

## ***Southern Surveyor* clears the deck for *Investigator***

**Australia's Marine National Facility research vessel, *RV Southern Surveyor*, is to be sold by open tender on the international market, in the lead up to the arrival of its replacement, *RV Investigator*.**



Credit: CSIRO

Since 2002, Australia's marine science community has relied upon *Southern Surveyor* to conduct research from the Southern Ocean to the waters off the coast of East Timor, and deep into the Indian and Pacific Oceans.

The Director of the Marine National Facility, Ron Plaschke, said the research achievements onboard *Southern Surveyor* have not only been to Australia's benefit, but also understanding the global importance of our surrounding seas and oceans.

'*Southern Surveyor* has made a major contribution to Australia's blue-water research effort,' Mr Ron Plaschke said.

On board *Southern Surveyor*, scientists from a diverse range of universities, institutions and government organisations have, among many other things:

1. Discovered massive submarine volcanoes between Fiji and Samoa, offering evidence of mineral deposits such as copper, zinc and lead. This research is helping us understand the origins of our continent and how geological resources are formed, which in turn guides exploration activities.
2. Played an important role in the development and recovery of buoys as part of the Australia Tsunami Warning System.
3. Deployed the Integrated Marine Observing System (IMOS) moorings in the oceans around Australia, which have

been pivotal in collecting data for Australian and international weather and climate research.

4. Observed changes to our ocean currents that influence rainfall, weather patterns and in turn fisheries, from the Indian, to the Pacific and Southern Oceans and also helped to uncover the southward movement of the East Australian Current.
5. Mapped our seafloor: only 12 per cent of Australia's Exclusive Economic Zone has been mapped.
6. Discovered the final resting places of historically significant shipwrecks, like the *MV Limerick* and *HMAS Australia*.

‘The 42-year-old *Southern Surveyor* is a former North Sea trawler converted into a research vessel and, while being well maintained, the ability to carry a wide range of scientific equipment and larger scientific teams is becoming increasingly limiting,’ Ron Plaschke said.

‘It will be a sad day when *Southern Surveyor* is sold and departs from Hobart, but there is growing excitement about the upcoming arrival of the replacement vessel, *Investigator*.’

The Marine National Facility (MNF) is a blue-water research capability, funded by the Australian Government and operated by CSIRO. In 2009 the Australian Government committed \$120 million to design and build a new research vessel for Australia's Marine National Facility.

Source: CSIRO

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