



Ambassador John Berry – UNSW Innovation Summit, Sydney

**Ambassador Berry’s Keynote Address to the
University of New South Wales (UNSW) Innovation Summit**

(As prepared for delivery, September 18, 2015)

It is an honor and a privilege to be speaking with you here today.

Tomorrow marks the two-year anniversary of my arrival in Australia. Over the last two years I have traveled all over this blessed country. I can say with certainty that it is an amazing, innovative place.

When President Obama visited Australia in 2014 he noted the parallels in our national origins – the legacy of immigration, settlement of the frontier, democratic ideals, equal opportunity for all.

Another trait American and Australians share is an innovative spirit. A tendency to question the status quo and to search for the new and novel rather than the tried and true.

As your new Prime Minister said this week, “The Australia of the future has to be a nation that is agile, that is innovative, that is creative.”

It is indeed an “exciting time to be alive.”

In my two years as U.S. Ambassador to Australia, I’ve made innovation a major theme of our engagement with the Australian government, private sector, and research community. From my first weeks and months in Australia – when I visited places as varied as the Queensland Brain Institute, or 3M’s Innovation Center, or the South Australia Health and Medical Research Institute, or learned about the amazing work U.S. energy companies are doing in Western Australia – I was blown away by the amazing innovation collaboration between our two countries.

I’d like to congratulate UNSW’s own engineering team, which recently brought home six awards at the International Ground Vehicle Competition, a robotics contest in Michigan. Their robot Pepper broke course records and ran twice as fast as its competitors.

At RoboCup 2015, UNSW engineers, again, led Australia to victory over Germany, to win the title two years running.

From UNSW to Swinburne University of Technology’s Factory of the Future to Canberra’s Deep Space Communication Complex, Australian scientists, researchers, teachers, and students are engaged in amazing and cutting edge work in engineering, medicine, brain research,



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advanced manufacturing and technologies, astrophysics, agriculture, climate science, conservation, business, and more.

Innovation is part of everything the United States and Australia do together. Through our actions, we are proving that innovation knows no bounds.

U.S.-Australia cooperation in research and development spans universities and government, think tanks and corporations. These partnerships help our economies expand, develop, and compete in the world market. Creative people and creative companies are teaming up to figure out how to deal with a changing world, changing markets, and a changing climate.

One of the first treaties signed between the United States and Australia, even before the ANZUS treaty, was the Fulbright Treaty. Fulbright promotes a two-way exchange of scholars and ideas between our two countries. More than six decades of Fulbright exchanges between the United States and Australia has spurred innovative cooperation across a range of disciplines.

Fulbright's longstanding partnerships with Australian institutions such as CSIRO and the Defence Science and Technology Organisation are generating new and groundbreaking research. For example, recent Fulbright Distinguished Chair in Advanced Science and Technology, Dr. Richard Ziolkowski worked with DSTO on the development and use of metamaterials – which have wide application, from defense to telecommunications. Other recent and current scholars include an immunologist, a geneticist, a nanotechnologist, a crop physiologist, and an IT systems developer.

In addition to the bilateral investment in education represented by Fulbright, the United States is the largest foreign investor in Australia, and much of our investment is in future-focused industries.

U.S. and Australian companies are working together in Cape York. Rio Tinto, the Australian Renewable Energy Agency, and U.S. firm First Solar are teaming up to build a solar energy plant at one of Rio Tinto's mines. This will help offset the expense of the current diesel fired power plants. First Solar also worked with AGL Energy to build the solar power plant in Nyngan – the largest in Australia. In addition to making good economic sense, these investments also make good environmental sense.

Australian ingenuity helps American company General Electric (GE) cut costs and improve productivity in Western Australia by streamlining operations and improving sub-sea production technology.

ConocoPhillips, Sinopec, and Origin Energy are investing more than \$20 billion to build the largest LNG project in Queensland on Curtis Island. I visited there with Chinese Ambassador



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Ma. That visit demonstrated to me more than anything else the vast potential of the clean energy market here in Australia and what we can accomplish when we work together.

American companies 3M, Hewlett Packard, Microsoft, and others have established innovation centers across Australia. Boeing's largest research and development facilities outside of the United States are in Melbourne and Brisbane. The company's partnerships here – with universities, with the private sector, and with CSIRO – mean that it has a huge pool of talent to draw on to advance the components and technologies at its disposal.

As Ambassador, it is my role and indeed my privilege to use the multi-faceted U.S.-Australia relationship as a vehicle for introducing new ideas, devices, or methods – the very definition of the word innovation.

Innovation means dialogue and innovation means educating future generations.

Last year, I inaugurated a series of innovation roundtables designed to put students, business leaders, academics, scientists, researchers, government officials, venture capitalists, and entrepreneurs in the same room to highlight the progress we are making on innovation collaboration, address emerging challenges, and brainstorm about future opportunities. Following our launch in Canberra, I've taken the Ambassador's Innovation Roundtable show "on the road" to Brisbane, Melbourne, Sydney, and most recently, Adelaide. In every city, the enthusiasm and "buzz" for our bilateral innovation relationship has been incredible.

