

MEDIA RELEASE

NEWS FROM THE INSTITUTE FOR MARINE AND ANTARCTIC STUDIES

DATE: SATURDAY 17 MAY 2014

ATTENTION: Chiefs of Staff, News Directors

A call for deep ocean stewardship

The world's deep ocean spans more than two-thirds of the planet, and untold quantities of untapped energy and mineral resources reside in its depths. Humankind needs and depends upon many of the deep ocean's treasures, and the race is already on to exploit them.

In the May 16 issue of *Science*, Environmental Law Institute's [Ocean Program](#) Co-Director, Dr. Kathryn Mengerink, and co-authors call for stewardship of the world's largest living space—striking a balance between wise use of vast resources and maintaining the deep ocean's delicate ecological balance—now, before permanent loss occurs.

Co-author Dr Ana Lara-Lopez, from the University of Tasmania's Institute for Marine and Antarctic Studies, said the deep ocean remains largely unexplored.

“What we have seen reveals vastly diverse life forms and habitats important to the health of our planet. Slow growing species are the norm, and some ecosystems once injured may never recover.

“Technological advances have greatly improved access to the deep ocean and the resources it holds. We need to move from a frontier mentality and looking at sectors in isolation to a precautionary system.”

Dr Lara-Lopez said the paper proposes an approach to deep ocean stewardship built on protection and mitigation, research, and collaborative governance.

“The deep ocean faces mounting challenges and the importance of getting stewardship right will only grow,” Dr Lara-Lopez said.

“It is vital that scientists and the community, here in Tasmania and around the world, engage in the debate.”

The ideas for the paper arose during an inaugural meeting of the Deep Ocean Stewardship Initiative (DOSI), an initiative designed to bring natural and social

scientists, regulators, the private sector, and civil society together to provide guidance on environmental management of the deep ocean.

The J.M. Kaplan Fund and the International Network for Scientific Investigation of deep-sea ecosystems (INDEEP), through a grant from The Total Foundation, have supported development of the DOSI.

Information released on behalf of IMAS by:
The Media Office, University of Tasmania
Phone: (03) 6226 2124
Email: Media.Office@utas.edu.au

