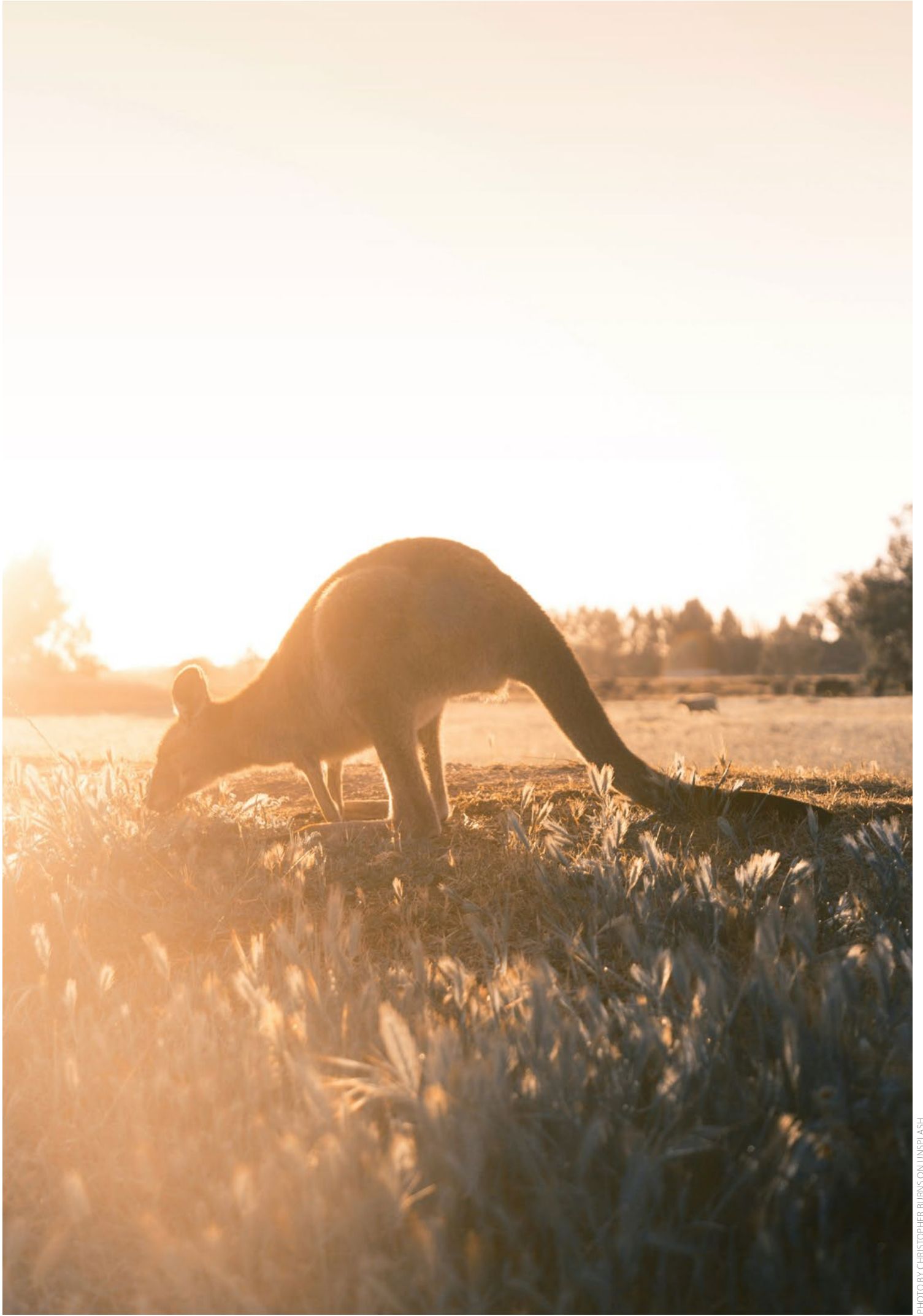




Future Earth Australia Membership prospectus





Invitation

On behalf of Future Earth Australia, I am pleased to invite your organisation to become a member of one of the world's largest knowledge networks dedicated to global sustainability.

