

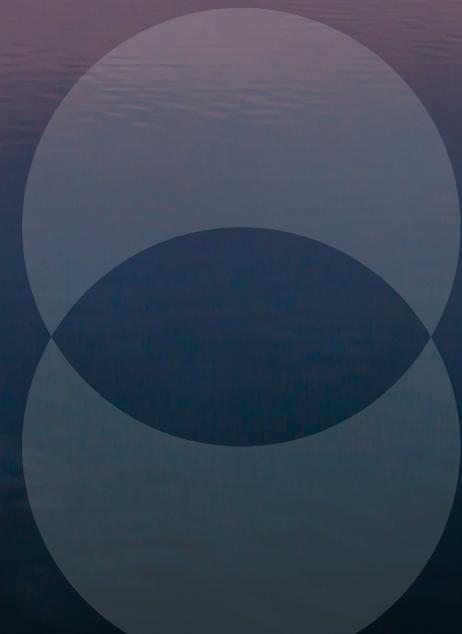
The Conference
Board of Canada

Bold Ideas for Canada

Toronto | September 17–18, 2025

A Centre for Canadian Growth and Prosperity Initiative

Listening Tour Insights | October 14, 2025



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**Appendix A
Methodology**

A message from Susan Black
and Tim Jackson

Canada is at a crossroads

Our country has long benefited from extraordinary strengths: abundant natural resources, trusted institutions, strong alliances, deep trading relationships, and a diverse, talented population. These advantages have supported prosperity and stability for decades.

But today, those foundations are under strain. Productivity is declining, costs are rising, infrastructure is lagging, and too many Canadians face barriers to accessing housing, healthcare, and opportunity. Global shifts—especially in the United States—are reshaping the international order and exposing vulnerabilities in our economic model.

We cannot address these challenges in isolation. Canada needs a broad and diverse set of voices at the table. Action at this scale won't come from just an elite few. All Canadians have a stake and a role in moving us forward as a nation. Now is the time for action—and collective commitment to put great ideas into practice.

To spark that action, The Conference Board of Canada and Shad Canada partnered to host two events—held on September 17 and 18, 2025, at George Brown College's Waterfront Campus in Toronto. Part of The Conference Board of Canada's Centre for Canadian Growth and Prosperity (CCGP), the events focused not just on surfacing bold ideas but on exploring how they could be implemented in practice.

Participants, including Shad alumni and other bold thinkers from their networks, were asked to generate ideas for how Canada can achieve lasting prosperity and a better future. Through facilitated discussions, participants were encouraged to dig deeper, exploring the concrete steps, partnerships, and conditions required to move big ideas from inspiration to action. In these conversations, the how proved just as important as the what—clarity of vision paired with practical pathways is what ultimately drives meaningful change.

For Shad Canada, the partnership with The Conference Board of Canada was a natural fit. Shad is one of the country's most respected organizations, renowned for nurturing young leaders who think critically, creatively, and collaboratively about the future. Every year, Shad brings together almost 2,000 exceptional high school students from across Canada for an intensive program in science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics, combined with design thinking and entrepreneurship. Shad alumni are trailblazers in their fields: they are entrepreneurs, innovators, researchers, and community leaders who already occupy some of the most influential roles in Canadian society. Their curiosity and sense of civic responsibility embody the spirit of this initiative.

The Conference Board of Canada brings more than 70 years of experience as Canada's leading independent applied research organization, producing over 400 research outputs annually and earning a reputation for rigorous, non-partisan analysis and convening. Now, we are turning ideas into impact—collating the ideas surfaced, amplifying them through clear communication, and leveraging our deep networks to ensure they capture the attention needed to drive real change.

Together, The Conference Board of Canada and Shad Canada form a powerful partnership. We are deeply grateful to the participants who joined us for this event, contributing their time, energy, and insight. The pages that follow capture their ideas, discussions, and proposed actions. We hope they inspire you as much as they inspired us—and remind us all of the potential that action holds for Canada's future.



