

24 February 2016

Simon McKeon AO to chair Group of Eight “Industry and Innovation” Board

The Group of Eight (Go8) is pleased to announce the appointment of distinguished businessman and social entrepreneur Simon McKeon as Chair of its “Industry and Innovation Board.”

The Board is a key plank of the Go8’s “Innovation 2016” agenda presented to Government in November 2015. The Board – whose private sector members will be announced shortly - will assist drive the Go8’s escalating involvement in Australia’s innovation ecosystem. This includes increased industry collaboration and a \$200 million investment fund currently being negotiated with overseas investors. The Go8 already leads Australia in both industry and basic research and, importantly, in the symbiosis between the two which necessarily underpins a dynamic and innovative economy.

Go8 Chair Dr Michael Spence said the Go8 was extremely fortunate to have Simon McKeon on board. “With his breadth of knowledge and hands-on experience, he is exactly the driving force needed to assist us deliver on the Government’s industry collaboration and innovation priority policy.”

Vicki Thomson, Go8 Chief Executive, said Mr McKeon was “pleased and excited to be at the centre of the Go8’s industry and innovation commitment”. “Mr McKeon recognises the research and collaborative strengths that come from the cooperative efforts of Australia’s eight leading research intensive Universities which currently spend some \$6 Billion a year on research, \$3 Billion of that on applied and experimental research.” she said. “Having Mr McKeon agree to be Chair of our newly established Board gives us an enviable wealth of private sector experience to draw on for guidance and support. We look forward to working with him and are honoured he has agreed to take the position.”

Media contact: _____ Go8 Chief Executive Vicki Thomson _____ 0417 808 472

**Simon McKeon AO began his career as a lawyer before moving to the Macquarie Group for 30 years. He is Chair of AMP and is a previous Chair of CSIRO. In 2011 he was chosen as Australian of the Year. In 2012 he was appointed an Officer of the Order of Australia for distinguished services to business and commerce through his leadership and advisory roles and to the community as a supporter of national and international charitable, educational and sporting organisations.*

That year he chaired an independent review of health and medical research in Australia that recommended a 10-year strategic health and research plan for the nation. He is Chancellor of Monash University and continues to be active in in MS Research and a number of other national and international charitable organisations.