



Meeting Report – 18 October 2018

INTRODUCTION

The final face-to-face meeting of the National Marine Science Committee (NMSC) for 2018 was held in Canberra on Thursday 18 October. 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 covered the following main items:

- General Business
- Implementing the decadal National Marine Science Plan (2015-25)
- Communication Strategy
- Discussion of Member Reports
- Sub-Committees, Working Groups, and Workshops
- International Engagement

1. GENERAL BUSINESS

Tim Moltmann (IMOS) will step down as chair of NMSC at the end of 2018 after a three-year term. The nomination of Tony Worby (CSIRO) as incoming Chair was unanimously supported by NMSC members. Transition will happen before the first meeting of 2019, scheduled for 7 February.

During discussions about transition, the issue of bringing greater diversity to NSMC leadership was raised. Two threads emerged.

One was the idea of having a Deputy Chair from outside the Sponsor organisations (AIMS, BOM, CSIRO, FRDC, GA, RAN, SIMS, UWA/OI, UTAS/IMAS, IMOS). It was agreed that the issue of succession planning for the role of Chair should be separate from a role of Deputy Chair.

Secondly, it was suggested that NMSC could consider a scheme for including early career researchers/policy practitioners as committee members for a period of time. The idea would be to bring diversity to the committee table, and expose the next generation to the workings of national marine science and policy.

A paper will be developed for consideration at the next meeting. Comments from the national marine science community are welcome.

There was no hot topic presentation at the meeting. It was agreed that Australian Marine Parks (Jason Mundy) would be the topic for February, and Review of the Australian Antarctic Science Strategic Plan (Gwen Fenton) would be the topic for May. Marine debris and marine biosecurity are other potential hot topics.

2. IMPLEMENTING THE NATIONAL MARINE SCIENCE PLAN

Fund national research vessels for full use

(Lead: Gavin Begg - SARDI)

In the next phase of research infrastructure investment, consideration will be given to developing a national coastal vessel capability. NMSC needs to remain ready to respond to this opportunity.

An inventory of ship-related equipment is being developed by MNF, AAD, AIMS, AMC and CSIRO with interest from international ship operators active in our region. Results will be reported to NMSC at a later date.

National marine environmental baselines and long term monitoring

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

A verbal update was provided on progress since the national workshop held at Geoscience Australia held in July. The audit of monitoring programs undertaken for the workshop was found to be incomplete and rounding this out is a short-term priority. The next meeting of the working group is being planned. It is still hoped that a report and recommendations will be available round mid-2019, for consideration at the 1 August meeting.

Coordinated studies on marine ecosystem processes and resilience

(Lead: Peter Steinberg – SIMS)

A verbal update was provided on recent progress, and another meeting of the working group is being planned. It was agreed that some outputs need to be emerging by the 2 May 2019 NMSC meeting.

Develop a coordinated science program to support decision making

(Lead: David Smith – RPN)

The agreed approach is to consider case studies for Integrated Ecosystem Assessments (IEA) at four locations i.e. NSW (Marine Estate Management Authority), Victoria (Marine and Coastal Council), Spencer Gulf (Spencer Gulf Ecosystem and Development Initiative), and Northern Seascapes (NESP Marine Biodiversity Hub).

The objective of the working group is not to undertake IEAs, but rather determine what would be required to do it in terms of data requirements and resources needed.

The working group is David Smith, Ric Fletcher, Beth Fulton, Alan Jordan, Gavin Begg, Nic Bax, and Anthony Boxall.

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

(Lead: Helene Marsh - JCU)

NMSC has approved funding to provide research assistance to undertake a survey of industry and government needs. A research assistant commenced mid-October and human ethics approval is underway.

3. COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

The NMSC website has been refreshed – see [here](#). Thanks go to Dr Indi Hodgson-Johnston (IMOS Assistant Director) for facilitating this. The new website is built on a more flexible infrastructure that will enable periodic updates on the decadal plan to be developed and delivered more effectively and efficiently. The committee considered the idea of developing one or two impact case studies to demonstrate how investment in marine science benefits Australia, and a proposal will be scoped for consideration at the next meeting.

