

MEDIA RELEASE

NEWS FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA

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ATTENTION: Chiefs of Staff, News Directors



Research clouds and virtual laboratories – welcome to the future!

The University of Tasmania is set to play a significant role in the next-stage development of Australia's digital research infrastructure. UTAS has been awarded two projects worth more than \$2 million to establish new computing and modelling facilities that will revolutionise the capability of scientists to undertake computational studies.

Through a \$47 million Federal Government initiative called NeCTAR (National eResearch Collaboration Tools and Resources), UTAS will be allocated up to \$900,000 to establish a Tasmanian Research Cloud Node, and \$1.3 million for a Marine Virtual Laboratory.

UTAS will work with CSIRO, the Australian Antarctic Division and the State Government, along with a range of national and international partners, in establishing these facilities.

"This is a fantastic vote of confidence in our research capability," the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research), Professor Paddy Nixon, said today.

"For UTAS and its partners to receive one of four national research clouds and one of five virtual laboratories awarded in this round is testament to the quality of our science and the strength of our collaborations."

Professor Nathan Bindoff, of the Institute for Marine and Antarctic Studies, who as Director for the Tasmanian Partnership for Advanced Computing led the Research Cloud proposal development, said: "Cloud computing is flexible, on-demand computing that can instantaneously deliver hundreds to thousands of processors to solve research questions.

"When mixed with data from ocean observing systems, climate simulations or sensor networks such as SenseT, researchers can discover and explore the science, more thoroughly, more insightfully and test more ideas better than before. This is exciting stuff.

"Cloud computing is also more efficient resource use, lowers the overall cost of doing science and empowers the national researchers in knowledge discovery."

Professor Nixon, who is on the Advisory Board of the UTAS-based Integrated Marine Observing System, which led the Marine Virtual Laboratory proposal, said: "Australia has a fantastic marine observing system and data network in place, and pockets of outstanding numerical modelling capability in all of the participating institutions. However we've lacked an experimental context in which to bring these things together at national scale.

"The Marine Virtual Laboratory will allow researchers to define a part of the ocean in time and space, and access these observations, data and models to run experiments from their desktop. What a great time to be a young marine scientist in Australia!"

The Research Cloud and Marine Virtual Laboratory will complement one another, and build on a Research Data Storage Node established earlier this year through a related Australian Government program.

The University of Melbourne is leading the NeCTAR program on behalf of the Department of Industry, Innovation, Science, Research and Tertiary Education. It is part of the Australian Government's Super Science initiative and financed by the Education Investment Fund.

Information released by:

**The Media Office, University of Tasmania
Phone: (03) 6226 8518; 0429 336 328 (Peter Cochrane)
Email: Media.Office@utas.edu.au**