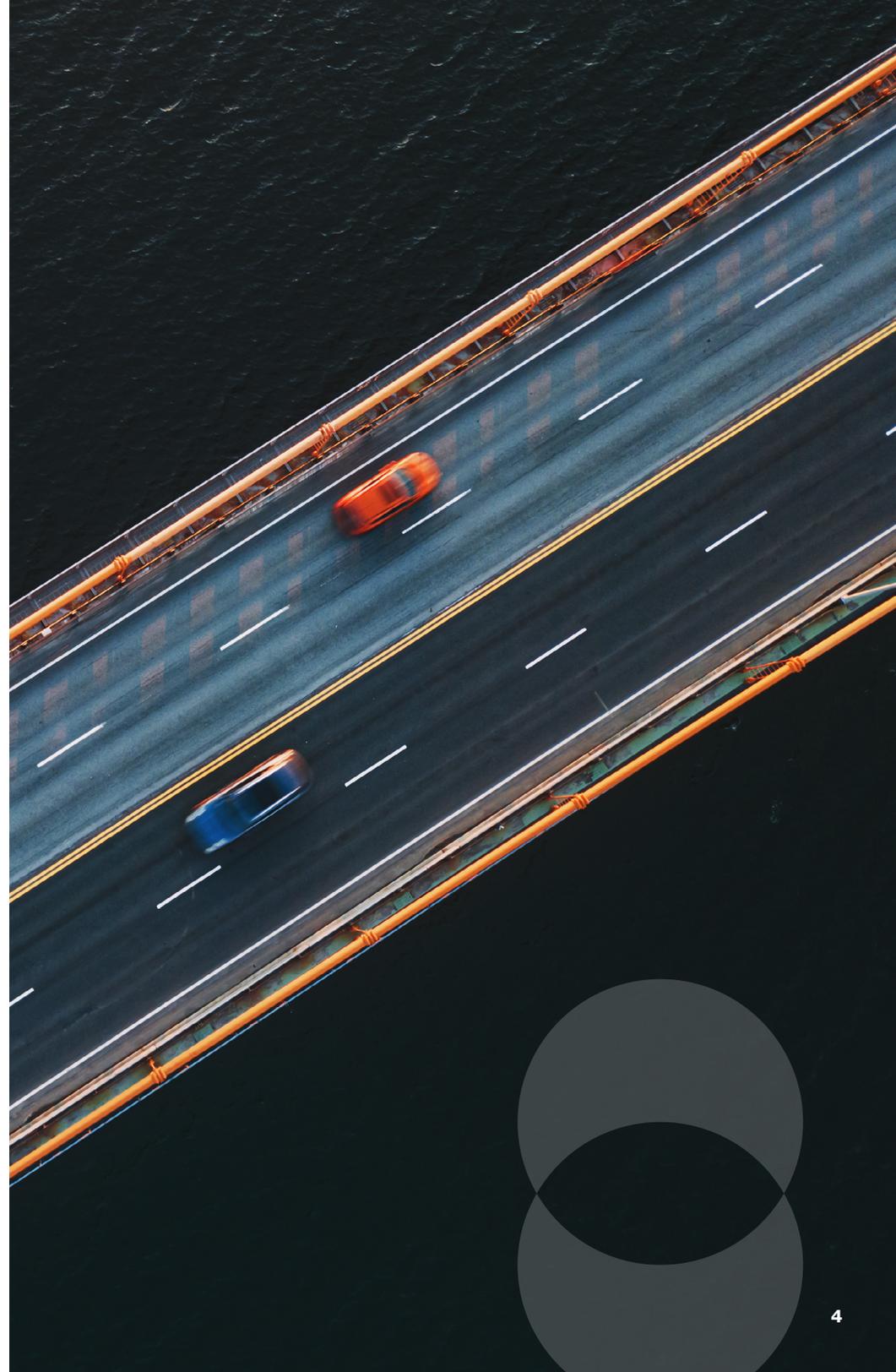
Susan Black
President and CEO,
The Conference Board
of Canada

Susan Black



Tim Jackson
President and CEO,
SHAD Canada

Tim Jackson



What we did

Each evening began with a fireside chat moderated by Dr. Alex Ryan (with the Honourable Bill Morneau on September 17 and with Dr. Rohit Ramchandani on September 18) designed to spark bold thinking among participants about Canada's future and the opportunities ahead.

The events then moved into interactive sessions led by Dr. Ryan, who invited participants to respond to the evening's Big Question—an open call to share bold ideas for advancing Canada's future prosperity. Participants generated a wide range of ideas and, as a group, chose the ones they felt held the greatest potential (see Appendix A for details on the methodology). On the first night, participants identified seven top ideas; on the second night, they identified six.

Next, participants shifted into an interactive open space session. Each top idea became the focus of its own discussion station, equipped with a flip chart and guided by a facilitator. Participants moved freely between stations, choosing the station or stations most important to them. This approach encouraged participants to build on one another's contributions, exploring the conditions needed to turn each idea into action as well as the barriers and key considerations that could shape its success.

The result was a set of early-stage, community-driven ideas that not only highlight what action could look like, but also point to how such action might be realized—through the right partnerships, enabling conditions, and pathways for implementation. By capturing both the vision and the practical steps, these discussions created a foundation that can be carried forward to inform policy, guide investment, and inspire collaboration toward a stronger, more prosperous Canada.



Agenda summary

- **Fireside chat** to spark dialogue and set the stage for the conversation.
- **Facilitated interactive session** during which participants generated bold ideas on how to make Canada more prosperous and then collectively identified the strongest ones.
- **Open space facilitation** with each top idea assigned to a station, allowing participants to move between stations and explore how to translate ideas into action.
- **Recap plenary** during which facilitators delivered 60-second summaries capturing the essence of the discussions.

Watch the recap video [here](#).



Setting the stage: Fireside chat

A future defined by opportunity and purpose

The Honourable Bill Morneau, Former Minister of Finance, Canada | September 17, 2025

“If not you, then who?”

The Honourable Bill Morneau opened the evening by noting that we are in a moment of profound change. He highlighted the weight of current challenges—geopolitical uncertainty, demographic shifts, housing and immigration pressures, rapid technological disruption, and the looming climate crisis. Rather than minimizing these realities, he emphasized that the starting point for charting a better future is recognizing how Canadians, especially young people, feel in this moment.

He invited participants to imagine the Canada they want to inherit 20 years from now: a country that combines its natural resources with the best of technology, that provides dignified and meaningful work for all citizens, where opportunities are fair across generations, and that acts as a magnet for talent and ideas.

Getting there will require focus and disciplined execution in government and public life, he said. We will have to make choices. Trying to solve every issue at once dilutes progress.

He closed with a reminder that while systemic challenges like climate change or broken institutions may feel overwhelming, meaningful change often begins with small, focused steps that compound into success. Participants’ ideas and advice are not peripheral but fundamental to shaping the Canada we need for the future.

Leading with imagination, justice, and resilience

Dr. Rohit Ramchandani, Innovation and Strategic Partnerships Officer, United Nations University Institute for Water, Environment and Health | September 18, 2025

“True prosperity is shared prosperity.”

Dr. Rohit Ramchandani opened the second evening by reflecting on Canada’s unrealized potential at a time of accelerating global change. He emphasized that prosperity at home cannot be separated from Canada’s role on the world stage, where issues like climate change, inequality, and fragile health systems demand leadership and collaboration. Drawing on his global health and social innovation experience, he framed the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals as a roadmap for aligning ambition, accountability, and progress.

