

AUSTRALIAN E-RESEARCH INFRASTRUCTURE COUNCIL (AeRIC)

AeRIC MEETING – 10 OCTOBER 2007

AGENDA ITEM 2: ACTIONS ARISING FROM AUGUST MEETING AND CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Purpose

To address the Actions Arising from the 31 August 2007 AeRIC meeting and to allow Council members to declare any conflicts of interest.

Issues

At the August meeting the Council agreed to include an agenda item at each AeRIC meeting to provide an opportunity for Council members to declare any conflicts of interest.

The other Actions Arising from the August AeRIC meeting, and subsequent actions are:

1. DEST to prepare a one page note which encapsulated its discussion on the AAF.
 - A short brief has been prepared and was distributed to AeRIC members on 3 October 2007.
2. Interested Council members to meet with AAF representatives.
 - The AeRIC Chair will send a request for a meeting to the AAF Steering Committee, on behalf of interested AeRIC members, and will forward the brief summarising AeRIC's comments on the AAF.
3. Dr Francis to provide a review of the NeAT progress towards a blueprint at the next meeting.
 - An update on progress to date achieved in the NeAT component is provided in the Executive Director's Report and will be presented at the meeting.
4. DEST to revise its paper on the (AREN) review to reflect changes agreed in the discussion and circulate to AeRIC members.
 - A revised version of the paper was circulated to AeRIC on 3 October 2007.

Action

- That council note any new interests advised by members.
- That AeRIC note the Actions Arising from its August meeting have been addressed.

AeRIC Secretariat

October 2007

**AUSTRALIAN E-RESEARCH INFRASTRUCTURE COUNCIL
AERIC**

**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.

ATTACHMENT A

ACTIONS ARISING

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

AUSTRALIAN eRESEARCH INFRASTRUCTURE COUNCIL (AeRIC)

AeRIC MEETING – 10 October 2007

AGENDA ITEM 3: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Purpose

To provide the Council with an overview of activities to progress the following components of the Platforms for Collaboration capability:

- Interoperation and Collaboration Infrastructure;
- National Computational Infrastructure;
- Australian National Data Service;
- National eResearch Architecture Taskforce (NEAT);
- Australian Access Federation (AAF); and
- National Collaborative Network (NCN)

Issues

Dr Francis will provide a verbal update on recent activities within these components of the PfC capability.

Interoperation and Collaboration Infrastructure (ICI)

The NCRIS funding agreement between DEST and VPAC requires that a joint venture agreement between the project participants be provided for acceptance by DEST. This is expected to define the operating principles and governance arrangements for the collaboration.

The ICI participants have agreed to provide services in addition to those funded by NCRIS through this collaboration, the public face of which will be known as the Australian Research Collaboration Service (ARCS). An ARCS Collaboration Agreement encompassing ICI services as a component is nearing completion and should be provided to DEST by 30 October 2007. A current draft of the Agreement is provided at Attachment A.

An Implementation Plan was submitted to DEST at the end of September to detail the business plan for the project up to June 2008. From 2008, a cycle of annual business plans and progress reports will commence.

The AeRIC meeting agenda features several items on ARCS, in particular the ICI Implementation Plan and the draft Collaboration Agreement. Professor Anthony Williams and Dr Paul Coddington will be presenting to AeRIC on behalf of ARCS.

National Computational Infrastructure (NCI)

The NCI Implementation Plan was submitted to DEST at the end of September. This is in effect the business plan of the NCI for the period 1 October 2007 to 30 June 2008. The development and agreements for NCI partner arrangements is in progress and is expected to be included in the first business plan due March 2008. Following DEST's review, and with input from AeRIC, the appropriate level of funds will be advanced as specified in the funding agreement.

The NCI Interim Implementation Plan is at Attachment C.

Australian National Data Service (ANDS)

The Technical Working Group established by the broader ANDS reference group agreed to the distribution of an exposure draft of the ANDS discussion paper on 12 September 2007. Feedback was highly supportive of the direction of the document. The deliverables required of ANDS and the characteristics of its operation are considered well defined and broadly agreed.

The Working Group will meet again on 15 October and intends to progress the document for AeRIC consideration in the weeks following the meeting.

More formal negotiations have commenced with obvious participants so that a proposed investment plan for the ANDS component of PfC should be completed over the next two months. An outline of the proposed arrangements is at Attachment D.

NEAT

Following AeRIC's approval of the National eResearch Architecture Taskforce (NEAT) operational framework and membership in August, NeAT met twice in September to scope the activity and commence identifying potential developments.

NeAT will situate each project within a selected NCRIS capability or national research community to ensure value is delivered early and more pragmatic designs are pursued. Project definitions are expected by the end of December for inclusion as work packages within the March 2008 business plans primarily in the ICI and ANDS components.

It is envisaged that some work will be completed by Paul Coddington (SAPAC) on assessing the NEAT, and Platforms for Collaboration in general, requirements across NCRIS capabilities.

Australian Access Federation (AAF)

The AAF Steering Committee meeting met on 4 October 2007 to discuss the AAF Communication Plan and options for governance and operational entities.

A promotional animation on federated access management was released on 14 September and has been widely distributed to targeted institutions and organisations.

Arrangements are being made to secure an agenda item on the AAF at the meeting of the Higher Education Services Board in mid-October and at the forthcoming DVCs(R) meeting of Universities Australia in November 2007. Arrangements are also being made for interested AeRIC members to meet with the AAF project leaders to discuss issues of concerns to AeRIC.

National Collaboration Network (NCN)

CSIRO and AARNet are currently developing a joint proposal with a view of seeking funding from NCRIS through Platforms for Collaboration.

The National Collaboration Network (NCN) aims to provide to researchers a set of new CSIRO-developed tools and network services to improve real-time on-line collaboration. Essential to the deployment of these tools and services is a high bandwidth network and associated expertise, and AARNet is the natural network partner in deploying these tools. The proposed users are NCRIS capability users and any research or education groups who wish to use these tools.

The NCN will not be a parallel research network to the Australian Research and Education Network (AREN) but an initiative to enhance eResearch using AARNet infrastructure. The proposal advocates the development of the AREN to enable any or all of the organisations

involved in the NCRIS Capabilities to easily establish a common interest high-speed network, layered over the AREN. It is proposed that it would be possible to set up such special-purpose networks as needed, and these could be flexibly extended or contracted, or set up on a semi-permanent basis.

AARNet and CSIRO are continuing to evolve the proposal, and address issues such as access to and pricing of these new technologies and the degree to which organisations have a potential or existing need for these services. While three million dollars was originally sought for this project it is expected that this figure will be revised as further work is carried out on financial projections.

Once finalised, the proposal will be submitted to AeRIC, however those issues being explored by the AREN Advisory Group should be considered in conjunction with the discussion.

Please refer to separate PDF documents for the following attachments:

- a) DRAFT ARCS Collaboration Agreement
- b) ICI Implementation Plan
- c) NCI Interim Implementation Plan (and notes page)
- d) Outline of ANDS Arrangements

Action

That AeRIC:

1. note the activities update on the components of PfC; and
2. advise when it would like a detailed presentation on further elements.

AeRIC Secretariat
October 2007