



Annual Impact Report

2023–2024



About us

A formal partner of the NSW Government, the Australian Public Policy Institute (APPI) is a unique joint-venture between government and leading Australian universities. Launched in 2021, we work closely with government ministers, departments, and other decision-makers to help address their most pressing policy priorities, enabling them to harness a wide range of expert advice. APPI is an independent, non-partisan policy institute with charitable status.

A growing partnership

- NSW Government
- University of Sydney
- Western Sydney University
- University of Technology Sydney
- University of New South Wales
- Charles Sturt University
- University of Wollongong

Our university partnerships will continue to grow in 2024-25 and beyond.



At the time of publication the Institute was known as the James Martin Institute for Public policy (JMI).

Transforming public policy

appi.org.au



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Acknowledgement of Country

APPI acknowledges the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation upon whose ancestral lands our Institute stands. We pay respect to Elders both past and present, acknowledging them as the traditional custodians of knowledge for these lands. We celebrate the diversity of Aboriginal peoples and their ongoing cultures and connections to the lands and waters of NSW.

Building strategic policy capability:

Year in review

630+

Direct engagement
with policymakers,
researchers &
other experts

540 hrs

Facilitated
collaboration with
policymakers
& experts



Collaboration

520+

Government policymakers
& experts from various
fields shared their expertise

16

New projects, including
6 Policy Challenge projects
& 3 fellowships





Contributions

71

Grant applications involving 200+ researchers from across NSW and Australia

180+

Policymakers, researchers and other experts contributed to collaborative projects

48

Leading experts contributed to *The Policymaker*



Interactions

1.5K+

Senior leaders in government, academia, industry and community took part in our flagship events

115K+

Website views

35K+

Website visitors



Policy Areas

Tackling some of the most pressing policy challenges, including:

- Housing & cost-of-living
- AI governance
- Child protection system reform
- Health research & innovation
- Education transformation & funding
- Mission-based investment

From our Chair

Today's big policy challenges for government are becoming more complex, interconnected, and entrenched. From climate change to cost of living, food security to energy transitions – there is no magic bullet or easy fix. Now more than ever, governments need practical solutions that are backed by evidence to effectively deliver for our local communities and improve everyday lives.

Enabling policymakers to tap into expertise across every area of public policy is a unique selling point of APPI.

As a partner of government, public service agencies and universities, the Institute continues to strengthen its position as a trusted partner for frank and fearless advice and workable solutions. It continues to ensure that research can be better utilised by government and feed directly into pragmatic policymaking, not lost to bookshelves.

APPI not only responds directly to government-identified priorities and needs, but also supports colleagues to explore strategic challenges and opportunities on the horizon. As an independent, bipartisan and not-for-profit organisation, our focus remains on the democratic health of our state and nation, now and in the future.

The Institute's impact has been clearly felt over the past year with a corresponding increase in visibility and interest in our approach. As documented throughout this Annual Impact Report, we have gone from strength to strength in a short period of time, with more researchers and public servants as well as industry and community representatives being involved in projects across a wide range of topics.

In the year ahead, we are excited to be launching a new workstream aimed at bolstering the strategic capabilities of policymakers and researchers to work together on contemporary policymaking on longer-term issues. At its core, APPI will continue to support our government partners to address important areas facing policymakers, guided by the needs of beneficiaries.



Professor Peter Shergold AC



From our Chief Executive

Three years ago, APPI was established with an ambitious agenda to transform policymaking in Australia. This is clearly no small feat, but working closely with our government and university partners, we continue to build strong foundations for more effective, seamless, and pragmatic evidence-based policymaking.

As detailed throughout this report, a distinctive feature of APPI is that we were created *by government for government*. We are privileged to work closely with decision-makers across government on their priorities and needs, whilst tapping into the phenomenal resource that is our universities brain trust. This distinctive model, underpinned by tangible impact, is unlike any other in the world.

Our collaborative projects and rapid response capability in 2023-4 have helped policymakers tackle some of Australia's most entrenched challenges, informed by world-leading experts.

We have contributed to issues such as child protection and out-of-home care, governance of artificial intelligence, and enhancing vocational education and training, amongst many others. We have also worked with our Commonwealth colleagues on the Australian Universities Accord, the future of community-led approaches to government services and organised learning opportunities for the Australian Public Service.

Alongside this work to elevate policy development and innovation, we will have distributed \$1.5M in funds for Policy Challenge Grants to university research teams by the end of 2024, in addition to substantial support

provided by APPI staff. The results of our first round of grants are now coming to fruition. We welcomed several Policy Fellows from our government and university partners. Through these cutting-edge projects, we are strengthening policy innovation on topics as varied as government mission-driven investment funds, Digital IDs and facial recognition, housing policy and urban design.

APPI was delighted to welcome the University of Wollongong (UOW) to its partnership in January 2024, with the majority of NSW universities now actively engaged in this shared public mission alongside government. The breadth and depth of UOW's research capability, coupled with its unique commitment to the Illawarra, will add significant value to our ability to inform and shape public policy. Following the state election, we re-established our Policy Advisory Committee as a means of regularly engaging key decision-makers across the NSW Government to direct our strategic project capabilities in line with their priorities. In addition, we held numerous engagement initiatives including our Policy Talks event series for public servants, and are developing an exciting program of work on capability-building on contemporary policymaking.

The momentum around APPI's mission over the past three years could not have been fostered without the backing of our incredible partners. We thank all those who have generously given their time and expertise towards this shared mission. We continue to benefit from the advice of our independent Research Advisory Group, and have been guided throughout by our expert Board of Directors. We look forward to continuing to expand our partnership in the years ahead for the public good of all Australians.



Libby Hackett

Welcoming the University of Wollongong to the partnership



“The collaboration between UOW and the Institute brings together expertise, resources, and a shared vision for driving innovation.”

