SCIENCE TO IMPACT:

Strategy 2040

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

The Australian Institute of Marine Science (AIMS) acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land and sea Country on which AIMS operates. We recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as Australia's first scientists and acknowledge the deep and timeless connection with Country. We pay our respects to Elders past and present and acknowledge future leaders.

SCIENCE TO IMPACT

The Australian Institute of Marine Science's research supports the sustainable use and protection of our oceans.

Climate change is warming Australia's oceans at a speed never scientifically evidenced before. The health of our oceans is changing. Australia's tropical marine ecosystems are under stress and coral reefs face many threats to their continued existence.

Science to Impact: Strategy 2040 sharpens our focus on safeguarding Australia's tropical oceans in the face of environmental change, including our innovative work to improve reef resilience.

Our new vision for AIMS — *thriving oceans through trusted science and innovation*, guides what we do and our strategy will guide how we do it.

For us, thriving oceans are ones where our marine ecosystems move beyond mere survival and towards a state of flourishing, growth, and positive development. This strategy is underpinned by a commitment to sustaining healthy oceans that continue to provide environmental, cultural, economic, and social benefits for all who live by, work with, and rely on them — supporting livelihoods, cultural connections, and collective wellbeing.

We are investing in and prioritising our effort and resources into five research themes which set the strategic direction for our science and innovation, as we continue to deliver science to inform evidence-based solutions for stakeholders.

We will build our capability and partnerships in emerging areas like Artificial Intelligence, further embed Indigenous values and cultural perspectives into marine science through effective engagement with Indigenous partners, innovate in conservation aquaculture, and continue exploring novel solutions for protecting Australia's oceans.

Our commitment to delivering impact remains a key focus of our strategy. This commitment is reflected in our proactive approach to systems-based thinking and transdisciplinary collaboration. We aim to bring together different knowledge systems, capabilities and perspectives across society to develop evidence-based, innovative and holistic solutions.

We will continue to invest in the key enablers that underpin our strategy: our people, partners, infrastructure and the transformation of our technologies.

Through this strategy, AIMS will continue to provide trusted science enabling the management, protection, and stewardship of thriving, healthy, and resilient oceans for generations to come.

Dr Elizabeth Woods OAM
Council Chair

Prof Selina Stead
Chief Executive Officer

VALUES

Safety
care for ourselves and others in all we do

Collaboration
together we create impact

Innovation
vision and creativity to solve big challenges

Integrity
always transparent, ethical and objective

Passion
energy that inspires excellence

Respect
treat everyone with dignity, value diversity, and support others

Environment
minimise our footprint

VISION

Thriving oceans through trusted science and innovation.

MISSION

To deliver research and knowledge to manage, protect, and steward Australia's tropical marine ecosystems.

RESEARCH THEMES

Safeguarding tropical marine ecosystems in the face of environmental change

Future Reefs
Enhancing reef resilience to climate change and environmental pressures.

Coastal Futures
Enhancing coastal ecosystems, coastal community wellbeing, and livelihoods.

Blue Economy
Supporting an inclusive and sustainable blue economy.

Digital Oceans
Enabling data science innovation, capacity, and data integration to support ocean health.

First Nations Innovation
Elevating Indigenous leadership, science and stewardship.

ENABLERS

People
Our highly skilled scientists and engineers, supported by efficient operations and corporate teams, deliver impactful and innovative marine research, earning us a reputation as a trusted, impartial, and independent advisor.

Partnerships & Collaborations
Our transdisciplinary approach unites diverse stakeholders and collaborators to address critical marine challenges, providing a pathway for translating our research to impact.
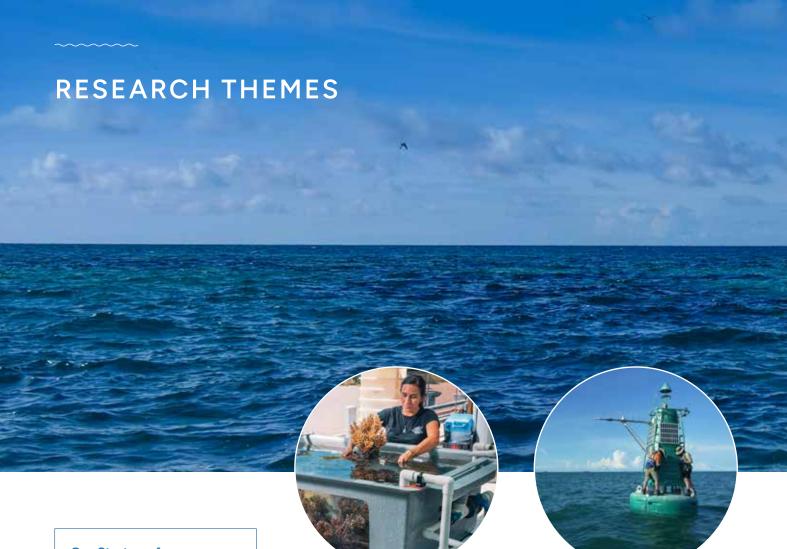
Infrastructure
Our world-class research infrastructure, including the National Sea Simulator, advanced laboratories, and our research vessel fleet, supports cutting-edge research in areas of national importance.

