



Business Research Collaboration

Discovery Report, July 2017



Australian Government
Department of Industry,
Innovation and Science



Index

About this Report	p 3
Section 1 – Project Context	p 4
Section 2 – The Collaboration Journey	p 10
Section 3– Key Themes and Insights	p 16
Section 4– Key Findings and Recommendations	p 37





Section 1 – Project Context



Background

Networking and collaboration are essential to a high-performing innovation system. When businesses collaborate with research organisations, they more than triple the likelihood of annual productivity growth. Research organisations also benefit from collaboration through increased income and research impact. However, despite the benefits and various policy initiatives, Australia performs poorly in business-research collaboration relative to other countries.

To build the knowledge base and options for new policy development, the Science and Commercialisation Policy Division undertook a research project from May to July 2017 using design thinking methodology to learn more about the barriers and drivers for Australian SMEs when collaborating with publicly funded research organisations.

The majority of research in collaboration policy has concentrated on the research sector so building the evidence based on business needs is an important contribution to this policy space.

Challenge Statement:

*What inhibits
'collaboration ready'
businesses from collaborating
with
publicly funded research
organisations?*

Project Approach

User Centred Design

The project applied a user-centred design methodology focussing on identifying the core needs of users in order to design targeted solutions.

We approach our projects in three key phases: Discover, Create and Deliver. This project focussed on Phase 1 Discover where we engaged directly with end users to understand their needs and motivations and to identify opportunities for solution design.

We interviewed 30 business from a variety of industry sectors, sizes and locations. Businesses included those who currently collaborate with publicly funded research organisations, have not collaborated, or have collaborated but are no longer doing so.

The Discovery process identified user journeys and derived insights to ensure we understand the true challenge. This report combines this data into key findings and recommendations to inform ideation and prototyping of possible solutions in Phase 2 Create.



Project Definitions

We applied the following definitions:

Collaboration

Formal arrangements between businesses and PFROs (including universities) that have a commercial focus on innovation including consultancies, research contracts, joint research collaborations, licensing of intellectual property and staffing placements.

A broad definition of collaboration was chosen so data on a range of collaborative activities could be collected.

Business

Australian Small to Medium Enterprises (SMEs) including micro businesses. Given the qualitative research approach, it was not possible to develop a representative sample of Australian businesses however a spread of companies were recruited across size, sector, location and collaboration experience characteristics to provide robustness .

Collaboration Ready

Refers to businesses deemed capable of collaboration based on key characteristics such as size, sector and maturity/turnover.

Publicly Funded Research Organisation

Includes universities, research agencies and medical research institutes that receive Australian Government funding.



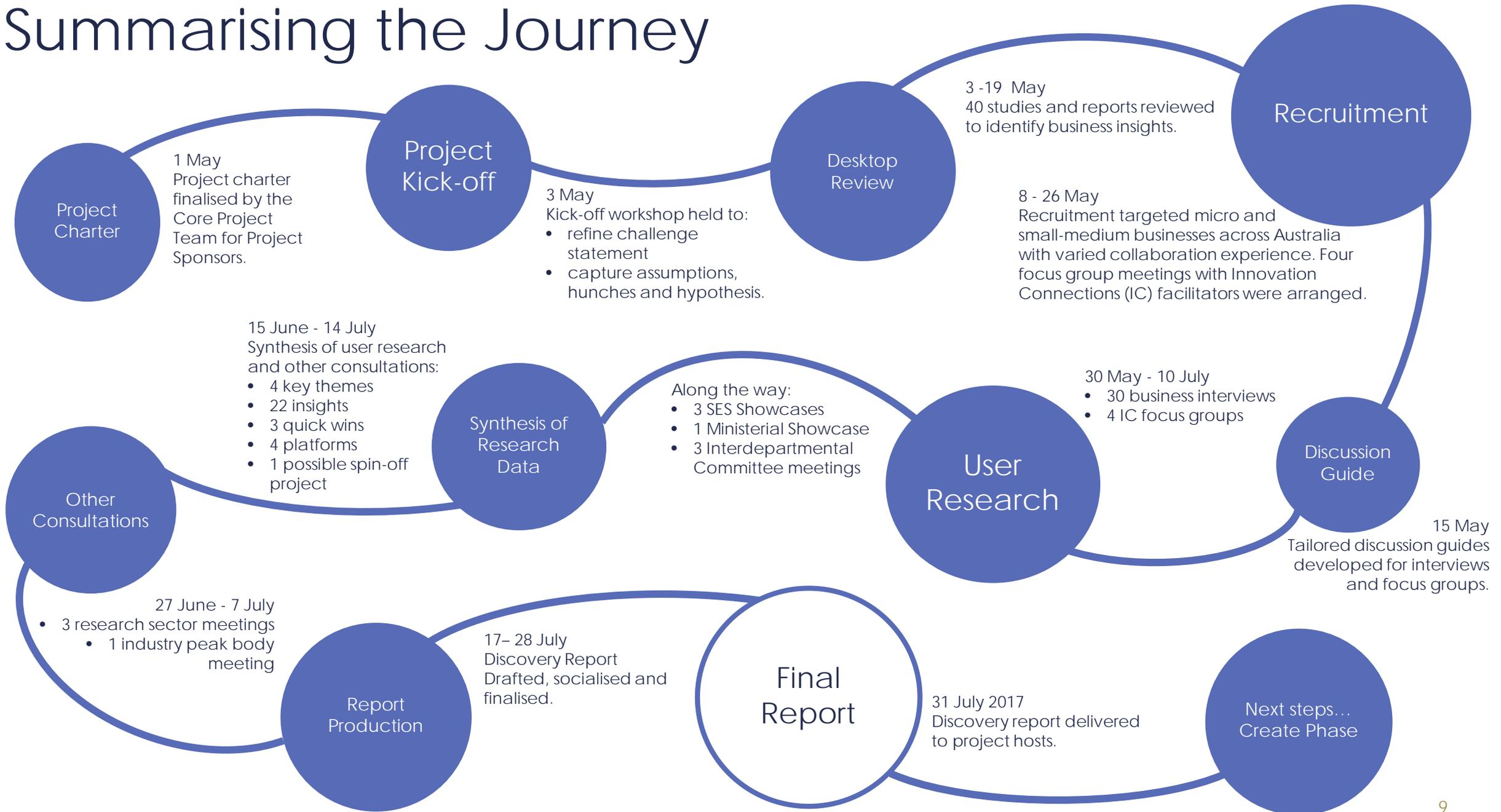
Desktop Review

Forty studies and reports were reviewed as part of this project including:

- Enhancing the Value of PhDs to Australian Industry (Australian Technology Network of Universities, 2017)
 - Joining Forces: Innovation Success through Partnerships (Australian Industry Group, September 2016)
 - Innovate and Prosper: Ensuring Australia's Future Competitiveness through University-Industry Collaboration (Australian Technology Network of Universities and Australian Industry Group, 2015)
 - Growth through Innovation and Collaboration, A Review of the Cooperative Research Centres Programme (Miles, March 2015)
 - Industry Research Collaboration Discussion Paper (NSW Business Chamber 2014)
- Leading up to the project, the department commissioned a report by the Australian Academy of Technology and Engineering which analysed and summarised reports and publications on collaboration and provided summary details of 100 measures in Australia and internationally. The ATSE work was also considered as part of the desktop review.
 - Five barriers for SMEs when collaborating with PFROs were identified in the desktop review, including:
 - Not knowing how to engage
 - Lack of trust-based relationships
 - Lack capacity and skills
 - Cost is too high
 - Businesses struggle with IP negotiations



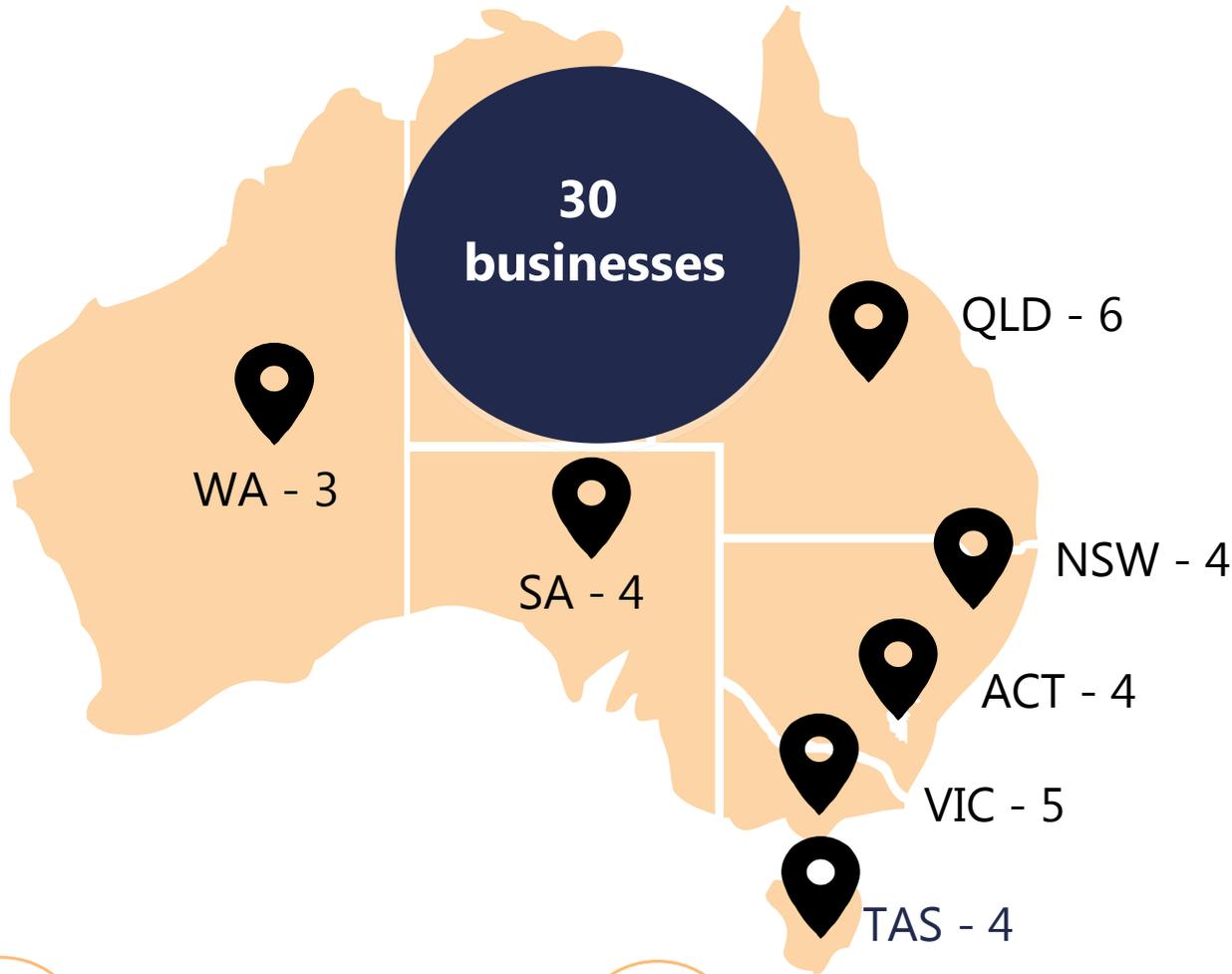
Summarising the Journey





Section 2 – The Collaboration Journey

Businesses Interviewed



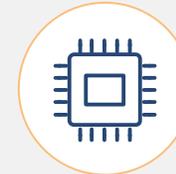
Firms by Sectors



11
Enabling
Technologies
& Services



3
Medical
Technologies &
Pharmaceuticals



10
Advanced
Manufacturing

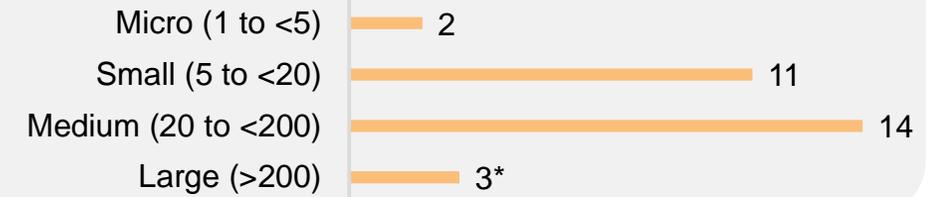


2
Mining
Equipment,
Technologies
& Services



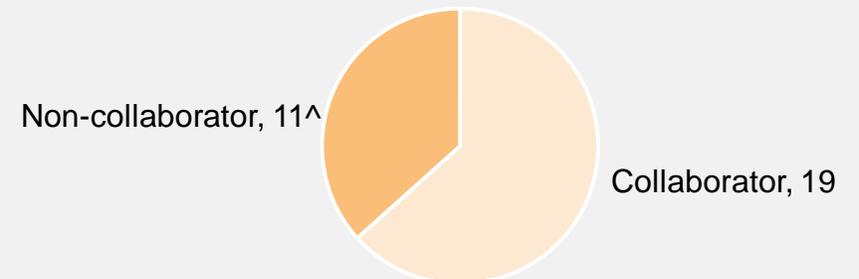
4
Food &
Agribusiness

Firm size by no. employees