The Hon Paul Scully MP
NSW Minister for Planning and Public Spaces

“Through this strategic partnership with the Institute, UOW researchers will have the opportunity to leverage their expert knowledge to address some of the most pressing and complex challenges facing the Illawarra region, NSW, and the nation as a whole.”

The Hon Ryan Park MP
NSW Minister for Health, Regional Health, the Illawarra and the South Coast



Our approach and value-add

We bring together policymakers, researchers, and industry and community experts to deliver timely, relevant, and pragmatic advice to government. As an independent joint-venture, we are uniquely placed to bolster the strategic policy capabilities of our partners to address critical policy challenges in Australia. In doing so, the APPI model harnesses leading evidence and expertise, and existing public investment in research, for the public good.



Government-responsive & evidence-based

In response to the needs of government, we actively engage with university, community and industry experts to respond to specific public policy challenges, ensuring that evidence is translated into purposeful public policy outcomes.



Networked & impact-oriented

We deliver high-quality, rigorous policy research, forging collaborative networks of experts to convert ideas into reality. Laser-focused on impact, we generate timely, policy-relevant insights for decision-makers and contribute to public discourse to drive policy innovation in the public interest.



Independent & trusted partner

We provide governments with an independent source of evidence-based policy advice on critical public policy issues. We are uniquely positioned as an independent body to convene the right actors at the right time to break down silos and deliver for all people more effectively.

Breadth and depth of public policy activity

Key APPI research and policy projects

Collaborative projects

APPI worked with government partners on some of the most complex, long-term, multidisciplinary policy challenges facing NSW and Australia. APPI's unique **collaborative project model** connects experts into critical stages of policymaking by bringing together government and university experts into project teams, convening Expert Advisory Groups with wider stakeholders, and holding workshops and consultations with wider stakeholders.

More than 70 researchers and 113 government experts have contributed to these projects, which extend over several months, to develop practical policy solutions in response to government's challenges. Establishing a vision, evidence base and pathways for embedding a relationship-based approach across the NSW child protection system (Partner: NSW Department of Communities and Justice)

- Crafting a new funding model for teaching and scholarship to support the Australian Universities Accord to drive transformative reform of the higher education system (Partner: Australian University Accord Panel, Australian Department of Education)
- Capturing insights to build the knowledge base of international credentialling models and educational practice, including an analysis of stakeholder perceptions (Partner: NSW Education Standards Authority).
- Providing policy and research support for the NSW government comprehensive review of the Vocational Education and Training (VET) system (Partner: NSW Department of Education)
- Outlining opportunities to regulate and shape artificial intelligence in NSW (Partner: NSW Department of Customer Service).

Rapid responses

APPI works intensively with government departments on highly targeted short-term **rapid response projects**. For example, we worked with the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet on an expert workshop to inform their Long-Term Insights Briefing pilot on the future of government services. We identified leading experts on co-design and community-led policymaking and facilitated an interactive workshop. Following the workshop, APPI delivered a short policy brief to the Department on key insights and considerations on effective community-led policymaking for the future of government services.

- Informing the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet's Long-Term Insights Briefing on the future of government services with expert workshops (Partner: Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, Australian Government).
- Understanding the key components of strong health research and innovation ecosystems and assessing opportunities for the NSW Ministry of Health to inform their new research and innovation strategy (Partner: NSW Ministry of Health).
- Hosting an interactive session for senior public servants from across the NSW Government to explore how AI is affecting government and public policy (Partner: NSW Department of Customer Service).
- Delivering an environmental scan across Australian and international jurisdictions to support exploration of opportunities in a complex area of education policy.

APPI regularly publishes impact stories to showcase the policy impact of its work.

appi.org.au/about/our-impact

Impact Case Study 1

Leadership on AI for the public good

In a nutshell

- **20+ hours of stakeholder consultations**
- **20+ AI experts and stakeholders consulted**
- **160+ policy documents, pieces of legislation and research papers reviewed**
- **25 leading AI experts from government and academia attended senior policymaker briefing**
- **15 innovative policy options identified**
- **550+ experts and stakeholders attended report launch at the NSW Future of AI Summit**

“This important report from the Institute sets out a constructive agenda for ensuring the NSW Government continues to be a global leader on AI for public benefit. Drawing on insights from diverse groups of internationally respected experts, the Institute’s collaborative project with the Office of the NSW Chief Data Scientist has forged a range of practical opportunities to regulate and shape AI technologies in the market to drive wide social and economic benefit for the people of our state and beyond. What emerges is a realistic strategy for today that is also fit for the future.”

Dr Ian Oppermann
Then Chief Data Scientist, NSW Government

The challenge

Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies are creating transformative economic and social opportunities for NSW. However, their rapid evolution poses significant policy challenges and growing ubiquity creates risks to human rights, democratic values and human wellbeing.

This project identified 15 innovative policy opportunities for the NSW Government to actively regulate and shape the development and use of responsible AI, along with the public service capabilities needed to do so, in order to protect the interests of all NSW citizens and promote the public good.

Collaboration

This project focused on the distinctive and impactful policy options available to the NSW Government to foster ethical and responsible AI in the economy and society, leveraging the NSW Government’s existing position as a global digital leader.

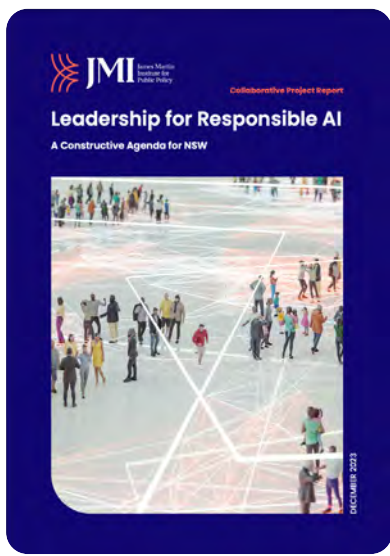
APPI brought together a project team to undertake research, collect evidence and insights and identify practical policy opportunities. The team worked in close collaboration with the NSW Government’s Chief Data Scientist, Dr Ian Oppermann, from June to December 2023 with active support from a dedicated Expert Advisory Group that included leading AI academic researchers from diverse disciplines as well as industry-based experts.

