

	Australian Government Environmental Information Advisory Group FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY	16 November 2015
		AG EIAG #11 Minutes
		Approved

ATTENDANCE AND MINUTES

AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION ADVISORY GROUP MEETING #11, 16 NOVEMBER 2015

BUREAU OF METEOROLOGY, LEVEL 3, 14 CHILDERS STREET, CANBERRA

ATTENDEES

Representative	Agency
Rob Vertessy	Bureau of Meteorology (CHAIR)
Graham Hawke	Bureau of Meteorology
Branko Vitas	Australian Bureau of Statistics
John Sims	ABARES
Mary Colreavy	Department of Agriculture and Water Resources
Rob Cameron	Attorney-Generals Department
Kerry Olsson	Department of the Environment
Adam Lewis	Geoscience Australia
Mike Makin	Murray-Darling Basin Authority (MDBA)
David Lemon	Commonwealth Scientific & Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO)

OBSERVERS

Name	Agency
Emma Hyland	Department of the Environment
Blaine Wentworth	Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet
Steve May	Australian Bureau of Statistics

APOLOGIES

Representative	Agency
	Attorney General's Department
	Department of Defence
	Commonwealth Scientific & Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO)
	Department of Finance
	Department of Health
	Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet

SECRETARIAT

Representative	Agency
Louise Minty	Bureau of Meteorology
Andre Zenger	Bureau of Meteorology
Mardi Albert	Bureau of Meteorology

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MINUTES

ITEM	The AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION ADVISORY GROUP (AG EIAG)
11.1	ADOPTION OF AGENDA
11.1a	Adopted the agenda for AG EIAG #11
11.2	OPENING AND ATTENDANCE
	Dr. Rob Vertessy (Chair) welcomed participants.
11.2a	Noted the attendance of the members, observers and guest presenters to the meeting.
11.3	MINUTES AND ACTIONS
11.3a	Approved the minutes as a true and accurate record of the AG EIAG #10 held on 29 April 2015.
11.3b	Noted no outstanding actions. Secretariat reminded the group that as agreed at AG EIAG #11, the minutes from AG EIAG #11 onwards will be published on the Bureau's external website once endorsed by members.
11.4	NPEI – UPDATE
Presentation	<p>The Bureau provided an overview of work under the National Plan for Environmental Information (NPEI) initiative since the last meeting with a specific focus on recent National Environmental Information Infrastructure (NEII) deliverables noting the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The NPEI is framed around four focus areas: (1) Coordination, (2) National Environmental Information Infrastructure (NEII), (3) Development of operational products and services, and (4) Environmental information reform. Specific points of note include the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <u>Coordination</u>: The whole-of-government e-communiqué eXchange is currently distributed to 1100 subscribers across the environmental information community three times per year. The audience is mostly Australian Government but since the last issue the distribution has been broadened to the states and territories as opportunities present. Members were reminded eXchange is an Australian government publication designed to showcase environmental products and services from AG EIAG agencies and members are encouraged to share the link to subscribe: www.bom.is/exchange. ○ <u>Coordination</u>: In July 2013 the Bureau released a directory of existing Environmental Information Products and Services (www.bom.is/directory) to provide a central point of access for current environmental information products and services that have relevance to the Australian Government. Directory functionality and content continues to be updated annually with the support of member agencies. A version of the directory has recently been uploaded to data.gov.au to provide users access to the data underpinning the website. ○ <u>National Environmental Information Infrastructure (NEII) update</u>: The NEII programme is designing and implementing of a whole-of-

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	<p>government environmental information platform to improve discovery, access and re-use of environmental data.</p> <p><u>Major achievements and deliverables since the last AG-EIAG:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ NEII Web and Collaboration Space (neii.gov.au) released publically in July 2015 providing the primary gateway to NEII resources including a metadata catalogue, document management system, collaboration space, blogs and forums. ▪ The recently released NEII metadata catalogue currently lists four data services released by the Bureau and this will expand by the end of the financial year to include NEII conformant data from partner agencies. ▪ Operational delivery of three additional NEII conformant web data services : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Australian Hydrological Geospatial Fabric from the Bureau's Water Information programme. • eReefs Marine Water Quality Web Data Services • Australian Gridded Solar Climatology Web Data Service ○ The programme has recently commenced the build of the National Environmental Monitoring Sites Register (NEMSR) to provide a consolidated view of our national environmental monitoring sites across environmental domains. The NEMSR is a core architectural component of the NEII
Discussion	<p>Members discussed the role of open data in the context of NEII, the role licencing frameworks such Creative Commons and the different dimensions of licencing and making data publicly available. The Bureau noted that NEII conformance means that as a minimum data must be publicly available (i.e. through publically visible web data services). Work is currently underway through the NEII conformance framework working group to gain shared agreement around licencing and other dimensions of conformance. A number of AG-EIAG agencies are represented on this working group. Geoscience Australia (GA) noted that it is currently reviewing candidate datasets for inclusion in the NEII, specifically those data already delivered by GA through data services and available under a Creative Commons licence.</p>
11.4a	<p>Members noted progress around the NPEI initiative and recent deliverables under the NEII programme. Members noted the commencement of the NEMSR project and were asked to consider candidate monitoring sites for possible inclusion into the first release of the register in June 2016.</p>
11.5	NATIONAL PRINCIPLES FOR ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION - UPDATE

