



PRIME MINISTER

**SPEECH BY THE PRIME MINISTER THE HON P J KEATING MP
PRESENTATION OF THE IBM ENVIRONMENTAL RESEARCH PROGRAM
AWARD TO THE AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF MARINE SCIENCE
TOWNSVILLE, WEDNESDAY, 20 JULY 1994**

Ladies and Gentlemen, it is extremely gratifying to be able to announce an IBM Corporation Environmental Research Program award to the Australian Institute of Marine Science.

I have just had the pleasure of launching the Great Barrier Reef Strategic Plan, a milestone towards the ecologically sustainable management of a world treasure. This is becoming a very satisfactory and environmentally friendly day for me.

The Institute has every right to feel a little bit pleased with itself about receiving this award. IBM is a corporation that sets and expects the highest standards. IBM also possesses and values highly its reputation as a good corporate citizen. Its very generous sponsorship, through the IBM International Foundation, of programs such as the one which has produced this award amply illustrates that.

IBM has offered the Institute assistance in the form of funding and computer technology to the value of \$AUS1.4 million. Now, they used to let me deal with large sums when I was Treasurer, and I can tell you that is a very generous figure. The award is one of only four granted worldwide, so is not only generous and practical but also very good for the Institute's reputation.

I understand that the project outlined in the successful proposal submitted by Dr Eric Wolanski will significantly boost the research work being done at the Institute. Dr Wolanski's proposes to undertake multi-disciplinary

research to model oceanographic, environmental and fisheries problems on coral reefs and mangroves. The project will produce new conceptual tools to assist managers in their understanding of these threatened marine environments for conservation and sustainable management.

Information from this project will be passed on to collaborating universities, and marine modellers from a number of developing countries will be trained. The project will greatly facilitate communication between scientists and environmental and resource managers both here working on the Great Barrier Reef and in South East Asia. The benefits of this award are not restricted to the Institute alone.

I believe IBM is to be commended on its corporate responsibility and foresight and I am pleased to extend my government's warmest thanks to the corporation for its generosity.

The Australian Institute of Marine Science, (or AIMS for short) makes a very important contribution to the national environmental research effort. Like the IBM Corporation, the Institute enjoys a high international profile for professionalism and excellence. It is acknowledged as Australia's foremost research body in tropical marine science, and is the world leader in areas including coastal dynamics and the oceanography of coral reefs and mangroves.

It has a proud record of achievement in a number of diverse and complex areas.

The Institute, with Commonwealth support, has also recently begun a research program in a part of north-western Australia containing not only the nation's most intense marine industrial activity, such as gas and oil production, but also some of our most spectacular and fragile ecosystems. The research focuses on the key marine science issues relating to sustainable management and regional development.

The importance of the Institute's work is acknowledged in the most sincere way - in the 1994/95 Federal Budget. AIMS was included in an increase in base level funding for three major Commonwealth research agencies by \$34 million over three years.

The Institute is also a major partner in two Cooperative Research Centres, or CRCs: the CRC for aquaculture and the CRC for ecologically sustainable development of the Great Barrier Reef. Both play crucial roles in formulating ecologically sustainable development and management strategies for their particular areas of concern.

I mentioned earlier the scope for regional cooperation that the successful AIMS project proposal offers, and this is an area where the Institute already plays a part through its membership of the International Tropical Marine Resource Centre, or INTROMARC.

INTROMARC is currently providing training in the ecologically sustainable management of tropical marine ecosystems to countries including Malaysia, Vietnam, Indonesia, the Philippines and Papua New Guinea.

The Commonwealth Government places a great emphasis on environmental management and cooperation in our international region, reflected in our involvement with International Environmental Cooperation mechanisms. Memorandums of Understanding on environmental cooperation have been, or are being, concluded with regional neighbours including Indonesia, Singapore and Brunei. We play a role already in several regional co-operative bodies, and look forward to co-operating with ASEAN in their new projects. As well, we are members of APEC, whose March meeting of Environment Ministers in Vancouver resulted in an environmental vision statement and a framework of principles for integrating economy and environment in APEC.

Let me again thank the IBM Corporation and congratulate all those involved in the successful project from AIMS. I wish both organisations every success with their future endeavours. They have given much to the world already, and show every sign of giving much more in an area where it is certainly needed and where an island nation like Australia should hardly be afraid to take the lead.