He invited participants to see Canada not only as a country with the means to meet its own challenges, but also as a nation with a responsibility to help shape a more sustainable and equitable future globally. Dr. Ramchandani highlighted the importance of imagination and courage in public life, urging Canadians to aim higher and measure success not just by economic growth but by wellbeing, justice, and resilience.

He closed by reminding the audience that Canada’s future will be determined by the choices we make today—choices that must be courageous, values-driven, and rooted in a vision of shared prosperity.



What we
heard from
Canadians

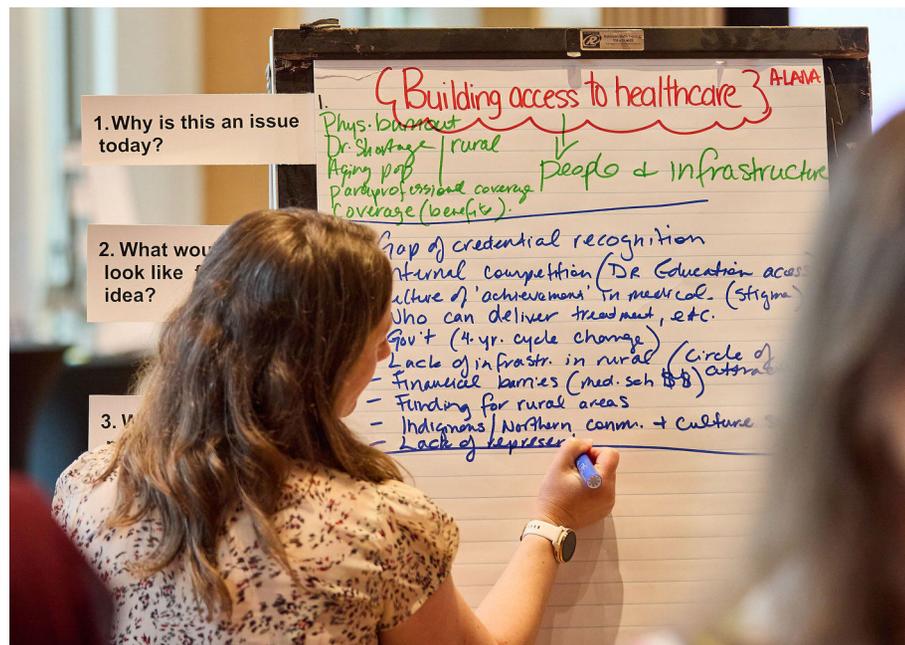
Pathways to prosperity and wellbeing

To channel the energy of the conversations, we have grouped the 13 bold ideas into two broad goals. Build a stronger Canada captures what it will take to compete and lead globally: a national data strategy, efforts to fight misinformation, new approaches to satellites and sensors, renewable energy hubs, stronger investment in research and development, incentives to retain graduates, and ways to empower aging populations to lead locally. Improve Canadians' quality of life turns the focus to daily wellbeing: better access to healthcare and mental health supports, clean drinking water, homes for residents, a reimagined tax system, and financial literacy that begins early.

Taken together, these ideas are practical, ambitious, and often urgent. They push Canada to move beyond tinkering at the edges and to think bigger about who we are, what we value, and where we want to be 20 years from now.

But the ideas are not just a list. They are rooted in the challenges Canadians feel now and the hopes they hold for tomorrow. Across the discussions, certain themes kept surfacing. Trust is fraying in our institutions, in the information we consume, and sometimes even in each other. Fairness is under strain in wages, housing, healthcare, taxation, and the weight of regulations that many believe should be simplified. Resilience is top of mind as people ask how we will prepare for climate shocks, global instability, and the next wave of disruption. Behind it all is the question of investment and whether we are willing to commit real resources to research, infrastructure, and people to secure the future we want.

This is a snapshot of what Canadians see as both possible and necessary. Trust. Fairness. Resilience. Investment. Agency. Simplicity. These are the threads running through every idea. Woven together, they point to a vision of a Canada that is not only stronger but also fairer, ready to meet the future with courage and purpose.



Top ideas

Build a stronger Canada

- Create a national data sovereignty strategy.
- Make Canada a global leader in combatting misinformation.
- Harness satellite and sensor tech for environment, health, and security.
- Build renewable energy hubs nationwide.
- Invest in research and development to retain talent and ideas.
- Incentivize graduates to stay in Canada.
- Empower aging populations to lead locally.

**These ideas
revolve around
technology
and talent.**

Improve Canadians' quality of life

- Build access to healthcare.
- Increase spending on mental health resources.
- Guarantee clean drinking water for all Canadians.
- Prioritize homes for residents over investors.
- Reimagine the income tax system.
- Make financial literacy mandatory at age 16.

**These ideas
revolve around
health and
financial
wellbeing.**

Build a
stronger
Canada

Create a national data sovereignty strategy

The need for a national data strategy was approached as both a strategic opportunity and a pressing vulnerability. Participants shared deep concerns about the imbalance of power between individuals and global tech companies, and the lack of public awareness around data value. While some focused on monetization, others emphasized rights, protections, and ethical governance. The group agreed that Canada must act quickly—not only to protect citizens, but also to position itself as a global leader in fair and transparent data practices. Participants believed that with the right mix of education, regulation, and collaboration, Canada could build a uniquely principled model for digital sovereignty.



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Why it matters now

- Canadians routinely give up personal data without understanding its value.
- A handful of global corporations control most data flows and usage.
- Canada lacks a national strategy for personal data rights and protections.

A vision of success

- Individuals understand and control how their data is used.
- Canadians can choose to monetize their data or opt out entirely.
- Transparent policies and ethical standards govern data collection and use.

