

HYDRO INTERNATIONAL INTERVIEWS PETER HARRIS

Marine Insititutes Co-operate to Improve Ocean Knowledge

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Peter Harris outlines how hydrography contributes to marine science. Seafloor mapping forms the basis for almost all marine research programmes. Mapping of the seafloor assists science in designing a seafloor sampling programme, understanding processes like sediment transport and tectonics and in identifying benthic habitats. The education of hydrographic technologies should therefore also play a larger role within scientific education. As a marine expert, Peter Harris has worked with a multi-disciplinary team to design Australia's national representative system of marine protected areas and is currently working on the United Nations World Ocean Assessment that is scheduled to be completed by 2014. The oceans are our future in many respects and while we depend upon ocean resources there still remains much to explore and understand to enable us to derive the maximum benefits for humanity while protecting our oceans.

Do mapping agencies have environmental aspects on their agenda?

Since the beginning of modern oceanographic exploration about 150 years ago we have learned much about the oceans, but there is still much more to learn. It has been said many times; 'we know more about the surface of the moon or of Mars than we know of our own oceans' and that statement is true. Given the importance of the oceans for humanity, this gap in our knowledge is a concern and so the environmental aspects of the oceans should be on everyone's agenda!

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