Overview

This year Grattan Institute again contributed the highest-quality policy research and ideas to public debate. We also strengthened our capability to communicate these ideas effectively to policy makers, opinion leaders, and the public through the media, presentations and events, and our website. This report examines each program’s contribution in detail.

Budget Policy and Australian Perspectives

Our report released in December, The wealth of generations looked at how the housing boom plus rapid increases in government payments on pensions and services for older people risks creating a generation of young Australians with a lower standard of living than that of their parents at a similar age. The report’s findings were discussed broadly including in opinion pieces in The Australian and The Conversation.

Behavioural economics - the love child of economics and psychology - is changing the policy landscape. We hosted a very well attended and interesting public event with Shadow Assistant Treasurer Andrew Leigh, discussing how behavioural economics is shaping policy in Australia.

Every year Grattan Institute releases a summer reading list for the Prime Minister. It recommends books and articles that the Prime Minister, or any Australian interested in public debate, will find both stimulating and cracking good reads. Public events discussing the reading list were held in Sydney with Geraldine Doogue and Melbourne with Helen Silver.

Three days after the Budget, Commonwealth Treasury Secretary John Fraser made his only public statement on the Budget and Australia’s long-term economic outlook in conversation with John Daley at State Library Victoria.

Cities

Cities Program Director Jane-Frances Kelly left Grattan to move to Scotland at the end of 2014. For over five years the Program has shaped Australian thinking on cities. Its work covers why cities matter, including both how they contribute to the economy, and how they strengthen or diminish social interaction. It broke ground in showing the latent demand for housing in cities, and the barriers to this being delivered. It provided a coherent synthesis of how policy affects housing. It has shown how we can improve how decisions get made in these areas.

City centres are the new engines of Australia’s prosperity, replacing the regions and their agriculture, and the suburbs that once housed much of our manufacturing. Today 80% of the dollar value of all goods and services in Australia is produced on
just 0.2% of the nation’s land, most of it in cities. But this report from the Cities Program, *Mapping Australia’s economy: cities as engines of prosperity*, shows that too many workers are living too far from jobs to fulfil our cities’ potential.

Cities are the engines of Australia’s economy, yet rising divisions within them threaten economic prosperity and the fair go. Grattan Institute’s first book, *City Limits: Why Australia’s cities are broken and how we can fix them*, showed how the distance between where most city residents live and where they work is growing rapidly.

**Transport**

Grattan Institute was delighted to announce the appointment of Marion Terrill as director of its new Transport Program. Marion has had substantial experience in both public and private sectors, having worked for the Commonwealth Treasury and as Policy Director of the Business Council of Australia, among other positions. Australia’s transport systems are under increasing strain as our cities, road networks and demands on our freight network grow.

**Energy**

The Energy Program’s report, *Fair pricing for power*, shows how we can do better in relation to electricity pricing. It proposed two new tariffs that would charge consumers not on their total power use but on the maximum load they put on the network at key times. This maximum load governs how much network businesses spend on infrastructure; if this spending can be reduced, the savings can be passed on as lower prices.

Big gas price increases are looming for Australian homes and businesses. The Energy report, *Gas at the crossroads: Australia’s hard choice*, shows that the emerging $60 billion export industry will deliver great economic benefits. Governments should ensure that these benefits are fairly shared but resist calls for gas protection to keep prices low.

The coming of home batteries coupled with solar panels on 1.4 million Australian rooftops could create an energy revolution, according to the Energy Program’s May report, *Sundown, sunrise: how Australia can finally get solar power right*. But governments must avoid the mistakes of the past by rejecting expensive subsidies and setting charges that reflect the true cost of providing power.

