SCIENCE DIVISION COMMUNICATION PLAN

N Burrows
C Simpson

SCIENCE DIVISION

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Introduction

DEC's policies and operations need to be underpinned by the incorporation of up-to-date knowledge. The Science Division is DEC's prime source of new conservation biology knowledge and information based on scientific research. With about 176 scientific, technical and administration staff, the division is the largest and most scientifically diverse group of conservation scientists in Western Australia. The work of the division reflects a significant investment by the State Government, through DEC, in multi-disciplinary biodiversity conservation research, monitoring and biogeography.

Communication of what we do is one of the three major outputs identified for scientists in the recently developed Productivity Framework for scientists. The purpose of this plan is to:

- Highlight the importance of communicating science and information.
- Provide a convenient communication framework (what, who, how).

We need to be good communicators for at least the following reasons:

- Professional: As a scientist, it is a professional obligation to communicate new findings to other scientists, fellow workers and key stakeholders. It is also an important part of the process of critical peer review of what we, both as an agency and as individuals, produce.

- Institutional: We have an obligation to the department, the government and the broader Western Australian community to generate and communicate new knowledge and information; it's primarily what we are funded to do. Policies, procedures and prescriptions supported by good science, and an informed community, enables DEC to do its job well and gives politicians and the broader community confidence in us. Political and community support for the department and for science is crucial if we are to be successful.

- Recognition: Through awareness, scientific research can be properly valued both by colleagues and staff in the department and by those who influence its funding. The role of science in shaping policies and practices needs to be made immediately apparent if it is to be appreciated. We must actively promote the good work we do and the important role it plays in underpinning biodiversity conservation and natural resource management in Western Australia.

- Personal: A scientist's reputation (and that of scientific institutions) is largely built on the quality and quantity of published work and the impact of this work. Personal rewards (beyond salary and career) include a sense of pride and achievement, recognition and respect by peers, job satisfaction and a greater likelihood of ongoing management support.

Communicating to politicians, practitioners, planners and other decision makers, as well as colleagues and the broader community requires a range of communication techniques. Important information needs to be communicated to the right people using appropriate means.

This communication plan sets out ways to communicate the work of the Science Division to a diversity of audiences. As well as ensuring science has impact by informing policy and improving the way we do business, it will create professional respect and a greater understanding of the importance of the Science Division's role in conservation and land management.

The Division has three main audience groups – the science community, influential stakeholders (other than the scientific community) and the general public – each further sub-divided into several sectors. There are different ways to deliver messages and to transfer technology to each of these groups.

The scientific community is primarily comprised of our peers and colleagues – the scientific community in tertiary organisations (and other) and collaborative research agencies such as CSIRO, and our fellow scientists in DEC.

Influential stakeholders include but are not limited to senior State Government scientific staff, WA's Chief Scientist, scientific political advisors, funding agencies, funding decision-makers (internal and external), politicians, DEC staff in other divisions, local governments and representatives from the private sector.

The general public includes the general community, media representatives, opponents, proponents, students, educators, environmental groups, community action groups, volunteers, Indigenous people and others.

Communicating to these people/groups requires a variety of methods – including scientific publications (e.g. peer reviewed papers etc.), conferences, workshops, media coverage, internet, reports, articles in conservation publications, professional liaison, meetings, newsletters, brochures, educational packages, advertising, interpretive displays, open days and detailed briefings. It involves telling the story and getting the message across in different ways; at a high level, a low level, to small organisations, to large ones, to other departments, to the general public, to the media, to local communities, to the young and the old.

The World Wide Web via the Internet has become by far the most powerful and far reaching communication tool. The Science Division will make a concerted effort to increase our internet presence.

The following is a matrix summary of our communication plan.