For the first time in Future Earth Australia's history, membership also grants participation in the Belmont Forum—a partnership of funding organisations, international science councils, and regional consortia committed to the advancement of transdisciplinary science.

I am delighted that Future Earth Australia members will have exclusive benefits such as influence in shaping collaborative research action calls and access to a multi-million-dollar international funding pool.

In 2015, the world agreed to address the most complex and urgent challenges facing humanity through the United Nations' 17 Sustainable Development Goals. In 2024, we enter the International Decade of Sciences for Sustainable Development.

The challenges are complex but communities across the globe, including in Australia and our region, are capable of connected research approaches that find and deliver solutions.

Future Earth is the global research initiative that engages with research institutions, businesses, governments, and wider communities to generate enduring solutions to sustainability challenges.

It brings together expertise from across disciplines and broader society to ensure solutions have impact within their specific context and contribute more broadly to the mosaic of global sustainability.

Future Earth Australia applies this model within Australia and to the Asia-Pacific region. It connects Australian institutions together into collaborative programs to find solutions at local, national, and regional scales. It also connects these institutions into the global sustainability effort, promoting Australia's research capacity to the world so that its contribution is integrated into international collaborations to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

I commend this proposal to you as a means of connecting your colleagues, researchers, students, policy developers, on-ground environmental workforce, and business associates into an initiative that is globally important, nationally significant, and institutionally rewarding.

To discuss any of the above or to find out more, please contact Kate Nairn, Program Manager at Future Earth Australia, on kate.nairn@science.org.au.

Professor Chennupati Jagadish AC PresAA FREng FTSE

President

Australian Academy of Science

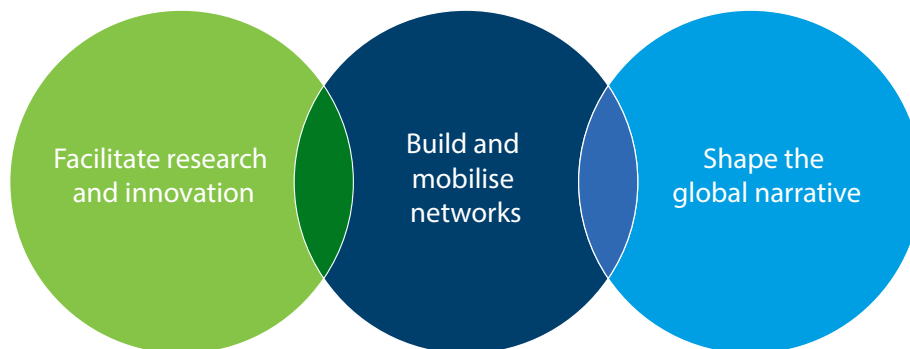




Our organisation

Future Earth Australia¹ (FEA) is a national platform to catalyse, collaborate, and connect research and practice for sustainability transformations. Hosted by the Australian Academy of Science, FEA is a critical knowledge broker and facilitator for national and international global change and sustainability research.

FEA connects top Australian sustainability research organisations, and is uniquely placed as an independent, cross-sector, transdisciplinary peak body. As a national node in the global Future Earth network, FEA has ties to the International Science Council, United Nations bodies, and (by mid-2024) the Belmont Forum.



Our purpose

FEA provides Australian researchers and institutions pathways to collaborate nationally and internationally on global change and resilience issues.

We aim to:

- bring together and assist members to capture the opportunities provided by international collaborative programs, particularly those tied to the Sustainable Development Goals
- showcase Australian members' research capacity to the international sustainability research community
- increase members' research impact in domestic science policy, and internationally through science diplomacy
- enhance the capacity and reputation of members' current and next generation of researchers through transdisciplinary research participation and professional development opportunities
- build recognition and support for transdisciplinary sustainability science across the sector.