**Health**

Seventy percent of Australians want to die at home yet most die in hospital and aged care. The Health Program report, *Dying Well*, sets out policies that could help many more people to die comfortably at home. Grattan Health Program Director Stephen Duckett and Visiting Health Fellow Hal Swerissen show how deaths in hospitals and aged care facilities have increased over time and compare with other countries, and call for new attitudes and practices that would give more Australians a dignified death.
In their submission to a Senate inquiry on out-of-pocket health costs, Stephen Duckett and Health Fellow Peter Breadon argued that the $7 Medicare co-payment will hurt the most vulnerable Australians, without producing substantial savings in the health system.

Poor implementation of a policy to reduce pharmaceutical costs is draining $320 million a year from government budgets, and raises questions about the involvement of pharmaceutical companies in drug pricing, according to the Health program’s June report, *Premium policy? Getting better value from the PBS*. The government should not pay on the PBS for the most expensive drug if a cheaper one is just as good. The policy to get the best price exists but it has been watered down in ways that benefit drug companies.

**Higher Education**

Graduates of Australia’s elite universities earn on average six per cent more over a career than do other graduates, but the Higher Education October report, *Mapping Australian higher education, 2014-15*, shows that when it comes to salary, your field of study matters much more than where you study. The report is the third in an annual series that provides key facts and their context about the higher education system.

With the Senate conducting an inquiry into the broad principles behind the government’s proposed higher education reforms, and investigating alternatives, Andrew Norton’s submission to the inquiry showed that more people get higher education qualifications in high-fee rather than low-fee OECD countries. Australia fits this mould: fees are relatively high, and so is participation in higher education. However, fees for most undergraduates remain regulated, funding rates do not reflect real university costs, and any increase in fees may be invested in research rather than in teaching that directly benefits students.

**Productivity Growth**

The Productivity Growth Program’s report, *Super Savings*, showed that high fees are hurting the superannuation balances of Australians, taking at least $40,000 from the accounts of millions of people before they retire. Government action can drive them down, taking the pressure off individuals at retirement and off government pension payments. Both superannuation administration and investment fees are too high, and could be reduced if the Government ran a fee-based tender for the right to administer default funds.

The Murray Financial Services Inquiry picked up this work and found that Australia’s $16 billion superannuation industry needs to become more efficient. The industry is unwilling to accept the criticism.

Small business is often slow to take up the benefits of computing technology and can do much more to profit from a vital global innovation, according to this Grattan discussion paper, *The silver lining: cloud computing and small and medium enterprises*. Productivity Growth Program Director Jim Minifie set out the big
information technology opportunities for the private sector, and how government can help business to realise them.

**School Education**

We welcomed Peter Goss to Grattan to head up our School Education Program this year. Peter has over 10 years experience as a strategy consultant, most recently with the Boston Consulting Group, advising Federal and State governments on service delivery innovation.

Focusing solely on their academic achievement as measured by final results reveals little about how much they actually learn during the year. Peter Goss argued that tracking academic progress, on the other hand, paints a much clearer picture.

Education commentators divide over how much to promote the disciplines known as STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics). This public event brought Australia’s Chief Scientist Ian Chubb and other experts to debate the question.

**Communications**

Grattan Institute is committed to presenting rigorous policy thinking and complex ideas in a clear and compelling fashion. We work hard to expose our work to the widest possible audience of policy-makers and the public. We have strong relationships with electronic, print and online media. Over the financial year Grattan Institute was mentioned in the media nearly 27,745 times.

Grattan Institute’s website was visited 216,689 times this financial year. Visitors viewed more than 589,354 pages and downloaded reports 39,812 times.

The number of people on our mailing list has grown to more than 16,000. Grattan Institute also continues to build its profile on social media, with 9,231 followers on Twitter.

Grattan Institute communicates directly to the public through speeches and public seminars. Over the year, Grattan Institute held 27 public seminars attended by approximately 4,600 people. Videos, podcasts and transcripts for most seminars are published on Grattan Institute’s website.

