	National Environmental Information Infrastructure Reference Group	September 11 2014
		Minutes
		For endorsement

MEETING #01 – MINUTES FINAL

Meeting	Meeting # 01 – National Environmental Information Infrastructure Reference Group
Chair	Dr. Louise Minty, Assistant Director, Environmental Information Services
Meeting Date	September 11, 2014
Location	Bureau of Meteorology – Darcy Room Level 3, 14 Childers Street, Canberra
Dial-in/Video	
Time	10:00 am to 12:00 pm (coffee on arrival)

MEMBERS

Representative	Agency	Attending
Christine Williams	Australian Bureau of Statistics	Mark Lound
Tony Boston	Bureau of Meteorology	
Cynthia Love	CSIRO	
Evert Bleys	Department of Agriculture	
Tim Neal	Department of Communication	Apology
Will Douglas	Department of Education	
Jason Ferris	Department of the Environment	
Pia Waugh	Department of Finance	Alan Barger
Stuart Minchin	Geoscience Australia	Neal Evans
Lex Cogle	Murray Darling Basin Authority	
Tim Clancy	Terrestrial Ecosystems Research Network	
Tim Moltmann	Integrated Marine Observing System	
Adrian Burton	Australian National Data Service	
Ben Evans	National Computing Infrastructure	
John LaSalle	Atlas of Living Australia	Peter Doherty
Phil Tickle	Spatial Information CRC	

SECRETARIAT

Representative	Agency
Andre Zerger	Bureau of Meteorology
Rachel Horswell	Bureau of Meteorology
Vivienne Bordas	Bureau of Meteorology

MINUTES

Item	Item
Item 1.1	**Opening and introductions**
	Dr Louise Minty (Chair) welcomed participants to this inaugural meeting of the Group. The formation of the group represents a distinct step-up in the Bureau's engagement with the community of environmental data custodians and data service providers. The Chair reiterated that the NPEI/NEII is a whole-of-government enterprise and the Group members' active participation is what will determine whether or not it succeeds.
Item 1.2	**NEII overview & roadmap**
	Andre Zerger provided an overview of the NEII and the NEII Roadmap noting the NEII vision: '*Empowering Australian's to discover, access and re-use environmental information for informed decision-making'.* The presentation highlighted that NEII sits in a broader national and international information policy context including for example data.gov.au, foundational spatial data framework, environmental deregulation agenda and declaration of open government as some examples. In this regard, the NEII has a unique role to play with its focus on environmental information and the Reference Group can provide a mechanism to engage with the broader national data and information community.
	The NEII Roadmap 2014-2019 has been developed primarily as a communication tool to document high-level drivers for NEII, the Bureau's NEII programme deliverables and phasings, governance arrangements and preliminary consideration of models of participation. NEII Reference Group members are invited to validate the roadmap structure, the content in the Roadmap and they will ultimately be asked to contribute deliverables and milestones. As such, the Roadmap will become a product of the Reference Group to be updated annually by the Bureau and the NEII Reference Group.
Discussion and Questions	**NEII Programme Resources** - The Bureau has ongoing funding to support NEII however these resources are modest. Ongoing resourcing supports engagement and communication activities, and the building of core IT components hosted by the Bureau. There is also some capacity to commission external work.
	NEII IT development work to date – The Bureau NEII team highlighted that in addition to specific NEII development work to-date, the Bureau had also focussed on adopting NEII standards for a number of related projects.

The best example of this is the recently released eReefs Marine Water Quality Dashboard that, in addition to the dashboard product, provides access to NEII compliant web data services.

The Role of NEII in regard to related initiatives - The group noted that the role of NEII in the broader environmental information landscape needs to be communicated in the Roadmap. This includes mapping in the respective roles of NCRIS facilities, data.gov.au and other like-initiatives.

Articulation of benefits and major drivers for NEII

The group noted that it may be helpful to better identify national drivers for NEII such as State of the Environment Reporting as one example. These could be used as a major driver for NEII, not only as a communication tool or a mechanism to asses and communicate benefits but as a 'target' to focus the activities of the NEII Reference Group. The Department of the Environment note its evolving work around headline indicators to assist in the delivery of the next SoE report. The ABS suggested that there is a need to better communicate the cost-benefits from activities such as NEII.

The Bureau noted that the programme will conduct a formal body of work around benefits realisation in early 2015 that will also involve engaging with groups represented on the NEIIRG.

ACTIONS	**Action 1.1** - Members to prepare for more detailed discussions regarding the NEII Roadmap at NEIIRG #02 in December. The Bureau will be seeking detailed input including the inclusion of milestones and deliverables from member organisations where appropriate. **Action 1.2** - ANDS will provide the Bureau NEII team an example of their communication material regarding the national research data commons. **Action 1.3** - The Bureau to update the Roadmap incorporating comments from NEIIRG #01 (including editorial, reference to broader information landscape, and reference to key stakeholders beyond the main commonwealth agencies).
Item 1.3	**NEII Reference Group Terms of Reference**
	Dr. Louise Minty introduced the Draft Terms of Reference seeking feedback from the group.
Discussion and Questions	**Do the Terms of Reference require modification?** • Terms of reference should make explicit reference to membership beyond only 'agencies' given the critical role and membership of other environmental information groups such as NCRIS facilities. • Terms of reference should include a specified life-span and review point for the reference group. • Terms of reference should note that membership is not static and the group can accommodate new members. • Roles and responsibilities of members with respect to representing other parts of the environmental information community should be included • The background should mention the connection of NEII to national reporting objectives The NEIIRG endorsed the terms of reference subject to these comments being incorporated into the final version.

