



"But understanding exactly what's happening is difficult due to the complexity of the stressors affecting phytoplankton, the size and regional diversity of the Southern Ocean, and the logistical challenges of conducting research there.

"While the changes in phytoplankton might happen quite quickly they'll take a very long time to reverse.

"Although it's currently unknown whether the rate of environmental change will outpace the ability of Southern Ocean phytoplankton to adapt, it is inevitable that changes in the Southern Ocean will influence the food chain there, the ocean biogeochemistry, and feedback on climate," Ms Deppeler said.

The full research paper is available at