The general issue of communication was discussed, and it was agreed that NMSC needs to place renewed focus in this area, including embracing social media. It was suggested that NMSC should form a Communication Sub-Committee to draw on the considerable marine science communication capability of its member institutions. This suggestion will be further developed.

4. 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 annual Fishery Status Reports (for Commonwealth waters) were released by ABARES on 28 September and delivered generally positive news for wild fish stocks – see [here](#).
- AIMS has released their new [Strategic Plan](#) which has 12 specific targets. It is pleasing to see the National Marine Science Plan clearly referenced in the strategy.
- The Australian Antarctic Division highlighted that *RSV Nuyina* is now in the water and the build is on track for 2020 - see <http://www.antarctica.gov.au/icebreaker>
- Dr Alistair Hobday (CSIRO) was announced as 2018 winner of the K. Radway Allen Award at the recent Australian Society for Fish Biology conference.
- FRDC has new Minister and a New Board.
- Parks Australia highlighted that five new management plans covering 44 Australian Marine Parks (an additional 2.3 million square kilometres of Australian waters) are now active.
- Professor Peter Veth has been appointed as the new Director of the UWA Oceans Institute starting in early 2019. As one of Australia's leading

archaeologists he has established an international reputation for the study of maritime societies.

- It was also noted that Professor Kurt Lambeck (ANU) has been awarded the 2018 Prime Minister's Prize for Science. Professor Lambeck is a geophysicist whose work has helped paint a better picture of sea level rise

5. NMSC SUB-COMMITTEES, WORKING GROUPS, AND WORKSHOPS

Sub-Committees (ongoing)

- Marine Data - The AODN Technical Advisory Group held its most recent meeting on 5th October 2018. Attended by representatives of AIMS, CSIRO, Department of Defence, Department of Environment (Parks Australia), Geoscience Australia, WAMSI, Bureau of Meteorology, NIWA, AAD, NCI, IMAS and AODN, the purpose of the meeting was two-fold: to provide a summary of existing AODN data holdings, and to review progress of the two ARDC (formerly ANDS-NeCTAR-RDS) alignment plan projects - the Marine Research Data Cloud (RDC) and Data enhanced Virtual Laboratory (DeVL).
- Marine Biotechnology – The Marine Biotechnology Sub-Committee held its second meeting on Thursday 27th September 2018. As a relatively new sub-committee, key business items discussed revolved around finalising membership, developing a work plan, identifying roles for individual members, and considering how best to contribute to the goals of the NMSC. Proposed nominations for additional members focused on improving the geographic and discipline diversity, and to include a government representative.
- In discussion at the NMSC meeting, it was noted that the Marine Bio-Products and Biotechnology CRC bid did not progress to stage two. The Blue Economy CRC bid has progressed to stage two – see [here](#).

Working Groups (time bounded)

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

Workshops

- DSTG (Lynne Fletcher) has agreed to co-sponsor a workshop on Bioluminescence with NMSC, to be held at Fisherman's Bend in early 2019. Martina Doblin (UTS), Shauna Murray (UTS) and Chris Bolch (UTAS) have agreed to be points of contact within the NMSC community. Further details will be provided as they become available.

6. INTERNATIONAL ENGAGEMENT

Australian marine science is very strong on international collaboration, and there is significant emphasis on oceans at the global level. Involvement of NMSC members in the following initiatives was discussed:

- Partnership for Observation of the Global Ocean (POGO) – [Statement on the Value of Ocean Observations](#)

- UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development
- Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 14 - Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development

Andreas Schiller (CSIRO) is leading a process to document national representation on international committees and panels associated with ocean research. It is expected that once this is completed it will help NMSC in identifying opportunities for enhancing Australia's international engagement.

NEXT MEETINGS

Meeting dates for 2019 are as follows:

- Thurs 7 February 10.30-15.00, Canberra
- Thurs 2 May 10.30-15.00, Canberra
- Thurs 1 August 9.00-17.00, Canberra
- Thurs 31 October 10.30-15.00, Canberra

NMSC Chair, on behalf of the Committee

Tim Moltmann - Director, Integrated Marine Observing System (IMOS)

University of Tasmania

tim.moltmann@imos.org.au