Transforming CRC’s

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Is the lack of innovation in the structures of industry service bodies costing primary industry businesses dearly?
R&D is the answer?

• Minister Littleproud said R&D is the answer to agricultural growth but.....

• Are the familiar structures of our industry R&D service bodies fit for purpose?

• Are these institutions responsive to major disrupters?

• Have the models become immune to change?

• If so... do we care?

• Have we learnt anything?
Cooperative Research Centre: creating opportunity

- CRC’s exist to strengthen collaboration among our research and commercial sectors to increase innovation and commercialisation.

- The national system of innovation approach is attractive to both academics and policy makers.

- ...maybe not so much for industry... particularly small and medium sized businesses... the ones in Australia who have the ‘hands on’ capacity to push the innovation agenda the hardest.
Cleverness.....

• No a failure of cleverness in all societies
• Funding
• Encouraging systems
• Supportive institutions
• Expectations to delivery
Unleashed our science on the world as undeveloped ideas, valuable but often unusable
Familiar Failure

• Concept that innovation sits within the academic institutions.

• Often we fail to translate the system of innovation from a conceptual framework to a concrete practice.

• We know this but keep repeating it.
The world is changing
Digital disruption, automation, deep analysis
big data – can we change with it?
Our story in the North

- Limited resources
- Limited capacity
Structural change of our R&D platforms.....boring

- Governance structures for investment and performance. - doing it differently.

- Cost shifting and funding source to maintain business as usual.

- Limited interdisciplinary research/ collaborations vs competitiveness...

- Northern Australia is a special case – working in the colonies...
Changing the Structure

• Actual performance: poor delivery/mediocre science/poor value for money.

• From 30% slippage to less than 3%

• ‘Reach-through’ contracts

• Suitcase scientists

• Researcher control of research agenda

• Project migration: industry disappointed
Creating a networked platform

• Competition is actually shrinking the cake – not growing it.

• Work hard at supportive networks.

• Create an engaged platform that enables fly-in researchers to work within a trusted framework,

• Working back with the Australian and State Governments so that a different approach isn’t shunned.
Contracts

• The CRC NA co-investment is on a project by project basis – not a general investment into the CRC with a corresponding expectation of funds.

• No ‘reach-through contracts’ – if there are 4 partners then there are 4 contracts.

• Poor delivery of milestone results in withholding of all institutional funds against all the milestones.

• Regular review against ‘end-user’ relevance.
Being of value to the North

• Crop production and adaption R&D.

• R&D in overcoming barriers and actually providing solutions/de-risking investment in a timely manner:
  • Harmonising regulation across jurisdictions
  • Native Title
  • Environmental regulations
  • Energy cost
  • Wages costs
  • Poor connectivity
  • Poor communications
R&D is also understanding and working with Investors, Industry and Community

- Work with investors, industry and community from the start
- Bring in players who understand the industry in the geography
- Build trust frameworks - make friends with the community
- Let the Minister know