MEETING NOTES

A summary of the meeting held on Wednesday November 10, 2010 at 2pm at in the John Yencken Conference Room is provided below.

Present: Karen Hill, Change Manager (Facilitator)
George Abraham, Frank Polyak, Ben Clements, Howard Coyle, Nicola Bennett, Mick Kelly, Chris Karchinsky, Peter Agnew, Mark Hughesion, Scott Mclaren, Rick Edwards, Garry Rourke, Tim Woolmer, Warrick Doherty, Peter Thompson, Vince Dwyer, Simon McCauley.

In Attendance: Sally Webster, Senior Workforce Planning/Change Consultant (HR)

1. Meeting Purpose

Attendees were briefly updated by Karen Hill (facilitator) on the change management process to date and the objectives of the process; these being to capture and acknowledge the existing knowledge, expertise and strengths of the Division so it can move forward, leveraging and building on what works well and improving on what does not.

The facilitator explained the purpose of the meeting and the rules of engagement, noting that staff, if not able to attend the session or were not comfortable in sharing their views in the open sessions, could meet individually with the facilitator or send feedback directly to her. The different stages of the change process were also explained briefly.

2. Discussion Points

Strengths of F&S

- The employment conditions;
- The people - The ANU community and the variety of work;
- The amount of diverse skills and knowledge within the Division;
- The resources of the division, for example the quality of equipment available;
- Eightly percent of the work within the group is self generated, therefore any client requests are handled fast.

Issues / Areas for Improvement

- Attendees concurred that communication both internal and external requires improvement;
- Discussed that an increase in resource sharing (knowledge and equipment) between F&S groups is required.
- The attendants discussed the ‘us and them’ culture within F&S. Some staff will just do their jobs without considering other areas of the Division. Not all staff see the Division as one big team.
- One downside to the generous working conditions (RDOs) means the operational requirements are met with less staff. There is less time to do things.
- There was a concern that there is plenty of money for new buildings but not enough thought or resources for the associated on-going maintenance or grounds.
- It was noted that there is a lack of social interaction with clients and other staff within the Division, thus feeling isolated.

4. **Different ways to be organised**
- It was felt that there are 'lots of chiefs not enough 'Indians', resulting in a top heavy structure.
- Attendees explained how useful it would be to have the opportunity to meet and greet other staff within the division and externally. e.g. Business Managers, building custodians etc.

5. **Leadership**
- Attendees felt that there is a need for clear work objectives so staff understand what is expected of them.
- Management must acknowledge that no work system is static and therefore work needs may be modify as required.
- It was agreed that more understanding by the University community on what the gardens and grounds team do (including good news stories) - how priorities can change quickly for example due to a heavy rain fall.

6. **Training ideas and Career Development**
- Computer fundamentals (beginners training).
- Train the Trainer programs.
- Horticulture training (professional qualifications).
- HR/People management training. HR foundations.

7. **Clients**
- It was felt that clients are generally positive about the team.
- It was agreed that more feedback is needed. For example, monthly or biannual meetings with Business Managers.
- Greater promotion of positive feedback amongst the group was suggested.

8. **Do we have a culture of tolerating mistakes?**
- It was felt that there is a culture of 'it will be alright'.

9. **Change and innovation**
- The amount of time is so great from the idea stage to implementation stage and high levels of red tape exist. These are deterrents for change and innovation. Need great transparency (and speed) of process;
- It was felt that other than on 'hedges', creativity are diminished due to lack of time and resources.

10. **Worst case scenario to the current change process?**
- Having to move locations to be with the rest of the Division. The team thought this wouldn't be a good idea. Enjoy current autonomy;
- There was a fear that if 'it isn't broke don't fix it'. There is concern that unnecessary change may be thrust upon an area already doing well;
- It was agreed that an increase in contract staff (outsourced) would be detrimental to the University. Better to keep the team in house to maintain the current high work standards;

Meeting was concluded at 2.45pm