Summary Report from Partnership Agreement
Category Workshops

23 – 25 February 2005
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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 Introduction

As part of the Peak Group’s communication strategy for CDU/NTG Partnership Agreement, Schedule members were invited to attend evaluation forums. Facilitated workshops were scheduled for the end of February 2005 to provide a participative forum for schedule teams to assist in promoting and generating:

- a clear understanding of the Peak Group’s role and expectations;
- greater awareness and clarity on the realities of developing schedule agendas and methods used to achieve results and outcomes when working in partnerships;
- opportunities to evaluate and share learning; and
- best practice principles to cement further the Partnership between CDU and NTPS.

This report provides a summary of the feedback presented at the forums, identifies key issues and recommends actions for consideration.

1.2 Process

Three forums were scheduled:

Categories 1 and 3  Wednesday 23 February
Category 2  Thursday 24 February
Category 4  Friday 25 February

Prof Helen Garnett provided the opening address to the first workshop and Mike Burgess addressed the second and third workshops.

Each workshop was asked to provide feedback about their experiences to date of working within the Partnership Agreement according to four criteria:

1. Effective working relationships
2. Hurdles and barriers
3. Achievements and highlights
4. Defining success

Plenary discussion was then facilitated around the feedback.

A proposed template for annual report reporting was tabled for future comment and an overview was provided in terms of the new proposed procurement guidelines.

1.3 Key Findings

Recommendations have been themed under 3 key headings which summarise the issues that emerged consistently throughout the forum:
• Structure of the Partnership Agreement
• Building capacity
• Enhancing the performance of the Partnership Agreement

Structure of the Partnership Agreement

There was consensus throughout the forums that the current structure of the Partnership Agreement could be improved. Overall, schedule members wanted to see a more integrated Partnership Agreement created, where inter-relationships and communication occurred between and within categories, and greater accessibility and improved two way communication with the Peak Group was achieved. There were low and inconsistent awareness levels as to the strategic framework and key drivers for the Partnership Agreement.

Building capacity

Again, there was consensus across the forums in relation to the lack of clarity for both CDU’s capacity building priority areas and its capability to deliver. Concerns were also expressed in terms of the NTG’s ability to receive research and evaluation from CDU and use it effectively to inform policy. However, the importance of CDU’s independence and the requirement for it to be a “critical friend” was widely acknowledged.

A long term strategic planning framework could be profiled for the Partnership Agreement as schedule members considered predominantly the short term operational requirements, setting their scope no further than 2006. Although it was recognised that there had been significant efforts to raise the awareness of the Partnership Agreement, it was considered paramount to raise further and generate greater awareness levels. It was reported that skills to enable the realisation of projects and essentially underpin the success of the Partnership Agreement, had been, in the main, presumed. It was considered that the capability of schedule members could be further enhanced by focussing on skill development in critical areas, for example project management and project planning and also by clearly defining the criteria for schedule evaluation.

Enhancing the performance of the Partnership Agreement

There was an expressed need for definition and clarity in relation to the accountabilities and expectations within the Partnership Agreement and the access and range of support and communication mechanisms available to Schedule members. Improved processes and understanding in the areas of procurement and monitoring and performance measuring were also seen to have a direct bearing on enhancing the success of the Partnership Agreement.

There was a strong focus from perspectives of recognition and importance that the Partnership Agreement is a two way process.
2.0 SUMMARY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Structure of the Partnership Agreement

