



Australian Government



AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE
OF MARINE SCIENCE

Corporate Plan 2024 – 2025

AIMS Corporate Plan 2024-25

The Australian Institute of Marine Science is Australia's tropical marine research agency. We provide world-class research that helps governments, industry and the community make informed decisions on the management of Australia's marine estate.

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Cover Image: Marie Roman

Contacts

Townsville, Queensland
PMB No. 3, Townsville MC Qld 4810
Telephone: 07 4753 4444
Facsimile: 07 4772 5852

Darwin, Northern Territory
PO Box 41775, Casuarina NT 0811
Telephone: 08 8920 9240
Facsimile: 07 8920 9222

Perth, Western Australia
Indian Ocean Marine Research Centre - Level 3
The University of Western Australia
64 Fairway
Crawley WA 6009
Telephone: 08 6369 4000

Canberra, Australian Capital Territory
Suite G7,
65 Canberra Avenue
Griffith ACT 2603
Telephone: 07 4753 4444

The Australian Institute of Marine Science acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the land and sea on which we work. We recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as Australia's first scientists and acknowledge the unique relationships and enduring cultural and spiritual connection that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have to land and sea, and pay our respects to Elders past, present and future.

We particularly recognise the Traditional Owners of the land on which our main laboratory and office bases are located: the Bindal and Wulgurukaba peoples in Townsville, the Larrakia people in Darwin, the Noongar people in Perth, and the Ngunnawal people in Canberra. We also recognise and pay our respects to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders who are Traditional Owners of the areas of our marine science operations across tropical northern Australia.

1. Introduction

1.1 Chair of Council's Foreword

On behalf of the Council of the Institute of Marine Science and as Chair, I am delighted to introduce the AIMS 2024-25 Corporate Plan. Consistent with its functions under the *Australian Institute of Marine Science Act 1972* (the Australian Institute of Marine Science (AIMS) Act), the Corporate Plan outlines AIMS' strategy for conducting scientific research and delivering knowledge that contributes to the economic and environmental wellbeing of Australians. This includes protecting the Great Barrier Reef, conserving our oceans and marine parks, partnering with First Nations people, and supporting a stronger Pacific family.

AIMS' research is focused on innovation to improve the quality of our science to deliver benefit to the nation. We collaborate with stakeholders and partners to turn our science into solutions, build effective, evidence-based decision-support systems, and embed new technologies and data science into our core capabilities. We partner with First Nations people, creating genuine opportunities and positive outcomes for the Traditional Custodians of the land and sea Country on which we work. Australia's First Nations people have a deep and continuing cultural connection to Sea Country and collectively, we are guardians of many of the world's most important marine ecosystems including World Heritage-listed coral reefs.

Australia's marine estate is the third largest globally. AIMS provides trusted advice on the state of our unique tropical marine ecosystems. Managing a healthy tropical marine estate is not just about protecting species and habitats; it is about preserving nature's capacity to deliver goods, services, and livelihoods, as well as the community's social and cultural values. The AIMS Index of Marine Industry 2023 valued our 'blue economy' at \$118.5 billion and 462,000 jobs, demonstrating the importance of our marine estate in Australia's current and future prosperity. Our research supports all who value and derive benefit from our oceans to make evidence-based decisions.

We acknowledge the contributions of Jeanette Roberts and Dr Thomas Barlow who retired from the Council during the



IMAGE: CAMERON LAIRD

past year, we are pleased to welcome three new members, Patricia Kelly, Professor Peter Steinberg, and Steve Duffield. In February 2024, the Council was excited to welcome Professor Selina Stead, our new CEO. Building on AIMS' strong foundations, Professor Stead will enhance AIMS' delivery of independent high quality marine science to benefit ocean health, society, the economy and quality of life for people at local, state, national and global levels. In April 2024, the Council also welcomed Dr Cass Hunter as an adviser to the Council, providing the perspectives of an active younger researcher and a First Nations woman in our discussions.

AIMS' success and the delivery of this Corporate Plan is built on our people. Our focus is a safe, inclusive, and sustainable work environment for the benefit of all our staff, partners, collaborators, and visitors. Safety is one of our core values; we work hard to continuously improve our safety-first culture and supportive procedures. In this exciting time of change for AIMS and as the new CEO embarks on a strategy refresh, our people are at the centre of our commitment to deliver high quality science in a collaborative and inclusive working environment for the benefit of all Australians.

Dr Beth Woods OAM
Chair

1.2. Chief Executive Officer’s Foreword

As the new Chief Executive Officer of the Australian Institute of Marine Science (AIMS), I am honoured to share the AIMS 2024-25 Corporate Plan, which captures our mission, commitment and role. This Plan is prepared for 2024-25 and covers the next five years to 2028-29. It is a requirement under paragraph 35(1)(b) of the Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013, and the Corporate Plan for Commonwealth Entities: Resource Management Guide No. 132.

The Government has outlined a number of priority areas in its recent budget with the cost of living on this island nation being the number one priority. With eighty-five per cent of Australians living on, or near, the coast, AIMS will focus on science where we can excel in supporting ocean resilience and security in fields of national importance such as blue carbon, climate change, coral reef biodiversity, data science, food security (aquaculture and fisheries), sustainable energy, threatened species, water quality, and new developments in state-of-the-art technologies (Reef Restoration and Adaptation Program). Our research focus will emphasise fundamental science, interdisciplinary collaboration and transdisciplinary partnerships with priority given to projects that demonstrate positive impact on health of oceans and people. We will evidence direct and indirect benefits to the cost of living in coastal communities we work and endeavour to make contributions to local, state and national challenges.

For more than 50 years, AIMS has been a trusted advisor and is committed to providing accurate, timely, and accessible communication of our research. We achieve this through our people, marine facilities and operations. AIMS is privileged to be the custodian of the National Sea Simulator (SeaSim), the only research aquarium of its type and scale in the world. Our research vessel fleet, the RV *Solander* and the RV *Cape Ferguson* rank as two of the top three most utilised research vessels in the world. The replacement for the RV *Apollo* – photographed on our front cover of this Corporate Plan – and funded through the 2023-24 Budget, will ensure we continue to have a high-quality near-shore capability when it enters service.

Our research will continue to deliver the evidence needed to inform decision-making, meet regulatory requirements and contribute to sustainably managing Australia’s marine estate for future generations. The current AIMS Strategy 2030 outlines our research and development efforts to support growth in Australia’s blue economy, contributing to national prosperity while delivering effective environmental management and protection of our unique tropical marine environment. Consistent with our Statement of Intent, our contributions have focused on:

- improving the health and resilience of marine and coastal ecosystems across northern Australia;
- creating economic, social, and environmental net benefits for marine industries, coastal communities, and First Nations Australians, and;
- protecting coral reefs and other marine ecosystems from the effects of climate change.



This Corporate Plan details how we will deliver on our long-term Strategy 2030 targets over the next five years. Particular areas of focus include:

- reef restoration and adaptation;
- embedding new technologies and data science into our core capabilities;
- strengthening our Indigenous Partnerships Program to ensure respectful collaboration with Sea Country, fostering genuine co-design and empowering Traditional Owner aspirations.

As the newly appointed CEO, I continue to be impressed by my colleagues’ and partners’ dedication to transform AIMS’ science into solutions for the benefit of Australians and the global community. We are committed to working with partners and stakeholders from various sectors, including science, industry, government, to jointly develop and deliver innovative solutions to present and future threats. Together, we have the skills, resources, and expertise needed to deliver positive impact for this island nation.

The success of this Corporate Plan relies on the passion, dedication, and collaboration of the AIMS community and as CEO, I am committed to providing a healthy and safe working environment. Having observed the influence of empowerment through our Indigenous Partnerships Team, AIMS promotes equity, diversity and inclusion through a values-based culture. AIMS will continue to strengthen relationships with First Nations people and weave Traditional Knowledge with western science for the benefit of all Australians.

As CEO, my priority over the next 12 months is to strengthen AIMS’ cohesive, comprehensive, and integrated strategy through a refresh of our research priorities and a review of organisation culture and structure. Using fundamental and applied science, long-term monitoring, and technological advancements, we will support rapid and scalable efforts in science innovation to safeguard Australia’s unique tropical marine ecosystems. This will ensure AIMS keeps Australia at the forefront of marine science and technology innovation.

Professor Selina Stead BSc, MSc, PhD
CEO

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1. Corporate Structure

The Australian Institute of Marine Science is a corporate Commonwealth entity established by the *Australian Institute of Marine Science Act 1972* (AIMS Act).

AIMS is accountable to the Minister for the Environment and Water and is governed by a Council that reports to the Minister. The Council, which meets every second month, sets our strategic direction and oversees the management of the Institute. The CEO is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the Institute.

The Council (as at 31 August 2024) comprises Dr Beth Woods OAM (Chair), Professor Simon Biggs (JCU Representative), Professor Selina Stead (AIMS CEO), Dr Erika Techera, Ms Patricia Kelly PSM, Professor Peter Steinberg and Mr Steve Duffield.

AIMS' enabling legislation is the AIMS Act and the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (PGPA Act).

2. Purpose

AIMS' purpose is articulated in its mission: to provide the research and knowledge of Australia's tropical marine estate required to support growth in its sustainable use, effective environmental management and protection of its unique ecosystems.

2.1 Strategic direction

In pursuing its mission, AIMS is working to deliver three key long-term impacts for the nation by 2030, measured by two impact targets.

Key Impacts	Impact Targets
Improve the health and resilience of marine and coastal ecosystems across northern Australia	At least \$200 million per annum in environmental, social and economic net benefits for tropical Australia Marine ecosystems in northern Australia are being regenerated or repaired
Create economic, social and environmental net benefits for marine industries and coastal communities	
Protect coral reefs and other tropical marine environments from the effects of climate change	

In pursuit of this goal, in 2024-25 AIMS will focus on delivering nine research outcomes:

- Baseline, status and trend data that are the trusted information base for stakeholder decisions;
- More information for stakeholders produced through autonomous and automated technologies and processes;
- Science that underpins conservation and management of threatened and endangered marine species;
- Models of environmental condition and function that are used to manage tropical marine ecosystems;
- Improved health for tropical marine ecosystems via AIMS' solutions that mitigate local, regional and cumulative pressures;
- Coral reef condition forecasts based on knowledge of recovery, acclimatisation and adaptation;

- Restoration science and scalable technologies that help coral reefs resist, adapt to, and recover from climate change impacts;
- Advanced data analysis workflows and knowledge delivery systems that improve stakeholder use of AIMS information; and
- Decision support tools that are used by stakeholders for management decisions and policies.

In addition, we will:

- Continue to implement the budget measure *Securing the Future of Australia's Marine Science*. This includes critical infrastructure upgrades, refurbishment of science facilities and replacing the research vessel *RV Apollo*;
- Continue to act as the managing entity and undertake research, in conjunction with consortium partners, to progress the Reef Restoration and Adaptation Program (RRAP).

2.2 Values

Our values support achieving our mission, guiding the behaviours and decision-making of our people.



Care for ourselves
and others in all that
we do



Together we create
impact



Treat everyone with
dignity, value diversity,
support others



Energy that inspires
excellence



Always transparent,
ethical and objective



Vision and creativity
to solve big
challenges



Minimise our
footprint

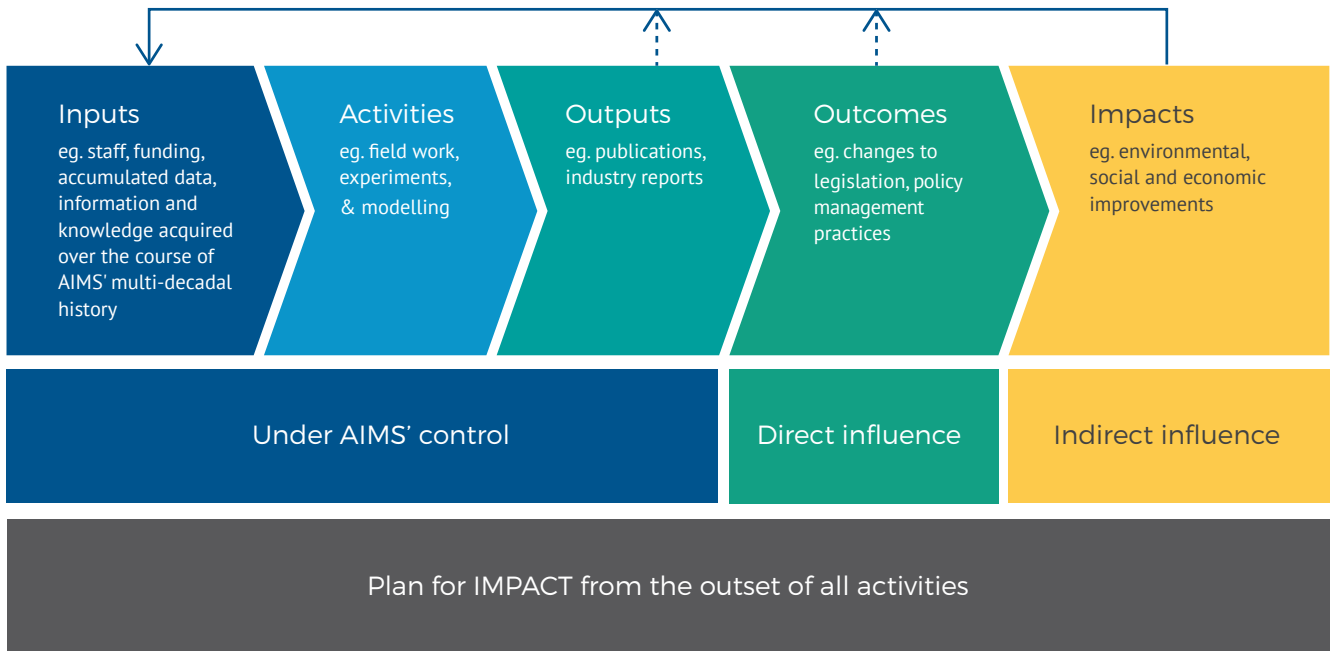
2.3 Driving towards impact

Guided by Strategy 2030, we focus on delivering impact by ensuring that:

- Project development is informed by engagement with users and stakeholders. This helps to maximise the likelihood that the resulting science will be taken up and deliver beneficial economic, environmental and social impact.
- Project results fill knowledge gaps that are actionable by stakeholders.
- Projects are discrete in time and scope and progress can be measured.
- A programmatic approach is taken where the suite of projects combine to achieve larger scientific outcomes with some projects directly feeding into others.
- Capability is leveraged by collaborating where appropriate. Opportunities for collaboration and longer-term strategic alignment are preferred.
- Projects with potential to deliver tangible benefits to Indigenous peoples are identified and developed in partnership with Sea Country traditional owners.
- We recognize that decision-making in marine science can be multifaceted, principally due to the inherent existence of trade-offs between sociopolitical, environmental and economic factors thus we adopt a systems thinking approach to local, state, national and global challenges.

