Andrew Boomer

Andrew Boomer has been Operations Manager of the Australian Animal Tracking and Monitoring System (AATAMS) Facility since the very early stages of the Integrated Marine Observing System (IMOS). During that period he has made an outstanding technical contribution to marine science in Australia, in the field, at the desktop, and around the meeting room. It is Andrew's unique ability to innovate and deliver 'in-water' solutions, and to engage a large community of science collaborators, and to see the data collection through to availability/uptake/use that makes his achievements truly outstanding.

Andrew is Operations Manager of AATAMS, a national network of 1275+ acoustic receiver stations, from the tropics to the cool temperate coasts of Tasmania and large centralized database. There are 35 organisations registered in the AATAMS database, with 120 users of the system and 60 individual research projects. More than 40 Postgraduate theses have arisen or been assisted by this resource and the number of papers published is increasing exponentially.

The lynchpin of AATAMS is the central data repository where researchers can search for their study animals facilitating large scale, collaborative research. This central database is a world first, and is the result of several years liaison between the hardware and software developers of the acoustic tracking equipment, the database managers across multiple institutions and the research community, all coordinated, facilitated and driven by Andrew. Recognizing its importance to the community, Andrew even designed a series of instructional videos that shows users anywhere from main labs to indigenous partners working in Torres Straits how to correctly use the system. He has matched this with a National Roadshow, presenting dedicated workshops to users of this fantastic new resource.

As operations manager, Andrew is responsible for deployment, servicing, retrieval and maintenance of the acoustic network at 14 different locations around the country, many in extremely remote locations e.g. Rowley Shoals and Scott Reef in NW WA, Flinders Island and Bass Strait in Tasmania. The position involves an extremely high level of technical competence, the ability to work under hostile conditions and the need to maintain very high levels of safety. From diving in shark infested murky tropical waters, through grappling for moorings at 3 am in 55 knot winds, to punishing 14 hour days in frigid Tasmanian waters, Andrew has lead his team for the last five years without incident.

Not only does Andrew perform an outstanding job in maintaining the network but he devotes many hours each week to advising researchers - from senior academics and government scientists to the beginning honours student. Andrew has provided technical advice, cautioned against ill-judged decisions about array design, tag selection etc. and assisted in data input and analysis for dozens of projects. Over and above this, Andrew has voluntarily spent hundreds of hours in his wetsuit, boat driving, catching and tagging animals, deploying and retrieving receivers, assisting colleagues from PhD students to senior researchers for the satisfaction of ensuring that the projects worked efficiently and successfully.

Andrew has played a lead role in the AATAMS facility since first being appointed in 2008. He heads a small team, yet has ensured the success of the AATAMS network over the last 5 years in a manner that is the envy of the rest of the world. The incredible success of AATAMS is directly attributable to dedicated and intelligent service by Andrew.