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# Strategic Plan 2005-2008

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## Introduction

This document sets out a strategic plan for the New South Wales Injury Risk Management Research Centre (IRMRC, the Centre) up until the end of the current agreement in 2008. It lays out our vision, values and mission, and describes the goals and strategic priorities which direct our business and research planning.

The Strategic Plan was developed after consultation between the Board, the Director, the Deputy Director and the senior researchers at the Centre. It reviews the Centre's compliance with the Scope of Work appended to the 2003 Deed of Agreement, reviews the Centre's progress towards achieving its strategic goals as defined in the Strategic Plan of 2003, documents the current position of the Centre, and presents the strategic priorities for the next three years.

Since the process was begun in November 2005 we have undertaken a Strategic Planning Day with the full Board and the key Senior Researchers, reviewed that work with the Senior Researchers, and met with key researchers and champions from the core funding partners of NSW Health, Motor Accident Authority (MAA) and the Roads and Traffic Authority (RTA) as well as the Deans of the Faculties of Science and Engineering.

The planning process was completed in the mid-term of the current funding agreement. The Centre has a strong corporate identity, a depth of expertise and research capacity and has successfully delivered on past objectives. Before the resignation of the incumbent Director, the IRMRC was entering a period of consolidation with an increasing emphasis on the development of a coherent marketing strategy. Although the fundamental purpose of the Centre will not alter there will be some uncertainty as to direction until another Director is appointed. Planning has proceeded without the identity of the new Director being known.

## Background

The Injury Risk Management Research Centre was conceived and initiated by the NSW Health Department in partnership with the MAA and RTA. The purpose of the IRMRC was to contribute to a 'whole of government' approach to examining injury risk in the community and to provide research services to a range of agencies concerned with injury risk.

UNSW prepared the winning tender for the Centre and it was established as a business unit within the Science Faculty. By the 2003 Deed of Agreement between the core funding partners and UNSW, the partners are committed to providing funds of \$440,000 per annum over five years. The NSW Health

Department contributes half of this core funding and the MAA and RTA each contribute a quarter. UNSW provides infrastructure support, such as office space and accounting systems, free of charge.

## The Planning Context

In the following section the environmental context within which the Centre operates and the capacity and competencies of the Centre are described. The strengths and weakness of the Centre have changed significantly over the three years since the last Strategic Plan was completed. Similarly, the opportunities available to the Centre and the threats to its successful continuation have also changed. These are addressed in the Strategic Plan. The detailed SWOT analysis is provided in Appendix A.

### The External Environment

The external environment provides the context within which the IRMRC operates. Changes in the environment would impinge upon the nature of the work done at the IRMRC and the opportunities available to the IRMRC.

#### (1) The core funding partners

IRMRC is in a dependent position in relation to the parties to the Deed of Agreement. It is the impact on them of their particular environment which defines the context which must be managed by the IRMRC.

The core funding partners continued interest in, and ability to, financially support the IRMRC is the most fundamental influence on the operation of the IRMRC. Delivering the requirements of the Scope of Works is the basic level of performance required of the IRMRC by the core funding partners.

Although the Deed of Agreement does not specify that a mid-term review of Centre would be required, the current Scope of Works only ran until 2005. An intention to review the Scope is clear. As the Centre has responded proactively to the dictates and needs of the funders and has achieved significant success in the last three years it is possible that the onerous reporting requirements detailed in the Scope may be renegotiated.

Until the new Director has been appointed, however, any revision to the Scope of Works may be delayed, which leaves the Centre operating without an agreed Scope of Works.

## **(2) Changes to the funding of research**

The Commonwealth Government's 'Research Quality Framework' may affect the manner in which granting bodies allocate funds. The current investigation by the Productivity Commission into tertiary funding and the value of research may also have a significant effect on the funds available for investigator driven research, previously a key criterion for academic excellence. It seems likely that the key attributes to attract Commonwealth funding of research would be societal relevance and impact. The IRMRC is well placed to tender for grants and infrastructure funding given its role in providing applied injury risk management research to government agencies.