2.4 Impact framework

To deliver impacts that support AIMS' mission in growing the sustainable, effective environmental management and protection of Australia's tropical marine ecosystems we take the following approach:



3. Operating Context

3.1 Environment

The marine research environment is complex, globally connected and affected by climate change and emerging technologies.

3.1.1 Legislative context

In addition to obligations under AIMS' enabling legislation, its operations are governed by a range of other Commonwealth, state and territory legislation including:

- Health, safety and environment obligations under the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* (Cwlth).
- Environmental obligations under the *Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (Cwlth), the *Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Act 1975* (Cwlth) and the *Fisheries Act 1994* (Qld).
- Information services obligations under the *Archives Act 1983* (Cwlth) and the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* (Cwlth).

Our primary obligations under the *AIMS Act 1972* (Cwlth) are:

- To carry out research and development (R&D) in relation to marine science and marine technology.
- To encourage and facilitate the non-commercial and commercial application of the results arising from such activities.

We provide fundamental knowledge of the marine environment that enables regulators and marine industries to make informed decisions and meet their regulatory requirements.

3.1.2 Marine science priorities

Biodiversity conservation and ecosystem health

Human activities and climate change threaten marine biodiversity, the natural functioning of marine ecosystems and their sustainable use by present and future generations. Marine biodiversity is challenged by multiple pressures that are rarely appreciated until their cumulative impact becomes evident. Understanding the cumulative impacts of these multiple stressors on warming marine ecosystems is drawn from AIMS' long term and large-scale monitoring of the Reef for more than 35 years. This knowledge has become increasingly important for the development of effective responses such as aquaculture conservation to conserve biodiversity and ecosystem health. Long-term ecological research and monitoring is also required to inform marine managers on the status and trends of key assets and values in ecosystems under management.

Urban coastal environments

More than 85 per cent of Australians live within 50 kilometres of the coast. As the location of most of

our transport, commercial, residential and defence infrastructure, this urban coastal environment is critical to Australia's strategic and economic security and fulfils important cultural, recreational and aesthetic needs. In addition, it has intrinsic biological diversity value and provides essential ecosystem functions such as primary productivity, nutrient cycling and water filtration. In a sustained period of pronounced economic development with a focus on resource extraction and infrastructure development – much of it centred on coastal hubs – the challenge for coastal managers and policy makers is to balance these multiple competing uses and their impacts. AIMS' scientific knowledge is fundamental to informing actions required to protect and conserve the marine estate.

Climate variability and change

Climate variability and change affects all aspects of society and both the marine and terrestrial environment. Heat, water, carbon and nutrients are the fundamental elements of the climate system, and the ocean is the dominant reservoir for all four constituents. To understand the climate system and its impact on society and the natural environment, we must be able to observe and model its oceanic branch including the storage and transport of heat, fresh water, nutrients and carbon in the ocean, and their exchange to the atmosphere and marine and terrestrial ecosystems, at global, regional and local scales. AIMS is the managing entity and a major research provider for the Reef Restoration and Adaptation Program (RRAP), which brings together Australia's leading experts to create an innovative suite of safe, acceptable interventions to help the Great Barrier Reef resist, adapt to and recover from the impacts of climate change.

Resource Allocation

Nowhere in Australia's marine estate is there a location that does not have multiple stakeholders. Sustainable use of these locations requires increased certainty about future trajectories and what natural and anthropogenic processes affect those trajectories. Making a decision on whether to take action or not, and what those actions might be and how best to use available resources, is becoming more critical for managing Australia's marine and coastal ecosystems and requires AIMS' knowledge and expertise delivered in a form that can be readily adopted by stakeholders.

3.1.3 Guiding documents

The following table provides information on the documents that guide how we approach activities that respond to marine science priorities and deliver outcomes for government, industry and community.

Guiding documents for delivering outcomes to government, industry and community

Guiding documents ¹	Requirement
Statement of Expectations	<p>As a publicly funded research agency, AIMS is required by its Act to respond to its Portfolio Minister.</p> <p><i>Our obligations are set out in a Statement of Expectations issued by the Minister, to which the AIMS Council responds with a Statement of Intent. This lays out and confirms AIMS' commitment to the Australian Government's policy agenda and the strong connections between this and the AIMS Strategy 2030.</i></p>
National science and research priorities	<p>The Australian Government has recently released the latest version of the National Science and Research Priorities after an extensive consultation exercise in which AIMS was engaged.</p> <p><i>Our core capability and research programs contribute strongly to several of the new National Science and Research Priorities.</i></p>
National science agenda and strategies	<p>We support the Australian Government's National Innovation and Science Agenda, the National Science Statement and the Innovation and Science Australia strategy document – Australia 2030: Prosperity Through Innovation.</p> <p><i>We particularly focus on fostering a strong national science and research base as the foundation for a competitive Australia.</i></p>
National Marine Science Plan	<p>AIMS has been a leader and core member of the National Marine Science Committee since its inception and is a strong advocate of the National Plan.</p> <p><i>AIMS is increasing its resourcing and effort directed to Resource Allocation, a pillar within Australia's National Marine Science Plan.</i></p>
Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)	<p>We support the SDGs of the United Nations including: (1) No poverty; (2) Zero hunger; (5) Gender equality; (8) Decent work and economic growth; (13) Climate action; (17) Partnerships for the Goals; and most notably (14) Life below water.</p> <p><i>Our partnerships deliver breakthrough scientific solutions to support the SDGs and help secure the future of fisheries and protect ecosystems and wildlife.</i></p>
2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific & Pacific Coral Reef Action Plan 2021-2030	<p>AIMS' activities in the Pacific are guided by the priorities, outcomes and approaches that have been articulated by Pacific peoples and leaders in the 2050 Strategy and the Coral Reef Action Plan.</p> <p><i>Our partnerships support the protection and sustainability of the ocean and the resilience and health of coral reef ecosystems. These crucial marine systems underpin Pacific economies and communities.</i></p>

3.1.4 Geographic considerations

AIMS operates primarily across the tropical north of Australia, from Ningaloo Reef in Western Australia to the Southern tip of the Great Barrier Reef in Queensland. This geographic specialisation is a result of focusing efforts on key tropical marine issues and opportunities.

We recognise the competitive advantage gained from the geographic location of our various centres – our Townsville headquarters is adjacent to the Great Barrier Reef and in a city that is recognised as a centre of coral reef research and management; Perth is the corporate hub for marine-based

industries that operate on the Western Australian coast and Timor Sea; and Darwin is close to neighbouring countries and development activities in the Arafura and Timor seas. It is also the centre for many Traditional Owner agencies and organisations operating across northern Australia.

AIMS extends its geographic reach internationally, particularly to the Pacific and Indian oceans, through partnerships and collaborative arrangements with other international marine science fora.

¹ As these guidance documents are updated by the Australian Government, AIMS will ensure its activities are aligned in order to deliver the best outcomes for government, industry and the community.

3.2 Capabilities

3.2.1 People

We take pride in the professionalism, capability and productivity of our people. AIMS employs approximately 440 science and support staff (including 40 under labour-hire arrangements) and another 47 in outsourced functions. Our scientists are on the ground and in the water, mapping, monitoring and collecting information on Australia's marine estate. They are in our labs, analysing data, modelling and pushing the boundaries of tropical marine science. Many of our scientists are international leaders in their field.

We maintain a strong educational program, particularly through postdoctoral fellowships co-funded with university and industry partners (between 20-25 at any one time) and PhD scholars (55) jointly funded and supervised in partnership with some of Australia's leading universities. AIMS also partners with universities to support Masters by research (4) and other higher education work experience programs. Core scientific expertise is supported by operational expertise. While focused on the delivery of scientific outcomes, we aim to raise foundation skills such as leadership, project management, stakeholder engagement and research communication.

The *Securing the Future of Australia's Marine Science* funding package announced by the Federal Government in April 2023 will add an additional 128 staff over the plan period. This will grow capability in three key areas: Science Technology Development, Science Technology Deployment and Traditional Owner partnerships. The resourcing also includes staffing to enable AIMS to meet current workload demands at a sustainable level.

Our workforce initiatives support the wider Australian Public Service undertakings on diversity and gender equity and Indigenous employment. AIMS has an Equity,

Diversity and Gender (EDGE) Working Group to integrate gender equity and diversity within AIMS' culture. AIMS was awarded Athena Swan Bronze status in 2020 by the Science in Australia Gender Equity (SAGE) program. This award recognises AIMS' commitment to improving gender equity, diversity and inclusion in STEM disciplines. The key element is the action plan that AIMS staff and leadership have committed to complete, coordinated by the EDGE Working Group and the People and Culture Team. The four key themes of the AIMS Action Plan are:

- Equity considerations in AIMS policy;
- Workforce gender balance;
- Diversity culture; and
- Training and communication.

We are currently in the process of developing the first of five cygnets required to seek silver accreditation status.

3.2.2 Research capabilities

Supporting our stakeholders' needs is a primary focus of AIMS. Our expertise in molecular and microbial sciences, mathematical modelling, ocean monitoring (from microbes to regional ecosystems and both the habitats and biodiversity), marine human impacts on ocean ecosystems (both noise and infrastructure), and decision support capability aligns with these evolving needs – from the ocean to the laboratory, from data analysis and models, to the ultimate development of products for direct use by end users.

AIMS' success is demonstrated by our consistently high position in relevant rankings based on science publication metrics.



IMAGE: CAMERON LAIRD

AIMS is committed to improving gender equity, diversity and inclusion in stem disciplines. This year, we will begin our pathway towards a silver award with the SAGE Athena Swan program, having achieved the bronze award in 2020.



3.2.3 Digital and Data Science capabilities

Digital and data science capabilities are core to the knowledge, services and tools that AIMS produces. AIMS continues to innovate within its digital landscape, spearheading the development of new digital tools, such as ReefCloud AI and ReefScan, to support the global community in improving reef monitoring and reporting.

AIMS' Digital Plan is advancing the integration of digital and data science capabilities into our research, support services, and technology development. This further embeds digital and data science as core enablers of AIMS Strategy 2030.

With the Digital Plan, AIMS will increase access to essential insights, services, resources and support, thus providing a seamless digital experience for AIMS researchers, stakeholders, and partners to foster innovation, operational excellence and impact.

3.2.4 Transformative technology capabilities

Critical functions such as environmental monitoring require continuous advances in technology if costs are to be kept manageable and stakeholder expectations in relation to data-led insights are to be met. These expectations are increasing rapidly, driven by requirements that include field work in locations that are unsuited for divers, a desire from Traditional Owner and citizen-science groups to deliver high quality data, and access to near-real time data.

In parallel we are experiencing a rapid increase in the volume of data and analysis required. There is an increasing need to actively manage natural assets such as reef adaptation and restoration interventions, where for example compared to assessing the current state of a reef you need one to two orders of magnitude more information on a reef to guide intervention actions on that reef. This can only be achieved by increased partnering with those operating in the marine environment. Automated technologies provide an avenue for this to occur. By packaging up what is typically completed by an expert diver and ecologist into automated systems, it opens the door for trained but not expert marine scientists to be part of solving this challenge.

In response we established the AIMS Technology Transformation Program to test ideas, design whole-of-pipeline technology solutions and move these into operational use. We have established partnerships with

developers and with other reef parties, several of which are investing into our development program, an example being the Joint Field Management Program (JFMP) which undertakes operational and management activities on the GBR. The program has invested in the AIMS development program in return for access to the technology as it becomes operational.

