



Meeting Report – 1 September 2016

INTRODUCTION

The latest meeting of the National Marine Science Committee (NMSC) was held in Canberra on Thursday 1 September, at the Department of Industry, Innovation and Science.

While all NMSC members have access to agendas, papers and minutes, this Meeting Report has been prepared for much wider distribution within the national marine science community. Its purpose is to ensure that the broader community is informed about the NMSC's action agenda, and has the opportunity to provide comment and input.

MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

NMSC welcomed the National Environmental Research Program (NESP) [Marine Biodiversity Hub](#) as member no. 25. Nic Bax will be the member representative, with Paul Hedge as alternate. Interest in joining NMSC has been expressed by Macquarie University Marine Research Centre and NSW Department of Primary Industries, and this will be followed up before the next meeting.

We welcomed Will Figueira onto the committee as recently-appointed president of the Australian Marine Sciences Association (AMSA). Our thanks go Sabine Dittmann as the previous AMSA representative who made significant contributions during development of our National Marine Science Plan. David Smith replaces Ken Lee as CSIRO's representative.

A review of NMSC's terms of reference is underway. A draft document was discussed and, based on feedback and further input, it will be updated into a final version for approval at the next meeting.

NATIONAL MARINE SCIENCE PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

The major topic of discussion at the meeting was NMSC's response to the 2016 National Research Infrastructure Roadmap Capability Issues Paper. Key issues discussed and agreed were as follows:

- The Issues Paper can be found [here](#). Submissions are due by Friday 9 September, and will inform an Exposure Draft of the Research Infrastructure Roadmap expected to be released by end of October. The Roadmap will be finalised before end of 2016.

- NMSC's submission can be found on the website [here](#). In summary, it emphasises the importance of marine research in driving the development of Australia's blue economy, and reinforces the research infrastructure priorities set out in our Decadal Plan.
- NMSC priorities include the national research vessel fleet, the national marine observing system, and related infrastructure requirements for implementing national marine baselines and long term monitoring, national ocean modelling, and national studies on marine ecosystem processes and resilience.
- The 'research vessel' working group has developed a position paper on the national research vessel fleet. It covers full utilisation of *RV Investigator* for marine science, the marine science requirements for the Australian Antarctic Division's replacement for *Aurora Australis*, planned replacement of shelf/coastal research vessels, and other relevant issues. This has been turned into a complementary NMSC submission specifically focused on research vessels, as a contribution to the 2016 National Research Infrastructure Roadmap. It can be found [here](#).
- Noting that ongoing existence of the Integrated Marine Observing System (IMOS) as an NCRIS capability is entirely dependent on the Roadmap, the IMOS Office and Advisory Board (which includes a number of NMSC member representatives) have also developed a complementary submission focused on the marine observing system. It can be found [here](#).
- It was noted that a number of NMSC member organisations were developing submissions, and that key messages in the Decadal Plan would be reinforced as appropriate.
- In summary, the collective input provided by these submissions demonstrates how the national marine science community is using its Decadal Plan to respond to the National Research Infrastructure Roadmap.

Updates on other [high level recommendations](#) in the Plan are as follows. (Note that latest written updates on all of these items can be found on the website [here](#).)

- Developing marine science research training that is more quantitative, cross-disciplinary and congruent with industry and government needs:
 - No update provided at the meeting.
 - Will Figueira agreed to assist in forming a suitable working group, noting ongoing interest from Sabine Dittmann (Flinders University) and discussion with Helene Marsh (James Cook University).
- Establishing and supporting a National Marine Baselines and Long-term Monitoring Program:
 - No update provided at the meeting.
 - John Gunn of the Australian Institute of Marine Science (AIMS) who is leading this discussion has been on leave.
- Developing a dedicated and coordinated science program to support decision-making by policymakers and marine industry:
 - An update was provided by Rick Fletcher (Australian Fisheries Management Forum/WA Fisheries).

