

FOR ENGAGE SFU 2026,
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SKAARUD

Innovation and Entrepreneurial Ecosystem Report **Sydney University, Australia**



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About The University of Sydney



- Founded in 1850
- Nr 18 in OS World University Rankings 2025
- Nr 15 in. QS sustainability Ranckings 2025
- Puplished over 21 000 publications
- Comitted over 2 million dollars in funding to 100 joint research projects

The innovation ecosystem

Discovery

Innovation & Enterprise division

Strategic university division – coordinates how research becomes impact

Central institutional unit - commercialization, industry engagement and research translation

PERIscope program

3-month market validation and residency program at the Sydney Knowledge Hub

Sydney Knowledge Hub

Events, meet ups, co-working space, Inventor mentor program, SPARK program, PerIscope program

Development

Nanopitch

Nanopitch: Health
Best pitch: \$100K equity-free prize. \$25K+ other prizes.

Nanopitch: STEM
Best pitch: \$25K equity-free prize

Sydney Gensis

Business idea competition - Encourage entrepreneurial thinking, and pitching.
8-week accelerator program - chance to win \$30K equity-free prize.

Start-up Year

12 month credentialed program and \$5K scholarship. Government funded and in collaboration with other universities

Pre-Seed Fund

\$25M fund providing up to \$500K investment in early-stage university ventures.

Venture

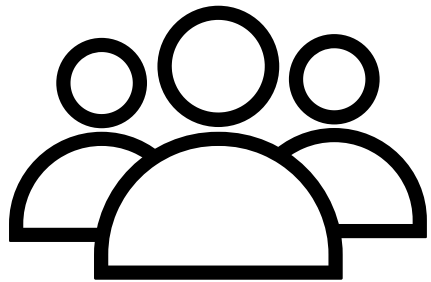
UniSeed fund

An investment fund owned in collaboration with multiple leading Universities and research institutes

Follow-on fund

Up to \$2M investment in spinouts to maintain university equity.

Innovation in numbers



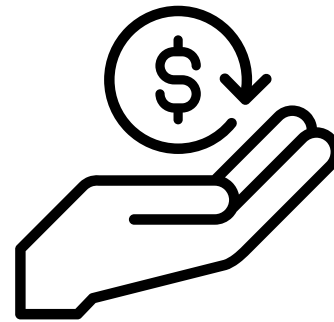
1,456

Jobs created



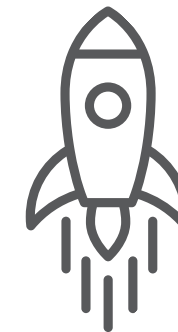
\$338m

Total value of companies
based in their IP



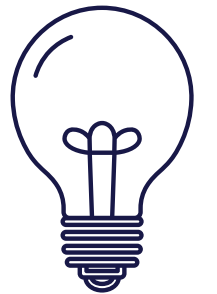
\$1.4b

Capital raised by
their start-ups



259

Start-ups supported
in their ecosystem



2,419

Inventions, copyrights,
designs and trademarks
(since 1983)

Sydney Knowledge Hub 03

Purpose and Vision

An initiative designed to connect students, researchers, startups, entrepreneurs, investors and industry partners. Institutionally structured and closely integrated with research activities. Aims to transform ideas into specific products, services and companies. Provides a clear scale-up environment to support growth from early-stage ideas to market-ready solutions.

Research and innovation focus

Strong focus on intellectual property (IP) protection and commercialisation. Around 50% of applications come from students and 50% from researchers. Approximately two-thirds of projects are research-led, often involving mixed teams of students and researchers. Largest participation comes from first-year and fourth-year students