Our value

FEA provides unique value to members, via:

- **national impact and collaboration.** FEA is a **peak body for Australian sustainability science**, providing a unique platform to form transdisciplinary collaborations, influence policy and advocate for Australian sustainability science
- **access to international funding.** FEA is becoming the **coordinating body for Australia's membership in the Belmont Forum (by mid-2024)**, providing access for members to large funding calls that prioritise international collaboration in transdisciplinary sustainability science
- **international impact and collaboration.** FEA is the **Australian node in the international Future Earth network**, elevating Australian sustainability research excellence internationally, promoting international collaboration opportunities for Australian researchers, and providing reportable evidence for member universities' actions towards Sustainable Development Goal number 17
- **access to funding for early- and mid-career researchers.** FEA **pursues philanthropic grants for supporting early-career researchers and professionals (ECRPs) in sustainability science**, which are distributed to members through workshops, events, and grants (~A\$50,000 in 2023).

MEMBERSHIP

From January 2024, membership in Future Earth Australia is for a **three- to five-year term**, at:

- **\$35,000 per annum** for institutions with an income >\$50M
- **\$20,000 per annum** for institutions with an income <\$50M

Membership grants a seat on the FEA Steering Committee, which provides strategic direction to the Secretariat and garners priority in FEA activities. The Steering Committee is governed by its Terms of Reference and MoUs with members.

FEA membership increases an organisation's profile under the QS World University Rankings and Times Higher Education criteria, by providing evidence for universities and research institutes towards achieving Sustainable Development Goal 17 revitalising the global partnership for sustainable development.

FUNDING

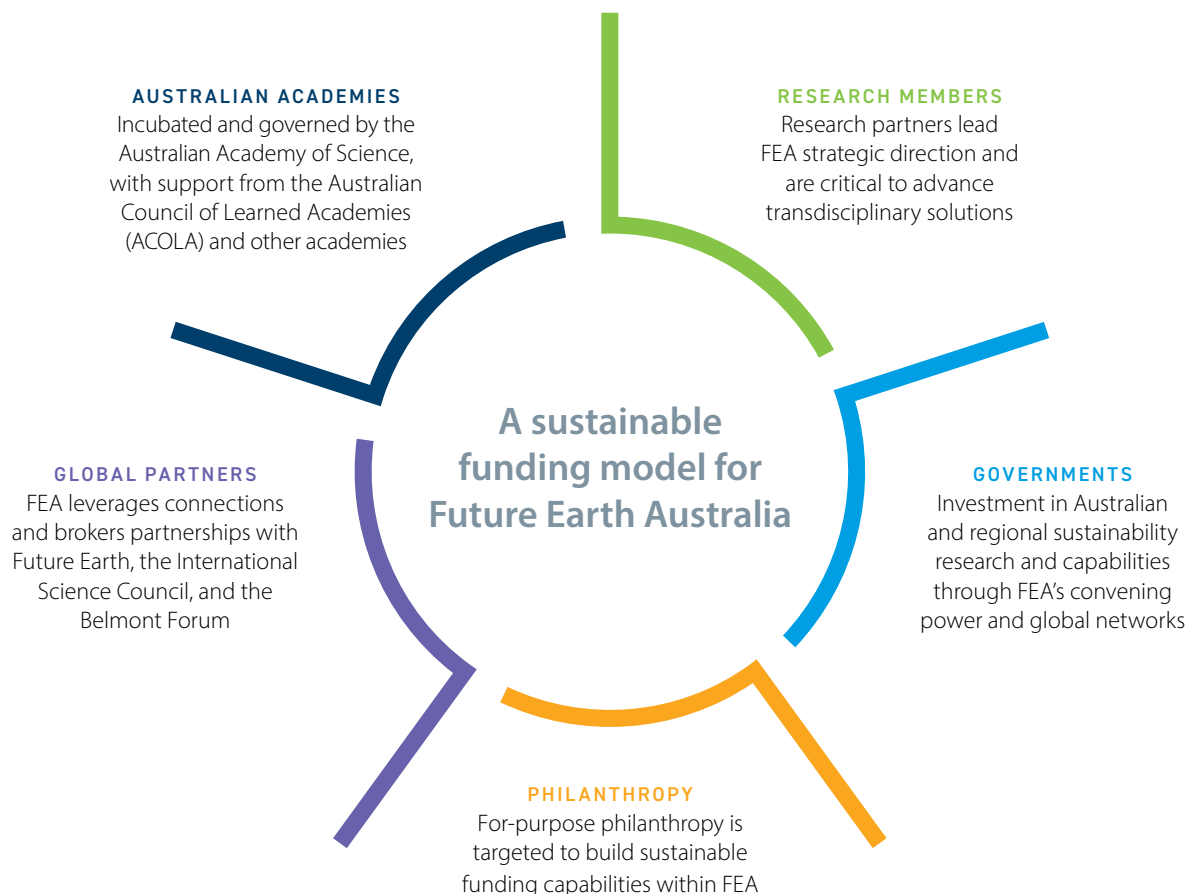
As part of FEA's sustainable funding model, membership fees make up one component of a co-investment strategy. Co-investment to drive programs, support the Secretariat, and provide larger return on investment for members is



