

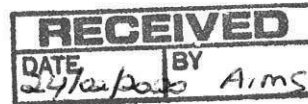


The Hon Karen Andrews MP

Minister for Industry, Science and Technology

MS19-001483

The Hon Penelope Wensley AC
Chairperson
Australian Institute of Marine Science Council
PMB 3, Townsville MC
TOWNSVILLE QLD 4810



Dear Ms Wensley

I am writing to outline my expectations of the Australian Institute of Marine Science (AIMS).

As you know, the Australian Government places high importance on science and innovation as drivers of our economy, employment, social wellbeing and positive environmental outcomes. It is therefore essential that AIMS plays a role in advancing the Government's broader economic agenda by fostering a strong tropical marine science base that underpins industry in our blue economy.

I expect AIMS to fulfil its purpose of contributing to the economic and environmental wellbeing of Australians by undertaking research and providing knowledge of Australia's marine estate to achieve:

- a healthy, resilient Great Barrier Reef;
- sustainable coastal ecosystems and industries across tropical Australia; and
- environmentally sustainable offshore oil and gas development.

Resolving national challenges

The National Marine Science Plan identifies the marine challenges faced by Australia. I expect AIMS to continue as a key leader in the effort to provide the knowledge, technology, tools and innovation that will deliver solutions to these challenges, and drive the development of our blue economy.

The Great Barrier Reef is nationally significant, as is the entirety of the marine environment in northern Australia, and is recognised in a number of national plans. The *Australia 2030: Prosperity through Innovation 2017* (ISA 2030 Plan) recommended a National Mission for a 10 year Great Barrier Reef restoration and adaption research and development (R&D) program. The *Reef 2050 Long-Term Sustainability Plan* (the Reef 2050 Plan) sets out an integrated vision and action plan for maintaining and enhancing the health of the Great Barrier Reef through the next decades.

I expect AIMS to carry out its responsibilities for a range of activities, including ecosystem health actions as identified in the Reef 2050 Plan. AIMS will need to work with its partners in government, industry, Traditional Owners, other research organisations and universities and the community to deliver this plan.

Advancing the Government's policy priorities

The Government has a range of policy priorities that relate to science. I expect that AIMS will continue to make an important contribution to government initiatives under the *2017 Science Statement*; the *2016 National Research Infrastructure Roadmap*; and the *2015 National Innovation and Science Agenda*.

As the Government's priorities develop, I consider it important that our own science and research efforts are brought to bear on these key challenges. As such, I expect you to work with the department on how the science and research capabilities of AIMS can be harnessed in support of the emerging policy priorities of government.

I expect AIMS to continue to carry out work that has a significant impact on matters of national environmental significance. One example of this is AIMS' independent advice to and research for the offshore oil and gas sector to help companies meet environmental regulations and standards (e.g. *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*).

Working collaboratively to advance the Government's agenda

In advancing the Government's agenda, I expect AIMS to collaborate with industry, universities and other publicly funded research agencies to achieve common objectives. In particular, AIMS should use national and international collaboration to increase the capacity and responsiveness of the nation's ability to translate marine science and research into outcomes for business and the broader community. I also expect AIMS to engage with the Chief Scientist of Australia.

I expect AIMS to continue to work in partnership with industry, such as the oil and gas sector, ports and tourism, as well as Traditional Owners and the not-for-profit sector. I expect AIMS to continue to partner with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander groups and individuals across northern Australia, with the goals of protecting and managing the sea country interests of the Traditional Owners, developing a better understanding of each other and our marine environments, and contributing to the economic development of northern Australia.

I also expect AIMS to encourage engagement between researchers and business, including by facilitating mobility between AIMS and other research organisations and industry. I expect AIMS to continue to focus on identifying and responding to commercial opportunities.

Embracing the digital economy

The digital economy is transforming how we do business and undertake our science and research. We know that Australia's ongoing economic success will depend on our ability to harness technological advances to improve existing businesses, create new products and improve daily life. I encourage AIMS to continue to use digital capabilities to increase the effectiveness of its activities, including through expanding the monitoring of the tropical marine ecosystem.

I expect AIMS to ensure that it complies with the Australian Cyber Security Centre Top Four Cyber Security Mitigation Strategies and to have sound general ICT controls. AIMS will build a culture of awareness for the importance of security to the organisation's mission, and improve resilience and response capabilities to cyber-attacks.

Promoting STEM equity

My department recently released the *Advancing Women in STEM* Strategy and supported the development of the *Women in STEM Decadal Plan*, led by the Australian Academy of Science. I ask that you work closely with my department, the Women in STEM Ambassador and other key stakeholders across the STEM sector to drive cultural and social change. I expect AIMS to seek and maintain Science in Australia Gender Equity accreditation and to provide an equitable workplace for all employees.

Driving your organisation's performance

Legislative requirements

I acknowledge the primary functions of AIMS are to carry out R&D in relation to marine science and marine technology, and to encourage and facilitate the non-commercial and commercial application of the results arising from such activities, as set out in the *Australian Institute of Marine Science Act 1972* (the AIMS Act).

I expect AIMS to be an exemplar of the Government's commitment to the effective governance and performance of its agencies, governed by the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (the PGPA Act).

In accordance with the PGPA Act, I expect AIMS to develop an annual report and corporate plan and to provide these to me, as the responsible portfolio Minister, and the Minister for Finance. In developing the annual report and corporate plan, I expect AIMS to consult with me and my department, and to take into account the priorities and policies of the Government, especially as articulated in this Statement of Expectation.

I note AIMS' Strategy 2025 includes measurable and ambitious targets. I encourage AIMS to continue to work closely with my department on strategies to track and report on these targets and on my priorities.

Sustainable operations

I expect AIMS to have a strategic and disciplined focus on the delivery of core responsibilities, consolidating past achievements, and driving enhancements to safety performance, financial management and the delivery of essential projects that support current legislative functions. I expect AIMS to work with my department to ensure long-term financial sustainability.

Agency staff and health

I expect AIMS to continue being a collaborator, partner and employer of choice by providing a workplace environment, culture and opportunities that will attract and retain the very best talent from around Australia and the world. I expect AIMS to continue to promote a safe and positive working environment, through responding to its health, safety and environment obligations under the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011*. I expect AIMS to continue to increase the diversity of employees, creating a diverse and inclusive team to maximise the opportunity to deliver its strategy.

I expect AIMS to continue to keep me and my department informed, in a timely and accurate way, of significant issues relating to the financial health, culture and work of the organisation.

Communication of AIMS' science and research

I expect that AIMS will raise community awareness of its activities and promote its research and technical knowledge to relevant stakeholders.

Working with my department and office

I look forward to AIMS working closely with my department. Aside from regular meetings between you and me, I ask that you keep me informed of significant issues relating to the work health and culture of the organisation. Your timely and accurate advice to my department and office is essential in allowing me to promote the scientific work of AIMS.

To this end, I expect that AIMS will discuss ministerial briefings and correspondence with the relevant areas of my office and my department, and provide copies in parallel. Further, I expect AIMS to provide prior notice, to my office and my department, of significant announcements and events that are likely to attract media attention.

I look forward to continuing to work with you on these important areas that will advance marine science and research in Australia, and to receiving your response outlining how the Council proposes to deliver on these priorities.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Karen Andrews', written in a cursive style.

Karen Andrews

13 / 2 / 2020