Asher Gentle:

All right, we might make a start now. So, hello and welcome everyone for joining the National Industry PhD Program Webinar. My name is Asher Gentle. I'm a director in the Department of Education. I will be presenting today along with Jason Steinwedel from Campus Plus. Just a further reminder for those that came in late to keep your microphone on mute and pop your questions in the chat. Just another thing to note, we will be recording this webinar and we'll make a copy of it available on our website by the end of the week unless there's any technical difficulties. So I might kick it off there, Jason, if you want to move on to the next slide.

So just to start, in the spirit of reconciliation, we would like to acknowledge that traditional custodians of country throughout Australia and their connections to land, sea, and community. We pay our respects to elders past and present and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples here today. For me, I'm speaking from Canberra, so I'd like to pay my respects to the traditional custodians, the Ngunnawal and Ngambri peoples. Next slide.

So I'd like to introduce you to the delivery partners. So the department's brought on some extra capability to support the efficient and effective delivery of the National Industry PhD Program. So firstly, Campus Plus is the lead partner and responsible for the management and delivery of the program on behalf of the Department of Education. They're also the primary contact point for inquiries moving forward. We've also got Science and Technology Australia, or STA, who are responsible for the marketing and communication and Cruxes Innovation, our training partner. They're responsible for delivering the 12-week training program for Industry linked candidates.

So a bit of background on the origins of the program. In early 2022, the Australian government released the University Research Commercialization Action Plan. This plan lays out a comprehensive set of interrelated reforms to this collaboration between universities and industry and to drive commercial returns. The Action Plan includes the creation of three new streams of funding. So the first one there is the Trailblazer Universities initiative. This is a $361.6 million investment to support six universities to supercharge their research translation and commercialization capability. So the six Trailblazer Universities were announced last year and they're starting to gear up their operations now.

The second program there is Australia's Economic Accelerator, a $1.6 billion priority driven fast-fail grant program to support projects aligned with National Research Priorities with higher commercial opportunity. So that program is currently open for 88 seed grants. We have $10 million set aside for possible projects there. That program we're looking to ramp up later on this year once the legislation passes for that program. Next slide please.

The third initiative, which was on that previous slide was Industry PhDs and Fellowships. For this one, we're looking to build a strong research workforce that has the knowledge and skills to strengthen university-industry collaboration, encourage cross sectoral mobility and better translate the university research into commercial outcomes. So the governments will provide $296 million over five years to establish a suite of six industry focused PhD and fellowships programs to be led by the Department of Education, CSIRO and the Australian Research Council.

So these programs will support 1800 Industry PhDs and over 800 Industry Fellowships over 10 years. So the Department of Education is responsible for the National Industry PhD Program, which is streams one and two on your left there. And to compliment the program, CSIRO is also expanding its existing industry PhD program. On the right-hand side, you can see that the ARC has established three new industry fellowships programs to support Early-Career, Mid-Career and Laureate fellows. Okay, now I'll pass on to Jason Steinwedel who's the program director at Campus Plus to talk about the program details and how it all works.

Jason Steinwedel:

Thank you, Asher and hello everybody. I too would like to acknowledge the land from which I'm presenting today. So I'd like to acknowledge the Wathaurong people down here in Geelong. The first thing is, what is an industry PhD? Well, it's a doctoral program that has in its design some form or potential form of industrial application. The National Industry PhD Program sets out to support programs and projects like these and has four broad aims. The first aim is to develop a talented cohort of PhD candidates who can cross between industry and academic settings. It wishes to support industry professionals to develop their research skills and expertise in research so that they can become the next generation of industry research leaders. It wishes to strengthen the innovation and development through greater university and industry collaboration, and obviously it's going to be supporting co-design projects that have been developed in partnership between universities and industries and align with the Government's priorities.

The program streams, the program falls into two key streams, the Industry Linked PhD stream and the Industry Researcher PhD stream. They're best described I suppose, as being identified by who owns the PhD candidate. So in the instance of the Industry Linked PhD stream, that's the university-led side, the university has what it believes is a suitable candidate for a project that it has developed in partnership with an industry partner. On the Industry Researcher side, that is where an industry partner, a company, believes that it has a highly capable professional that they wish to support in undertaking a PhD in partnership with a university under a project that will have applications of benefit to them.

