



Meeting Report – 1 February 2018

INTRODUCTION

The first face-to-face meeting of the National Marine Science Committee (NMSC) for 2018 was held in Canberra on Thursday 1 February. 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.

At the opening of the meeting, members acknowledged the passing of Professor Joe Baker on 16 January 2018. They also recognised the Australia Day honours awarded to Professor Trevor McDougall, and Mr Colin Creighton

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:

- Commodore Fiona Freeman has assumed the role of Hydrographer of Australia, taking over from Commodore Brett Brace. We thank Brett for his great contribution to Australian marine science over several years. Captain Bob Woodham has taken up the new role of Director Meteorology and Oceanography (METOC) Program. This and other new positions represent an investment by the Department of Defence in its capacity to conduct METOC operations in support of the Defence mission.
- On 22 January 2018, Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull MP announced a \$60M funding package for measures to address the risks and threats currently facing the Great Barrier Reef. The package includes a \$6M concept feasibility study of a proposed [Reef Restoration and Adaptation Program](#) led by AIMS, with CSIRO and other partners.
Contact: David Mead, AIMS (D.Mead@aims.gov.au)
- On 20 December 2017, a new Administrative Arrangements Order for the Department of Industry, Innovation and Science was announced. Senator the Hon Michaelia Cash was appointed as Minister for Jobs and Innovation, the Hon Craig Laundy MP was appointed Minister for Small and Family Business, the Workplace and Deregulation, and Senator the Hon Zed Seselja was appointed as Assistant Minister for Science, Jobs and Innovation. Minister Cash will represent science-related matters in Cabinet as part of her portfolio responsibilities.

AUSTRALIAN OCEAN DATA NETWORK (AODN)

The [AODN Portal](#) now offers 190 data collections for discovery, subset and download. The [AODN metadata catalogue](#) contains 11,872 records. This is an increase of 100 records, with new collections including a high resolution digital elevation model for the Victorian coastal region, and the Australian Chlorophyll a database (accepted by the journal Nature Scientific Data) holding more than 50 years of measurements.

Contracts have now been signed for ~\$1.1M of NCRIS funding in 2017-18 to deliver two new projects; (1) a Marine Research Data Cloud project focused on 'Building services for Australian marine data discovery', with particular emphasis on improving the flow of biological data to the AODN portal; and (2) a Data-enhanced Virtual Laboratory project 'To provide the information infrastructure in support of a national ocean modelling system'.

Contact: Roger Proctor (IMOS/AODN) Roger.Proctor@utas.edu.au

After several years of cross-Tasman collaboration, we were delighted to see the release in December of the New Zealand Ocean Data Network (<https://nzodn.nz/>) built on AODN information infrastructure and thus interoperable with the AODN.

NMSC Sub-Committees and Working Groups

A discussion was held on supporting mechanisms required to progress the national marine science agenda. It was agreed that NSMC needs two types of coordination mechanisms to progress matters that cannot/should not be dealt with by the full Committee.

1. Ongoing mechanisms, called sub-committees.
2. Time-bounded mechanisms, called working groups.

To date NMSC has had one sub-committee. The AODN Technical Advisory Group (TAG) is the data sub-committee of NMSC. The AODN Director/TAG Chair provides a report to each NMSC meeting (see above), and the NMSC approves the annual AODN implementation plan developed in consultation with the TAG.

A new sub-committee on coordination of research on Marine Mammals and Fisheries Interactions has been proposed by FRDC, and is in the process of being established in consultation with all interested parties.

Working groups are currently being used to develop implementation plans for high level priorities in the decadal plan as required. The intention has always been that they will wind up when their work is done. Currently there are active working groups for priorities on Research Training, and Marine Baselines and Monitoring – see updates below.

IMPLEMENTING THE NATIONAL MARINE SCIENCE PLAN

Implementing the National Marine Science Plan continues to be a major focus for the Committee.

Infrastructure

The Departments of Education and Training, and Industry, Innovation and Science are continuing to develop a Research Infrastructure Investment Plan in response to the 2016 National Research Infrastructure Roadmap. This is very important for the research

infrastructure priorities in the National Marine Science Plan, and we remain hopeful for a positive outcome in the May 2018 Federal Budget. Australia's Chief Scientist, Dr Alan Finkel, reinforced the importance of research infrastructure investment in his [recent speech at Science Meets Parliament](#) in Canberra.

Skills

Professor Helene Marsh (JCU) attended the meeting as Chair of the 'Marine science research training' working group. A very useful discussion was held about the role of the working group and what NSMC is hoping it will achieve. Other members include Will Figueira (AMSA), Iain Gordon (JCU), April Abbott (Macquarie/CAPSTAN), and Lynnath Beckley (Murdoch), supported by Margaret Carlin (AIMS) in her NMSC Secretariat role. It was noted that Erika Techera (UWA) is on sabbatical and has left the working group, and her excellent contribution during 2017 was acknowledged.

Relationships (coordination, integration)

David Souter (AIMS) joined the meeting by phone from Perth. A workshop for the National Baselines and Long-term Monitoring program is being planned for April 2018, to be hosted by GA in Canberra. Contacts: David Souter, AIMS (d.souter@aims.gov.au) and Paul Hedge, NESP Marine Biodiversity Hub (Paul.Hedge@csiro.au).

Emphasis on other NMSC priorities under this general heading will be progressed during 2018.

Blue Economy

NMSC has identified a number of challenges in addressing the priority to 'create an explicit focus on the blue economy throughout the marine science system'. Emphasis is currently being placed in three areas – engaging a broader base of expertise (economics, law, psychology etc.), accelerating the innovation cycle, and indigenous engagement.

It was noted that two Cooperative Research Centre (CRC) bids are currently being developed with a blue economy focus. One led by the University of Tasmania focused on seafood production, renewable energy and offshore engineering, and one led by Flinders University focused on marine bio-products. Further information is available via the CRC Association website – see [here](#).

It was agreed that indigenous engagement will be a major topic at the next NMSC meeting. This will involve the FRDC Indigenous Reference Group, work being done by the NESP Marine Biodiversity Hub and Parks Australia, and will draw on the experience of member organisations.

NMSC LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

NMSC is sponsored by eight organisations – AIMS, Bureau of Meteorology, CSIRO, FRDC, Geoscience Australia, Department of Defence (RAN), Sydney Institute of Marine Science, and UWA, with IMOS providing in-kind support as Chair. Their contributions are gratefully acknowledged. Under the NMSC Terms of Reference, these organisations form an Executive Committee which met by teleconference on 17 January in advance of the full committee meeting. It was agreed that quarterly Executive Committee meetings will be held between

quarterly NMSC meetings, to assist with maintaining momentum around the key priorities in the National Marine Science Plan.

It was agreed that we will develop a brief update on the decadal National Marine Science Plan after three years since its release. The update should reinforce our overarching messages, update on significant events since August 2015, and highlight what needs to happen next. It will be timed to come out in the third quarter of 2018 i.e. after the May 2018 Federal Budget.

NEXT MEETING

Meeting dates for the remainder of 2018 are as follows:

- Thurs 19 April 10.30-15.00, Canberra
- Thurs 9 August 09.00-17.00, Canberra
- Thurs 18 Oct 10.30-15.00, Canberra

NMSC Chair, on behalf of the Committee

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