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<tr>
<th>Core themes</th>
<th>Key issues</th>
<th>Recommendation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Improve the existing structure</td>
<td>▪ Promote cross schedule and category communication and dialogue.</td>
<td>1. Assign a Peak Group member to a specific category for quarterly meetings with schedule champions.</td>
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<td>▪ Rationalise schedules where similarities exist.</td>
<td>2. Schedule Champions and Peak Group member responsible for the category to identify potential synergies and recommend to the Peak Group.</td>
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<td>▪ Increased engagement and accessibility of the Peak Group at Schedule level.</td>
<td>3. <em>Implement a biannual forum (3 hours) with schedule champions and the Peak Group.</em></td>
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<td>▪ Address Governance.</td>
<td>4. <em>Peak Group to review Governance principles and processes and undertake a gap analysis in relation to current processes.</em></td>
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<td>Improve mechanisms for success within the Partnership Agreement</td>
<td>▪ Explore links/synergies within schedules. <em>(Pinpointing Schedules that could work together strategically was considered to be the Peak Group’s responsibility. It was not the role of Schedule champions to investigate blending of Schedules)</em></td>
<td>5. Refer to Recommendation 1</td>
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<td>▪ Improve the knowledge of the Partnership Agreement: the key drivers for its existence, how it works and particularly the importance of CDU to the Northern Territory economy. Need a stronger commitment to the higher level goals of the Partnership.</td>
<td>6. Utilise Schedule champions to provide information to new schedule teams.</td>
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<td>7. Develop an internal communications strategy. <em>(see appendix 1)</em></td>
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<td>8. Develop a key criteria checklist for the appointment of Schedule Champions. This in turn should inform the expectations of the role and create greater transparency of processes.</td>
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<td>9. Review the process for the recruitment of Schedule members.</td>
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- 5 -
- Selection of Schedule Champions
- Selection of Schedule members
- Recognise and celebrate successes and achievements in schedules.

10. Develop case studies that identify the difficulties experienced by the schedule groups and provide practical solutions as to how they were overcame. For example, inactivity and low commitment to the goals and strategies of the schedule (schedule 4.6). Planning and agreeing the direction (schedule 1.2)

11. Refer to the Internal Communications Strategy (recommendation 23)

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<th>Core themes</th>
<th>Key issues</th>
<th>Recommendation</th>
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| Capacity of CDU | - Identification of specific areas where CDU is seeking to capacity build. There was a lack of clarity about what capacity meant to CDU.  
- Concerns in relation to the monitoring and coordination capability within CDU of activities and commitments across the Partnership Agreement. It was also noted that it was difficult to locate the correct contact due to a lack of understanding of organisational structures.  
- There was a specific concern at the capacity to deliver | 12. CDU to provide clarity on capacity building areas.  
13. Improve coordination across CDU by considering a whole of university coordinator specifically for commitments and agreed activities under the Partnership Agreement. |
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<th>Strategic planning</th>
<th>Skill enhancement</th>
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| ▪ Schedules to better inform NTG policy objectives.  
▪ Lack of understanding as to the future of the Partnership Agreement. Members referred to a finite timescale of 2006 with little consideration of how schedules would continue. | ▪ At the commencement of the Partnership Agreement it was assumed that members had active skill bases in terms of project management, and collaborative working relations. This as not the case in reality and as the working relationships evolved it became apparent that there were skill gaps in these areas. |
| 14. Ensure that Partnership activities are linked with Agency and CDU specific objectives and strategic priorities. This in turn may assist as a vehicle to further engage CEOs. | 16. Develop a fact sheet series to profile the skill sets required to work effectively within the Partnership Agreement and equip members with tools and guidelines. Each fact sheet could cite examples of schedules where proficiency in the profiled skill has been demonstrated. The forums identified the following topics:  
▪ Defining collaborative relationships.  
▪ How to scope projects and funding proposals.  
▪ How to write effective KPIs. |
| 15. Change communication messages to give message that 2006 is an evaluation milestone, not the end of the Agreement. | 17. Need for schedule champions to involve some level of administrative support/advice to the schedule team to ensure that administrative details/issues are understood, resolved and progressed. |
### Resources

Also refer to resources in Section 3, Enhancing the operational performance

- Commitment to engage Indigenous people on schedules, particularly in Category 4
- Lack of clarity concerning intellectual property rights in relation to research.

