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From Administrivia to Engagement:

Lessons in participative management and employee satisfaction at the ARC Centre of Excellence for Climate System Science

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Objectives

1: We will introduce ourselves and set some context around where we work and our thoughts, experience and reading on participative management, and frame the topic within in the university setting

2: We will give an overview of the highly successful combined workshop for professional staff from three centres of excellence at UNSW

3: We will discuss some of the outcomes from our workshop and possible opportunities and considerations of adopting participative management practices within the university context to find the right blend

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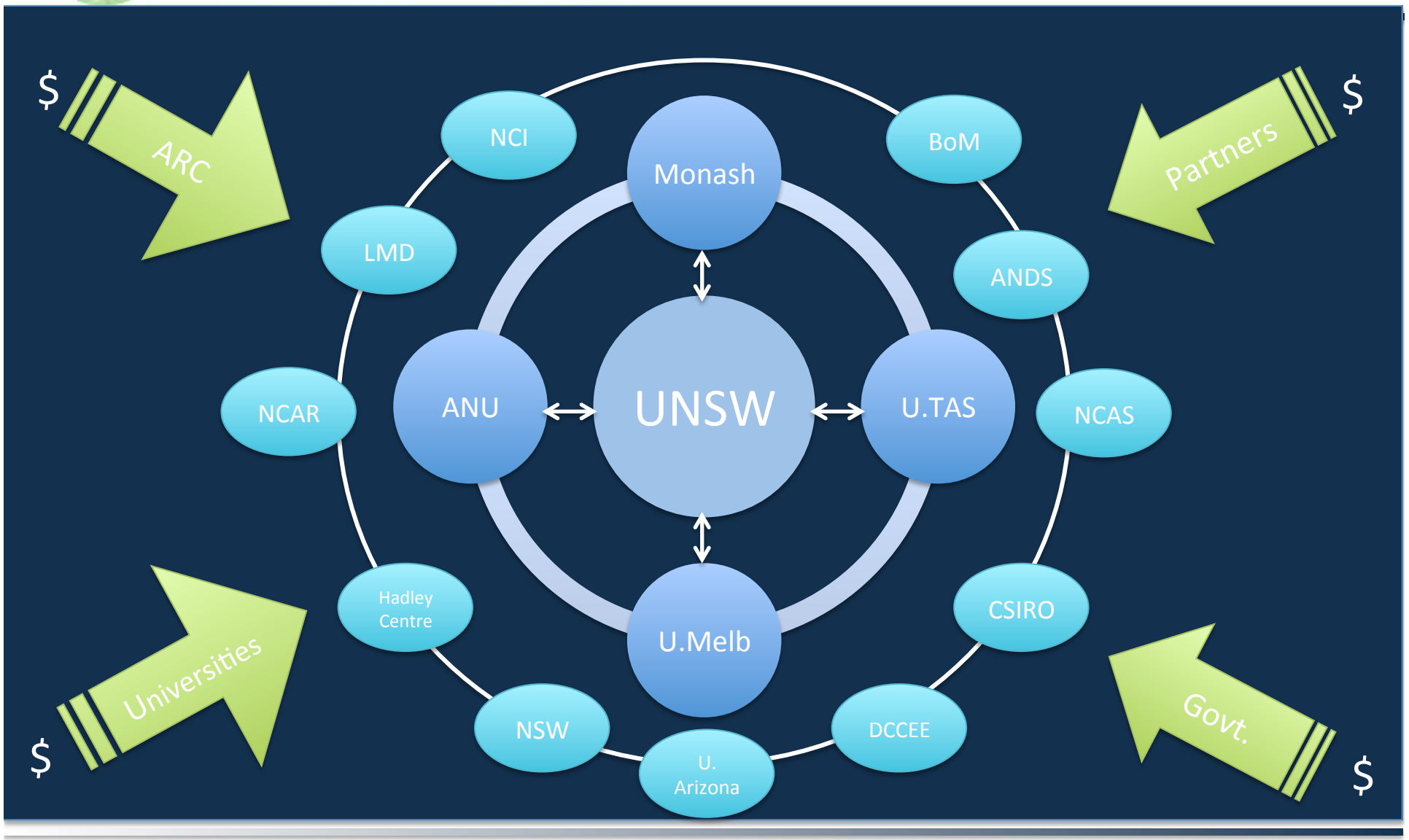