Members of Future Earth Australia

The current FEA members include those from the Group of Eight and Innovative Research Universities:





continually sought from government, philanthropy, the learned academies, global partners, and research partners. This is a new strategy for FEA that reflects the wider value and representation of FEA across sectors.

FEA membership fees are directed to:

- Belmont Forum membership subscription
- providing opportunities for early-career researchers and professionals
- events and program costs for FEA members and the Secretariat
- Secretariat functions to support knowledge brokering activities including policy impact and international collaborations.

GOVERNANCE

FEA is primarily guided by its Steering Committee, made up of one representative from each member institution, plus two early-career researchers and professionals (one university, one non-university). FEA sits within the International Division of the Australian Academy of Science and is overseen and governed by the Academy's Executive and Council. Day-to-day operations of FEA are undertaken by Secretariat staff who are within the Australian Academy of Science.



Membership fee allocation

- 25%** ECRP activities and admin
- 25%** Research and policy impact
- 20%** Network and program activities
- 15%** Belmont Forum fee and admin
- 15%** Strategic planning and communications

Our impact

Transforming our understanding and application of sustainability is imperative to address the triple planetary crises of biodiversity loss, pollution, and climate change in this critical decade to 2030. Accelerating and coordinating Australian science for sustainability protects communities and the environment, supports equitable policy, and builds public trust in science. FEA provides critical knowledge brokering services in this space.

See our latest Year in Review and Strategic Plan at www.futureearth.org.au/publications for more details.

NATIONAL ENGAGEMENT AND INFLUENCE

FEA has demonstrated its ability to convene academic and Traditional Knowledge holders with government, community groups, civil society, and the private sector to advance understanding, drive collaboration, and co-produce knowledge for sustainability in Australia. To date, our facilitation has produced three decadal plans that elevate the importance of transdisciplinary work in meeting Australia's challenges:

1. A National Strategy for Just Adaptation²
2. Sustainable Oceans and Coasts National Strategy 2021–2030³
3. Sustainable cities and regions: 10-year strategy to enable urban systems transformation⁴

These strategies continue to provide direction and evidence for national issues (e.g. sustainable oceans, climate change risk, urban policy, climate and health). Members directly enable these research collaborations through their contributions and receive citation credit and impact for their academic contributors. FEA continues to be a critical voice advocating for improved research infrastructure to facilitate transdisciplinary collaborations.