Several of the systems in development are fully autonomous, requiring certification for trusted operational use. Consequently, AIMS has formed a partnership with the Queensland Government, the Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA) and several other organisations to create a marine autonomous systems development, testing and certification range at our Townsville site. ReefWorks is enabling development programs to progress and ultimately will be a pathway to operational certification. It includes Australia's only autonomous marine systems "testing sandbox" where developers can test systems without the need for complex permits and other approvals. Importantly, it is filling a critical gap in the Australian innovation sector. There is a strong demand to develop technology aligned to Australia's needs and interests and there is currently a gap in the market to test and certify these systems.

3.2.5 Quality assurance capability

AIMS' rigorous quality assurance and quality control procedures ensure we deliver high-quality and timely research.

Our multi-layer quality control systems approach includes internal and external peer review of publications and reports, rigorous data collection procedures, quality assurance, and data curation.

- The AIMS Quality Management Policy, approved by the AIMS Council, establishes clear standards for the delivery of quality scientific research and services in line with the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research 2018.
- The AIMS Responsible Conduct of Research Framework provides a foundation for high quality research, credibility, integrity, and community trust in our research outputs.

- An external review process is conducted every five years (most recently in 2022-23) by an expert panel of scientists of international renown and diverse technical backgrounds to assess the quality and impact of our science against international benchmarks, and an evaluation of how well AIMS is currently positioned to its mission outlined in Strategy 2030.

AIMS is characterised by an ambitious, honest, ethical and conscientious research culture and committed to the principle of open access in our research publications as the best means to support maximum uptake and application that benefits as wide a user base as possible.

3.2.6 Health, safety and the environment

AIMS' commitment to safety is expressed in our core values and Strategy 2030. Put simply, our highest priority is the health and wellbeing of our staff, volunteers, visitors and all who work with us.

Recent and profound organisational growth, demanding work environments and an innovative research focus require active care to manage the health and safety of our workers and reduce our impact on the environment.

AIMS responds to this challenge through an organisation-wide approach to physical and psychosocial risk management, progressive leadership, and a relentless focus on developing a future-ready safety management system together with a proactive safety culture.

AIMS Strategy 2030 commits us to continuous improvement in safety performance, recognising the integral connection between safety management, staff wellbeing, and the pursuit of quality science. We have set ourselves explicit targets for key safety performance measures, ensuring an active focus on injury prevention during a period of continued growth and change.

3.2.7 Financial

Core Funding

Core funding for AIMS is provided through Australian Government annual appropriations. These are identified in the 2024-25 Portfolio Budget Statements², Budget Related Paper no. 1.3, Climate Change, Energy, The Environment and Water Portfolio, pp. 93-115 (PBS).

In April 2023 the Commonwealth announced as part of the Budget, *Securing the Future of Australia's Marine Science* additional funding package for AIMS to meet financial sustainability over the forward years of this Plan. This Plan includes \$191.8 million of operating funding and \$23.3 million of capital funding from that package. This package included the Commonwealth commitment to ongoing annual additional core funding of \$43.5 million beyond this Plan.

External revenue

External revenue comes from industry, philanthropy and a range of state and federal government departments, authorities and agencies. This external revenue stream provides essential support to maintain AIMS' current capability, augment its scientific excellence and deliver impactful outcomes.

External revenue forecasts for the five-year period 2024-25 to 2028-29 are driven by continuing revenue related to reef adaptation science and social investments from the resources industry as well as underlying maintenance of external revenue income from government renewal sources (e.g. Integrated Marine Observing System (IMOS)).

A conservative contingency approach around managing overall revenue and FTE for AIMS has been adopted. The forecast net revenue for 2024-25 is \$23.9M. The forecast is supported by a pipeline that is already well established with many contracted projects, extending our confidence into the forecast.

² https://www.dcceew.gov.au/about/reporting/budget#toc_0

AIMS' ReefScan is an innovative approach to monitoring marine ecosystems involving machine learning, advanced sensors, and robotics. The suite has been used in Australia, Vietnam, and the Philippines, and works with AIMS' ReefCloud to provide clear, fast reports and updates for reef managers. ReefScan is now being tested to autonomously detect crown-of-thorns starfish.

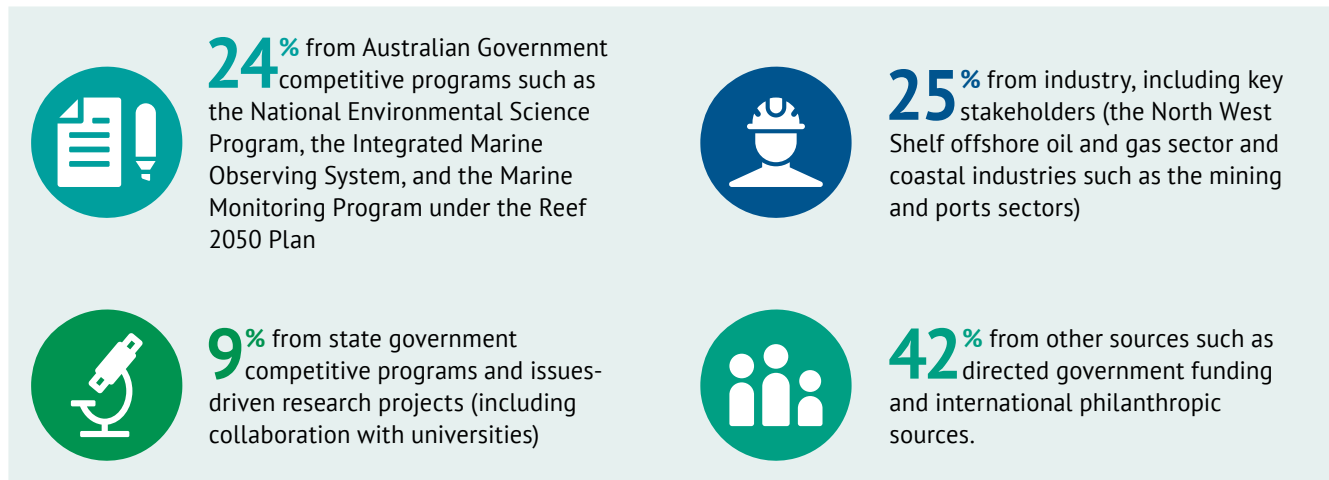


IMAGE: MARIE ROMAN

In the outyears we are forecasting a stabilisation of net revenue earnings of around \$22M per year.

The anticipated Reef Restoration and Adaptation (RRAP) program revenue represents a significant part of the AIMS long term external revenue forecast through to June 2029

Sources of external revenue



AIMS business development activities in recent years have focused increasingly on developing large-scale, long-term partnerships. Further bolstered by increased stakeholder management efforts, and a continued focus on quality and delivery, AIMS' external revenue pipeline of opportunities is healthy, comprising a large complement of strategic programs of work.

Previously AIMS has targeted net revenue growth in order to support the financial sustainability goals. The new funding announcements for AIMS in 2023 have allowed AIMS to focus on the delivery of strategic research funded through the budget appropriation process. In addition to significant Reef Restoration and Adaptation Program work, AIMS has focused its strategic engagement with industry and government partners such as BHP, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, IMOS and Parks Australia.

AIMS extends the breadth and impact of its research through co-investment with these stakeholders. These collaborative arrangements are typically mandated for government-funded programs, including the National Environmental Science Program (NESP) and IMOS. We take care to ensure the arrangements, whether through commercial contracts or co-funding, align with national science priorities and result in transfers and benefits back to the nation. Leveraging innovative technology developments such as ReefCloud and ReefScan, we have significantly enhanced our monitoring data acquisition and processing capability. These technology systems are transforming tasks that previously took hours to minutes, and those that were previously not feasible are now manageable. Our continued advancements will make direct access to data products by all potential users a practical possibility.

and contains the greatest risk to AIMS in this long-term revenue forecast. Given the significance of the RRAP funds to the AIMS long-term external revenue forecast, careful consideration has been given to the risk and probability of funds forecast in our planning.

Our long-term approach to delivering improved research outcomes through external funding includes the following criteria:

- The research must contribute to future impact (i.e. net economic, environmental or social benefit for Australia).
- The research must advance strategic government objectives as reflected in the AIMS Strategy 2030, in addition to meeting customer needs.
- The quality of research is appropriate to achieve robust outcomes.
- AIMS retains intellectual property access.
- AIMS is not inappropriately restrained from presenting the findings to government or correcting any misrepresentation of its findings.

We charge commercial rates and decline co-investment opportunities when the research is for the direct commercial gain of an organisation or company.

Operating result forecast

AIMS is forecasting operating losses in 2024-25 to 2027-28 years of the Corporate Plan. The reason for these losses is continuation of funding for depreciation expenses being less than the expected depreciation expense.

Capital investment

All major assets of AIMS are subject to a capital replacement program to ensure lowest life-cycle cost, maximum return on investment and tight alignment with our current and future research needs. The program comprises:

- Routine replacements (e.g. motor vehicles, computers and scientific equipment).
- Ongoing facility maintenance and refurbishment.
- Technological development associated with new autonomous monitoring equipment.
- Upgrades to in-house corporate systems.

3.2.8 Infrastructure

AIMS operates out of three primary locations across Australia. AIMS' headquarters at Cape Ferguson, about 50 kilometres from Townsville in Queensland, has been our primary centre of research since the 1970s. Our Darwin office is located at the Arafura Timor Research Facility (ATRF) adjacent to the Charles Darwin University campus. AIMS in Perth is co-located within the Indian Ocean Marine Research Centre (IOMRC) at The University of Western Australia's Crawley campus.

These primary sites are supported by a small office in Canberra that enables and promotes interaction with the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water, and other government departments and agencies. We also operate a vessel berthing and maintenance facility within the Port of Townsville that is the home port of our two large Research Vessels, the RV *Solander* and the RV *Cape Ferguson*, and acts as a temporary logistics and mobilisation hub while our wharf and marine precinct at our Townsville Headquarters at Cape Ferguson await refurbishment.

A specialised research fleet, unique aquaria, sophisticated laboratories, mechanical and electronics workshops, extensive collections, analytical technology and an array of marine observing equipment enable our scientists to examine subjects ranging from microbiology through to broad-scale ecology and oceanography, both in the laboratory and in the field.

AIMS' headquarters at Cape Ferguson was opened in 1976. Some of the critical underpinning services and infrastructure are undergoing upgrade and refurbishment to ensure that our current and future research capability is adequately supported and resilient to future demands and challenges. In 2024-25 AIMS will continue to deliver our electrical resilience upgrade, which will ultimately enable

our Townsville site to operate independently for up to two weeks in the event of electrical grid disruption. We will also continue with broad master planning and refurbishment of office and laboratories in Townsville, and finalise the operational completion of the SeaSim National Facility expansion project.

Below is a summary of our nationally significant research infrastructure:

The SeaSim National Facility

The SeaSim National Facility provides a paradigm shift in how researchers undertake experiments on tropical marine systems, combining modern process automation engineering and marine science, supported by highly qualified and experienced staff. SeaSim enables fine control over environmental variables, including light, temperature, ocean acidification, sedimentation, and emerging and priority contaminants. The SeaSim provides the capability to replicate environmental variables over seasonal, monthly and diurnal cycles, with extremely high levels of control. The reliability of the controls and automation systems enable large-scale, long-term experiments where multiple generations of organisms can be studied under experimental conditions, a capability that does not exist in any other facility in the world. Since 2021, the SeaSim has been undergoing a \$36.3 million expansion that will:

- almost double the original SeaSim experimental capacity; and
- provide funding to support a National Facility model of operation, providing merit-based access for the best national and international researchers to undertake their work in the SeaSim. This model makes available a proportion of the experimental space within the Expanded SeaSim Facility, equivalent to 35% of the existing SeaSim.



The National Sea Simulator will open its doors to marine scientists as the SeaSim National Facility in 2025. Expansion of the SeaSim, the world's most sophisticated aquarium facility, and access to external researchers via a merit-based system has been funded through the National Research Infrastructure Investment Plan.

IMAGE: ROSLYN BUDD

Construction of the expanded experimental facility will be completed in 2024-25, with implementation of the merit-based access model also rolling out over this period.

The AIMS research fleet

AIMS operates two large purpose-built research vessels (the RV *Cape Ferguson* and the RV *Solander*) and several smaller vessels to provide unique capacity for researchers to access and conduct research in the diverse tropical marine habitats across Australia’s northern coastline. The large vessels are equipped with specialist oceanographic equipment, onboard laboratories and experimental equipment, support for flow-through aquaria and onboard dive support. This combination of capabilities, unrivalled in the Australian research fleet, enables our scientists and collaborators to safely and effectively conduct research at sea, in some of our country’s most remote and challenging tropical regions.

Our research fleet is ageing, with the RV *Cape Ferguson* well beyond her design life (at 24 years of age) and the RV *Solander* approaching 20 years of age. A project to design the next generation of coastal research vessel for Australia, as a replacement for the RV *Cape Ferguson* is nearing completion with construction of the vessel subject to securing construction phase funding. We have commenced a design and procurement process to upgrade our small to mid-sized vessel fleet, including the RV *Apollo* in Townsville and RV *Capricornus* based in Darwin. Other key scientific infrastructure includes:



Research laboratories

More than a dozen laboratories across Australia including analytical, x-ray, molecular/genetics, and quarantine facilities.



