

**AUSTRALIAN E-RESEARCH INFRASTRUCTURE COUNCIL
AERIC**

**DRAFT RECORD OF MEETING
31 AUGUST 2007**

Attendees

Council

Professor Tom Cochrane (Chair), Dr Rhys Francis (by access grid), Mr Chris Hancock, Ms Cathrine Harboe-Ree, Ms Anne-Marie Lansdown, Mr Alan McMeekin, Professor Robin Stanton, Dr Robert Woodcock, Professor Iain Wallace.

DEST

Ms Clare McLaughlin, Mr Tony Rothnie, Dr Thien Tran.

Presentations

- Mr Nick Tate (University of Queensland), supported by Professor James Dalziel (Macquarie University) on the Australian Access Federation (agenda item 6).

Notes:

- The order of agenda items was changed to better suit the availability of AeRIC members. This record reflects the order in which items were discussed.
- Actions arising from the meeting are collated in Attachment A.

Agenda Items

Agenda Item 1 – Welcome and Introductions

The Chair opened the meeting at 9.05 am, welcoming Council members, particularly Professor Iain Wallace who was attending his first AeRIC meeting. The Chair noted that other members had been provided with an opportunity to make a short statement and invited Professor Wallace to do so. Professor Wallace responded noting his interests in the Australian Partnership for Advanced Computing, as well as the Victorian Partnership for Advanced Computing and its involvement in the Interoperation and Collaboration (ICI) component of the Platforms for Collaboration (PFC) capability.

Agenda Item 2 – Actions Arising from July meeting

The Chair gave an overview of the Actions Arising from the July meeting. The Council noted that all had been addressed.

Agenda Item 3 – Statement of Interest

The Chair invited DEST to talk to this agenda item.

DEST noted that the interests identified by members had been collated into a table at Attachment B of the agenda paper, and that levels of materiality were proposed in that table. No interests were rated above a category 2¹.

Council agreed the proposed levels of materiality, noting that the levels might change and that Council members should take the initiative in such situations to manage their interests in a way that ensured that no contentious situations arose.

Agenda Item 4 – Executive Director's report

The Chair provided an overview of the responsibilities of the Council regarding oversight of all the components of the PfC capability. He then asked Dr Francis to talk about developments in the National Computational Infrastructure (NCI) and ICI components as they would not be covered by separate agenda items during the meeting.

Dr Francis gave a brief summary of activities and advised the Council that the NCI component was progressing well. He then invited Professor Robin Stanton to comment. Professor Stanton supported Dr Francis's comments regarding progress, and also noted the importance of co-investment for future developments. He outlined a range of activities and discussions regarding the ongoing implementation and development of the NCI component, notably in relation to tier 1 computing around Australia.

In discussing the nature of future involvement, the Council noted that the general intention was that NCI should be more open to co-investment than previous arrangements under APAC.

Dr Francis then gave an update on the ICI component, noting that its arrangements were complex as the ICI partners were moving to a Joint Venture agreement. He noted that the current draft of the Joint Venture was likely to be broadly acceptable, although there may need to be further discussions on some aspects of the proposed arrangements. He also noted that the ICI implementation plan was under development, and it was possible that task allocation across the Joint Venture may be an issue for some participants.

Dr Francis then invited Professor Wallace and Mr McMeekin to comment. Professor Wallace supported Dr Francis's overview. Mr McMeekin raised the issue of ICI engaging with other service providers. Dr Francis responded noting the importance of the draft business plan for 2008-09 due with DEST in March 2008

Council agreed that both the NCI and ICI components would be major agenda items in coming AeRIC meetings.

Agenda Item 5 – National e-Research Architecture Taskforce (NeAT)

The Council was presented with a supplementary agenda paper proposing the membership for NeAT.

Dr Francis noted that a preliminary meeting of potential NeAT members had taken place on Wednesday, 29 August 2007. He advised the Council that the meeting was positive and, while attendees were a little daunted by the role of NeAT, they had affirmed their willingness to

¹ The AeRIC Guidelines on Conflict of Interest describe a category 2 conflict as "Those conflicts of interest which, although not minor in nature, are not so material that it should deprive AeRIC of the member's expertise and knowledge during the consideration of the issue or matter at hand".

participate. One area that was identified for further exploration was whether NeAT had the necessary skills and attributes to address emerging social networking technologies.

Dr Francis also noted that NeAT should be reviewed after one year to ensure it remained relevant.

AeRIC agreed to the proposed membership of NeAT, and noted that some activities may need to be undertaken to explore issues relating to new technologies.

Agenda Item 6 – Australian Access Federation (AAF)

The Chair gave a brief overview of the AAF and then introduced Mr Nick Tate and Professor James Dalziel, who were joining the meeting by access grid. Mr Tate then gave an issues-focussed presentation on the AAF and its future directions.