We use the strategic heft of our national science and research strategies and gravitas of position to drive change towards sustainability and in support of sustainability science at scale. This includes Academy submissions to national policies, plans, and legislation, as well as global research priorities and inputs through Future Earth and the International Science Council. Steering Committee members and Strategy Working Group experts can be called on to provide direct representation to ministers or government department heads at FEA's behest.

ACCESS TO FUNDING

Belmont Forum

The Belmont Forum is a unique multilateral funding mechanism that brings together international funding partners around shared global environmental change challenges. It aims to strengthen the transdisciplinary approach needed to address the complexity and global character of the problems through a single point of entry for grants and peer review process.

FEA is in the process of becoming the new Australian coordinating body for the Forum with the Australian Academy of Science as a full member. This lays the foundation for **Australian researchers accessing the benefits of the Forum for the first time in six years**. This will be exclusive to Future Earth Australia members.

The Belmont Forum provides a trusted collaborative process tested by 150+ members and funders through 23 Collaborative Research Actions⁵ over 14 years. A portion of FEA membership fees will go towards the Belmont Forum, which allows for access to the international funding base (approximately €8 million per call) and influence in the process of shaping the nature and direction of Collaborative Research Actions calls.

Average return on investment for Belmont Forum membership would be >6:1 (assuming an award of €775,000 for a granted project with a research consortium of five institutions (a minimum of three is needed)).



Philanthropy

If further philanthropy and grants are received by FEA, then a portion will always be directed to our early-career researchers and professionals program, prioritising members. See details below.

INTERNATIONAL ENGAGEMENT AND COLLABORATIONS

FEA facilitates the network of members to leverage the Future Earth network of nine Global Hubs, 19 National Networks, and 27 Global Research Networks (see below). FEA's position in the Academy is a conduit for collaboration and access to the Academy Fellows, the National Committees for Science, the International Science Council Asia Pacific Focal Point, as well as inroads to the other learned academies.

Future Earth

Future Earth⁶ is one of the largest global networks of sustainability research institutions. Comprised of scientists, researchers, and innovators, it provides the knowledge needed to support transformations towards sustainability.

Our focus on systems-based approaches seeks to deepen our understanding of complex Earth systems and human dynamics across different disciplines. This understanding is used to underpin evidence-based policies and strategies for sustainable development.

Future Earth develops the knowledge and tools that governments, communities, and companies need to meet the United Nations' 17 Sustainable Development Goals. By understanding connections among environmental, social, and economic systems, Future Earth works to facilitate