Field-deployed observing and remote-sensing equipment

Including weather stations and autonomous oceanographic instrument moorings



Engineering workshops

Constructing specialised equipment such as underwater sensors, data loggers, sediment traps, weather towers, coral corers and many other devices



Coral core collection

Australia’s largest and most significant coral core collection

Since 2005, RV *Apollo* has supported AIMS’ coastal science in the Townsville region for technology trials, reef and water quality monitoring, organism collection and event responses. As it nears retirement, plans for a new vessel with greater capacity and capabilities are advancing, with delivery expected during 2025/26.



IMAGE: MARIE ROMAN

AIMS will continue to focus on ways to maintain and, where necessary, replace ageing infrastructure to ensure safe, fit-for-purpose platforms for conducting marine science.

As well as maximising value derived from our diverse research infrastructure for ourselves, we will ensure its high use by external collaborators in industry, universities and other research institutions.

3.2.9 Systems and processes

Our physical capabilities are supported by an array of corporate and operational systems and processes. Over the past two years, AIMS implemented a new project

management framework and supporting systems, which include Microsoft Project Online and TechnologyOne CiAnywhere. In 2024-25, we will implement an update to the project management system and a data warehouse to provide the overall platform for the implementation and integration of our business decision support systems. The program of continuous improvement and integration will also continue across our underlying business information and corporate systems using the implementation of the Power Platform and include those for contracting and visitors, cementing our position as a professional partner and employer of choice.



More than **two decades** of **water quality measurements** from the Great Barrier Reef



Integrated oceanographic models of processes ranging in scale **from single reefs to entire ecosystems** such as the GBR



More than **30 years** of field measurements of coral reef health from the whole of the GBR, **the longest and most complete record of GBR health in existence**



Marine cultivation and husbandry techniques developed in the SeaSim



Nearly **two decades** of measurements of **biodiversity, ecological change and oceanography** from the Browse Basin off north-western Australia, with a focus on the Scott Reef system



The world's **largest coral core archive** that researchers use **to understand past climate conditions and how coral growth responds to environmental changes**, allowing us to better understand how corals might respond to ongoing climate change



Two decades of **biodiversity sampling** from around the continent for taxonomy and biodiscovery

3.2.10 Intellectual assets

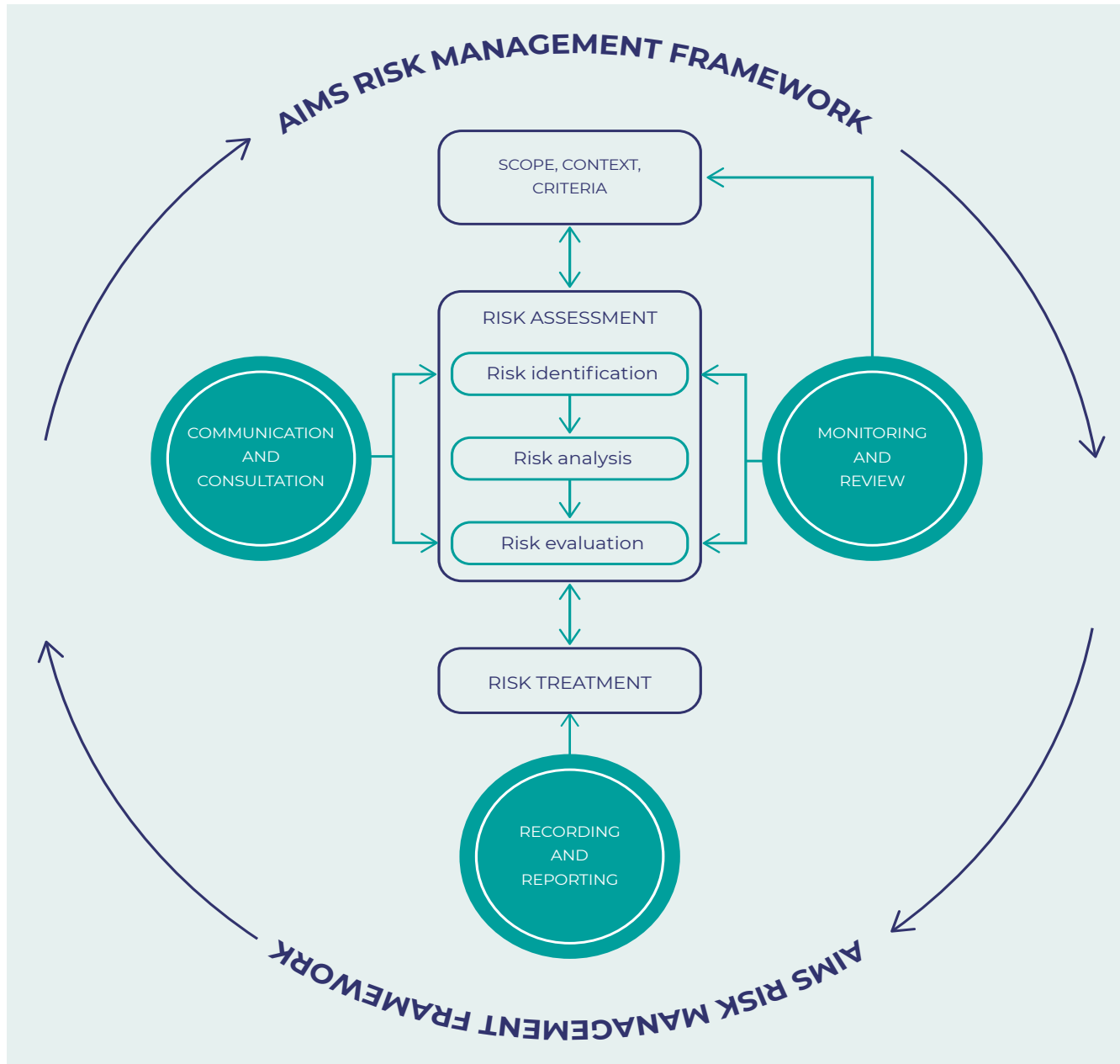
AIMS possesses unique collections, observations and measurements containing decades worth of information on Australia's tropical marine ecosystems, extending from the Great Barrier Reef to north-western Australia. This collection includes the assets described above.

These assets are unparalleled. The continuity of long-term and broad-scale geographic collections and information enables critical long-term analysis of natural and human-induced trends in ecosystem change. Over the life of this Corporate Plan, we will leverage and develop these intellectual assets to support our research activities and plans.

3.3 Risk management

To fulfil our purpose and achieve our strategic targets, we need to engage with risk, manage uncertainty and exploit opportunity. Our comprehensive corporate risk management system includes processes to identify and assess new risks, together with the refinement of existing control measures. It is based on an organisational risk management framework and an associated corporate risk register, control framework and risk appetite statement. This risk framework aligns with ISO 31000 Risk Management and complies with the Australian Government's risk management policy.

AIMS Risk Management System



The control framework, which includes the AIMS Audit Committee and AIMS Remuneration and Nominations Committee (both subcommittees of the AIMS Council), helps AIMS discharge its responsibilities under the *Australian Institute of Marine Science Act 1972* and the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* in respect of financial reporting, performance reporting, risk oversight and management, internal control and compliance with relevant laws and policies.

The control framework is designed to ensure the following outcomes:

- **Strategies and goals** - our strategic targets are aligned with national priorities and the needs of stakeholders.
- **Plans** - our plans offer viable solutions for achieving goals and objectives.
- **Resources** - our financial and non-financial resources are sufficient to complete the research and other activities required to achieve our goals.

- **Delivery** - our systems and processes deliver research and other activities within our annual plans in a safe and efficient manner.
- **Communication** - our research outcomes are communicated in a manner that maximises user uptake and value.
- **Values** - all our activities are undertaken in a manner consistent with our organisational values.

Risk culture

Organisations with a strong risk culture are more resilient, make better and more timely business decisions and are better equipped to enhance and protect their reputation. Over the past several years, AIMS has matured its risk culture with both a top-down and bottom-up approach. AIMS has a proven track record of risk management with respect to workplace health and safety. Our risk profile includes remote field work, diving, laboratories, hazardous chemicals and biohazards. Our staff have embraced our

operational risk management processes to ensure that the risks associated with their work are managed to be as low as reasonably practicable.

During the Plan period, our key area of focus will be continuing to develop and mature our risk culture. To facilitate this improvement a Risk Officer has been appointed who, in conjunction with the Chief Risk Officer (General Counsel), will be responsible for enhancing and promoting risk management across AIMS.

A key focus will be to further embed risk culture into our project portfolio. The focus is needed due to the number of significant capital and scientific projects being undertaken during the plan period. The AIMS Project Management Framework includes approval workflows and support tools to help assess and manage project risks and opportunities. This is further supported by the AIMS Project Risk Procedure, which assists project leaders to manage all foreseeable risks (both opportunities and threats) in a manner that is proactive, effective, and appropriate, to maximise the likelihood of the project achieving its objectives, while maintaining risk exposure at an acceptable level. The framework and procedures are an important step in formalising our approach to project risk management. The next significant step is to drive the maturity of our risk management culture in this important area of our business. This will be achieved through direct coaching and support from the Project Management Office, and formalised performance review and feedback by the AIMS Leadership Team.

Risk summary

AIMS' risk profile over the period of this Plan will be characterised by a period of rapid change in our operating environment. As climate change continues to advance over the coming decade, including the likelihood of further bleaching events on Australia's coral reefs, we anticipate our services will continue to be in increasing demand and require a step-up in operating tempo.

Additionally, AIMS is undertaking a period of rapid growth with significant investment in our capabilities. This includes an increase in resourcing and capital projects, such as the SeaSim expansion and refurbishment to sections of our headquarters. This investment will elevate our profile and scientific capabilities but will expose AIMS to greater risk whilst the new staff are onboarded and the projects progress.

The table below summarises the risks associated with each outcome and proposed controls. AIMS reviews its corporate risk register every three months to ensure that risks and controls remain current. For the life of this Corporate Plan, a continuous improvement approach will be applied to ensure that all risks continue to be as low as reasonably practicable.

Risk descriptions, controls, and mitigations

Key Risks	Description	Controls and Mitigation Strategies
Financial Risk	<p>Financial risk is the risk to AIMS' long-term financial viability and its overall financial strength.</p> <p>Financial risks at AIMS include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Funding Risk; ■ Financial Management Risk; and ■ Fraud Risk. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Financial Sustainability Review; ■ Financial governance processes; ■ Financial forecasting and planning and monitoring; ■ Audit Committee and internal audit; ■ AIMS Code of Conduct; and ■ Staff education and training.
Impact Risk	<p>Impact risk relates to AIMS undertaking science that is not fit for purpose and does not have the desired impact. By undertaking science that has limited impact, AIMS would not achieve its strategic goals.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ AIMS Strategy 2030; ■ Corporate planning processes and Statement of Expectations; ■ Horizon scanning and analysis of government policy; ■ Capacity planning to position AIMS to respond to external opportunities; and ■ Stakeholder engagement.
Third Party Risk	<p>Third Party Risk relates to the activities AIMS undertakes in conjunction with third party collaborators and the potential reputational damage resulting from conflict or negative events occurring in relation to the third party. Key Third Party Risks to AIMS include issues arising in relation to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The National Sea Simulator partnership with NCRIS; ■ The Reef Restoration and Adaptation Project; and ■ Partnerships with Traditional Owners. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Stakeholder and collaborator engagement; ■ Communications governance and planning; ■ Shared risk management processes; and ■ Third Party due-diligence processes.

Key Risks	Description	Controls and Mitigation Strategies
Climate Risk	<p>Climate Risk is the risk of adverse weather or climate and changing geopolitical conditions which may impact AIMS. Key climate risks include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Business continuity being impacted by weather events; ■ Site availability; ■ Changes in government and industry priorities; and ■ Increased coral bleaching. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Emergency Response Plan; ■ Business Continuity Plan; ■ Business Impact Analysis; ■ Project Planning - costing risk into project; and ■ Horizon scanning to identify emerging risks to AIMS.
Legal and Regulatory Risk	<p>Legal and regulatory risk relates to AIMS breaching any law, regulation, contract or code.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Documented policies and procedures; ■ Annual compliance attestation process; ■ In-house legal team; ■ Education and training; and ■ External legal advice.
Workplace Health and Safety Risk	<p>Workplace Health and Safety risk relates to the wellbeing of AIMS staff whilst undertaking their duties. Given the nature of AIMS' operating environment there are a significant number of workplace health and safety risks that staff are exposed to, including risks associated with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Diving; ■ Marine operations; ■ Engineering and workshops; and ■ Psychosocial hazards. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Health and safety governance, systems, processes, work procedures and support; ■ Appropriately resourced and skilled workforce including a dedicated WHS function; ■ Strong safety culture fostered by AIMS leadership team; and ■ Staff training and engagement.
Security Risk	<p>Security risk relates to the harm or unauthorised access to AIMS' facilities, systems and workforce. Significant security risks at AIMS include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Cyber security risk; ■ Site security; ■ Personal security whilst staff travel overseas; and ■ Foreign interference. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ ICT Security Policy & Associated Policies; ■ Cyber Security Incident Register; ■ Intrusion Prevention and detection monitoring; ■ Firewalling; ■ Incident management processes; and ■ Education and training.
Systems and Assets Risk	<p>AIMS relies on key infrastructure, facilities and assets that enable the delivery of world leading marine science. System and asset risk relates to any threat to this infrastructure. Key threats to infrastructure and assets at AIMS include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Availability of marine assets (including RV <i>Cape Ferguson</i> and RV <i>Solander</i>); ■ Availability of onshore infrastructure (wharf and laboratories); ■ Maintenance of facilities and fit for purpose corporate systems; and ■ Delivery and disruption of major capital projects. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Strategic planning of science infrastructure informed by AIMS science needs; ■ Strategic laboratory group that identifies future use cases; ■ Site master planning; ■ Capital management and infrastructure plan; ■ Maintenance register; and ■ Fit for purpose project governance framework and systems.
Workforce Risk	<p>Workforce risk is defined as any workforce related threat that will impact AIMS achieving its strategic objectives. Significant workforce challenges include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Talent availability for research and enabling functions; ■ Industrial action; ■ Changing workforce expectations; ■ Workplace regulation compliance; and ■ Management of psycho-social hazards. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Competitive salary and conditions, including flexible working conditions; ■ Leadership program; ■ Geographical spread of worksites; ■ Strategic workforce planning; ■ Capability Development Fund and Reward Review Program; and ■ Succession planning.