In addition, the team conducted over 20 consultations with leading AI experts from civil society groups, industry stakeholders, government policy staff, professional practitioners and academic researchers.

Solutions

The Project Report highlighted 15 policy opportunities for the NSW Government that covered the following key areas:

- Use law, guidance and oversight mechanisms to manage risks and reduce harm
- Use procurement to drive technology for public benefit
- Shape the market through knowledge transfer effects
- Enhance government capability



“Through this project, the Institute has articulated a set of insights and policy options that are worthy of consideration by the NSW Government as they look to improve the legal and policy settings for AI. The final report will be a valuable resource for policymakers and regulators, as well as others interested in this important policy area. It has been an incredibly positive experience contributing to this highly collaborative, impact-focused process.”

Professor Lyria Bennett Moses
Director, UNSW Allens Hub for Technology,
Law and Innovation

Impact

The project set out practical, innovative, and long-term policy options for the NSW Government. It brought together various AI experts from multiple domains, including academia, industry, and civil society.

The policy opportunities outlined in the report are timely and directly relevant to other jurisdictions in Australia. With other states and the Commonwealth Government currently working on actions they can take to regulate and influence the development and use of AI, the approaches outlined in the report can support these efforts by offering concrete avenues for reform for policymakers in other jurisdictions to consider.

In addition to crafting transformative policy options, the report generated an evidence base for potential policy development in a complex and rapidly evolving field.

By bringing together a wide range of researchers, industry experts and senior NSW policymakers, the project also created opportunities for collaborative idea exploration and exchange.

The report was launched at the 2023 NSW Future of AI Summit and received positive feedback from senior NSW Government policymakers and researchers. Its findings were referenced in NSW Parliamentary Inquiries on AI governance and policy opportunities are now being considered by digital policy leaders in the NSW Government.



Grants and fellowships

APPI Policy Challenge Grant

The APPI Policy Challenge Grant is an annual award program to support cutting-edge public policy development, addressing critical policy challenges. This year saw the publication of the first reports from APPI's inaugural grant awardees. In December 2023, APPI published a Policy Insights Paper on 'Improving governance and training for the use of facial verification technology in NSW Digital ID' by the team led by Professor Ed Santow (University of Technology Sydney) (see the impact case study in this report). In March 2024, on International Women's Day, APPI published a Policy Insights Paper on 'A gender equitable future of work in NSW' by the team led by Professors Rae Cooper and Elizabeth Hill (University of Sydney). This report set out five key areas of government policy, operations and investment that can be leveraged to drive gender equality across the labour market in NSW.

In late 2023, the second round of the grant program awarded seven grants to outstanding teams led by researchers from the University of Sydney, Western Sydney University, the University of Technology Sydney, the University of New South Wales and Charles Sturt University. Over the next two years, APPI will provide dedicated support to these project teams to translate their insights for policy audiences and amplify the impact of their research through targeted engagement and collaboration.



The 2023 grant winners are addressing some of New South Wales's biggest policy challenges, including:

- **Economic empowerment of First Nations people in the transition to Net Zero**
Lead researcher: Professor Heidi Norman
University of Technology Sydney
(Since moved to UNSW)
- **EV-ready apartments**
Lead researcher: Dr Thomas Longden
Western Sydney University
- **First Nations voices in habitat restoration**
Lead researcher: Dr Mitchell Gibbs
University of Sydney
- **Governing AI, education, and equity together**
Lead researcher: Professor Kalervo Gulson
University of Sydney
- **Harnessing data for inclusive and sustainable mobility**
Lead researcher: Associate Professor Amelia Thorpe
University of New South Wales
- **Leveraging digital technologies to boost productivity in the construction sector**
Lead researcher: Professor Srinath Perera
Western Sydney University
- **STEM education beyond our cities**
Lead researcher: Dr James Deehan
Charles Sturt University

For the 2024 round, grant applications were invited for projects focusing on intergenerational equity and shared prosperity, where the proposed research has strong potential to catalyse policy innovation and generate public value for the benefit of the people of NSW. Grant applications were sought for the following five areas:

1. Improving the availability of appropriate social and affordable housing for the people of NSW
2. Transitioning to a net zero economy: deepening economic inclusion and social license
3. Boosting industrial capacity for a productive and resilient economy
4. Redirecting public investment towards early intervention in education and population health
5. Driving greater equity in the distribution of wealth

We received 71 applications, involving more than 200 researchers and community practitioners from across NSW and Australia, of which 24 are led by an early career researcher (ECR). This year has seen an increasing number of applications supported by industry, NGOs and universities across Australia. Winners will be announced in late 2024.



APPI Policy Fellowship program

The APPI Policy Fellowship program continued to grow in 2023–2024. In late 2023, APPI held an open call for expressions of interest for future APPI Policy Fellows from its partner universities. This attracted significant interest and APPI has confirmed a pipeline of excellent fellows for 2024–25.

Four APPI Policy Fellows, drawn from the public service and university partners, pursued independent policy-relevant research over the course of this year:

1. Simon Rowell (The Cabinet Office, NSW Government) joined APPI as a Senior Policy Fellow. Mr Rowell's project explored how government can leverage greater investment to support industry and innovation in NSW, with his findings to be published later in 2024.
2. Dr Sophie-May Kerr (UNSW) completed a 12-week fellowship on housing policy, focusing on the needs of families with children living in apartments. Dr Kerr's Policy Insights Paper, "Planning for the inclusion of families with children in apartments", was published on 6 May 2024 and was featured in the *Sydney Morning Herald* and *The Mandarin*.
3. Associate Professor Dilupa Nakandala (Western Sydney University) completed her research exploring how manufacturing SMEs can be supported to adopt industry 4.0 technologies. A Policy Insights Paper sharing her insights and the policy opportunities emerging from her fellowship will be published later in 2024.
4. Dr Jodie Brabin (Charles Sturt University) began a fellowship exploring male participation and attrition in clinical nursing within NSW public health.



