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HOW TO WIN A CRC (OR NOT)

Why a CRC?

- ⦿ The Australian CRC program is the envy of many countries
- ⦿ ROI from CRC research exceeds many other research investment avenues
- ⦿ CRCs provide a mechanism to assemble the intellectual and financial critical mass necessary to tackle a significant sector or industry issue
- ⦿ End-users need to be able to articulate what they want and “employ” researchers to deliver solutions (akin to corporate R&D)
- ⦿ A passion for research in a field does not justify or constitute a CRC

Credentials

- Bid Chair – CRC for an Internationally Competitive Pork Industry (New – Successful (1 of 16))
 - Round 9 (2004); 3 Stage Selection Process; Biennial Selection Rounds; \$25M/\$28M (\$11M); Liberal/Nelson
- Bid Chair – CRC for High Integrity Australian Pork (New – Successful (1 of 4))
 - Round 13 (2010); 2 Stage Selection Process; Annual Selection Rounds; \$20M/\$26M (\$18M); Labour/Carr
- Bid Co-Chair – CRC for Living with Autism Spectrum Disorders (New - Unsuccessful – Interview (10/26 – 6))
 - Round 14 (2011); 2 Stage Selection Process; Annual Selection Rounds; Labour/Carr
- Bid Chair – CRC for Living with Autism Spectrum Disorders (New – Successful (1 of 4))
 - Round 15 (2012/13); 2 Stage Selection Process; Annual Selection; \$31M/\$31M (\$6M); Labour/Carr, Evans, Bowen, Emerson, Farrell

Disclaimer

- ⦿ The CRC selection process is highly competitive
- ⦿ Very strong bids can be unsuccessful
- ⦿ These “keys to success” are MY views based on MY experience
- ⦿ DIISRTE and the CRC Selection Committee may have different views

End-User Driven

- ⦿ End-user initiated and championed
- ⦿ End-user priorities
- ⦿ End-user management
- ⦿ End-user engagement

Genuine Need

- ⦿ Genuine need is easy to defend
- ⦿ Genuine need attracts the right participants
 - Choose your participants carefully!
 - “All right then said the little red hen” approach
- ⦿ Research outcomes must “revolutionise” the sector
- ⦿ Need does not trump a “gold medal” application

Champions

- ⦿ You need a Champion not a Spin-Doctor
 - DIISRTE is not the ATO!
- ⦿ Significant time investment (Pro-bono)
 - 650 hours on overall Autism CRC bids
 - Combined Autism CRC bids cost <\$100K
- ⦿ No consultant or lobbyist has influence over the process
- ⦿ Economist input into the Impact Tool is very valuable
- ⦿ Back those prepared to share risk

Science

- ⦿ World-class innovation
- ⦿ World-class researchers
- ⦿ Consider a maximum of 3 programs
- ⦿ Robust – Autism CRC had 22 reviews
- ⦿ A science “challenge” at interview can be catastrophic

Manage Expectations

- Don't be all things to all people
- Always relate back to the CRC Objectives
- Never offer a funding guarantee
- Competitive/Peer-reviewed project applications relevant to objectives

Educate Scientists and Participants

- ⦿ Do not assume scientists and participants understand the CRC process and objectives
- ⦿ Culture change
 - *“Unlike our NHMRC and ARC-funded research, work we do within the CRC will have to produce an outcome”*
- ⦿ Some participants have had bad CRC experiences

Communication

- ⦿ Inform rather than “lobby”
 - Ministers and Governments change!
 - “Whole of Government” approach
- ⦿ Keep your participants informed!
- ⦿ Promote and manage sector cohesion in relation to the CRC bid

CRC Program and Selection Committee

- You must understand the program and the application requirements
- Need to liaise with DIISRTE
- If at first you don't succeed, liaison and feedback from the CRC Selection Committee is valuable

Essential Participants

- ⦿ Set a minimum cash contribution
- ⦿ Discourage “tied” funding
- ⦿ Incorporate
- ⦿ Use cash contributions as the basis for voting (not in-kind) when the CRC is incorporated
- ⦿ No guaranteed Board seats (but insist on end-user and researcher representation)
- ⦿ Establish an R&D Committee with EP seats

Governance

- ◎ Chair – Must have
- ◎ CEO – Must have
- ◎ Board selection process
- ◎ Structure and legal
 - Pre-establishment (Terms Sheets)
- ◎ IP management
 - Major point of discussion from a very low knowledge base
 - Project-based IP model with CRC ownership as the base position

Interview

- ⦿ The most difficult part of the bid process
- ⦿ Focus on the feedback questions
- ⦿ Do not assume all aspects of the application are clear to the Committee
- ⦿ Have the highest calibre interview team possible
- ⦿ The Interview can make or break a CRC bid
- ⦿ Utilise the CRCA

Summary

- ⦿ A CRC bid is a significant undertaking
- ⦿ End-user driven CRCs with a genuine need have a head start
- ⦿ CRCs are not level playing fields so there is no template for engagement – embrace the concept and exploit your sector strengths

