

## **Australian Government statement on the themes of the eight interactive dialogues**

Australia supports the proposed themes of the eight interactive dialogues.

Our statement relates to the importance of taking stock of progress towards the SDG 14 targets in June.

As we are all well aware, we are five years in to the 2030 agenda – a third of the way through. Four of the SDG 14 targets are due to mature this year – and we understand we are likely to miss some, if not all, of those targets. We want to emphasise how imperative it is that we take stock of our progress as we move into the decade of action – why are we not on track to meet our targets, and how can we correct course?

We would like to see the concept notes for the dialogues highlight the importance of taking stock – and we propose that *each* of the eight interactive dialogues include a guiding question on taking stock – that means examining the sufficiency of existing actions, and the barriers to success, as well as opportunities and solutions.

Hearing views on what the barriers to success are and how to overcome them would be incredibly useful in helping us understand the transformations that are needed to deliver on our agenda.

Noting the theme of this year's conference, participants could consider how science and innovation can help us overcome barriers to success. We should take a broad interpretation of science to include all relevant fields – biophysical, social, economic, human behavioural, and systems integration. Similarly, we need innovation not only in data and technology, but in policy, governance and in finance.

Taking stock of progress will provide an opportunity to reflect, to share lessons, and reorient and reinvigorate action for this critical decade. And it is a way in which the UN Ocean Conference to demonstrate its value add and credibility.