* Firms recruited as SMEs but the interview confirmed their size as large.

Collaborators



[^] Based on project definition of collaboration

Key Business Needs

To provide context to collaboration experiences, businesses were invited to share information about their history, strategic outlook and biggest challenge.

Based on this information, five main needs were identified by the project team:

1. **Financial stability and cash flow** is a key need. A number of businesses interviewed are under financial pressure.
2. **Management capability and leadership** underpins business success.
3. **Skills** are essential to viability and growth. Some businesses are struggling to recruit workers with the right skills and experience.
4. Accessible and reliable **information** is needed to support all facets of planning and operation.
5. Businesses rely on trusted professional and personal networks. Some businesses need to expand these **networks and connections**.



“We wouldn’t be where we are today without collaboration”

“It takes you places you wouldn’t normally go”

“Collaboration is absolutely necessary in a fast changing world”

“It helps unis research and it also helps us”

Benefits of Collaboration

Businesses that had undertaken or were engaged in a PFRO collaboration noted a number of benefits from the engagement, including:

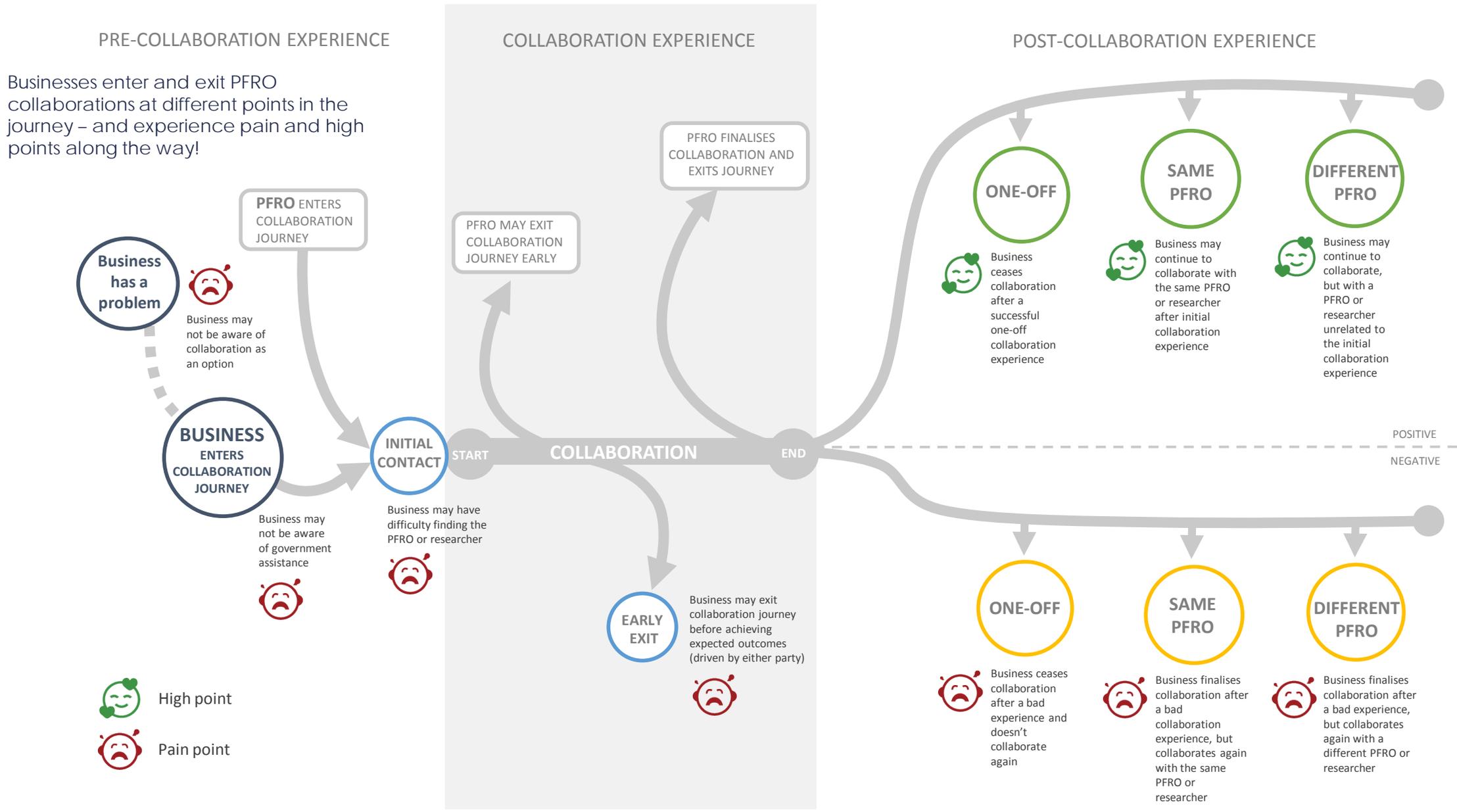
- It helped them strengthen, diversify, grow
- Provided new, improved and tested products and services
- Supported skills development including building an innovation mindset
- Expanded networks
- Offered recruitment pathways
- Shared or minimised risk
- Helped them market products
- Enriched PFRO research.