SCIENCE COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

AUDIENCES	SD COMMUNICATION OBJECTIVES/MESSAGES	SD ACTIONS	POSITION RESPONSIBLE	PERFORMANCE MEASURE/S
Scientific community	Science Division (SD) does high quality applied science. SD scientists are leaders in their field. SD scientists are productive.	See Productivity Framework attached.	Program Leaders and individual scientists	See Productivity Framework attached.
Minister for Science, Minister for Environment/ Chief Scientist	Science underpins sustainable development. Government investment in science is wise. DEC science helps Government make better decisions. SD provides timely, relevant and high quality science. Informs and underpins gov't conservation and environment policy, resource development decisions, sustainable development. Highly collaborative.	Via DG /SDD brief Minister/Chief Scientist twice a year on scope of work and achievement of strategic (i.e. government) goals. PLs – field trips with Chief Scientist/Minister Copy of ARAR to Chief Scientists and Minister ex DG Ministerial media releases. Face to face opportunities at official events. SD to participate in *Science Meets the Parliament* forum, Scitech's ScienceNetworkWA. SD outcomes in DEC Annual Report Chief Scientist gets link to Information Sheets. Articles in "Sate of the Future".	Science Director. Program leaders to initiate through SD. Program leaders to initiate through SD. SD and PLs. SD with assistance from PLs. DG & SD. SD & Pls	Meetings held Field trips held Media releases Events attended Articles submitted
Local Members of Parliament	Know what science is going on in their areas and why. DEC policies and activities are underpinned by science.	Provide annual briefings via DG & Minister's Office. Provide briefings on field trips. Invite to see scientific work in region. Provide 'photo opportunities', local media opportunities if researchers are in area or if new Government funding is being announced. SD to participate in *Science Meets the Parliament.*	Science Director	Annual briefings Field trips Media events
Statutory Authorities (e.g., MPRA, Cons Comm, EPA, FPC, FESA)	SD is available to advise/help. DEC science helps them make better decisions. Understand SD's role SD is available to advise/help. SD science helps MPRA/EPA/CC make better decisions.		Science Director – Program Leaders to provide briefings, arrange field trips, reports.	Briefings Field trips Management plans
DEC Director General	Science influences political decisions. Science essential to DEC business, underpinning policies, decisions, actions SD does science relevant to DEC's mission. SD does good science.	Update DG and Corp Ex. on new/emerging scientific findings/issues. Update on progress of SD goals at Corporate Executive meetings. Provide verbal summary of latest milestone and summary reports at CE	Science Director – PLs to provide information	Briefings to DG Meetings with DG Presentations to Corporate Executive Policy influence / changes

AUDIENCES	SD COMMUNICATION OBJECTIVES/MESSAGES	SD ACTIONS	POSITION RESPONSIBLE	PERFORMANCE MEASURE/S
		meetings. Meet DG to discuss urgent or important issues relating to SD as required.		
DEC Directors	Science essential to DEC business, underpinning policies, decisions, actions. SD does science relevant to DEC's mission. SD does good science. Directors know what science is going on where, and why.	See above. One-on-one briefing meetings with Directors.	Science Director – PLs to provide information in other divisions	As above
DEC Branch Managers (BM)	SD science is corporately important. BMs understand SD science underpins political and DEC decisions, and management actions. SD available to provide advice.	Promote liaison at staff level. PLs and/or Director to attend/present at Branch meetings	PLs and Director	Briefings Meetings Field trips Demonstration trials Prescriptions guidelines
DEC Regional Managers (RM)	Science is the basis of management decisions. Staff involved in science management actions are of corporate value.	Promote liaison at staff level. PLs and/or Director to attend/present at Regional meetings	PLs and Director	As above
DEC District Managers (DM)	DMs know SD science helps them make better management decisions. DMs understand corporate value of staff involvement in science management actions.	Promote liaison at staff level. Scientists to attend/present at District staff meetings.	PLs and all scientists	As above
Community groups				
Scientists				