## **(3) UNSW**

The effectiveness of UNSW in supporting the research effort of the Centre is the third key external influence on the Centre. Significant political, technical and competitive influences are mediated by UNSW. In response to external funding threats, UNSW is re-positioning itself within the tertiary education market. It is emphasizing its position as a member of the 'Group of Eight' premier Australian universities; a position attributable to its historical research capability, its close links with industry, and its success in gaining peer reviewed research grants.

Under the new Vice Chancellor, Professor Fred Hilmer, UNSW intends to further encourage the development of its research capacity, particularly in areas of competitive advantage, through increasing support for the preparation of grant submissions, pursuing opportunities to increase research collaboration with industry and external agencies, rewarding multidisciplinary research effort, and strengthening cross-School/cross-Faculty strategic initiatives, including the program for Risk Management of Injury (Faculty of Science Strategic Plan 2005-2009).

Although under the terms of the 2003 Deed of Agreement the university is only committed to a non-cash contribution, it has also funded research projects (\$80,000) and research fellowships (\$210,000) and allocated a share of the university's performance based funding, known as Research Quantum, to the IRMRC (around \$204,000 to date). This funding may be viewed as an acknowledgement by UNSW of the Centre's superior research performance and its success in the meeting of UNSW strategic objectives.

## **(4) In conclusion**

The impact of this external environment on the IRMRC is both protective and proactive. The IRMRC is an externally funded multidisciplinary, cross-faculty and cross-institutional research centre. The IRMRC model meets both University and Faculty strategic priorities and as such it is rewarded by UNSW. These rewards provide a gauge of success for the core funding partners. And the relationship

with the funding partners has remained strong. The Centre may also represent a research model favoured by the Commonwealth.

## The Internal Environment

The internal environment refers to the organisation's structure, processes, capabilities and competencies. The Centre has performed according to expectations as set down in the Scope of Works. Effective systems of management and administration have been implemented and senior researchers recruited. Valuable peer reviewed research grants have been obtained and peer reviewed publications have grown over the period to more than 20 in 2005.

The total value of all IRMRC projects awarded since the signing of the 2003 Deed of Agreement is \$9.7 million; \$2.2 million in core funding (\$1.32 million to date) and \$7.5 million worth of non-core research project funding. All projects have resulted in publications, from in-confidential reports for funding bodies to academic papers in peer-reviewed journals.

The IRMRC has almost fully complied with the Scope of Works in the 2003 Deed of Agreement. A detailed description of achievements against the Scope is provided in Appendix B. The Centre has achieved almost all of its strategic and business goals as detailed in its 2003 Business Plan 2003-2007 (Appendix C).

The Centre was entering a period of consolidation in 2005 when the Director and Professor of Injury Risk Management, who had overseen the development of the IRMRC into a viable entity, resigned. She left the Centre in July 2006. Whilst the administrative systems remain intact, the research reputation of the Centre is threatened by her departure.

The loss of a leader who had a significant international reputation is the most significant challenge confronting the IRMRC. The operation of the Centre is crucially dependent upon the attraction and retention of skilled senior staff. No more so than in regard to the Directorship, a position which is itself a marketing tool for attracting key researchers. Recruitment for a replacement began in 2006 but there is currently no incumbent. The future direction of the Centre would be significantly affected by the managerial competence, reputation and research interests of the person who takes on the role.

## The Strategic Plan

The outcome of the planning process has been the production of this Strategic Plan. It builds upon the successes of the last three years but addresses the current issues which confront the Centre and threaten its viability and sustainability.

### Vision

To advance injury risk management through the conduct of high quality research, the building of research capacity, and the translation of the results of research into policy and practice.

### Organizational Values

'Injury Risk Management' is an inclusive concept concerned with the identification of hazards, development of strategies to minimize associated risks and to mitigate potentially adverse consequences. It is understood that this is best achieved through multidisciplinary research and collaboration on the development of interventions.

### Mission

The mission of the IRMRC is to:

- establish a research program that is forward thinking whilst meeting current needs;
- conduct ethical, innovative and quality research;
- broadly disseminate knowledge gained through research;
- foster a climate which encourages innovation, initiative and research excellence;
- engage in the policy development process by the provision of timely and relevant outputs from the research process.

