

AEDA News
Issue 2 (15 June 2007)

AEDA News is a fortnightly email for members of the Applied Environmental Decision Analysis CERF Hub.

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1. What are our principles? (From the Director)

Welcome to the 2nd issue of AEDA news. I'm assuming that most of you know that AEDA stands for 'Applied Environmental Decision Analysis' but quite possibly many of you may not yet have worked out exactly what we hope to achieve. There are a number of words in existence on what AEDA is (I recommend you read the AEDA proposal document

(<http://www.ecology.uq.edu.au/index.html?page=44926&pid=20497>), but what are our values and principles?

We're still grappling with the words that we'll use in describing ourselves as we interact with the wider world. However, they go something like this:

"AEDA was established to develop and test ideas, tools and methods to support transparent decision-making for better environmental management. Where possible, we will also provide guidance for organisations wishing to use these new ideas. AEDA will focus on three areas of scientific innovation: monitoring; spatial prioritisation; and environmental decision making."

That's the nub of it. Even if you can't quote this, as a member of AEDA you need to remember the points presented in these words. But underlying these intentions run some deeper principles or philosophies (call them what you will). We're still attempting to articulate what these might be but they go something like this.

AEDA is all about:

- Integrating ecological knowledge in defensible decisions
- Efficient allocation of conservation resources
- Making use of existing data and experts
- Dealing with uncertainty in decision making
- Discovering simple and applicable rules of thumb for management
- Learning and communicating by case study.

Maybe you have your own idea of what it is that AEDA is supposed to be about and would like to add to this list. If so, I'd like to hear your ideas. While it's impossible to encapsulate all of this in a name or four letters, we do need a few selling statements that might begin to stick with our stakeholders (which includes the general public).

Consequently, I finish this discussion with a slogan we're starting to use in connection with the name AEDA: 'Smart science for wise decisions'. If at the end of its time AEDA is remembered for proving the truth of this statement then we can claim some measure of success.

Hugh Possingham
Director, AEDA
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2. Two new CERFs for environmental economics and biodiversity

Funding for Environmental Economics Research Hub

The Australian Government has announced funding of \$7 million through its \$100 million Commonwealth Environment Research Facilities (CERF) Program to establish an Environmental Economics Research Hub. The Environmental Economics Research Hub will develop economic models and tools for environmental policy makers in areas such as designing marine reserves; developing incentives and tools for improving water efficiency and developing policies for promoting environmental stewardship, multi-species and ecosystem management for biodiversity, and adapting to climate change.

The hub will be led by Professor Jeff Bennett, Director of Graduate Studies in Environmental Management and Development at the Crawford School of Economics and Government at the Australian National University in Canberra. Other institutions connected to this hub are the University of New South Wales, the University of Western Australia, Central Queensland University and Griffith University.

Funding for biodiversity network

Federal funding of \$5.5 million provided through the CERF Program will support the development of a national network on Australian biodiversity.

The network of scientists, universities, museums and government agencies will be coordinated by the Centre for Plant Biodiversity Research in Canberra and led by Dr Judy West and will aim to accelerate research and discovery of Australia's biodiversity. Research will focus on small terrestrial mammals, reptiles, invertebrates and weeds, and will deliver web-based tools to provide information and assist with identification.

The Minister for the Environment and Water Resources, Malcolm Turnbull, said he saw the research hub as becoming a "global leader in delivering web-based information on taxonomy, and moving towards the creation of a 'one stop shop' for assessing key information on Australia's biodiversity."

He said it would also address the decline in Australia's taxonomic research capacity by providing opportunities for student training and engaging early career scientists.

More info: <http://www.environment.gov.au/programs/cerf/index.html>

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3. L'Oréal Women in Science fellowships (closes 29.6.07)

Applications are now open for the inaugural L'Oréal Australia For Women in Science fellowships.

The fellowships recognise scientific excellence by early-career women in the life and material sciences, mathematics or engineering, women who have completed their PhD or equivalent in the last five years.

Three fellowships will be awarded, each for \$20,000.

L'Oréal already play a significant role in promoting women in science around the world through their L'Oréal -UNESCO For Women in Science Awards program which honours five leaders in science each year.

Two Australians have been recognised by this program: Suzanne Corey, Director of the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute, and Jenny Graves, Director of the ARC Centre of Excellence in Kangaroo Genomics.

Now, L'Oréal Australia is joining their international colleagues with these inaugural fellowships for early career researchers.

