



Top 3 Sessions from the 2024 National Health & Innovation Precincts Summit

Explore three standout sessions from last year's Summit, filled with strategies and lessons shaping the future of health and innovation precincts in 2025 and beyond.



Introduction

The National Health & Innovation Precincts Summit is Australia's premier gathering of leaders shaping the future of innovation ecosystems.

Each year, the Summit brings together decision-makers from government, universities, hospitals, industry, and investment to exchange insights, forge partnerships, and accelerate innovation. This exclusive document distills three standout sessions from the 2024 Summit. Each case study highlights how world-class precincts are tackling common challenges — governance, investment, talent, and partnerships — and delivering impact at scale.

By exploring these insights, you'll gain practical knowledge to inform your own strategies and prepare for the landmark 2025 Summit in Melbourne.



"I have attended all the National Health and Innovation Precinct Summit events. The quality of program, the value of the networking and the collaborative approach that the Informa team have, ensures that I come back year after year, knowing that I will get an even better conference next year, keeping me as a leader in Innovation Precincts."

- 2024 Delegate

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SESSION

01

White City Innovation District – Driving Inclusive Economic Growth

Councillor Stephen Cowan, Leader, Hammersmith & Fulham Council



Stephen Cowan highlighted the remarkable journey of White City, a London neighbourhood that has been reinvented into one of the UK's most vibrant innovation districts.

What began as an underutilised area has been transformed into an inclusive, knowledge-driven hub through deliberate planning, strategic partnerships, and a commitment to ensuring local communities benefit alongside global investors.

The vision was built around a STEM³ ecosystem — science, technology, engineering, maths, medicine, and media — recognising that the future of innovation lies in cross-disciplinary collaboration. By integrating life sciences with creative industries and digital technologies, White City has created a dynamic environment where new ideas and industries converge.

The results have been staggering:

- 1 Over £2.5 billion invested in life sciences, £1.1 billion in green and climate tech, £946 million in cyber, AI, and fintech, and £906 million in creative, digital, and screen industries.
- 2 13,200 new STEM³ jobs created since 2017, with numbers expected to climb to 22,500 by 2024.
- 3 Major global players have been attracted, alongside a flourishing community of startups and scale-ups.

But what makes White City especially notable is its commitment to inclusivity and placemaking. The district has been designed not just as a business hub, but as a community. Investments in affordable housing, cultural initiatives, and public spaces ensure that growth is broad-based and benefits both local residents and global stakeholders.

The district is also underpinned by cooperative growth partnerships that bring together local government, universities, industry, and investors to shape a shared future.

As Councillor Cowan emphasised, innovation is not only about labs and infrastructure — it's also about culture and people. By democratising access to innovation and ensuring local communities see tangible benefits, White City has created a model for how innovation precincts can grow in a way that is both globally competitive and socially inclusive.

Key Takeaway:

White City demonstrates that successful innovation districts balance world-class investment with cultural inclusivity, strong governance, and community integration. It's a reminder that thriving precincts must be built with — and for — the communities they serve.

SESSION 02

Generating Impact from Precincts – Learnings from Cambridge, UK

Professor Keith McNeil, Commissioner, Commission on
Excellence and Innovation in Health



Professor Keith McNeil explored the remarkable transformation of Cambridge from a modest university town into one of the world's most influential biotechnology clusters. What makes Cambridge stand out is not simply its history, but the deliberate way in which its institutions, leaders, and investors aligned around a shared vision that enabled the city to become a global powerhouse for life sciences and innovation.

At the core of this success story lies what McNeil described as the “Secret Sauce”:

- 1** A great university with centuries of academic excellence.
- 2** A great teaching and academic hospital, Addenbrooke's, embedded within the city's research fabric.
- 3** A network of commercial partners and investors willing to translate ideas into businesses.
- 4** Above all, a shared vision uniting government, academia, industry, and entrepreneurs.