Who and what can move it forward

- Policy-makers enact clear regulations on data rights and privacy.
- Educators build data literacy from primary through post-secondary education.
- Tech companies and civil society co-design practical frameworks.

What it will take

- A national strategy for personal data ownership and sovereignty.
- Global best practices, such as the General Data Protection Regulation, adapted to Canada's context.
- Public education campaigns to raise awareness and build support.

Challenges to overcome

- Canada's small market, which limits leverage with global tech firms.
- Policy-makers' potential lack of technical expertise to regulate effectively.
- Rapid technological change outpacing legislative processes.

For more insights on this topic

[Building competitiveness with intellectual property](#)

Make Canada a global leader in combatting misinformation

The group grappled with the motivations behind misinformation— who creates it, why it spreads, and how it reshapes public perception. The conversation explored the emotional and psychological dimensions of trust. Misinformation exploits uncertainty and erodes civic confidence. How can Canada respond by building a culture of discernment and digital ethics? The idea was framed not just as a policy challenge but as a national opportunity to define what truth and accountability look like in the digital age.

Why it matters now

- Misinformation is profitable and persuasive, eroding public trust.
- Technology platforms amplify falsehoods faster than truth can catch up.
- The erosion of trust threatens democratic institutions and civic cohesion.

A vision of success

- Canada is recognized as a global benchmark for digital integrity and trusted information.
- Citizens are equipped with critical thinking skills and media literacy from an early age.
- Verified, sourced, and independently referenced content becomes the societal norm.

Who and what can move it forward

- Governments develop policy and regulatory frameworks.
- Educators embed media literacy and critical thinking into school curricula.
- Civil society and tech innovators co-design tools that verify and filter information.

What it will take

- A Canadian Trust Index to monitor and rank misinformation across platforms.
- Infrastructure and computing capacity to support real-time analysis and response.
- Public engagement and leadership to build a culture of accountability and resilience.

Challenges to overcome

- Balancing freedom of speech with the need for regulation and oversight.
- Widespread dependence on platforms that profit from misinformation.
- Lack of trust in institutions responsible for monitoring and enforcement.

For more insights on this topic

[Building AI compute capacity in Canada](#)

[Social and emotional learning for critical thinking](#)



Harness satellite and sensor technology for environment, health, and security

Participants envisioned a future in which Canada's leadership in space and sensor technology could redefine how nations respond to environmental and security threats. Data-driven systems could anticipate crises, inform policy, and protect vulnerable regions. Beyond technical capacity, the group emphasized the importance of ethical design, public trust, and inclusive governance. This is a chance to build infrastructure that not only monitors change but empowers communities to act on it.

Why it matters now

- Canada faces growing environmental risks and geopolitical instability.
- Water scarcity is emerging as a global security issue.
- The country lacks infrastructure to monitor and respond to threats, especially in the North.

A vision of success

- A Canadian-owned system provides real-time environmental and security data.
- Satellites, drones, and sensors track climate and defence indicators.
- Canada becomes a global leader in monitoring infrastructure and standards.

Who and what can move it forward

- Federal government leads with strategy, funding, and regulation.
- Industry, academia, and government form multidisciplinary teams to drive innovation and develop practical solutions.
- Training and licensing programs expand drone and tech capacity.

What it will take

- Investment in advanced data infrastructure and quantum computing.
- Clear regulatory guardrails to balance privacy and monitoring.
- International partnerships to share costs and scale development.

Challenges to overcome

- High infrastructure costs and limited domestic chip manufacturing.
- Regulatory hurdles around privacy and surveillance.
- Political uncertainty and lack of sustained public awareness.

For more insights on this topic

[Defence modernization and investment in advanced technologies](#)



Build renewable energy hubs nationwide

Energy centres were proposed as a transformative solution to two major challenges: climate change and regional economic inequality. This idea was seen as a way to electrify the country using low-emissions technologies while creating new industries and jobs. There was strong interest in shifting the focus of energy policy from sovereignty to opportunity, where clean, affordable power becomes a foundation for innovation and export. Participants acknowledged the complexity of implementation, including regulatory fragmentation and the scale of investment required.

Why it matters now

- Low-emissions energy solutions are a key part of Canada's response to the climate crisis.
- Energy demand is surging, driven by artificial intelligence (AI) and digital infrastructure.
- Regional disparities limit access to clean, affordable energy.

A vision of success

- Energy centres provide clean, affordable power across Canada.
- Development is equitable and minimizes impact on Indigenous communities.
- Canada becomes a global exporter of energy technology and expertise.

Who and what can move it forward

- Governments align national and provincial energy strategies.
- Industry leaders and innovators build scalable solutions.
- Communities shape development that reflects local needs.

What it will take

- A national regulatory framework to coordinate efforts.
- Substantial investment in infrastructure and technology.
- Public support and transparency to build trust and momentum.

Challenges to overcome

- Fragmented regulation across provinces.
- High upfront costs and uncertain funding sources.
- Risk of inequitable development or environmental harm.

For more insights on this topic

[Blueprint for local energy resilience](#)

[Infrastructure corridors for energy and economic resilience](#)



Invest in research and development to retain talent and ideas

The conversations opened with a sense of disbelief when participants learned that, despite Canada's reputation for talent and technical excellence, its research and development (R&D) spending lags far behind global peers. Participants quickly connected this gap to broader issues such as limited support for start-ups, risk-averse capital, and a lack of urgency in scaling new ideas. They described R&D as the engine of economic growth, capable of transforming industries, creating high-paying jobs, and positioning Canada as a leader in emerging fields like AI, biotech, and clean energy. Participants wanted Canada to stop playing it safe and start investing like a country that believes in its own potential.



