

The Kimberley Marine Research Program - Integrating Science into marine conservation management

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The West Australian Marine Research Institution (WAMSI), a joint venture partnership of State, Federal, Industry and Academic institutions is addressing this need through its cooperative approach to research program development and framework establishment to enhance science impact and knowledge exchange. The Kimberley Marine Research Program (KMRP), funded through the Western Australian State Government's Kimberley Science and Conservation Strategy and delivered through WAMSI, is a strong example of this process. The KMRP encompasses 25 research projects characterising the physical and biological environment, ecosystem processes and the social values and uses of this vast wilderness over the five year program. The integrated research program is designed to ensure the information necessary for planning and management of marine conservation, is available for both state government and Traditional Owners. WAMSI designs and manages research programs from their inception to ensure the greatest return from WA's public investment in marine science leading to successful knowledge transfer and impact. This process starts with the development of a clear research strategy outlining critical information gaps and questions through to ensuring accessibility of research finding in a clear and concise reporting format and relevant products and tools for management. This enables the greatest impact of these research findings through their incorporation into policy, guidelines and operational actions by managers and other end-users. This process relies on an open and ongoing dialogue between scientists and end-users, driven by an intermediary with an understanding of the needs of both parties. Through a considerable end-user involvement and understanding over the life of the program and individual projects, there is a resulting increase in the uptake of the results, and the overall success of the research program and of sustainable conservation management.



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