Businesses Collaborate in Different Ways

- 27 out of 30 firms had engaged with a PFRO in some way.
- 17 of those 27 firms had undertaken more than one type of collaboration.
- Joint collaborations and fee for service contracts were the most common collaborative activities.
- Informal collaboration was also reported by some SMEs, particularly small businesses.
- Medium sized businesses undertook the most skills-based collaborative activities such as hosting student internships and placements.
- 7 out of 11 Enabling Tech & Services firms had undertaken joint collaborations with PFROs.
- OECD collaboration data excludes firms with less than 10 employees. This project found 5 out of 8 firms with less than 10 employees had undertaken a joint collaboration with a PFRO.



Understanding the Collaboration Journey





Section 3 – Key Themes and Insights

Overarching Key Themes

Understanding
Each Other

Commercial
Realities

Capability
and
Support

Relationships
and
Trust





Drivers – move collaboration forward



Barriers – roadblocks in the way



Core Insights: Summary

Theme 1: Understanding Each Other



Active Engagement

PFROs with active SME collaboration strategies help to drive collaboration.



Difficult Negotiations

Businesses are faced with convoluted, unclear language and unexpected time delays when negotiating projects. This can cause frustration and lead to unclear expectations.



Navigation

PFROs do not market their research staff and capability in a way that is easy for businesses to understand or navigate. This means that businesses are relying on chance meetings, existing contacts, internet searches and other adhoc methods to find a research partner.



PFRO Responsiveness

When PFROs don't meet agreed project timelines it is costly for the business and this undermines the collaboration, sometimes leaving businesses reluctant to collaborate again. Businesses have contacted PFROs but in some cases they don't respond in a timely manner or not at all.



Different Language

Businesses and PFROs have a different understanding of what research is, means and involves. When businesses engage with PFROs, they feel like PFROs don't understand them or their business, which can delay or stop projects getting off the ground.

There is an opportunity to help facilitate a common language between both parties.



Research Priorities

The research agenda and priorities of a PFRO do not always align with business needs. This can lead to projects going off track or not meeting business expectations. Some businesses are left feeling 'ripped off'.





What we heard

Active Engagement

PFROs with active SME collaboration strategies help to drive collaboration.

"[The university] looked for opportunities for students, research opportunities and consulting opportunities"

"Unis get a good arrangement from the placements as the students are paying for the course, and they complete their mandatory part of study requirements"

"The researcher found me, I didn't find her"



What we heard

Research Priorities

The research agenda and priorities of a PFRO do not always align with business needs. This can lead to projects going off track or not meeting business expectations. Some businesses are left feeling 'ripped off'.

How might we encourage true partnerships with aligned priorities?

"Unis only want fully funded students and publications with their name on it"

"The outcome each partner will achieve is different, in the University's case...they are meeting a broader set of objectives"

"If you have a researcher who likes researching just for the sake of it, this is not so good"

"They were ignoring our needs"





What we heard

Difficult Negotiations

Businesses are faced with convoluted, unclear language and unexpected time delays when negotiating projects. This can cause frustration and lead to unclear expectations.

How might we assist in improving the upfront negotiation process?

"We don't have a legal department, so complex convoluted contracts are a barrier – we need things clear and simple so everyone can get on with business"

"It's taken 2 months of negotiations. The comms are waiting and ready to go...but the agreement has taken a while longer than we expected it to"

"Legal costs and delays in big agreements associated with commercialisation and collaboration are an issue"

Navigation

PFROs do not market their research staff and capability in a way that is easy for businesses to understand or navigate. This means that businesses are relying on chance meetings, existing contacts, internet searches and other ad-hoc methods to find a research partner.

There is an opportunity to improve communications and simplify the navigation process.

"... I don't know where to start or what door to knock on. Would find someone in my network and start a discussion"

"Don't even know enough on what unis do and don't know how to fit our stuff in with them"

"Pure chance how the collaboration started ... we met at an awards ceremony"

"Uni websites aren't great to help businesses find the right person or capability – most businesses don't know who to work with so this is a barrier"





What we heard

PRFO Responsiveness

When PFROs don't meet agreed project timelines it is costly for the business and this undermines the collaboration, sometimes leaving businesses reluctant to collaborate again. Businesses have contacted PFROs but in some cases they don't respond in a timely manner or not at all.

"We went to a PFRO who are a big player, it wasn't so commercial in the end and it was difficult to get through compared to say another business"

"Time is money for businesses; this is not appreciated or understood by the research community"

"They don't understand that every minute is money, this is the biggest challenge"

"We were reaching out to universities but were getting blocked walls and deaf ears ... Yes, we probably could have pushed harder, but how hard do you have to push yourself to get buy in from the other side?"

Different Language

Businesses and PFROs have a different understanding of what research is, means and involves. When businesses engage with PFROs, they feel like PFROs don't understand them or their business, which can delay or stop projects getting off the ground.

There is an opportunity to help facilitate a common language between both parties.