"The unique role of the Institute as an intermediary between government and universities offers great potential to researchers like me who are interested in utilising research to encourage real-world change."

Dr Sophie-May Kerr
APPI Policy Fellow

Impact Case Study 2

Governing facial recognition technology for digital identity in NSW

In a nutshell

- 10 principles identified to support legislation and policy for NSW digital ID
- 27 policymakers and industry experts attended a policy roundtable
- 6 Australian jurisdictions involved in the policy roundtable
- 550+ experts attended report launch at NSW Future of AI Summit 2023

The challenge

In April 2022, the NSW Government committed to establishing a digital identification for the people of NSW. Digital ID initiatives involve the use of new technology, such as facial verification, to verify an individual's identity. Done well, this can increase convenience for citizens, reduce risks associated with misidentification, and save money for governments and the private sector. However, this technology brings challenges that must be understood and addressed to realise the promise of a more secure and effective way of verifying people's identities.

Collaboration

The project team from the UTS Human Technology Institute collaborated with Service NSW to develop independent expert advice that proposed a governance framework and training strategy to support Service NSW and the Department of Customer Service in developing and rolling out a safe, reliable, and responsible Digital ID system. Working across several Service NSW teams, the project team harnessed the expertise of a range of stakeholders, including technology vendors, independent experts and community members.

“As our work evolves, there is great value in having an open conversation with leading experts about the way we deliver this technology to help communities understand the value and assure them of the steps we are taking to build trust in the community around Government services and digital ID initiatives.”

The Hon. Jihad Dib MP
Minister for Customer Service
and Digital Government



Policy insights

As part of its independent expert advice to the NSW Government, the project team developed ten principles to inform the governance framework for NSW Digital ID, focusing on four key areas: user protections, performance standards, accountability and oversight, and interoperability.

These principles underscore the importance of relying on more than just state-of-the-art technology. Good digital service delivery requires a systems-wide approach, including clear guardrails, effective governance, skilled staff, and placing human rights at the centre of policy design and decision-making.

Impact

In a world characterised by digital disruption, it is vitally important to harness diverse, deep expertise to help policymakers navigate new challenges and opportunities as they emerge. Through extensive engagement with policymakers, this project boosted collaborative relationships for policy development and contributed to building public sector capability in NSW.

The significance of the project's findings extends well beyond NSW. The NSW Government is a leader in digital government services and is well-placed to share its learnings widely across jurisdictions. That is why the project team organised a policy roundtable with the support of APPI that brought together representatives from other jurisdictions around Australia to discuss how to collectively build public trust and confidence in digital ID systems.



“The Institute’s Policy Challenge Grant enabled us at the UTS Human Technology Institute to provide the NSW Department of Customer Service with independent expert advice as it seeks to build the best, safest and most secure system for digital ID... the Institute’s support also enabled HTI to amplify our impact more widely, including through a successful co-hosted roundtable that brought together industry, community and government experts from jurisdictions across Australia. We are deeply appreciative of the Institute’s cooperative, collaborative approach and its like-minded commitment to creating real policy impact for the public good.”

Professor Edward Santow
Co-Director, UTS Human Technology Institute

Thought leadership and capability-building

The Policymaker

APPI's solutions-oriented digital publication, *The Policymaker*, published nearly 40 thought leadership pieces over the past year, from leading and emerging policy thinkers and practitioners. *The Policymaker* is increasingly recognised as a 'go-to' resource platform that bridges high-quality research and policy application.

Over the past 12 months, *The Policymaker* has covered a range of themes, including public health, housing, artificial intelligence, industrial policy, child protection and the transition to Net Zero.

The Policymaker also established two new hubs this year. The *Knowledge Brokering Hub* goes to the heart of APPI's mission, collecting insights from those with experience in strengthening collaboration between government and researchers to improve public policy outcomes. Meanwhile, the *AI & Public Policy Hub* examines the multifaceted effects of AI on various policy domains and the future of government operations.

APPI Policy Futures

APPI Futures, spearheaded by Executive Director Jane Reynaud since her arrival in April 2024, operates at the interface of policy, evidence and practice.

This new work stream aims to drive new opportunities for capability-building and capacity uplift for both established and emerging policy practitioners, and its programs will be underpinned by a commitment to practitioner-centred expertise, fostering skills enhancement and facilitating knowledge exchange around best practice in contemporary policymaking.

APPI Policy Futures is leading deep consultation with key stakeholders across government and academia to understand the breadth of our partners' needs in this context and to explore opportunities for targeted and strategic policymaking skills development. APPI Policy Futures is also engaging closely with sector colleagues to ensure new offerings are complementary to existing professional development programs being delivered, and opportunities for collaboration are maximised. The next 12 months will see critical growth in the output and impact of this new strategic portfolio.



“Responding to the needs of government and university partners, APPI Policy Futures presents a compelling opportunity for us to build the targeted policy capacity and capabilities that can deliver real benefits for society at large.”

Professor the Hon. Verity Firth AM
Deputy Chair, APPI

“The NSW Policy Community of Practice looks forward to collaboration with APPI Policy Futures on developing the policy capability, skills and connections that public servants need to deliver robust policy outcomes and public impact.”

