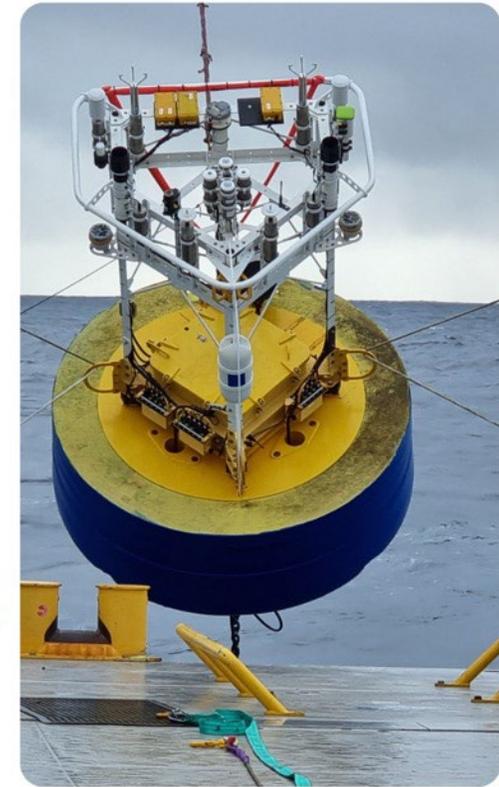




Executive Director update and future directions

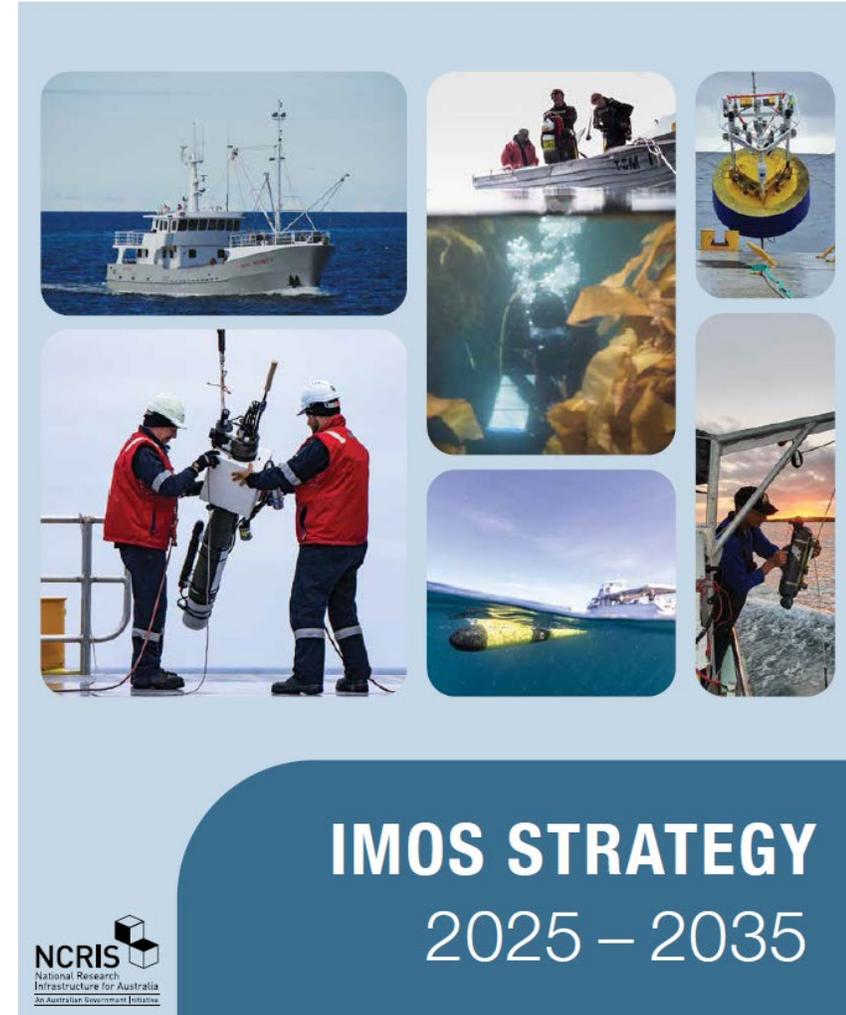
Michelle Heupel



IMOS acknowledges the Traditional Custodians and Elders of the land and sea on which we work and observe, and recognise them as Australia's first marine scientists and carers of sea Country. We pay our respects to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples past and present.

