

AUSTRALIAN E-RESEARCH INFRASTRUCTURE COUNCIL (AeRIC)

AeRIC MEETING – 20 November 2007

AGENDA ITEM 7: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Purpose

- To update AeRIC on a number of matters not covered elsewhere in this agenda.

Issues

National Computational Infrastructure (NCI)

ANU will be submitting a final Implementation Plan to DEST. This Plan will be referred to the Council for consideration at its first meeting in 2008. ANU is prepared to make a presentation of the Plan at the Council's meeting, if required.

Progress to date includes:

- Dr Mike Sargent, NCRIS Chair, has started a series of meetings with the heads of potential NCI partners such as the Bureau of Meteorology, GeoScience Australia and CSIRO. The intention is to discuss with these organisations the benefits of joining and investing in NCI;
- ANU has negotiated with CSIRO and obtained a commitment for co-funding, but CSIRO still needs to firm up the level of co-investment;
- ANU has undertaken to move towards finalising the membership of the NCI Steering Committee and the appointment of the NCI Executive Director; and
- ANU's call for applications under the Merit Allocation Scheme targeting existing APAC National Facility users closed on 2 November with the outcome of assessments for 2008 allocations expected in December.

National Collaboration Network

At the last AeRIC meeting, the Council agreed that the discussion of the development of the NCN proposal be deferred until the November meeting.

However, since that time CSIRO has advised that their negotiations with AARNET have broken down and as a consequence CSIRO has suspended its offer and a final joint proposal will not be put to AeRIC.

AARNET has indicated that it is likely that a proposal for an AARNET NCN will still be forthcoming early in the new year.

Recent developments in NSW

ARCS

In the lead up to the finalisation of the ARCS Collaboration Agreement, concerns were raised with DEST about the proposed NSW signatory, ac3, and its ability to be a regional service provider in the evolving ARCS Collaboration. DEST and the AeRIC Executive Director decided to follow-up on previous discussions with the NSW Government and NSW research interests to determine the preferred eResearch service provider.

A proposal for an eResearch Institute for NSW (to be named the "Institute for Trans-disciplinary eResearch Services & Technology - "Intersect") was put forward in late October by the Securities Industry Research Centre of Asia-Pacific (SIRCA), in consultation with the University of Sydney and the University of New South Wales.

On 12 November, the AeRIC Executive Director met with the NSW Government (the Office for Science and Medical Research) and representatives from Macquarie University, the University of Technology Sydney, the University of New South Wales and the University of Sydney. The group agreed that services beyond the current offerings of ac3 were required in the state and they offered their general support for the INTERSECT proposal. The NSW Government indicated that it will provide financial support for INTERSECT and implementation should commence by March 2008 to enable coordination with its funding timelines.

The proposal is currently at a conceptual stage and does not itself offer a full set of eResearch services, in particular, provision of physical infrastructure. On this basis, DEST and ARCS decided that ac3 should participate in ARCS, and ac3 signed the joint venture agreement in November. INTERSECT is likely to incorporate involvement from ac3 which would provide high performance computing and data services.

An entity such as INTERSECT might provide a range of eResearch services and it would be well placed to attract co-investment, including from ARCS and ANDS.

AAF

At the NSW meeting, Professor James Dalziel (AAF Steering Committee member, Macquarie University) presented to the group on the AAF. He noted that while three institutions in NSW had commenced engagement with the AAF, there is still a long way to come, particularly for the remaining universities with limited engagement to date.

He asked those present to encourage their IT Directors to work with him to address AAF technical issues and he also asked them to consider the major research resources that could be widely shared across the AAF.

NCRIS Capabilities Round Table

With the consolidation of the investments in the various NCRIS capabilities, DEST has arranged an NCRIS Capabilities Round Table to be held in Canberra on 21 November. The aim is to provide a forum where NCRIS capability representatives can share information on the progress in implementing their NCRIS investments. Dr Francis will also provide a presentation on Platforms for Collaboration. The draft agenda for the Round Table is attached.

Action

- Members note the report

AeRIC Secretariat
November 2007

NCRIS CAPABILITIES ROUND TABLE

21 NOVEMBER 2007

**BRASSEY HOTEL, CNR BELMORE GARDENS AND MACQUARIE STREET
BARTON, ACT**

DRAFT AGENDA

- 9.00 Welcome
- 9.05 Overview of NCRIS and its policy environment
- 9.15 Platforms for Collaboration – brief introduction by Dr Rhys Francis
- 9.30 Brief presentation by each capability (<10 mins) – addressing major issues and challenges to date and what they would like to get from the day
- 10.30 Morning Tea
- 10.50 Presentations (continued)
- 11.30 Annual Business Plan Development (open discussion facilitated by DEST):
 - Access and pricing
 - KPIs
 - Governance
 - Reporting
 - Support from DEST
 - Other?
- 12.45 Lunch
- 2.00 Issues discussion (continued)
- 3.00 Information Updates from DEST:
 - NCRIS Committee (who they are, role, capability mentors)
 - NCRIS Communications Strategy (including possible showcase event)
 - Evaluation Plan, Monitoring (brief overview)
- 3.40 Higher Education Endowment Fund (where it's up to, relationship with NCRIS)
- 4.00 Wrap up
 - Follow up actions
 - Any other business
 - Do we want to do this again next year?
- 4.30 Close

PROVISIONAL ATTENDEES

Rhys Francis

Gary Meyers

Trevor Powell

Jo Neilson

Richard Garrett

Tony Williams

Paul Coddington

Scott McTaggart

Mark Morelli

Andrew Gilbert

Lisa Germany

Mark McAuley

Robert Finder

Stewart Hay

Jenny Morawska

Simon Ringer (TBC)

Miles Apperley (TBC)

John La Salle

Jack Malecki

Rosie Hicks

Andrew Dzurak

Bob Furbank

Steve Winslade

Adrienne McKenzie