

## COMMUNIQUÉ

### MARINE NATIONAL FACILITY STEERING COMMITTEE

#### MEETING #81: Monday, 14 August 2017

The 81<sup>st</sup> Marine National Facility (MNF) Steering Committee (SC) meeting was held in Hobart on 14 August. In addition to discussing the strategic direction of the Facility, the SC reviewed a number of operating reports and endorsed key position papers put forward by the MNF.

#### Selection Criteria Scoring Guidance

Assessments of the applications for sea time are conducted via a peer review process by external experts, the Science Advisory Committee (SAC) and the National Benefit Assessment Panel (NBAP). The MNF, through engagement with the SAC and NBAP Chairs, has updated the selection criteria scoring guidance wording following feedback from the inaugural sitting of NBAP. SC noted the changes were consistent with continuous improvement of the assessment process. The scoring guidance will be made available on the website for the upcoming round of applications.

#### Full year operations

*Investigator* has enabled a wide range of excellent science to be undertaken over the last three years, and the demand for sea time continues to far outweigh the days available. The strong and consistent message from the marine science community, including through the National Marine Science Plan 2015-2025 and the 2016 National Research Infrastructure Roadmap, is that *Investigator* should be funded for full year (300 day) operations. Securing funding for full year (300 day) operations for the *Investigator* remains the highest priority for the SC.

#### Education and training

With SC endorsement, the MNF is facilitating a range of student education and training activities to maximise the education and training benefits of the Facility. The first Collaborative Australian Postgraduate Sea Training Alliance Network (CAPSTAN) voyage to deliver post-graduate student training is scheduled for November 2017.

#### Membership

The MNF and SC would like to sincerely thank the following outgoing SC and SAC members for their considerable contribution to the MNF:

- Professor Richard Coleman, IMAS. Richard has served on the MNFSC since 2013, completing two terms.
- Dr Susan Wijffels. Susan served on the SAC from 2015-2017.

SC also endorsed the following SAC membership changes:

Reappointment of existing members:

- Dr Neville Smith
- Dr Andrew Heap; and
- Dr Edward Butler

Appointment of new member:

- Associate Professor Moninya Roughan, UNSW. Moninya replaces Dr Susan Wijffels.

#### Communications Strategy

The MNF Communications Strategy 2017-20, having incorporated previous SC guidance, was approved at SC#81. The three year Strategy provides a high-level overview of communication objectives and priorities for the MNF, and describes the core intentions and guiding principles. The Communications Strategy will soon be made available on the MNF website.

#### Advisory Group

Steering Committee endorsed a proposal to establish an expert group, sourced from the scientific community and MNF, to guide capital acquisition and all material decisions about new science capability and related design elements for *Investigator*. The group will be guided by a MNF Strategic Procurement Plan (being developed).



**Feature Voyage: IN2017\_V03 O’Hara**

This voyage, along a significant length of the east coast of Australia, was a biodiversity survey in the abyssal depths of the ocean around 4,000 to 6,000 metres deep.

This pioneering voyage generated significant media interest with global media coverage of the activities, including front page news, magazine stories and viral social media coverage.

With the extensive mapping undertaken in the Commonwealth Marine Reserves, the voyage also delivered significant impact to key end users, not to mention some amazing pictures.



IN2017\_V03: Blob fish, Rob Zugaro.

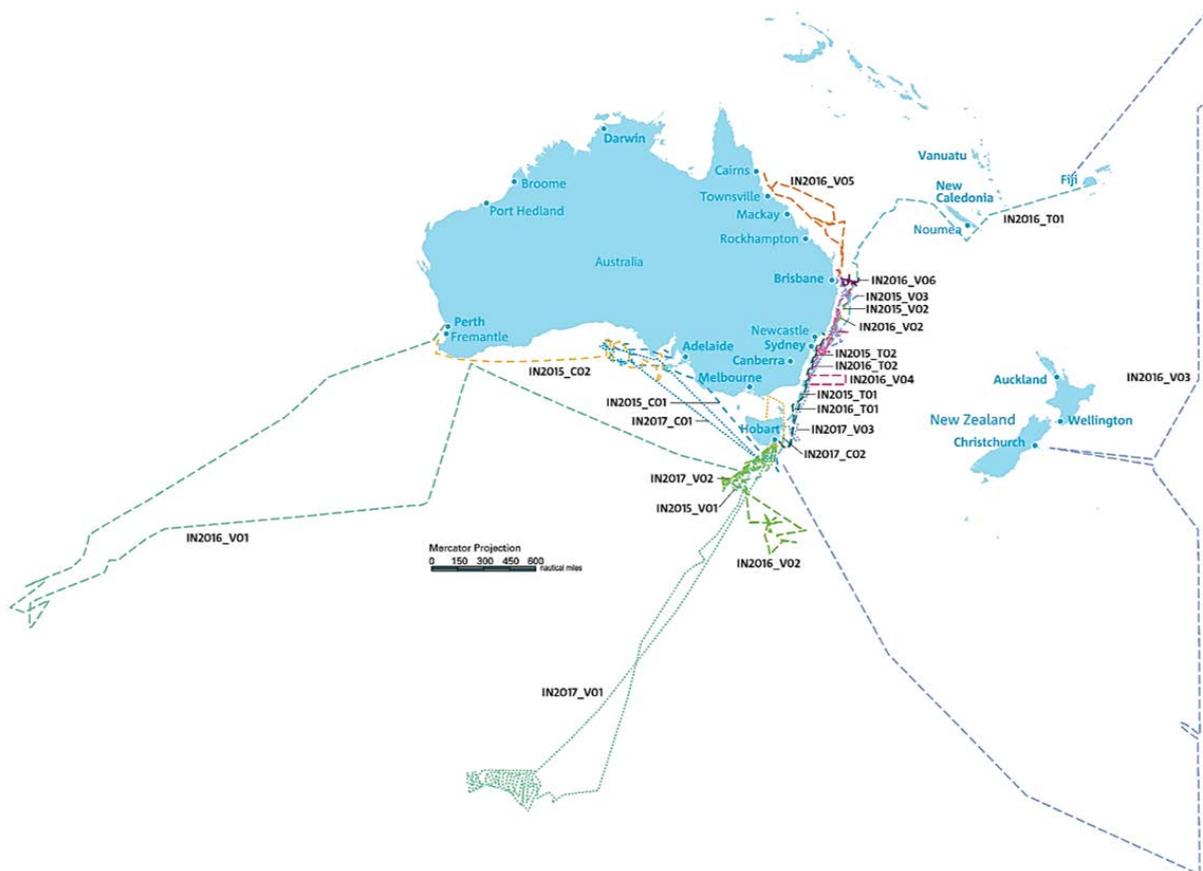


IN2017\_V03: Coffin Fish, Asher Flatt

**In conclusion**

The SC remains committed to securing full utilisation of the MNF as landmark infrastructure and ensuring there is appropriate capital investment to maintain and enhance capability into the future. Maximising efficiency and leveraging additional national benefit from onshore programs will assist in prosecuting the case for the value delivered by the vessel to our nation.

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



Investigator voyages to July 2017