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National Collaborative Research Infrastructure Strategy (NCRIS): The Australian roadmap – State of advancement

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BACKGROUND

National Collaborative Research Infrastructure Strategy (NCRIS)

- Embodies principles recommended by National Research Infrastructure Taskforce (2003)
- Builds on previous investments under the Major National Research Facilities programme and the Systemic Infrastructure Initiative
- Announced in the 2004-05 Budget as part of the *Backing Australia's Ability: Building Our Future Through Science and Innovation* package
- \$542 million funding available from 2004-05 to 2010-11

PROGRESS TO DATE

- NCRIS Committee appointed by Minister for high level oversight
- Roadmap released February 2006 identifies principles and priority areas for infrastructure investment
- Facilitators worked with research community to develop collaborative investment plans
- Funding for first nine major areas of investment announced November 2006, with three others funded provisionally
- Funding agreements are currently being negotiated
- Facilitators are developing investment plans for the provisionally funded areas

NCRIS Principles

- Focus infrastructure investment:
 - Address National Research Priorities
 - Target world-class research strengths
- Develop major research facilities
 - National collaborative basis
 - Involve key institutions & groups
 - Available to serve wider research needs
- Improve access to infrastructure
 - Stewardship, obligations, rights
- Consider whole-of-life costs and operational funding as appropriate

NCRIS Investments

Funding for the investments under the NCRIS Programme was approved by the Minister on 27 November 2006

Already allocated and underway

- Evolving Biomolecular Platforms & Informatics \$50m
- Integrated Biological Systems \$40m
- Characterisation \$48m
- Fabrication Nanotechnology \$41m
- Biotechnology Products \$35m
- Networked Biosecurity Framework \$25m
- Optical and Radio Astronomy \$45m
- Integrated Marine Observing System \$55m
- Structure & Evolution of Australian Continent \$43m
- Platforms for Collaboration (ICT investments) \$75m

Provisional Allocation

- Population Health and Clinical Data Linkages \$20m
- Terrestrial Ecosystems Research Network \$20m
- Associate Membership of European Molecular Biology Laboratory (EMBL) \$ 3m

Reviewing the NCRIS programme & processes

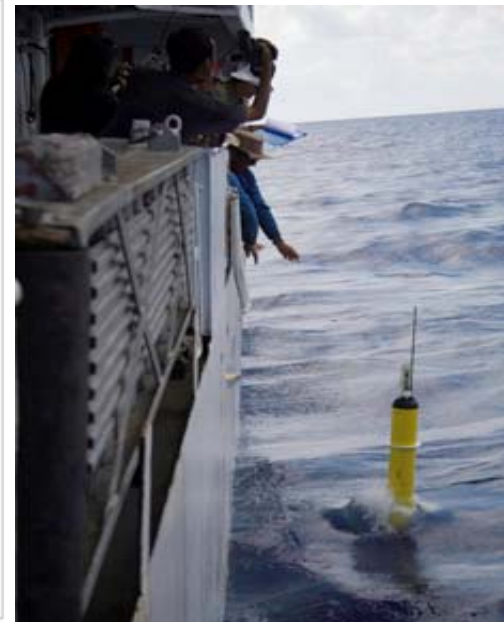
- **The NCRIS Evaluation Strategy provides a framework to assess the effectiveness, efficiency and appropriateness of the NCRIS programme**
 - Critically important – will influence the conduct of future collaborative funding processes for national research and research infrastructure
- **A focused *Review of NCRIS Processes* in early 2007 surveyed key stakeholders to assess the Roadmap and Facilitation processes so far**
- **A major (mid-programme) Review is scheduled for 2009 and will draw upon:**
 - The 2007 *Review of NCRIS Processes*
 - Progress Reports from grant recipients
 - Surveys of stakeholders including research facility managers and end-users (researchers)

Stakeholder views of NCRIS outcomes

- Strategic approach generally understood and supported by researchers and key stakeholders
 - NCRIS is catalysing a collaborative business and research culture across institutions, jurisdictions, disciplines, but some competitive attitudes and self-interest persisted during the roadmapping phase
- Strong engagement, co-investment (\$640M to date)
 - esp. States and Territories, research agencies (CSIRO, ANSTO), universities, and research communities previously collaborating
 - Resource allocation process was largely viewed as being transparent
- Need to strike a balance in targeting infrastructure funding:
 - Building on existing infrastructure and past investments and through co-investment by institutions and jurisdictions who can afford it
 - Addressing research needs of smaller players and regions in emerging areas of strategic or national importance
- Investment plans will deliver many high quality national/ collaborative facilities and networks
 - Also need effective merit-based access schemes, significant research project funding, leading researchers and facility management, and especially a high quality ICT infrastructure, such as that being provided through the NCRIS Platforms for Collaboration capability

IMOS: Integrated Marine Observing System

- Agreed research themes addressed by marine science community working collaboratively.
- Investments in data gathering infrastructure
- Data to be freely accessible to all researchers



Platforms for Collaboration

- Will provide the research community with the ICT platforms to generate, share, analyse, store and retrieve information
- AeRIC: Australian e-Research Infrastructure Council
 - Will oversee PfC, ensure world class services are identified and delivered to support effective eResearch within / across disciplines and gather input from a broadly inclusive e-Research Forum
- National Data Management Infrastructure Component
- National Computational Infrastructure Component
- Interoperation and Collaboration Infrastructure Component
- Australian Access Federation (AAF)
- Australian Research and Education Network (AREN)

Australian Square Kilometre Array (SKA) Pathfinder

- The SKA – a planned EUROS 1 billion radio telescope
- An iconic global science project
- A strategic priority for Europe and Australia
- SKA to be built in Australia or South Africa
- NCRIS is contributing to a \$120 million Australian SKA Pathfinder (ASKAP) telescope
- European participation in ASKAP is welcome

The Higher Education Endowment Fund

- New \$5 billion endowment for higher education announced in 2007-08 Budget
- Estimated \$300 million per year available for investment in university capital and research facilities
- The Australian Government intends to make further contribution to the Fund in 2008-09
- Details of the scheme will be developed over the next few months.

NCRIS - Further Information

More information on NCRIS, can be found at:

<http://www.ncris.dest.gov.au/>