Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: Industry comment on IP toolkit

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment on the draft IP toolkit. Collaboration between industry, small business and academia has the potential to improve the opportunity for, and outcomes associated with new innovations to increase productivity and profitability.

The Plastics and Chemicals Industries Association (PACIA) is the peak national body representing the business of chemistry in Australia. Our members include chemicals manufacturers, raw materials suppliers, plastics fabricators and compounders, importers and distributors, logistics and supply chain partners, chemicals and plastics recyclers and service providers to the industry. These businesses range from small, family-owned companies and innovative medium sized enterprises to leading national and multi-national enterprises.

The chemistry industry – comprising the chemicals and plastics sectors – is the second largest manufacturing section in Australia. The sector:

- Supplies 109 of Australia’s 111 industries – about 80% of the sector’s outputs are inputs to other sectors of the economy;
- Contributes $11.6 billion to Australia’s gross domestic product;
- Comprises 5500 small medium and large businesses nationally; and
- Directly employs more than 60,000 people.

Our industry is not only important in its own right, but also has a multiplier effect on productivity and cost savings throughout the broader economy. Each job in the chemicals and plastics sector creates five more in related supply chains. The industry’s central role in multiple supply chains provide benefits that far exceed the direct benefit associated with the chemistry industry.

Australia relies on a chemistry sector to deliver more sustainable future. Australian chemistry companies work with their product and service chains to deliver solutions for the many challenges facing humanity, including climate change, water shortages and resource constraints from population increases.

PACIA already engages in various mechanisms to support collaboration between the research community and industry. This includes supporting the Green Chemistry Futures facility at Monash University and the Victorian Centre for Sustainable Chemical Manufacturing.
PACIA supports measures that can assist industry collaborate with Australia’s research community. As such, PACIA supports development of the IP toolkit. In support of the aims and objectives associated with development of the toolkit, PACIA offers the following comments:

- While the toolkit is focused on collaboration between small and medium enterprises and researchers, the Department may wish to consider its applicability for collaboration between large companies and researchers. Large companies often have significant research capability that can be leveraged to drive greater outcomes. Recognising the opportunity of collaborating with large companies should not be overlooked as tools are developed.
- While model collaboration agreements are welcome, these should be supported and complemented by a suite of guidance material to facilitate collaboration arrangements. This may include guides that make different trade offs to accommodate varied circumstances of each party, or information that discusses issues that need to be considered when negotiating a collaboration agreement.
- Any guidance material, whether model agreements, information documents or other supporting documents should be drafted in a manner that facilitates flexibility between collaborating parties. As the interests, circumstances, appetite for risk and objectives of collaboration vary, so should collaboration agreements.

PACIA looks forward to continuing to work with the Department to develop a suite of guidance material to support improved collaboration opportunities between companies of all sizes and Australia’s research community.

Should you have any questions in relation to this submission, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely

BEN STAPLEY
Director – Policy and Regulation