18. Schedule Champions to actively seek Indigenous members.

19. Develop guidelines that clarify intellectual property rights and create a fact sheet.

### 3. Enhancing the performance of the Partnership Agreement

<table>
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<th>Core themes</th>
<th>Key issues</th>
<th>Recommendation</th>
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| Roles and responsibilities           | - There is role ambiguity in terms of expectations and accountabilities in relation to the Peak Group, Schedule Champions and Schedule Members  
- Whilst there is a strong level of commitment to making the Partnership Agreement work members still view this activity as an add on function rather an integrated core business. Defining, recognising and integrating schedule activity into core business is a critical strategic issue that requires greater definition and consideration in terms of the practicalities and implementation. | 20. Documents addressing role expectations to be developed and included in the induction package and the Internal Communication Strategy.  
21. Dialogue needs to occur with the Peak Group and executives of both CDU and NTG to develop practical processes to address core business priorities. (Refer also to recommendation 14). |
<p>| Communication                        | - Greater engagement and two way dialogue with the Peak Group was required.                                                                                                                                     | 22. Refer to recommendations in “Improving the existing structure”.                              |</p>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Communication across schedules was very limited. This in turn led to duplication and unrealised synergies.</th>
<th>23. Develop an Internal Communication Strategy.</th>
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<td>General Profile of the Partnership Agreement. There was low awareness of the communication mediums utilised by the Secretariat to inform members and limited knowledge of the key drivers of the Partnership Agreement</td>
<td>24. Secretariat to conduct Awareness sessions for nominated NTG and CDU personnel. 25. Directive to Incorporate Partnership Agreement awareness into NTG and CDU Inductions.</td>
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<td>Resources</td>
<td>The processes to enable resource sharing between CDU and NTG were considered to be protracted and cumbersome. The facility to share resources was seen as a critical component in ensuring effective working relationships, developing understanding of each other’s organisational context and strengthening CDU capacity to attract research funding. Because work associated with the Partnership to date has not been viewed as core business, time spent on Partnership activities is viewed as an add on and an additional workload. There is a perception that there are not adequate resources to address the work demands of the Schedules.</td>
<td>26. Secretariat to facilitate a meeting of key Human resources personnel to develop a secondment/exchange strategy between NTG and CDU. 27. Refer to roles and responsibilities. 28. Implement recommendations 1-5.</td>
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<td>In the main schedule members felt that there had been a strong level of commitment and engagement in Partnership activities but that there had been limited feedback and recognition of the level of commitment and input.</td>
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<td>Procurement</td>
<td>More rigorous approach to including strategies within schedules; and assistance for schedule champions.</td>
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<td>Current processes are not comprehensively understood and perceived to be cumbersome.</td>
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<td>Schedule members felt that the Partnership Agreement itself is perceived by CAPS to be contradictory to the values underpinning procurement in the NTG.</td>
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<td>29. Liaise with Treasury in relation to the development of the new procurement guidelines.</td>
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<td>30. Secretariat to seek guidance on compliance with national competition policy.</td>
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<td>31. Secretariat to undertake Awareness Raising session with CAPS, Procurement Policy and the Procurement Review Board, to ensure the overarching goals of the Partnership Agreement are understood and to facilitate better working relationships between Procurement stakeholders and the Secretariat/Schedule members.</td>
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<td>32. Secretariat to ensure procurement is a feature of the Awareness sessions, the “New Schedule” induction and the internal communications strategy.</td>
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<td>33. Secretariat to develop guidelines for schedule champions</td>
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<td>Measurement, monitoring and reporting</td>
<td>Fundamental questions need to be addressed in terms of the accountability of the PA, achieving openness and transparency in all of the workings of the partnership and how best value will be achieved.</td>
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<td>Assessment needs to occur on how schedule performance is assisting the functioning of the Partnership Agreement.</td>
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<td>Monitoring, evaluation and reporting needs to be simplified. A project reporting template needs to be established (this could be an adaptation/extension of the Annual Report reporting proforma) to assist schedules to easily monitor and report the progress of their schedule activity at the beginning and for the duration of all projects.</td>
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<td>34. Review assessment criteria for Schedule performance and ensure transparency of that criteria for all Schedule Champions.</td>
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<td>35. The Secretariat to continue consultation with schedule members in relation to the development of the annual report reporting template and its potential adaptation to be used as a project management reporting tool.</td>
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<td>36. Refer to recommendation 15.</td>
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3.0 SUMMARY OF FORUM FEEDBACK AND COMMENTARY

It is inevitable that both across and within the forums there were some contradictions. However these were few and far between and there were predominantly consistent themes and messages arising out of the three forums. In the following summaries all comments detailed have been consistently raised throughout the forums unless otherwise indicated. There were very few instances of isolated issues, that is issues peculiar to one schedule or category.

