1. Introduction

Monash University and the University of Warwick are two leading, research-intensive institutions which have entered into a deep partnership that harnesses their collective strengths to empower their research and education activities.

The purpose of this document is to articulate the shared principles, structures and mechanisms to further the research collaboration through the Monash Warwick Alliance. It has been developed in consultation with research leaders at both institutions.

2. Alliance Research Direction

2.1 Building on our connections

Research collaboration in the first term of the Alliance (2012-2016) was characterised by a small number of significant, top-down investments mostly in STEM areas and a large number (50+) of small-scale, bottom-up projects. These investments and the funding schemes enabling them were aimed at establishing connections across the more than 10,000 academics at both universities.

In its second term, 2017-2021, the Alliance seeks to capitalise on these connections and to concentrate on catalysing excellent and mutually beneficial research across all levels of collaboration as depicted in figure 1; especially in areas of prominence at each university.

There is recognition and desire to facilitate a range of collaborations across the Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences (HASS) and Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics, and Medicine ( STEMM) fields.

Figure 1: Alliance Research Portfolio Structure

**Tier 1: Aspirational Level.** Attributes: world-leading institute, key part of the value chain of external stakeholders e.g. government, private sector. Active in research and education. Substantial external funding, no remaining financial dependence on Alliance.

**Tier 2: Signature Links.** Attributes: Clear joint leadership in a discipline or challenge area. Globally-connected departments, joint or collaborative appointments and joint goal-setting. Potential in the medium-term to become Tier 1 activities. Alternately, these could be major interdisciplinary cross-departmental courses or significant initiatives differentiated from quotidian international collaboration.

**Tier 3: Highly Productive Niches:** Attributes: excellent collaborations with clear external targets.

**Tier 4: Broader Collaboration:** Day-to-day collaboration and regular university-to-university interaction and cooperation.
2.2 Prioritising excellence and impact

Underpinning all Alliance investments is the principle that financial support be provided on a competitive basis and be for excellent projects with high potential for either impact and/or attracting further external funding.

Through a combination of bottom-up and top-down approaches the Alliance will target activities that demonstrably contribute to the economy, society, culture, national security, public policy or services, health, the environment, or quality of life, beyond contributions to academia.

2.3 Leveraging the administration

The Alliance will seek to leverage the two universities administrative and research support and business development structures to better facilitate research collaboration and target external funding opportunities.

2.4 Our people and places

The flow of researchers, students and ideas is a critical element to the success of the Alliance. It has the potential to attract talented staff to the universities as employees and also to open the door to engagement as collaborators.

2.5 Accessing new spaces

Leveraging our connections, capabilities and capacities can enable access to or enhance competitiveness in new spaces that neither university would otherwise engage in. Presenting Monash and Warwick as the Alliance can facilitate access to agencies and opportunities closed to the universities individually (eg. UK/AU trade discussions, multilateral agency programs etc).

2.6 A Holistic Alliance

Collaboration on research contributes significantly to the stability and success of the Alliance. Our research activities are not pursued in isolation of other Alliance activities and, where appropriate, we seek to integrate education activity elements to engage students and enhance their learning experience.

3. Governance

The Alliance Research strategy will be led by Professor Pauline Nestor, Senior Vice-Provost and Vice-Provost (Research) at Monash, and Professor Kerry Kirwan, Academic Director (Research), Research Innovation & Industrial Research at Warwick.

The strategy relies on access to and support from relevant expertise across both universities. Overall coordination of the activities is the responsibility of the Alliance Project Team.

Progress reports will be provided to the Alliance Steering Committee and to the Alliance Board annually.
4. **Enabling elements**

4.1 **Embedding expectations of impact and excellence**

Underpinning all Alliance-supported activities is the need to strive for excellence and impact commensurate with other investment opportunities. This is achieved through the following:

a) The set of principles in Appendix 1 provides guidance to academics on Alliance expectations of their projects. These principles inform the design of Alliance funding scheme documentation.

b) Use of a peer review college and content experts facilitates the selection of only high quality proposals. Proposals are reviewed by experts not only on their academic merits, but also on the potential impact.

c) Communications and media support contributes to the promotion and reinforcing of the image of excellence.

d) Review of processes and projects to determine the impact of Alliance investments.

e) Adopting the principle that Alliance funding will be awarded only to excellent proposals and not simply because it is available.

