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Committee WRS Committee  
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## Advanced Technology Institute (ATI) Update

### 1. Purpose

To update the Committee on the establishment process of the Advanced Technology Institute (ATI).

### 2. The decision-making process and significance

No decision is being sought in this report. This is an update on activities subsequent to the 15 August WRS Committee workshop on ATI.

### 3. Background

As part of its Economic Growth agenda, the Government announced the formation of an ATI as a mechanism to better channel innovative research into commercial activity. The ATI will be structured as a Crown Agent and has been allocated a budget of \$166 million (\$90m opex, \$76m capex) over the next four years. It is proposed to have a presence in the Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch regions. In Wellington, IRL would be integrated into the ATI for example.

On 15 August, the Committee was briefed on the ATI proposal and agreed to take a proactive approach in promoting the retention of research capability in the region. This would mainly involve engaging with the ATI Establishment Board and senior government officials as appropriate.

### 4. Comment

The WRS Committee and all the Wellington region councils welcomed the ATI proposal. The establishment of the ATI and its presence in the Wellington region completely aligns with the recently refreshed Wellington Regional Strategy. One of Wellington's six focus areas is on progressing science, developing technology-driven innovation, and enabling the commercialisation of innovation.

The Wellington region has well-proven science capabilities in clusters of Crown Research Institutes, independent research bodies, and universities. This is matched by industry strengths across sectors, including food & beverage, ICT, health technologies. Having on-the-ground ATI capability in the Wellington region is critical to helping the new economy continue to grow and becoming more internationally competitive. It is also critical to the success of a networked ATI model across the country.

A press statement highlighting the above points was released on 24 August, however this received no media attention.

Hutt City Council officers met with government officials on 16 September to determine Government plans and timelines. They were advised that there have been delays in the legal process to establish the ATI. A report from the Select Committee is due on 6 November. The ATI Establishment Board now has until 1 February 2013 to report back with recommendations on operational matters.

Through the Economic Development Association (EDANZ), Grow Wellington has been promoting the economic development agency's role in supporting proposed ATI locations in Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch. They advise that a wider regional approach may be taken which for Wellington could mean the lower North Island, or a wider Central New Zealand cluster. This would strengthen the case for the Food and Beverage sector for example.

Although the Cabinet Paper on the ATI identified focus sectors for each region, officers are aware of other commercialisation projects in Wellington having promoted the case to be included and/or to retain the current research related activities e.g. super conductors.

## 5. **Communication**

Grow Wellington and the region's councils will continue to engage with the relevant agencies on the establishment of the ATI.

## 6. **Recommendations**

*That the Wellington Regional Strategy Committee:*

1. ***Receives the report.***
2. ***Notes the content of the report.***

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