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The Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) plans to terminate one hundred of its world-class climate scientists. The leadership of the international research project on Climate and Ocean – Variability, Predictability and Change (CLIVAR) is alarmed by this development.

CLIVAR is one of the four core projects of the World Climate Research Programme, which is sponsored by the World Meteorological Organization, the International Council for Science and the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. CLIVAR facilitates international synergy in observing, analysing, and predicting changes in the Earth's climate system. CLIVAR identifies and regularly updates the major scientific climate research priorities, channelling international efforts towards addressing the associated gaps.

The tremendous progress in our understanding of the climate system has resulted from internationally-coordinated measurement, modelling, and analysis programs. Yet the climate system is highly complex and many uncertainties remain. Improved climate prediction at the regional scale is a top priority of CLIVAR. However, to deliver on this promise, climate scientists must continually strive to improve their process understanding of the climate system: this can only happen through sustained global observational and numerical modelling programs. The current record breaking El Niño event illustrates the strategic importance of continued investment in climate research, given that it is driving widespread drought in Australia, as well as extensive coral bleaching along the Great Barrier Reef.

Any reductions in climate research capacity at this time of on-going climate change would come at great cost to Australia and the global society at large. The climate scientists within CSIRO are recognized as world leaders, and have made critical contributions. Our CSIRO colleagues have unique expertise in:

- Interannual to decadal climate variability and impacts on Australia
- Southern Ocean observations, modelling and analysis
- The Australian global climate model, known as ACCESS, which has featured prominently in Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)

climate change assessments

- Climate change impacts and adaptation in the Southern Hemisphere, including the Pacific islands and Australia

Much of the expertise at CSIRO is irreplaceable. International climate research and coordination, application, and decision-making rely heavily on CSIRO expertise through contributions and memberships in CLIVAR panels and IPCC assessment reports.

Terminating this team of researchers would come at great risk, doing irreversible damage to the programs, knowledge and expertise built up over many decades of joint Australian and international collaboration. This would be a tremendous loss to CLIVAR and to the IPCC. It would isolate Australia for the years to come from climate research and climate information, as they continue to evolve on international level, with unmeasurable negative implications for Australia. The CLIVAR Scientific Steering Group and Panel Co-Chairs are seriously concerned for the future of climate research, should the proposed CSIRO terminations occur.



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CLIVAR Scientific Steering Group Co-Chairs

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CLIMATE & OCEAN

Variability, Predictability and Change

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