4.2 **Alliance research funding support**

In addition to non-financial support the Alliance provides and facilitates a range of funding mechanisms spanning small, medium and large-scale investments. Each funding mechanism is contingent on Alliance budget availability at the time and targets collaboration at different stages of development. Unlike schemes available in the first Alliance term, new schemes allow for far greater flexibility and focus on providing what is needed for academics to achieve the project goals:

a) Establishment of early connections and new collaborations is supported by a small-scale *Catalyst Fund* designed to kick-start research linkages and projects in any discipline with a clear plan for impact.

b) More established collaborations seeking to break into the next level of activity are eligible for the *Accelerator Fund*. Support at this level may include elements such as Research Assistants, PhD scholarships, reasonable research budgets (but not capital equipment) etc. Activities at this level are expected to more strongly align with university strategy and present a business case with clear external targets and potential for greater impact.

c) Third party expertise necessary to advance an Alliance collaboration (e.g. visiting fellows) is also available within the Catalyst and Accelerator funds.

d) Scholarships and travel funding for Joint PhD students and their supervisors are available. Existing collaborations between academics are prioritised as a means to expand capacity in research activities and to leverage the academic relationships necessary for a quality joint supervisory experience. Scholarships are administered
through the standard rounds at each university; all students receive a travel bursary and supervisors at each end receive a small travel grant.

e) Strategic opportunities driven either by internal and/or external agenda are explored using Sandpit Funding. Similar to the Catalyst Fund in many respects, this fund enables a top-down approach to building academic teams willing to target clearly identified external opportunities.

f) Major Initiatives of the type previously used to support joint professors remain an option in the Alliance funding structure but are not restricted to this format. Supported projects will have potential significant enough to elevate the relevant academic areas to world leaders or have similar scale impact.

**Figure 2: Alliance research funding support**

4.3 Identification and development of major initiatives and external engagement opportunities.

Major Alliance investments in the second term are primarily guided by their strategic fit and potential to secure external support.

Identification and development of opportunities will typically be initially led by Alliance Academic Directors in consultation with Provosts and Vice-Provosts/PVCs (Research) and relevant Deans/HODs and external agencies. These investments require coordinated support from the relevant professional services areas to support bids to funding agencies. Propositions to industry should be coordinated at both ends, with identified academic leads and contributors. Support needs may encompass funding scheme expertise/advice, proposal writing, industry facilitation, legal support, financial analysis provision and may entail direct lobbying for funding scheme eligibility.

Decisions on proposal selection will be taken by the Alliance Steering Committee following consideration of business cases developed in cooperation with the relevant faculty/school/department and within the standard decision making processes of the
universities. Where agreement cannot be reached, decisions will be escalated to the Alliance Board.

4.4 Non-financial support towards realisation of project outcomes

Experience has shown that successful (and sustainable) research collaboration requires a variety of support elements beyond financial contribution. The Alliance directly provides or facilitates support for proposals; including:

a) Linkage of research support services (Monash Research Office and Warwick’s Research Impact Services) in preparing grant submissions and sharing best practice.

b) Identification of external funding opportunities through tailored Research Professional (RP) profiles.

c) Coordinated approach to commercialisation and intellectual property led by the respective technology transfer offices.

d) Linkage of business development offices to facilitate identification of opportunities.

e) Senior leadership support in approaches to government, industry and other funding bodies. This includes lobbying to support favourable shifts in government policy

f) Marketing and communications support and/or advice from the Alliance Project Team.

g) Leverage of alumni links.

h) Administrative system troubleshooting.

4.5 Alliance-funded senior academic appointments.

Alliance-funded appointments will pursue the most appropriate employment format to secure the best candidate. Sub-professorial appointments are ineligible for split arrangements, such as 80/20.

It is expected that senior academic appointees also receive adjunct/honorary status at the other institution.

In a shift away from the joint professor model adopted in the first term, Alliance appointments will now typically be used to support or enhance collaborative projects and teams. This helps to ensure embedded connection and commitment to the project at both institutions.

Where an appointment is made 100% at one institution, there is an expectation that the key stakeholders at the other institution take part in the selection process. Similarly, the other institution should provide input into any performance appraisal. This is managed by the respective HR offices.
Appendix 1

Principles of Alliance Activities Receiving Financial Support (published with all internal funding proposal documentation)

1. Strategic value

Including:

- Synergy – the combined activities of the institutions produce possibilities well beyond what the institutions could do individually.

- Alignment – for education and research programs, there should be alignment with (and potentially influence upon) the strategic intentions of the relevant areas (as agreed by the Deans at Monash and the relevant PVC at Warwick) and the institutions overall.

2. Transformational potential

The activity supported will be agreed to be able to meet a threshold such as:

- Potentially major grant or impact potential in research; or potentially significant new markets or brand impact in education; or an innovative contribution to improving student experience at both institutions.

Ideally, it will have potential to do much more.

3. Innovative approaches

International collaboration in higher education is common: Alliances that leverage the diverse assets of broad-based universities less so. Innovative approaches are characterised by their new ways of accessing or combining knowledge and resources to achieve a goal more effectively.

4. Shared commitment and benefits

A threshold requirement of any Alliance funded initiative is the anticipation of benefits to both institutions. These need not be symmetrical in every case, however, there must be an evident shared commitment to the aims of the project and a nominated ‘owner’ at each end for any proposition to be considered.

5. Potential for external investment

The prospect for the activity to secure external investment from government, industry or other partners. This principle will be applied in proportion to the level of funding requested.