

Communique

Atlas of Living Australia Advisory Board

Meeting #12, July 2021

Introduction

The 12th meeting of the Atlas of Living Australia (ALA) Advisory Board was held on 29th July 2021.

Participants included David Cantrill, Hamish Holewa, Melodie McGeoch, Matt Miles, Toni Moate, Brant Smith, Stephen Van Leeuwin and Andre Zerger.

Meeting #12 also welcomed Professor Stephen van Leeuwin to his first meeting. Stephen is the BHP Curtin University Indigenous Chair, Biodiversity and Environment and we are excited to have engaged Stephen given his role leading a number of programs of importance to the ALA. It's also wonderful to have Western Australia represented on our board.

ALA Director's Report

The Director provided an update on major strategic activities, partnerships, progress, and risks/issues since the last meeting of the ALA Advisory Board. Of particular note this includes:

- Delivery of our Core Infrastructure Upgrade project aligning our infrastructure architecture with that adopted by the Global Biodiversity Information Facility. As well as modernising ALA data pipelines to accommodate larger and more frequent data uploads, this upgrade will future-proof the international Living Atlases program.
- Finalisation of an agreement with the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment's Office of the Threatened Species Commissioner to manage a multi-regional citizen science partnership.
- The ALA also renewed a partnership with the Office of the Chief Environmental Biosecurity Officer to continue operational support for a biosecurity species alerting functionality utilising ALA data and services
- The ALA accepted all recommendations from its recent specialist CSIRO cyber-security review with implementation underway.

The team experienced significant growth in recent months with the appointment of two data analyst to the Science and Decision Support teams (Dax Kellie and Jess Finker).

Jess will contribute her skills to our partnership with the EcoCommons program. We were also fortunate to engage Cam Slatyer as the project manager for the Sensitive Species Data Pathways project and all three will be based with our Canberra team.

National Research Infrastructure Roadmap Engagement

The ALA National Research Infrastructure Roadmap Strategy and Engagement agenda item stimulated a broad ranging and rich discussion including the need for a vivid decadal vision to guide ALA investments, partnerships and business models.

The Board reaffirmed that ALA's unique core biodiversity data functions and capabilities are at the heart of its value proposition. However, they recognised that ALA must be responsive to emerging demands to remain relevant, noting the increasing requirement for insights into biodiversity outcomes from a whole-of-landscape (systems) perspective. The Board confirmed that ALA would develop a clear statement of its core value proposition (noting ALA's foundation in the collections, museums and herbaria sector) and a vision for targeted extension of its infrastructure, data, product and service offerings.

The Board explored a scenario and horizon scanning approach to planning, to identify triggers that would require ALA to provide surge capacity and the flexibility to respond to sudden increases in demand for services, and evolving priorities from its user-base.

Farewelling Prof. Melodie McGeoch

The Chair noted that it would be the last Board meeting for Prof Melodie McGeoch and thanked her for her valued contribution to the ALA. Melodie has brought an important ecological modelling and biosecurity focus to the operation of the ALA and we'll be looking to continue this important focus with our new appointment which we hope to announce shortly.

Dr Diana Day
Chair, Atlas of Living Australia Advisory Board
August 2021