Intersect Review

Findings

The Panel offers the following findings for consideration as frameworks for action:

Finding 1: Intersect has created a successful eResearch services business and in the process has developed specialised technical and organisational capabilities that are providing momentum and opportunities for further successes. This is a commendable achievement.

Finding 2: The value of Intersect to members at the current stage of development is critically dependent on Intersect's ability to secure grants from government investments in eResearch infrastructure and to convert such funds into infrastructure, software and services. This dependency does not appear to be as broadly recognised through Intersect's operations and relationships as is warranted by the magnitude of risk to the current business model.

Finding 3: Software engineering is an Intersect core capability and a distinguishing strength. It has contributed significantly to Intersect's reputation. The market for professional software services within the university sector is largely restricted to construction of community level software. Lacking direct institutional support, research communities rely on government infrastructure funding schemes. Maintaining and growing its core software engineering capability is likely to lead Intersect to a broader market place.

Finding 4: Intersect's engagement model is among the best known to the Panel and can be credited with the widespread support for Intersect across its membership. There are however signs of differential needs across the membership which threaten the model and invite a review with the intention of tailoring engagements to individual member circumstances.

Finding 5: Broadening business to include infrastructure services under a 'services-in-common' model is likely to lead to fundamental changes within Intersect; changes that affect management, skills, service standards and capabilities. The development is consistent with sustainability objectives and offers benefits to members in the short term at least. However there are aspects that could be quite disruptive to the current business

model and these argue for detailed plans and strategies which, due largely to timing induced by opportunity, have yet to be carried out.

Finding 6: In the context of changes in the operating environment, sustainability is emerging as an overriding objective supported by members and other stakeholders alike. Broadening business and broadening markets are two directions raised in considering Intersect's future. A substantial and consequential step has been taken with the introduction of data infrastructure and management services. These changes bring to the foreground the need for revisiting and renewing Intersect's vision and strategic goals. In relation to sustainability, supporting Intersect's distinctive capabilities into the future is strongly supported by current members. The renewal process should include consideration of the impact of broadening the market on each of the two main prospective revenue lines, i.e. engineering and infrastructure. Changes in the value proposition for membership and the membership model itself would be in scope. The diagram from Section 5 is replicated here to assist in communicating the scope of this finding.