

Connecting bits across the Tasman

Linking Trans-Tasman eResearch

Nick Jones¹, Julie Watson²

¹BeSTGRID, Auckland, New Zealand, n.jones@auckland.ac.nz

²Ministry of Research Science and Technology, Wellington, New Zealand, Julie.watson@morst.govt.nz

INTRODUCTION

Last year a group of eResearch representatives from both sides of the Tasman met to begin the process of building relationships and identifying connections to drive eResearch collaborations across the Tasman. Much has happened over the intervening year and there is strong demand for continuation of this series of Birds of a Feather (BoF) sessions (http://wiki.karen.net.nz/index.php/Category:Trans_Tasman).

The aim of each session remains consistent, that is to build a shared view of the drivers for and issues in achieving collaboration between research groups in Australia and New Zealand, with focus on discipline specific application level programmes and services as opposed to networks and network related services.

Experience from research programmes in Australia and New Zealand continue to inform discussions on opportunities for eResearch collaborations across the Tasman and the relationships that are needed to facilitate them.

These programmes would exploit the AARNet/KAREN networks and the grid and high-performance computing services provided by the National Computational Infrastructure, ARCS, and ANDS in Australia and BeSTGRID and major HPC centres in New Zealand.

TRANS-TASMAN ERESEARCH DISCUSSIONS 2008

Just fewer than 30 people participated in the first Trans-Tasman eResearch discussions hosted at eResearch Australasia. Initial discussions were held around the model for this trans-Tasman discussion BoF with a suggestion that the PRAGMA model might translate well to support New Zealand / Australasian collaboration. This model uses biannual meetings where parties act within the limits of their own resources given the overall approach is unfunded.

The group highlighted existing and planned trans-Tasman activity to provide an initial context for identifying platforms for discussion. Notes from this previous Trans-Tasman BoF can be found at:

http://wiki.karen.net.nz/index.php/Trans_Tasman_eResearch_BoF_September_2008

Reviewing these notes, its clear that there are many opportunities that could be exploited to mutual benefit.

It would be useful to further formalise an approach to maintain and build momentum for trans-Tasman eResearch collaboration.

FUNDING OPTIONS

A broad overview of potential funding options to support trans Tasman research collaborations were discussed and the following possibilities were identified:

- Australian Research Council (ARC) International Linkages programme
- Australian Department of Innovation, Industry, Science and Research support a variety of international funding opportunities, including the International Science Linkages programme has funding for international science collaborations.
- Victoria Department of Innovation, Industry, and Regional Development has specific funding for capability development, echoed in several others states. Investment priorities include biotechnology, medical research, and nanotechnology. The Office of Science and Technology promotes specific programmes.
- New Zealand Foundation for Research, Science and Technology (FRST) has International Investment Opportunities Fund (IIOF), Objective one supports building international research collaborations – for research projects ranging from \$100,000 to \$600,000 per annum for up to three years. This is open to proposals on demand, four times a year.
- Ministry of Research Science and Technology (MoRST) has the Bilateral Research Activities Programme which is a part of the International Science and Technology (ISAT) Linkages Fund, designed to support international science and technology links between New Zealand and the world with the exception of Germany.

Opportunities for joint eResearch capability development

Extensive discussion focused on possibilities for joint workshops and other capability development programmes. Discussion focused on the lack of appropriate workshops or events with a focus on implementing research

infrastructures and on research domain specific applications and services. A general commitment was made to maintain trans-Tasman discussions on opportunities to collaborate and to feedback to appropriate agencies to align funding structures and policy development. In Australia this would be via AeRIC, and in New Zealand, directly to the eResearch Advisor at MoRST.

This discussion: connecting bits across the Tasman

During 2009 the BeSTGRID community has been funded to strengthen existing and develop additional GRID middleware capabilities with a focus on geosciences and bioscience. Work is progressing within New Zealand's geosciences and bioscience communities to enable scaling up of existing research and connection with established offshore communities.

The Trans-Tasman BoF is our forum to discuss how to support the transition from 'making do' within the boundaries to sharing resources and technologies across boundaries to tackle larger problems. We will use this session to refine the ideas for collaboration outlined above, and to develop a more structured approach to trans-Tasman coordination while strengthening existing relationships.

The organizers Julie Watson, eResearch Adviser, MoRST, and Nick Jones, Director, BeSTGRID, seek expressions of interest for attendance at this workshop. Please contact the julie.watson@morst.govt.nz if you would like to contribute or attend.

Notes from past Trans-Tasman BoFs can be found at:

http://wiki.karen.net.nz/index.php/Trans_Tasman_eResearch_BOF_September_2008