The Industry Linked stream comes with a 12-week training program, as Asher mentioned earlier, and we'll go into a little bit more detail about that. The Industry Researcher stream is the one that is supported by the industry partner or the employer, so they will continue to employ their staff member throughout the course of their PhD. How does the program work? The industry partner and the university together develop a research project that will address or potentially can address some industry needs. It is designed to take part both in the academic setting and in the industry setting. The intent is that the candidates will work across both settings.

In the case of the Industry Linked PhD, it is expected that between 20 and 50% of their time will be spent within the industry setting and in the Industry Researcher stream, it's expected that between 20 and 50% of their time will be in the university setting. The actual amount and times can be negotiated between the partners and it will form part of a collaborative agreement that the two parties reach. Part-time arrangements can be accommodated within the program, out to as far as eight years, and Campus Plus is here to assist in identifying and making introductions between the industry and the university partners.

The program is primarily there to support candidates and through the funding streams that are up on the screen now. So in the Industry Linked stream, the candidate is set to receive a minimum of a $46,000 per annum stipend for a maximum of four years. That stipend's made up of their RTP or similar scholarship, a minimum $10,000 a year top up from the industry partner, plus a $6,000 top up through the Department. On the Industry Linked side, the employer receives a $41,000 a year subsidy for a maximum of four years. That helps them support their employee and maintain their employee's salary through the course of the PhD. Regardless of which stream the program is assisting, whether it be Industry Linked or Industry Researcher, the university involved will receive a $10,000 a year grant from the Government to help support with administrative requirements.

Part of the program for the Industry Linked stream is to provide a package of training, which will be spread across 12-weeks throughout the course of the duration of the PhD project. It is provided by Cruxes Innovations one of our partners in this endeavor and it's based on their Base and Trek training programs. The intent of the programs is to provide the candidate with the skills necessary to make them

a highly capable and highly driven, shall we say, industry focused researcher so that they can drive the collaboration between the industry and the university sectors. The courses will kick off with a two-day face-to-face intensive workshop and then go online from thereafter.

From an eligibility standpoint, a project that is eligible must have potential industry application. Now there are some more details later in the presentation on the selection criteria and we'll get to them. An Industry Linked candidate, so a PhD candidate coming through the university sector, can be either domestic or international. They must be supported by a participating university. The program is targeting new or early commenced PhD candidates and the candidate must be eligible to be awarded a Research Training Program stipend or similar scholarship for the duration of their PhD. An Industry Researcher PhD candidate must be nominated I suppose, or supported I think is the better word, from their employer, and that the employer agrees to participate in the program. The employer would be agreeing to be the industry partner for the duration of the program and the employer is agreeing to support their employee throughout it by maintaining their salary and benefits.

An eligible partner must be an Australian company, so you have to have an ABN or an ACN. You must be undertaking or show that you undertake research and development activities. You must be willing and able to support your candidate, your employee by maintaining their full salary and benefits through the duration of the project. Or if you're a partner on the Industry Linked side, you must be willing to provide a minimum of $10,000 a year stipend top-up to the candidate that is agreed on from yourself and the university. The industry partner is also expected to be able to provide a supervisor to work with the university supervisor for the times that the candidate is on the industry's premises. It's a requirement under the program that a collaborative agreement be established between the university and the industry partner. An example of a collaborative agreement will be made available via the Department's website ahead of the application rounds opening

This year, application rounds, there will be three. Round one is imminent and will open in early March and close in mid-April, giving an intended five weeks for people to get their applications in. Awards will be announced by the end of June, with commencement to take place in the second half of this year. The next round will open in mid-May, closing in late June, be awarded before the end of October with the intent to commence in the first half of 2024. And the third round this year will open in November, close in late December, with the commencement to take place in the second half of 2024.

I'm going to hand back to Asher now to let him talk through the scope and size of the program as well as give some detail on the application process. Over to you Asher.

