

THE WESTERN AUSTRALIAN MARINE SCIENCE INSTITUTION

Chairman's Newsletter No. 4

14 June 2006

Greetings

This Newsletter No. 4 is being distributed to WAMSI Governors, Alternates and Administration, and also to a number of other people closely associated with WAMSI. Please feel free to distribute it to anyone who may be interested in the development of WAMSI.

Appointment of a CEO for WAMSI

In my last Newsletter I advised that Dr Steve Blake would take up the position of Chief Executive Officer on 8 May 2006. I also provided a brief outline of Dr Blake's background.

Dr Blake commenced duties on 8 May and has quickly become familiar with the requirements of WAMSI. I encourage Governors and Alternates to make contact with Steve if he has not already arranged to meet with you. He is currently housed in an office in the headquarter building of the Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences. His telephone number is 6488 4654.

Second meeting of the interim Governing Board

The second meeting of the interim Governing Board was held on Wednesday 7 June 2006. It is important that the Governors be kept informed about the matters discussed at the Board Meetings. Below I have provided information about the more important items discussed at the 7 June meeting:

- The Minister for Science and Innovation attended the Board meeting from 9.00am until 10.00am. I have provided in Attachment 1 to this Newsletter a copy of the notes I used in welcoming the Minister. The discussion with the Minister was very helpful in progressing the establishment of WAMSI, including the delivery of a draft of the State Funding Agreement. It is essential that the four Agreements come together so that Parties can be invited to sign the Joint Venture Agreement.
- The Business Plan has been amended to give attention to the matters raised by the Office of Science and Innovation. The most recent version of the Plan (26 May 2006) was presented to the Board Meeting. Copies will be sent to all Parties who are not members of the WAMSI Board. It is essential that the Board operates in accord with the Business Plan submitted to Government. The Business Plan will become an attachment to the State Funding Agreement.
- The Board was informed that WAMSI workshops had been held to discuss research programs for Nodes 1, 2 and 3. The Board received science plans for:
 - Node 1, Strategic Marine Science for Western Australia's marine Environment;
 - Node 2, Climate Processes, Predictability and Impacts in a Warming Ocean;
 - Node 3, Ningaloo Research Program; and

- Node 6, Ocean Science for Offshore Engineering.

Newsletter No. 3 informed readers that the Budget had been revised so that some funds were available for redistribution at a later date, either on merit within the Nodes or to co-invest in new opportunities. This was given attention in the planning workshops.

Node leaders or researchers associated with a Node spoke to the science plans. Further discussion is needed in relation to the Node 6 proposal, but the Board agreed that the Node leaders for Nodes 1, 2 and 3 should now prepare project details for submission to the CEO and consideration by the Board Scientific Committee of Ayers, Poiner and Robertson (and the CEO). An aspect of considerable importance in the project presentation is the method by which the Universities will be involved in the selection and supervision of PhD students. The Board wants to ensure that the Education Program is well structured and involves all of the university Parties.

- The CEO presented to the Board detailed plans for a quarterly reporting process to ensure that the Board was able to track research progress and expenditure. The CEO was requested to 'road test' the reporting process with Node leaders with a view to balancing the principal of minimising paper work with the need for correct and transparent reporting processes.
- Progress on the development of the four agreements was discussed. These are the Joint Venture Agreement, the Centre Agent Agreement, the State Government Funding Agreement and the Project Agreement. The Board was informed that considerable progress had been made with all of the Agreements except the State Funding Agreement. The Minister for Science and Innovation kindly offered to seek further information about progress on the State Funding Agreement.

Meetings

Interim Governing Board

The next meeting (third) of the interim Governing Board will be held on Friday 25 August 2006 and the fourth meeting will be held Friday 3 November.

Workshop

A workshop to progress the development of the science plans for Node 4 (Sustainable Marine Ecosystems) will be held in May 2006. The CEO will chair this workshop

Progress on accommodation

The WAMSI Headquarters will be located on the ground floor of the Botany/Biology Building at the University of Western Australia campus in Nedlands. WAMSI will have four individual offices, storage space, a meeting room (shared with AIMS) equipped with video conferencing facilities, a shared small kitchen and reception area. The alterations are well advanced and the CEO expects that the WAMSI staff will be in its new headquarters on, or about, 3 July 2006.

Kind regards

Bernard Bowen (Chairman)

WELCOME THE MINISTER FOR SCIENCE AND INOVATION

- 1 Welcome the Minister: The Hon Francis Logan MLA
- 2 This meeting is the second of the interim Board of the WA Marine Science Institution (or WAMSI as it is called)
- 3 Meeting on the UWA Campus is significant. It recognises that the UWA has generously provided accommodation and the on-going costs of operating that accommodation. The University will also be the legal entity for WAMSI and will provide a number of administrative services as well as a cash grant.
- 4 WAMSI resulted from the coming together of cooperative inputs from State and Commonwealth organisations as well as from industry and the universities. The aim was to provide the government with a business case for marine science which would deliver economic, social and environmental benefits to the State. The Business case, which proposed a joint venture of all of the parties involved, was successful and a grant was announced.
- 5 The joint venture partners have met on a number of occasions to put together the required documentation to give effect to the Business Plan approved by the State Government.
- 6 The research to be undertaken will be strategic in nature but must be clearly identified as providing a knowledge base leading to outcomes of benefit to the State. The research will be both biological and oceanographic in three science themes of ocean system forecasting; biodiversity conservation and natural resource management.
- 7 Leverage of funds additional to the \$21 million is essential. Some of the leverage will result in \$2.5 of research effort for each \$1 of WAMSI money invested while the leverage in other areas can be much higher. Our best estimate at present of 'other contributions' (i.e. contributions additional to the \$21 million MRF money) is \$48 million. However, this will become clearer when the details of research have been presented at the project level.

Also, the WAMSI CEO (Dr Blake) is exploring other avenues for investment and funding.
- 8 With a joint venture of 14 partners it is absolutely essential that transparency of operation of the Board and the research approved be at the highest level. WAMSI will be successful if the governments, universities and industry support its research and engage in the path to adoption of the research outcomes.
- 9 WAMSI is unable to commence in an operational sense until all of the agreements have been finalised and signed. Essential to that process is the preparation of the Funding Agreement. I would be most grateful if your staff could ensure that this draft agreement is available at the earliest possible date for consideration by the WAMSI interim Board.

- 10 WAMSI would like to be operational by 1 July and I am looking to the discussions later in the day to ascertain the realities of that. I am pleased that Linda Penny has been able to join us as an observer as her contributions to our discussions about the commencement date will be valuable.
- 11 Minister, again welcome to this meeting. We look forward to building a research program which will deliver outcomes of economic, social and environmental benefit to the State.

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