AUDIENCES (EXTERNAL)	SD/MSP OBJECTIVES and MESSAGES	STRATEGIES	PRIORITY	PERFORMANCE MEASURE/S
International Organisations	DEC/SD supports role of international organisations	Briefings Regular professional contact via international conferences etc. Scientific papers Milestone reports Web	M	Milestone reports Scientific papers Conference papers Briefings Professional contacts New web information
National Organisations	DEC/SD supports Commonwealth agencies DEC/SD provides and seeks information DEC/SD carries out excellent science DEC/SD is collaborative Science underpins DEC policies and operations	Regular professional contact Media releases (joint) Collaborative research Knowledge transfer - scientific papers Milestone reports Web	H	Professional contact Scientific papers Joint media releases issued Collaborative research Knowledge transfer New web information
State Govt Agencies	SD carries out excellent science SD is collaborative SD coordinates marine science in DEC	Briefings Milestone reports Publication in other agencies' publications and webs Intersector articles	H	Briefings Milestone reports Publicity from interagency publications Liaison Forums attended

		Ongoing liaison between researchers Fora Web		
Local Universities	DEC/SD supports local universities SD carries out excellent science SD is collaborative SD coordinates marine science in DEC	Briefings Publications in university newsletters and websites Workshops Advice on scientific papers published Communication of joint events Web information	H	Briefings Publications in university newsletters and websites Workshops held Number of scientific papers published Other publicity results
Interstate Universities	DEC/SD welcomes interstate universities in WA marine science	Scientific papers Professional collaboration Web information	H	Scientific papers published Instances of collaboration New web information
Conservation NGOs	DEC has a science capability that is used to generate knowledge to underpin conservation management.	Professional collaboration Briefings Web	H	Instances of professional collaboration Briefings New web information
Industry Peak Bodies	DEC has a science capability DEC/SD's roles and priorities are understood and valued	Professional collaboration Briefings/workshops Web information	H	Instances of professional collaboration Briefings/workshops numbers New web information
Industry	DEC has a science capability DEC/SD and industries' roles and priorities are understood and valued by both SD is collaborative and will exchange information	Professional collaboration Briefings Web Sponsorship of projects Liaison	H	Instances of professional collaboration Sponsored projects Briefings held New web information General staff liaison
NRM CEOs	DEC has a science capability DEC/SD roles and priorities are understood and valued SD and NRM groups have common interests	Professional collaboration Distribution of scientific research Web Face to face meetings Attend combined NRM Council meetings once a year	H	Instances of professional collaboration New web information Scientific research distributed Council meetings and briefings provided
NRM Science co-ordinators	DEC/SD roles and priorities are understood and valued SD is collaborative and will exchange information SD and NRM groups have common interests	Briefings Professional liaison Research papers Newsletters Web	H	Number of briefings undertaken Instances of other professional liaison New web information Research papers provided Newsletters sent
Local community conservation groups	Know what science is going on and why DEC management decisions are underpinned by science There are opportunities to participate Scientific information is freely available	Face to face briefings Meetings Web Information on what duties to carry out Fora Newsletters Posters (for office/members) Radio interviews Magpaper Advertisements Letters	H	Briefings New web information For a Newsletters Posters Radio interviews Magpapers published Advertisements Letters
Indigenous people	DEC helps protect biodiversity, environment and cultural	Regular face to face meetings	H	Meetings Field trips

	values Benefits in exchanging science and traditional knowledge Aboriginal people have employment opportunities in DEC	Field trips Partnerships		Partnerships
Local residents, landowners, community members	DEC/SD provides unbiased and respected science Management of the environment is based on science	Face to face communication Newsletters Radio interviews with MSP scientists Local media coverage Magpaper Advertisements Letters Web	H	Newsletters Radio interviews
General public	Know what science is going on and why Conservation & land management decisions are underpinned by MSP science DEC/MSP will meet the public	Face to face communication by working staff Media releases Radio and television interviews Feature articles Documentaries Public meetings Educational programs Books Posters Other publications (brochures, magpapers, fact sheets) Web Interpretive displays Liaison with conservation activity groups	H	Media releases issued and resultant publicity Public meetings Educational programs carried out Books Other publications produced Documentaries Interaction with conservation activity groups