

## COMMUNIQUÉ

### MARINE NATIONAL FACILITY STEERING COMMITTEE EXTRAORDINARY MEETING: Wednesday, 30 May 2018

On May 30<sup>th</sup>, the Marine National Facility (MNF) Steering Committee held an extraordinary meeting to review the *Investigator* voyage schedules for 2018-19 and 2019-20 to accommodate the Government's announcement of full year funding for the MNF under the May 2018 Federal Budget.

#### **Funding announcement – full year operations**

Starting from 2018-19, RV *Investigator* will offer marine scientists [300 operational days of research](#) each year. The scale-up to full year operations was announced as part of the Australian Government funding commitment of \$1.9 billion to 2028-29 for the Research Infrastructure Investment Plan.

This is an exciting outcome as it will allow *Investigator* to expand on the wide range of excellent marine research, monitoring, education and training this vessel enables, and deliver Australia the full benefit from its research capability.

Importantly, the Government announcement has included the capital funds required to ensure that the *Investigator*'s significant research capability is maintained and enhanced over the years.

The Committee wishes to express its sincere thanks to the Australian Government for approving the additional funding and to the marine science community for their unflinching support in achieving this auspicious outcome.

#### **Revised *Investigator* 2018-19 and 2019-20 voyage schedule**

The Committee reviewed and approved the MNF's proposed strategy to fill unused capacity on *Investigator*'s 2018-19 and 2019-20 voyage schedules.

In revising the schedules at a relatively short notice, the Committee sought to avoid or minimise changes to previously approved voyages.

For the 2019-20 schedule, additional sea time was awarded to the highest ranking proposals from the applications round that closed in August 2017, which also met critical logistic requirements.

For the 2018-19 schedule—for which planning is in its final stages—the Committee agreed to seek expressions of interest for projects to be undertaken in the available port periods. This will be done through a special call for Supplementary applications, which will also cover Supplementary projects opportunities for the two additional voyages scheduled in 2019-20. The call will be published before the end of June 2018.

If you are not currently on the subscriber list and would like to be kept up to date with MNF announcements, you can subscribe [here](#).

#### **Upcoming meeting**

The Committee will meet next on 14<sup>th</sup> September to consider the implications of the additional funding for current policies and processes and to set strategic directions for the transition to full year operations.

#### **In conclusion**

*Investigator* was designed and engineered to carry out an array of highly sophisticated scientific activities and possess capabilities far beyond those of previous Australian research vessels. Through the first four years of operation, *Investigator* has already proved a game-changer for marine research in Australia: the announcement to fund year round operations will enable *Investigator* to meet its full potential.

We look forward to providing marine researchers with the expanded capability to support their endeavours in answering Australia's big questions about the marine environment and resources, climate and food security.

**Dr Ian Poiner**  
**Chair, MNF Steering Committee**

