

ACERE Industry Forum 2026

From Knowledge to Impact: Designing Pathways that Actually Work

Friday 13 February | 1:00–5:30pm

Location: University of Sydney | **Venue:** TBA

A practice-facing forum bringing together academics, intermediaries, academic entrepreneurs, venture builders, and policy leaders to explore **what really enables research-driven ideas to translate into ventures and impact**.

This is **not** just a pitch event or a showcase of polished success stories.

It is a candid, interactive conversation focused on **early-stage realities, trade-offs, and evidence-based lessons** from Australia and internationally.

Why Attend?

- Gain **candid, experience-based insights** into why research ideas stall — and what helps them progress
- Learn from **Australian and international evidence** on deep science/deep tech commercialisation and ecosystem design
- Engage in **interactive discussions and shared learning**
- Connect with **academics, intermediaries, academic entrepreneurs, and policy leaders** shaping future pathways

Program at a Glance

Time	Session
1:00–1:15	Arrival & Networking
1:15–1:25	Forum Welcome & Framing <i>Associate Professor Krithika Randhawa, ACERE Co-Chair & Industry Forum Convenor, University of Sydney</i>
1:25–1:40	Official Welcome from the University <i>Professor Antoine van Oijen, Interim Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research Enterprise), University of Sydney</i>
1:40–2:50	THEME 1 – From Research to Translation: Where Promising Ideas Stall <i>A candid look at early-stage translation challenges, including capability gaps, researcher readiness, deep-science constraints, and the realities of funding and policy instrument that shape what makes it through translation — and what doesn't.</i> Lightning perspectives: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Ellen Gorrisen, Australia's Economic Accelerator</i>• <i>Leong Mar, Knowledge Commercialisation Australasia & University of Sydney</i>• <i>Imche Veiga, Sydney Knowledge Hub</i>• <i>Sydney Nano Academic Entrepreneur, Sydney Nano</i> Moderated discussion and audience Q&A: <i>Unpacking early-stage friction, incentives, and pre-venture deep science realities</i>
2:50–3:00	Break

Time	Session
	THEME 2 – From Translation to Venture: Founder Readiness, Infrastructure & Real Constraints Founder Reality Check: <i>Edda Hamar & Kai Man Yuen, Incubate</i> – What founders consistently misunderstand at the translation-to-venture stage, and which capabilities and frameworks actually help.
3:00–4:00	Interactive discussions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Founder readiness & market validation • Deep-tech timelines, infrastructure & credibility • Translation-to-venture handoffs • Early customers, partners & capital (non-)VC access Whole-room synthesis: Surfacing patterns, system-level frictions, and tensions between academic legitimacy and venture expectations.
4:00–4:10	Break
	THEME 3 – Evidence, Enablers & Ecosystem Learning: What Actually Changes Outcomes <i>Drawing on insights across the Australia’s Economic Accelerator, CSIRO, venture capital, and deep-tech startups, alongside German cases (ARENA2036 InnovationCampus Future Mobility), this session examines how policy and collaborative university–industry models work in practice — and why similar interventions lead to very different outcomes over time.</i>
4:10–5:00	Paired provocations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Ellen Gorrisen, Australia’s Economic Accelerator</i> • <i>Ferran Giones, University of Stuttgart</i> Moderated dialogue and audience Q&A: <i>What evidence suggests we should stop doing, how evaluation reshapes pathway design, and what we would change if redesigning research-to-impact pathways today.</i>
5:00–5:30	Reflections & Informal Networking

Speaker Bios (Alphabetical Order)



Edda Hamar *Program Manager, Incubate, University of Sydney*

Edda Hamar is a Program Manager at Incubate, where she supports early-stage founders as they navigate the transition from ideas to startups. She has founded and led ventures across culture-tech and sustainable fashion, including Harmonic, Undress Runways, and Lána. A UN Young Leader for the SDGs and a Forbes 30 Under 30 Asia honouree, Edda brings hands-on experience in early venture formation, founder capability-building, and designing startups that combine commercial discipline with social impact.