Facilities and structure

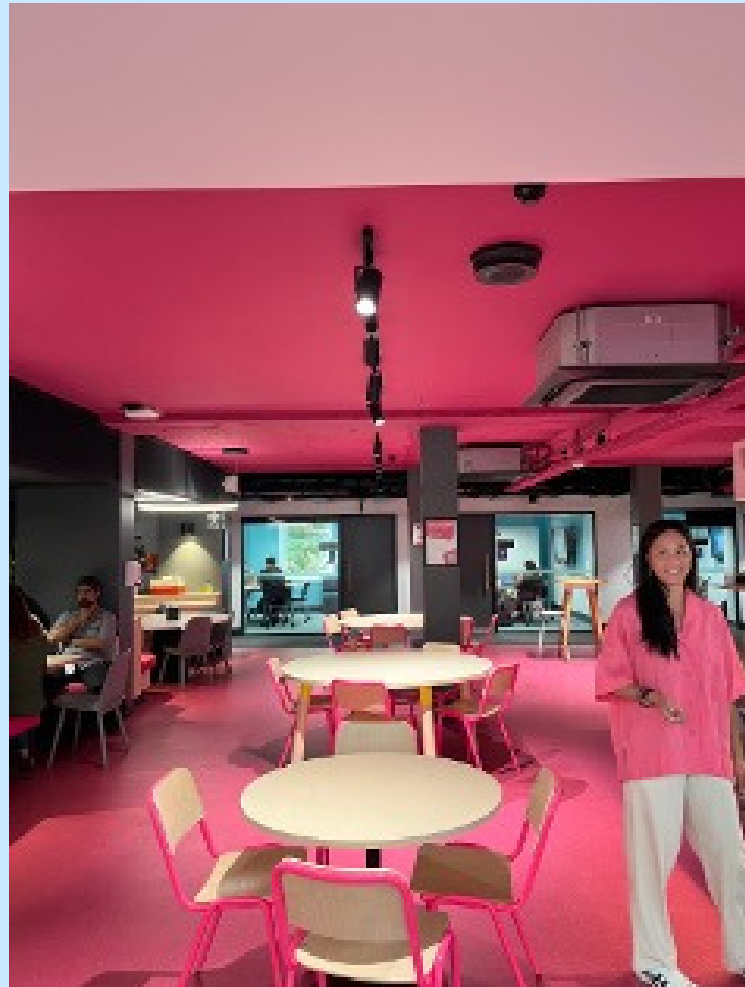
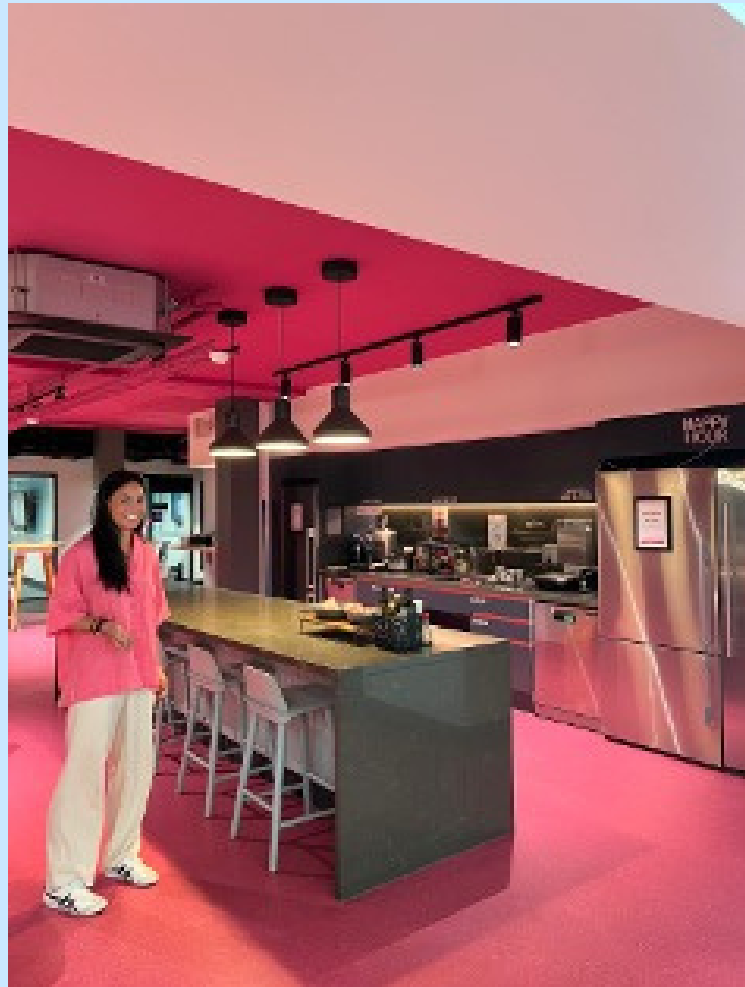
An innovation building, co-founded by the government. Used for both incubator programs (e.g., programs like INCUBATE) and a coworkingspace for startups. Offers flexible workspaces, including; one desk - one day rental options, coworking memberships, researchers memberships. Membership-based structure with different access levels. Students are offered a free 30-day trial membership.

Support and resources

Provides a wide range of resources, including; training and educational programs, mentorship and expert guidance, networking opportunities, financial support and funding opportunities and access to facilities, laboratories and innovation spaces



Photos from Innovation Hub



Funding & Capital

04



04.1

Pre-seed fund

DESCRIPTION:

PROVIDES EARLY-STAGE CAPITAL TO TRANSFORM RAW RESEARCH OR INNOVATIVE CONCEPTS INTO COMMERCIALY VIABLE PRODUCTS. IT SUPPORTS ESSENTIAL INITIAL STEPS LIKE PROTOTYPE DEVELOPMENT, MARKET VALIDATION, AND EARLY TEAM BUILDING BEFORE A STARTUP GENERATES REVENUE. THIS FOUNDATIONAL INVESTMENT ACTS AS A BRIDGE, PREPARING PROMISING VENTURES TO ATTRACT LARGER DOWNSTREAM FUNDING LIKE SEED OR VENTURE CAPITAL

