

Bureau of Meteorology Advisory Board Annual Report 2008-09

Role of the Advisory Board

The Bureau of Meteorology Advisory Board was created in June 2002 as a non-statutory body. The function of the Board is to advise the Minister and the Director of Meteorology on issues of relevance to the proper discharge of the functions of the Bureau. More specifically, the role is set out in the terms of reference approved by the Minister and cited below.

During 2008-09, the Advisory Board reported to the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and the Arts, the Hon Peter Garrett AM MP.

Terms of Reference

The major responsibilities of the Board are to:

- a) keep under review, and advise the Minister and Director of Meteorology on:
 - (i) the changing environment affecting national and international demand for the provision of meteorological and related services;
 - (ii) the Bureau's Corporate Strategy and Forward Program;
 - (iii) the optimal balance of resources to be applied to the various public interest priorities of the Bureau including severe weather warning services, provision of public weather, climate, hydrological and oceanographic services, maintenance of the national climate record and the conduct of research and investigation;
 - (iv) the appropriateness of the allocation of current and future products and services provided by the Bureau in the categories of free, cost recoverable or commercial;
 - (v) stakeholder views of the Bureau's current products and services and emerging needs;
 - (vi) any other issues of relevance to ensuring the efficiency and effectiveness of the Bureau of Meteorology;
- b) respond to issues and requests addressed to it by the Minister, the Director of Meteorology and members of the stakeholder community; and
- c) report, at least annually, to the Minister on its activities and to make recommendations in relation to the performance and future direction of the Bureau.

Membership

Membership of the Board is at the invitation of the Minister, after consultation with the Prime Minister. While the Director of Meteorology and the Portfolio Secretary are included as ex officio members, the balance of membership is constituted so as to broadly reflect the Bureau's stakeholder community, with individual members selected on the basis of their ability to contribute at the highest level to the development of meteorology in Australia.

Members are selected to represent, as far as possible, the following broad sectors:

- agriculture;
- aviation;
- defence;
- fire and emergency services;
- environmental management;
- marine;
- media;

and/or the following specialist fields:

- economics;
- law;
- meteorology; and/or
- scientific research.

Some members are recognised as contributing expertise and experience in more than one of these areas.

As at 30 June 2009, the Advisory Board comprised the following members.

Member	Position
Mr Barry Grear AO (Chair)	President World Federation of Engineering Organisations
Ms Jan Adams	Head, China Free Trade Agreement Task Force Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
Mr Mackenzie Craig	Primary Producer
Ms Sue Howard	Broadcaster and media consultant
Ms Siobhan McKenna	Associate Commissioner, Productivity Commission Managing Partner, Illyria Pty Ltd
Mr Russell Miller	Partner, Minter Ellison
Dr James Moody	General Manager International Development CSIRO
Professor Will Steffen	Executive Director Climate Change Institute Australian National University
Ms Robyn Kruk (<i>ex officio</i>)	Secretary Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts
Dr Greg Ayers (<i>ex officio</i>)	Director of Meteorology Bureau of Meteorology

There were a number of membership changes during the year. Dr Geoff Love resigned as Director of Meteorology on 13 August and Dr Greg Ayers commenced in his place on 25 May. In the interim period, Dr Neville Smith, Dr Rob Vertessy and Mr Gary Foley acted as Director of Meteorology at various times. Ms Robyn Kruk commenced as Secretary of the Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts on 2 March, following a period of acting by Mr Gerard Early and the resignation of the previous Secretary, Mr David Borthwick, on 2 January.

Activities of the board 2008-09

Meetings

The Advisory Board met three times between July and November and agreed that no further meetings would be held until after the appointment of the new Director of Meteorology following the resignation of Dr Geoff Love. No further meetings were held between 25 May, when Dr Greg Ayers commenced as Director of Meteorology, and 30 June. Details of member attendance at meetings, held at the Bureau's offices at 700 Collins Street in Melbourne, are provided below.