Grattan Institute also works to influence policy makers. Program Directors and other staff are continually extending their professional networks to include more public sector officials, Ministers and Shadow Ministers in all States. These and other stakeholders are routinely consulted for comment as our work is developed, and after it is released publicly.
Staff

Grattan Institute appointed seven new staff during the financial year, closing the year with 25 staff members. Eleven interns were also employed at different times, contributing to specific projects and programs, and gaining opportunities for their own development. The strong demand for advertised roles at Grattan Institute confirms our position as a highly sought-after employer.

Major Reports

Grattan Institute published 10 major reports during the financial year. These reports were downloaded from our website 33,810 times over the year.

Budget Priorities

The wealth of generations
Author: John Daley and Danielle Wood
Published: 9 December 2014
Older Australians are capturing a rising share of wealth, while the wealth of the young has stagnated. It is time to renew Australia’s generational bargain with policies that ensure rising living standards for all ages.

Cities

Mapping Australia’s economy: cities as engines of prosperity
Author: Jane-Frances Kelly and Paul Donegan
Published: 20 July 2014
City centres are the new engines of Australia’s prosperity, producing a dollar value of goods and services out of all proportion to their physical size. But too many workers are living too far from jobs to fulfil our cities’ potential.

City Limits: Why Australia’s cities are broken and how we can fix them
Author: Jane-Frances Kelly and Paul Donegan
Published: 1 March 2015
Grattan Institute’s first book, City Limits: Why Australia’s cities are broken and how we can fix them, by Jane-Frances Kelly and Paul Donegan, is now available at bookstores and through Melbourne University Publishing.

Energy

Fair pricing for power
Author: Tony Wood
Published: 6 July 2014
Australians are paying too much for power. New tariffs would make the electricity grid cheaper and save some consumers from paying more than their fair share.
Gas at the crossroads: Australia’s hard choice
Author: Tony Wood
Published: 19 October 2014
Big gas price increases are looming for Australian homes and businesses. But the emerging export industry will deliver great economic benefits, and governments should resist rising calls for gas protection.

Sundown, sunrise: how Australia can finally get solar power right
Author: Tony Wood and David Blowers
Published: 24 May 2015
An energy revolution, featuring solar panels and home batteries, is at hand in Australia. Governments must not botch it, as they did last time

Health

Dying well
Author: Hal Swerissen and Stephen Duckett
Published: 28 September 2014
Seventy percent of Australians want to die at home yet most die in hospital and aged care. New policies could help many more people to die comfortably at home. As the baby boomers grow old, it is time to discuss a subject we might dislike but cannot avoid.

Premium policy? Getting better value from the PBS
Author: Stephen Duckett and Peter Breadon
Published: 21 June 2015
Poor implementation of a policy to get better value for PBS spending is costing government $320 million a year

Higher Education

Mapping Australian higher education, 2014-15
Author: Andrew Norton
Published: 12 October 2014
Graduates of Australia’s elite universities earn more over a career than other graduates, but when it comes to salary, what you study matters more than where you study.

Productivity Growth

Super savings
Author: Jim Minifie
Published: 19 April 2015
High fees are hurting the superannuation balances of millions of Australians. Government action can drive them down, taking the pressure off retirement and pension payments. Here’s how.
Other Publications

Over the financial year Grattan produced many other publications, including opinion pieces, speeches and presentations. They are:

**Budget Priorities**

*New rules needed to make election promises more transparent*  
18 August 2014

*Why Australia gets third best policy on infrastructure*  
30 September 2014

*Why a cost-cutting Government still has a budget problem*  
6 October 2014

*Young Australians set to pay for government policy mistakes*  
9 December 2014

*Big spending will leave the young poorer*  
10 December 2014

*Selling a GST rise will be easier if we can follow the money*  
21 January 2015

*Australia should recover pension payments from estates*  
18 February 2015

*IGR will show how we are robbing the young to pay the old*  
3 March 2015

*Intergenerational Report: Joe Hockey and the deathly budget hallows*  
5 March 2015

*Heads in the sand on real cost of Next Generation*  
12 March 2015

*Negative gearing: the economic reasons why government must kill this sacred cow*  
17 March 2015