Key Risks	Description	Controls and Mitigation Strategies
Science Delivery Risk	<p>Science Delivery Risk relates to the risks to AIMS delivering world leading marine science. Key Science Delivery Risk challenges include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Delivery of science on budget and schedule; and ■ Maintaining scientific quality and scientific integrity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Research Business Plans; ■ Reporting to Council and ALT; ■ Peer review process; ■ Workforce Planning; ■ Research Policy Framework; ■ Project Management system and processes; and ■ Regular external science reviews and use of independent research advisor as appropriate.

3.4 Cooperation

The opportunities and challenges facing Australia's marine systems are considerable – no single research organisation can provide all the scientific capability and capacity required to address them. AIMS plays a leadership role where appropriate and brings partners into projects and programs as required. In other contexts, we provide specialised capability for projects led by others.

3.4.1 Contributing to government priorities

Australian Government

In response to the Minister's Statement of Expectations³, the Institute's Statement of Intent expresses its commitment to the Government's legislated requirements, policy framework and key priorities. AIMS fulfills its responsibilities through the delivery of world-class R&D in relation to marine science and marine technology and the provision of impartial and accurate advice to inform decision making.

Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water

AIMS supports the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water, to assist with the development of strategies and plans that support and enhance the health of Australia's tropical marine estate. This includes scientific research and advice on tropical water quality and biodiversity within the National Environmental Science Program (NESP), and input to other policies and documents as required.

In recent years, AIMS has built strong relationships with the Department, and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, to apply science diplomacy and capability development using our international networks. These include the International Coral Reef Initiative and the Global Coral Reef Monitoring Network which are used to deliver coral reef monitoring, management, conservation and restoration solutions that are mutually beneficial for both Australia and Australia's international partners. Further, AIMS' active engagement provides opportunities to grow external investment in research that addresses priority marine issues that affect both Australia and our international neighbours and partners.

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

AIMS works closely with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) to help advance Australia's diplomacy interests, particularly in marine science. We contribute advice and guidance, and participate in relevant fora on the blue economy, coral reefs, First Nations partnerships, and sustainable marine development. We support the strengthening of Australia's bilateral relations and regional and international cooperation through our contribution to selected projects and the global exchange of information and knowledge. AIMS also provides advice to DFAT's Office of First Nations International Engagement/Ambassador for First Nations People.

Department of Industry, Science, and Resources

AIMS works closely with the Department of Industry, Science and Resources to help advance Australia's science and industry interests, particularly in marine science. We contribute research and advice on the sustainable development of the blue economy.

We are working closely with the Department and Australia's Chief Scientist as they refresh and implement Australia's National Science Priorities and revitalised National Science Statement.

Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts

With a growing government focus on northern Australia, which intersects with our footprint and scientific focus, we expect to also develop a closer relationship with the Office of Northern Australia and the Department.

State and Territory governments

AIMS undertakes a broad range of monitoring, research and reporting and provides advice to state and territory governments addressing information needs for regional strategic planning (e.g. Reef 2050 Plan, Darwin Harbour Master Planning), quantifying potential impacts of the development and operations of specific ports and coastal infrastructure and the impacts of contaminants introduced into marine systems through offshore and coastal industries and other sources adjacent to coastal ecosystems. Consistent with our focus on tropical waters, we work most closely with the governments of Queensland, Western Australia and the Northern Territory.

³ <https://www.aims.gov.au/docs/about/corporate/corporate-profile-governance/statement-of-expectations>

Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority

AIMS provides significant support to the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority to assist with the implementation of the Reef 2050 Long Term Sustainability Plan (Reef 2050 Plan). This plan is Australia's overarching long-term strategy for protecting and managing the Reef to support its health and resilience in the future. AIMS is also a formal partner in the implementation and delivery of the Reef 2050 Integrated Monitoring and Reporting Program.

We also monitor, research, report and provide advice on the condition of water quality and coral reefs in the inshore Great Barrier Reef through the GBRMPA Marine Monitoring Program. We provide assistance with and lead surveys and sample corals during acute bleaching events.

National Indigenous Australians Agency

The National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA) works with the Minister for Indigenous Australians to implement policies, particularly the Closing the Gap agenda, to improve the lives of First Nations People. AIMS Indigenous Partnership Program intersects strongly with NIAA's Environment Focus Area, particularly the Indigenous Protected Areas Program and the Indigenous Ranger Program both of which are currently undergoing significant expansion. Further, AIMS is participating in NIAA's development of a National Indigenous Ranger Sector Strategy.

National Offshore Petroleum Safety and Environment Management Authority

The National Offshore Petroleum Safety and Environment Management Authority (NOPSEMA) is Australia's offshore energy regulator with administrative remit in Commonwealth waters. AIMS engages and works collaboratively with NOPSEMA and industry to provide advice on environmental information needs, including the appropriate scale and scope of environmental baseline studies and impact assessment of petroleum exploration, operations and decommissioning activities. NOPSEMA's functions include the regulation of other large scale, technically complex offshore energy infrastructure activities, namely offshore renewable energy projects in Commonwealth waters covering offshore fixed and floating wind, wave and tidal power, and other technologies. AIMS will work closely with NOPSEMA and other regulators to provide relevant environmental knowledge as the offshore renewable energy industry grows.

Parks Australia

Parks Australia is the Australian Government agency charged with managing Australia's national parks and conservation areas. AIMS and Parks Australia have an established collaborative partnership underpinned by common strategic goals and activities concerning conservation of biodiversity and cultural heritage, and scientific and commercial endeavour in Commonwealth marine reserves. Projects undertaken in partnership include biological and bio-cultural surveys of values tied to Commonwealth marine parks in the north-west, north and Coral Sea marine park networks. AIMS and Parks Australia collaborate on projects involving Traditional Owner and industry sector participation and partner in support of

training and upgrade needs for the Australian Marine Science Atlas.

3.4.2 Traditional Owner and First Nations partnerships

AIMS continues to build strong partnerships with Traditional Owner and First Nations groups because, through collaborations with Traditional Owners over many years, we recognise that partnership projects in areas of shared interest and priority generate significant mutual benefits, including a greater understanding of each other and the marine environment. We know that greater research impact and value can be created, and new insights gained, if our science is interwoven with the knowledge, perspectives, capacity and capability of the Traditional Owners of sea country. We also know that science partnerships support the aspirations of Traditional Owners for greater capacity and empowerment in sea country monitoring, research and decision making, and science partnerships.

3.4.3 Research partnerships

AIMS partners to increase the capability and capacity to solve the scientific challenges we need to overcome and involves stakeholders and users in the design and conduct of the science, ultimately increasing its adoption and eventual impact. We engage with both national and global marine science capability, using joint ventures and strategic alliances to increase the scope and scale of collaborative research projects.

Organisations and centres that have complementary capability in tropical marine science with whom we collaborate include:

- Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation (ANSTO)
- CSIRO
- Geoscience Australia
- Universities, including James Cook University (JCU), the Australian National University, the University of Melbourne, Curtin University, Charles Darwin University (CDU), the University of Western Australia (UWA), the University of Queensland, the Queensland University of Technology, the University of Tasmania and Griffith University
- State-based agencies (e.g. departments of environment, primary industries and fisheries, and natural resource management agencies).

We adopt a collaborative approach to R&D at the national level, engaging early with well-respected partners capable of delivering science at the required scale and relevance. These include partnerships and programs such as the Western Australian Marine Science Institution, NESP, IMOS, and the Indian Ocean Marine Research Centre. Three initiatives with universities located in the cities where we locate our scientists and facilities, AIMS@JCU, AIMS@UWA and AIMS@CDU, focus on early career researchers to produce the next generation of marine scientists.

We have a strategic alliance agreement with JCU, and memorandums of understanding with the Queensland University of Technology and Monash University.

3.4.4 Industry partnerships

AIMS works in partnership with several industries important to Australia's blue economy, including the natural resources sector, involving both offshore petroleum extraction and onshore mining activities with coastal and marine footprints. Increasingly, AIMS' partnerships with these sectors incorporate on-ground community engagement and participation in AIMS' research activities, including with Traditional Owners. The commercial and recreational fishing and tourism sectors are collaborators or highly relevant stakeholders for the purpose of AIMS generating impactful science outcomes.

Resources sector

AIMS provides essential research that supports the sustainable development of energy, minerals and other valuable resources in and under Australia's oceans, while protecting these rich and ecologically diverse habitats. The offshore oil and gas sector is now both a major end user of our research and an important contributor to its strategic directions.

The social license and approvals drivers for the petroleum industry are centred around decarbonization. AIMS works with resources partners to address operational challenges including decommissioning and impacts of liquid discharge studies. The decommissioning space will continue to be a growing industry engagement sector for AIMS where opportunities will be dependent on whether industry chooses to remove structures or opt for deviations to full removal. Within this work, an increasing topic of importance in the future will be Traditional Owner engagement.

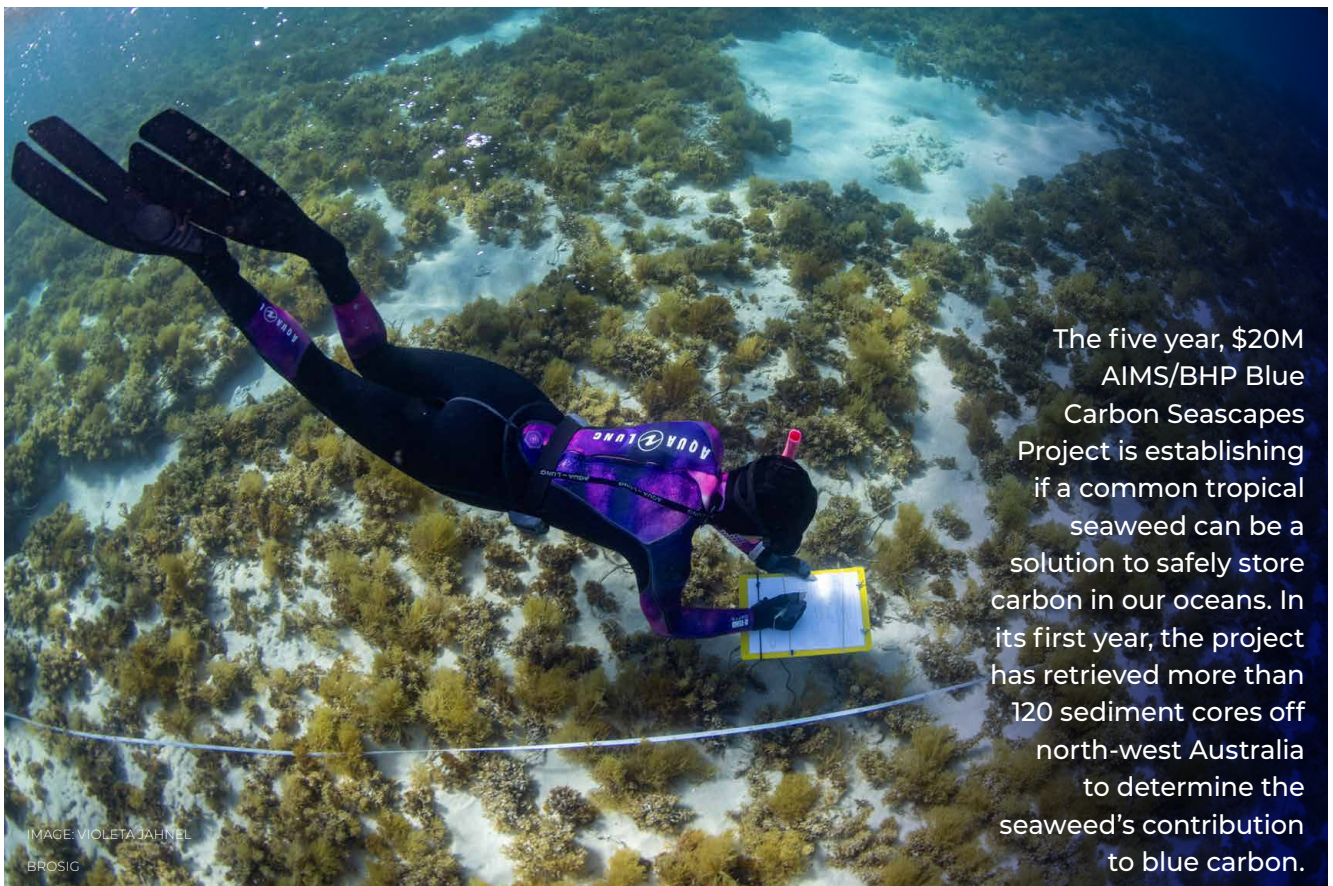
AIMS will continue to work with our major industry partners BHP and Rio Tinto to support the sustainable development of the primary resources activities in coastal Australia. Our Northern Territory team works closely with Rio Tinto (aluminium) providing research support for their activities in the Gulf of Carpentaria. The Rio Tinto Alcan Gove operations include a bauxite mine, refinery (ceased operation), residue disposal area (RDA) and port facility.

