



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

NITRO-Oceania 2021 Business Meeting

On-line Tuesday, September 21, 2021

9.00am-10.30am Australian west coast

10.30am-12pm SA and NT

11am-12.30pm Australian east coast, PNG

1.00-2.30pm NZ and Fiji

2.00-3.30 Samoa

(Outlook meeting invite will be sent separately)

AGENDA

Co-chairs: Iain Gordon and Gabriele Bammer

1. Welcome and introductions. Apologies.

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

2. Report from 2020 business meeting – For noting

<https://nitro-oceania.net/activities/business-meetings/2020-business-meeting>

3. Activity reports

3a. Executive report (Tayanah O'Donnell)

3b. Impact dialogues working groups (Ken Taylor, see: <https://nitro-oceania.net/activities/working-groups/impact-narratives-working-group>)

3c. Moving towards a sustainable future: Contemporary challenges and opportunities working group (Thought-pieces working group; Paul Bertsch, see: <https://nitro-oceania.net/activities/working-groups/thought-pieces-working-group/>)

3d. Seminar (Gabriele Bammer)

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

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

4. Financial statement and progress on establishing an interim secretariat – For discussion

How can we continue progress towards getting NITRO-Oceania onto a firm financial footing, allowing us to have adequate administrative support for our activities. See attached report.

5. Opportunities for members – For discussion

What would members like to see NITRO-Oceania do and how would they like to contribute? For example:

- Strengthen our role as peak body for inter- and trans- disciplinarity in Oceania by building membership, responding to relevant enquiries and other opportunities, strengthening intersections with Indigenous peoples etc
- Working group activities (see <https://nitro-oceania.net/activities/working-groups/>)
 - Impact dialogues
 - Research classification
 - Moving towards a sustainable future: Contemporary challenges and opportunities
 - Organisational capacity building
- Seminars
- Other.

6. Nominations for the NITRO-Oceania Executive (2021-2022) – For action

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

Executive Members:

- attend monthly (approximately) video calls
- actively participate in discussions about NITRO-Oceania-related matters
- are 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 organizational leadership positions in Oceania.

7. Wrap-up



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

Report to 2021 Business Meeting

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.

NITRO-Oceania Achievements (August 2020 – September 2021)

NITRO-Oceania has:

- 46 members who are in leadership positions in 29 interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary organisations, plus eight honorary members and three global members (<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.

NITRO-Oceania organised:

- a workshop entitled “How organisations best support and encourage research for impact” organised by the Impact Dialogue Working Group on March 3, 2021. It had 29 participants. See <https://nitro-oceania.net/activities/working-groups/impact-narratives-working-group/march-2021-workshop/>
- a workshop entitled “Promoting success for sustainability research in the Oceania region” at the Sustainability Research and Innovation Congress 2021 (SRI2021). This was organised by the Impact Dialogue Working Group on June 14, 2021 and had 10 participants. See <https://nitro-oceania.net/activities/working-groups/impact-narratives-working-group/june-2021-workshop/>
- an online seminar on August 23, 2021 by Professor Erin Leahey, University of Arizona, USA on “Universities’ commitment to interdisciplinary research: Some causes and consequences” with 46 attendees. See <https://nitro-oceania.net/activities/seminars/> and a recording is available on this page.

NITRO-Oceania participated in

- the production of a report “Evaluating Transdisciplinary Approaches” (https://ian.umces.edu/pdfs/ian_newsletter_628.pdf) based on a Belmont Forum workshop on measures of transdisciplinary engagement.

Financial Statement 2020-2021 and Resourcing Issues

The long-term future of NITRO-Oceania requires a legally constituted organisation with a firm financial footing. Achieving this involves:

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

At the 2020 business meeting it was agreed that voluntary donations (\$2,000 per year) would be sought from member organisations to 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. The funds are managed by The Australian National University.

Financial status

	Income	Expenditure
Voluntary subscriptions paid		
University of Queensland (Global Change Institute; Nov 2020)	2K	
Australian National University (RegNet; Nov 2020)	2K	
Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (Jan 2021)	2K	
Massey University (Sustainability, Feb 2021)	2K	
University of Technology Sydney (Institute for Sustainable Futures, May 2021)	2K	
Total income	10K	

Expenditure		
Website domain name renewal (April 27, 2021)		24
Website renewal (April 28, 2021)		396
Salary support for research officer to update and maintain website		7,500
Balance		2,080

How activities are currently resourced

Activity	How resourced
Membership recruitment, administrative support for Executive meetings	Pro bono (Gabriele Bammer and Cassie Moutia, CSIRO).
NITRO-Oceania website	Voluntary subscriptions (see above).
Workshop on March 3	Pro bono (Ken Taylor, Iain Gordon, Ramona Boodoosingh, Jeremy Hapeta, Rachel Parker, Allanah Ryan, Dan Walker). ACIAR paid for facilitation and administrative support from Future Earth Australia.
Workshop on June 14	Pro bono (Ken Taylor, Iain Gordon, Ramona Boodoosingh and Allanah Ryan). University of Queensland, Global Change Institute (contribution by Crighton Nichols as facilitator and to organization).
Seminar on August 23	Pro bono (Gabriele Bammer and Rachel Parker).

Previous financial, in-kind and pro bono contributions were 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
- Gabriele Bammer for organisational and 'secretariat' support (averaging 1-2 days per month).

Secretariat Target

Item	Cost
Casual administrator (\$65 per hour for one day per week for 48 weeks (equivalent annual salary around 90K), plus 30% on-costs)	30K
Workshop facilitation, website costs etc	10K
TOTAL	40K

This would need 20 organisations to donate \$2K each.

Significant in-kind and pro-bono support would still be required to supervise and train the administrator, as well as provision of office space, computer etc.

Tasks

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.

The administrator would require skills in:

- Meeting organization and advanced Zoom skills
- Website updates, maintenance and trouble shooting
- Workshop organization and support
- Membership recruitment (needs to be comfortable working with senior academics)
- Basic financial management

Needs to be a self-starter.