"I don't know if universities would be the first people we would go to - maybe in the future, right now it would be business to business - we understand each other better"

"The universities all wanted to go back to first principles ... but that can't work with this product. Universities wouldn't accept this - closed mindset"

"Collaboration with the PFRO was ended as they didn't understand what was required from them"



Core insights: Summary

Theme 2: Commercial Realities



Problem Solving

Collaboration opportunities arise from businesses having specific problems they need to solve to survive and grow but are unable to tackle in-house. This creates a strong need to tap into PFROs' R&D capabilities and expertise.

There may be an opportunity for a group of businesses to work together with a PFRO on shared projects.



Research Limitations

Some businesses have specialised research needs that don't align with the capabilities of PFROs in Australia, therefore they go overseas.



Commercialisation

Market regulation in Australia can create significant delays for businesses when commercialising a product, in comparison to commercialising overseas. This can undermine collaboration due to a lack of clarity around the commercial pathway following a collaboration.



Value Proposition and PFRO Capacity

Collaborating with PFROs can take significant time, cost and effort compared to working with private research providers or other businesses. Without a clear value proposition, businesses may be reluctant to invest the additional time and effort, especially if they are under financial strain.

There may be an opportunity to educate businesses on the benefits of collaborating with a PFRO.



Capability Transfer

Businesses, particularly micro and small businesses, do not always have R&D capability. Working with a PFRO partner provides an opportunity for knowledge and capability transfer, ultimately strengthening Australian businesses.





What we heard

Problem Solving

Collaboration opportunities arise from businesses having specific problems they need to solve to survive and grow but are unable to tackle in-house. This creates a strong need to tap into PFROs' R&D capabilities and expertise.

"... we needed scientific help to address the problem"

"Getting independent product testing from a university would help us sell our product – we need more than just customer testimonials to verify our product works"

"Universities are a reservoir of R&D, which offers access to strong, robust, thinking around company problems"

Capability Transfer

Businesses, particularly micro and small businesses, do not always have R&D capability. Working with a PFRO partner provides opportunity for knowledge and capability transfer, ultimately strengthening Australian businesses.

"We were looking for skills that they have and we don't have and don't need a permanent requirement of"

"We needed to work with external parties to understand the science behind it, is it realistic and is it feasible to take on this prospect and potential behind it"

"We don't have R&D capacity in house at the moment"

"I need as much help as I can get"





What we heard

Research Limitations

Some businesses have specialised research needs that don't align with the capabilities of PFROs in Australia, therefore they go overseas.

"Testing wasn't available in Australia so we went to the US"

"The PFROs in Australia do not have the type of lab and testing facilities like other countries"

"... need boutique type of technical help which Australia does not have"

Commercialisation

Market regulation in Australia can create significant delays for businesses when commercialising a product, in comparison to commercialising overseas. This can undermine collaboration due to a lack of clarity around the commercial pathway following a collaboration.

"Preventing invention through regulation is doing vast amounts of harm!"

"... easier and quicker to certify the civil part in Europe and then have it recognised here ... Cost is comparable but save on time and have more certainty"

"It takes 4.5 years to go through TGA and get a product to public listing and this is 90 days in the USA with 91 days to get the product out to market"





What we heard

Value Proposition and PFRO capacity

Collaborating with PFROs can take significant time, cost and effort compared to working with private research providers or other businesses. Without a clear value proposition, businesses may be reluctant to invest the additional time and effort, especially if they are under financial strain.

"... finding ways to collaborate without putting financial strain on the organisation is a challenge"

"For any company it's a long road and a risky process – risk/reward thing – if well cashed up and have long timeframes you can do it, if not you can't."

"To date, collaboration hasn't been too important. Has to work for both and everyone wants to be paid. To do that, have to deliver value in a timely manner"



Core Insights: Summary

Theme 3: Capability and Support



Placement Opportunities

Business skills gaps and recruitment needs are successfully driving collaboration through student internships and industry PhD programs.



Innovation Mindset

An innovation and growth mindset in businesses stimulates collaboration.

Some of the businesses interviewed were interested in collaborating to build not only their own business, but the sector or region. There may therefore be an opportunity to support more group collaboration.



Red Tape

Applying for collaboration grants at the State and Federal level was considered complicated and lengthy. This results in businesses not making the most of the support available.

There is an opportunity to streamline the collaboration grants process to make it easier for business.



Awareness

Commonwealth and State and Territory government funding are viewed favourably and have helped many businesses collaborate. However some businesses remain unaware of the Government support available.



Capability

Businesses may not have the technical and management skills to understand the benefits of collaboration, manage a project or commercialise the outcome successfully.

Opportunity exists to close skills gaps and heighten awareness around benefits of collaboration.



Intellectual Property

Businesses may be inexperienced in managing intellectual property and often don't have access to the specialist legal advice needed to represent their interests appropriately. This can lead to delays in commencing a project or sometimes loss of competitive advantage if an unfavourable contract is made.





What we heard

Placement Opportunities

Business skills gaps and recruitment needs are successfully driving collaboration through student internships and industry PhD programs.

"Hard to get people with right skills when you need them, hence need to build around a Masters or a PhD student"

"Only PhDs done inside companies foster collaboration ... It is through their connections with the universities that they attract talent and Word of Mouth gets around"

"We probably have too many senior people at the moment, and need more junior people that we can train up, so we will look for talented people out of universities that we have known for a while or done projects with"

"IC [programme] has been great. Would bloody love it if we could have someone find a PhD student with state of the art knowledge and embed them in our company"

Innovation Mindset

An innovation and growth mindset in businesses stimulates collaboration.

"I collaborate with whoever I can collaborate with ... Anyone working at the university is a part of my tribe"

"wouldn't function without it [collaboration] – without this mindset in the past 5 years, the business wouldn't exist. Market is stagnant, difficult to compete in the [sector]"

"The assumption is that I wouldn't want to collaborate again [because of a bad experience with a PFRO] but 'you need to collaborate'"

"If you get a group of positive, innovative people in the room, nothing you can't do. It's about feeding the mindset"





What we heard

Red Tape

Applying for collaboration grants at the State and Federal level was considered complicated and lengthy. This results in businesses not making the most of the support available.