Offshore Renewable Energy

The introduction of offshore renewable energy (ORE) in Australia has been catalysed by relevant legislation and regulation frameworks which came into place in 2022. In 2023-24 New South Wales, Victoria and Western Australia have announced several sites for ORE development. AIMS is leading engagements with the sector and government to remain at the forefront in terms of shaping its role in delivery of relevant research.

Industry social investment

AIMS has grown its partnership with BHP and, in an iconic project for AIMS, we have co-designed applied research on blue carbon solutions with BHP. The AIMS – BHP Blue Carbon project, launched in 2023, aims to unlock carbon credits in existing marine restoration projects, as well as catalyse new nature-based solutions to large-scale abatement of carbon emissions using seaweeds in coastal areas within BHP areas of operation with global relevance and reach. AIMS has entered into a five-year agreement with BHP to undertake a research project titled Unlocking the Deep sequestration Potential of Seaweeds in the Blue Carbon Seascapes. This iconic Project has a total value of ~\$20M with a 50:50 co-investment arrangement between BHP and AIMS.



The five year, \$20M AIMS/BHP Blue Carbon Seascapes Project is establishing if a common tropical seaweed can be a solution to safely store carbon in our oceans. In its first year, the project has retrieved more than 120 sediment cores off north-west Australia to determine the seaweed's contribution to blue carbon.

Other companies are looking to BHP's novel framework of building social value and AIMS is currently in discussions with other industry partners who are seeking options for funding further blue carbon and megafauna research.

AIMS continues to work with Eni on training and engagement with Thamarrur Rangers in the Joseph Bonaparte Gulf, off the coast of the Northern Territory and northern Western Australia. AIMS has received industry funding directly sourced from company corporate community or social investment funds.

Ports and maritime industries

Around 98 per cent of Australia's trade travels by sea and economic growth is the driving force for the port sector⁴. With the continued development of major ports across northern Australia, AIMS has become an important source of advice on sustainable port development and operations. AIMS works with the port operators, maritime industries and state and federal regulators to fill knowledge gaps related to potential impacts of port operations across Australia's tropical marine estate, and to assist with understanding and minimising potential environmental risk associated with operational and development activities, including dredging, reclamation and infrastructure works.

Tourism, commercial and recreational fisheries

Historically, reef tourism has been a significant marine industry. It is estimated that tourism activity associated with the Great Barrier Reef generates \$5.7 billion per annum⁵ and supports most of the 64,000 jobs dependent on the reef. Considering this, AIMS' research is critical to supporting economic activity and jobs in the region. It provides opportunities for coastal communities to improve their livelihoods and protect their way of life.

AIMS is a key provider of research that contributes to the protection of the natural asset that is the Great Barrier Reef – a key element of Australia's global brand – to help it survive the impacts of climate change and other environmental pressures. We conduct targeted projects focused on monitoring marine health, controlling the spread of the predatory crown-of-thorns starfish and providing strategic advice for managing the marine estate. Our research also supports viable tourism and fishing industries.

Coral reef ecosystems support important commercial, recreational and subsistence fishery resources in northern Australia. Fishing also plays a central social and cultural role in many island and coastal communities, and is often a critical source of food and income. AIMS compares

fish diversity and abundance across tropical Australia, through the combination of its east coast surveys and its comprehensive assessment of coastal, nearshore, oceanic atolls and shoals from Ningaloo to Darwin. Our findings will help policy makers, regulators and fishers determine how much catch to take and how much to leave behind for the reefs to remain productive in the face of increasing stress from climate change and other pressures.

3.4.5 Not-for-profit sector partnerships

AIMS works with the not-for-profit sector, including national and international philanthropic organisations such as the Great Barrier Reef Foundation (GBRF) and the Coral Research & Development Accelerator Platform (CORDAP). AIMS works in close association with the GBRF in a number of fora and advisory bodies and has a representative on the GBRF's International Science Advisory Panel.

3.4.6 International partnerships

AIMS extends its geographic reach internationally, particularly to the Pacific and Indian oceans, through partnerships and collaborative arrangements with other international marine science fora. These strategic relationships enable AIMS to augment its own capability to address national priorities and enhance Australia's contribution to tackling global challenges.

Internationally, AIMS has formal research agreements and relationships with several universities and research institutes including the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (US), the University of South Pacific (Fiji) and the Palau International Coral Reef Center.

Australia is a founding signatory of the International Coral Reef Initiative (ICRI). ICRI's Global Coral Reef Monitoring Network (GCRMN) is a worldwide group of coral reef scientists, managers and organisations that monitor the health of the world's coral reefs. AIMS has been the global coordinator of the network since it was established in 1995. AIMS will continue this role in 2024-25 – partnering closely with NOAA as the US is the current ICRI Chair – monitoring and messaging regarding the 2023-24 global bleaching event, and preparation for the release of the next GCRMN Status of Coral Reefs of the World Report.

A key aspect of our international partnering is its expression of Australia's strategic interests in marine science and technology. This underpins our growing relationship with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, which was initially built around our joint support of ICRI.

⁴ <https://www.portsaustralia.com.au/value-of-ports/economy>

4. Key Activities

4.1 Research activities

To continue to achieve the impact targets identified in the AIMS Strategy 2030, AIMS will focus on delivering the following nine research outcomes over the five-year period encompassed by the 2024-25 AIMS Corporate Plan. Delivery

of longer-term research outcomes will be achieved through the implementation of a number of shorter-term activities described below.

Timeframe for continuation of Research Activities under each Research Outcomes with circle symbols indicating projected end date for each activity, 2024-25 to 2028-29

Five Year Research Outcomes	Key Activities	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29
Baseline, status and trend data that are the trusted information base for stakeholder decisions	Continue delivering long-term coral reef and physico-chemical monitoring programs.	●				
	Maintain AIMS' role as the major Integrated Marine Observing System (IMOS) operational partner for northern Australia and the Great Barrier Reef	●				
	Deliver specific monitoring and baseline assessments in response to external demand including work with Australian Government, state agency and other research partners to implement the Reef Integrated Monitoring and Reporting Program (RIMReP)	●				
	Improve the efficiency and capability for marine observing and assessment methods through technology, including continuous development of reporting indices and operationalising an innovative cloud-based analyses tool	●				
More information for stakeholders produced through autonomous and automated technologies and processes	Complete high impact projects already underway (e.g. agile underwater vehicle development, autonomous image analysis)	●				
	Advance development, testing and adoption of automated data and image analysis pathways to enhance operational efficiencies	●				
Science that underpins conservation and management of threatened and endangered marine species	Determine the status, movement and habitat use of key megafauna species, and how they are influenced by coastal development and industry activities, to inform their conservation and management	●				
	Explore movement and population connectivity of threatened species in northern Australia	●				
	Develop cumulative threat maps for threatened and exploited species in the tropics	●				
Models of environmental condition and function that are used to manage tropical marine ecosystems	Maintain and improve models describing the functioning of coastal areas to support ecosystem-scale management decisions	●				
	Develop and deliver specific models and regional assessments, in response to industry and stakeholder client needs	●				
	Develop, validate and apply predictive benthic habitat models based on geomorphological, biophysical and environmental attributes for priority regions across northern Australia	●				

Five Year Research Outcomes	Key Activities	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29
Improved health for tropical marine ecosystems via AIMS' solutions that mitigate local, regional and cumulative pressures	Improve understanding of coastal and ocean acidification in the Great Barrier Reef and its impacts on benthic communities	[Progress bar from 2024-25 to 2028-29]				
	Understand the potential causes of crown-of-thorns starfish (CoTS) population outbreaks to inform actions and strategies to manage and mitigate current and future outbreaks	[Progress bar from 2024-25 to 2028-29]				
	Develop sampling and analysis protocols for microplastics in marine environments, and produce a contamination baseline for northern Australia	[Progress bar from 2024-25 to 2026-27]				
	Understand sensitivity of tropical marine organisms to priority contaminants, including importance of factors relevant to the tropical environment (e.g. temperature, light)	[Progress bar from 2024-25 to 2028-29]				
Coral reef condition forecasts based on knowledge of recovery, acclimatisation and adaptation	Understand drivers and limitations of coral reef recovery, coral growth and reef accretion rates	[Progress bar from 2024-25 to 2028-29]				
	Optimise coral propagation, settlement and post-settlement survival in the National Sea Simulator to support coral reef recovery and restoration R&D	[Progress bar from 2024-25 to 2028-29]				
	Understand risks and scope for enhancing coral tolerances to support coral reef recovery and restoration by developing approaches such as hybridisation, selective breeding, assisted gene flow and gene editing technologies	[Progress bar from 2024-25 to 2028-29]				
Restoration science and scalable technologies that help coral reefs resist, adapt to, and recover from climate change impacts	Deliver the Reef Restoration and Adaptation Program with partners, which will develop and test an innovative suite of interventions to help the Great Barrier Reef resist, adapt to, and recover from climate change impacts	[Progress bar from 2024-25 to 2028-29]				
Advanced data analysis workflows and knowledge delivery systems that improve stakeholder use of AIMS information	Modernise data systems into a coherent research data platform	[Progress bar from 2024-25 to 2025-26]				
	Maintain a nationally recognised repository of research data	[Progress bar from 2024-25 to 2028-29]				
	Expand online delivery of environmental information	[Progress bar from 2024-25 to 2026-27]				
	Integrate the eAtlas ⁵ into national data portals	[Progress bar from 2024-25 to 2026-27]				
Decision support tools that are used by stakeholders for management decisions and policies	Advance decision support capability within the Reef Integrated Monitoring and Reporting Program (RIMReP), the Reef Restoration and Adaptation Program (RRAP), and other initiatives	[Progress bar from 2024-25 to 2027-28]				
	Map Traditional Owner sea Country in tropical Australia	[Progress bar from 2024-25 to 2026-27]				

4.1.1 Intervening to help build reef resilience – The Reef Restoration and Adaptation Program

Between 2017 and 2019 AIMS led a study to assess the need, the feasibility of developing and benefits of deploying additional new reef interventions to help maintain and build reefs' resistance to climate change. It concluded that interventions would likely be needed, were possible and could provide positive net benefits, but that all of the interventions would require R&D to develop. In 2020 an R&D program called the Reef Restoration and Adaptation Program (RRAP) was established with \$100 million of

government investment over four years, supplemented by third party investments and in-kind support by core R&D providers.

The Reef Restoration and Adaptation Program is developing new interventions that cover the spectrum of protection (retaining the corals we have), adaptation (helping corals to adapt and reducing the need for ongoing interventions) and restoration (restoring smaller high value, but degraded areas). Key to the program is an extensive engagement and partnering program with stakeholders and Traditional Owners. Full details can be found at www.GBRRestoration.org.

5 <https://eatlas.org.au/content/about-e-atlas>

The 2024/25 year represents the commencement of the 5th year for the R&D program, with significant achievements to date including:

- World-first demonstration of high-throughput semi-automated coral production for dozens of coral species.
- Innovative inert coral seeding devices for rapid diverless deployments.
- World-first heat-evolved symbiont algae to increase coral thermal tolerance.
- Increased understanding of variation in coral heat tolerance and breeding methods to propagate more tolerant corals.
- Progressed coral spawn capture, larval rearing and reseedling methods towards larger scales of routine production.
- World leading technology and capacity development of cloud brightening and seawater fog-based coral reef cooling and shading strategies.
- Progress towards up-scaling of coral cryopreservation methods.
- Laboratory simulations and in-field experimental data leading to the development of models to predict rubble generation and persistence.

In addition, the program has been building the required fundamental knowledge, understanding of risks and benefits, models and decision support systems to enable well-guided future deployment decisions. The R&D program has a strong focus on building partnerships with stakeholders and traditional owners.

In 2025 the program will enter a new phase with selected methods moving to at-scale pilot testing. In parallel, selected methods will be field tested at scale over 2025-2028. The objectives of these tests are broad and include:

- Demonstrate the end-to-end processes and systems underpinning the selected RRAP interventions.
- Implement and assess co-design engagement models with Traditional Owners and communities to enable long-term ownership of, and support for, interventions.
- Commence the process of creating the capabilities required to support a restoration industry, with a strong focus of method and technology transfer to third parties.
- Test and develop decision and governance models.
- Develop the scientific foundations for, and assess the feasibility of, market-based mechanisms to leverage Government investments and mobilise private sector capital.

During 2024 AIMS will also be leading efforts to secure a second tranche of R&D investment. The program is making excellent progress, but is well short of the originally envisaged 10-year-plus program so this need is not unexpected. The urgency in timing and the case for needing these interventions has only strengthened as marine heatwaves are increasing in strength and intensity.

4.2 First Nations-related activities

AIMS is striving to establish a larger proportion of genuine partnership projects with First Nations people and organisations. We recognise that greater research impact and value can be created, and new insights gained when AIMS science is interwoven with the knowledge, perspectives, customary practices, capacity, and capability of this country's original marine scientists – the Traditional Owners of land and sea Country.