FUND OVERVIEW & SCOPE

- **Early-Stage Capital:** Provides initial funding to transform early-stage research and ideas into commercial ventures.
- **Core Purpose:** Used for prototype testing, market validation, and developing early-stage startups.
- **Key Focus Areas:** Supports projects in health, biotechnology, data science, sustainability, and advanced materials.
- **Industry Collaboration:** Operates in close partnership with industry and investment partners.
- **Fund Size & Duration:** Managed by the venture investment team with a \$25M AUD allocation over 5 years.
- **Investment Limit:** Provides up to \$500,000 per project

04.2

UniSeed fund

DESCRIPTION:

A JOINT INVESTMENT VENTURE OWNED BY LEADING AUSTRALIAN UNIVERSITIES AND RESEARCH INSTITUTES TO BRIDGE THE GAP BETWEEN EARLY-STAGE RESEARCH AND PRIVATE CAPITAL. IT PROVIDES CRUCIAL FUNDING AND COMMERCIALIZATION SUPPORT FOR HIGH-IMPACT PROJECTS IN AREAS LIKE TECHNOLOGY, BIOTECHNOLOGY, GREEN ENERGY, AND DATA SCIENCE. BY TARGETING VENTURES WITH GLOBAL SCALABILITY, UNISEED HELPS TRANSFORM ACADEMIC BREAKTHROUGHS INTO SUCCESSFUL COMMERCIAL ENTERPRISES.

FUND OVERVIEW & SCOPE

- **Joint Venture:** Owned and operated in collaboration with leading Australian universities and research institutes (Univ. of Melbourne, Univ. of Queensland, UNSW Sydney, Univ. of Sydney, and CSIRO).
- **Research Bridge:** Functions as a vital bridge between early academic research and private venture capital investment.
- **Sector Focus:** Target investments in high-impact sectors including technology, biotechnology, green energy, and data science.
- **Capital Gap Solution:** Created specifically to address the early-stage capital shortage for commercializing research products and services.
- **Global Ambition:** Prioritizes projects with high potential for international scalability, particularly in medicine and software innovation.
- **Proven Track Record:** Has successfully backed numerous university spin-outs that progressed to major acquisitions by industry leaders.

04.4

Governance & Ownership

Centrally Governed: Strategically managed through the university's centralized Innovation & Enterprise division.

Strategically Funded: Backed by structured university capital allocations and long-term funding strategies.

Government Supported: Operates with co-funding and policy alignment from government initiatives.

Commercialization-Oriented: Focused on translating academic research and innovation into commercial market solutions.

IP & Investment-Driven: Built around strong intellectual property protection, formal patenting, and venture backing.

ECOSYSTEM GOVERNANCE

Equity Participation: The university takes equity stakes in early-stage spin-outs and venture creations.

Licensing Agreements: Formal commercial licensing of university-held intellectual property (IP) to startups and industry partners.

Institutional Involvement: University maintains active ownership interest to ensure long-term value creation and research alignment.

Spin-Out Support: Structured framework for researchers and founders to transition institutional IP into independent commercial entities.

OWNERSHIP STRUCTURES

Similarities & Differences

05.1 Similarities and Differences: NTNU vs. Sydney

Category	NTNU	University of Sydney	Key takeaway
Governance model	Hybrid: Student-driven with institutional support	Institutionally structured & centrally governed	Sydney uses a top-down strategic model
Innovation	Idea-driven, primarily student-initiated	Research-driven commercialization of academic IP & patenting	Sydney focuses on IP, patents and licensing
Startup ownership	Founders/students retain full ownership	University takes equity stakes in spin-outs	Sydney has higher direct university equity
Membership model	Low-threshold with free student access	Fee-based co-working space & paid memberships	Sydney expects buy-in via membership fees
Student involvement	Student-led organizations & peer mentoring culture	50% researchers, 2/3 researcher-led with mixed teams	Sydney connects students directly with researchers
Scale-up pathway	Fragmented funding ladder & local VC network access	Structured pathway: Research → Pre-Seed → UniSeed → VC	Sydney provides a clear commercialization ladder
Capital access	More limited to local VC ecosystems	National VC collaborations + bigger capital network	Easier for startups to have access to follow on capital

05.2 Comparison to NTNU

More institutionally structured

Strong equity & IP focus

University may take equity

National UniSeed + stronger Venture capital ecosystem

Paid membership structure

More room for funding

Cooperation between students and researchers

05.3

Recommendations

MIXED STUDENTS- RESEARCHER TEAMS

Encouraging more collaboration between students and researchers. They all sit on valuable information that should be shared. Open up for startup teams being mixed with students and researchers

NATIONAL UNIVERSITY INVESTMENT FUND

Would open up more possibilities for startups all over Norway. Difficult to find funding as a new startup and this would be an initiative that could lift the engagement

MORE STRUCTURED SCALE-UP PATHWAY

A clearer transition from idea – prototype – growth. Maybe include cooperations with bigger fundings that could be given to more experienced startups or startups with a big growth potential

Contact Persons

06

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KNOWLEDGE OF NTNUS INNOVATION
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HEAD ON RESEARCH VENTURES
INVESTMENT, PRE-SEED LAUNCH FUND

RELEVANCE:
WOKRS WITH FUNDING STARTUPS

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