*Labor’s superannuation tax policy needs more bite*  
23 April 2015

*Government writing reform cheques it’s unlikely to cash*  
2 April 2015

*Victorian budget built on unstable foundations*  
6 May 2015
Budget 2015: The St Augustine budget, wants to be virtuous, but not yet
7 May 2015

A ‘dull and routine’ budget that relies on group denial
13 May 2015

Health funding: Hospital funding cuts strain Fed-state relations
15 May 2015

Budget analysis: Future taxpayers will pay the price
16 May 2015

Budget repair hopes rest on a brief storm
16 May 2015

It’s crystal clear: super tax concessions have got to go
12 June 2015

Transport and Cities

Across the great divide – a tale of two Melbournes
2 March 2015

A tale of two Sydneys: defined by those with jobs and those without
2 March 2015

Sydney’s stuck in traffic, putting the brakes on women and the west
2 March 2015

Inner City v Outer Suburbs: where you live really does determine what you get
16 March 2015

The selfishness that’s tearing Melbourne apart
29 April 2015

Budget infrastructure spending serves mainly political goals
13 May 2015

Energy

A practical proposal to make Australian power prices fair
8 July 2014

Renewables are not the only green energy Australia needs
11 July 2014

What lessons do we take from the mistakes of RET?
28 August 2014
Energy Green Paper leaves power investment up in the air
24 September 2014

Energy Green Paper scores a pass on power, a fail on climate
26 September 2014

Why governments should leave the gas market alone
20 October 2014

Pain and gain as huge export boom drives up our domestic gas bills
21 October 2014

Hunt must show his deal is highway to the future, not a side alley
30 October 2014

There are big bets being placed each way on the future of coal
21 November 2014

The big fight over power prices is under way
3 December 2014

Ditching gas heating and cooking could save you hundreds of dollars
19 January 2015

Electricity sales can power renaissance for the states
22 January 2015

NSW power privatisation: Stop the Sell Off claims put to the test
5 March 2015

Electricity charges for some Victorian households up to $800 more than they need to be
23 March 2015

Ignore the scare campaign about privatisation
23 March 2015

Submission to the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet’s Issues Paper: Setting Australia’s post-2020 target for greenhouse gas emissions.
20 April 2015

Direct action can be turned into a real climate policy
28 April 2015

Federal Budget 2015 – environment experts react
14 May 2015

A tale of two futures: Australia’s economy under climate change
15 May 2015
Without a safeguard, Australia will burn through our emissions target
19 May 2015

Submission to the Department of the Environment’s Consultation paper, Emissions Reduction Fund: Safeguard mechanism.
20 May 2015

Reform network rules to cut PV money waste
24 May 2015

Here comes the solar power revolution
25 May 2015

Submission to the NSW Legislative Council’s Select Committee on the leasing of electricity infrastructure.
25 May 2015

Here’s to a bright future for solar, without lavish and inefficient subsidies
29 May 2015

Submission to the COAG Energy Council’s Issues Paper, Review of Governance Arrangements for Australian Energy Markets
30 May 2015

Australia has a huge stake in the global energy and climate puzzle
22 June 2015

Health

How government can cut health spending and not hurt the vulnerable.
29 July 2014

A poor prescription: higher payments for pharmaceuticals are the wrong way to save
29 July 2014

Higher health co-payments will hit the most vulnerable
29 July 2014

Short-term fix won’t solve long-term healthcare funding problem
30 July 2014

Can the Coalition’s co-payment policy be repaired?
14 August 2014

Forget the co-payment… Seven tips for an affordable, quality health system
19 August 2014
Don’t panic: in global terms, we’re a healthy lot
1 September 2014

What can we learn from other countries’ health systems?
5 September 2014

Why a sound health system needs to change
23 September 2014

New attitudes and policies needed to change the Australian way of death
29 September 2014

The need for a regulatory rethink: a perspective from Australia
22 October 2014

Why politicians’ health promises must go beyond the hospital bed bidding war
27 November 2014

