

## The Kimberley Marine Research Program. An Overview

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The Kimberley Marine Research Program (KMRP) has been commissioned by the State Government to provide a baseline of information for marine park management, and future coastal planning. The program will deliver the first regional scale baseline of marine environmental information in the Kimberley. While the program will provide a step change improvement in information for management, it will necessarily be at a foundational level of understanding.

The WA State Government committed the KMRP funding through The Western Australian Marine Science Institution (WAMSI) to support the planning and management of the proposed State marine park network across the Kimberley. The resulting research program, coordinated by the Department of Parks and Wildlife, includes 25 research projects led by the WAMSI partners taking place across the Kimberley.

This regional view of the marine environment and identified values in the Kimberley will enable a better assessment and management of the impacts and risks to these values. The program is focussed on two main areas of research:

- Describing the biological, physical and social environment including the marine values and the current pressures upon them; and
- Understanding ecosystems including how they function and respond to human pressures and climate change

The 25 projects cover a range of topics including habitat mapping, biology, marine animal abundance and distribution, connectivity, oceanography, geomorphology, water quality, nutrient flow as well as, social values, human use and climate change impacts. Indigenous involvement is a key component to the success of the KMRP and, while there are 2 projects specific to this (Traditional knowledge and Social values), all projects will seek to engage with Indigenous people to include their participation and to ensure the outcomes of the research benefit local communities.

The program has been designed to build an overall picture of the Kimberley and this important marine environment by gathering information that will support the long term understanding and management of this area. To achieve planned outcomes, the complex research methodologies have been focussed on delivering information that support the Program objectives (integration), and science findings must be provided in a form that is useable and useful for managers (knowledge uptake).



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