Asher Gentle:

Excellent, thanks Jason. So in terms of the number of scholarships we have available through the program, we're looking to slowly scale up the program over the next couple of years. So for the first round, which is for candidates commencing second half of this year, we have 15 available for industry Linked and 11 for Industry Researcher. For round two that grows slightly to 24 for Industry Linked and 24 for Industry Researcher, and that's in relation to candidates commencing in the first half of 2024. So round three you can see that set is out at 20 and 20 and round four that's bumped up a little bit to 30 and 30. It's important to note that these scholarship numbers are indicative only and we may adjust rounds and available scholarships depending on the quality of applications in each round and the available budget. The program is ongoing and once fully established we'll be continuing to run application rounds twice a year, offering between 30 and 35 scholarships for both the Industry Linked and Industry Researcher streams for each round. Next slide please.

So applications for the program are expected to open in early March. Universities will be responsible for submitting applications on behalf of the industry partner and prospective PhD candidate. This applies to

both the Industry Linked and Industry Researcher streams. So applications will need to be made through the existing Department scholarship platform, ISEO, some universities may already be familiar with this system for other government scholarships such as the New Colombo Plan. Universities have nominated a graduate research liaison officer, or GRLO, to co coordinate applications within a university. We'll make a list of these liaison officers available shortly to ensure that university and industry partners know who to contact regarding applications, but broadly it's the role of the GRLO to work with faculty members to develop the application and submit it. However, if you encounter any problems with ISEO in relation to lodging an application or the process in general, please don't hesitate to reach out to either the Department or Campus Plus. We'll have our contact details available on the final slide. Next slide please, Jason.

So we're accepting applications under the program for either single projects or multiple based projects such as doctoral training centers. In the application form, you'll need to identify which stream you're applying for and whether it's a single or multiple based project. However, please note that the guidelines do provide an objective of 30% maximum of places for multiple based projects to ensure an appropriate balance within the program. In terms of what to expect on the application form, we'll be collecting a range of information on the project details relating to what the project is and the project's broader objectives. So this will include information such as field of research, project description, aims and design, a rough timeline, and some of the proposed IP arrangements. Applications will also need to provide some information on industry partners, this includes the sector, and most importantly we're looking for a strong commitment from each industry partner to support the PhD candidate for the full duration of the program.

Other information being collected will be standard university information such as primary contact and as the application form and the process in general is around assessing projects rather than PhD candidates themselves, we've tried to keep data collection through that form to a minimum for PhD candidates. Though we do ask some information on what is the ideal target candidate, for instances where a candidate has not already been identified and we do accept either. Either you've already got someone identified or you haven't, and that can be sought after the application process. And then just to finish this slide, there's also some information around the selection criteria, which I'll outline on the next slide.

So we're broadly expecting that the process will be highly competitive for this scholarship round and to ensure a robust selection process an independent assessment committee will be established. We're still in the process of finalizing details for this committee, however, our expectation is that it'll be composed of representatives from both universities and industry with an independent chair. So the committee will make their assessments based on the selection criteria outlined in the program guidelines, which are also specified on the slide there. So 50% is for Engagement between University and Industry Partner, 30% is for Research, Feasibility and Strategic Alignment, 10% for Project Impact, and 10% for Capacity, Capability and Resources to support the development of PhD candidates. There'll be a little bit of extra information in the application form to tease out those criteria a little bit.

So once the committee undertakes their process, a list of recommended projects, will be provided to the Department for final sign off. And as with this information, all of the program details are broadly available in the program guidelines which are published on the Department's website and we'll have a link to those at the end of the slide. So that finishes up our deck for today. So we have the rest of the time for questions and answers. So I'm going to ask Holly Bell from Campus Plus to help facilitate the session and moderate some of those questions and Jason and I will answer as best we can.

Hollie Bell:

Thanks Asher. There's been quite a few questions and any that haven't been answered and seem to be recurringly popular, we'll have all those in an FAQ on the website shortly. So a lot of their questions seem to be how far into your PhD is considered early and is one to 2.5 years into your candidature, is that too late? So can you give a little description on what's still eligible?

Jason Steinwedel:

I'll take that Asher, but feel free to jump in. The intent of the program really is very early. So we are looking primarily at candidates in the first 12 months or those who are yet to commence. Asher, do you want to add anything further to that?

