

Recommendations

Recommendation 1

2.29 The committee recommends that the government reaffirms the primacy of the Antarctic Treaty System to Australia's sovereignty and national interests, and continues to support and resource Australia's robust engagement in Antarctic Treaty processes and fora in the pursuit and promotion of those interests.

Recommendation 2

2.32 The committee recommends that Antarctic and Southern Ocean issues be a standing theme for Australian ministers and officials in relevant multilateral and bilateral diplomatic discussions, particularly those with our Asian neighbours, and that Australia continues to seek all possible opportunities for constructive, practical cooperation with other nations engaging in that region.

Recommendation 3

3.50 The committee recommends that Australia commits to re-commencing maritime patrolling in the Southern Ocean, including a minimum of two 40-day patrols by the *Ocean Shield* in the 2014-15 and 2015-16 financial years.

Recommendation 4

3.53 The committee recommends that Australia explores the possibility of concluding new agreements with neighbouring and like-minded countries to cooperate in patrol and deterrence in the Southern Ocean, based upon the example of the arrangements presently in place with France.

Recommendation 5

3.57 The committee recommends that the government actively investigates the potential for further use of non-vessel technologies, including consideration of the potential application of new Defence assets, to support law enforcement and border patrolling in the Southern Ocean.

Recommendation 6

3.78 The committee recommends that the government commits to continued funding of the Southern Ocean Research Partnership for at least a further five years beyond the completion of the current funding in 2015.

Recommendation 7

3.79 The committee recommends that Australia prioritises the active pursuit of further diplomatic discussions with Japan about its future whale research plans, including extending a formal invitation to Japan to join the Southern Ocean Research Partnership.

Recommendation 8

4.19 The committee recommends that researching the impact of changes in the Southern Ocean on the Australian and global climate remain a strategic priority in Australia's future planning and resourcing of scientific research.

Recommendation 9

4.20 The committee recommends that Australia continues its advocacy for the establishment by CCAMLR of new Marine Protected Areas in the waters of East Antarctica.

Recommendation 10

4.60 The committee recommends that an immediate commitment be made by the government to continue funding for Antarctic and Southern Ocean scientific research beyond the sunset dates of existing collaborative initiatives in 2017 and 2019.

4.61 The committee further recommends that appropriate funding for Antarctic and Southern Ocean science be assured through a commitment in the Budget process to a funding cycle reflecting, and integrated with, the ten-year cycle of the Australian Antarctic Science Strategic Plan, and in line with Recommendation 13.

Recommendation 11

4.63 The committee recommends that future allocation of research funding for Antarctica and the Southern Ocean include specific funds to support young and early-career scientists, in recognition of Australia's comparative advantage in maintaining world-class scientific expertise in these fields into the future.

4.64 The committee further recommends that government agencies and scientific research organisations, particularly the science community based in Tasmania, work to develop a program of mentoring to facilitate information-sharing and professional support between experienced and retired scientists and those commencing in the field.

Recommendation 12

4.74 The committee recommends that resources be dedicated to the development and implementation of a Southern Ocean mapping program, as a whole-of-government initiative under the guidance and coordination of Geoscience Australia, and that such a strategy be included in future decisions about the allocation of funding and vessel time.

Recommendation 13

5.20 The committee endorses Recommendation 28 of the 20 Year Australian Antarctic Strategic Plan, proposing a comprehensive review of the budget and resourcing needs of the Australian Antarctic Division, and recommends that this be adopted and undertaken by the government as soon as practicable.

Recommendation 14

5.52 The committee recommends that all options be examined including that budgetary allocation be provided to restore the ability of the RV Investigator to spend its optimum 300 days per year at sea, in support of Australian and international scientific research.

Recommendation 15

5.56 The committee recommends that an interagency working group be established to review Australia's current and proposed marine assets and their utilisation, and to explore the potential costs and benefits of a national fleet approach to the acquisition and management of Australian vessels.

5.57 Taking into account Recommendation 17, the committee further recommends that the working group should commission and draw on an independent expert study of Australia's requirements for effective patrol, surveillance and research including in the Southern Ocean and Antarctic waters, the ability of existing national maritime assets to meet those requirements, significant gaps in capacity, and possible best-practice models for the management and coordination of national maritime assets to meet Australia's needs.

Recommendation 16

5.60 The committee recommends that CSIRO and the Australian Antarctic Division work on a streamlined and integrated approach to the management of scientific research proposals requiring vessel time in the Southern Ocean and Antarctic waters, to ensure the efficient and appropriate use of vessels.

Recommendation 17

5.79 The committee recommends that the Commonwealth government and the Government of Tasmania work together on the development and implementation of a dedicated strategy for maximising Tasmania's potential as an Antarctic Gateway, including joint investment toward the upgrading of Hobart's port and other key infrastructure, and drawing upon the recommendations made in the 20 Year Australian Antarctic Strategic Plan.

Recommendation 18

5.95 The committee recommends that the government considers options for further strengthening whole-of-government coordination in the pursuit and promotion of Australia's national interests in Antarctica and the Southern Ocean, including the appointment of an Australian Antarctic and Southern Ocean Ambassador to coordinate whole-of-government policy and to provide senior leadership for the promotion of Australia's interests and role domestically and internationally.