Highlights and updates from 2025

- IMOS released a new decadal strategy
- Elements of the coastal research infrastructure (CoastRI) are being established including national networks of coastal wave buoys and estuarine water quality monitoring
- IMOS Australian Ocean Data Network (AODN) continued expansion of products to translate data to information for end-users (IMOS Live!)
- IMOS signed an MOU with Mercator Ocean International to advance data products and metrics
- IMOS is a foundational element of the recently supported Our Future Oceans ARC Centre of Excellence
- IMOS received a lot of attention in Canberra for providing data related to the SA HAB bloom and WA marine heatwave



Forum for Operational Oceanography (FOO)

The goal of FOO is to improve the safety and efficiency of marine industries through better decision-making via operational oceanography. foo.org.au/

- FOO includes:
 - discussions relating to operational oceanography, including requirements of stakeholders, industry and interested parties
 - scientific and technical discussions of common interest to practitioners working in relevant areas or drawing on products from operational oceanography service providers.
- In 2025 FOO was hosted in Fremantle with 113 attendees from 54 organisations
- Keynote presentations were provided by:
 - Katrina Maguire (DCCEEW): Sustainable Ocean Plan
 - Lyndon Llewellyn: National Marine Science Strategy
 - Arani Chandrapavan (DPIRD): The 2025 WA marine heatwave
- Thanks to everyone who attended and contributed. We hope to see you at FOO 2027!



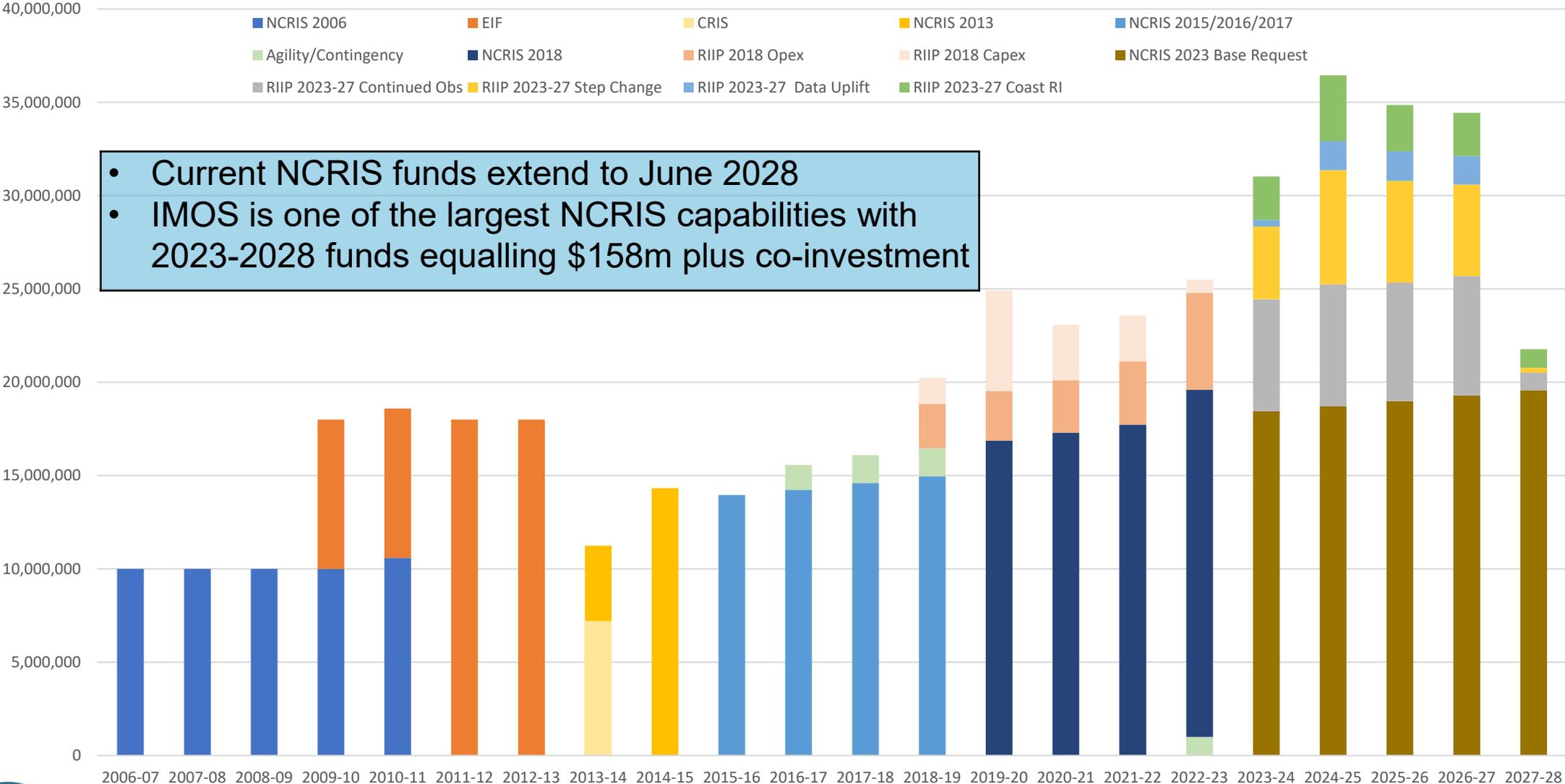
NCRIS update

- The 2025 NCRIS funding round has not been finalised and there are no outcomes at this stage.
 - IMOS proposed the CoastRI initiative and additional support for data products in this round.
- The 2026 Capability Gap funding, designed to cover our shortfall in 2027/28 due to differing timing on funding allocations, closes March 19.
- IMOS will be requesting funds to continue operations at current levels through 2027/28.
- An additional Environment and Climate funding round may still occur in 2026 or 2027 but is unknown at this stage.
- NCRIS funding beyond 2028 is unknown.