While we continue to monitor the survival and growth of young corals from the largest ever coral restoration trial in 2023, teams with the collaborative Reef Restoration and Adaptation Program are planning for at-scale pilot testing in 2025.

IMAGE: SASKIA JURRIANS

Our commitment and approach to achieving this is outlined in the AIMS Strategy 2030 and in the AIMS Indigenous Partnerships Policy, Procedures and Plan. Recognising the enduring spiritual and cultural connections to, and inherent responsibilities for their land and sea country, AIMS now positions Traditional Owners as decision makers regarding which activities can be conducted by AIMS in their sea Country, by seeking free prior and informed consent (FPIC) for all projects that have a strong intersection with sea country or Traditional Owner interests.

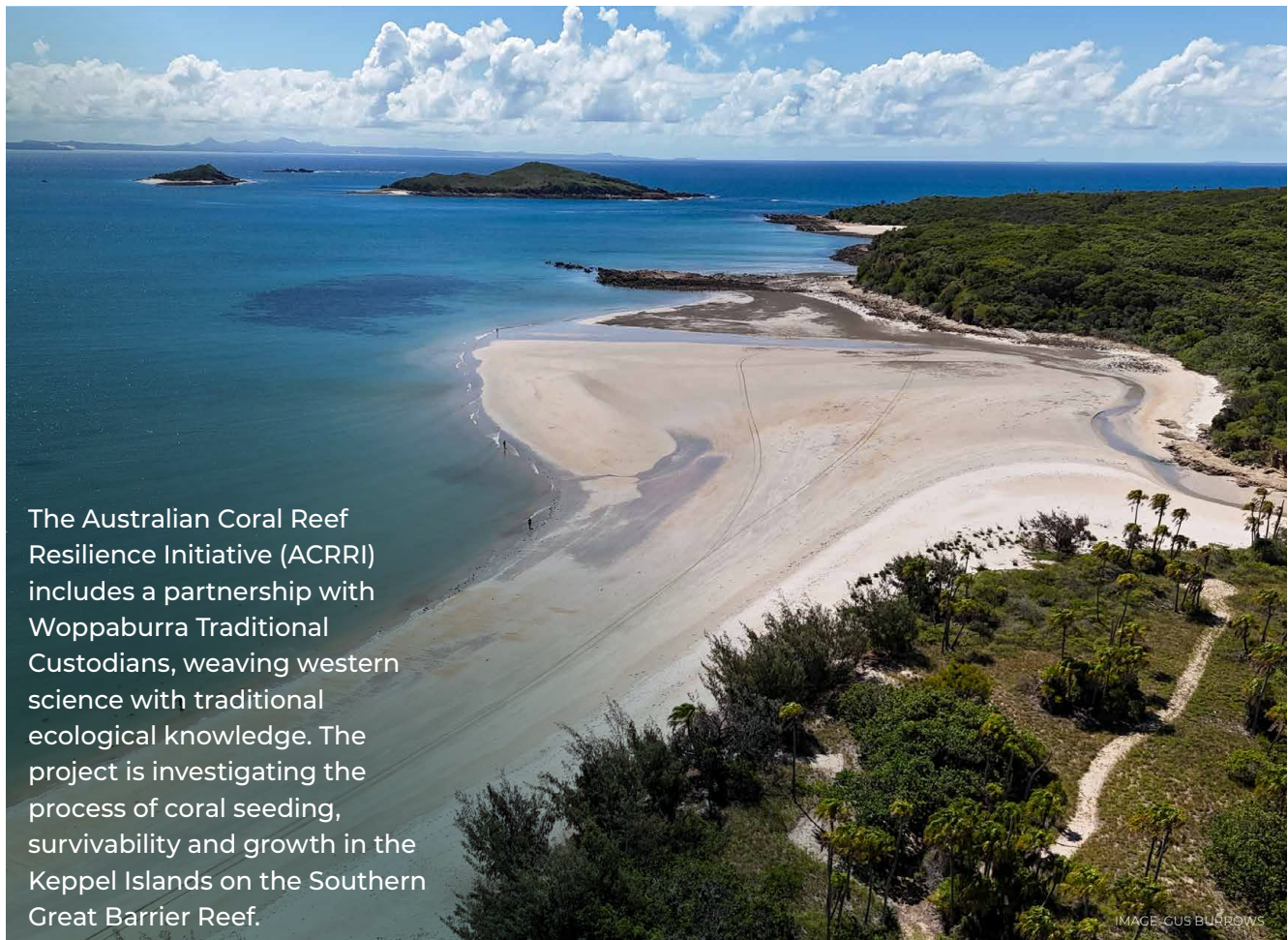
The commitment to seeking FPIC has led AIMS to engage with over 50 Traditional Owner groups and Indigenous organisations across northern Australia. In many cases, this engagement results in relationships based on mutual understanding and respect, and often leads to partnership projects that deliver to mutual interests and embed two-way knowledge-sharing about tropical marine environments. Future development of the program will focus on continuous improvement of AIMS' cultural competency and streamlining application of the Indigenous Partnerships Procedures across AIMS; creating innovative research methods to bring western science together with traditional knowledge; and using partnership projects as a platform for delivery of meaningful training and capacity building in areas of priority to Traditional Owners and Indigenous rangers.

The Indigenous Partnerships Plan has established a four-tiered framework to characterise the level of engagement now required across all AIMS' research projects. Tier allocation as either bronze, silver, gold or platinum depends

first on the strength of the intersection between the project and Traditional Owner interests and their sea country, and second, on the level of Indigenous leadership of the project.

Current gold tier projects include the five-year Woppaburra Coral Project within the Australian Coral Reef Resilience Initiative, and Northern Australian Marine Monitoring Alliance demonstration projects with Bardi Jawi and Torres Strait communities. A current platinum tier project is a collaboration with the Dhimurru Aboriginal Corporation (as lead agency). AIMS assisted Dhimurru in the development of their successful \$450,000 *Our Marine Park Grant* (OMPG) to explore their indigenous Protected Area (IPA) and the Wessel Marine Park, and AIMS is now subcontracted by Dhimurru to provide marine survey method training to the corporation's Rangers.

AIMS will continue to create opportunity for meaningful training and capacity building within the Indigenous Partnerships Program. We will identify and coordinate opportunities within partnership projects and develop formally accredited units of competency within the Vocational Education and Training (VET) sector with a focus, during this corporate plan, on areas of Traditional Owner priority (e.g. marine monitoring) and workforce need (e.g. reef restoration). We will also continue to support Indigenous high-school programs such as James Cook University's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander in Marine Science (ATSIMS) program and Winter School in Marine Science, and support undergraduate Indigenous students through paid internships at AIMS.



Over the life of this Corporate Plan, we will also further develop our capacity and capability in novel research methodologies for genuine co-design and the integration of Western Science with Traditional Knowledge.

Levels of Traditional Owner engagement for projects



BRONZE – AIMS-led project.
Basic traditional Owner engagement



SILVER – AIMS-led project.
Traditional Owner consultation,
consent and optional participation



GOLD – Joint AIMS and
Traditional Owner-led project



PLATINUM – Traditional Owner-led
project with AIMS support

4.3 Infrastructure upgrades

Over the period of this plan, AIMS will continue to deliver critical infrastructure upgrades of our ageing assets and support services, and continue to develop and promote business cases to support both appropriate maintenance of our current infrastructure, and growth in our research infrastructure capability in line with organisational and national demand.

- The October 2020 federal Budget included funding from the National Research Infrastructure Investment Plan for expansion of the SeaSim and to establish merit-based access for external researchers through the establishment of the SeaSim National Facility. The expansions will be commissioned during 2024/25 and the first merit-based experiments commencing.
- Our original headquarters buildings and marine facilities near Townsville continue to require significant ongoing investment in both critical maintenance and facility upgrades to support AIMS' science activities and aspirations. Critical upgrades to our power systems commenced in 2024 and will continue into 2025, and detailed master planning and remediation works to prepare for upgrades to ageing laboratory and office spaces has begun and will continue during the period of this plan. Outcomes of our master planning will be informed by future science and infrastructure needs and increased capacity and will, in turn, underpin future funding business case development.

- Our marine facilities and wharf require significant remediation and upgrading to ensure ongoing operation and to cater for AIMS' future capability needs. The March 2022 federal Budget included \$26.5 million for remediation and upgrade of the AIMS- Wharf, including expansion of the existing infrastructure to support larger sized, modern research vessels and the requirements of the ReefWorks maritime technology testing range. This is an extremely challenging project in a complex regulatory environment, with design and engineering investigations and approvals processes continuing into 2024-25.
- The RV *Cape Ferguson* (commissioned in 2000) is beyond end-of-life and needs urgent replacement in order to continue to efficiently and safely support AIMS' core sea-going activities. The project to design a future Research Vessel to replace the RV *Cape Ferguson* commenced in 2022 and will deliver a construction-ready design by December 2024. We will continue to propagate a detailed vessel construction business case to support replacement of the RV *Cape Ferguson* by 2028, subject to securing construction phase funding.

4.4 Engagement

As one of Australia's publicly funded research agencies, public engagement through events, the media, and the Parliament supports our Strategy 2030 reputation targets. Awareness of who we are and what we do helps the public understand the value that AIMS provides to the nation, and of our central role in tropical marine science.

We measure the impact of our public communications and engagements, and are investing in ongoing improvements to our media and social media monitoring and analysis capabilities. This helps us to understand how AIMS' communication is perceived, and supports improvements in its presentation and reach. We continue to make progress on achieving our goal of a 50% increase in awareness of AIMS by the Australian public compared to 2022.

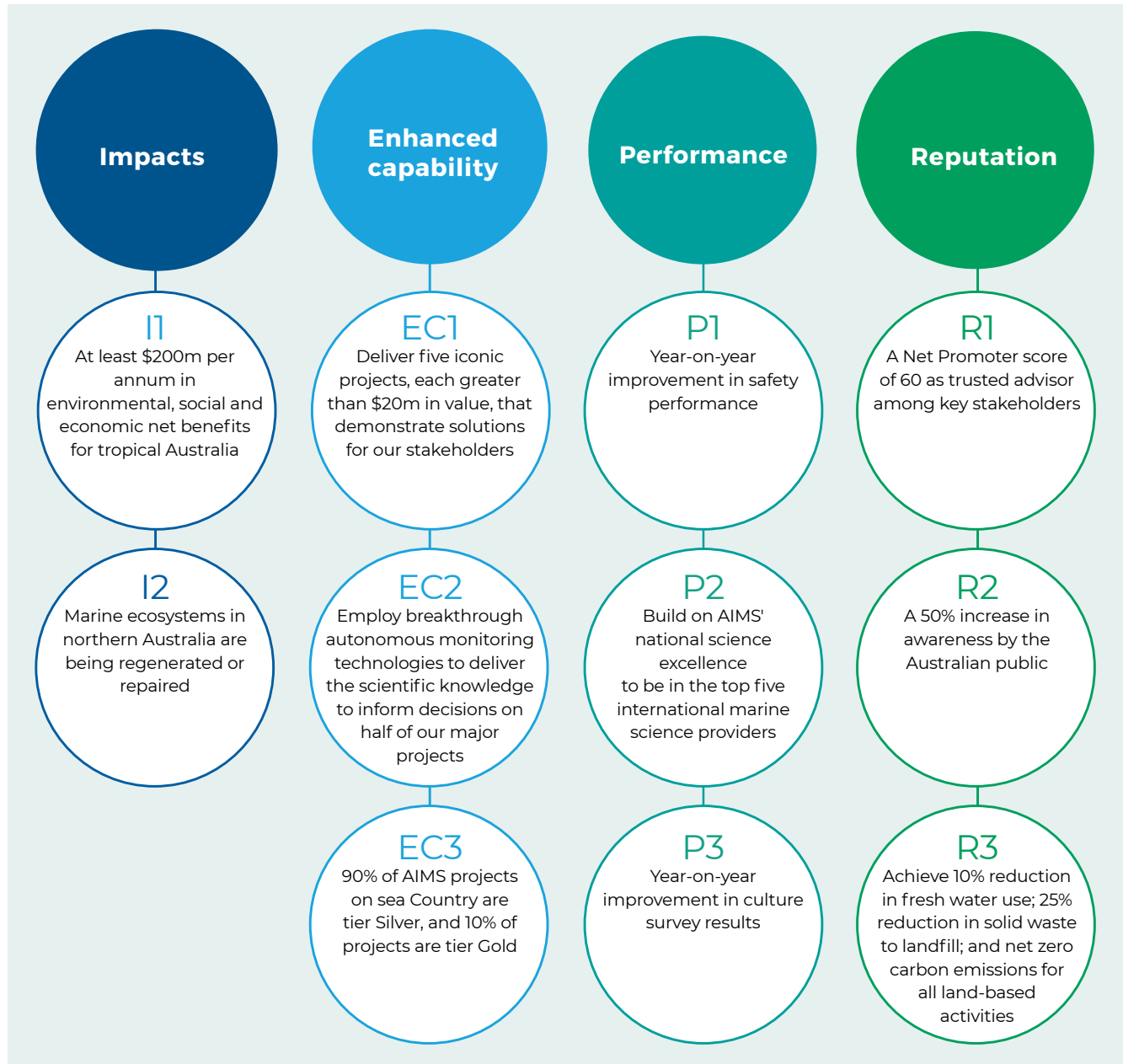
The successful introduction into service in 2023 of our centralised image gallery has enabled better management of our non-scientific imagery and improved its availability to the public. Through 2024/25 we will continue to investigate new opportunities to meaningfully engage with the public and other stakeholders in order to further develop our reputation as a preferred science partner, and an independent and trusted advisor. This will also support the positive image of our efforts to provide the science required to support the use, management, and protection of Australia's tropical marine estate.

