

# NIIN

National Industry Innovation Network

## NIIN at a Glance



Skills + Talent  
Development



Innovation  
Central Network



Cyber + Health  
Alliances



Research  
Chair Program



Industry  
Alumni Program

## Message from the NIIN Chair

Collaboration between industry and universities is critical to Australia's economic prosperity and leadership in digital transformation. The NIIN represents a bold and transformative approach, changing the way we forge partnerships to solve national challenges and deliver lasting societal and economic benefits.

With over 20 years of experience in senior leadership roles within higher education—including positions as Dean, Pro-Vice Chancellor, Deputy Vice Chancellor, Provost, and Vice Chancellor—I have witnessed firsthand the transformative power of strategic partnerships. My involvement in significant state and federal government advisory positions, leading Universities Australia as its Chair from 2021 to 2023 and, most recently, guiding the University of Wollongong through major transformation as Vice Chancellor, has reinforced my commitment to uniting diverse sectors to create meaningful impact.

Since becoming NIIN's inaugural Chair in March 2025, I've been honoured to drive this vision. Together, we're strengthening Australia's digital capability, reshaping the innovation landscape, and strengthening our resilience and prosperity. I'm excited to contribute to this journey and keep working with our partners to realise NIIN's extraordinary potential.

**John Dewar**  
NIIN CHAIR



## The purpose of the NIIN

I have spent the past decade promoting the importance of university-industry collaboration in helping Australia accelerate digital innovation and improve its economic resilience. Digital innovation has a crucial role to play given it impacts all industries, companies large and small, and has the potential to deliver both immediate and long-term economic benefits. The risks of not doing digital innovation are too great to ignore.

The NIIN was established to bring industry, academia, and government together in a collaborative vehicle capable of applying innovation at scale to Australia's most pressing industry challenges and broader economic and societal priorities. It is industry-led collaboration together with universities, united by a common goal: to increase the pace, scale, and impact from digital innovation across the nation. Cisco is the networks industry anchor, committed to reshaping how university collaboration drives meaningful outcomes in Australia. Our capacity to be competitive, productive and resilient is underpinned by effective and efficient industry-university collaboration.

We are also active in anticipating and responding to skill shortages and talent development. By providing opportunities for students to work with us on industry projects, we are not only helping industry solve problems, but we are also helping to prepare students for the jobs of the future.

The NIIN is only just getting started. We are looking forward to innovating differently and keeping industry at the centre of everything we do.

### **Reg Johnson (NIIN Founder)**

**DIRECTOR, EDUCATION & STRATEGIC INDUSTRIES,  
CISCO ANZ**



# About the NIIN

## Rationale and vision for NIIN

The NIIN is a collective of universities and companies driven by one goal: to leverage the power of digital to create benefit for Australia.

Despite Australia's relatively high standing in science and research performance, Australia ranks last among OECD nations for industry-research collaboration. A major challenge for Australia is that the pathways for forming relationships necessary for successful industry-research collaboration are limited and inefficient.

Triple-helix collaboration between industry, universities and government is critical to capturing and distilling benefits from innovation. Collaboration accelerates knowledge spill over, ensures that all levers are being applied to innovation, and creates alignment between the supply of and demand for applied research.

But positive intent is not sufficient; Australia needs practical, efficient and accessible mechanisms to drive digital innovation at scale.

The NIIN represents a digital innovation ecosystem comprising companies (vendors and end user customers) and universities. Since 2020, we have evolved to become one of the largest industry-university innovation networks in Australia. We have also begun building ties with regional and global partners that can supply ideas, talent and access to networks that help us lift Australia's innovation performance while simultaneously supporting the broader region we live in.