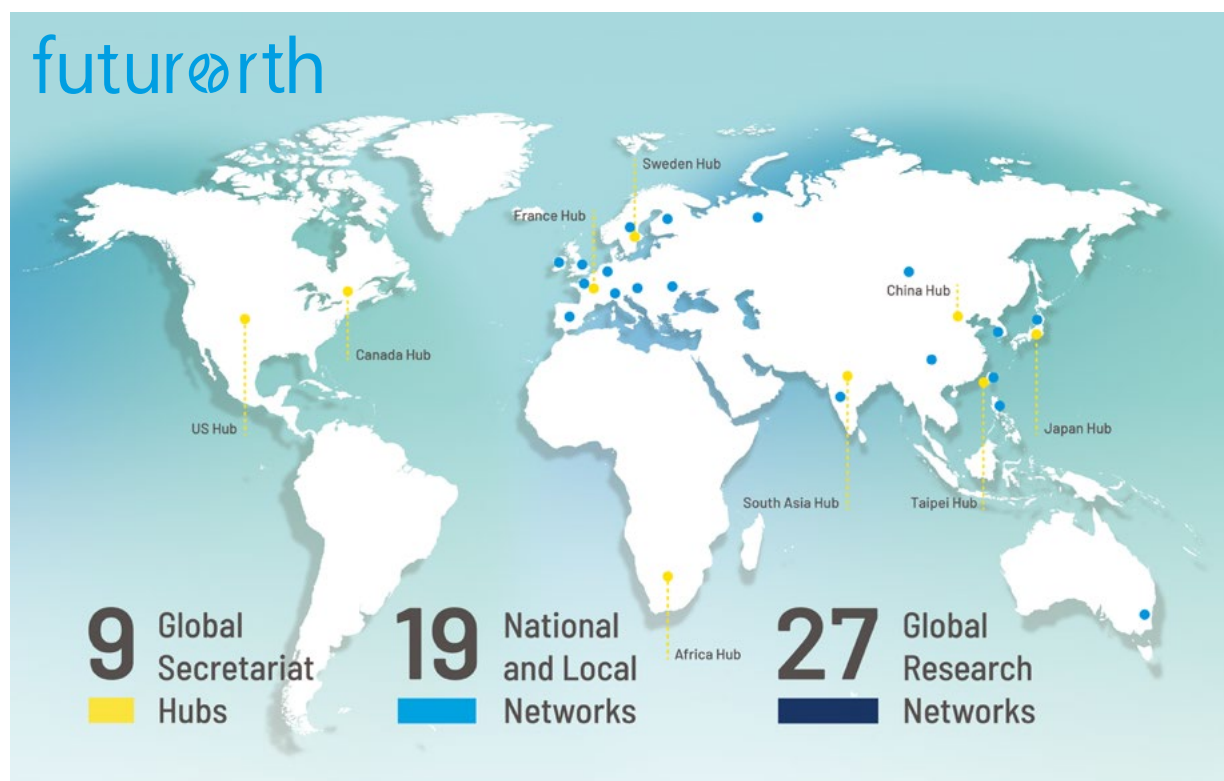
research and innovation, build and mobilise networks and shape the narrative, turning knowledge into action.

SUPPORTING EARLY-CAREER RESEARCHERS AND PROFESSIONALS

Supporting early-career researcher and professionals is one of FEA's four strategic objectives. FEA provides a point of difference from university early-career researcher networks by bridging academia, government, and private sectors for mentorships, collaborations, and recruitment opportunities.

In 2023 and 2024, FEA has funded and facilitated three collaboration labs, convening ~50 early-career researchers and professionals from around the country to advance the ideas and implementation of our three national strategies. Hosted by RMIT University, University of Sydney, and Griffith University, this provided a chance to partake in transdisciplinary work in action.

The first round of our Opportunities Fund⁷ saw over A\$34,000 awarded to 18 early-career researchers and professionals to launch transdisciplinary collaborations and enjoy professional development activities. See two examples of funded projects on page 8.



Future Earth Australia Opportunities Fund

Seizing Opportunities: Brianna Gordon

My project is an interdisciplinary PhD research project that will be applying a Two-Way methodological approach to investigating the potential metal contamination from legacy gold mining in the former Tambaroora and Turon River gold mining district on Wiradjuri Country.

This research will partner with Wiradjuri Traditional Owners of the research area to not only determine the quantity of metal contamination and how this contamination may be impacted by climate change, but also the impact that this potential contamination might have on Wiradjuri Country and culture.

This research combines analytical environmental chemistry, yarning on Country with Wiradjuri research partners, and creative artistic works to produce culturally informed research that meets the priorities of Wiradjuri research partners.

The Seizing Opportunities grant is contributing to this work by primarily supporting the creative elements of this research through funding the purchase of art supplies and other costs associated with producing the artwork.

This artwork will visually communicate the research project in an accessible and culturally informed way.

— *Brianna Gordon, Wiradjuri Gundungurra woman and PhD student, Australian National University*

Creating Opportunities: Jillian Conrad

Across ocean and coastal spaces, Indigenous rights have been ignored and denied to the detriment of the health and wellbeing of Australia's marine and coastal ecosystems.