Ferran Giones *Deputy Head, Institute of Entrepreneurship and Innovation Science, University of Stuttgart*

Ferran Giones is Deputy Head of the Institute of Entrepreneurship and Innovation Science at the University of Stuttgart and Associate Professor II at Nord University, Norway. His research focuses on technology entrepreneurship, industry emergence, and entrepreneurial strategy, with particular attention to how technological change activates entrepreneurial activity and shapes new markets. Ferran brings insights from German ecosystem initiatives such as ARENA2036 and ICM, informed by both academic research, policy engagement and industry-engaged work.



Ellen Gorrison *Lead Priority Manager, Australia's Economic Accelerator (AEA)*

Ellen Gorrison has more than 25 years' experience across strategy, venture capital, and technology commercialisation. She is Lead Priority Manager at Australia's Economic Accelerator, a \$1.6 billion national program supporting the commercialisation of university research. Previously, Ellen led commercialisation at CSIRO, served as Investment Director at IP Group Australia, and held senior roles in deep-tech startups including Jovian Tech and HB11 Energy. She brings extensive experience spanning academia, industry, government, and venture ecosystems, with a strong focus on early-stage deep-tech translation.



Leong Mar *Head of Commercialisation, University of Sydney / Board Member, Knowledge Commercialisation Australasia*

Leong Mar is an accomplished commercialisation leader with over 25 years' experience across research organisations, deep-tech startups, and global science corporations. He has led technology translation, intellectual property management, venture creation, and capital raising across multiple sectors. Leong is a founding board director of CSIRO spin-out Chrysos and brings deep, hands-on experience bridging research, industry, and investment to deliver societal, environmental, and economic impact through successful research commercialisation.



Krithika Randhawa *Associate Professor of Strategy, Innovation & Entrepreneurship, University of Sydney Business School*

Krithika Randhawa is Associate Professor of Strategy, Innovation and Entrepreneurship and ARC Fellow at the University of Sydney Business School. Her research examines how emerging technologies are commercialised through open innovation, digital platforms, and ecosystems. She has published in leading journals and works closely with industry and government partners including Stryker, IoT Alliance Australia, Australian Sports Technology Network, Australian and international public agencies. Krithika holds leadership roles in the Australian Centre for Entrepreneurship Research and Education, Innovation and Product Development Management, and Europea Academy of Management.



Professor van Oijen, *Interim Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research Enterprise), University of Sydney*

Professor van Oijen has led research groups at Harvard Medical School (USA), the University of Groningen (Netherlands), and the University of Wollongong (Australia). He is a former ARC Laureate Fellow and a current NHMRC Leadership Fellow. His research focuses on DNA replication and repair, combining advanced imaging with molecular biophysics. In Wollongong he founded Molecular Horizons, a molecular life sciences institute, and led the establishment of major core facilities. At the University of Sydney, he is the Interim Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research Enterprise) and leads the Faculty of Medicine and Health's research portfolio and strategic objectives.



Imche Veiga *Director, Sydney Knowledge Hub, University of Sydney*

Imche Veiga has an unusual set of experiences that spans the complex journey technology takes from laboratory to market. She has been a founder, a venture capital fund manager, and a research scientist. She has authored government policy on entrepreneurship, served on R&D grant funding committees, and led a national not-for-profit. As Director of the Sydney Knowledge Hub, the startup incubator on campus, she puts these experiences to work with focus on bringing real research-based, market-driven impact to life.



Kai Man Yuen *Accelerator Program Manager, Incubate, University of Sydney*

Kai Man Yuen is Accelerator Program Manager at Incubate, the award-winning startup program at the University of Sydney. With a background spanning science and business, he co-founded SGNZ (Science Grad New Zealand) to support science graduates in navigating career pathways beyond academia. Kai is a strong advocate for applying clear frameworks, structured decision-making, and practical tools at the earliest stages of the entrepreneurial journey, particularly for research-led founders translating complex technologies into viable ventures.