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## Foreword



Science by nature is an international enterprise. Contributing to the progress in science, to the development of excellence of Australian science, and to maximise the benefits of science requires that Australia participates fully in this enterprise. This country's research and development effort is small on the global scale but international linkages provide access to the global resources. Access to the international effort takes different forms: from bilateral programs between individuals or agencies to international programs. The benefits from the bilateral exchanges have previously been demonstrated<sup>1</sup> and this study examines the benefits from Australia's participation in major international science organisations. This follows on from an earlier study of Australia's linkages with international climate research programs<sup>2</sup>. Historically most of the international science activities were coordinated by the International Council for Science (ICSU). But with increasing research across disciplines and with an increasing trend to use science to address issues of importance for society so has the breadth and nature of the international network expanded. Not only is it involved with the scientific issues of the day but also with the policy issues. Scientific issues are increasingly influential in matters of international environmental policy, international economic policy, national security and capacity building in developing countries and Australia needs to participate in the agenda-setting and decision-making activities. Thus it is appropriate that the Academy has reviewed Australia's role in this network of international science linkages at this time.

This report is a snapshot of the current situation of Australia's participation in global scientific activities. These global activities, as well as Australia's engagement in them, evolve with time and because of the many agencies involved, some working outside the usual academic sphere, this report may not be complete, even within the limited categories covered. Thus the Academy will endeavour to periodically review the information and we encourage readers to report any omissions or otherwise comment.

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<sup>1</sup> Australian Academy of Science, 1999, *International Networks and the Competitiveness of Australia's Science and Technology*. ISBN: 0 85847 213 9.

<sup>2</sup> Australian Academy of Science, 2003, *International Climate Change Science: Australia's Role, Links and Opportunities*. A report prepared for the Australian Greenhouse Office ([www.science.org.au/reports/ago.pdf](http://www.science.org.au/reports/ago.pdf))