Asher Gentle:

Yeah, I'd just say that the program guidelines don't limit when that barrier takes place, but we want the projects to be co-designed between university and industry and there comes a point during the PhD where that becomes very hard to have that sort of influence. So that's why we're mostly focused on new-end or early-end connecting PhDs, but that doesn't limit later on PhDs.

Hollie Bell:

Okay, thank you. And here I'll give you two quick questions together. Can the industry partner be a non-for-profit and can it be a company that's a spin out from a university incubator?

Jason Steinwedel:

Okay, I'll grab that one. So as long as the company is a registered company, it has an ABN or an ACN, it is an eligible company under the program. So the answer to those questions is yes to both. If the not-for-profit has an ABN or an ACN and yes, if the spin-out has its own ABN or ACN.

Hollie Bell:

Thank you. Okay, next question from Jay Parsons. Is Campus Plus going to organize panels to assess applications?

Jason Steinwedel:

Yes. As Asher mentioned, in part of the application process, an independent assessment committee will be formed. Campus Plus is responsible for bringing the committee together and managing it. We will not be sitting on the committee, so it is at arm's length from us. The assessment criteria, which is within the guidelines, will be the guidance for that committee and we can provide if anybody wants to have a little bit more in depth information about how the committee is formed, the sort of membership, that will all be published in due course.

Hollie Bell:

Thank you. And question from DRA072, how do you see all industry PhD programs working together to source students, industry and university partners?

Jason Steinwedel:

Asher, can I hand that one over to you?

Asher Gentle:

Yeah, we're working very closely with CSRIO on their industry PhD program to ensure that we are working collaboratively and not competitively. There's also other government programs out there as part of the government, readily engaging with other government organizations to ensure that it's all aligned.

Hollie Bell:

Thank you. And this one's for you as well, Asher. From Mitch, does the RTP scholarship for Industry Linked come from the university's existing RTP allocation or is this from an additional RTP place?

Asher Gentle:

There's no additional funding for the RTP components, so universities will need to use their existing pool.

Hollie Bell:

Thank you. And question from Ben, when applying for the National Industry PhD program, do we need to provide evidence that the candidate or potential candidate has secured an RTP scholarship?

Asher Gentle:

No, that can be done after the fact, so we're just assessing the projects during the application phase. Then universities will have a period of time once they're advised of the successful project to identify a candidate and to undertake their own scholarship processes. I appreciate that this first process is a little bit short, given the late rollout of the program, but ideally from round two onwards universities will have a few months to go about sourcing candidates and the same for industry partners for the Industry Researcher stream.

Hollie Bell:

Thank you. I think that this might have been covered in the webinar, but Jason, what is the priority or selection criteria?

Jason Steinwedel:

The easiest thing to do might be to go back to the slide and I'll put that particular slide back up again there. So again, as Asher outlined, I mean this is a really great question and it reinforces how critical reading in depth the guidelines are going to be. So the selection is going to be based on these four elements. 50% is focused on the *Engagement between the University and the Industry Partner* and all the elements around that engagement, 30% weighting will be given to the *Feasibility and Strategic Alignment of the Research*, 10% for *Impact* and 10% for *Capacity and Capability*. The guidelines have a series of advisory notes under each of these four elements, so I would really recommend everybody go to the Department of Education's website if they haven't already done and grab a copy of the guidelines off there. You can download it either in Word or PDF, so download it and become familiar with those four elements.

Hollie Bell:

Thank you. We've still got lots of questions. From Lars, in case of stream two, the Industry Researcher stream, does the PhD student have to pay the PhD fee to the university or will the fee be covered by the program or does the university need to waive the fee?

Asher Gentle:

It's required that all students within the program receive an RTP fees offset or equivalent, which basically means that PhD candidates within the program should not be charged fees.

Hollie Bell:

Thank you. From Hamza, is there a website where the potential industry employers will post for hiring?

Jason Steinwedel:

Not at this stage right now. What we are doing is we've been gathering the intent of both universities and industry partners wanting to participate. Through the work of Campus Plus we will be doing some filtering, if you will, to identify subject alignment and be looking to make introductions that way.

Hollie Bell:

Thank you. So I've got, from Paul, he'd like to know how should we convince an employer that this is a beneficial program for them to support?

