

## EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TRAINING

### SENATE LEGISLATION COMMITTEE - QUESTIONS ON NOTICE 2006-2007 ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES HEARING

**Outcome:** AIMS  
**Output Group:** AIMS

#### DEST Question No. E766\_07

Senator Carr provided in writing.

#### Question:

AIMS@JCU

1. How is the AIMS@JCU project going?
2. Has it met all the targets that were identified when it was established?
3. It was established to enable JCU and yourselves "to create new areas of research expertise." What new areas of expertise have been established by AIMS@JCU in the past two years? [Any?]
4. How has AIMS@JCU improved the position of AIMS in terms of research income?
5. What has been the dollar benefit in research income for AIMS under this programme?
6. How has this benefit been calculated?
7. Has this been additional funding from private sources or other government sources?
8. What has been the extent of private or corporate investment in AIMS@JCU programmes?

#### Answer:

*AIMS has provided the following response:*

AIMS@JCU

1. Collaborative research is progressing in 3 research areas – Tropical Aquaculture, Coastal Processes and Modelling, and Stress in Tropical Marine Systems. The joint venture has eighty-seven members with an even representation from both partners across three research programmes focused on improving understanding of: issues facing the growth of the tropical aquaculture industry; biological, physical and chemical processes in the coastal zone; and, the physiological and molecular basis of marine stressors responsible for degradation of marine organisms. The Joint Venture has offered 16 PhD scholarships, 3 awards for Honours Students and established 3 Post doctoral positions (one currently being advertised). In addition to the students receiving scholarship support, the venture provides top up funds for some students – in all 51 students are members of AIMS@JCU.
2. The purpose of the Joint Venture is to enhance the levels of collaboration between the two partners and increase Australia's profile as a world leader in tropical marine research and education. The benefits include improving training opportunities for research students, research collaboration between staff, and joint access to the

research infrastructure of each institution. This has enabled both partners to improve the utilization of assets and to rationalize purchases of new equipment.

The objectives of AIMS@JCU are detailed on the website (<http://aims.jcu.edu.au/AIMS-JCU/about.htm>). While many of the objectives are longer term, significant progress has been made against these agreed objectives especially in sharing research facilities and improving research training opportunities for students.

Collaborative research between staff of the two institutions is now significant in two of the three programs (Aquaculture and Coastal Processes) and developing in the newest area (Stress in Tropical Marine Systems). AIMS@JCU has funded capital infrastructure developments on both the AIMS and JCU campuses, including support for aquaculture facilities at JCU, controlled environment rearing facilities at AIMS, and high-bandwidth connections between the two sites. As well, JCU Members of the Joint Venture gain access to the world class facilities at AIMS, including laboratories, instrumentation, and research vessels and there are reciprocal rights of benefits for AIMS staff using JCU infrastructure.

Outputs from the joint venture are reported in more detail in the 2006 Annual Report which is available on the [AIMS@JCU website](http://aims.jcu.edu.au/AIMS-JCU/home.htm). The website also provides information on research activities. See <http://aims.jcu.edu.au/AIMS-JCU/home.htm>.

3. "Create new area of research expertise for the Participants, both individually and together" was one of the objectives outlined in the Joint Venture Agreement. Consistent with this objective, maths and physics expertise has been developed within the Coastal Processes and Modelling programme that would not have been available without the AIMS@JCU scholarships.
4. The Joint Venture has not generated any additional research income.
- 5-6 The benefits do not relate to external income but rather to enhanced research capacity and broader use of research assets to support ongoing growth of Townsville as a research centre of excellence in tropical marine research and training. This regional capacity will provide long term benefits nationally and globally.
7. See answer 5 and 6 above.
8. Nil. The research focus of AIMS@JCU is primarily public benefit research.