Why it matters now

- Canada's R&D investment is generally viewed as low compared to global peers.
- Innovation drives productivity, competitiveness, and economic resilience.
- Emerging sectors like AI, biotech, and clean energy require sustained investment.

A vision of success

- Canada retains top talent and builds globally competitive tech firms.
- Small innovators thrive in a fair and dynamic market.
- R&D funding is stable, long-term, and insulated from political shifts.

Who and what can move it forward

- Governments set the tone through policy and incentives.
- Investors—venture capitalists, banks, pension funds—back Canadian innovation.
- Innovation hubs support start-ups with infrastructure and expertise.

What it will take

- More capital that is risk-tolerant and widely accessible.
- Competitive wages and career pathways that attract top talent.
- Advanced infrastructure, including computing power and research tools.

Challenges to overcome

- Risk-averse firms and investors that slow innovation.
- Stifled competition due to market dominance by large incumbents.
- Poorly designed or ineffective innovation programs.

For more insights on this topic

[Building Canada's AI workforce for innovation](#)

[Benchmarking Canada's global R&D performance](#)

[Confronting Canada's risk aversion in innovation](#)

[Harnessing artificial intelligence for growth and competitiveness](#)

[AI's evolving role in Canada's economy and society](#)

[Canada's changing labour market and what it means for R&D](#)

Incentivize graduates to stay in Canada

We face a dual challenge of attracting new talent and retaining those already here. The conversations moved between personal anecdotes and structural analysis, revealing how interconnected factors such as education, wages, immigration policy, and regional opportunity shape Canada's talent landscape. While the issue raised concern, it was also accompanied by optimism. Canada's strong reputation for quality education, along with recent changes in the United States, were seen as advantages that could make Canada more appealing to global talent and investment.



Why it matters now

- Canada is losing highly educated talent to other countries.
- Wages and opportunities are often more competitive abroad.
- The domestic tech and innovation ecosystem lacks sufficient scale and visibility.

A vision of success

- Canada becomes a magnet for global talent and local entrepreneurship.
- Homegrown companies thrive and scale internationally.
- Skilled professionals choose to stay in, return to, or relocate to Canada.

Who and what can move it forward

- Governments implement tax incentives and competitive immigration pathways.
- Investors and incubators support Canadian start-ups.
- Employers and influencers promote Canada as a destination for innovation.

What it will take

- Competitive compensation and benefits packages.
- Marketing campaigns to showcase Canadian opportunities.
- Diversified funding to grow regional innovation hubs and expand local career opportunities.

Challenges to overcome

- Lengthy immigration processes and limited permanent residency pathways.
- Lack of incentives for talent to remain in Canada long-term.
- Structural inefficiencies that make it harder to launch and scale businesses.

For more insights on this topic

[Incentives to retain graduates in Canada](#)

[Immigrant retention in Canada](#)

[International student retention within provinces](#)

[Aligning immigrant skills in critical sectors](#)

[Retaining talent in Canada's health systems](#)

Engage aging populations

Participants highlighted that retirement is a time for continued growth, leadership, and community engagement. The discussion drew on international examples that promote intergenerational connection and civic participation, showing how older adults can remain active contributors to society. The group emphasized the importance of creating roles that reflect evolving interests and capabilities. They called for a cultural shift that sees aging as a dynamic life stage defined by purpose, inclusion, and meaningful involvement.



The Conference Board of Canada

Why it matters now

- Retirement often leads to social isolation and loss of purpose.
- Ageism in the workforce begins earlier than many expect.
- Valuable knowledge and productivity are lost when older adults disengage.

A vision of success

- Older adults find meaningful “second acts” after retirement.
- Communities benefit from intergenerational learning and social exchange.
- Aging is recognized as a dynamic stage of life with diverse definitions of success.

Who and what can move it forward

- Governments invest in recalibrating skill pathways to prepare older adults for civic engagement.
- Community organizations launch mentorship and wellness programs.
- Media and education systems promote new narratives around aging.

What it will take

- New opportunities and increased awareness of existing ones.
- Initiatives that foster intergenerational collaboration and mutual learning.
- Cultural shifts that encourage individual ownership of later life stages.

Challenges to overcome

- Seniors’ potential lack of awareness of available supports and opportunities.
- Societal definitions of success that often exclude older adults.
- Structural and cultural barriers that limit participation and visibility.

More ideas

Alongside the 13 ideas we explored in depth, participants offered many other interesting and thought-provoking contributions. We've highlighted a selection of these here to illustrate the breadth and creativity of those shared.

“Get more students into vocational and trades education by 2035. Trade is in high demand. Through advocacy and investment in trade schools, we can mitigate the bias we have toward university degrees versus diplomas.”

“Encourage social decentralization to build large cities and towns across Canada. Develop social and economic incentives for new immigrants to move to the territories and provinces other than Ontario, British Columbia, and Quebec.”

“Accelerate infrastructure and housing construction by 2030 by harmonizing provincial and national building codes, harmonizing transportation regulations, and allowing equivalent testing standards and products from Europe.”

“Regulation in Canada is overly complicated. Commit to reducing complexity or establishing standards for simplicity—make processes easier to understand (language clarity), shorter, and less cumbersome so more investment wants to come/to do business with us.”

“Re-think immigration requirements. Focus on highly skilled immigrants or those with high amounts of capital to drive economic growth.”

Improve
Canadians'
quality of life

Build access to healthcare

Participants explored how healthcare access in Canada is shaped by deeper systemic dynamics—who gets trained, where they choose to practise, and how communities are supported over time. The conversations focused on the cultural, educational, and policy shifts needed to build a more inclusive and resilient system.

Why it matters now

- Physician shortages and burnout are limiting access to care.
- Rural and Indigenous communities face persistent infrastructure and service gaps.
- Medical education pathways remain costly and exclusionary for many.

