

AIMS Opening Statement to Senate Estimates

October 2020

Thank you for the opportunity to make an opening statement.

I would like to acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the AIMS sites and pay my respects to them as the first scientists in this land. I acknowledge the deep and timeless connection between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, their land and sea country, and pay my respects to Elders past and present, and acknowledge the future leaders of tomorrow.

AIMS has been monitoring, studying, and reporting our findings on Australia's tropical marine environment for almost 50 years, for the benefit of Australian communities, businesses and governments. We are consistently ranked in the top three marine research institutions in the world due to the quality and relevance of our published work. In fact, when I checked last, we were sitting at number one.

Our ability to do this is underpinned by our robust experimental research. Research which is only possible because of the outstanding scientists that we employ, our collaborators and our major infrastructure, including our sea going research vessels, and our internationally recognised marine research aquarium, the National Sea Simulator, or as we call it, SeaSim.

And so, I was delighted to receive the news in the Government's October budget, that SeaSim has been allocated an additional \$36.3 million over the next three years for expansion, and to help fund its operation as a merit-based

National Facility. Thank you. This expansion of SeaSim is most timely.

It will support the vital experimental research being done by AIMS and our partners in the Reef Restoration and Adaptation Program (the RRAP), as we seek ways to help the Great Barrier Reef adapt to, and recover from, the environmental stresses brought about by climate change.

This funding will also allow expansion of SeaSim into a National Facility, providing funded access to marine scientists from other organisations, driving positive impact for the nation.

Finally, I'm pleased to advise that AIMS' 8th instalment of the Index of Marine Industry, completed in collaboration with Deloitte, is close to finalisation. The Index will once again provide detailed insight into the value and importance of Australia's blue economy. I urge you to look out for this.

Thank you