GP co-payment 2.0: a triple whammy for patients
10 December 2014

New measures save billions on costs by making GP patients pay
14 December 2014

Good news for rural health: physician assistants join the workforce
17 December 2014

The great money identity: total health expenditure = total health incomes
23 December 2014

Redirect the subsidy to cure insurance headache
7 January 2015

What can we do to help Australians die the way they want to?
19 January 2015

We need Medicare reform, but co-payment 3.0 is the wrong place to start
23 January 2015

$5 Medicare rebate cut could cost patients up to $40 more
4 February 2015

Why the proposed rebate reductions will damage the health system
5 February 2015

We still have a GP co-payment by stealth
10 March 2015
Federal health spending is forecast to slow, but states face rising bills
10 March 2015

Time for policy rethink as frequent GP attenders account for 41% of costs
19 March 2015

Take the initiative to link hospital and primary care
30 March 2015

Consumer and community engagement in Primary Health Networks
28 April 2015

Comparative Health Care Federalism – Chapter 9 (“Australia”)
28 April 2015

E-health, prevention and primary care
12 May 2015

Budget wimps out on drugs
15 May 2015

Big pharma foxes in the hen house
21 June 2015

We can save $300m in the PBS with rules we already have. So why don’t we?
22 June 2015

Higher Education

Why a top degree won’t top up your salary as much as you’d think
13 October 2014

Labor, Greens blind to inequities of current higher education system
21 October 2014

Higher Education Research and Reform submission
28 October 2014

Political stalemate leaves higher education exposed
29 October 2014

Higher education reforms still needed
3 December 2014

The ATAR debate: students need to be able to finish uni, not just start it
21 January 2015

Education package needs to be changed to succeed
21 January 2015
Senate submission shows 40 per cent of VET-FEE debt unlikely to be repaid
20 February 2015

Senate inquiry submission recommends proceeding with the expansion of demand driven higher education funding
27 February 2015

Senate inquiry submission on the principles behind and alternatives to the Pyne higher education reforms
4 March 2015

Demand-driven higher ed reform possible without fee deregulation
5 March 2015

Focus should now be uni funding certainty
17 March 2015

Defeat of higher ed bill should ease budget pressures
18 March 2015

Tackling doubtful debt: How to keep the student loan scheme viable
15 April 2015

Collecting student loans from overseas debtors just a start
5 May 2015

Keeping public priorities in public universities
28 May 2015

Productivity Growth

Why cutting super fees is a multi-billion dollar microeconomic reform
23 July 2014

Government needs a super long-term strategy
3 September 2014

Competitiveness: Three wins but is the money well spent?
14 October 2014

Retirement incomes will soar, but only if government acts
8 December 2014

Superannuation tender process would help savers
19 April 2015

Effective competition would cut costs in superannuation
10 June 2015
School Education

Achievement matters but what about tracking learning progress?
27 January 2015

My School website won’t lift outcomes for all schools
10 April 2015

STEM the wasteful write-offs
20 May 2015

Public Events

Grattan Institute held 27 public events over the financial year. They were

Fairer pricing for power
Melbourne – Policy Pitch
15 Jul 2014

The Financial System Review and superannuation
Sydney – Forward Thinking
24 Jul 2014

Mapping the Australian economy
Melbourne
28 Jul 2014

Change to die for?
Melbourne – Policy Pitch
19 Aug 2014

Big ideas for a small state: Grattan views on the policy priorities for the next Victorian Government
Melbourne – Policy Pitch
16 Sep 2014

RET review – what does it mean for renewable energy in Australia?
Melbourne – Energy Futures
17 Sep 2014

Fairer pricing for power
Sydney – Forward Thinking
25 Sep 2014

How behavioural economics does and can shape public policy
Melbourne - EY
08 Oct 2014
Gas: too good to burn?
Melbourne – Policy Pitch
21 Oct 2014