Following the presentation, the Council discussed with Mr Tate and Professor Dalziel:

- the need to address both technical and trust issues, and the way specific issues were differentiated across types of institutions;
- the need for institutions to change internally when implementing the AAF;
- the importance of outreach activities; and
- high level governance and management.

After Mr Tate and Professor Dalziel had left the meeting, the Council continued to discuss this important initiative. Council agreed that a further face-to-face discussion would be beneficial.

Action

1. DEST to prepare a one page note which encapsulated AeRIC's discussion on the AAF.
2. Interested Council members to meet with AAF representatives².
3. AeRIC would request the AAF to focus more on the operating/governance model.
4. AeRIC would suggest the AAF work more with NCRIS.

Agenda Item 7 – Australian National Data Service (ANDS)

The Chair opened this item and asked DEST to provide a detailed update.

DEST noted that a Discussion Paper was being prepared by the ANDS Technical Working Group (TWG), the next iteration of which was to be discussed at a TWG meeting on 6 September 2007. A short period of refinement would follow with the document then going into wider circulation. A suggestion was made that this include it being made available on the Internet to encourage engagement by the wider community.

Dr Francis commented that the proposed thrust of ANDS would be on linking between institutional repositories and supporting research communities to manage federated data.

Council discussion focussed on the interaction between the likely goals of ANDS, developments in institutional practices and norms and the dynamic way data was shared within research teams.

Council agreed that ANDS should be a significant item at a future meeting.

² Interested AeRIC members are invited to advise the Secretariat, which will arrange the meeting.

Agenda Item 9 – Developments at the leading-edge of e-Research

The Chair asked Dr Francis to open discussion on this item. Dr Francis commented that at the NeAT preliminary meeting³ the matter of the 'architectural blueprint' of e-Research tools and services had been raised. Of particular interest was the level of detail that might be expected.

The Council discussed what might be required of the 'architectural blueprint', and concluded that what was needed would have to be fit for purpose, that is sufficient description to support the assessment of investments that should be made across the PfC capability.

Dr Francis noted that a outline should be available for the next AeRIC meeting and that a discussion around its suitability would be beneficial.

Action

5. Dr Francis to provide a review of the NeAT progress towards a blueprint at the next meeting.

Agenda item 10 - Other business

The Chair asked DEST to speak to the proposed item on Systemic Infrastructure Initiative (SII) funding.

DEST noted that it expected a number of SII projects to seek extensions of their projects. The Council agreed to a DEST suggestion that AeRIC provide advice on those extensions to ensure these projects aligned with PfC activities to the maximum extent possible.

The Chair then asked DEST to advise the Council if there were any updates on the Higher Education Endowment Fund (HEEF). DEST advised that:

- a further \$1 bn would be provided for HEEF by the Government, taking the total to \$6 bn; and
- eligibility for HEEF was likely to be for Table A and Table B providers under HESA.

Agenda Item 11 – Next meeting

It was agreed that the next meeting of AeRIC would be held in the afternoon of 10 October 2007, in conjunction with the APAC07 conference.

It was also agreed that the meeting would examine the ICI component in some detail, as both the Implementation Plan and the draft Joint Venture Agreement should be available for consideration by that time, and the key players in ICI should be at APAC07 and could make a presentation to AeRIC. Other matters would be included on the agenda only if time permitted.

Agenda Item 8 – Australian Research and Education Network (AREN)

The Chair asked DEST to speak to its AREN initiative.

³ See also agenda item 5

DEST outlined its initiative to form a group to look at the impediments to expanding the AREN as outlined in the agenda paper and noted that positive preliminary discussions had been held with AARNet. It was noted that the immediate driver was DEST's desire to ensure connectivity was available for all NCRIS-supported infrastructure, but that the outcome being sought was a principles-based solution that was scaleable. Such a solution would allow for the easy connection of the range of research and education institutions in the future. DEST noted that it expected this to be a very complex task that could, potentially, lead to significant change. The group being formed by DEST to undertake the review would be expected to examine and make recommendations on all relevant matters.

DEST noted it was very interested in the views of AeRIC, but that final outcomes would be negotiated directly.

Council discussion indicated that the review would be welcomed and the need for the review to go into detail. Suggestions were also made on how to improve the draft outline of the review provided by DEST in the agenda papers.

The Council supported the review.

Action

6. DEST to revise its paper on the review to reflect changes agreed in the discussion and circulate to AeRIC members.

Close

The meeting closed at 1.30 pm.

ACTIONS ARISING

1. DEST to prepare a one page note which encapsulated its discussion on the AAF.
2. Interested Council members to meet with AAF representatives.
3. Dr Francis to provide a review of the NeAT progress towards a blueprint at the next meeting.
4. DEST to revise its paper on the review to reflect changes agreed in the discussion and circulate to AeRIC members.