Joann Wilkie
Deputy Secretary – Economic Strategy
& Productivity Group, NSW Treasury



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The Policymaker



APPI  **POLICY FUTURES**

APPI Policy Futures works at the interface of policy, evidence and practice to drive new opportunities for capability-building and capacity uplift for established and emerging policy experts. These practitioner-centred programs aim to enhance skills and knowledge exchange around best practice in contemporary policymaking.

“If there was ever a time to bring our largest publicly funded organisations together and collaborate in new ways to drive benefit and impact for our community, it’s now.”

Jane Reynaud

Executive Director, APPI Policy Futures

Strategic engagement for the public good

APPI has broadened its engagement with its government and university partners to drive practical policy solutions for Australians. In the 2023-24 financial year, our team engaged with policymakers and researchers over 550 times, dedicating significant time to facilitate meaningful dialogue, connections and policy innovation. These efforts demonstrate the Institute's dedication to shaping evidence-based policymaking that benefit the public, bridging the gap between research and practical application to achieve tangible results.



Deepening our partnership with governments

Throughout the year, APPI has worked with government entities at all levels to deliver collaborative initiatives and capture expert insights. The Institute's engagement focused on identifying opportunities to address complex challenges such as housing, higher education funding, and systems reform in health and child protection. Our broader team and collaborators, which includes APPI Policy Challenge Grant recipients and Policy Fellows, facilitated in-depth engagements with various government officials, enriching our understanding of priorities and laying the groundwork for identifying policy opportunities based on research and expertise. We are committed to supporting policymakers in delivering informed policies that positively impact the lives of all Australians.

320+

Direct engagements with
government policymakers

275+

Policymakers across
government departments
and ministerial offices involved

250+

Hours of collaboration with
government policymakers
across work streams

Highlights:

- In May 2024, APPI was accepted onto the NSW Treasury's **whole-of-government scheme** for Prequalification: Performance and Management Services for Strategic Planning and Development and Policy Review/Development.
- APPI's **Policy Advisory Committee** was reconstituted after the 2023 NSW elections. It brings together senior policymakers from government departments and ministerial offices to advise APPI on current priorities and opportunities for collaboration.
- **APPI Senior Policy Fellow (Public Service Stream) Simon Rowell** joined the Institute in June 2024 from The Cabinet Office in NSW Government to examine how government can leverage greater investment to support industry and innovation in NSW.
- **APPI delivered an APS Academy Mastercraft session** on "Engaging with experts to solve public policy challenges", bringing together 108 public servants across 39 agencies.
- APPI launched a new **Policy Talks series**, which aims to build a community of policy professionals across sectors to foster innovation and inclusivity at all levels of government policy. Policy Talks are held in collaboration with the NSW Policy Community of Practice.

Key collaborators in FY2023-24:

- Australian Department of Education
- NSW Department of Education
- NSW Department of Communities and Justice
- NSW Education and Standards Authority (NESA)
- NSW The Cabinet Office
- NSW Treasury
- NSW Department of Customer Service
- Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet
- Investment NSW
- NSW Department of Health



Harnessing the expertise of our university partners

In the past year, APPI has worked closely with partner universities to engage researchers in the policy processes. The Institute has tapped into university expertise on artificial intelligence, higher education funding, child protection system reform, vocational education and training, and many others. These initiatives have been essential in developing an evidence base for policy change and innovation for the public good. By actively promoting participation in collaborative projects for smart solutions, we have expanded our university networks with deep subject-matter expertise. Moving forward, we are committed to further nurturing these networks to ensure our combined efforts continue contributing to Australia's prosperous and resilient future.

310+
Engagements with university researchers and other experts

290+
Hours of collaboration

250+
Researchers involved across work streams, including 25 researchers and other experts who served on Expert Advisory Groups, and eight Research Associates

Highlights:

- APPI welcomed the **University of Wollongong** as its sixth university partner in Feb 2024.
- **Dr Sophie-May Kerr (UNSW)** completed a fellowship on housing policy and, in particular, how to better accommodate families with children living in NSW apartments.
- Alongside UTS and other partners, APPI co-sponsored the visit of world-leading economist **Professor Mariana Mazzucato** as part of her "Mission-led Australia Tour."
- JMI's CEO, Libby Hackett, participated in a panel discussion on the role of universities in shaping public opinion at the **Times Higher World Academic Summit 2023** at the University of Sydney.
- APPI showcased policy institutes from its partner universities at a **Policy Impact Exhibition** during the 2023 APPI Policymaker Summit.
- A new **Policy Pioneers** feature series showcases impactful policy research undertaken by early-to-mid-career researchers from our partner universities.
- APPI will soon launch a new podcast series, the **Policymaker Podcast**, with thematic episodes hearing from researchers, public servants and political advisors, and industry and community representatives on a range of topics including energy transitions and the road to Net Zero, social cohesion, and trust and technological innovation.





Policy engagement led by recipients of the APPI Policy Challenge Grant

Engaging with policymakers is a fundamental aspect of the APPI Policy Challenge Grant program. A recent survey found that project teams engage with policymakers extensively, and for various reasons (see Figure A). This showcases their intention to developing pragmatic and evidence-based policy solutions.

