

## Chair's Communique

### Atlas of Living Australia Advisory Board

MEETING #14, April 2022, Hobart

*The 14th meeting of the Atlas of Living Australia (ALA) Advisory Board was held on 6 April 2022. Participants included David Cantrill, Ian Cresswell, Aaron Dodd, Danielle Donegan, Cathryn Geiger, Hamish Holewa, Matt Miles, Toni Moate & Andre Zerger.*

#### Board

We were pleased to welcome Cathryn Geiger (Chief Data and Analytics Officer, Data and Analytics Office) as the new board member representing the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment. We also welcomed Danielle Donegan from the Department of Education, Skills and Employment's NCRIS program who joined us for Meeting #14.

#### Stakeholder dinner

Meeting #14 gave us the opportunity to host our first stakeholder dinner since COVID precluded meetings in person. Guests represented stakeholders from CSIRO, EcoTourism Australia, Tasmanian Environment Protection Authority, Integrated Marine Observing System, Tasmanian Land Conservancy, Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, and the Tasmania Fire Service. It was a great networking opportunity and we are grateful to everyone who joined us.

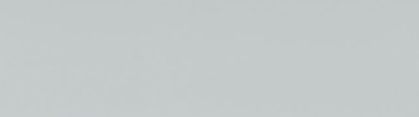
#### Director's update

The ALA Director provided an update on major strategic activities, partnerships and progress since the last meeting in October 2022. Of particular note:

- The announcement of the inaugural [ALA Australian Biodiversity Data Mobilisation](#)

[Program](#) and significant interest across the sector.

- Commencement of ALA's Extended Data project to ensure strategic alignment with similar work underway by the Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF).
- Commencement of a project in partnership with the [Australian Research Data Commons Bushfire Data Challenges](#) program to create a high-quality species occurrence data asset to assess fire impacts, and support bushfire recovery science.
- The extension of ALA NCRIS partnerships through a partnership with the Australian Urban Research Information Network (AURIN) related to urban biodiversity and citizen science. The inaugural Built Environments Biodiversity Project grant will fund the **Valuing Urban Wetlands** project to be led by [Dr Birgita Hansen](#), of Federation University, Ballarat, Victoria.
- An overview of ALA [research impact](#) ranging from population analysis and modelling, simulating biocontrol potential for the European wasp, and forecasting range shifts of fish, orchids, grasses and rainforests in response to climate change.



## Industry Consultation

Cameron Slatyer presented on findings and recommendations from ALA's March 2022 consultation with industry users, with a specific focus on the environmental consulting sector given the key role the ALA plays in supporting their business. Results highlighted the importance of improving awareness of ALA capability, the possibility of offering bespoke training to the sector, and streamlining the provision of data from this sector to the ALA. The Board endorsed the report's recommendations and look forward to further progress in this space through the coming year.

## Biosecurity Sector Engagement

As Australia's biodiversity data infrastructure, the Board noted that ALA can be an indispensable contributor to the environmental biosecurity challenges facing Australia. This was also identified as a priority in ALA's 2019 National Consultation, and a need identified in successive National Research Infrastructure (NRI) roadmaps. Dr Erin Roger presented on a draft biosecurity sector plan, which focuses on expanding ALA capability and partnerships to deliver improved data services to research and decision making. The Board stressed the criticality of considered stakeholder engagement, and a clearly defined role for the ALA given the breadth and complexity of the sector. The

Board noted the urgent need for national data services for pest species as this remains a national gap, and the role of ALA to best deliver impact in this national priority.

## ALA Decadal Vision and NRI Roadmap

A finalised ALA decadal vision was presented to the Board and endorsed for release. The Board explored the vision in the context of the NRI Roadmap, and a recent gap analysis process undertaken by the NCRIS program. The Board were briefed on the ALA's priorities for an anticipated strategic planning process to be undertaken later in 2022 by the Department of Education, Skills and Employment.

## In conclusion

It was a pleasure to host my first in-person board meeting in my home town of Hobart. Meeting with our stakeholders in-person is something we've all missed. The Board and I were also treated to a fabulous tour of CSIRO's [Australian National Fish Collection](#) which provided a timely reminder of the importance of Australia's biological collections and the fundamental role they play in improving scientific understanding for management.

The Board and I look forward to our next meeting in July 2022 in Brisbane.

**Dr Ian Cresswell**  
**Chair, Atlas of Living Australia**  
**Advisory Board**  
**April, 2022**