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Statistics

- Over $30mil over seven years
- 5 Universities
- 11 Formal Partner Organisations, Australian and int'l
- 14 Chief Investigators
- 30+ PhD Students
- 20 Research Associates
- 16 Partner Investigators
- 32 Associate investigators - worldwide
- 4 FTE Professional Staff

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What characterises a 'bad' manager?

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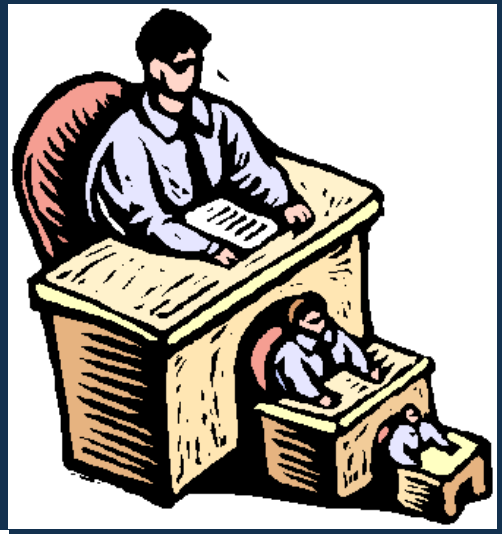

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Participative Management

- What is participative management?
- How do you accomplish participative management?
- Theory established on some basic assumptions…

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Participation and decision making continuum:

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Proponents of Participative Management

- Increased employee satisfaction
- Higher employee morale and motivation
- Improved organizational performance and effectiveness
- “value attainment”

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Positives from an Organizational Perspective

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Criticisms of Participative Management

- Pursuing participation can be slow and complicated

If it leads to more engaged, satisfied staff who are committed to the organisation, it's worth it.

- Perceived loss of control by the manager

Decreases the manager's need to control everything, freeing the manager to work on more strategic issues

- Success dependent on organisational culture, and support for the managers implementation of participative management

Universities are already generally culturally compatible to PM. Start with small local steps to manage upwards.

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Key requirements for successful implementation of Participative Management

- The skills, ability, and knowledge of the supervisors and managers
- Transformational Leadership skills
- The level of organizational support
- Company climate
- And the availability of appropriate training programs

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Welcome to the Combined Centres Of Excellence Professional Staff Workshop

Goals for the Day

- For admin/business staff from 3 Centres of Excellence to meet and get to know each other
- To identify common challenges we face as Centres of Excellence and see if there are shared solutions we can implement
- To take time out of the office and reinforce respect for our chosen careers as university/research managers and administrators

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Combined UNSW Centre's of Excellence Workshop

"It was helpful to me as a Finance Officer be able to meet other staff from other CoEs and to understand the roles and responsibilities people have. It was a relief to know that we were facing similar issues and that we were all present to share new ideas and solutions with each other". Vilia Co, Finance and Resources Officer, CoECSS

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"Sharing knowledge and systems across the Centres of Excellence has been a real benefit in my role and has helped me establish useful relationships with other communicators." Alvin Stone, Media and Communications Manager, CoECSS

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Applications and Discussion

A workshop of your own?