At the first forum members were asked to form their schedule groups in order to respond to the 4 evaluative criteria. This resulted in detailed accounts of schedule activity rather than a broader consideration of the framework for the Partnership Agreement. The opportunity for discussion time was subsumed by impromptu schedule meetings.

At the second and third forums, however, members were not asked to form their schedule groups but requested to respond to the criteria as mixed teams and reflect on the responses against the backdrop of their specific schedule experience. This promoted a more robust forum for sharing and debate and responses were more general, less schedule specific and addressed the broader Partnership framework.

3.1 EFFECTIVE WORKING RELATIONSHIPS

Members were asked to define and assess the relationships within the Partnership Agreement, review how the schedules had identified joint priorities and developed collaborative working relationships, and identify the characteristics of an effective working relationship within the Partnership Agreement.

Schedules working well had addressed the silos, were communicating with mutual respect and were flexible and responsive to each other’s needs and shared objectives. There was a strong sense of ownership and achievement within the schedule.

Issues around leadership, lack of direction, lack of effective planning and inadequate identification of joint priorities were key characteristics of difficulties experienced regarding working relationships. Another difficulty related to the stability of the schedule team and was considered to be an important factor of achieving effective working relationships, particularly when high turnover of members impacted on the continuity of involvement.

Overall relationships were defined by 6 categories:

1. Schedule specific
   - Work existing prior to June 2003 currently badged under the Partnership Agreement
   - New schedules working well
   - New schedules not working so well

2. With the Peak Group

3. With the Secretariat

4. Schedule to schedule
5. Schedule to the Partnership Agreement
6. Partnership Agreement to CDU and NTG populations not currently engaged in the Partnership Agreement.

3.1.1 SCHEDULE SPECIFIC FEEDBACK

Schedules under the Partnership Agreement had:

- enabled the strengthening of existing bonds/relationships. Where existing relationships existed, they were strengthened as a result of collaboration under the Partnership Agreement. This in turn resulted in the development of new ventures, opportunities and synergies. For example, members of the research community in the Northern Territory are already well known to each other. However as a result of working on the Partnership framework these relationships were able to be further enhanced.

- Enabled the development of new relationships. The schedules facilitated collaborative initiatives (eg the sharing of equipment and knowledge which led to a number of additional benefits – i.e. Schedule 1.3);

- helped to achieve a common vision and forced parties to more closely align priorities;

- provided a catalyst for relationships and platform for continuity and solution orientated problem solving;

- enabled a badge for existing work. With regard to this issue there were two distinctively different perspectives. The first perspective was characterised by the view that the badging of existing work was a hindrance imposing unnecessary and cumbersome reporting requirements and could see no clear benefits in the process. The second perspective saw clear benefits in the process as it provided recognition for work at both University Council and Cabinet levels;

- facilitated capacity building by an increased understanding of how CDU and NTG work;

- strengthened research capacity in CDU. It was considered an important benefit that Government had access to research outcomes in order to inform policy development. However, it was perceived that this process was currently not occurring and needed to be addressed. It was unclear as to whether Government is receiving the research and deciding, for whatever reasons, not to utilise the research to inform policy or whether the research was not reaching the Government.

- created more regular, informal and lateral communication.