Cambridge's track record of excellence is undeniable. The city has produced 125 Nobel Prizes, with 90 linked directly to research conducted there, including groundbreaking discoveries like the structure of DNA, the sequencing of the human genome, and the innovations that underpin modern-day genome sequencing technology.

These scientific achievements built a reputation that attracted both talent and investment, creating a cycle of success that has endured for decades. McNeil emphasised that Cambridge's growth was not inevitable; it was carefully cultivated by creating the conditions where innovation could flourish.

Key enablers included:

- Institutional alignment across the university, hospital, local government, and investors.
- The role of visionary individuals — leaders who refused to accept limitations and who championed bold projects.
- A culture of collaboration and informal networks, where chance conversations in labs, boardrooms, and even pubs sparked billion-dollar ideas.
- The strategic use of physical space, with research, clinical, and commercial facilities co-located to accelerate knowledge transfer.

The Cambridge cluster also benefited from strong financial backing, from the university's own endowments to the early role of groups like the Cambridge Angels — entrepreneurs turned investors who reinvested in the ecosystem.

This access to capital, combined with a thriving entrepreneurial culture, turned scientific discoveries into global companies.

Key Takeaway:

Cambridge's rise was not the result of chance but the product of sustained vision, leadership, and collaboration. By aligning institutions, attracting world-class talent, and fostering both formal and informal networks, Cambridge demonstrates how an innovation precinct can evolve into a world-leading biotech hub.

SESSION 03

Lot Fourteen – Case Study in Building an Innovation District

Diane Dixon, State Project Lead, Department of the Premier and Cabinet, South Australia



Diane Dixon presented the bold vision for Lot Fourteen in Adelaide — a flagship innovation district that embodies Australia’s ambition to compete globally in the industries of the future.

Developed on the site of the former Royal Adelaide Hospital, Lot Fourteen has been deliberately positioned as a catalyst for economic, social, and cultural prosperity, and it has quickly become a symbol of South Australia’s transformation into an innovation state.

Backed by a significant \$756 million government investment, Lot Fourteen has grown into a thriving hub with more than 160 businesses already on site. Tenancy rates are nearing full capacity, reflecting both the attractiveness of the district and the strength of demand for collaborative spaces that bring together research, industry, and entrepreneurs.

Dixon outlined a suite of ambitious projects that will further expand the precinct's capabilities:

- 1 \$20m Innovation Hub** – dedicated to AI, quantum sensing, photonics, and communications, fostering collaboration and commercialisation.
- 2 \$60m Australian Defence Technologies Academy** – building sovereign skills, integrating research with industry, and strengthening defence capabilities.
- 3 \$20m Space Assembly & Testing Facility** – advancing Australia's space industry and supporting missions like the SASAT1 Space Services Mission.

Beyond physical infrastructure, Lot Fourteen has embedded a culture of open collaboration and active engagement. Initiatives such as CEO roundtables, capability showcases, international delegations, trade missions, and tenant reference groups ensure that businesses within the district are not only connected to each other but also to global opportunities.

This ongoing ecosystem-building effort reinforces Lot Fourteen's position as a magnet for talent, investment, and innovation. Lot Fourteen is also part of the South Australian Innovation Places Framework, which highlights how coordinated precincts across the state can achieve more together.

This underscores an important lesson: innovation doesn't happen in isolation — it flourishes when ecosystems are interconnected and aligned with broader strategic priorities.

Key Takeaway:

Lot Fourteen illustrates how a bold vision, substantial public investment, and careful alignment with strategic industries can seed a world-class innovation ecosystem. By combining physical infrastructure, industry focus, and active stakeholder engagement, the district is setting new benchmarks for global relevance and long-term impact.

BONUS

Download the Full Presentation Slides

Access the complete presentation slides from all three featured sessions. Dive deeper into the data, case studies, and strategies shared by global precinct leaders, and take away practical insights you can apply to your own innovation journey.



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Click the link below to take part at this year summit! Don't miss this unique opportunity to be part of shaping the future of Australia's innovation landscape!

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