1. OECD. 'Business innovation statistics and indicators (2021)'. OECD website, last accessed 24 November 2023

2. Department of Industry, Science and Resources. 'Barriers to collaboration and commercialisation'. 27 November 2023.



By 2027, our goal is to be recognised as:

- 1 Australia's leading industry-led digital innovation network
- 2 A scalable, repeatable model for delivering industry and student outcomes
- 3 A practical, affordable mechanism for industry to change practices, business and operating models
- 4 A regionally and globally-connected innovation ecosystem
- 5 Delivering on Australia's digital, industry and innovation policy commitments
- 6 A trusted source of digital skills that improve Australia's cyber resilience and help manage key market transitions

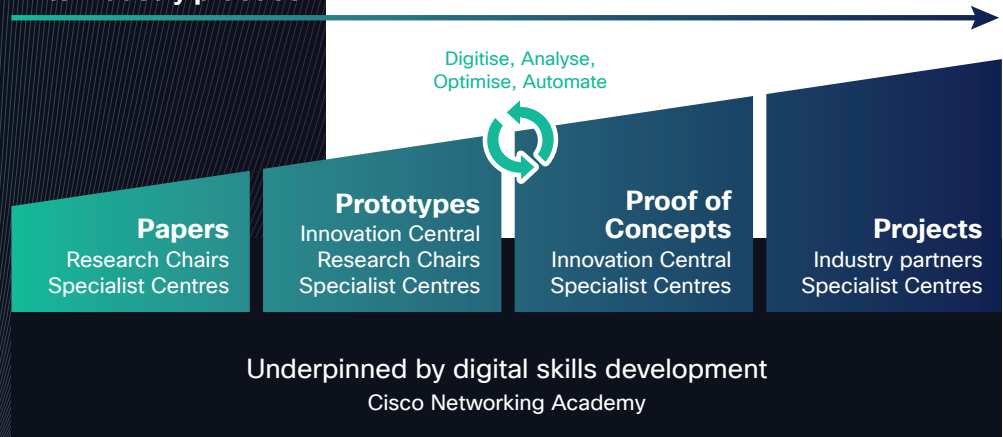
# NIIN's point of difference

The NIIN focuses on solving problems of national significance through collaboration at a number of levels. What differentiates the NIIN from other models is its focus on creating industry-led large-scale digital solutions that can change practice, business and operating models. The model is anchored in thought leadership (papers), supports rapid innovation in various forms and culminates in large-scale projects.

The entire process is underpinned by a focus on digital skills that are required for Australia to maximise value from technology.

## How NIIN supports societal and economic impact

### Translating research into industry practice



# NIIN Programs and Initiatives



## Strategic Partnerships

Partnerships are the heart of the NIIN. Staffed with university experts working with industry to pool assets and expertise, including research, administration, IT and teaching, all with matched funding commitments. Areas of current focus include the Trailblazer Program, advanced manufacturing, defence and healthcare.



## Specialised Centres

A number of specialist centres have been established at partner universities. Typically they are grounded in either a specific technology or an industry application. The specialist centres currently cover domains such as digital health, IoT, next generation AI, and future networks.



## Skills & Talent Development

Training hubs that complement the more than 100 Cisco Networking Academy sites already operating across Australia / New Zealand and provide opportunities for students to gain practical experience through dedicated projects and events.



## Innovation Central Network

An Australia-wide network of Innovation Central facilities located on university campuses, focused on building new models for industry–university collaboration at scale. Here, industry partners can move beyond discussing possibilities to prototyping and developing solutions, supported by talented staff, students and expert collaborators. Each Innovation Central is staffed with dedicated Alliance Managers who provide hands-on project management and coordination.



## Cyber & Health Alliances

The NIIN is accelerating progress in health and cyber security domains, priority areas for Australia. Two alliances have been formed to create natural coalitions around strategically important topics: The NIIN Health Alliance and the NIIN Cyber Security Alliance



