

COMMUNIQUÉ

MARINE NATIONAL FACILITY STEERING COMMITTEE

Meeting #87 and #88

MNF Steering Committee meeting #87

The 87th MNF Steering Committee (SC) meeting was held on 27 September 2019. The meeting welcomed the incoming Chair, Dr Sue Barrell, and considered actions to address key recommendations arising from the *Review of the MNF Access Framework* undertaken by Dr Bruce Mapstone.

Welcome Dr Sue Barrell

Dr Sue Barrell was welcomed as new Chair of the SC, succeeding Dr Ian Poiner.

Following a long career at the Bureau of Meteorology (BoM) - Australia's national weather, climate and water agency - Sue retired in August 2018 from her final role as BoM Chief Scientist. Sue's experience spans roles across many of the BoM's operations, from forecasting to research, science and climate change policy, and Senior Executive.

Sue has a BSc (Hons) in Physics and a PhD in Astronomy. In July 2017, Sue was recognised as a Science and Technology Australia Inaugural Superstar of STEM and is a committed advocate for empowering women to take up science careers.

Sue is passionate about the application of science to delivering highly valued outcomes for Australians.

The SC look forward to working with Sue to deliver tangible benefits to Australia's marine estate stakeholders through optimising full year use of Australia's only blue-water research vessel.

Response to the MNF Access Framework Review

The SC commissioned an independent review of the Facility's Access Framework in December 2018 in the context of the changed level of operation following the announcement of additional funding. Terms of reference for the Review can be viewed [here](#).

The Review was undertaken by Dr Bruce Mapstone, involved extensive consultation with researchers, government and other stakeholders and was completed in May 2019.

The MNF and MNF SC are working to finalising a response, which will be implemented through 2020.

MNF Steering Committee meeting #88

The 88th MNF Steering Committee (SC) meeting was held on 9 December 2019. The meeting endorsed the proposed voyage schedule for 2021-22 and further considered implementation of the Review outcomes including a 10 year strategic plan for the MNF.

Timeline for 2022-23 voyage application call

To allow for time to implement and communicate changes introduced in response to the Review of the Access Framework, the next round of applications - for 2022-23 - will be called around the middle of the year, a few weeks later than usual.

The timeline for the next primary application call will be released on the MNF website in March 2020.



2021-22 Primary Voyage Schedule

In November 2019, the Research Advisory Committee and National Benefit Advisory Committee met to consider assessments of the applications for sea time during 2021-22.

In December, the assessment process culminated in the SC endorsing a primary voyage schedule for 2021-22, which will be available on the MNF website early in 2020.

Useful tips for future applicants:

- Focus on key goals and aims – articulate them well and keep your proposal coherent. Do not be tempted to expand the project beyond its scope by including opportunistic, unrelated add-ons. If important, these additional activities can be noted in your application as potential supplementary or piggyback projects, but they should not form part of the case for a primary voyage.
- When resubmitting a proposal, ensure that the new application addresses the feedback from the initial submission.
- Applicants are encouraged to start the planning process by meeting with the intended beneficiaries of the project to seek their input to project development. Applications that demonstrate strong relationships with end users will be viewed more favourably.
- The application should clearly demonstrate the path to impact. In detailing who or which organisation will use the outcomes, the application should detail contact with that entity and describe the impact they expect to achieve.
- Letters of support should demonstrate a commitment to using the outputs of the project, not simply support the project in principle. Ideally these letters will be from all those entities listed as the end users.
- Consult with your project supporters and collaborators: if your project relies on other researchers or institutions—for example for necessary inputs or for storing samples post-voyage—you should have their agreement before you proceed.

Safety First!

While procedures onboard RV *Investigator* are safety-focussed, the SC is also keen to ensure safety remains a high priority in all we do.

To that end, each SC meeting now opens with a *Safety Share*. Several interesting and helpful stories have emerged from the members during these discussions.

MNF 2030

The SC endorsed an exposure draft of *MNF 2030*, a strategy document informed by recommendations from the independent MNF Access Framework Review.

Under *MNF 2030*, the MNF will take a more active role in facilitating delivery of impact through the utilisation of its science capabilities. The strategy introduces changes in the way researchers can access time on RV *Investigator* and to the annual scheduling of activities. The strategy also describes the directions the MNF will take in the pursuit of operational excellence and capability improvements. MNF will meet with stakeholders during 2020 to discuss and finalise the strategy.

Completion of HSE Audit

The SC congratulated the MNF on successful completion of an HSE Audit.

The Audit Report commended the level of commitment to safety across MNF and the Audit provided useful feedback to assist further integration of operating procedures between ASP, MNF and voyage participants. MNF will be implementing a “one-safe initiative” as part of the process to respond to the Audit’s recommendations.

2018-19 Annual Report

The 2018-19 MNF Annual Report has been published to the MNF website and can be accessed here:

<https://mnf.csiro.au/en/About/Annual-report>

Dr Sue Barrell

Chair, MNF Steering Committee