

# The Australian Forum for Operational Oceanography (FOO)



Forum for Operational  
Oceanography

## Introduction

In developed countries around the world, Government agencies, R&D providers and marine industries are realising the potential advantages of creating a systematic focus on operational ocean observing, short-range prediction, and delivery of services - covering marine and coastal environments, and physical and biogeochemical properties. This has come to be described as operational oceanography. Recent efforts in the UK to establish a Forum for Operational Oceanography are one good example. As an island nation deriving massive social, economic and environmental benefits from its coasts and oceans, Australia has good reason to be keenly interested in these developments. A team of scientists and managers from across industry, government and academia have therefore come together and formed a steering committee to bring the Australian Forum for Operational Oceanography (FOO) into existence.

The overarching goal of the FOO is to improve the safety and efficiency of marine industries through better decision making. This requires better industry processes and trained staff. It requires better operational oceanographic services from government, and industry. It requires a solid foundation of world class research and development. This is the value chain for operational oceanography in Australia.

## Objectives

The intended objectives of the FOO are:

1. To provide a mechanism for clearer and more coherent articulation of user needs and priorities from across diverse sectors and jurisdictions with common interests in operational oceanography;
2. To facilitate awareness and utilisation of existing operational oceanography systems by the community –focusing on but not limited to those developed in Australia- with the ultimate goal of achieving greater positive impact and implementing a robust feedback loop to guide further improvements to systems and services;
3. To keep the whole cross-sectoral operational oceanography community informed of developments and best practices in the field. One of the main aims of the FOO is to strengthen links with a diverse community of intermediate service providers (metocean consultants, environmental consultants) and to agree and achieve international best practice across the sectors; and
4. To initiate the interactions and partnerships between groups in Australia that are essential to improve both exploitation of capabilities in operational oceanography, and transitioning of systems research to operations. This includes the sharing and alignment of future plans and planned developments in operational oceanography among participants in the forum.

In essence, the FOO represents a mechanism and opportunity for consolidating Australia’s national coordination of efforts for the benefit of all participating parties. The FOO is meant to be a forum for:

- discussions relating to operational oceanography, including requirements of stakeholders, industry and interested parties, and for
- scientific and technical discussions of common interest to practitioners working in relevant areas or drawing on products from operational oceanography service providers.

It is foreseen that specific working groups will be established by the FOO to discuss and progress specific issues in more detail, including but not limited to observations, modelling and services. The FOO will raise and address issues relevant to the national interest. A national forum can consider local and state issues that can be placed in a national context. It is envisaged that the FOO will facilitate a coherent voice into governments, peak industry groups and other relevant bodies in relation to operational oceanography.

### **FOO Steering Committee**

The initial steering committee overarching goal was to bring the FOO into existence, with a specific target of holding the inaugural Australian Forum for Operational Oceanography meeting. This was successfully achieved, with the inaugural meeting ‘FOO 2015’ held in Fremantle, Western Australia on 21-23 July 2015.

One of the agreed next steps following the July meeting was to reform the FOO leadership team. Membership of a nine-person Steering Committee was finalised in October 2015. Particular attention was paid to balancing the group across the ‘four pillars’ of FOO i.e. R&D Providers, Government Services, Service Industries and Marine Industries.

### **FOO Steering Committee membership**

<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Individual</b>	<b>‘Pillar’</b>
Austral Fisheries	Martin Exel	Marine Industry
Australian Institute of Marine Science	Richard Brinkman	R&D
Australian Maritime Safety Authority	Craig Longmuir	Government Agency
Bureau of Meteorology	Peter May	Government Agency/R&D
CSIRO	Andreas Schiller	R&D
Fugro Survey Pty Ltd	Simon Foster	Service Provider
Integrated Marine Observing System/ University of Tasmania	Tim Moltmann* Emma Sommerville Indi Hodgson- Johnston	R&D
Royal Australian Navy	Barbra Parker	Government Agency
RPS MetOcean Pty Ltd	Steve Buchan	Service Provider
Woodside Energy Ltd	Jan Flynn*	Marine Industry

\* Co-chairs

The new committee's major item of business will be to facilitate the formation of a working group or groups to progress the priority areas discussed at the July 2015 Forum. Other items of business will include communication, membership, resourcing, and future events.

The tasks of the steering committee over the next 12-18 months will be to:

- drive the establishment of working groups based on the candidate priority areas identified at FOO 2015;
- prepare communication materials that can be used by steering committee members to create awareness and build engagement with the Forum;
- undertake targeted recruitment to build on the FOO membership base;
- determine and implement the business model FOO will use to become an enduring organisation; and
- plan for the next FOO meeting.

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