## Research Chairs

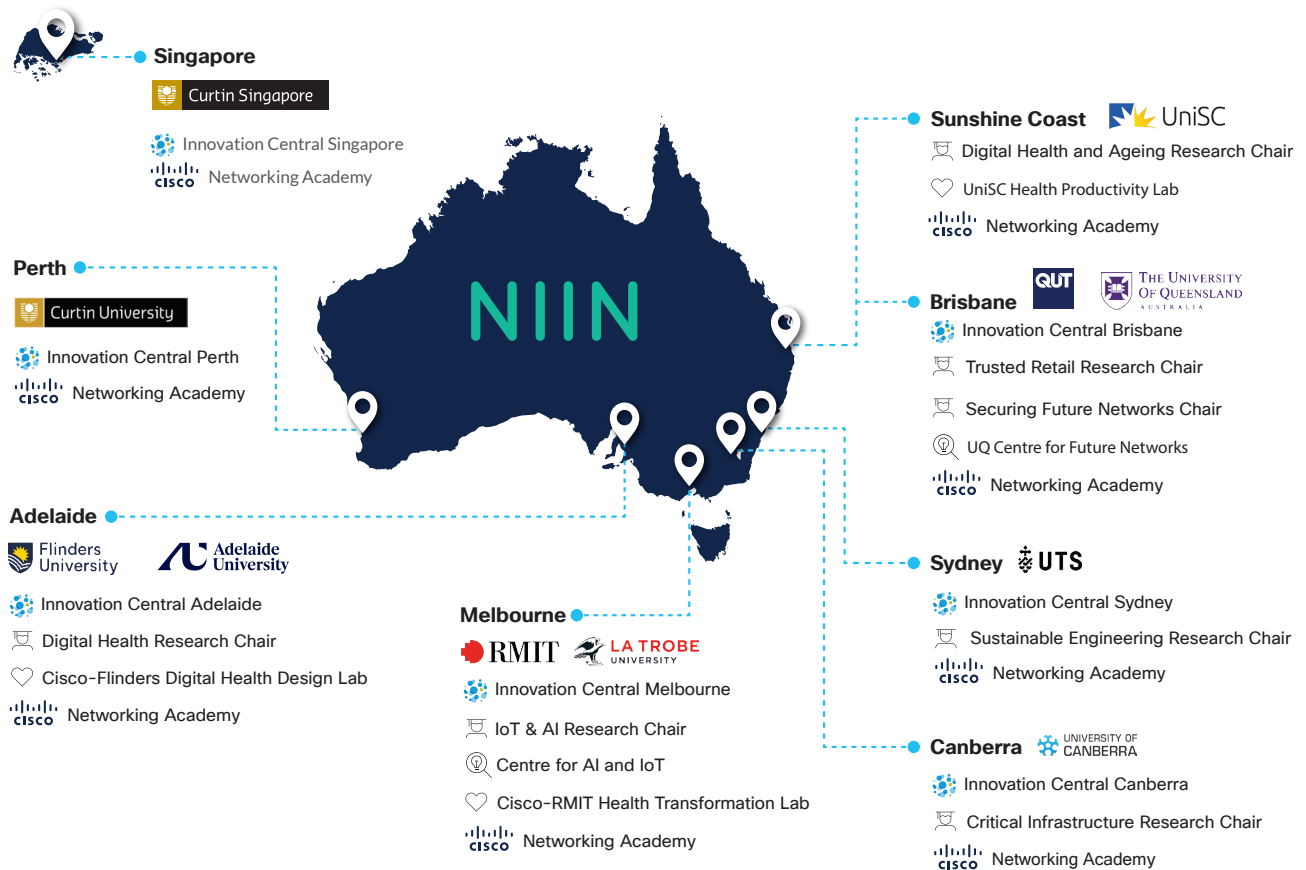
Research Chairs are provided with early access to next-generation technologies to pursue leading-edge innovations. Research Chairs have been established at six universities in the areas of Digital Health, IoT & AI, Critical Infrastructure, Next Generation AI, Retail & Logistics and Digital Health & Ageing.



## Industry Alumni Program

Designed to extend Cisco's engagement within the NIIN, the program leverages the expertise of former Cisco engineers and business leaders. The alumni act as a vital link between academia and industry, ensuring that Cisco's intellectual property, market influence, and domain expertise remain deeply embedded in NIIN projects.

# NIIN partner ecosystem



Since its launch in 2020, the NIIN has delivered:

<p><b>350+</b> INDUSTRY PROJECTS</p>	<p><b>190+</b> INDUSTRY EVENTS</p>	<p><b>\$550M</b> ATTRACTED IN FUNDING (government &amp; co-investment, including Trailblazer)</p>
<p><b>1,500+</b> CLIENT ENGAGEMENTS</p>		
<p><b>200+</b> COLLABORATORS</p>	<p><b>3,000+</b> ENGAGED STUDENTS</p>	<p><b>150+</b> COLLABORATIVE WORKSHOPS</p>

# NIIN Operating Model

## NIIN Operating Model Structure

### NIIN ADVISORY COUNCIL

#### Strategic Participation

Provide expertise to ensure well-informed and aligned decisions.

#### Governance and Accountability

Uphold transparency, equity, and accountability.