There is an opportunity to streamline the collaboration grants process to make it easier for business.

"Don't you guys talk? Government is replicating the same thing over and over again"

"Do you really need to write a 20 page report for \$7K?"

"Those that promote programmes regionally say you just fill in a form, you just ... no, it's not 'just', it's a complicated process"

"Biggest issue was the timeframe. Lots to go through with quotes, documentation, getting contracts ... lots of time taken up in the initial paperwork"

Capability

Businesses may not have the technical and management skills to understand the benefits of collaboration, manage a project or commercialise the outcome successfully. Opportunity exists to close skills gaps and heighten awareness around benefits of collaboration.

"The engineer was good but not a people person ... couldn't explain properly"

"There is an advantage to me having worked within universities previously, I have to internally sell what unis are good for and not good for"

"Business boards are not convinced by academic language and this can undermine collaboration projects getting off the ground"

"I've never even thought about it"





What we heard

Awareness

Commonwealth and State and Territory government funding are viewed favourably and have helped many businesses collaborate. However some businesses remain unaware of the available Government support.

"We've never even thought of collaborating with anyone, we just do it all ourselves."

"Maybe the programs are there and we aren't aware of it"

"There's not a lot of success stories that you hear out there. If those people were out there, they'd motivate us. Finally hear a success story, and then you keep hearing the same one over and over again"

Intellectual Property

Businesses may be inexperienced in managing intellectual property and often don't have access to the specialist legal advice needed to represent their interests appropriately. This can lead to delays in commencing a project or sometimes loss of competitive advantage if an unfavourable contract is made.

"I haven't come across an IP barrier yet but expect to"

"What happens to the IP they [PhD students] create? The reality is the universities want it ... when the students come in and have their placement with you, they see all your secrets and patents and then go back to the university – is a risk to the business"

"Universities have all their IP people and know all the clauses and they send it back to you and you think this is how it must work"

Core Insights: Summary

Theme 4: Relationships and Trust



Enduring Relationships

Businesses often rely on existing relationships and people they know and trust when attempting to collaborate.

If a good relationship is made, businesses will continue to work with that researcher even if they move between PFROs.



Previous Experiences Count

Businesses that have had positive collaboration experiences are more likely to collaborate in the future. They are also more likely to influence other businesses to collaborate through word of mouth.

Opportunity exists to promote positive case studies.



False Perceptions

Some businesses assume that because PFROs are public institutions they can trust them. This can drive collaboration but also lead to issues when businesses don't follow standard due diligence as they would in business-business relationships.

Others hold the view that because PFROs are 'funded by the tax payer' the research should be free. This is a barrier.



Breaking Trust

Trust and positive working relationships are critical to collaboration. Businesses with negative experiences are less likely to collaborate in the future.



PFRO Bureaucracy

Businesses view PFROs as large and bureaucratic and they prefer to engage with individual researchers rather than through formal channels. This becomes a problem when businesses later enter into formal arrangements with PFROs – triggering project delays and renegotiations.





What we heard

Enduring Relationships

Businesses often rely on existing relationships and people they know and trust when attempting to collaborate.

If a good relationship is made, businesses will continue to work with that researcher even if they move between PFROs.

"Need to work with people I trust, who have a track record ... trust is an issue and personal relationships are more important"

"Personal relationships are important. It doesn't matter contact is in Melbourne, but that there's the continuity of the relationship over 3-4 years and that you know he'll take your call"

"One good person in a research organisation can make all the difference, and can make collaboration a great experience"

Previous Experiences Count

Businesses that have had positive collaboration experiences are more likely to collaborate in the future. They are also more likely to influence other businesses to collaborate through word of mouth. Opportunity exists to promote positive case studies.

"Will go back again dependent on what they need" ... "Nothing went wrong with these collaborations"

"I have managed to build good working relationships, like for instance with the University"

"Initial collaboration opened the door to other ways of engagement"



What we heard

Breaking Trust

Trust and positive working relationships are critical to collaboration. Businesses with negative experiences are less likely to collaborate in the future. Opportunity exists to encourage business to learn from negative experience and persevere with collaboration efforts.

"if we see a campaign 'do business with us' we won't respond, due to this [bad] experience"

"Trust in the researcher is critical. Our business is built on partnerships and relationships. If you don't have this then it will be hard"

"Australia has so many rules around everything, except for how to communicate with business, and researchers often take advantage of this and act poorly"

PFRO Bureaucracy

Businesses view PFROs as large and bureaucratic and they prefer to engage with individual researchers rather than through formal channels. This becomes a problem when businesses later enter into formal arrangements with PFROs – triggering project delays and renegotiations.

"There is a cavern between the people that do the research and the administration of the university"

"the biggest barrier is that you've got an elephant and a mouse"

"It is the actual university that is holding it back, not the researcher. He's a nice gentleman and I get along with him really well"



What we heard

False Perceptions

Some businesses assume that because PFROs are public institutions they can trust them. This can drive collaboration but also lead to issues when businesses don't follow standard due diligence as they would in business-business relationships.

Others hold the view that because PFROs are 'funded by the tax payer' the research should be free. This is a barrier.

"I thought this was how it worked, if you don't inform small business they will fall into the same trap unless they find a university who really understands how it must be done"

"They would say to me 'well, if we do it, you have to pay [for] it'. Well, I pay my taxes"



Innovation Connections Facilitator Insights

Some businesses may not know what they need or how to make it happen – they need facilitation.

The Innovation Connections guidelines could be tweaked so more businesses can access support.

Businesses are motivated and constrained by money.

Marketing of programmes should be improved.

A collaboration is sparked by a commercial problem or opportunity.

SMEs need projects to happen fast!

