



Australian Government

Chief Scientist

19 July 2021

Committee Secretary
Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works
PO Box 6021
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Committee Secretary,

I am writing this letter to support the construction of the National Collections Building at Black Mountain Science and Innovation Park, ACT. Reason for my support are:

- CSIRO's National Research Collections Australia (NRCA) in Canberra comprise over 13 million specimens in four collections, representing 240 years of data and approximately 20% of all biological collections in Australia.
- The NRCA biological collections are significant national biological research infrastructure that underpin research and innovation in agriculture, biosecurity, biodiversity, human health and climate change.
- The project will co-locate all CSIRO-managed Canberra-based Collections into a precinct environment on the Black Mt Science site.
- The investment by NCRIS and CSIRO in the National Research Collections Building will ensure the long-term preservation and availability of these irreplaceable specimens through provision of specialist storage conditions.
- The precinct will deliver the next generation of biodiversity research facilities that incorporate curation, technical, digitisation, science and interaction spaces that support and enhance access and collections use, thus enabling CSIRO and its national and international research collaborators to better deliver fundamental and applied science for national benefit.
- In particular, the development of new state-of-the-art genomics and digitisation labs will unlock new information from the specimens and accelerate the sharing of this data with the innovation sector. These labs will also support the adoption of new artificial intelligence/machine learning methods of curating and analysing the specimens.

This new building has an important role to play for the safeguarding of our precious collections that hold so much information for future generations as well as for current researchers.

Yours sincerely

A solid black rectangular box used to redact the handwritten signature of Dr Catherine P. Foley.

Dr Catherine P. Foley AO PSM