#### Advocacy and Representation

Act as ambassadors for NIIN, including fostering connections where possible.

#### Preparation and Engagement

Review materials ahead of meetings to enable effective decision-making.

### NIIN LEADERSHIP

#### Operational Execution

Deliver projects efficiently to meet Council objectives.

#### Implementation of Council Recommendations

Turn strategic guidance into actionable plans.

#### Stakeholder Coordination

Liaise with partners to maintain collaboration and secure resources.

#### Performance Monitoring

Track outcomes and report progress to the Council.

### ADVISORY COUNCIL SECRETARIAT

#### Administrative Support

Prepare agendas, materials, and action plans.

#### Documentation and Reporting

Record minutes and track Council recommendations.

#### Operational Coordination

Manage logistics and communication with members.



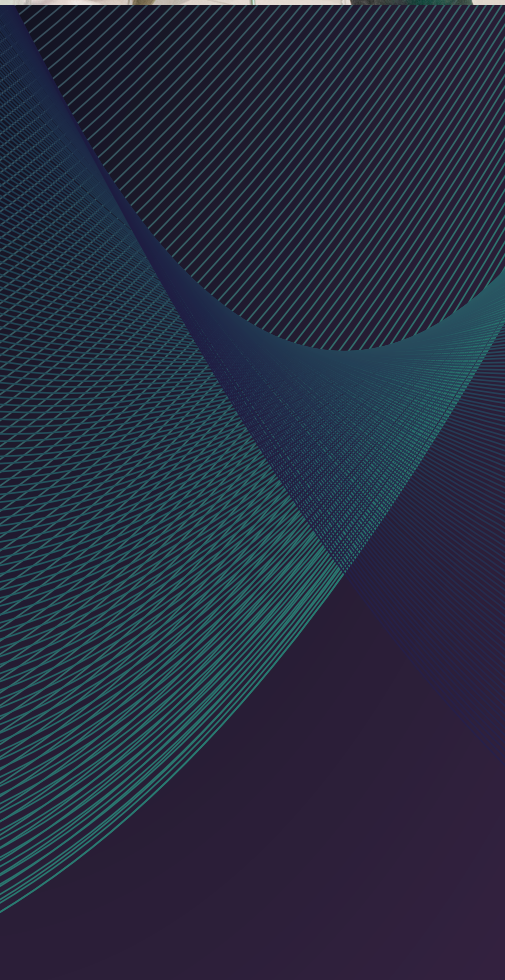
### NIIN QUARTERLY OPERATIONAL REPORTING AND GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

Research Chair Program  
Advisory Committee

Innovation Central Network  
Advisory Committee

NIIN Health Alliance  
Advisory Committee

NIIN Cyber Alliance  
Advisory Committee



## NIIN Advisory Committee Positions

### NIIN RESEARCH CHAIR ADVISORY COMMITTEE

**Prof Ross Young** | Advisory Committee Chair | DVCR, UniSC

**Prof Trish Williams** | University Representative | Flinders University

**Andrew McLean** | Industry Representative | Professor of Practice, UTS /  
ex Managing Director, Intel ANZ

**Reg Johnson** | NIIN Director | Director, Education & Strategic Industries, Cisco ANZ

Industry position (TBC)

University position (TBC)

