



## Meeting Report – 9 August 2018

### INTRODUCTION

The third face-to-face meeting of the National Marine Science Committee (NMSC) for 2018 was held in Canberra on Thursday 9 August. The purpose of this report is to ensure the national marine science community keeps informed about the NSMC's action agenda, and has an opportunity to provide comment and input.

The Committee's agenda covers the following main items, though the order and emphasis varies by meeting:

- Implementing the decadal National Marine Science Plan (2015-25)
- NMSC Sub-Committees, Working Groups, and Workshops
- Forward Strategy
- Discussion of Member Reports
- Presentations on 'Hot Topics'
- Other Business

### 1. IMPLEMENTING THE NATIONAL MARINE SCIENCE PLAN

#### (a) 2018 Federal Budget outcome

The May 2018 Federal Budget provided support for a number of high priority issues in our decadal plan.

Research infrastructure funding was made available to operate *RV Investigator* for an additional 120 days per annum, and to sustain and enhance IMOS until at least 2023, with good prospects to 2029.

Related investments were announced in High Performance Computing and research data, as well as satellite positioning and satellite data delivery (Digital Earth Australia).

In the next phase of research infrastructure investment, consideration will be given to developing a national coastal vessel capability, providing merit-based access to SeaSim, and exploring requirements for more advanced climate and environmental prediction.

With respect to direct funding for research activities, significant long-term investment in programs focused on Antarctica and the Southern Ocean, and the Great Barrier Reef, is very welcome.

In summary, the national marine science community has a lot to look forward to in making use of these investments to deliver high quality research in the national interest. To 'make real' our aspiration for marine science to drive the development of Australia's blue economy.

## **(b) What next?**

Noting that some NMSC members will be heavily committed to successfully implementing the 2018 budget outcomes noted above, it was agreed that NMSC now needs to focus on four, interrelated priorities in the decadal plan. Working Groups are in place for all four priorities, with brief updates as follows:

### **National marine environmental baselines and long term monitoring**

(Lead: David Souter - AIMS, Co-Lead: Paul Hedge - NESP MBH)

This Working Group is now up and running, with a successful national workshop held at Geoscience Australia held in July. Case studies were considered, and an audit of monitoring programs is underway. National efforts around Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and standards-based data discovery and access of marine data are fundamental, and need to be strongly supported by the national marine science community if we are to make real progress in this area. The Working Group expects to take ~12 months to do its work, at which time NMSC will need to consider how to establish a sustained focus in this area. By definition, it will require ongoing attention.

### **Coordinated studies on marine ecosystem processes and resilience**

(Lead: Peter Steinberg – SIMS)

Progress has been slow due to heavy commitment of members of the Working Group leadership. Momentum is being re-established after a recent teleconference, and a fuller update will be provided at the next NMSC meeting (18 October). The national priority for science associated with reef restoration provides additional impetus.

### **Develop a coordinated science program to support decision making**

(Lead: David Smith – CSIRO)

A global desktop study of Integrated Ecosystem Assessments (IEA) prepared by Beth Fulton (CSIRO) was provided for discussion. It was agreed that a sensible next step would be to identify some potential case studies, and establish what would be required to undertake IEAs under these circumstances. The intent is not to actually undertake the IEAs (as this would require additional resources), but rather to establish the pre-conditions for doing so if resources were available. A Working Group will be formed to move this forward.

## **Develop marine science research training that is more quantitative, cross-disciplinary and congruent with industry and government needs**

(Lead: Helene Marsh - JCU)

This Working Group has developed a plan of action, which was supported by NMSC. Funds requested to undertake next stage activities were approved.

## **2. PRESENTATIONS ON HOT TOPICS**

David Smith (CSIRO) gave a presentation on the [National Fishing and Aquaculture RD&E Strategy 2015-2020](#), with emphasis on the Research Providers Network (RPN). The important role of RPN in evolving to a national capability delivering across all jurisdictions was emphasised. It was noted that a process to review the strategy on a 2020-25 timeframe will commence soon.

Terry Hill (Department of Environment and Energy) gave a presentation on Environmental-Economic Accounting (EEA) which stimulated good questions and discussion. The Australian Government 'EEA' Strategy and Action Plan can be found [here](#). Given the focus of our decadal plan on 'marine science driving the development of Australia's blue economy', it is important that NMSC gets involved. The [AIMS Index of Marine Industry](#) provides a mechanism for measuring economic value. Measurement of the environmental and social value of Australia's marine estate through initiatives such as EEA is more challenging, though equally important. Marine science has a key role to play here.

## **3. MEMBER REPORTS**

Written reports submitted by members provide a very useful mechanism for cross-sector communication at the National Marine Science Committee. Some key points of interest are as follows:

- The hull of Australia's new state-of-the-art icebreaker, RSV Nuyina, will be floated this September. It is due to arrive in Hobart in mid-2020, beginning service in the 2020-21 Antarctic summer season.
- State of Environment (SoE) 2021 planning has begun. The next SoE will have regard to sustainable development goals and environmental-economic accounting.
- The fourth biennial Australian Coastal and Oceans Modelling and Observations (ACOMO) workshop will be held at the Academy of Science in Canberra on 9-11 October. The program has now been finalised and can be found [here](#).

## **4. NMSC SUB-COMMITTEES, WORKING GROUPS, AND WORKSHOPS**

### **Sub-Committees (ongoing)**

- [Marine Data](#) - The Australian Ocean Data Network ([AODN](#)) Technical Advisory Group (TAG) is the Marine Data Sub-Committee of NMSC. The AODN Annual Implementation Plan for 2018-19 was submitted to NMSC, and approved. A written report on recent activity was also provided for information.

- Marine Biotechnology – A report from the Marine Biotechnology Sub-Committee was discussed. Decisions relating to Round 20 CRC bids were noted. The Sub-Committee is looking for two additional members, and anyone interested should contact the NMSC secretariat ([NMSC.secretariat@utas.edu.au](mailto:NMSC.secretariat@utas.edu.au)).
- Mitigation of Interactions between Marine Protected Species and Fishing Gear – A definition of the role, membership and funding of this Sub-Committee was provided and agreed.

### **Working Groups (time bounded)**

- None current beyond the four Working Groups focused on implementing the decadal plan.

### **Workshops**

- DSTG (Lynne Fitzgerald) has agreed to co-sponsor a workshop on Bioluminescence with NMSC. To be held at Fisherman's Bend late 2018/early 2019. A point of contact within the NMSC community is to be identified.
- Consideration is also being given to a National Workshop on Marine Image Analysis.

## **5. FORWARD STRATEGY**

Noting that the May 2018 Federal Budget outcome was very positive, the focus of NMSC now needs to be on ensuring our implementation efforts remain robust over the longer term.

Leadership succession, membership, and resourcing of the Secretariat were discussed in this context. The need to provide resources to support implementation mechanisms (e.g. Working Groups) was recognised and agreed.

## **6. OTHER BUSINESS**

Colleagues from the Bureau of Meteorology joined by teleconference to discuss the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development. It was agreed that focus on 'the Ocean Decade,' and related emphasis on the 'ocean' Sustainable Development Goal (#14), presents an opportunity for NMSC. We need to promote the strength of Australian marine science to key stakeholders not currently engaged, such as the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT).

### **NEXT MEETING**

Meeting dates for the remainder of 2018 are as follows:

- Thurs 18 Oct 10.30-15.00, Canberra

### **NMSC Chair, on behalf of the Committee**

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