

BUILDING OUR FUTURE: A NATIONAL PLAN FOR ECOSYSTEM SCIENCE

Dr Rebekah Christensen¹, Professor Stuart Phinn^{2,1}, A/Professor Glenda Wardle³, Professor Mark Westoby⁴, Professor Jason Beringer⁵, Professor Mike Bull⁶, Dr Margaret Byrne⁷, Dr Helen Cleugh⁸, Professor Kris French⁹, Professor Andrew Lowe^{10,1}, Professor Alan Andersen¹¹, Professor Bronwyn Harch¹², Professor Ary Hoffmann¹³, Tim Moltmann¹⁴, A/Professor Adrienne Nicotra¹⁵, Professor Andy Pitman¹⁶

¹Terrestrial Ecosystem Research Network, ²The University of Queensland, ³The University of Sydney, ⁴Macquarie University, ⁵The University of Western Australia, ⁶Flinders University, ⁷Department of Parks and Wildlife, ⁸CSIRO Marine and Atmospheric Research, ⁹The University of Wollongong, ¹⁰The University of Adelaide, ¹¹CSIRO Ecosystem Sciences, ¹²The Queensland University of Technology, ¹³The University of Melbourne, ¹⁴Integrated Marine Observing System, ¹⁵The Australian National University, ¹⁶The University of New South Wales

The need has never been greater for science to deliver the evidence, knowledge and skills to respond to the **current and future challenges facing Australia's ecosystems and society**. Australia has a proud history in the science that enables us to understand ecosystems. Still, a number of barriers have limited our ability to realise the full potential of this science and to implement effective, science-based management strategies and policies.

The recently released long-term plan for Australian ecosystem science sets out the vision and priorities to overcome these barriers, and to build our national ecosystem science capability over the coming decades. This plan was built upon extensive consultation and input from people across the country, with key leadership from the ESA amongst a group of other peak organisations.

The six key directions outlined are: (1) Delivering maximum impact for Australia by enhancing science and end-user relationships; (2) Supporting long-term research through dedicated long-term funding; (3) Ecosystem surveillance through a systematic, national-scale monitoring system; (4) Making the most of data resources by enabling publication of, and access to ecosystem data; (5) Inspiring a generation and empowering the public with knowledge and opportunities; and (6) Encouraging and supporting enhanced leadership, coordination and collaboration for ecosystem science in Australia.

A series of actions for each direction is proposed for the next five years, to kick-start progress towards the long-term vision. This presentation will highlight the opportunities for people to be actively involved in implementing these actions to build the foundations of our future.

Rebekah Christensen works for the Terrestrial Ecosystem Research Network, and is interested in increasing the impact of science for the benefit of society. Over the last year she has coordinated activities for the development of Australia's long-term plan for ecosystem science.