## Goals and Strategic Objectives

The IRMRC strives to:

- Be an independent centre of excellence in research;
- Provide innovative research leadership in injury risk management;
- Be a source of information on injury risk management;
- Advance injury risk management through high quality research;
- Contribute to the policy development process of sponsoring agencies;
- Grow partnerships with researchers, government agencies and other stakeholders;
- Build capacity in injury risk management research;
- Appropriately target and disseminate findings to maximize integration into policy and practice;
- Develop research funding sources in order to sustain future research.

## Business Objectives

The strategic objectives of the IRMRC would be operationalized through measurable business objectives. The sets of business objectives are listed below and the associated key performance indicators are to be found in the Business Plan 2005-2008 that accompanies this document.

- 1. Be an independent centre of excellence in research -**
  - (a) continue to be recognized by UNSW as key strategic priority centre, that is, a multidisciplinary, cross-faculty and cross-institutional research centre;
  - (b) continue to be recognized by peers, other agencies and professional bodies as a Centre of Excellence in Injury Risk Management Research;
  - (c) continue to achieve a high level of research productivity;
  - (d) further develop a high level of research governance.
- 2. Provide innovative research leadership in injury risk management -**
  - (a) foster an environment that attracts and retains quality researchers;

- (b) maintain high quality investigator driven research in the research programmes;
- (c) provide appropriate support to researchers in gaining peer reviewed grants;
- (d) publicize successes of research staff;
- (e) continue to be a significant influence over the development of injury risk research.

**3. Be a source of information on injury risk management -**

- (a) use statistical databases and other informational responses, such as literature reviews, to provide up-to-date information on injury risks in NSW
- (d) add value to the information held in the databases by undertaking sophisticated data mining and statistical analysis, including the development of linkage methodologies;
- (c) use all available information to identify patterns of injury risk in the NSW community and investigate the practices that generate levels of risk.

**4. Advance injury risk management through high quality research**

- (a) identify knowledge gaps and research needs to set research direction;
- (b) design and conduct rigorous and innovative multi-disciplinary research;
- (c) undertake conceptual, experimental, epidemiological and evaluative research;
- (d) report results in peer-reviewed publications and at scientific conferences;
- (e) further develop a university-wide network of researchers to enhance research capacity and research outcomes;

**5. Contribute to policy development by the sponsoring agencies**

- (a) collaborate with sponsors on defining a relevant and cogent research program;
- (b) provide continuing research, training and knowledge management to build capacity within the sponsoring agencies
- (e) meet the free work obligations of the deed of agreement.

**6. Grow partnerships with researchers, government agencies and other stakeholders**

- (a) continue to collaborate with other injury risk management researchers and injury research centres nationally and internationally.
- (b) maintain and extend partnerships with government agencies and other stakeholders;
- (c) maintain and nurture relationships of relevance to the vision and mission of the IRMRC.

**7. Build capacity in injury risk management research**

- (a) mentor and supervise researchers within IRMRC, across UNSW, and in collaboration with other research partners;
- (b) continue to attract applicants of outstanding ability to our postgraduate research training program, and ensure sufficient supervisory capacity for our research Masters and PhD candidates;
- (c) continue to deliver a successful postgraduate course in injury risk management;
- (d) continue to provide opportunities within the Centre for public health officers, biostatistical officers and other workplace training placements from our funding partner agencies;
- (e) provide opportunities for the career development of IRMRC staff.

**8. Appropriately target and disseminate research findings to maximize integration into policy and practice**

- (a) report results widely in a variety of forums;
- (b) inform policy makers, injury prevention practitioners and the public of research findings;
- (c) develop a communications strategy for the IRMRC in consultation with the Board;
- (d) provide leadership in public debate on the identification and management of injury risks;
- (e) ensure the representation and involvement of the IRMRC on policy forums and in the policy development process.