Technology Innovations
Our commitment to transforming our use of digital and technology platforms enhances scientific discovery, allowing us to make our data open and accessible, driving innovation and transparency.

RESEARCH THEMES

Our Strategy focuses on five research themes highlighting the breadth of work undertaken by our world-class scientists working collaboratively within and across themes.

Our established expertise and reputation in reef and coastal science is complemented by a growing focus on research to support a sustainable blue economy. We will expand our transformative initiatives in digital and data science and continue advancing our work in First Nations Innovation.

By prioritising partnerships, efforts, and resources across these themes, we will continue delivering science to support thriving oceans.

Future Reefs

Coral reef ecosystems are increasingly endangered by climate change, pollution, and other human activities. AIMS responds to these urgent threats with an in-depth understanding of reef ecology and evolution based on long-term monitoring, field and laboratory-based experimental research. Our research aims to make positive impacts on reef processes and biodiversity, cultural heritage, and ecosystem services through science-based conservation, restoration and adaptation strategies to support conventional and novel management solutions.

Coastal Futures

AIMS plays a pivotal role in safeguarding Australia's coasts through the collection, interpretation, and modelling of ecological, chemical, and physical data, specifically to assess risks and inform management. We support Traditional Owners undertaking sea Country monitoring programs that integrate traditional knowledge with contemporary scientific methodologies. Our research informs adaptive management and policy to ensure coastal ecosystems remain resilient, productive, and aligned with community and cultural values.

Blue Economy

AIMS supports the advancement of Australia's blue economy (sustainable offshore and coastal industries) by delivering trusted science, tools, and advice that guide the sustainable and equitable use of ocean resources. Our research supports these industries in protecting biodiversity and cultural values, and facilitates contemporary environmental regulation. Through this work we will support productive, sustainable, and inclusive development and the realisation of long-term ecological and economic benefits for communities and future generations.

Digital Oceans

AIMS addresses the growing complexity of ocean science by integrating our ecological, genomic, chemical, and physical data streams with advanced Artificial Intelligence and data visualisation. This foundational approach enables novel methods for discovery using predictive modelling and Machine Learning to generate new hypotheses, transforming vast data streams into scientific knowledge. The resulting intelligence and insights provide the predictive foresight needed to inform dynamic marine spatial planning, conservation strategies, and sustainable industry practices.

First Nations Innovation

AIMS amplifies Indigenous leadership in marine science and stewardship by removing systemic barriers to recognising Indigenous Knowledge and sea Country custodianship. In partnerships with Traditional Owners, we foster ethical best practice, innovation excellence, co-design for reciprocity in knowledge sharing, and embed capacity building pathways across the spectrum from practitioner to higher tertiary education. In strengthening equity in ocean science and management, we enrich our research outcomes with social and cultural depth.

ABOUT AIMS

The Australian Institute of Marine Science is Australia's tropical marine research agency.

JOIN US

We welcome partners and collaborators to join us in advancing marine science and innovation.

Together, we can drive impactful research, deliver innovative solutions and shape sustainable ocean futures.

aims.gov.au

AIMS is a world leader in tropical marine research, expanding our nation's knowledge hidden below the surface.

We provide:

- unique insight into Australia's tropical waters; and
- knowledge to develop globally relevant and innovative research solutions.

From Ningaloo in the West, across the Top End to the Great Barrier Reef in the East, AIMS' researchers understand large-scale, complex and emerging challenges in iconic marine habitats in Australia's vast and remote tropical waters.

As a trusted name in marine science we look to Australia's future needs and build upon our existing capabilities and knowledge to support thriving oceans.

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