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Update Kerry Olsson	<p>The Department of the Environment provided an update regarding the planned public release of the National Principles for Environmental Information which were recently endorsed by members out-of-session:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principles will be released publically in the next month pending ministerial advice. • The Minister has been invited to release them and distribute to his colleagues. • The AG EIAG secretariat will write to agency heads requesting their assistance in publicising them. • As the principles are a product of the Australian Government Environmental Information Advisory Group, members were asked to act as champions for ongoing promotion and uptake within their agencies through activities such as the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Publishing the principles on agency intranet/internet sites ○ Distributing the principles to relevant senior managers within the agency ○ Incorporating a news item about the principles in agency newsletters ○ Discussions with key stakeholders as the principles being a useful tool to engage others in the Australian Government's environmental information reform agenda
Discussion	<p>There was discussion about the National Principles dealing primarily with national data. It was noted that States and Territories may gain value from the principles given the critically of States and Territories in supporting the development of major national environmental information product. State and Territory awareness of the national principles will occur through eXchange and related mechanisms. Members were encouraged to circulate the principles nationally through their respective jurisdictional networks.</p>
11.5a	<p>Noted the endorsement of the National Principles for Environmental Information and ensuing release activities. Members were reminded to consider additional promotion and adoption activities within their agencies once the principles are formally released.</p>
11.6	<p>Water Information in Australia</p>
Chair's Introduction	<p>The Chair introduced the thematic focus for this session, <i>Water Information in Australia</i>, where selected agencies provided an overview of their water information related programmes. The focus of the presentations is on data and information delivery rather than water management or policy.</p>
11.7	<p>Murray Darling Basin Authority – Mike Makin</p>
Update	<p>MDBA provided an overview of water information in the MDBA including challenges over time and more recent challenges in managing data across jurisdictions. MDBA provided an update about environmental water reporting noting there hasn't been an annual report produced for the last 3 years. An emerging challenge for the MDBA is how to process the data described in the Basin Plan in a manner that does not impact confidence in the final products.</p>
11.8	<p>Department of Agriculture and Water Resources – Mary Colreavy</p>

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Update	<p>Mary Colreavy provided an overview of the newly formed Water Division in the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources and updated the group about evolving internal structures. She also clarified key responsibilities and role within the Murray Darling Basin Plan. Other topics covered in the presentation included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • market monitoring for value for money principles • production of water market information to the public (ABARES reports) • trends in water purchasing and challenges of the national water market system • the ongoing demand for water information including transparency • international interest in how Australia manages water information
11.9	Australian Bureau of Statistics – Branko Vitas and Steve May
Update	<p>Steve May provided an update about the ABS Water Accounts based on the international SEEA Framework. He also provided an overview of water accounting in Australia including the difference between ABS (water in the economy) and Bureau (water in the environment) roles in the water accounting landscape noting the complementary nature of the products. Other points covered in the presentation included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • broadening awareness beyond the ABS, timeliness and spatial referencing. • identified data gaps in terms of soil/water use in agriculture, household tank water discharge, irrigation runoff and flows back to the environment. • coming soon: Australian environmental economic accounts in mid-2016.
11.10	Bureau of Meteorology – Graham Hawke
Update	<p>Graham Hawke provided an update on how the Bureau manages and delivers water information within the context of climate variability including drought conditions and variable rainfall. He outlined the Bureau's role in the context of the federal government's original investment in improving water information in Australia, primarily through the formation of the Bureau's Water Information Programme. Other points covered in the presentation included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • and overview of the Bureau's flood and seasonal streamflow forecasting products • current projects around catchment and reef modelling • public data services through Water Data Online and tracking daily water storage levels through. • National Water Accounts reported annually using a standardised approach
11.11	MEMBER UPDATES
	<p>Due to time constraints, no verbal member updates were provided during the meeting. The chair requested members provide updates out-of-session for inclusion in the minutes. Updates received include the following:</p> <p>Geoscience Australia</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ On Tuesday 17th Nov the GA representative on the NEII Reference Group, will present on GA's experience in moving from paper based Product Catalogues, to digital Catalogues and digital data and GA's experience in Catalogue and Data Web Services. GA currently working with the Bureau of Meteorology to facilitate the automatic Harvesting of GA's Product and Data catalogue into the NEII Catalogue.