Some schedules said they had few face to face meetings and saw this as an inhibitor to a successful schedule team, in the alternative, one successful schedule met only once a year and communicated via email.
It was mooted that good working relationships between CDU and NTG were not necessarily due to the schedules. Success of the schedule was seen as being personality dependent and the schedule mechanism not necessarily the most effective mechanism. “Successful partnerships are dependent on personality where they need to depend on structure but the structure is not supportive”. (category 4)

There was a perception that Schedule members are working on a volunteer ‘free’ basis. This was informed by the lack of integration of schedule activity with core business; it was felt that some schedules lacked already overstretched resources.

3.1.2 PEAK GROUP

- There was a limited understanding of the Peak Group’s role, responsibility and expectations and a strong desire to achieve a shared understanding. Relationships with the Peak Group need to be responsive. It was recognised that during the infancy of Schedules a greater degree of direction and communication about expectations is needed but as the Schedule matures the emphasis will change and the main flow of information would be feeding upwards.

- Greater acknowledgment was requested of the time and resources that is committed to the Partnership Agreement. More feedback and positive reinforcement, especially of an informal nature, for the effort and achievement of Schedules.

- “More opportunities for active and engaging time similar to the attendance of Peak Group members at the workshops” was considered to be both useful and necessary.

- Inadequate conversations with the Peak Group in terms of future directions.

3.1.3 THE PARTNERSHIP SECRETARIAT

- Support of Government and CDU via the joint Secretariat was considered to be very good. However it was also noted that the secretariat was not at a level to direct schedule teams. (Category 4)

3.1.4 SCHEDULE TO SCHEDULE

- Lack of clarity about what the Peak Group’s expectations are – particularly the role of schedule champions (not an integrated understanding)

- Inter-competitive – need to work together on similar Schedules. Need to communicate with other Schedules to maximise resources and collaboration.

- Schedules are too isolated from one another and restrict the ability to collaborate on a broader scale and avoid duplication.

3.1.5 SCHEDULE TO THE PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

- Tokenistic notion of the Agreement as a piece of paper, not a working document.
The Schedules themselves are not the most important thing: the overriding goals/strategies underpinning the Partnership Agreement are.

Insufficient recognition of importance of the Partnership Agreement to the Northern Territory.

Communication is primarily one way i.e. from schedule teams to the Peak Group.

Needs to be engagement at the most senior level. CEO’s and other senior staff need to be engaged in the process. Anecdotal evidence has demonstrated that where CEO’s take a strong interest and leadership role in the schedules that outcomes are achieved.

3.1.6 PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT TO THE REST OF THE WORLD (I.e. CDU and NTG)

There is a perceived lack of engagement by NTG /CDU populations not involved at the schedule level. Understanding of the Partnership Agreement and its benefits are low.

Poor perception of CDU at middle levels of NTG.

3.1.7 RECOMMENDATIONS

Refer to the following relevant recommendations:

1, 3, 7, 8, 9, 20, 24, 25

3.2 HURDLES AND BARRIERS

Forum participants were asked to consider aspects of the Partnership Agreement that had caused frustration and difficulty and also to identify strategies had been useful in assisting them to overcome any hurdles or barriers.

Feedback was focused around the key headings detailed below: the capacity of CDU, differences and understanding of organisational contexts, the structure of the partnership Agreement, procurement guidelines and the capacity of resources.

3.2.1 DIFFERENCES AND UNDERSTANDING OF ORGANISATIONAL CONTEXTS

Different operating environments exist within CDU and NTG, whereas in the main, these differences can be complimentary, they can also compete with each other.

Work needs to occur to provide both parties with a better understanding of the different ways in which the two organisations (NTG and CDU) are governed/ operate/communicate, network and abbreviate and the consequences that this might have for the way in which they work together.
It is perceived that NTG lacks an understanding of research grant processes of CDU and conversely there was a perception that CDU did not understand the political environment of NTG. This produces tensions between academic rigour/integrity and service orientation, confidentiality and intellectual property. These factors potentially exacerbate the risk: of conflicting and competing priorities and the ability to work effectively in collaboration.

