

WASTAC - 1999 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

After a first decade of interaction with the Western Australian Satellite Technology and Applications Consortium, I believe that the experience has given useful insights into the successful application of satellite remote sensing technology that are relevant for the third millennium. Despite Western Australia's small population of 1.9 million people spread across a vast State, WASTAC is effectively networking a critical mass of people for the capture of many of the benefits of moderate resolution (MR) satellite remote sensors.

Deriving useful information products from the MR satellites results from the close involvement of end users in Perth, Kimberley, Northern Territory, Melbourne and Canberra and on the Indian Ocean. Responding to their demands has been possible through access to skilled staff, advanced research, software, hardware, a high speed digital communications link and the internet.

The main benefits from MR satellite remote sensing come not from selling the raw data, but from enabling Consortium members to derive information products that assist land managers, fishermen, weather forecasters and researchers better perform their work.

The market value of the information is directly related to the relevance, timeliness and accessibility of the information derived from the MR satellites.

Many excellent student research projects result from easy access to the free data made available by WASTAC.

After 10 years, new information within the 5 spectral bands of the NOAA-Advanced Very High Resolution Radiometer satellite sensor is still being discovered and many opportunities still exist to make significant advances with this information. Benefits of ocean colour data from SeaWiFS are yet to be exploited.

With its past experience WASTAC is well positioned to use X-band reception to exploit direct broadcast data from the next generation MODerate resolution Imaging Spectro-radiometer (MODIS) launched 17 December 1999 on NASA's TERRA satellite.

Ongoing support of senior management within the WA Department of Land Administration, Bureau of Meteorology, CSIRO and Curtin University of Technology has enabled WASTAC to pursue its vision and achieve results.

During 1999 over 4000 overpasses of NOAA and SeaWiFS were archived, which is a tribute to the commitment of Ron Craig and his team at DOLA and Don Ward and technical staff at the Bureau of Meteorology. Richard Stovold as Secretary has maintained the smooth running of the Western Australian Satellite Technology and Applications Consortium Board and Standing Committee.

The addition of Alan Pearce, CSIRO, to the editorial board for the annual report has resulted in significant improvements in content and presentation. Again Curtin University's Accounts Department has assisted us ably with WASTAC's financial management and audit.

Richard Smith
Chairman,
Western Australian Satellite Technology and Applications Consortium