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- Geoscience Australia is engaging in the UN Sustainable Development Goals process through GEO (Stuart Minchin is now Australia's representative on the GEO Executive Committee), and through the UNGGIM (United Nations Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management, under the UN Statistics Division). All countries need to report on all the indicators (i.e. not just developing countries) and there is potential for developing EO based measurements to contribute to these indicators through approaches that bring together geospatial and statistical capabilities and cultures.
- Geoscience Australia, CSIRO and the NCI have formed a Partnership Board to strengthen the collaboration on the Australian Geoscience Data Cube. GA are contributing Dr Trevor Dhu as programme director for the data cube. There is extensive international interest in and support for the approach.
- In September GA applied the Data Cube to complete a project for the Governments of Victoria and South Australia, providing statistical data to characterise vegetation condition from 1987 to the present day. GA provided measurements of surface reflectance which the state research agencies aim to use to develop and apply comprehensive models of vegetation condition.
- Geoscience Australia and the USGS are sharing knowledge and expertise in areas related to the Data Cube and land cover change detection. The USGS are driving the implementation of a continuous change detection capability (CCDC) which analyses Landsat time series to detect change 'as it happens'.
- At the National Marine Science Association Conference in Geelong in July 2015, Dr. Peter Scanes of the NSW government reported success in using the Data Cube "time machine" to elucidate past patterns of water quality in Nadgee Lake in far south eastern NSW. Although in an inaccessible, pristine catchment the status of Nadgee Lake has fluctuated significantly in recent years posing a mystery.
- Members of the Wentworth Group of Concerned Scientists have asked Geoscience Australia officers for a briefing on the Data Cube, in the context of the recently completed Australian Environmental Accounts Trial.
- Following an executive briefing at the MDBA, GA and the MDBA are investigating trial projects for the application of the Data Cube in the MDBA.
- Geoscience Australia is working with Professor Emma Johnston's team at UNSW which is working on the Coasts chapter of the State of the Environment Report. Due to a lack of specific resourcing this work is on a 'best efforts' basis. It aims to demonstrate the potential of the Data Cube to facilitate more systematic, quantitative and efficient SOE reporting in future.
- On November 4th Australia signed a 'cooperation arrangement' with the European Commission (EC) enabling Australia to become an international participant in the Copernicus satellite programme. Australia will establish a Regional Hub for distribution and sharing of Copernicus data, and will have access to Copernicus data at a level similar to that enjoyed by European counties.
- A consortium of Geoscience Australia, the National Computational Infrastructure, CSIRO and the States and Territories has agreed to establish a 'Regional Hub' for Copernicus data. The immediate priority is to establish and operate a Data Hub to effectively manage data from Europe's Copernicus satellites in Australia.
- Geoscience Australia has commenced work with the Bureau of Meteorology to extract bushfire hotspots from Himawari-8 images. Himawari-8 images are produced every 10 minutes, greatly increasing the relevance of satellite data for fire response.

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	<p>Researchers at the University of Wisconsin will develop the necessary algorithm which will run on Bureau Systems, with hotspots appearing on the GA operated Sentinel site. The work is funded under the National Disaster Risk Reduction Grants scheme.</p> <p>Australian Bureau of Statistics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The ABS has released a number of publications with respect to Environment Statistics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Water Use on Australian Farms, 2013-14 (cat. no. 2618.0) - 29 May, 2015 ○ Land Account: South Australia, Experimental Estimates, 2006-2011 (cat.no. 4609.4.55.001) - 27 August, 2015 ○ There are also a number of releases upcoming releases: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Water Account, Australia, 2013-14 (cat. no. 4610.0) - 26 November, 2015 ○ Energy Account, Australia, 2013-14 (cat. no. 4604.0) - February 2016 ○ Australian Environmental-Economic Accounts, 2016 (cat. no. 4655.0) - April 2016 ○ Including a paper on “Valuation of Stock of Australia’s Water Resources” <p>ABARES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ ABARES noted some recent and upcoming publications which are available from http://www.agriculture.gov.au/abares/publications including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Catchment Scale Land Use Summaries – 16 Sept 2015 ○ Australia's forests at a glance 2015 – 28 Oct 2015 ○ Fishery status reports 2015 – 30 Oct 2015 ○ Australian forest and wood products statistics: March and June quarters 2015 – 11 Nov 2015 ○ Land Use Information for Australia – 20 Nov 2015 ○ Agricultural commodity statistics 2015 – 15 Dec 2015 ○ Wine grape farms in the Murray-Darling Basin – 17 Dec 2015 ○ Dairy farms in the Murray-Darling Basin – 17 Dec 2015
11.12	<p>OTHER BUSINESS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No other business.
11.13	<p>NEXT MEETING DATE</p>
Update	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AG EIAG #12 proposed for 25 April 2015 from 1-4pm. This will be formalised through a formal meeting invitation.
11.13a	AG EIAG #12 date and theme to be confirmed and invitations issued.
11.13b	Presentations from AG EIAG #11 to be circulated with minutes.

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ACTION ITEMS

Note: actions completed and accepted by the AG EIAG will be removed from the rolling action list.

ITEM	ACTION	DUE DATE	STATUS
11.13a	AG EIAG #12 date and theme to be confirmed and invitations issued.	Ahead of AG EIAG#12	In-progress
11.13b	Presentations from AG EIAG #11 to be circulated with minutes.	Ahead of AG EIAG #12	Complete