine its direction for the future.
- Provided advice on incubators and competitions for start-up companies to Alberta Innovates.

### Leading Dialogue

- ARIA organized a presentation and discussion with the co-authors of the Council of Canadian Academies report, “Paradox Lost: Explaining Canada’s Research Strengths and Innovation Weakness”, and a number of Alberta’s innovation leaders on implications for federal and provincial innovation policy.



- ARIA members participated in a roundtable discussion on industry innovation needs in Alberta. This event was hosted by Innovate Calgary and participants included venture capitalists, angel investors, industry representatives, commercialization leaders, and academic researchers.
- ARIA organized meetings with Alberta’s innovation system stakeholders to enhance the members’ understanding of post-secondary institutions’ research strategies and facilities, industry approaches to innovation and industry linkages to the innovation system.
- ARIA Executive Committee held stakeholder outreach meetings to explore key research and innovation matters and international partnering opportunities in Alberta.

### Building Networks

- Collaborated with the Alberta Economic Development Authority on a series of visits to companies in an effort to improve the understanding of the innovation characteristics of Alberta companies.
- ARIA continued to build its relationship with national research, innovation and statistical organizations such as the Science, Technology and Innovation Council; Western Economic Diversification; Industry Canada; the Council of Canadian Academies; the Canadian Institute for Advanced Research; and Statistics Canada.

### Performance Measure

	<b>Current Year (2013-14)</b>	<b>Target (2014-15)</b>
Establish Government of Alberta connections with government officials and innovation experts in other jurisdictions.	Organized 14 stakeholder meetings between ARIA members, government officials and innovation experts.	Organize a minimum of 10 stakeholder meetings.
Organize forums and networking opportunities for Alberta’s innovation system stakeholders.	ARIA members participated in four key sessions with stakeholders and senior government officials during the October 2013 Calgary meeting and the May 2014 Edmonton meeting.	Arrange a minimum of two forums / networking events.
Update ARIA public website to inform stakeholders and Albertans of ARIA’s activities and impact.	Added an ARIA member news and activities section to provide updates on members’ activities.  Posted 2013-14 planning and reporting documents and a high-level summary of the member’s face-to-face meetings.	Continue to enhance the ARIA public website in efforts to increase transparency and inform stakeholders of ARIA’s activities.

# Members of the Authority

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## CHAIR

### Marvin Fritzier

Professor of Medicine  
Faculty of Medicine University  
of Calgary

Calgary, Alberta



## VICE CHAIR

### Oryssia Lennie

Former Deputy Minister  
Western Economic  
Diversification Canada

Edmonton, Alberta



## MEMBERS

### Helena Acheson

Head of Division Innovation  
Agency for ICT and Media,  
Baden-Württemberg

Stuttgart, Germany



### Alan Bernstein

President and CEO  
Canadian Institute for Advanced  
Research

Toronto, Ontario



### Florence Gauzy Krieger

Senior Scientific Officer BayFOR

Munich, Germany



### Riikka Heikinheimo

Executive Director  
Academy of Finland

Helsinki, Finland



### Chris Henshall

Consultant

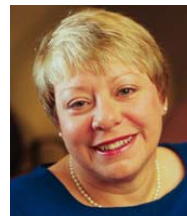
London, United Kingdom



### Laura Kilcrease

Founder & Managing Director  
Triton Ventures

Austin, Texas



### Peter Riddles

Founder & Director  
Vicibio Pty Ltd.

Brisbane, Australia



### Geoffrey Pradella

President and Senior Partner  
Pradella Associates Group Inc.

Calgary, Alberta



### Peter Nicholson

Founding President  
Council of Canadian Academies  
(Retired)

Annapolis Royal, Nova Scotia



### Jason Luan

ARIA MLA Representative

MLA for Calgary-Hawkwood

