

Australia would firstly like to strongly endorse, formally, the GEO Strategic Plan 2015-2025 and thanks all involved in the process of preparing this important guiding document for the next ten years of GEO.

Australia particularly supports the increased focus in the strategic plan on actively facilitating the dialogue between Earth Observation providers and users, and sees that GEO has a crucial role to play in demonstrating the potential of Earth observations to directly measure a number of the UN Sustainable Development Goals, and so assist society to chart a path to a sustainable future.

Australia has been an active participant and contributor to GEO for the last decade and intends continuing this for the next ten years. In this spirit, Australia pledges to contribute \$75,000 Australian dollars to the GEO trust fund for 2016. Of course, not all contributions are financial and Australia remains committed to assisting GEOs mission in a number of other ways. I will quickly mention a couple of areas where we are actively contributing.

Australia is working closely with other GEO Members through the Committee on Earth Observation Satellites (CEOS) in progressing the development of Next Generation Architectures for Earth Observation Data building on the work already demonstrated by the Australian Geoscience Data Cube. These efforts hold enormous promise in significantly lowering the technical barrier to user uptake of Earth observation information and will end up making Earth observation information truly accessible to policy makers and end-users in both the public and private sector.

Australia recognizes the critical importance of ocean observations in our region and is actively supporting the Blue Planet initiative of GEO. We hosted the Blue Planet Symposium in Cairns during May 2015 which was an important meeting to allow the oceans community to consider how to respond to the GEO transitional Work plan. Australia is also active in co-chairing the GEO Global water quality community of practice,

Australia is thankful for our strong partnerships with other key GEO members in the collection and delivery of Earth observations across our Southern continent and would particularly like to thank the United States (for our longstanding partnership around the Landsat Programme), Japan for our strong engagement around Himawari 8, and most recently the growing relationship with the European Commission around the Copernicus Programme.

GEO provides an important forum for social intercourse between Members and Participating Organisations to nurture and develop these important initiatives and relationships, and Australia would like to urge that we redouble our efforts over the next ten years to Advocate for, Engage with and Deliver on the promise of Earth Observations in creating tangible benefits for our global society.