Member	23 July (meeting 2008/2)	23 September (meeting 2008/3)	13 November (meeting 2008/4)
Gear (Chair)	✓	✓	✓
Adams	✓	✗	✗
Craig	✓	✓	✓
Howard	✗	✓	✓
McKenna	✓	✓	✓
Miller	✓	✓	✓
Moody	✓	✗	✓
Steffen	✗	✓	✗
Borthwick	✗	✓	✓
Love	✓	n/a	n/a
Smith	n/a	✓	n/a
Foley	n/a	n/a	✓

Major Issues Examined in 2008-09

During the year the Board considered the following major issues:

- a management review of the Bureau's functions, priorities, resourcing and business processes;
- the Operational Plan 2008-12;
- the integration of the Ionospheric Prediction Service into the Bureau;
- the Bureau's role in climate change science;
- the financial reforms associated with Operation Sunlight; and
- implications of the Gershon Review of Information and Communications Technology (ICT).

More information on each of these is provided below.

Management review. Over the course of meetings 2008/2, 2008/3 and 2008/4 the Advisory Board was briefed on an independent assessment of the Bureau's functions, priorities, resourcing and business processes. The Advisory Board suggested options for preparing for and approaching the review, recommended arrangements to emphasise the strategic significance of major infrastructure and its contribution to outputs, commented on technology upgrade strategies, advised on the scope of functions and provided guidance on the post review process including engagement and change strategies.

Operational Plan 2008-12. At meeting 2008/2 the Advisory Board was briefed on the Bureau's Operational Plan 2008-12 and commented on the strategic priorities and proposed new operational model. While suggesting that an accompanying communications plan should be developed and that the plan should be checked for consistency with the recommendations of the O'Kane Review, the Advisory Board expressed its approval of the document and congratulated the Bureau for producing a positive and succinct summary of its operational plans. Implementation of the Operational Plan was discussed at meeting 2008/3, with the Advisory Board noting the progress made and recommending several strategies in support of a more sustainable operational model.

Integration of the Ionospheric Prediction Service. Following the integration of the Ionospheric Prediction Service with the Bureau, an overview of its operations, clients and networks was provided to the Advisory Board at meeting 2008/2. The Advisory Board noted the issues and opportunities associated with the integration, including the potential synergies through provision of services to common customers and the potential for sharing common observing sites.

Climate change science. A briefing on the Bureau's contribution to climate change science was provided to the Advisory Board at meeting 2008/2, at the request of the Chair. The Advisory Board noted the Bureau's role in maintaining the climate record, informing climate change science and policy, supporting rural industries and undertaking climate change-related research.

Operation Sunlight. The Government's proposed financial reform package, known as Operation Sunlight, was discussed at meeting 2008/3. Potential changes to budget and funding arrangements requiring more detailed planning and cash forecasting were noted and the Advisory Board provided advice on measures to ensure the Bureau was well positioned to make the transition to the new framework.

Gershon Review of ICT. An overview of the key recommendations of the Gershon Review of ICT and the potential impacts for the Bureau were provided to the Advisory Board at meeting 2008/4. While the proposed whole-of-government arrangements could offer opportunities for efficiencies, the Advisory Board noted that the Bureau's ICT strategic planning would benefit from the adoption of more robust processes and a more disciplined framework in which to develop a clearly articulated strategy to position the Bureau to achieve a more favourable outcome from the Gershon Review.

Other Activities

Advisory Board Representation. Members of the Advisory Board are, from time to time, invited to attend Bureau activities to represent the Board and to increase their knowledge of the Bureau, its operations, services, clients and stakeholders. Generally speaking, members are invited to Bureau events that are held in their local area or that pertain to their particular area of expertise.

On 4 September Mr Russell Miller attended the launch at Parliament House, Canberra, by the Minister for Climate Change and Water, Senator the Hon Penny Wong, of the Water Information Research and Development Alliance (WIRADA), a joint initiative between the Bureau of Meteorology and CSIRO.