A vision of success

- Timely, equitable healthcare is available to all Canadians.
- Diverse representation in the healthcare workforce improves outcomes.
- Rural communities are supported by sustainable infrastructure and services.

Who and what can move it forward

- Governments and medical schools can expand training and funding.
- Community organizations support culturally sensitive care.
- Health teams and mentorship programs diversify the pipeline.

What it will take

- New medical schools and targeted rural incentives.
- Inclusive data and metrics to guide policy.
- Cultural sensitivity training embedded across the system.

Challenges to overcome

- Credential-recognition gaps and financial barriers to entry.
- Lack of inclusive data for marginalized populations.
- Short-term political cycles that hinder long-term planning.

For more insights on this topic

[Building better access for migraine care across Canada](#)

[Improving access to cancer treatment](#)

[Role of community pharmacies in improving access](#)

[Getting medicines to patients faster](#)

[Physician assistants as emerging access enablers](#)

[Access to Alzheimer's treatments](#)



Increase spending on mental health

Attendees framed mental health as a shared societal responsibility, one that touches every sector, from education and healthcare to workplaces and community organizations. The conversations focused on the need to embed mental health support in all stages of life. Participants called for systems that are proactive, inclusive, and collaborative. Mental health is a foundational element of public health and social wellbeing, not a specialized service.



The Conference Board of Canada

Why it matters now

- Mental health challenges are rising, especially among youth and marginalized groups.
- Services are fragmented, underfunded, and often inaccessible.
- Many Canadians lack coverage for therapy and community supports.

A vision of success

- Mental health care is embedded across education, healthcare, and workplaces.
- Canadians can access timely, affordable, and culturally responsive services.
- Community programs and interdisciplinary teams exist to support long-term wellness.

Who and what can move it forward

- Governments expand public coverage and funding.
- Educators, clinicians, and employers integrate mental health supports into workplace settings.
- Health professionals collaborate across disciplines and sectors.

What it will take

- Coverage for psychotherapists under provincial health plans.
- Mental health education in primary, secondary, post-secondary, and workplace settings.
- Investment in community-based programs and mentorship initiatives for non-clinical professionals.

Challenges to overcome

- Financial barriers and uneven insurance coverage.
- Lack of inclusive data and research on underrepresented populations.
- Institutional silos that limit coordination and continuity of care.

For more insights on this topic

[Youth mental health access and service gaps](#)

[Investing in sustainable workplace mental health](#)

[Balancing work demands and wellness needs](#)

[Supporting neurodiversity through mental health investment in education](#)

[Addressing mental health needs in neurodiverse student populations](#)

Guarantee clean drinking water for all Canadians

Water access is a reflection of Canada's social contract—what we owe to one another, and how we care for our land and communities. The conversation surfaced tensions between policy intent and lived experience, especially in regions where water insecurity persists. The group emphasized the need for governance models that respect Indigenous Knowledge, prioritize environmental justice, and elevate community voices. They saw water not just as a resource but as a right that must be protected through inclusive leadership.

Why it matters now

- Remote communities face persistent barriers to accessing safe drinking water.
- Climate change and systemic environmental injustices are compounding risks.
- Canada lacks legally enforceable federal inspection standards and consistent access to information.

A vision of success

- Water-testing kits and audits are available nationwide.
- All Canadians can make informed decisions about water access and safety.
- Canada leads in sustainable water policy and ensures responsible stewardship of its domestic water resources.

Who and what can move it forward

- Broken water services and infrastructure are repaired in remote areas.
- Sustainable alternatives are supported by community organizations.
- Proper sewage and waste planning is informed by environmental experts.

What it will take

- A federal equalization budget based on community need.
- Education and training on water safety, access, and management.
- Procurement policies and laws that prioritize sustainability and equity.

Challenges to overcome

- Insufficient budgeting and uneven resource distribution.
- Political interests, including oil pipelines through Indigenous lands.
- Geographic dispersion and cost-efficiency concerns.

For more insights on this topic

[Closing the infrastructure gap to deliver clean water and equity](#)



Prioritize homes for residents over investors

There is a disconnect between housing as a human need and its treatment as a speculative asset. Participants were concerned that foreign and business investment is driving up housing prices, reducing supply, and putting homeownership out of reach for many Canadians. The group discussed how cultural norms around property, investor-driven development, and land ownership by non-residents are shaping a system that puts profit ahead of people. A range of policy levers were discussed to shift investment away from residential real estate and into sectors that support long-term prosperity.

Why it matters now

- Foreign and business investment contributes to rising housing costs.
- Vacant properties reduce supply and distort local markets.
- Canadians are concerned about increased ownership of agricultural and residential land by non-residents.

A vision of success

- Homeownership becomes more accessible for Canadians.
- Housing prices stabilize or decline in overheated markets.
- Investment shifts toward sectors that support long-term prosperity.

Who and what can move it forward

- Governments introduce policy and tax reforms that discourage speculative ownership.
- Economic development agencies promote investment in other sectors.
- Local communities and start-ups lead diversification efforts.

What it will take

- Incentives to redirect capital into tech, natural resources, and other productive areas.
- Policy frameworks that prioritize housing for residents over investors.
- Public awareness campaigns to shift perceptions of real estate as a safe investment.

Challenges to overcome

- Risk of reduced investment in housing supply.
- Potential unintended consequences for construction and development.
- Balancing affordability with economic growth and regional needs.

For more insights on this topic

[Understanding the causes of and solutions for Canada's housing crisis](#)

[Balancing growth with housing affordability](#)



Reimagine the income tax system

Taxation is a tool for shaping Canada's values and ambitions, not just balancing budgets. The conversation focused on how tax policy could reflect national priorities such as sustainability, inclusion, and long-term competitiveness. The group emphasized the need to redefine what taxation fairness means in a modern economy. A reimagined system could reward innovation, support families, and signal Canada's commitment to economic leadership.

