

Submission by the Australian Marine Sciences Association Inc. (AMSA) on the ISA 2030 Strategic Plan Issues Paper

The Australian Marine Sciences Association (AMSA) is pleased to provide a submission on the 2030 Strategic Plan Issues Paper by Innovation and Science Australia (ISA). AMSA welcomed the National Science Statement released in March 2017 and the vision laid out in it, and suggests that the 2030 Strategic Plan for Innovation and Science in Australia is guided by this National Science Statement. The Issues Paper raises, however, multiple concerns about the ability of the Strategic Plan to help achieve the vision.

AMSA is Australia's largest professional society of marine scientists with over 800 members nationwide. AMSA actively promotes the advancement of marine sciences in Australia and engages in public debate where it has specialist knowledge. Its members work across research agencies, universities, museums, government departments, and the private sector, and have expertise spanning all disciplines related to marine sciences. AMSA provides science based position papers and statements on marine issues and throughout its over 50 year history, has been influential in the development of marine science policy in Australia. AMSA is also a member of the National Marine Science Committee.

1. Feedback on the challenges

a) Are they the right ones?

The 2030 Strategy is meant to guide investment, facilitate conversation between players in the innovation, science and research system, and describe what this system will look like in 2030. It is not apparent how the six challenges were derived, why they were selected, or why they appear in this sequence.

The Issues Paper is missing the opportunity to relate back to the National Science Statement. The four objectives laid out to realise the Government's vision (page 12–13 in the Statement) can be taken as challenges, as the system should deliver on achieving them. We recommend to replace the challenges from the Issues Paper with challenges around (i) engaging all Australians with science, (ii) building scientific capability and skills, (iii) producing new research, knowledge and technologies, and (iv) improving and enriching Australian's lives through science and research.

Due to these concerns about the challenges, we are not addressing any of the specific questions listed as "Issues for Discussion" under each of the challenges in the Issues Paper.

b) Have we missed something?

The Issues Paper has very little on environment and climate change. Climate change in particular should be added to the list of 'far-reaching impacts' Australia should respond to pro-actively. It is also a primary force behind trends and should be respectively added (page 4, 4th line first paragraph).

Environmental outcomes and benefits are mentioned throughout the National Science Statement, but not really addressed in the challenges of the Issues Paper. This includes also the unique problems around marine spatial planning and marine resource use, which need to be underpinned by solid scientific evidence. Marine resources will also change as a result of climate and development needs.

Overall, the Issues Paper appears very slim on science and how policies come from scientific facts that define policy followed by social and economic arguments to redefine and change policy.

On page 4, the future workforce will require a commitment to the diversity and equality of opportunity for all, as well as skills development.

c) How can we move forward from ideas to actions?

The Issues Paper is not revealing any plan and covers no aspects of funding.

Most of the Issues Paper has generic terms that need to be described better and then actions put forward to solve the problems and predictions of the future.

A revised version of the Issues Paper should be open for consultation again and further followed up by pro-active engagement with all stakeholders within the science sector.

2. Further comments

The Issues Paper commences with outlining megatrends, yet it is not clear why this is done, nor how it fits into achieving the vision. These megatrends are also not explaining why the following challenges were selected. AMSA thus suggests to delete them.

The language and terminology used in the Issues Paper is at times fuzzy. Expressions like 'innovation frontier', 'unleashed 'gazelles'', 'burning platform', "wave of destruction" are vague and not useful in a plan.

We look forward to commenting on the revised version of the Issues Paper. Please do not hesitate to contact AMSA if you require clarification on any specific points raised in this submission.

Kind regards,



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