ACHIEVING ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL GAIN FROM TROPICAL KNOWLEDGE

Schedule 2.6

Under Review – March 2004

ISSUES

The parties agree the key issues are:

• The development of northern Australia in an ecologically and economically sustainable manner is an imperative, in view of the dramatic and anticipatable ecological, political, social and economic changes that will transform this part of the world during the 21st Century.

• A number of organisations have been developed and research activities undertaken which are dedicated to forms of tropical application within specific theme areas. The University hosts a number of centres that contribute in this regard. However, there is currently no identifiable mechanism for gathering, codifying and disseminate this range of existing and potential knowledge, university-generated and other, in such a way that the relevance for the social, ecological and economic development of the Northern Territory is made explicit to decision makers, funders, entrepreneurs, students or members of the public.

• Positioning the University nationally and internationally as a pre-eminent tertiary institution for the teaching and research of subjects in tropical knowledge will assist in the identification of the Territory’s comparative advantages, niche expertise areas, and thus future areas for commercialisation and product marketing in related South East Asian regions.

• General enhancement of tropical research that is pertinent to the Territory’s economic and social policy debates is also required, in partnership with government, community and industry stakeholders.

STRATEGIES

The parties agree the strategies they will employ are:
• Establish a Joint Centre for Tropical Knowledge within the Charles Darwin University which will operate as a clearing house for knowledge and sponsor research and debate, in collaboration with relevant institutions, in such potential subjects as:
  – The extension of tropical climatic conditions into temperate zones due to climatic change
  – The population health and economic consequences for northern Australia associated with climate change (for example the shifting vectors for disease carrying insects)
  – Development of renewable energy systems
  – Indigenous economic development opportunities
  – The economic basis for conserving the largest tracts of tropical savanna landscapes on Earth
  – The biotechnological solutions to making currently marginal lands economically productive
  – Environmental and social impact research informing ongoing development and population growth within the urban areas

• To establish the Centre, the University and the Government will each dedicate a position to synthesise and communicate tropical knowledge research and seek more stable funding for the Centre, in liaison with all tiers of government, industry and other research institutions. The positions will be funded with certainty for the period through to 31 December 2004.

• Further consideration of Territory Government contributions to the existing University Scholarships and the University’s endowment as part of the broader Partnership Agreement process. The Centre will assume responsibility for convening the Charles Darwin Symposia (Schedule REF) as a principal means of serving as a catalyst for intellectual and cultural debate on tropical knowledge.

• Both parties collaborating effectively in their participation in advising on the Northern Territory’s research and innovation policy and activity.

**PERFORMANCE INDICATORS**

_The parties agree the indicators to be used are:_

• Number of partnerships entered into between the University, the Government and/or the private sector

• Level of new Commonwealth research grants and expenditure in the Territory Economy directly related to tropical knowledge
• Degree to which tropical knowledge research has influenced public policy and any measurable impact on public sector outlays

• Number of new research scholars attracted to tropical knowledge, and related scholarship funding

• Attributed value amongst stakeholders of the Centre in its role as an entrepot point for Tropical Knowledge