Through these Roundtables, we've strengthened partnerships with the American Chamber of Commerce, federal and state governments, universities like Queensland University of Technology, Swinburne University of Technology, University of Sydney, and Flinders University, and organizations like the Australian Advanced Manufacturing Council, the Grattan Institute, and Questacon.

These groups share our belief that there are few things more important than advancing education in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics – STEM. This generation and the next of STEM practitioners will drive U.S.-Australia progress on innovation and take our relationship to new horizons.

Innovation means using the latest technology to conserve our natural resources, protect biodiversity, and achieve medical breakthroughs.

In July, we worked closely with the Australian government, conservation organizations, and zoos to launch the first-ever Threatened Species Conference in Melbourne. There, I noted that if conservation efforts are to be successful, we must adopt innovative approaches, and be willing to



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try new technologies. A great example is the use of drones to count orangutans in the wild – and this technology is being developed right here in Australia.

Also in July, at the University of Canberra, we held the U.S.-Australia Biomedical Research Partnership Conference, where U.S. and Australian scientists met to explore future opportunities for collaboration. Advances in neuroscience, in particular, have benefitted from such partnerships.

Research in to brain injuries and disorders is advancing by leaps and bounds, thanks in part to the Brain Research through Advancing Innovative Neurotechnologies – or BRAIN – Initiative supported by a partnership between the U.S. National Institutes of Health and Australia’s National Health and Medical Research Council.

Innovation means voyaging across oceans and reaching further and further in to outer space.

The arrival in Sydney in April 2015 of the Hokule’a symbolized not only the cultural connections that span the Pacific, but also the ingenuity required to blend tradition and technology. A traditional Polynesian canoe, the Hokule’a is stronger, faster, and more seaworthy thanks to modern innovations such as fiberglass, canvas, and synthetics.

The out-of -this-world partnership between NASA and CSIRO keeps the Canberra Deep Space Communications Complex at the forefront of space exploration. NASA Administrator Charlie Bolden visited last year and saw first-hand how American and Australian scientists are working together to unlock the secrets of the universe.

Innovation means improving the interoperability of our militaries.

As displayed at this year’s Talisman Sabre exercise in the Northern Territory, the largest to date. Our Force Posture Initiatives will result in a more efficient response to regional and global crises, including humanitarian assistance and disaster relief.

Innovation means confronting terrorism and violent extremism head on.

Terrorism lives online, and this is where the communities most affected need to wage the digital battle for hearts and minds. In June, we co-sponsored with the Australian government a “HackAbout.” This competition brought together individuals from the worlds of technology, civil society, and education to “hack” a solution to the challenge of combatting violent extremism. The winner developed an app that matches young people with mentors.

Another app – called 52 Jumaa – developed a team of students at Curtin University in Perth came second in the global Peer to Peer: Challenging Extremism competition, held in



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Washington, D.C. Their app uses the power of personal development and affirmation to guide users to a more positive view of themselves and their place in the community, and away from extremism.

Innovation means partnering with the business community in the United States and in Australia and with growing networks of entrepreneurs and venture capitalists.

We were delighted to be a part of OzApp in Perth last February. The event linked Australian entrepreneurs with U.S. technology companies and investors. These are the visionaries who will chart the waters of economic growth, trade, and investment in the 21st century. They will exploit the new opportunities opened by free trade and economic integration in the Asia Pacific.

By new opportunities, of course, I am referring to the TransPacific Partnership or TPP, which will drive 21st century innovation.

This cutting edge trade deal is the economic centerpiece of President Obama's vision for the Asia-Pacific region. The 12 countries in the agreement together make up 40% of the world's GDP.

The TPP would open services markets across the region, paving the way for further innovation in telecommunications, healthcare, tourism, education, and transportation.

The TPP is key to a stable, transparent, and rules-based order for the 21st century and beyond. For 70 years, a rules-based order is what has provided security, driven economic growth, and promoted greater integration and innovation. We owe it to future generations to ensure that they inherit a region that is dynamic, peaceful, and prosperous.

The future we would like to see is one of even closer collaboration between the United States and Australia – in business, science and technology, defense, education and research.

I made it through this whole speech without using the word rebalance, but now I will.

The rebalance is an innovation in U.S. foreign policy. It is about the United States deepening extensive diplomatic, economic, development, people-to-people, and security ties with the region. It is about developing and enhancing regional institutions. It is about engaging with new and emerging partners. And, it is about strengthening our existing alliances.

We anticipate Australia will become an innovation center of excellence in the Asia Pacific region. Innovation collaboration between the United States and Australia will help us answer some big questions.



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How do we create the jobs of the future? How do we share intellectual property in a way that increases knowledge yet promotes commerce? How do we grow our advanced manufacturing capabilities?

I don't have all the answers. But I do know we need to consider how to formalize partnerships, engage young people, and improve STEM education. And, we need to share our experiences with entrepreneurship, venture capital, and crowd-funding. Most of all, as Pacific powers, we need to encourage regional integration and collaboration.

It is not enough for the United States to be Australia's largest foreign investor and Australia's largest destination for investment, or Australia's most prolific education and research partner. The United States is Australia's ally in innovating for the 21st century. We look forward to a century of discovery together.