Businesses want to know who is handling their project – trust and relationships are important.

Government support can be confusing. There are so many small programmes and they have different administration arrangements.

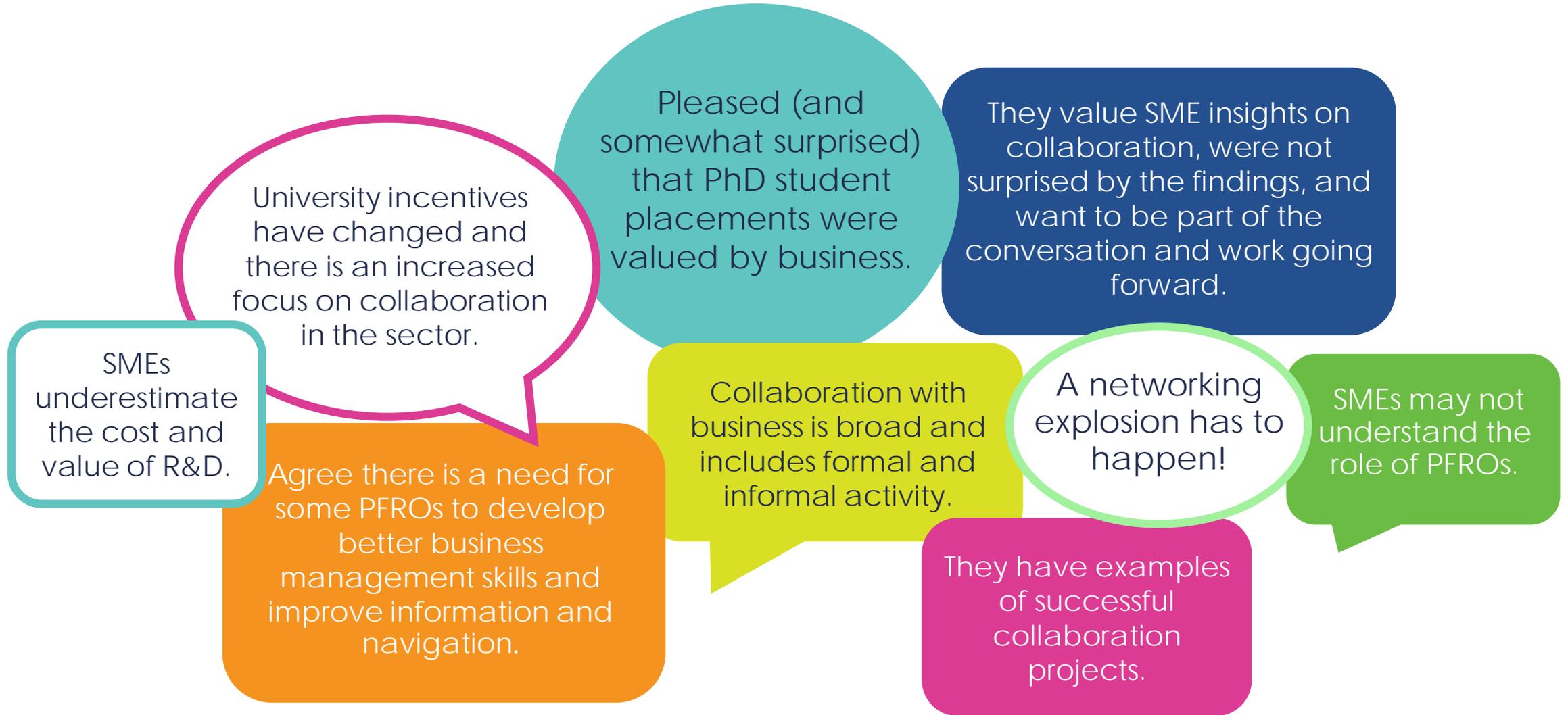
The majority of IC clients are male business owners.

We have a standard approach and template so IP is not a major barrier.

Some commercialisation offices are chasing big business and are not focused on SMEs. It can be easier to work around them, directly with the researchers

PFRs need to provide clearer information and navigation for SMEs.

Some Research Sector Insights on Preliminary Findings





Section 4 – Key Findings and Recommendations

Key Findings

- Businesses have a very broad understanding of collaboration and many aren't aware of the benefits.
- Most of the businesses interviewed have undertaken some form of engagement with PFROs including supplying goods and services, recruitment, networking, advice/consultancy, fee for service research contracts, joint research collaborations and PhD student placements.
- Some government collaboration programmes are not marketed effectively to businesses. Some measures are also lacking coordination and would benefit from greater policy cohesion.
- Businesses have difficulty finding a collaboration partner, and rely on existing networks or internet searches. They value trusted relationships and often prefer connecting with individual researchers rather than going through formal PFRo channels.
- An innovation mindset supports successful collaborations. Some businesses need to build management capability and upskill on innovation/'21st century' skills.
- PFROs also need upskilling on business acumen and could be more responsive to business needs.

Financial stability and Cash flow

Key business needs driving behaviour:

Access to skills

Management Capability and leadership

Networks and connections

Access to information

Key Recommendations

Informed by the research, the project team is recommending three quick wins, four ideation platforms which can be further explored and one further research project.

Quick Wins:

- Share findings across Government
- Continue the project Interdepartmental Committee (IDC) as a Business-Research Collaboration IDC
- Review and update Business.gov.au

Ideation Platforms*:

- Marketing of Government collaboration programs
- Connecting businesses with research opportunities
- Skills for Business
- Group collaboration

Further Research Project:

Exploring the barriers and drivers for women in business

* The Ideation platforms combine all the insights and themes into a tool that can be used as a starting point to create targeted solutions. It is recommended this project moves to the Create Phase, building on the above platforms.

Ideation Platforms

The ideation platforms combine all the insights and themes into a tool to be used as a starting point for the creation of ideas for possible solutions. The project team has developed 4 ideation platforms:

1. Marketing of government programs
2. Connections
3. Skills for business
4. Group collaboration

It is recommended the Business Research Collaboration Project moves to the Create Phase, building on these platforms.