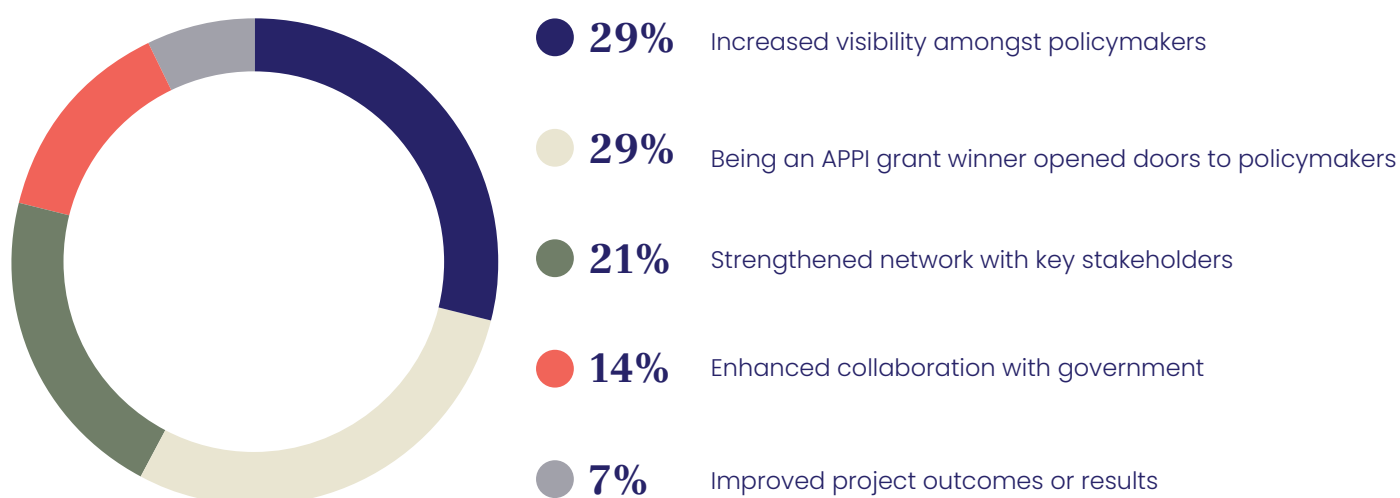
Throughout the year, project teams have received targeted support from APPI to maximise the policy impact of their work. Survey results show that the various forms of support provided by APPI enhanced the project teams' ability to engage effectively with policymakers (see Figure B).



Policy engagement led by grant project teams in FY2023-24: Most common objectives



Impact of the support provided by APPI to Policy Challenge Grant recipients



Source: 2024 survey of grant project teams



“I have had grants over a million dollars and never had support like this. It’s amazing... This has not only been the least annoying grant process, but it has also been the smartest, most streamlined, and most involved. We’re thrilled to have received an Institute grant.”

Associate Professor Amelia Thorpe
School of Law, Society and Criminology, University of New South Wales

“I have found the experience of working with the Institute to be extremely positive at all stages. The Institute take a personal, values driven approach to public policy research that made me feel valued as an academic at all stages. The team have continued to help with networking and support to maximise the potential impact of my project. It’s enabled me to expand my horizons whilst remaining focused on my research.”

Dr James Deehan
School of Education, Charles Sturt University

Building communities of action

In the past year, APPI has expanded its events program and boosted digital engagement to unite stakeholders in public policy transformation. The new initiatives include interactive conferences, roundtables, webinars, and other forums that empower diverse voices from government, academia, industry and civil society. By encouraging active participation and network-building, we are creating a dynamic and inclusive environment to address complex policy challenges.

APPI Policymaker Summit

APPI hosted its **inaugural Policymaker Summit** at UNSW Sydney on 7 August 2023. This new flagship event brought together over 200 public policy experts from government, academia, civil society and industry.

The event featured addresses from NSW Deputy Premier Prue Car MP and Minister Rose Jackson MLC, who emphasised the need for inclusive policymaking and stakeholder engagement in education and housing reforms. Discussions focused on driving sustainable economic growth and empowering communities to shape policy responses.

The Summit highlighted the increasing collaboration between the government and universities, marking a significant moment in Australian public policy. Panels also emphasised the need to integrate lived experience into policy design and the importance of democratic engagement in decision-making. Professor Peter Shergold AC, APPI Chair, praised NSW's leadership in forming partnerships with university expertise in policymaking. The Summit also included a Policy Impact Exhibition that showcased the work developed by leading policy institutes from across its partner universities.

Policy Challenge Grant winners celebration

In November 2023, we celebrated the 2023 APPI Policy Challenge Grant winners at the State Library of NSW, marking another cornerstone of our event program. Introduced by a keynote address by the Hon Anoulack Chanthivong MP, NSW Minister for Innovation, Science and Technology, the event showcased the six project teams that were awarded grants to develop concrete solutions to some of the state's most pressing challenges.



Highlights:

- **NSW Deputy Premier Prue Car MP** and **Minister Rose Jackson MLC** delivered addresses at the 2023 APPI Policymaker Summit.
- **NSW Minister Paul Scully MP** and **Minister Ryan Park MP** participated in the launch event of APPI's partnership with the University of Wollongong.
- **NSW Minister Anoulack Chanthivong MP** delivered the keynote address at the 2023 APPI Policy Challenge Grant Winners celebration.
- APPI launched its report 'Leadership for responsible AI' at the **Future of AI Summit**, hosted by the NSW Department of Customer Service, in the presence of 550+ attendees at the University of Technology Sydney.



“We are fortunate to have the Institute in NSW as our independent driver for research-informed policymaking, working to build relationships and forging clear pathways for academic and policymaker collaboration.

To make progress, we need to foster knowledge infrastructure and ecosystems to connect the NSW Government with the private sector. We need our educational institutions and policy and think tanks harnessing expertise and knowledge from all corners to tackle the policy challenges we all face – now and for the future.”

The Hon. Anoulack Chanthivong MP
NSW Minister NSW Minister for Innovation,
Science and Technology

Policy Talks

APPI launched a new Policy Talks series, which aims to build a community of policy professionals across sectors to foster innovation and inclusivity at all levels of government policy.

The first event focused on affordable and accessible housing. Taking place at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music in May 2024, it featured a discussion between Rebecca Pinkstone, CEO of Homes NSW, and Professor Philip Oldfield from UNSW. Pinkstone emphasised the significance of tenant-centred policies and the need for collaboration with local government and support partners to address social housing challenges effectively.

