



Crows in search of cutting edge

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ADELAIDE has formalised its efforts to be on the cutting edge of sports science and innovation by forming a partnership with Flinders University's commercial arm, Flinders Partners.

At the initiative of chief executive Steven Trigg and the innovations committee, the Crows will have a bank of researchers from the university working on implementing their research in the real world with an emphasis on psychology and physiology – but with a few limitations.

The partnership takes the Crows' work with science a step further than its association with Adelaide University, which will continue but is more in the traditional vein of joint ventures between universities and sporting clubs. The partnership with Flinders Partners is different in

that the two entities – Flinders and the Crows – will brainstorm projects together, come up with ideas and then implement research they agree is likely to benefit the high-performance program. At the front of the queue is delving deeper into the mental side of sport, which has been highlighted as a crucial area of elite performance with much scope for improvement.

"The mental side of it is probably underutilised, not only in AFL but also Olympic sports," Crows physical performance manager Stephen Schwerdt said. "It's something we want to put up higher on the agenda."

Schwerdt, a former player and long-time fitness man at West Lakes, said the partnership was a natural extension by the work in sports science initiated by former coach Neil Craig, who had an extensive background in the field.

It would bring not only fresh ideas, but also challenge long-held views from within the club.

"We've upped the ante a little bit and revamped it a bit going into this partnership," Schwerdt said. "It's about being cutting edge with the help of the research from them but commercialise those concepts too."

"We haven't put any limitations on it."

"It's good to have an outside view for a football club, because sometimes you can become a bit insular. So hopefully having Flinders Partners on board we will get a different perspective."

Schwerdt said the partnership would cover a range of fields, including physiology, psychology, training and recovery techniques and how to maximise individual talent.

But each project would have to be closely considered before undertaken to make sure time wasn't wasted.

"There could be a number of things that we haven't even looked at that they can bring to the table to help us be a better football club," Schwerdt said. "Some may not have a commercial aspect to them but have a huge benefit for our players."

"That's why we're looking at it. But we're very clear we can't be guinea pigs. We'll look at things we think can have a clear benefit for our players and give us a competitive advantage."



Ideas: Stephen Schwerdt