

COMMUNIQUÉ

MARINE NATIONAL FACILITY STEERING COMMITTEE

MEETING #74: 26-27 FEBRUARY 2014

This is my first meeting as Chair of the Marine National Facility Steering Committee and I would like to welcome my fellow new members to the committee:

Mr Bob Quarrill
Manager, Geotechnical Operations
Exploration Division, Woodside Energy

Professor Richard Coleman
Institute of Marine and Antarctic Studies (IMAS)
University of Tasmania

Dr Nick Gales
Chief Scientist
Australian Antarctic Division

In conjunction with existing members; Graham Peachey, CEO, Australian Maritime Safety Authority; Toni Moate, Deputy Chief – Science Operations and Executive Director, Future Research Vessel Project; and John Gunn, Chair, Oceans Policy Science Advisory Group we are well placed to meet the challenges of this exciting period with the arrival of *Investigator*.

As Chair I also sit on the MNF Scientific Advisory Committee and the Future Research Vessel Steering Committee for our new research vessel.



Prof Richard Coleman, Dr Nick Gales, Mr John Gunn, Mr Bob Quarrill, Ms Toni Moate, Dr Ian Poiner (Chair) and Mr Ron Plaschke at the Hobart meeting (Mr Graham Peachey not in attendance)

Farewell to *Southern Surveyor*

The *Southern Surveyor* has been sold by international tender to Excel International which is based in Dubai.

It has been a bittersweet farewell for a ship that has provided valuable service since 2003.

***Investigator* progress**

The commissioning and construction of *Investigator* is progressing well but there have been delays in finalising the vessel's construction. While unfortunate, this has always been a possibility as we are building a highly sophisticated ocean research platform.

Once completed, *Investigator* will sail to Hobart with the following tasks to be carried out:

- Fit out of the remaining scientific equipment
- Training and familiarisation of the vessel
- Development of operational procedures
- Sea trials to provide practical experience for the marine crew and MNF support staff

This is a crucial period as it provides the basis for the safe and efficient operation of the vessel when science voyages commence.

Schedules

With the delayed arrival of *Investigator* impacting forward voyage schedules, it has been decided to defer the offer of rescheduled 2014-15 voyages and 2015-16 application round primary voyages until a firm delivery date can be established. Voyage offers are therefore expected early in June, and hopefully before.

Accordingly, the call for Supplementary applications for sea time in 2015-16 has also been delayed. Details of this call will be communicated through the MNF internet site, the *Investigator* blog (<http://csirofrvblog.com/>) and by direct email for those on our mailing list.

While the delay in the arrival of *Investigator* is regrettable, it is important to maintain high safety standards, ensure quality workmanship and comprehensively test the vessel prior to acceptance.

In conclusion

Steering Committee is grateful for the marine research community's patience and understanding during this exciting period as we prepare *Investigator* as Australia's future ocean class research vessel.

Dr Ian Poiner
Chair