



Network of Interdisciplinary and Transdisciplinary Organisations in the Oceania Region (NITRO-Oceania)

NITRO-Oceania 2020 Business Meeting

On-line Monday, August 24, 2020 (Zoom details sent separately)

11-12.30pm Australian west coast
12.30-2pm SA and NT
1-2.30pm Australian east coast, PNG
2-3.30pm Solomon Islands
3-4.30pm NZ and Fiji

AGENDA

Co-chairs: Gabriele Bammer and Ken Taylor

1. Welcome and introductions. Apologies.

List of members: <https://nitro-oceania.net/members/>

2. Brief overview of activities – For noting

Description of activities: <https://nitro-oceania.net/activities/>

Summary provided in attached document: Business case for establishing an interim secretariat

For automatic notification of new activities: “SUBSCRIBE FOR UPDATES” in the right hand column of the website: <https://nitro-oceania.net/>

3. Future plans and funding – establishing an interim secretariat – For discussion

See attached document: Business case for establishing an interim secretariat

PLEASE READ THIS BEFORE THE MEETING

4. Proposal for three new membership categories – For discussion

Current members hold leadership roles in interdisciplinary or transdisciplinary research organisations in the Oceania region and agree with the aims of the Network.

Proposed new categories:

- Honorary members (those who have stepped down from leadership positions in interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary organisations and who continue to support the aims of NITRO-Oceania)
- Aspiring leaders (interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary researchers who are not currently in leadership positions and who support the aims of NITRO-Oceania)
- International members (people who hold leadership positions in interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary organisations outside Oceania and who support the aims of NITRO-Oceania)

5. Nominations for the NITRO-Oceania Executive (2020-2021) – For action

Members of the current executive: see <https://nitro-oceania.net/members/>

Recognising how busy everyone is, we ask Executive Members to:

- Attend monthly (approximately) video calls
- Actively participate in discussions about NITRO-Oceania-related matters
- Where possible, be proactive in furthering the interests and activities of NITRO-Oceania.

We aim for an Executive of between 6 and 10 members and suggest that at least 60% should currently be in leadership positions in Oceania.

6. Opportunities for members – For discussion

There are many ways members can contribute to the activities of NITRO-Oceania, including:

- Recruiting other members
- Developing success stories or impact narratives
- Participating in the activities of one or more working groups (see <https://nitro-oceania.net/activities/working-groups/>)
- Forming a new working group
- Where appropriate, representing NITRO-Oceania in day-to-day activities.

7. Guest Speaker and Discussion

Professor Klement Tockner, President of the Austrian Science Fund, will talk about how he implemented his vision to fund interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary research.

Biography: Klement Tockner is president of the Austrian Science Fund – FWF, full professor for Aquatic Ecology at the Free University Berlin and former director of the Leibniz-Institute of Freshwater Ecology and Inland Fisheries (IGB), Berlin. He received a PhD from the University of Vienna (1993) and a Titular Professorship at ETH (2005). He is an internationally leading freshwater scientist, in particular in the research domains biodiversity, ecosystem science and environmental management. He is Co-Editor of the journal Aquatic Sciences and Subject Editor of the journal Ecosystems. He has published more than 200 scientific papers including 127 ISI papers. In 2009, he edited a comprehensive book on European Rivers (Rivers of Europe, Elsevier). Klement Tockner has successfully managed large inter- and transdisciplinary projects such as the EC-funded project BioFresh (www.freshwaterbiodiversity.eu). He is member of several scientific committees and advisory boards and elected member of the Austrian Academy of Sciences and the German Academy of Sciences, Leopoldina.

Austrian Science Fund (Fonds zur Förderung der wissenschaftlichen Forschung):

<https://www.fwf.ac.at/en/>

Two annual rounds of funding for interdisciplinary research have been completed

(<https://www.fwf.ac.at/en/research-funding/fwf-programmes/young-independent-researcher-groups/>) and a first round of funding for transdisciplinary research is now in progress

(<https://www.fwf.ac.at/en/research-funding/fwf-programmes/connectingminds/>).



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Business Case for Establishing an Interim Secretariat

Why Do We Need NITRO-Oceania?

The rapidly escalating challenges and ‘wicked’ problems facing humanity require interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary research that bring together knowledge from all relevant disciplines, as well as from stakeholders affected by the problem of concern and those in a position to act on it. Calls for such research have been regularly reiterated by influential bodies, starting in 2004 with the US National Academy of Sciences, National Academy of Engineering and Institute of Medicine (<https://www.nap.edu/catalog/11153/facilitating-interdisciplinary-research>) and, most recently, the OECD Committee for Scientific and Technological Policy (https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/science-and-technology/addressing-societal-challenges-using-transdisciplinary-research_Oca0ca45-en). There is, however, growing concern that, in the current global economic downturn, universities, research institutes and governments are falling back on siloed disciplinary approaches.

