



Australian Government

Chief Scientist

MEDIA RELEASE

Date: 13 May 2014

SCIENCE – THE PLATFORM TO BUILD SUSTAINED GROWTH

Australia's Chief Scientist Professor Ian Chubb has expressed disappointment at cuts in the Federal Budget that will have an impact on our capacity in science and on the many areas of the economy that depend on science.

“While I recognise that no area of Government expenditure is immune from savings, I am concerned about the impact these reductions could have on our overall capacity in science.”

“I do recognise the government's increased funding for the OPAL nuclear reactor, the CSIRO's research vessel *RV Investigator*, as well as its commitment to the National Collaborative Research Infrastructure Strategy and putting the Future Fellowships program for mid-career researchers onto a continuing basis; these are decisions to be applauded”. Professor Chubb said.

“Of course the Medical Research Future Fund is a great initiative. Hopefully it signals that Australian research across the full spectrum will achieve the recognition that it deserves as we seek to build the platform we need to sustain growth.”

Professor Chubb said the changes in science funding offered the opportunity to develop a whole-of-government strategy for reinvestment.

“If we are to ‘shape the destiny of our nation’ and achieve sustained economic growth, we need a plan to underpin our investment in science. It is vital that we identify what our national needs are, what our research priorities are, and where we have advantages that we can use. Too often for too long we start and then stop; science is a long-term investment and needs a degree of certainty to prosper.”

Professor Chubb said other countries were already investing strategically in science – for the long haul.

“The United Kingdom, the EU, Canada, the United States, China, South Korea, and many, many other countries around the globe, have all prioritised science funding as an important foundation for future sustained growth.”

“Building a stronger, more prosperous Australia requires us to commit to a long-term science agenda. A resilient advanced economy requires great research, skilled people, competitive technology and adaptive industries,” he said. “They are all connected and a decent strategy would make sure that they are connected better than ever. I look forward to working with the Government to develop an action plan for science that will position Australia to advantage.”

Media enquiries: Mick Bunworth 02 6102 8179 or 0410 029 407

Mick.Bunworth@chiefscientist.gov.au