The future of gas supply and demand in eastern Australia
Melbourne – Energy Futures
13 Nov 2014

Australia’s age-based tax and welfare system: is it fair?
Melbourne – Policy Pitch
18 Nov 2014

2014 Summer Reading List for the Prime Minister
Melbourne – Policy Pitch
16 Dec 2014

2014 Summer Reading List for the Prime Minister
Sydney – Forward Thinking
09 Dec 2014

Gas: too good to burn?
Brisbane - UQ
05 Feb 2015

Regulating the peer-to-peer economy
Melbourne – Policy Pitch
09 Feb 2015

The Murray Inquiry and Superannuation
Sydney – Forward Thinking
18 Feb 2015

City Limits Book Launch
Melbourne – Policy Pitch
04 Mar 2015

City Limits Book Launch
Sydney – Forward Thinking
5 Mar 2015

What is the future of Australian energy exports in a carbon constrained world?
Melbourne – Energy Futures
05 Mar 2015

Crisis, what crisis? Should tax reform fix Commonwealth and State budgets?
Melbourne – Policy Pitch
21 Apr 2015

Setting Australia’s emissions reduction targets
Melbourne
Australia’s budget pressures: the view from Treasury
Melbourne
15 May 2015

STEM for all: Building the capability of all young Australians in Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths
Melbourne – Policy Pitch
19 May 2015

Is it time to leave the grid? The rise of distributed generation and the consequences for consumers and the electricity sector
Melbourne – Energy Futures
28 May 2015

Sundown, sunrise: how Australia can finally get solar power right
Sydney – Forward Thinking
11 Jun 2015

What's happening to graduate employment?
Melbourne – Policy Pitch
16 Jun 2015

Chronic failure: next steps for primary care
Brisbane – State of Affairs
18 Jun 2015

Private Events and Seminars

Grattan Institute held thirty private seminars over the financial year.
Grattan Staff

Grattan Institute ended the 2014-15 financial year with the following staff:

John Daley, Chief Executive Officer

Andrew Norton, Program Director, Higher Education
Jim Minifie, Program Director, Productivity Growth
Stephen Duckett, Program Director, Health
Tony Wood, Program Director, Energy
Peter Goss, Program Director, School Education
Marion Terrill, Program Director, Transport

Peter Breadon, Fellow, Health
Jordana Hunter, Fellow, School Education
Danielle Wood, Fellow, Australian Perspectives
David Blowers, Fellow, Energy
Hal Swerissen, Visiting Fellow, Health

Ittima Cherastidtham, Senior Associate
Brendan Coates, Senior Associate

Tim Cameron, Associate
Cameron Chisholm, Associate
Danielle Romanes, Associate
Hugh Parsonage, Associate

Eloise Shepherd, Executive Assistant
Andrew McDonald, Corporate Services Manager & Company Secretary
Emma Turner, Finance and Officer Coordinator
Mabel Chen, Office Coordinator
James Button, Manager, Communications
John Harris, Manager, Strategic Communications
Alex Stott, Events and Marketing Specialist
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Good public policy work needs friends. Grattan Institute acknowledges the generous financial support of the following institutions and individuals.

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**Program Support**
The Higher Education Program is funded by The Myer Foundation.

**Institutional Support**
- Low Family Foundation
- Susan McKinnon Foundation
- Suntech R&D Australia

**Individual Support**
- Ian Abbey
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- Robyn Alexander
- Dr James A Mawdsley
- Percy Allan
- Julie and Michael Landvoigt
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- Genevieve Graves
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- Ron Hastie
- Robert Heyes
- Alice Hill
- Reg Hobbs
- Russell Hooper
- Ginevra Hosking
- Susan Humphries
- Joe Isaac
- John J Doyle
- Mike J Venes
- Paul James
- Sidney Jones
- Avram Katherine
- Hal Kendig
- Harry Kestin
- Asif Khan
- Francis King
- Peter Knock
- Cameron Knott
- Kathy Koustoudaris
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