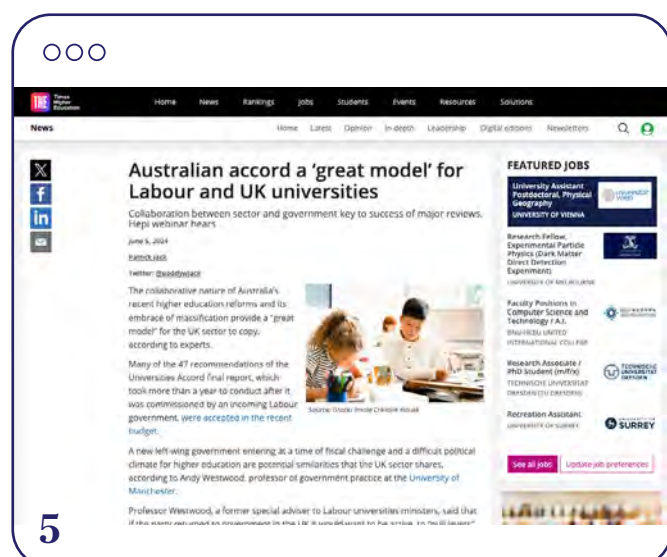
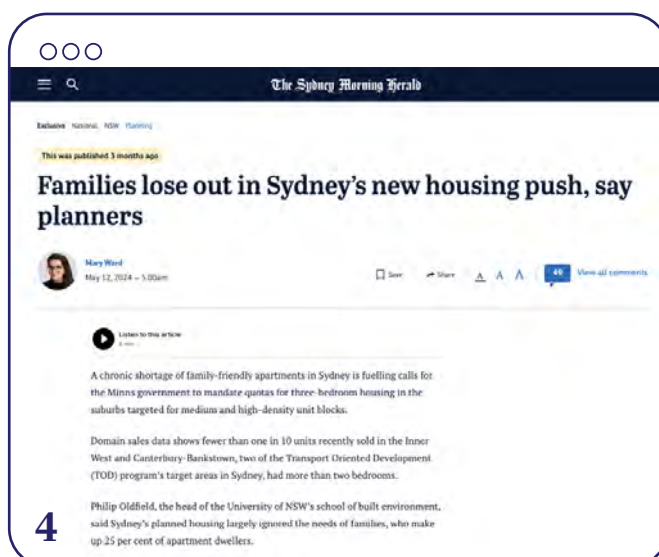
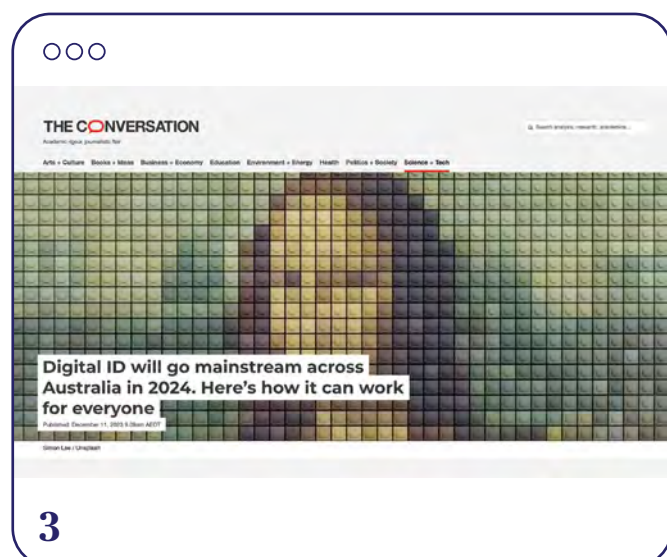
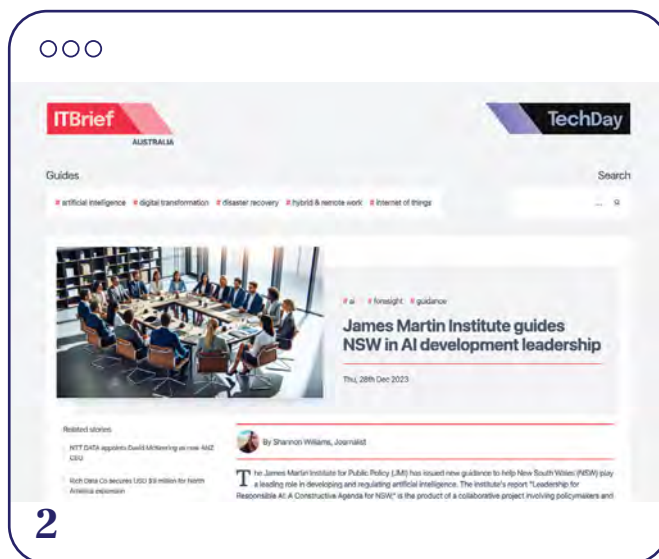
Professor Philip Oldfield stressed the complexities of housing supply and affordability, emphasising the importance of diverse and well-designed living spaces. The event also addressed issues in the rental market and explored examples of international good practice as potential solutions. The discussion highlighted a clear commitment to inclusive policymaking and innovative solutions, envisioning a brighter future for housing accessibility in NSW through community engagement and effective policy frameworks.





Media highlights

APPI has been featured in several major media outlets in the last 12 months:



1. The Policymaker Summit was featured in *The Australian*.
2. APPI's report "Leadership for Responsible AI" was featured in *IT Brief* and *LSJ Online*.
3. The Policy Insights Paper of the APPI Policy Challenge Grant project led by Professor Ed Santow (UTS) was featured in *InnovationAus*, *The Conversation*, *ABC Radio* and several other outlets.
4. Sophie-May Kerr's research was featured in *The Sydney Morning Herald* and an article published by *Domain* as well as an op-ed in *The Mandarin*.
5. APPI's CEO, Libby Hackett, was interviewed by *Times Higher Education* about the Institute's work on the *Australian Universities Accord*.