Jason Steinwedel:

That's a really good question, Paul. Look, the intent of this program and other industry PhD programs is to be able to showcase the benefit that the depth of thinking and the depth of knowledge that comes through a PhD study. So we can certainly, and from Campus Plus, we can certainly get involved in conversations to help explain the intent of the program to employers, and happy to do so. But one of the key foundations of this program is to assist industry in understanding how the knowledge that a PhD, somebody with a qualification in PhD, the depth of knowledge that they can bring to their organization and how they can give them an edge in the marketplace, so to speak. If you come through the industryphd@campusplus.com.au website, which is up on the screen, drop us a note, we are more than happy to have a conversation with you offline about what you want to understand in a little bit more depth and assist however we can.

Hollie Bell:

Thank you. And question from, so does the program include international industry partners overseas or only in Australia?

Jason Steinwedel:

Only in Australia. To be eligible, an industry partner must be an Australian registered company, so it has to have an Australian Business Number or an Australian Company Number.

Hollie Bell:

Thank you.

Asher Gentle:

I'll just clarify that one. They can be an international company, they just need to have a presence in Australia.

Hollie Bell:

Okay. And Pat would like to know is there a template for the industry partner letter of intent and also a template for all the other streams as well?

Jason Steinwedel:

I'm sorry Holly, I missed that question.

Hollie Bell:

Is there a template for the industry partner letter of intent?

Asher Gentle:

Yep. We'll be providing a template in the application portal.

Hollie Bell:

Thank you. And for Industry Researcher stream, are they also limited to the six universities to partner with? If so, which six?

Asher Gentle:

Sorry, I think they must have confused the programs. Yeah, the Trailblazer's Initiative with the six universities is a separate program. This program is not limited to those six universities, but rather it's limited to universities listed on Table A and B in the Higher Education Support Act, which is pretty much every university in Australia, or close to it.

Hollie Bell:

Very good. And excellent question from Jafaar, is the Department of Defence considered an industry partner?

Asher Gentle:

Yes. The definition is broad enough that it's any organization with an ABN that does R&D. So that means yes, and other government agencies can be considered industry partners. I should just note that one of the strategic alignment criteria does mention that for-profit companies is an extra consideration, so there may be some preference for for-profit organizations but that doesn't exclude eligibility for government agencies and not-for-profits.

Hollie Bell:

Okay. Asher, it's probably not a question you can answer right now, but if you could advise them who would be the best person to ask on this. Will home affairs expedite visas for identified international PhD candidates and we are experiencing many students getting slow or no response to HDR visa applications?

Asher Gentle:

I think we might have to talk to that person separately, but broadly I would just say that we're reasonably flexible in the program. If there's delays in a PhD candidate commencing their studies, that doesn't mean we're just going to walk away. We're happy to work with each individual university to ensure that that student can commence when they can, and I'm also happy to chase that with Home Affairs if there's some sort of process, I'm just not aware of anything currently.

Hollie Bell:

Okay. Evangeline would like to know if I'm a already on an industry doctorate program, IDP, at an institution, how would transferring into the National Industry PhD Program be beneficial for me? Would there be a difference in recognition when I'm on an institution based accredited doctorate program versus the national initiative?

Jason Steinwedel:

I just want to see if I understand the question. So the question is that the individual is already on one of the other industry PhD programs and is looking to transfer across to this one?

Hollie Bell:

Yes.

Jason Steinwedel:

Yeah.

Hollie Bell:

Okay. Is there any benefit in doing that?

Jason Steinwedel:

Look, without knowing exactly which program they're already on, it's hard to identify the specific benefits. but I'll say that the National Industry PhD Program is focused on the candidate. If you're coming through the Industry Linked stream, it increases the available stipend to a minimum $46,000 a year to make it a little bit easier on them. And if you're coming from the industry side, so you're an industry employee, the Industry Researcher side, your employer gets a subsidy to help offset supporting you, if you will, in doing it. So they're probably the key benefits here from a financial standpoint, but without actually knowing what they're currently on, it's a bit hard to talk around specifics. Again, I would encourage that person to come through the industryphd@campusplus.com.au email address and willing endeavor to have a conversation and see if we can answer those questions offline.

Hollie Bell:

Thank you. And can you just give everybody a reminder where the list of university graduate research liaison officers will be held?