ACTIONS	**Action 1.4** - The Bureau to update the Terms of Reference noting feedback from NEIIRG #01 and circulate these ahead of NEIIRG #02
	Action 1.5 - The Bureau to provide information on the broader National Plan for Environmental Information initiative when papers are circulated ahead of meeting #02
Item 1.4	**NEII Programme update**
	Rachel Horswell presented an NEII Programme framed around five focus areas.

- **Communication** - In May 2014 the Bureau published the NEII Reference Architecture to provide an overview of the architectural direction of the NEII - http://www.bom.gov.au/environment/doc/NEII_Reference_Architecture.pdf. An NEII web and collaboration space is currently under development with a view to release in late 2014. An interim website has been established http://www.bom.gov.au/environment/about.shtml providing access to key documents and emerging resources.

- **Engagement** - The NEII Reference Group has been established with meeting one held on September 11th 2014. Under its terms of reference the group will table updates to the Australian Government's Environmental Information Advisory Group (covered below).

- **Policies and Frameworks** - CSIRO are undertaking work that will leverage experiences from like national and international initiatives to better understand the role of non-technical enablers (e.g data licencing models, service level agreements) in building a federated information system. A presentation regarding the study findings will be presented by CSIRO to NEIIRG #02.

- **Data Management** – Work is underway to develop an NEII Information Modelling White Paper that will be presented at a future meeting.

- **ICT Build -** Development of the Bureau's instance of the National Environmental Information Services and National Environmental Information Catalogue has commenced, with the first release of Services expected to be operational by June 2015. The first data services to be released operationally will be the Bureau's Hydrological GeoFabric and Solar Radiation data products.

Item 1.5	**Member Updates**
	TERN – Resourcing has been secured until next financial year and there is a focus on securing longer term funding arrangements. No anticipated change in direction.
	IMOS – With additional funding now secured until 2016 under the NCRIS programme IMOS will have been in existence for 10 years.
	ABS – Currently reviewing a number of programmes including environmental accounting through a formal process of stakeholder review.
	CRC SI – Currently have a number of projects in place of relevance to NEII including working with GA to develop 'workbenches' to leverage the Landsat Data Cube available on the NCI. This will enable reports to be

	provided at sub-IBRA and NRM region levels. Have recently partnered with the Department of the Environment and the Caring for our Country program to build an NRM spatial hub providing data at property level with a focus on rangelands.
	ANDS - Have a current project underway to implement an operational vocabulary service and vocabulary management system. The Bureau of Meteorology team are engaged with this through Dominic Lowe.
	NCI – Have focussed on establishing services and ensuring effective governance arrangements are in place. They recently completed a workshop regarding metadata catalogues and data citation for NCI data collections.
	GA – Current activities include developing virtual laboratories to leverage their larger data holdings and work around Water Observations from Space. There is a major change in ICT strategy to place a greater focus on back-end services rather than portals and interfaces.
	ALA – Are working closely with Caring for Our Country within the Department of the Environment around the MERIT system. This includes incorporating new data types and improving their approach to capturing on-ground activities.
	DoE – Are engaging extensively with States and Territories as the EPBC Act is being devolved to States and Territories and this may create an opportunity for activities such as NEII. The ERIN team are currently engaged in further developing its Headline Indicators program in preparation for SoE 2016.
	Bureau – Developing more robust infrastructure to provide web data services for a range of products and services which should help other programmes in the Bureau to align with NEII principles.
	CSIRO – Are reviewing their data roadmap and refreshing their data infrastructure for key national facilities. This includes data intensive facilities such as the Australian Square Kilometre Array Pathfinder and the new survey vessel the RV Investigator.
	MDBA – Working closely with Geoscience Australia regarding the Landsat Data cube, vegetation condition assessment cross the basin and with the Bureau of Meteorology around improving access to water information to support their activities.
ACTIONS	**Action 1.6** - CSIRO to provide the NEIIRG further information regarding the Belmont Forum, which might have useful outputs for NEII.
Item 1.6	**Other business**
	Next meeting 3rd December 2014 - TBC
	Future dates – 12 March 2015 and 11 June 2015 - TBC

ACTIONS SUMMARY

Actions completed and accepted by the NEIIRG will be removed from the rolling action list

	Action	Due	Status
1.1	Members to prepare for more detailed discussions regarding the NEII Roadmap at NEIIRG #02 in December. The Bureau will be seeking detailed input including the inclusion of milestones and deliverables from member organisations where appropriate.	Prior to NEIIRG #02	In-progress
1.2	ANDS will provide the Bureau NEII team an example of their communication material regarding the national research data commons.	ASAP	Complete
1.3	The Bureau to update the Roadmap incorporating comments from NEIIRG #01 (including editorial, reference to broader information landscape, and reference to key stakeholders beyond the main commonwealth agencies).	Prior to NEIIRG #02	Complete
1.4	The Bureau to update the Terms of Reference noting feedback from NEIIRG #01 and circulate these ahead of NEIIRG #02	Prior to NEIIRG #02	Complete
1.5	The Bureau to provide information on the broader National Plan for Environmental Information initiative when papers are circulated ahead of meeting #02	Prior to NEIIRG #02	Provided at Meeting #02
1.6	CSIRO to provide the NEIIRG further information regarding the Belmont Forum, which might have useful outputs for NEII.	ASAP	Complete