Supported by the Future Earth Australia Opportunities Fund, this project will develop a Sea Country Planning Toolkit for the Finniss River region in the Northern Territory. Sea Country Planning is a culturally centred planning tool that allows Traditional Owners to drive the management and safeguarding of their coastal and marine spaces.

The toolkit, which is rooted in justice principles of acknowledgement and equitable decision making, will pursue shared benefits for Indigenous communities. It will be a symbol of empowerment, sovereignty, and the profound legacy of caring for Country, and a product of collaboration between the Northern Land Council, Griffith University, CSIRO, the Blue Economy Cooperative Research Centre, and the Northern Territory Government Department of Industry, Tourism and Trade.

This project embodies social equity and empowerment, cultural heritage preservation, environmental stewardship, and sustainable economic development. It marks a step toward a future where equity and justice are tangible realities, etched into the fabric of Australia's Blue Economy.

The project brings together elements of marine, urban and environmental planning, environmental science, finance, critical human geography, and spatial politics—interwoven seamlessly to address the project's multifaceted challenges.

In essence, this project exemplifies the power of collaboration and transdisciplinary research—where diverse voices converge, ideas interweave, and collective efforts pave the way for a future where equity, respect, and justice prevail. Through this collaborative endeavour, a transformative ripple effect is created, fostering a more inclusive and empowering Blue Economy for all.

— *Jillian Conrad, PhD student and ECR Project Lead, Griffith University*

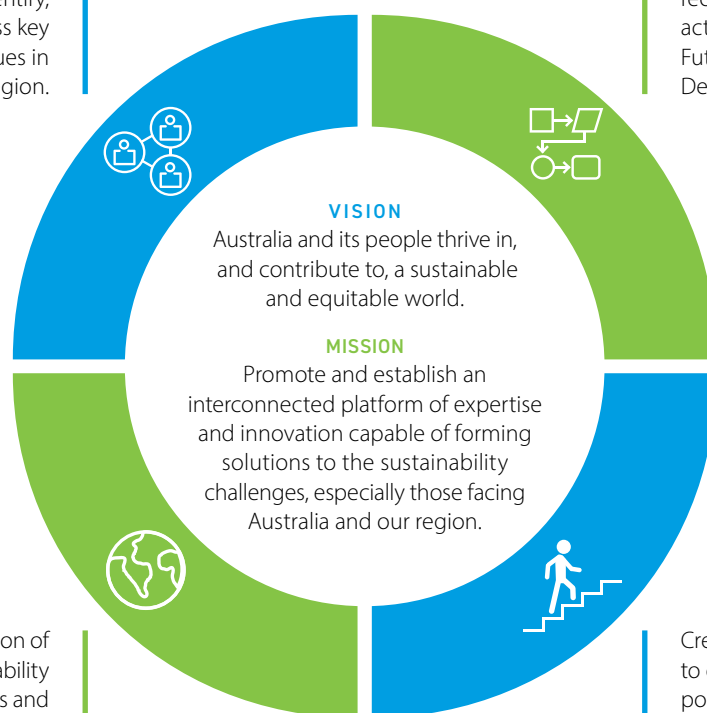
Our strategic vision

Inspire and connect transdisciplinary and cross-sector initiatives to identify, monitor and address key sustainability issues in Australia and our region.

1

2

Support the implementation of recommendations and actions arising from Future Earth Australia Decadal Strategies.



Endnotes

- 1 <https://www.futureearth.org.au>
- 2 <https://futureearth.org.au/publications/national-strategy-just-adaptation-0>
- 3 <https://futureearth.org.au/publications/sustainable-oceans-and-coasts-strategy>
- 4 <https://futureearth.org.au/publications/sustainable-cities-strategy>
- 5 <https://www.belmontforum.org/cras>
- 6 <https://futureearth.org>
- 7 <https://www.futureearth.org.au/opportunities-fund>

To discuss any of this prospectus,
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Find us [online](#), or on [LinkedIn](#)