Why it matters now

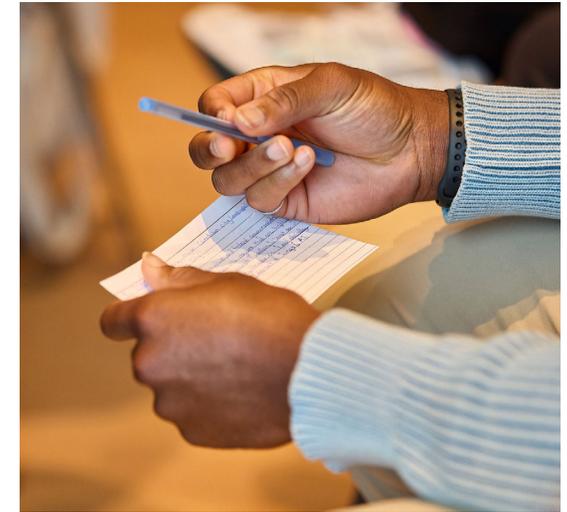
- The current system is overly complex and discourages productivity.
- Overconsumption and materialism are not adequately addressed through taxation.
- Resistance to reform limits Canada's ability to compete globally.

A vision of success

- Canada adopts dynamic, competitive tax models that attract and retain talent.
- Taxes are aligned with sustainability goals and discourage harmful externalities.
- Entrepreneurs and families benefit from simplified, equitable tax policies.

Who and what can move it forward

- The federal government and the Ministry of Finance lead reform.
- Economists and small-business owners contribute diverse perspectives.
- Chartered professional accountant organizations and data analysts model and advocate for change.



What it will take

- A re-evaluation of approaches to corporate and capital gains tax.
- Revised thresholds for minimum income and parental leave clawbacks.
- Clear national goals to guide reform and maintain top tax rates under 50 per cent.

Challenges to overcome

- Influence of special interest groups that prioritize narrow agendas over broad prosperity.
- Complexity of balancing local and global competitiveness.
- Propensity for incremental change over transformation.



Make financial literacy mandatory at age 16

Ideas surfaced around how financial literacy can shape long-term decision-making and personal agency. Participants focused on the need to introduce financial concepts in ways that are engaging and relevant to young people, especially before they begin navigating adult responsibilities. The group emphasized that financial education should empower individuals to understand systems, ask questions, and make choices that reflect their values. It was framed not just as a skill but as a mindset that supports independence and informed participation in society.

Why it matters now

- There is a concern that too many Canadians lack basic financial knowledge and confidence.
- Vulnerable populations are disproportionately affected by debt and financial exclusion.
- Financial literacy is not consistently taught across provinces or school systems.

A vision of success

- All students receive standardized financial education by age 16.
- Canadians make informed decisions about saving, borrowing, and investing.
- Financial systems are transparent and accessible to all.

Who and what can move it forward

- Provincial education ministries embed financial literacy in curricula.
- Banks and credit unions support unbiased financial education.
- Educational technology companies and non-profits develop engaging learning tools.



What it will take

- Curriculum development and teacher training.
- Partnerships between schools, financial institutions, and community organizations.
- Public campaigns to promote financial literacy as a civic skill.

Challenges to overcome

- Inconsistent standards and delivery across regions.
- Lack of qualified educators with financial expertise.
- Potential conflicts of interest in sourcing financial education content.



More ideas

Alongside the 13 ideas we explored in depth, participants offered many other interesting and thought-provoking contributions. We've highlighted a selection of these here to illustrate the breadth and creativity of those shared.

“Provide free housing for all no- or low-income people (sliding scale of rent based on income) by 2040. All homes [are] built using Canadian labour and products and provide volunteer or paid work to maintain properties by those in housing.”

“Partially privatize healthcare and follow Singapore’s models:

1. Private insurance for basic and routine care with small fee per service;
2. Public insurance for catastrophic health problems;
3. Health savings accounts for individual saving, investment, and expenditure—with zero taxes on capital gains.”

“Ensure quality and culturally relevant education for Indigenous students in Northern, remote communities.”

“By 2050, turn every major Canadian city/metropolitan area into a ‘15-minute city.’ In collaboration with local, provincial, and federal governments, promote cities to develop into regions that are highly accessible (zero emissions, public transit, and walking), boost social determinants of health (affordability, lifespan, etc.), and ethically merge/integrate technology like the Internet of Things and AI.”

“Retain Canadian scientists and engineers and attract immigrants/international students by investing in our post-secondary institutions and increasing the funding.”

A national conversation

The Centre for Canadian Growth and Prosperity has started a national conversation about Canada's economic future. Through a series of events in communities across the country, we are bringing together people from all sectors to share ideas and practical solutions for Canada's long-term growth.

Each event will generate unique insights—rooted in local realities but connected to national priorities. These ideas will be synthesized to identify common themes, emerging opportunities, and promising actions, then shared widely with decision-makers across government, business, and civil society so they can inform real-world priorities. The process will culminate in a final document that brings the insights together into a clear, shared vision for Canada's prosperity.

Our goal is to move beyond discussion to real collaboration, ensuring that what's learned in each community can help shape a stronger, more inclusive, and more resilient Canada. Through our expertise and national networks, we facilitate conversations that keep attention on the issues that matter, sustain momentum over time, and create the conditions for bold actions to be adopted and implemented.

Stay connected

Stay up to date on the ideas shaping Canada's future. Sign up for our [newsletter](#) to get updates, event highlights, and ways to get involved—delivered straight to your inbox.