- A proposed process has been outlined, and initial contacts made with some stakeholders.
- Other stakeholders and contacts have been identified, including through discussion at NMSC, and this working group now looks ready to be formed.
- Creating a national ocean modelling system to supply defence, industry and government with accurate, detailed knowledge and predictions of ocean state:
 - A brief update was provided by Tim Moltmann, Integrated Marine Observing System (IMOS) and Forum for Operational Oceanography (FOO).
 - The next step is for the working group to develop a talk and discussion points for the third Australian Coastal and Oceans Modelling and Observations ([ACOMO](#)) workshop, to be held at the Academy of Science in Canberra on 11-12 October 2016.
 - Some additional members were suggested.
- Facilitating coordination of national studies on marine ecosystem processes and resilience:
 - An update was provided by Peter Steinberg, Sydney Institute of Marine Science (SIMS).
 - An initial working group has been formed and teleconference held.
 - A short briefing paper on proposed structure and science themes is being developed. When finalised, this will be made available for broader community input.
- Creating an explicit focus on a sustainable blue economy throughout the marine science system:
 - No action at the moment. This priority was discussed by NMSC, and the Chair agreed to bring a brief discussion paper to the next meeting.

The Secretariat will continue to liaise with the teams developing action agendas for all of these priorities.

OTHER NMSC PRIORITIES

1. Australian Ocean Data Network (AODN)

- NMSC agreed to provide oversight of AODN, with the AODN Technical Advisory Group (TAG) becoming the marine data sub-committee of NMSC.
- This is an important step along the path to fully realising the vision of AODN as an interoperable online network of marine and climate data resources for Australia.
- NMSC will have input into annual AODN implementation planning, developed by the AODN Director in consultation with the TAG. This will include priorities for maintaining and developing the infrastructure in response to user needs, as well as priority new data collections being targeted for inclusion in AODN.
- Status reports will be provided to NMSC meetings, reporting progress against the AODN Implementation Plan.
- The draft AODN 2016-17 Implementation Plan and August 2016 status report are now available on the website [here](#).

2. National Marine Technology Roadmap

- There was no update on this priority, being led by Dr Lyndon Llewellyn (AIMS).

3. Presentations and discussions on topical issues

- Emma Hyland (Department of the Environment and Energy) gave a presentation on [Essential Environmental Measures](#), followed by questions and discussion. The Department has started this process by working with the native vegetation community. They would like to engage the marine community next, as it is considered to be relatively mature in thinking about essential environmental measures. There is work being done internationally on essential ocean variables (including for biology and ecosystems), and nationally on marine environmental measures through 2016 State of the Environment Report, Reef Integrated Monitoring and Reporting Program (RIMREP), Commonwealth Marine Reserves, NESP Marine Biodiversity Hub, and IMOS. The Department and the NMSC Secretariat will discuss next steps.
- A planned update on RIMREP by the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA) was deferred until the next meeting due to unavailability of the presenter.
- Other topics identified for future meetings include Monitoring Commonwealth Marine Reserves (Parks Australia), Marine Estate Management in NSW (NSW Government), Opportunities in Ocean Observation from Space (Geoscience Australia), 2016 State of the (Marine) Environment Report (CSIRO), and Fisheries & Aquaculture RD&E Strategy.
- It was noted that at two presentations per meeting, this will fill the agenda for 2017. Some flexibility in timing may be required so as to ensure presentations remain timely.

REGULAR COMMUNICATION

Quarterly email updates are provided to the community, timed to include NMSC Meeting Reports. The Website is updated with relevant information about topical and priority issues. All members are encouraged to provide relevant material to include in NMSC communications.

During discussion, it was noted that the inaugural National Marine Science Symposium held in November 2014 was considered to be a successful event, and that future national symposia should be considered. In general, it was felt that NMSC should focus on engaging the national community in its current Decadal Plan, noting that the Plan will require review and update some time during the 2015-25 period. It was felt that the energy required to run a second national symposium would be best directed towards community input into the next stage of major review and forward planning.

It was suggested that in the interim, NMSC should make optimal use of established national fora such as the annual AMSA conference. Talks and sessions at these events provide an effective and efficient means to engage the community in making the plan a reality, as well as means of broader communication both from and to the NMSC.

NEXT MEETING

This was the final face to face meeting for 2016, though members agreed that a two-hour teleconference will be held in November (after the Exposure Draft of the National Research Infrastructure Roadmap is released). The next face to face meeting of the NMSC meeting will be held in Canberra on Thursday 23 March 2017.

NMSC Chair, on behalf of the Committee

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