



Australian Ocean Data Network

'Publicly funded data, publicly available'

Newsletter #1, July 2010

Welcome to the Australian Ocean Data Network (AODN). This is the first newsletter issued by the AODN Development Office, located at the University of Tasmania. We aim to produce this newsletter every 3 months to keep you informed on updates and progress in establishing the AODN.

What is the AODN?

The vision of the AODN was articulated in 2005 by the Australian Ocean Data Centre Joint Facility (AODCJF), a joint venture between the six Commonwealth Agencies¹ with primary responsibility for marine data. This was *"to put in place, by June 2011, an interoperable, online network of marine and coastal data resources, including data from the six AODCJF partner agencies, supported by standards-based metadata, which will serve data to support Australia's science, education, environmental management and policy needs: Australia's digital ocean commons."*

What is the AODN Development Office?

The AODN Development Office is co-located with the Integrated Marine Observing System (IMOS) eMarine Information Infrastructure Facility (eMII). The AODN Office has been established with funds from the Department of Innovation, Industry, Science and Research (DIISR) and the Australian National Data Service (ANDS). The AODN Office was formally established on the 1 July 2010, and has a Director - Roger Proctor, a Manager - Patrick Gorringer (both working part-time on AODN) and five full-time staff – Wiebke Ebeling, Pauline Mak, Alicja Mosbauer, Andrew Walsh and, currently, one vacancy. The objectives of the AODN Development Office are two-fold:

- 1) to populate the AODN with publicly funded data and to make this accessible to as wide a community as possible;
- 2) to encourage, and develop, the culture of data sharing across the marine science community of Australia.

Who are these people and what do they do?

The AODN Office has a wide range of skills, including science expertise, software and systems development, and data management.

- Roger Proctor is the Director of the IMOS facility-eMII; he has held this position for the last two years, prior to this he was a senior research scientist at the National Oceanography Centre in Liverpool, UK.

¹ Partners of AODCJF are: Australian Antarctic Division (AAD), Australian Institute of Marine Science (AIMS), Bureau of Meteorology (BOM), Commonwealth Science and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) Marine and Atmospheric Research (CMAR), Geoscience Australia (GA) and Department of Defence (RAN Directorate of Oceanography and Meteorology)

- Patrick Gorringer joined IMOS in January 2010 as Deputy Director of eMII from the Swedish Meteorological and Hydrological Institute where he was Project Officer for EuroGoos, the European component of the Global Ocean Observing System.
- Wiebke Ebeling, originally from Germany, has just completed a PhD at the Australian National University in Canberra researching optical characteristics of Australian marsupials.
- Pauline Mak joins the Office from the Tasmanian Partnership for Advanced Computing where she was assistant manager for the Australian Research Collaboration Service Data Services.
- Alijca Mosbauer joins the Office on secondment from Department of Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts where she was Assistant Director of the Marine Conservation Branch and, previously, metadata manager for the Australian Antarctic Division.
- Andrew Walsh is based in the Department of Defence (RAN) in Sydney and has spent the last 10 years working in the marine sector, primarily exposing marine data through information systems.

The main functions of the AODN Office, in line with the objectives, are to facilitate the visibility of and access to marine data through the AODN portal, and to encourage the marine community to publish their data. The AODN portal is being built from the same information infrastructure developed for IMOS; this requires the metadata describing the data to conform to international standards (ISO 19115 to be precise) which enables the integration of metadata from different sources into a catalogue, providing the source for powerful search functions.

The primary role of the AODN Office will be to:

- liaise with individuals and agencies who wish to join the AODN;
- evaluate the effort required to publish metadata records describing their data;
- work with individuals and agencies to create these metadata records, and establish any information systems needed to publish these records. The important element in this process is that, through the metadata, there is a direct link to the underlying data, whether that is directly to data files or to data through web services.

In support of the primary role other tasks the AODN Office will undertake are:

- be the first point of contact - a **helpdesk** has been established to provide support for scientists and managers. The helpdesk can be contacted either by email (info@aodn.org.au) or by phone (03-6226-2904);
- carry out an ongoing development program for the **AODN portal** (<http://portal.aodn.org.au>);
- plan a series of '**roadshows**' to encourage the sharing of marine data, primarily through demonstrations of the value of doing so. How we do this is still under discussion with IMOS and ANDS;
- work with ANDS to ensure that the AODN is exposed to non-marine scientists through the Australian Research Data Commons and, thereby, enabling cross-discipline research.

The AODN Development Office staff roles are as follows:

- Roger has overall responsibility for the AODN Development Office;
- Pat will manage the day-to-day operations of the AODN Development Office;
- Wiebke is an outreach officer with responsibilities for the helpdesk and roadshows;
- Pauline has responsibilities for system integration and is webmaster for the portal;
- Alijca is the e-research data analyst with a special liaison role with ANDS;
- Andrew is the data facilitator, enabling the connection between data provider and the AODN portal.

The great benefit of co-location with IMOS/eMII is the opportunity for additional resources which can be utilised by the AODN Development Office as needed.

What's the progress so far?

- The AODN Office has been established in Hobart at the University of Tasmania;
- the helpdesk has been initiated;
- the AODN metadata catalog is under construction, currently with 2148 records;
- the AODN portal is currently in construction;
- the process to be used for effort evaluation is nearly complete;
- planning is underway for the roadshows.

There are a number of immediate opportunities for publishing datasets which the AODN Office is pursuing

- Primary amongst these are the data of the members of the AODCJF (all have pledged data holdings to the AODN).
- The AODN Office is also developing a plan for a regional view of the AODN in Western Australia. For some time many of the agencies and universities holding marine data in WA have expressed a wish to publish a unified view of data in the region. The AODN sees this as a model for future regional engagement.
- Plans are also in progress for bringing data from the Marine National Facility into the AODN. It is anticipated that the first data, the underway data collected by the research vessels *Southern Surveyor* and *Aurora Australis*, will be visible in the AODN portal in mid-August. This is a project funded directly by ANDS. In the longer term all the legacy data held by the Marine National Facility will be accessible.
- The National Climate Change Adaptation Research Facility (NCCARF) Marine Adaption Network are working with AODN to publish their data (<http://arnmbr.org/content/index.php/site/aboutus/>)

The AODN Office is beginning to promote the AODN. Roger Proctor made a presentation at the recent Australian Marine Sciences Association meeting in Wollongong (5-8 July 2010) titled 'Delivering the Australian Ocean Data Network'. Abstracts discussing the AODN have been submitted to the Coast-to-Coast conference (20-24 September 2010) and the eResearch Australasia conference (8-11 November 2010). The AODN features as 'where next for IMOS?' in recent IMOS Data User Workshops (AMSA, 9 July; UQ Brisbane 19 July; JCU Townsville 20 July) and will feature in future workshops (UWA Perth 26 August). The WA AODN will be discussed at the WAMSI Data Management Workshop, "Turning data into knowledge: marine data management in Western Australia", Perth, 16 September 2010.

Important contacts for the AODN Development Office

Director: Roger Proctor, tel: 03-6226-1977, mob: 04-0015-3449, email: roger.proctor@utas.edu.au

Manager: Patrick Gorringe, tel: 03-6226-8558, email: Patrick.gorringe@utas.edu.au

Helpdesk: 03-6226-2904, email: info@aodn.org.au

AODN portal: <http://portal.aodn.org.au>

Job Opportunity!

The AODN Development Office is looking for a second Outreach Officer to develop and support the helpdesk and the roadshows. If interested please contact Roger or Pat on the contact details above.



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