3.2.2 CAPACITY OF CDU

There is currently a lack of clarity around key priority areas in which capacity should be built. Schedule members felt this was critically important to define. “Expectations of CDU are unrealistic - CDU needs to build the capacity to deliver before outcomes can be realised and the specific capacity they are trying to build needs to be articulated.” “The capacity to deliver verses the desire to deliver needs to be tested. There is a need for CDU to clarify its priority areas.”

3.2.3 COMMUNICATION

- It is considered that there are too many schedules which results in the creation of another series of organisational silos. More inter-schedule communication to promote relationship and dialogue within categories and across the Partnership Agreement is required.

- There is a high level of reporting required which is considered to be an inefficient use of time.

- Due to the embryonic nature of the Partnership Agreement there are a number of aspects of the working relationship that need further development, particularly the identification of the priority of schedules within the Partnership Agreement. Attention also needs to be given to equipping schedule members with the information and capabilities to scope projects and determine project priorities.

3.2.4 PROCUREMENT

- A small number of Schedule members expressed concern at the implications for private industry with the recently approved General Certificate of Exemption for contracts determined under the Partnership Agreement. The groups felt that there was a need to ensure a level playing field and to ensure that partnerships with other industry providers are fostered, as well as the University. Particularly in the higher education areas, there is little, if any, NT based private sector capability.

- A general consensus amongst the groups was exhibited in terms of the frustrations that Schedule members had experienced while undertaking procurement under the Partnership Agreement. It was noted that there is an inherent conflict between the organisational culture/policy framework for procurement in the NTG and the strategic framework of the Partnership Agreement. The Partnership Agreement expresses a collaborative strategic approach, with a focus on capacity building for CDU, while Procurement Policy in the NTG is based on an underlying framework of fairness, equity and open competition in the procurement of goods and services. These two frameworks are seemingly at odds with each other, and translate into difficulties in achieving successful working relationships due to the underlying differences in each.
3.2.5 Structure

- The intent of the Partnership Agreement is clear; however, it is not clear how schedules are collectively meeting this intent.

- There is a lack of clarity in relation to “whether the process is driving content or the other way around”. Are projects there to achieve the Partnership Agreement or vice versa.

- Schedules need to be integrated where similarities exist.

- Governance of the Partnership Agreement needs to be more transparent. It is unclear to schedule members what principles or ground rules govern the Partnership. What criteria is used to review performance? What are processes for dealing with disputes and the basis for decision making and the selection of members?

- There was a lack of awareness and indeed confusion in relation to how schedules were selected under the Partnership and their relationship to the core business of Agencies. It was perceived that two types of schedules existed:
  - Recognising a need and seeking to address that need (which in the main should be to build capacity)
  - Existing projects incorporated into the structure with the intent of generating some achievements for the Partnership Agreement.

There was concern that schedules addressing fundamental needs were missing.

3.2.6 Resources and capacity

- “There is an expectation that schedules will use existing resources. However, there is a perception that this will place a drain on existing resources.” Schedule members were unclear as to whether or not schedule work is core business (possibly with priorities that are at odds with this core business) or whether it is in fact additional work. There were also concerns about the sustainability of resources if it was additional work as perceived. This links in with recommendations 14 and 19.

- Members expressed frustration at the expectation of meeting project outcomes in a climate of continuous change in relation to staff turnover. Consequently it was felt that it was difficult to achieve the underpinning principles of the Partnership Agreement - to build capacity of CDU. One comment, however, was that this was always an issue as far as relationship building between the two organisations is concerned, but that the Partnership Agreement now provided a framework for continuity.

- Training and program outcomes should implicitly link to achieving the Northern Territory Government’s 6 capacity building areas:
  - Building Territory business
  - Promoting jobs and training
  - Building better schools
  - Building stronger regions
3.2.7 RECOMMENDATIONS

Refer to the following relevant recommendations:

2, 4, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 24, 25, 26, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35.

3.3 ACHIEVEMENTS AND HIGHLIGHTS

Members were asked to consider what were the key things that have made a significant difference or have been milestones of the journey so far?

