

New Australian Marine Research Vessel under Construction

Construction of Australia's new AUD120 million Marine National Facility research vessel, *Investigator*, began in Singapore on 30th January 2012. Australia's ocean territory is the third largest in the world and includes unique biodiversity and valuable resources, and marine science is critical for the sustainable management of ocean assets.

The Executive Director of the Future Research Vessel Project at CSIRO, Toni Moate, who attended the steel cutting ceremony in Singapore, said the 93.6 metre research vessel would be capable of conducting marine research from Australia's coastal waters to the Antarctic ice edge and to the tropical waters to the north.

The contract to design, build and commission the vessel was awarded to Teekay Holdings Australia, which partnered with the Sembawang Shipyard in Singapore because of its track record and commitment to new technologies and innovation. Ms. Moate said that the equipment on board the new world-class vessel will be capable of mapping the seafloor six kilometres below the surface, conducting deep water coring to 24 metres and she will have the latest satellite communications technology. She also will for the first time allow Australian scientists to carry out advanced atmospheric research on board the Marine National Facility.

Investigator will be operated by CSIRO and will be available to all Australian marine scientists. It replaces the existing Marine National Facility ship, *Southern Surveyor*, which is 40 years old.