Applications will be assessed by a jury made up of:

Kurt Lambeck, Professor of Geophysics, ANU and President of the Australian Academy of Science;

Cathy Foley, CSIRO Industrial Physics and President of the Australian Institute of Physics; Suzanne Corey, Director, Walter and Eliza Hall Institute of Medical Research and 2001 L'Oréal International Laureate; and

Vijoleta Braach-Maksvytis, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Innovation and Development) at the University of Melbourne and member of the Australian National Commission for UNESCO.

The closing date is 29 June 2007. More information: <http://www.scienceinpublic.com/l'oreal.htm>

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4. Systematic planning workshop (Bundeena, NSW, 3 June 2007)

In attendance: Eve McDonald-Madden, Hedley Grantham and Edward Game from the University of Queensland and Michael Bode of The University of Melbourne.

Recently AEDA funded a small workshop in Bundeena in Royal National Park, NSW titled 'Systematic conservation is not just planning'. The aim of the workshop was to progress research begun earlier in 2007 by the attendees on incorporating monitoring and evaluation into systematic conservation. The participants brought varying areas of expertise to the discussion including optimal monitoring, systematic conservation planning, marine reserve design, and mathematical modelling.

The small format workshop was very productive with three papers proceeding, two to the point of full draft and one having completed the conceptual planning and most of the analysis.

The first paper is a comment on the state of monitoring and evaluation in systematic conservation, with an outline of the types and purposes of monitoring in this area of conservation and why it is important. It also presents an investigation of how to integrate these ideas into the systematic conservation process.

The second paper presents an example of the optimal approach to surveying prior to conservation action, in this case land acquisition. The third paper is an investigation into adaptive rezoning of marine reserves on coral reefs based on monitoring data.

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June 2007

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5. New publications by AEDA members

Cunningham RB, Lindenmayer DB, Crane M, et al. (2007) *Reptile and arboreal marsupial response to replanted vegetation in agricultural landscapes* Ecological Applications 17 (2): 609-619 2007

Fischer J, Lindenmayer DB (2007) *Landscape modification and habitat fragmentation: a synthesis* *Global Ecology and Biogeography* 16 (3): 265-280

McCarthy MA, Lindenmayer DB (2007) *Info-gap decision theory for assessing the management of catchments for timber production and urban water supply* *Environmental Management* 39 (4): 553-562

Lindenmayer DB, Fischer J (2007) *Tackling the habitat fragmentation panchreston* *Trends In Ecology & Evolution* 22 (3): 127-132 2007

Manning AD, Lindenmayer DB, Barry SC, et al. (2007) *Large-scale spatial and temporal dynamics of the vulnerable and highly mobile superb parrot*, *Journal of Biogeography* 34 (2): 289-304

Tubelis DP, Lindenmayer DB, Cowling A (2007) *The peninsula effect on bird species in native eucalypt forests in a wood production landscape*, *Australia Journal Of Zoology* 271 (1): 11-18

Have you published an article or book recently that other AEDA members might be interested in? If you have, please send us the information so we can list it in the next issue of AEDA news.

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6. Workshops completed and planned

A crucial feature of AEDA is to get scientists and stakeholders together to tackle environmental problems, working together to get results faster. The “results” can include analytical work being on a specific task, the production of journal article(s), communication of what AEDA does or just better lines of communication being opened between all those involved in a problem.

We are fortunate to have funding available to facilitate different types of events, including workshops, writing retreats or general meetings. A number of these have already happened within the short life span of AEDA, and many more are either being organised right now, or are mooted as possibilities.

A schedule of these events is available at <http://spreadsheets.google.com/pub?key=pbBMR5Lp96w-Z9Aa7rl2pMA> .

Please have a look and forward any suggestions for improvements or additions to Karen Hurley <k.hurley@uq.edu.au>, Hugh Possingham <h.possingham@uq.edu.au> and/or Brendan Wintle <brendanw@unimelb.edu.au>. This schedule is not “set in concrete” and the more input from members of AEDA the better. Anyone can organise and facilitate an event, from top academics to students, as evidenced by the brief description of the Systematic Planning workshop above by Hedley Grantham, a PhD Candidate from the AEDA Brisbane node. Please also consider how this may benefit others such as staff from the Commonwealth Department of Environment and Water Resources, NGO’s or other involved/interested authorities.

Karen Hurley
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June 2007

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That ends issue 2 of AEDA News.

If you have news or views relating to AEDA or of interest to AEDA members, please send it to David Salt, dsalt@cres.anu.edu.au

(Please note that David Salt works Wednesday to Friday.)