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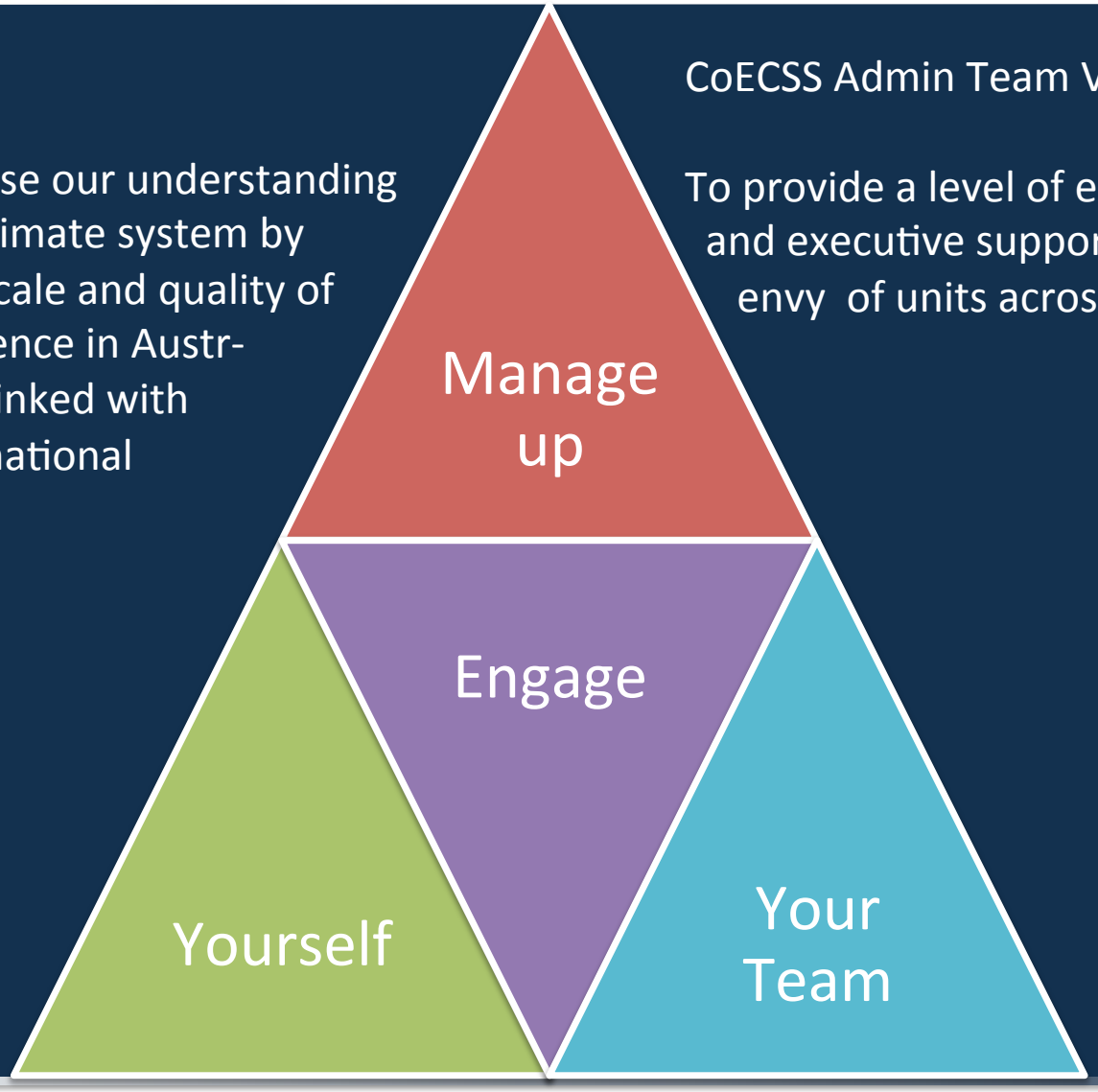
COECSS VISION

We will revolutionise our understanding of the Australian climate system by transforming the scale and quality of climate system science in Austr-alian universities, linked with national and international partners



CoECSS Admin Team Vision:

To provide a level of executive, admin and executive support that is the envy of units across the university

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…the findings demonstrate the need for an inclusive participative approach by which professional, administrative and academic staff collaborate to build a systematic, multi-facetted approach appropriate for the sector.

Jones, S. & Lefoe, G. (2010) Distributed Leadership: working together to ride the waves: The Action Self-Enabling Reflective Tool (ASERT)

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Can you imagine implementing some of these ideas in your area?

What would be some obstacles?

Do you have your own success stories to share?

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