### NIIN CYBER ALLIANCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

**Prof Anton Middelberg** | Advisory Committee Chair | DVCR, University of Adelaide

**Prof Ryan Ko** | University Representative | University of Queensland

**Prof Olaf Maennel** | University Representative | University of Adelaide

**Shainal Kavar** | University Representative | La Trobe University

**Deniz Molokov** | Industry Representative | Downer

**Prof Frank den Hartog** | University Representative | University of Canberra

**Helen Patton** | Cisco Representative | International

**Matt Carling** | Cisco Representative | Australia

### NIIN HEALTH ALLIANCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

**Prof Vishal Kishore** | Advisory Committee Chair | Director, RMIT Health  
Transformation Lab

**A/Prof Alison Craswell** | University Representative | UniSC

**Rob de Nicolo** | Industry Representative | former Director of Systems Engineering,  
Cisco ANZ

**Prof Adeeba Kamarulzaman** | Health System Representative | Monash Malaysia /  
WHO Advisor

**Rob Russell** | Industry Representative | Director, ArchiTech

**David Siroky** | Cisco Representative

### INNOVATION CENTRAL NETWORK ADVISORY COMMITTEE

**Karen Stocks** | Advisory Committee Chair | former VP, Global Measurement &  
Audience Solutions, Google

**Adam Powick** | Industry Representative | former CEO, Deloitte Australia

**Erin Stacey** | IC Director Representative | Director, ICC

**Reg Johnson** | NIIN Director | Director, Education & Strategic Industries, Cisco ANZ

**Prof Alex Stojcevski** | University Representative | Pro-Vice Chancellor & President,  
Curtin Singapore

Industry position (TBC)

# NIIN Advisory Council



## Prof John Dewar

### NIIN CHAIR

As Chair, John Dewar provides strategic leadership to the Advisory Council, overseeing its activities and ensuring alignment with NIIN's mission. John acts as the primary liaison between the Council and NIIN leadership and also represents the Advisory Council in external engagements, promoting its role in fostering digital innovation for Australia.



## Prof Deborah Terry

### UNIVERSITY REPRESENTATIVE – VICE CHANCELLOR, UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND

Prof Deborah Terry brings significant experience as a leader in the Australian higher education sector and an internationally recognised researcher. As Vice-Chancellor and President of The University of Queensland, and previously Curtin University, Deborah has extensive experience advancing research excellence and educational innovation.



## Prof Alec Cameron

### UNIVERSITY REPRESENTATIVE – VICE CHANCELLOR, RMIT

Prof Alec Cameron is Vice-Chancellor of RMIT and brings significant experience from leadership roles spanning both academia and industry. Alec's background includes senior positions at Aston University (UK), UNSW, University of Western Australia, and executive roles in major corporations including Telstra and Sun Microsystems.



## Karen Stocks

### INDUSTRY ADVISOR

Karen Stocks is the former Vice President of Global Measurement & Audience Solutions at Google, where she led worldwide strategies for audience insights. She was also Twitter Australia's first Managing Director and has held senior leadership roles at Google and Vodafone. Karen is a Fellow of CPA Australia and a former board member of Netball Australia.



## **Stefan Leitl**

CISCO VP, AUSTRALIA AND NZ

Stefan Leitl is Vice President of Cisco Australia & New Zealand where he is responsible for delivering market leadership through the innovative utilisation and application of Cisco technologies and services, that help customers and partners to accelerate their digital agility and grow. Stefan is committed to driving the most trusted customer experience in the industry through Cisco's innovation and people.



## **Prof Harlene Hayne**

UNIVERSITY REPRESENTATIVE – VICE CHANCELLOR, CURTIN UNIVERSITY

Professor Harlene Hayne was appointed Vice Chancellor of Curtin University in April 2021, having previously been the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Otago in New Zealand. Harlene is a Fellow of the Royal Society of NZ and of the Association for Psychological Science. In 2022 she was made a Companion of the New Zealand Order of Merit (CNZM) in recognition of her outstanding services to health and wellbeing.



## **Adam Powick**

INDUSTRY ADVISOR

Adam Powick is the former CEO of Deloitte Australia, where he led the firm to over A\$3 billion in revenue and a workforce of 13,000. An aeronautical engineer turned consultant, he has more than 30 years' experience advising boards and C-suites on technology, digital, data, and AI transformations, and has held senior leadership roles across Deloitte's global and Asia Pacific networks.



## **Kate Burleigh**

INDUSTRY ADVISOR

Kate Burleigh is a non-executive director specialising in digital transformation, AI implementation, and technology governance. She was formerly Country Manager for Amazon Alexa and Devices ANZ and Managing Director of Intel ANZ. She now serves on the boards of Hollard Insurance, Super Retail Group, and Wenona School.



## **Reg Johnson**

DIRECTOR, EDUCATION & STRATEGIC INDUSTRIES, CISCO & NIIN FOUNDER

Reg Johnson, as the founder of NIIN, leads its vision to establish Australia as a global leader in digital innovation. With deep expertise in fostering university-industry collaboration, Reg plays a pivotal role in advancing NIIN's strategic priorities. He focuses on creating impactful partnerships, driving large-scale innovation projects, and addressing national challenges through digital solutions.

NIIN

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