

P a p e r 1: Workshop Origins, Scope a d d Objectives

1.1 Origins

The need for a workshop, or similar forum for discussion of the role of Scientific Support Co-ordinator (SSC), was identified initially during the preparation of **REEFPLAN**, the oil spill contingency plan for the Great Barrier Reef (a supplement to both the National Plan and the Queensland Supplement). During preparation of **REEFPLAN**, it became apparent that although the National Plan and State Supplements provided for the incorporation of scientific advice in oil spill response, the specific requirements of designated **SSCs** were unclear. In addition, it was evident that many agencies which may fulfil the role of SSC were not experienced in, nor sufficiently familiar with, the **requirements** for scientific advice, particularly during an actual response.

These problems were also identified and discussed informally during the two national conferences on oil 'spills in Australia (SPILLCON '85 and '87) and during the workshop on hazardous chemical spills in the Great Barrier Reef Region (Craik, 1985). As a result of these meetings, the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority approached the Department of Transport and Communications to seek support for the organisation of a workshop specifically on the role of SSC. The Department then approached interested organisations, particularly State Committees to seek endorsement of the workshop proposal and input to the workshop programme.

The workshop was designed to complement and extend the other initiatives of the Department in training and response. The Department recognised the value of such a meeting in the context of overall training priorities, as scientific input to other training activities had been limited, partly because of inadequate understanding of how scientific advice could be effectively incorporated in the overall response framework. It was recognised at the outset that most value would be achieved therefore if the workshop was oriented specifically towards the support needs of the central figure in the response framework - the On Scene Coordinator (OSC).

1.2 Scope

Because of the precedent setting nature of the workshop and considerable investment of resources by all involved it was considered necessary to provide the opportunity for participants and **support** agencies to have input into the workshop programme. This led to an expansion of the initial workshop program to include provision for consideration of specific issues of importance at the State and regional levels of

SSC role implementation (e.g. mapping).

The final workshop program (Paper 19, Section D) thus included both formal lecture and discussion sessions and informal sessions for information exchange and discussion. An important central theme of the workshop, also evident in the workshop **objectives**, was the need to direct all such discussion towards the information needs of the On Scene Co-ordinator. Participation in the workshop was restricted to those with direct operational responsibility for SSC implementation (all State **SSCs**) and those with particular experience in aspects of spill response of relevance to the role of SSC.

1.3 Workshop Objectives

The overall aim of the workshop was to define and evaluate the role of the Scientific Support Co-ordinator (SSC), with particular reference to the scientific support needs of the On Scene Co-ordinator (OSC). Specific objectives directed towards this aim included:

- a. To provide a forum for the exchange of information between **SSCs** regarding scientific support in all phases of response organisation.
- b. To explore lines of communication, organisation and information transfer within the context of the needs of the OSC and consistent with the provisions of the National Plan model.
- c. To assist participants in becoming familiar with the nature and range of demands on an SSC and techniques-for-meeting those demands-effectively.
- d. To develop familiarity with prediction and monitoring techniques and an awareness of the strengths and limitations of existing approaches.
- e. To undertake training exercises which improve participant understanding of the range and nature of environments at risk from oil spills.
- f. To define further training and information needs and priorities for implementation of SSC responsibilities relevant to each State or Territory.

While these objectives are broad in scope, they reflect the perceived need for the role of SSC to be more fully defined if the National Plan model is to continue to be efficiently implemented. In particular they stress the nexus between the roles of SSC and OSC.

Throughout all workshop sessions, participants were therefore requested to be mindful of the requirements for **fulfilment** of these objectives.