We therefore need peak bodies that represent interdisciplinarity and transdisciplinarity at research policy and funding tables (nationally, regionally and internationally) in order to inspire and support researchers in achieving transformational impact on global challenges.

In 2019 research leaders in Oceania established NITRO-Oceania as such a regional peak body, with a remit to:

- Foster attention to grand challenges relevant to countries in the region and globally
- Create supportive environments and infrastructure
- Develop effective metrics for excellence, impact and return on investment
- Improve funding availability and outcomes
- Support next generation organisational leaders
- Provide effective career paths and role models for interdisciplinarians and transdisciplinarians at all levels, and especially to support early-career researchers
- Develop workable transition pathways to implementation of new metrics and effective career paths.

What NITRO-Oceania Is Aiming For

Workshops in Brisbane in 2019 and online in 2020 have supported this need. As well as these workshops, in its first year, NITRO-Oceania activities included establishing and maintaining an active website and lobbying for change to the research classification system (see **Achievements** below) – all on a voluntary basis with some ad hoc funding. However, the long-term future of NITRO-Oceania requires a legally constituted organisation with a firm financial footing.

Achieving this involves:

- i) Continuing to increase membership
- ii) Maintaining an active program of activities
- iii) Establishing an agreed legal entity for NITRO-Oceania
- iv) Establishing a funded secretariat.

Voluntary funding proposal

Voluntary funding by members could establish an interim secretariat, for a two-year period, specifically to concentrate on increasing the NITRO-Oceania membership and supporting an active program of activities.

If they can afford it, organisations with leaders who are members of NITRO-Oceania are asked to donate \$2,000 per year for the next two years. The funds will go into an account at The Australian National University.

If 20 of the major Australian and New Zealand organisations which have leaders who are members of NITRO-Oceania were able to contribute, this would generate \$40,000 per annum. It is proposed that \$30,000 would be allocated support an 'interim secretariat' (3 days per month) and \$10,000 for expenses such as meeting facilitation and website maintenance.

Deliverables

1. Maintain an active, up-to-date website
2. Identify and approach all relevant organisations in the Oceania region inviting them to join
3. Ongoing support to Executive and currently active working groups
4. Revitalise current working groups and support the establishment of new working groups
5. Look for and capitalize on opportunities for NITRO-Oceania to have impact on science policy and funding
6. Maintain links with and encourage further development of global and other country leader networks.

NITRO-Oceania Achievements

NITRO-Oceania has:

- 46 members who are in leadership positions in 28 interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary organisations (<https://nitro-oceania.net/members/>)
- an active Executive with nine members, which meets by WebEx every 1-2 months (<https://nitro-oceania.net/members/>)
- a website (<http://nitro-oceania.net>) established in June 2019
- held two successful network meetings:
 - a meeting to establish the network in May 2019 in Brisbane Australia (<https://nitro-oceania.net/2019/05/01/May-2019-first-NITRO-Oceania-meeting>)
 - a virtual meeting in June 2020 on "*Communicating in stories – strengthening this core ID/TD skill*" (<https://nitro-oceania.net/2020/06/17/june-2020-june-17-impact-narratives-workshop-a-success/>)
- six working groups (<https://nitro-oceania.net/activities/working-groups/>), three of which have been very active:
 - Planning for the 2020 meeting working group has been incorporated into the regular meetings of the NITRO-Oceania Executive.

- Impact narratives working group has taken the lead in organising a series of three workshops to address “*Greater impact through inter- and transdisciplinary research and education: building skills, value and the case for this new way of working,*” starting with the June 2020 online workshop mentioned earlier.
- Research classifications working group has made two submissions on appropriate research classification for inter- and trans-disciplinary research to the joint review of the Australian and New Zealand Standard Research Classification (ANZSRC) conducted by the Australian Research Council (ARC), Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), Statistics New Zealand (Stats NZ), and the New Zealand Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE).
- its origins in a global network, established in 2018 – see <https://nitro-oceania.net/global-network/>.

Support to date

Financial and in-kind contributions have been made on an ad hoc basis by:

- CSIRO Land and Water for the meetings of members in 2019 and 2020
- Our Land and Water National Science Challenge NZ for the 2020 online workshop
- Future Earth Australia, Australian Academy of Science for the 2020 online workshop and meeting of members in 2020
- Integration and Implementation Sciences (i2S) for the website
- Members attending the 2019 meeting for airfares and accommodation.

The bulk of the organisational and ‘secretariat’ support (averaging 1-2 days per month) has been provided pro bono by Professor Gabriele Bammer.