Out of the 4 criteria for evaluation, achievements and highlights was compromised somewhat at the expense of effective working relationship and hurdles and barriers. There was a consistent trend in the feedback provided in that establishing effective relationships within schedule teams was a dominant feature of members’ achievements. The other key highlight was the increased profile of CDU and the positive outcomes and synergies brought about by the relationships under the partnership Agreement.

Due to the focus of this section no recommendations are provided.

The following sections identify specific comments from schedule members.

3.3.1 GENERAL

- In 18 months the Partnership Agreement has come a long way
- The Partnership itself is very positive. One member had been involved in both the Tasmanian and ACT models and said CDU and NTG Partnership Agreement was by far the most integrated. (schedule 2.1)
- Increased recognition by NTG about the importance of CDU to the economy.
- Secondments (paid) and adjunct (honorary) were considered to have been a notable highlight of the Partnership. Secondments of both NTG staff to CDU and vice versa as in NT Treasury (schedule 2.2) and Department of the Chief Minister (schedule 2.7) provided excellent opportunities for both a greater understanding and appreciation of the differences of the organisational contexts and more effective working relationships.
- Improved perceptions of CDU.

3.3.2 SPECIFIC TO SCHEDULES

Examples of achievements within Specific schedules
Partnership Agreement as breakpoint to solve intractable issues (i.e. Desert Knowledge)

Bio Science North Australia (1.3)

ACIL-Tasman Infrastructure Study for Transport: partnership formed

Uniform/Agreed set of goals for Schedule 1.2 – to build KPI’s and a joint understanding of each other’s needs

ICT – Structure around Grant Programs and Directions (1.6)

Graduate Certificate in Community Development (4.5)

3.4 DEFINING SUCCESS

Members were asked how they might define true success of the Partnership Agreement and in doing so what factors should be considered to assist with the realisation of future success?

Defining success was closely aligned to the issues identified in hurdles and barriers. The main focus of the feedback centred around the strategic framework of the Partnership Agreement. There was an expressed need for definition and clarity of the accountabilities and expectations within the Partnership Agreement and the access and range of support and communication mechanisms available to Schedule members. Improved processes and understanding in the areas of procurement and monitoring and performance measuring were also seen as tools likely to have a direct bearing on enhancing the success of the Partnership Agreement.

3.4.1 GENERAL

- “If success is about building CDU capacity then everything is a success!”
- “Generating collaborative funding arrangements.”
- “Increased capability and capacity building - but how do we measure that?”
- A significant success would be to shift and broaden the reach of the Partnership Agreement. That would require a move out of solely internal networks and focus on integrating external partners or members. It is perceived that the sustainability of the partnership is in the ability to leverage from external resources and lock in other providers from industry and private practice.
- Achieving tangible benefits from the exchange of academic and bureaucratic skills by better informing Government policy and creating evidence based policy.
- Selecting worthwhile projects at the expense of smaller, less successful projects.
- Engaging the commitment of the leadership at all levels of CDU and NTG and particularly Chief Executive Officers who are not represented on the Peak Group
- Improved reputation of CDU to deliver useful products.
- Establishing objective KPI’s to measure the success of the Schedule.

3.4.2 SUCCESSFUL RELATIONSHIPS

- Cross-institutional communications where Schedule champions can operate with more authority and efficiency.
- Convergence for a range of NTG agencies and CDU schools to enable the identification and commitment to core priorities and a more cohesive relationship underpinned by an informed appreciation of each other’s organisational contexts.
- Defined global (whole of government, whole of university whole of Territory, international objectives. Greater emphasis of “Team NT” approach.) objectives.
- Collaboration → leveraging → synergies

3.4.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

Refer to the following relevant recommendations:
12, 13, 14, 15, 19, 24, 25, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35.
Appendix 1

CHARLES DARWIN UNIVERSITY/NT GOVERNMENT

PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

Background

Aim

To raise awareness of the intent and application of the Partnership Agreement and build a collaborative and constructive relationship between Government agencies and the University.