Governance

APPI is an independent, non-partisan policy institute with charitable status. It operates under a robust governance framework that encompasses an independent Board of Directors, a formal Constitution, independent advisory groups including a Research Advisory Group, and the governing and reporting structures in place with our government and university partners.

These structures and agreements ensure clear processes, integrity, accountability, and the pursuit of excellence in research, analysis and policy engagement.

APPI remains committed to upholding the highest standards of governance and fostering collaborations that contribute to informed decision-making and positive societal impact.

Constitution

APPI operates under a constitution that outlines the principles, objectives, and governance structure of the organisation. It delineates the roles and responsibilities of the Board of directors, ensuring transparency, accountability, and adherence to the highest ethical standards.

Board of directors

APPI is governed by an independent Board of directors, which is responsible for providing strategic guidance and oversight to ensure the effective operation and fulfillment of APPI's mission. The Board is composed of distinguished individuals from various fields, including government, academia, the not-for-profit sector and industry who bring their expertise and experience to steer APPI's activities.

- **Professor Peter Shergold AC, Chair (Independent)**
- **Professor The Hon. Verity Firth AM, Deputy Chair (University-appointed)**
Deputy Chair, Vice-President Societal Impact, Equity and Engagement, University of New South Wales
NSW Minister for Education and Training (2008–2011)
- **Peter Duncan AM (Government-appointed),**
Chair, WaterNSW
- **Professor Emma Johnston AO FAA FTSE FRSN (University-appointed)**
Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research),
University of Sydney
- **Jillian Kilby, Independent (Government-appointed)**
CEO and Founder, The Infrastructure Collaborative
- **Amy Persson (University-appointed)**
Interim Vice-Chancellor (Social Justice and Inclusion), University of Technology Sydney
- **Joseph Rizk AM (Independent)**
CEO and Managing Director, Arab Bank Australia

Finance, Audit and Risk (FA&R) Committee

FA&R provides expert advice to the CEO in developing appropriate financial, audit and risk mechanisms, process and methods. On behalf of the APPI Board, the FA&R oversees critical reporting systems and checks, including the risk register.

Government partnerships

- APPI has a Funding Agreement as well as a Memorandum of Understanding with the NSW Government. The Funding Agreement defines the reporting requirements and performance indicators for the Institute until 2024.
- APPI signed the Memorandum of Understanding with the NSW Government this year, which set out the nature of this unique collaborative partnership. It outlines shared goals, cooperation, and partnership principles, facilitating a fruitful partnership in addressing critical policy challenges.

University partnerships

- APPI has either a Funding Agreement or Partnership Agreement in place with each of its university partners. These partnerships enable APPI to leverage the expertise and resources of its university partners, fostering a vibrant environment for collaboration and knowledge exchange at various levels.



University Partners Advisory Panel

The University Partners Advisory Panel is a sub-Committee of the Board, designed to maximise the contribution of university partners to the work and shared mission of APPI. Representatives include:

- Professor Emma Johnston AO FAA FTSE FRSN, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research), University of Sydney
- Professor The Hon. Verity Firth AM, Vice-President Societal Impact, Equity and Engagement, University of New South Wales, NSW Minister for Education and Training (2008-2011)
- Amy Persson, interim Pro Vice-Chancellor (Social Justice and Inclusion), University of Technology Sydney
- Professor Deborah Sweeney, Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Vice-President (Research, Enterprise and International), Western Sydney University
- Professor David Currow FAHMS, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Sustainable Futures), University of Wollongong
- Professor Mark Evans FIPPA, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research), Charles Sturt University

University Key Contacts

Each of our universities provide APPI with a 'key contact' with dedicated time to supporting the Institute. Our University Key Contacts play a crucial role in helping APPI to identify and access research expertise, professional advice and facilities in support of our mission.

Our key contacts are currently:

- Rhonda O'Brien, Executive Officer, Office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research), Charles Sturt University
- Chris Tulloch, Executive Officer, and Jo O'Brien, Senior Executive Assistant, Office of the Deputy Vice Chancellor – Research and Sustainable Futures, University of Wollongong
- Anne Irvine, Senior Government Relations Manager, University of New South Wales
- Fiona Versey, Manager, Strategic Partnerships and Advocacy, Centre for Social Justice and Inclusion, University of Technology Sydney

- Kim Pascoe, Executive Officer, Office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research), University of Sydney
- Dr Anette McLaren, Senior Policy Advisor and Projects Manager, Office of the Deputy Vice Chancellor, Research, Enterprise and International, Western Sydney University

Research Advisory Group

The Research Advisory Group provides expert advice to APPI regarding the quality and governance of the Institute's research activities with a focus on public policy impact. The Research Advisory Group also provides expert advice to the Executive on the shortlist of applications for the APPI Policy Challenge Grant program.

The Group is made up of three university research-policy experts, three government research-policy experts, and three independent research-policy experts, including an independent Chair.

- Professor Margaret Harding, Chair of the Research Advisory Group
- Anne Hampshire, Vice-Chair, Independent member
- Professor Mark Evans, Vice-Chancellor of Research, Charles Sturt University
- Nathan Martin, Office of the Deputy Secretary for Aboriginal Affairs and Outcomes, NSW Premier's Department
- Tim McMinn, Director of Roadmap Governance, Office of Energy and Climate Change, NSW Treasury
- Professor Philip Oldfield, Head of School at UNSW Built Environment
- Eamon Ritchie, Independent member
- Associate Professor Jacqueline Ullman, School of Education, Western Sydney University
- Dr Frances Foster-Thorpe, Executive Director of Shaping Futures and Data Insights, The Cabinet Office of NSW

We thank others who served on the Research Advisory Group during this financial year: Associate Professor Myra Hamilton, Dr Aruna Sathanapally, Dr Samantha Sharpe and Professor Karen Soldatic.



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