Centre for Canadian Growth and Prosperity

Turning potential into prosperity

What we do

Canada has the talent, resources, and potential to be one of the world's most dynamic and inclusive economies. Yet we face persistent challenges—slowing productivity growth, uneven opportunity across regions, and structural barriers that limit our competitiveness. The Centre for Canadian Growth and Prosperity (CCGP) exists to help close that gap.

The CCGP unites research, convening, and action to identify bold solutions that strengthen Canada's long-term economic performance and quality of life. The Centre focuses on the structural drivers of prosperity and the policies, partnerships, and innovations needed to address them. This means tackling issues such as productivity, investment, skills, and inclusiveness in a coordinated way—bringing together evidence, diverse perspectives, and practical pathways for implementation. By shining a light on these foundational challenges and mobilizing the people and organizations best positioned to act, the Centre will help ensure that Canada not only generates ideas but also has the capacity and commitment to turn them into lasting change.

How we do it

The CCGP advances its mission through three interconnected streams:

1 Convening and mobilizing – Hosting national and community-based events, we bring together leaders and citizens from all sectors to surface ideas and explore the practical steps required to implement them.

2 Curating thought leadership – We identify, synthesize, and amplify the most promising insights from Canada and abroad, ensuring that decision-makers and the public have access to clear, actionable knowledge. We are building a hub that will collate thoughts and research related to CCGP goals from leading sources.

3 Monitoring and measuring – We track Canada's progress on the structural drivers of prosperity, shining a light on what's working, where gaps remain, and how to keep attention on critical issues over time through our scorecards and trackers.

Through these streams, the CCGP provides a disciplined, action-focused process that moves ideas from inspiration to implementation.

Be part of the change

The CCGP is made possible through the support of funders, who share a commitment to Canada's long-term prosperity. Their expertise, networks, and investment allow us to advance a practical, solutions-focused agenda that will help Canada thrive in an increasingly competitive global economy.

To learn more or get involved, visit the [Centre's webpage](#).



Appendix A

Methodology

This summary draws on data collected from two events held at George Brown College in Toronto, Ontario. The events were hosted by the Conference Board of Canada through its Centre for Canadian Growth and Prosperity (CCGP), in partnership with Shad Canada.

Participation

- September 17, 2025: 38 participants (ages 22–35)
- September 18, 2025: 33 participants (ages 26+)

Idea generation

Following the opening remarks and a fireside chat, participants were given an index card and pen to record their boldest idea in response to a guiding question about Canada's future prosperity. While the wording varied slightly between the two evenings, the intent was the same:

- September 17: What's your boldest idea to set Canada on the path to lasting prosperity?
- September 18: What is your boldest idea to create a better future for Canada?

To focus their responses, participants were provided with the following guiding principles.

When writing your idea, aim to make it:

- **Bold and inspirational:** an idea with wide societal relevance that sparks engagement and imagination.
- **Specific and actionable:** a clear, targeted direction that is measurable and time-bound.
- **Ambitious and achievable:** visionary in scope, but realistic in its potential for implementation.

Idea prioritization exercise: The 25/10 Method

Dr. Alex Ryan led participants through [the 25/10 Method, a Liberating Structures exercise](#) to surface high-potential ideas in an open, participatory way. Participants exchanged cards multiple times to randomize ideas, then scored the card they held from 1 to 5. This swap-and-score cycle was repeated five times, giving each idea up to 25 possible points. Top-scoring ideas were read aloud, consolidated where overlapping, and refined into a set of unique proposals. The process identified seven top ideas on September 17 and six on September 18.

Open space discussions

The top-ranked ideas were then explored in greater depth through an open space technology facilitation activity. Each idea became the focus of its own discussion station, equipped with a facilitator and flip chart to capture input. Participants were free to move between stations, choosing the conversation or conversations most meaningful to them.

This flexible format encouraged collaborative problem-solving, allowing participants to build on one another's contributions and refine the ideas into actionable directions. Discussions at each station were guided by five questions designed to surface both the vision and the practical steps required to drive meaningful change:

1. Why is this an issue today? Define the problem this idea aims to solve.
2. What would success look like for this idea? Describe the tangible outcomes or changes if this idea were to succeed.
3. What steps and people could move this idea forward? Identify practical pathways and key actors needed to advance it.
4. What is needed to put this in place? Highlight the immediate, concrete actions required.
5. What barriers or risks could prevent success? Identify challenges and how they might be overcome.

The open space discussions were conducted over a 60-minute period so that participants could dive into each idea while keeping the energy high and the focus sharp.

Data capture

Facilitators documented the discussions in real time on flip charts and sticky notes, capturing participants' words as faithfully as possible without interpretation.

Together, this process yielded a total of 27 pages of flip chart notes and 34 pages (7,291 words) of text in the written reflections from facilitators.

- September 17, 2025: 14 pages of flip chart notes and 18 pages (3,967 words) of text in the written reflections from facilitators.
- September 18, 2025: 13 pages of flip chart notes and 16 pages (3,324 words) of text in the written reflections from facilitators.

All data was anonymized before analysis.

Data analysis

The analysis employed a hybrid approach that combined manual qualitative review with the support of a generative AI tool (operating in non-learning mode). Flip chart images from participants were transcribed using Microsoft 365 Copilot, and all outputs were manually verified by a human for accuracy and completeness. In addition to the transcriptions, a nightly post-event reflections report completed by each facilitator—summarizing their observations and participant insights—was used to support synthesis and theme development. This multi-source strategy accelerated thematic coding while preserving the integrity and richness of participants' original contributions.

Limitations

While every effort was made to capture the breadth and depth of the conversations, not all individual contributions could be reflected in this summary. This briefing presents key themes and representative ideas that emerged most prominently through the process.

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