

2016 National Research Infrastructure Roadmap
Chief Scientist
9 September 2016

Dear Dr Finkel

Re.: Submission to the 2016 National Research Infrastructure Roadmap Capability Issues Paper

This submission augments the broader National Marine Science Committee (NMSC) submission, and is specific to a proposed National Research Vessel Alliance (see Attachment).

The submission details the necessary infrastructure required to form a national alliance of a coordinated fleet of research vessels that cover Australia's extensive and valuable marine estate in order to fully realise the significant benefits from our blue economy. The submission focuses on large scale research vessels that have the capacity to operate distances to at least the continental shelf. The scale of these vessels enables the use of specialised and state-of-the-art equipment to sample deeper, offshore waters, as well as to accommodate the necessary teams of scientists to conduct the research. The submission covers the benefits, logistics and networks for operating a coordinated national research vessel fleet, including how best to support and use international infrastructure.

The blue economy is a significant opportunity for economic growth, employment and investment that will be realised over the next decade and beyond. By 2025, it is estimated that Australia's marine industries will contribute around \$100 billion each year to the economy. The blue economy is projected to grow three times faster than the national GDP over the next decade, more than doubling its current contribution of \$47 billion a year.

A national alliance of a coordinated fleet of large-scale, offshore research vessels that cover Australia's marine estate, from the coast to the blue water, and the tropics to Antarctica, will increase the opportunities for scientific collaboration and discovery and enable the necessary data and information to be collected to derive the benefits from the nation's blue economy, while ensuring Australia's marine science infrastructure and capabilities remain world leading, innovative and cutting-edge

In 2015, the NMSC published a decadal plan, *National Marine Science Plan 2015-2025 Driving the development of Australia's blue economy* (NMSP), which focusses investment on the highest priority capabilities, including infrastructure, required to fulfil our blue economy's potential. The NMSP details the critical research infrastructure required to realise these goals including an adequately funded national research vessel fleet consisting of blue water, polar and coastal-shelf vessels.

The NMSC looks forward to continuing to work with you and the Australian Government to realise the full potential of Australia's blue economy.

Yours sincerely

Prof Gavin Begg

Chair – NMSC Working Group National Research Vessel Alliance