**9. Develop research funding sources in order to sustain future research**

- (a) seek research funding from peer-review funding sources, government agencies and other funding agencies;

- (b) identify and cultivate other potential funding partners;
- (b) support staff in obtaining independent research funding and fellowships;
- (c) ensure efficient management of IRMRC resources;
- (d) delivery of research project outcomes in a timely manner and within budget.

## Priority Strategies

Priority strategies are those that are fundamental to the continued viability of the Centre. They include those strategies that have not yet been successfully or fully implemented as well as strategies that are needed to ensure continued prosperity and the delivery of core goals and objectives.

### The Strategies 2005-2008

- (a) The highest priority is the recruitment of a world class injury risk researcher to the Chair of Injury Risk Management and the Directorship of the Centre. Only after this position is filled will it be possible to ratify strategies for addressing other priorities. It may be necessary to offer a remuneration package outside of the general provisions of the enterprise agreement.
- (b) Prepare a strategic marketing plan which identifies the key growth strategy for the IRMRC - for instance, will growth be pursued by expanding the target market, increasing market share or by improving profitability? Should the Centre pursue diversification into new research programs or offer more services to existing clients by capacity building in new disciplines? Should other funding partners be approached, and if so, whom? What are the legal implications for the Deed of Agreement? On what basis is the balance between commercial consulting and investigator driven research to be decided? These issues cannot be resolved without the input of the future Director.

In the planning process, the expertise needed for each growth option needs to be detailed and potential strategies for attracting it must be developed. Fundamentally, the marketing of professional services to funders is contingent upon the availability of the appropriate human resources and the availability of those resources is dependent upon the marketing of the organisation to those human resources. A growth marketing strategy, in the first instance, would need to promote the Centre to the providers of research and not the end users of that research. To grow the research effort in any direction requires the IRMRC to entice senior researchers to the Centre.

This issue is clearly demonstrated in the case of the sport and active recreation injury research at the Centre. This was the area of expertise of the last Director. Two of the early career sports researchers who had worked at the Centre followed the Director to her new unit. At the same time the only other senior researcher in the area has taken twelve months

maternity leave. How does the Centre maintain any credibility in this area? Does the Centre seek out other eminent researchers in this field? Does the Centre collaborate with the Director's new Unit? Does the Centre just forgo further activity in this area of research?

Although the marketing strategy has not yet been fully developed it is not possible to avoid taking certain crucial marketing decisions, such as:

**(i) Update marketing materials in line with UNSW branding guidelines**

Centre publications and materials have been redesigned by a graphic designer for consistency of presentation, to accord with the new UNSW branding guidelines, and to correct material containing the former Director's name and the Centre's previous address.

**(ii) Develop further training programmes**

Although, the Centre has been required to develop a second post-graduate course in injury risk management, there may not be a viable market for such a course. A seminar series would reach a wider audience, be more resource efficient, and provide a useful marketing device for the Centre.

Planning work on a seminar series has commenced. It is envisaged that there will be three workshops of one day duration spread over the year (2007). Although the seminars would provide a forum for the IRMRC to disseminate its research findings, it would not be desirable to increase the formal teaching load of staff. The intention would be for the IRMRC to be seen as the central information resource for its constituents. Key individuals would be asked to address different interest groups on a relevant theme. The program would be developed in consultation with the key funders.

The event would be informative but not academically demanding. It would provide an opportunity for networking by attendees and for the promotion of the Centre – 'getting its name and face out there'. The profile of the IRMRC would be enhanced.

- (c) Develop training placements for staff of the MAA and RTA, similar to that provided for Public Health Officers and NSW Health Biostatistical Officers
- (d) Develop a media strategy that does not compromise data confidentiality and meets the concerns of funders. The current business objective of ensuring a media release for every Centre publication needs refinement. The strategy has not been fully developed but further work is contingent upon the finalisation of the broader Marketing Plan. What is the role of the IRMRC in disseminating research findings to various audiences?

- (e) Implementation of a computerized project management system is partially completed. Administrative staff have been trained in MS Project and a generic research work plan is being set up. Data entry will commence in October. All projects should be able to be monitored on MS Project by January 2007.
- (f) Provide support to academic staff for the identification and preparation of research and other funding proposals.