There is also one idea for a spin-off project (Women in Business) that could be considered.



How might we market the benefits of collaboration and Government collaboration programmes already available to business?



Marketing

Marketing

The Need

Businesses need more information about the benefits of collaboration and what support programmes are available to help.

The Target Audiences



Doing just fine, thanks!



Salespeople



Not ready yet

Quotes

"Government tells its story really badly. There is a lot on offer but it isn't being communicated. The grants are well designed but there is little knowledge among businesses on what's available. The story is being told, but the message isn't getting through. There is a need to tell the stories more effectively."

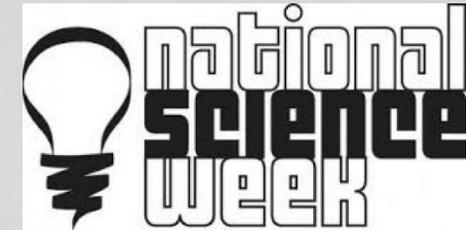
The Opportunity

Raise awareness for businesses on the benefits and value of collaborating with a PFRO.

Considerations

- Diverse range of business types and needs – likely that a range of approaches are needed.
- Information overload – how to cut through with a new message and not add more white noise.
- Co-ordination across government programmes and ensuring any additional marketing aligns.

Where have we seen this problem solved before?



Thought Starters

- Media marketing campaign
- You Tube channel
- New business research collaboration award at PM's Science Awards

The background of the slide is a teal color with a network diagram. The diagram consists of numerous small white circular nodes connected by thin white lines. The nodes are arranged in a way that forms a large, irregular shape, possibly representing a network or a data structure. The lines are thin and light-colored, creating a subtle pattern against the teal background.

How might we connect businesses with
PFRO research opportunities?

Connections

Connections

The Need

Businesses need clear and easy ways to find a research partner or research solution.

Target Audiences



Not ready yet



Groundbreakers



Learning the ropes

Quotes

"... I don't know where to start or what door to knock on. Would find someone in my network and start a discussion."

"Uni websites aren't great to help businesses find the right person or capability – most businesses don't know who to work with so this is a barrier."

The Opportunity

Quick, easy and user friendly solutions that help business connect with PFROs that best meet their specific needs.

Considerations

- Existing platforms/service are disjointed and can be confusing and time consuming for businesses to navigate.
- Avoid building more platforms?
- Some businesses prefer face to face networking opportunities vs. more cost efficient on-line solutions

Where have we seen this problem solved before?



Thought Starters

- One stop shop for business and PFROs that connects existing services
- 'Airtasker' inspired site for business to post research problems they want to engage PFROs to solve
- Run business-PFRO collaboration expos or networking events
- Expand IC facilitation

**How might we provide
innovation skills
development
options for businesses?**



Skills for Business

The Need

To build innovation skills and management capability in management to help businesses, so they can effectively build innovation into their business model. Includes: how to identify opportunities, negotiate contracts, project management, and commercialising outcomes.

Target Audiences



Salespeople



Not ready yet



Groundbreakers



Learning the ropes

Quotes

"There is an advantage to me having worked within universities previously, I have to internally sell what unis are good for and not good for."

"Business boards are not convinced by academic language and this can undermine collaboration projects getting off the ground."

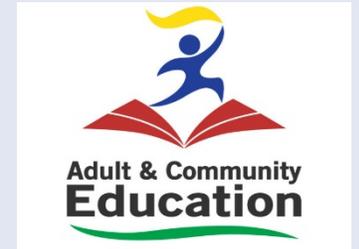
The Opportunity

Provide access to management capability building and innovation upskilling for current and future businesses.

Considerations

- Defining skills and competencies, course delivery – who provides the training and how it is funded ?
- Need to work within existing VET and Higher Education mechanisms. Could take a long time to realise.

Where have we seen this problem solved before?



Thought Starters

- Short accredited innovation courses for businesses.
- Work with VET and higher education sectors to ensure '21st century innovation skills' are built into all training packages and course outlines.
- Link to EP programme - business advisers could help identify candidates while VET/HE institutes could refer alumni on to EP.

In what ways could we encourage businesses to work together with PFROs to solve shared problems?

Group Collaboration



Group Collaboration

The Need

Drawing on business to business collaboration and shared business challenges at the regional or sectoral level, there is a need to support more business consortia collaboration.

Target Audiences



Navigators



Groundbreakers



Learning the ropes



Doing just fine, thanks!

Quotes

"... finding ways to collaborate without putting financial strain on the organisation is a challenge"

"Anyone that is trying to develop work and opportunities in the regions, we are keen to work with them."

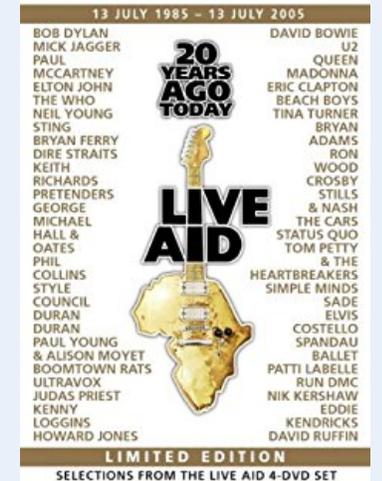
The Opportunity

Harness collaborative networks (e.g. professional associations, industry councils, trade events and regional economic networks) to fund collaboration projects that solve a shared problem.

Considerations

- Helps minimise risk, reduce R&D costs, and lead to more businesses engaging in and benefiting from innovation.
- Particularly relevant for regional areas facing skills shortages and declining industries.
- Avoid duplicating existing initiatives such as the CRCs, and align with work done by the growth sectors.

Where have we seen this problem solved before?



Thought Starters

- Have the IC programme facilitators help coordinate businesses in their area with similar needs.