5. Performance Measurement

The high-level directions and objectives set out in the AIMS Strategy 2030 cascade into detailed implementation plans, as outlined in the Portfolio Budget Statements and

Corporate Plan. These form the basis for our research and investment decisions. The AIMS Strategy 2030 has 11 strategic targets to be achieved by 2030.

AIMS Strategy 2030



To ensure our progress against these long-term targets, this Corporate Plan contains eight key performance criteria against which we measure our performance on an annual basis. A combination of quantitative and qualitative

indicators that draw on internal and external metrics of activity and success allow us to provide an objective and meaningful assessment of whether we are meeting our performance criteria.

Key Performance Criteria

Performance Criteria	Portfolio Budget Statement (PBS) performance targets	Key Performance Indicators	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29
AIMS research creates a positive triple bottom line* contribution (impact value) to Australia	Minimum two case studies	≥ 2 new triple bottom line case studies published per year (pa)	≥2 new triple bottom line case studies published per year				
		Demonstrated total impact value	≥\$200M per annum total impact value				
Deliver strategic and applied research and monitoring that addresses stakeholder needs	Achieve revenue budget from stakeholder commissioned research	Achieve revenue budget from stakeholder commissioned research	Achieve revenue budget from stakeholder commissioned research				
Maintain or increase current standings for scientific excellence, innovation and impact	Maintain acknowledged domestic and global high standing in relevant fields of research, and confidence of key stakeholders in research outputs	Maintain top 3 ranking in marine science in Australia and top 10 globally and pursuing a top 5 global ranking**	Maintain top 3 ranking in marine science in Australia and top 10 globally			Maintain top 3 ranking in marine science in Australia and top 5 globally	
		Maintain high stakeholder confidence in AIMS' scientific outputs gauged using a net promoter score	NPS ≥55	NPS ≥60	NPS ≥60	NPS ≥60	NPS ≥60
Deliver research advice and scientific products that are critical for stakeholders to assess the impacts of natural and human pressures on sensitive marine ecosystems	Maintain or increase the number of peer reviewed publications and other knowledge products, and make datasets or data products publicly available	Maintain annual journal publication rates ≥200 per annum***	≥210 journal articles and technical reports	≥210 journal articles and technical reports	≥220 journal articles and technical reports	Maintain annual journal publication rates ≥220 per annum	Maintain annual journal publication rates ≥220 per annum
		Datasets held by AIMS are accessible to the public, subject to any confidentiality restrictions	100%				
Increase research capability, capacity, impact and science diplomacy through participation in formal national and international collaborations, joint ventures, partnerships and strategic alliances	Maintain or increase the number and scale of domestic and international research partnerships, collaborations, joint ventures and strategic alliances	Maintain proportion of published papers and reports that include collaborators (≥ 80 per cent)	≥80% of published papers and reports include collaborators				
	Specialist advice and expertise provided by AIMS is used by relevant advisory panels and committees	≥ 2 new case studies published per year	≥2 new case studies published per year that demonstrate the value of AIMS' contributions for advisory panels and committees				
Improve research outcomes and impact through increasing Traditional Owner partnership in the planning and delivery of coastal research and development	Year on year increase in % by value of projects with Indigenous partnership in the planning and delivery phases	≥ 1 new case study published per year	At least one case study per year that demonstrates how partnership with Traditional Owner communities improves outcomes for the community and delivers value for AIMS' science.				
Reduce AIMS' environmental footprint	20 per cent reduction in AIMS' carbon emissions compared with 2017-18	Carbon emission reduction ≥ 20 per cent compared with 2017-18	≥30% reduction	≥35% reduction	≥40% reduction	≥40% reduction	≥45% reduction
	15 per cent reduction in AIMS' waste to landfill compared with 2018-19	Solid waste to landfill from normal operations reduced by 15 per cent compared with 2018-19	≥25% reduction	≥25% reduction	≥25% reduction	≥25% reduction	≥25% reduction
Optimise use of research infrastructure assets	Maintain or increase use of research infrastructure	≥ 90 per cent use of major research assets	≥90%				

* Economic, social and environmental net benefit

** Improved methodology for benchmarking commenced from 2023-24.

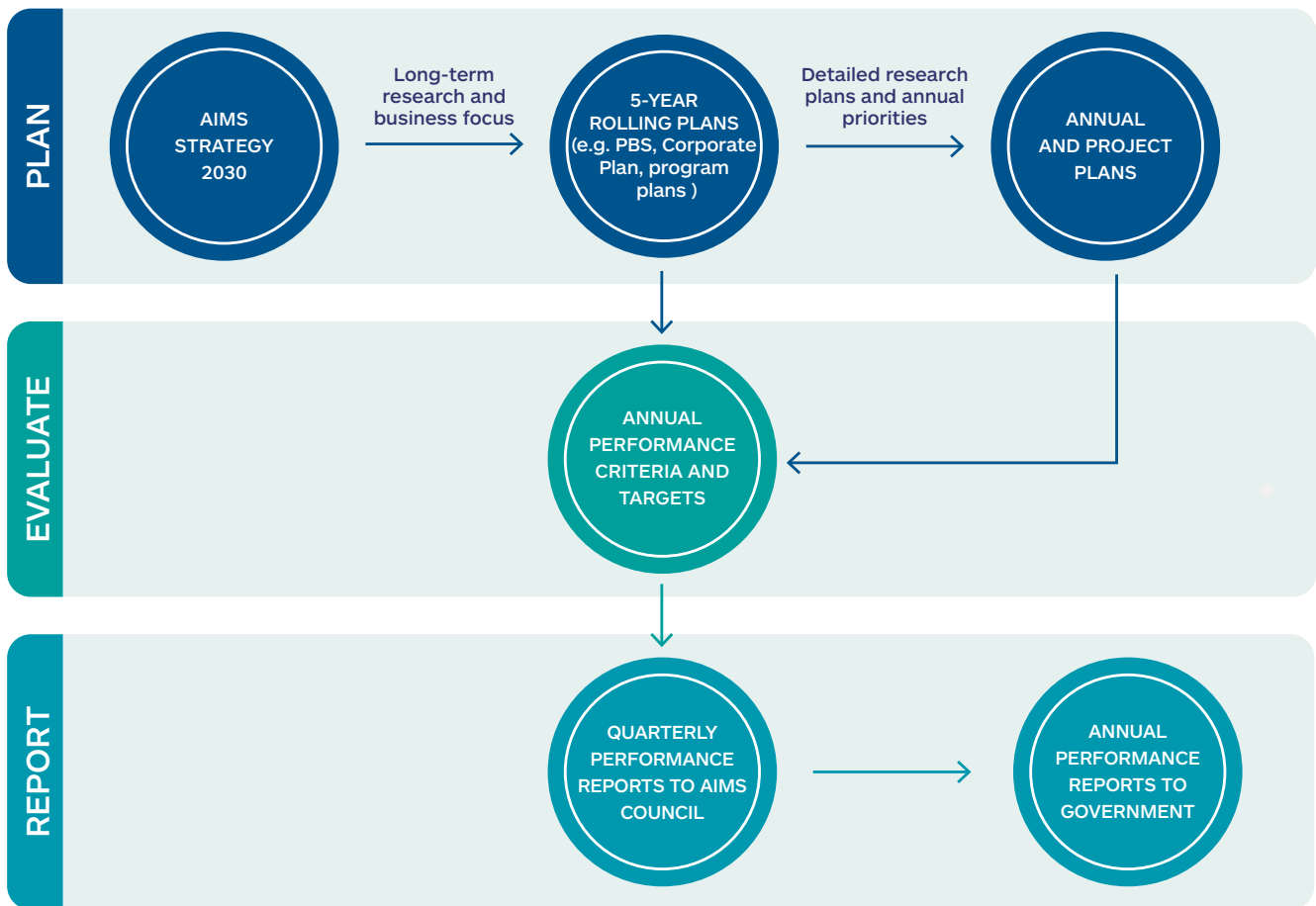
*** Improved measure from 2023-24 to specify scientific paper productivity.

The AIMS Annual Report 2023-24 will provide a comprehensive assessment of our performance for the financial year. Overall performance and performance against

research goals will be reported in detail. This report will be available on the AIMS website in late October 2024.

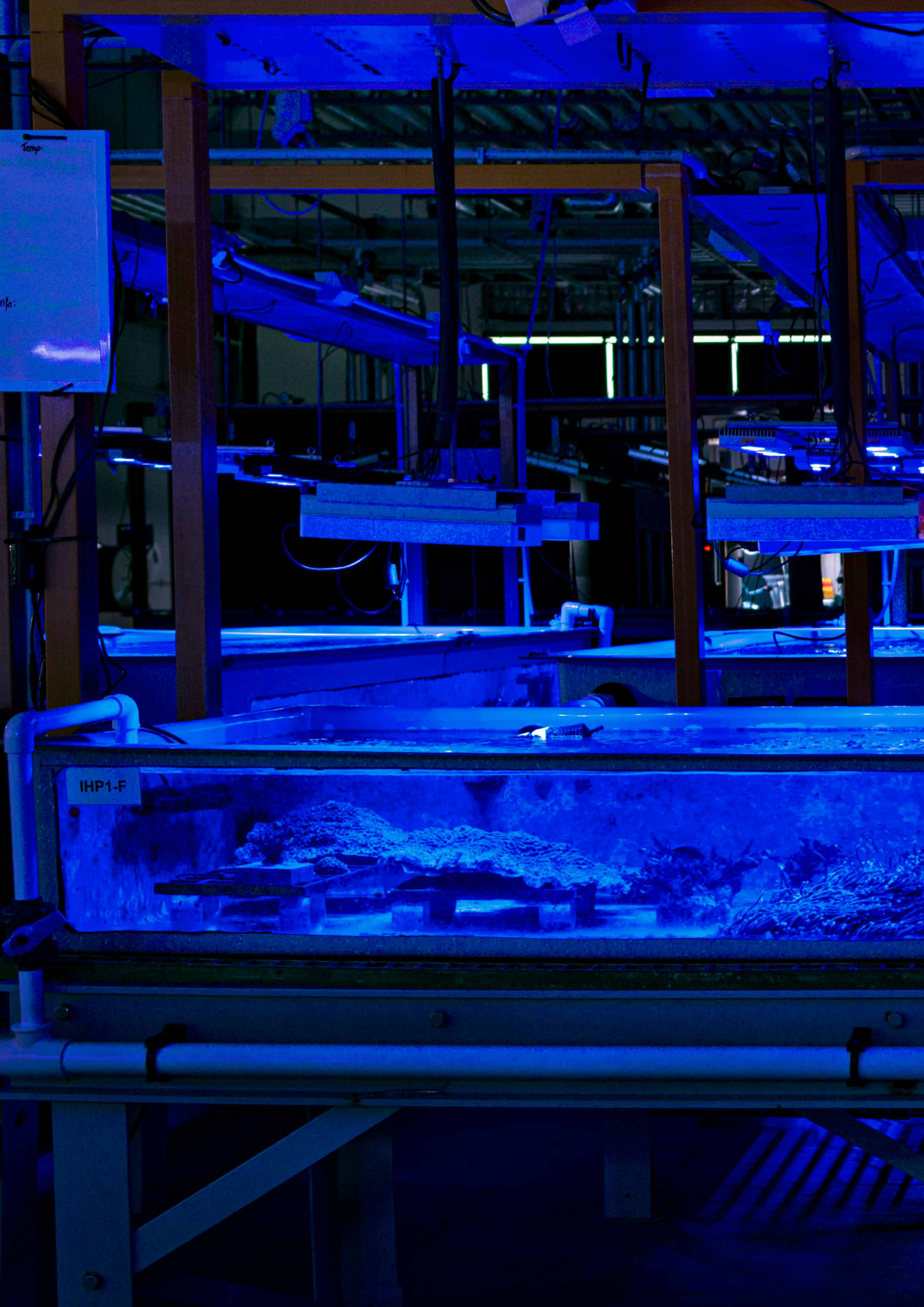
The links between our planning process and performance are shown below.

AIMS planning, evaluation and reporting process



Temp: _____
Info: _____

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IHP1-E

2016 SPAWNING



Australian Government



AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE
OF MARINE SCIENCE

Townsville, Queensland

PMB No. 3, Townsville MC Qld 4810

Telephone: 07 4753 4444

Facsimile: 07 4772 5852

Darwin, Northern Territory

PO Box 41775, Casuarina NT 0811

Telephone: 08 8920 9240

Facsimile: 07 8920 9222

Perth, Western Australia

Indian Ocean Marine Research Centre - Level 3

The University of Western Australia

64 Fairway

Crawley WA 6009

Telephone: 08 6369 4000

Canberra, Australian Capital Territory

Suite G7,

65 Canberra Avenue

Griffith ACT 2603

Telephone: 07 4753 4444

aims.gov.au