

11th May 2017

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Solar Powered Great Barrier Reef Research at AIMS

Research into the workings and wellbeing of Australia's tropical marine environments has received a boost with the announcement of funding for the installation of renewable energy infrastructure at the Australian Institute of Marine Science (AIMS) near Townsville.

With \$1.8 million in funding delivered through the Australian Government's Public Service Modernisation Fund, and announced as part of the Federal Budget 2017-2018, AIMS will commence planning and construction of an 800kW solar panel array at its Cape Ferguson headquarters during financial year 2017-18.

Speaking from Cape Ferguson today, AIMS CEO John Gunn said that installation of the \$2.25 million system would result in more money being available for AIMS' science activities. "We will save around \$300,000 annually on electricity bills – savings that can be used to support the important work being done by our researchers", said Mr Gunn.

A significant proportion of AIMS' research focuses on the impact of climate global change on tropical marine ecosystems. "Increasing atmospheric CO₂ levels are known to be driving climate change – this initiative will reduce the Institute's carbon footprint by more than 800 tonnes annually", noted Mr Gunn.

The Institute's National Sea Simulator (SeaSim) is proving to be an invaluable tool in the fight to unravel the complex interplay of pressures on reef communities. "SeaSim is allowing us to undertake complex research that was not previously possible – including work on assessing the impact of increasing CO₂ – this investment will help to reduce the recurrent cost of running this important research asset."

"The Government's commitment to supporting world class research infrastructure, as part of its National Innovation and Science Agenda, is helping to keep Australia at the forefront of tropical marine research internationally," said Mr Gunn.

For media enquiries:

Mr Steve Clarke - Communication Manager
Australian Institute of Marine Science
Tel: +61 (7) 4753 4264 (Australian Eastern Standard Time, +10 hrs)
Mob: +61 (0) 419 668 497
s.clarke@aims.gov.au

Ends.