Dear colleagues,

This is the second in a series of Special Bulletins designed to keep the IMOS community fully informed about the process to allocate ongoing and new funding. Our unifying goal is to successfully implement an extended and expanded IMOS program for the benefit of Australia’s society, economy and environment.

As noted in the August bulletin, it has been decided to evolve the IMOS Node Steering Committee into a national Science and Technology Advisory Committee (STAC). The STAC met at Melbourne Airport on 4-5 September to consider continuation and growth proposals for funding in 2018-22. Overall the meeting went well, and the consensus was that it’s a good direction for IMOS to head in. Once the terms of reference and ongoing membership are finalised, we’ll provide more information via the website.

The draft meeting report is currently being reviewed, with a few key points as follows:

- Continuation of the current IMOS program will require >80% of available funding. This includes capital replacement and indexation.
- There is room for expanding the current program and enhancing it to do new things, in line with the Five Year Plan. Discussion of relative priorities was the main focus of the STAC meeting.
- In some instances, proposals considered by STAC need to be further developed before advice can be finalised. The IMOS Office will work with proponents to revise plans and budgets for reconsideration by STAC in late October/early November.
- The Board will consider 2018-22 funding recommendations on 26 November, and we are well on track to provide a high quality report to the Board based on STAC advice and other relevant inputs.

An exciting development already approved by the Board is the establishment of a New Technology Proving capability in IMOS. Due to uncertainty about NCRIS funding in recent years, it is some time since IMOS has been in a position to invest in bringing new technologies, methods, and approaches into the program. The Board has provisionally approved $0.5M per annum ($2M over four years) to invest in a capability to do this. STAC discussed the criteria for assessment, call for proposals, and evaluation of pilots. The IMOS community will be kept fully informed as the process is designed, developed, and implemented.

We trust this update is clear, but please do not hesitate to contact the IMOS Office if you wish to discuss it further. Special Bulletins will be provided in October and November as we work our way through the major milestones in the IMOS 2018-22 planning process.

Regards, Tim Moltmann (on behalf of the IMOS Office and Board)