



Mind the Gap: perspectives on collaboration policy and practice

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Collaboration as:

- integral to the modern research endeavour
- a foundation for successful innovation



35 out of 35!!!!

- “lowest level of industry-research collaboration in the OECD”
- 3% *vs* 37% in large firms, 2% *vs* 14% in SMEs

Doesn't ring true!!!

- inconsistent with day-to-day experience
- joint university-industry filed PCT applications are 13 out of 35 OECD countries (*IP Australia*)
- on \$\$ earned per academic Australia is mid-ranked among OECD countries (*Times HES*)
- problem lies with comparability of data
 - the basis of the ABS data used in OECD comparisons
 - counts of collaborations further highlight this



35 out of 35?!

Should CRCs be implicated in this purported underperformance?



CRCs Programme

- Explicitly established to foster industry – researcher collaboration
 - in practice became “end-user” but again “industry” after Miles report 2015
- By many measures in many reviews – mainly Allen Consulting Group 2012 report – a very successful intervention:
 - but little attempt, other than using input statistics, to evaluate collaboration



CRCs to June 2017

- Since 1991, 211 CRCs have been funded:
 - 31 of them are currently operating (single term, 10-year maximum). 5 more are since contracted
- Of the other 180 CRCs, 91 were earlier iterations of the **89 that exited** the CRC Programme when their funding agreements ended (Department of Industry, Innovation and Science (DIIS) data)

CRCs that continued, ex-funding from Government

- Only 15 continued to operate after exiting the CRC Programme (~17%) (2 since wound-up)
- Little understanding of why so few;
- Emma and Laurie (Chair of former MiningCRC, now Mining3) engaged with a group of peers (Chairs and CEOs of the CRCs that transitioned) to identify the shared and unique factors that enabled a few CRCs to transition to sustainable operations.

Main Findings (no surprises!)

Planning and timeframes

- Allowing significant time for transition planning and execution (years not months)

Resources

- Reserving funds to cover typical decline of revenues during transition or after
- Ensuring continuity of activities and people e.g. projects with lifespans beyond CRC Programme exit

End-user participants in CRC

- Successful transition in most cases correlated with high end-user commitment (they understood the value proposition)

Some interesting details

- Only one transitioning CRC transitioned out of surprise/necessity
- Tidying up dysfunctional governance structures in advance (not always in anticipation) helped for a smooth and successful transition
- Most lost members through the transition process, for reasons both positive and negative
- All except one new entity operates at a smaller scale (revenue and staff) than predecessor CRC.

Missing insights to complete the story

- the other 74 CRCs that would up – various possible reasons?
- the CRCs now operating under post-Miles rules (maximum 10 years, no re-bid) – unambiguous decision
- the “coulda-beens” – those that tried to transition but could not
- the new CRC model emerging where their work programmes are determined by calls for applications rather than *ex-ante* design – what will it mean for continuity, or even relevance of continuity?

A big message

Participants strongly felt that the non-involvement, by design, of the CRC Programme in planning for and executing life-after-CRC funding probably devalued the ultimate national benefits derived from the CRC Programme and the collaborative model, and was a shortcoming in policy and programme design



THANK YOU

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