

# Building world class Innovation precincts for Impact

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## Program:

Tuesday April 24, Room 5.29 ConferenceSpace Tonsley

Registration 430pm for 4.45pm start

4.45: Introduction Ilse: 1 min

4.46pm: Ilse 10 min presentation about the MaRS journey

Introduction Bert: 1 minute

4.57pm-5.30 pm fireside chat interview

5.30-5.44pm Q&A

5.44 Closure 1 minute end 5.45pm

5.45-6.15pm networking drinks



MaRS Centre complex, a series of buildings connected by a sky-lit atrium

# Fire chat Intro Ilse

- Ilse was CEO of Mars from 2005-2017. She was Chair of the Canadian Task Force on Social Finance in 2010, and serves on the Government of Canada's Science, Technology and Innovation Council (STIC) and the Advisory Council on Economic Growth.
- “Under her 12 year tenure MaRS has grown from a big idea into a flourishing urban innovation hub that is viewed as a model by leading cities around the world. Ilse's vision, leadership and unwavering commitment has transformed MaRS into an organization that plays a critical role in fostering innovation and scaling it for impact in Canada and beyond.”
- Prior to joining MaRS, Ms. Treurnicht was for six years CEO of Toronto's Primaxis Technology Ventures. She was a Rhodes scholar and earned a Phd in chemistry from the University of Oxford and did her chemistry undergrad at South Africa's Stellenbosch University.
- <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/report-on-business/small-business/startups/ceo-of-torontos-mars-discovery-to-end-12-year-run-at-the-helm/article30352551/>

MaRS Mission: an  
entrepreneurial venture  
designed to bridge the gap  
between what people need  
and what governments can  
provide

I suggest four themes for our Innovation precincts/district discussion. We focus on the first three topics and if time allows also the 4<sup>th</sup>, before Q&A. What do you think?

- 1. Future innovation precincts (9 minutes):** Where inspiration meets realization: Your vision and believe is that collaborative innovation will provide solutions to society's problems. New breed of innovators requires more than labs and offices.
  - In that regard: How do you see the changing role of 21<sup>st</sup> century innovation districts? What are critical success factors?
  - How can world class research institutions, like Flinders University, play a more critical role to success of such an Innovation Precinct?
- 2. Tech acceleration/collaboration (9 minutes):** Australia struggles with Industry-University collaboration (see graph p5). MaRS brings together educators, researchers, social scientists, entrepreneurs, investors and business under one roof, with tenants like Johnson and Johnson Innovation Lab, Facebook, Paypal.
  - How did you convince this portfolio of names to join MaRS district? Can you give some examples of collaboration that came from this?
  - How important are programs that enable tenants in precincts to explore new ways of creating value through e.g. acceleration and incubation?
  - On the low participation of women in tech startups, a few months ago you said: "We need a serious reset — from the way women are engaged, treated, valued, funded and supported — at all levels, and across the full innovation life cycle. Without this reset, our innovation ecosystem will remain undifferentiated and subscale, and our economy and our communities will suffer." Can you elaborate on how innovation districts can better support the reset?
- 3. Maximising Impact (9 minutes):** You said that innovators 'build the future on purpose'. MaRS is not just about creating billion-dollar companies, but touching a billion lives, creating entrepreneurs working to improve society for future generations and making a difference.
  - Why is that kind of impact important for the success of an innovation district? Can you give us some examples as illustration?
  - MaRS is bringing together technology research with Social Enterprises, what are some of the advantages of connecting those minds?
  - Challenges?
- 4. Risk capital strategy (5 minutes):** MaRS offers a range of products and services to help startups find funding, from seed capital to Impact investing.
  - How do you get investors to buy into an innovation precinct risk capital strategy? Challenges/value proposition?
  - Building an approach for the tech sector will leave gaps: What is your opinion on more defined sector strategies, like cleantech or med tech?

<https://www.newswire.ca/news-releases/groundbreaking-report-from-movethedial-highlights-underrepresentation-of-women-in-canadas-tech-and-venture-capital-sectors-654403433.html>

<https://hbr.org/2018/03/women-entrepreneurs-are-more-likely-to-get-funding-if-they-emphasize-their-social-mission>

<https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/276875>

FIGURE 5 ROOM TO IMPROVE

Firms collaborating on innovation with higher education or public research institutions, 2008–2020 (%)