Jason Steinwedel:

Yeah, I believe, Asher, that'll go up as a link on the DOE website in due course once everybody has finalised. So yeah, keep an eye on the Department of Education's website, that's the link down the bottom of that slide that's currently up there.

Hollie Bell:

Thank you and Mark would like to know how will the independent assessment committee be made up? Will experts be fielded from across all areas to ensure that for instance, specialists from STEM are not evaluating applications from people in the creative industries?

Jason Steinwedel:

Yeah, great question. The intent of the IAC is that you would have, as Asher said, an industry representative, university representative and an independent chair. We would be looking to have a mixture of content experts so that you have people that understand the technology or the research stream reviewing stuff they understand about. There would be somebody who would be there outside of that stream, more as moderation, and of course an industry partner. So that's sort of broadly what it's going to look at. We are not going to ask people that don't necessarily know anything about the field to review it, there'll be a cross section of the community involved in the IACs.

Hollie Bell:

Thank you.

Jason Steinwedel:

More detail will be made available closer to application time.

Hollie Bell:

Excellent. So Jared would like to know, please explain how IP will be split and licensed and sold, etcetera between Uni, researcher and the company. So if you could just let him know who to consult in regards to that.

Jason Steinwedel:

Okay. The intent of collaborative agreement is to outline a position that both the industry partner and the university are comfortable with as far as IP ownership, licensing, splitting, whatever. As a starting point, an example of a collaborative agreement that goes into has some guidance on IP split will be made available ahead of the application process. But I would also, if you're in a university, I would suggest you go back to your technology transfer officers and have a conversation with them around expectations of IP when working in collaboration with industry, so make use of your technology transfer officers in your university, they can certainly help. If you're coming from an industry side, have a very open and honest conversation about your expectations with your chosen university partner, and it comes down to not mandating as such, but both partners working on what they believe is going to be fair and equitable for all.

Hollie Bell:

Thank you. And we have a very optimistic person here, Jay Butler. He or she would like to know can they complete their PhD within one or two years instead of the standard three? Is that still eligible for the program?

Jason Steinwedel:

Oh, I'm going to be honest, I'm not a hundred percent sure whether it's up to us to answer whether you can actually fast track your PhD, that really comes down to the university that you're partnering with, but the program supports you on a per annum basis. So from a minimum of three years full-time to a maximum four years full-time, and then out to a maximum of eight years part-time with the funding prorated accordingly. So I don't know whether that answers your question or not and I'm not sure we can answer that question to be honest with you.

Hollie Bell:

All right, so Shanila would like to know, if she's an applicant, do we need to contact the advisor first? So I'm assuming she's a student. What actually do we need to do to be a candidate?

Jason Steinwedel:

So yes, if you're a candidate or if you're a prospective candidate, you need to work through your supervisor at the university if you're coming through the university. Or if you are coming through the Industry Researcher pathway, you need to make sure that you've got your employer on board and then work back through your supervisor, because it is going to be up to the universities to bring these applications together and process them through the ISEO portal as Asher was talking about. I think we're coming very close to the end of our allotted time, aren't we, Holly?

Hollie Bell:

Yeah, most of the questions are very, very similar to what's already been asked, but we'll go through them at the end and if any of them are sort of standouts and be beneficial to all the people on the whole, we'll put that in the FAQ.

Jason Steinwedel:

Okay, look, I might just take jump in and thank everybody for their time today to sit and listen to this. We hope it's been informative. Campus Plus is continuing to have conversations with anybody who's expressing interest in the program or wants to know more. Up on the screen there are pathways that you can get in contact with us, all pathways at the end of the day, will lead back to the team here at Campus Plus where we will endeavor to be in contact very, very quickly either via email or if it's more complex, we tend to set up a virtual chat and have a bit of a chat to see if we could understand where you're coming from. So I'll say thank you to all. I'll say thank you to Asher and Holly and the great Campus Plus team who are sitting behind all of this and look forward to hearing more from you all and looking forward to applications rolling in when the date is announced in the very near future. Asher, I'll let you finish off.

Asher Gentle:

Thanks Jason. I'll just echo that thanks and just encourage people to reach out. As Jason said, happy to chat with people anytime. Thanks.