Objectives

- Raise awareness of the Partnership Agreement, including its intent and application for the mutual benefit of the Northern Territory Government (NTG), the Charles Darwin University and the whole of the Northern Territory community.
- Increase collaboration between researchers and practitioners to ensure research expertise is relevant to clients and builds the capacity of both the University and Government agencies;
- Build constructive working relationships that are not constrained by cultural differences and organisational boundaries;
- Share information and showcase success stories;
- Clearly explain how the agreement operates to make it easier to harness benefits;
- Ensure personnel in both organisations actively seek opportunities to build mutual understanding and find solutions as opportunities are explored and exploited.
- Manage expectations about what can actually be delivered by developing an understanding of needs and capacities and communicating progress and planning;
- Enhance long-term planning and forecasting by increasing the quality of information shared;
- Use effective communication to increase research capacity and knowledge management, create a strong profile and market position, deliver courses and research that are relevant to the Territory workplace, and attract more students and funding.

Target audiences

- Researchers and educators
- Policy makers
- Funding providers
- NTG Chief Executive Officers
- Senior management in Government and the University
- Public sector middle management
- University Schools
• University Council
• Cabinet
• Partnership Agreement Peak Group
• Schedule champions and members
• NT Business community
• NT professional community
• Prospective students
• NT general community
• Third – party organisations with an interest in the success of the Partnership

Strategies

• Ensure all communication and information is relevant for its target audience;
• Clearly articulate the purpose and benefits of the Partnership Agreement and show how it links to the business directions of Government and the University;
• Prioritise collaborative approaches that encourage teams to work on joint problem-solving;
• Face to face communication will build relationships and increase understanding of respective needs, capacities and opportunities;
• Ensure communication is relevant and interesting, to overcome barriers such as information overload, business cynicism, and resistance to the partnership approach;
• Showcase case studies, such as work problems that were solved, Government contracting out policy advice, courses that meet specific skills shortages, business opportunities under the agreement that have built the University’s capacity, new ways of working, interesting people and projects;
• Maximise the use of the web site, with levels of information;
• Clearly articulate common goals and priorities, then match delivery with realistic business objectives.
• Clearly articulate the roles and expectations within the Partnership structure and develop a transparent framework for evaluating Schedule activities.

Tactics

• Face to face communication that fosters a collaborative, information-sharing approach, such as workshops on specific issues to find solutions that apply both the academic and practical experience of the respective parties;
• Lunchtime speakers, both at the University and in Government agencies on successful applications of the partnership agreement;
• Regular meetings for schedules, to exchange ideas and provide mutual support;
• Peak Group forum with schedule champions to be held at least annually.
• Regular report cards for the Partnership Agreement Peak Group so successes are evident;
• Publication of articles in academic journals to add credibility to research projects;
• Incorporate Partnership Agreement awareness into NTG and CDU Induction processes;
• A dedicated web page with information about the Partnership Agreement, an overview of how it works, its intent, examples of success and links to more detailed
documents for those who need it (provide templates so people can contribute information and make it easy to provide feedback);

- Articles in existing publications to promote the agreement and its application, eg stories in the University’s magazine (Origins), Government publications and web site;
- Produce a simple flyer outlining the agreement and send to all staff, with tips on how it might be applied, case studies and comments from ‘champions’;
- Reward positive outcomes with recognition and feedback; and
- Attract positive media coverage when the University helps with research or key projects.

Tools

- Web site – dedicated section (possibly password protected) on roles and responsibilities of Peak Group members, Schedule Champions and members and the Secretariat, and how to use the partnership Agreement, processes to introduce, amend and delete schedules procurement and reporting guidelines, A
- Flyer or fact sheets on how the partnership agreement works – perhaps one with more detailed ‘nuts and bolts’ information and another designed to increase higher level awareness of the objectives and benefits of the agreement
- Awareness sessions.
- Articles for newsletters and publications already read by target audiences
- An emailed newsletter on a subscription basis (will need to be interesting and relevant)
- Media releases and articles
- Face to face meetings

Evaluation

- Conduct regular surveys to measure awareness, attitudinal and behaviour change against objectives of the agreement (marketing students could do this);