Current IMOS funds

IMOS NCRIS (and related schemes) funding 2006-2028



- Current NCRIS funds extend to June 2028
- IMOS is one of the largest NCRIS capabilities with 2023-2028 funds equalling \$158m plus co-investment

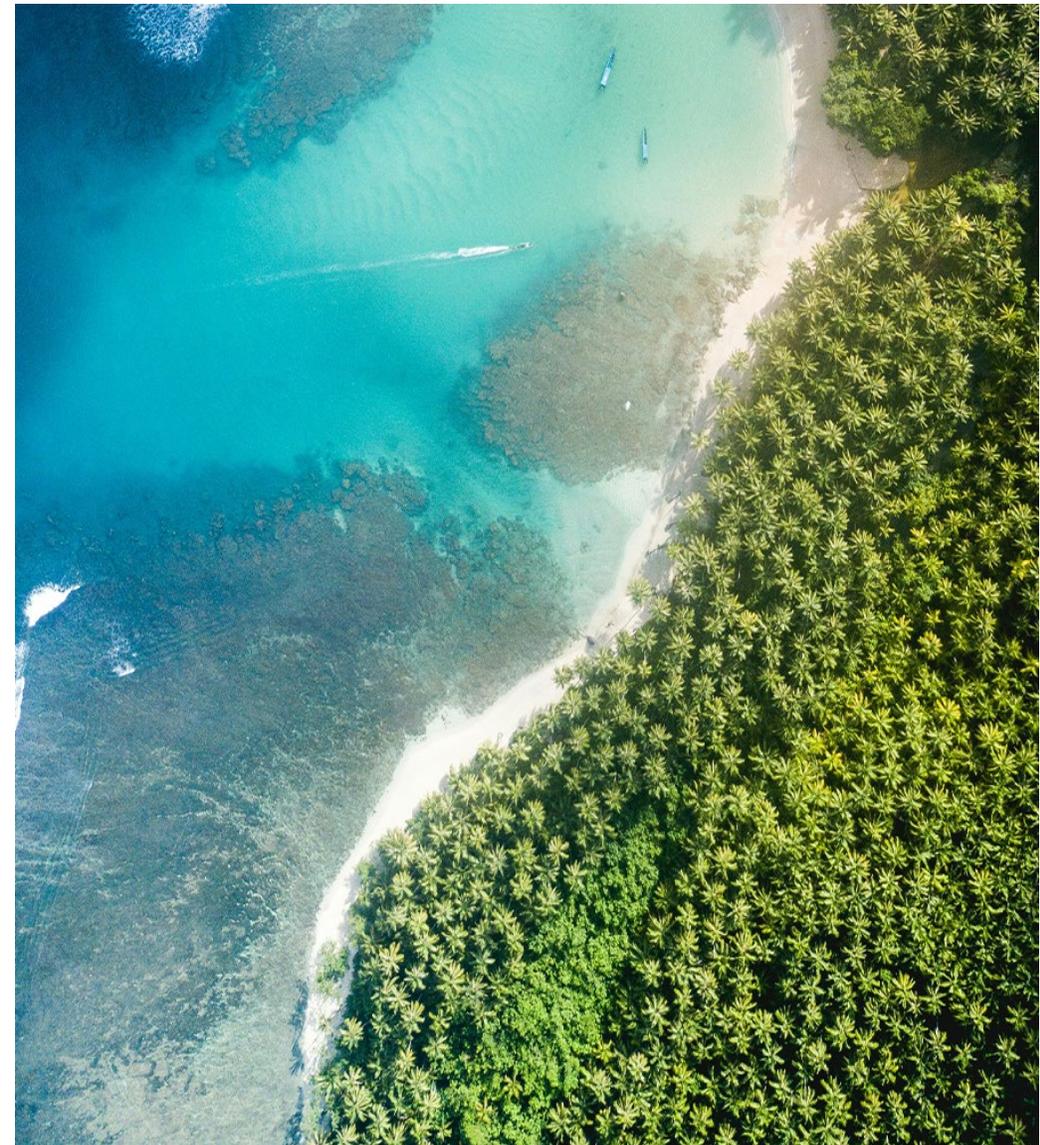
Maintaining gratitude

- Despite the delays and complications with the NCRIS program, we are lucky to have it.
- As NCRIS prepares for the future via the Roadmap and funding requests please be ready to help provide information and promote the program.
- We anticipate receiving NCRIS funding before the end of this financial year – however, funding changes or additional requests cannot be considered for the remainder of the funding cycle (2027/28) until we have outcomes from the current rounds and understand the forward financial outlook.



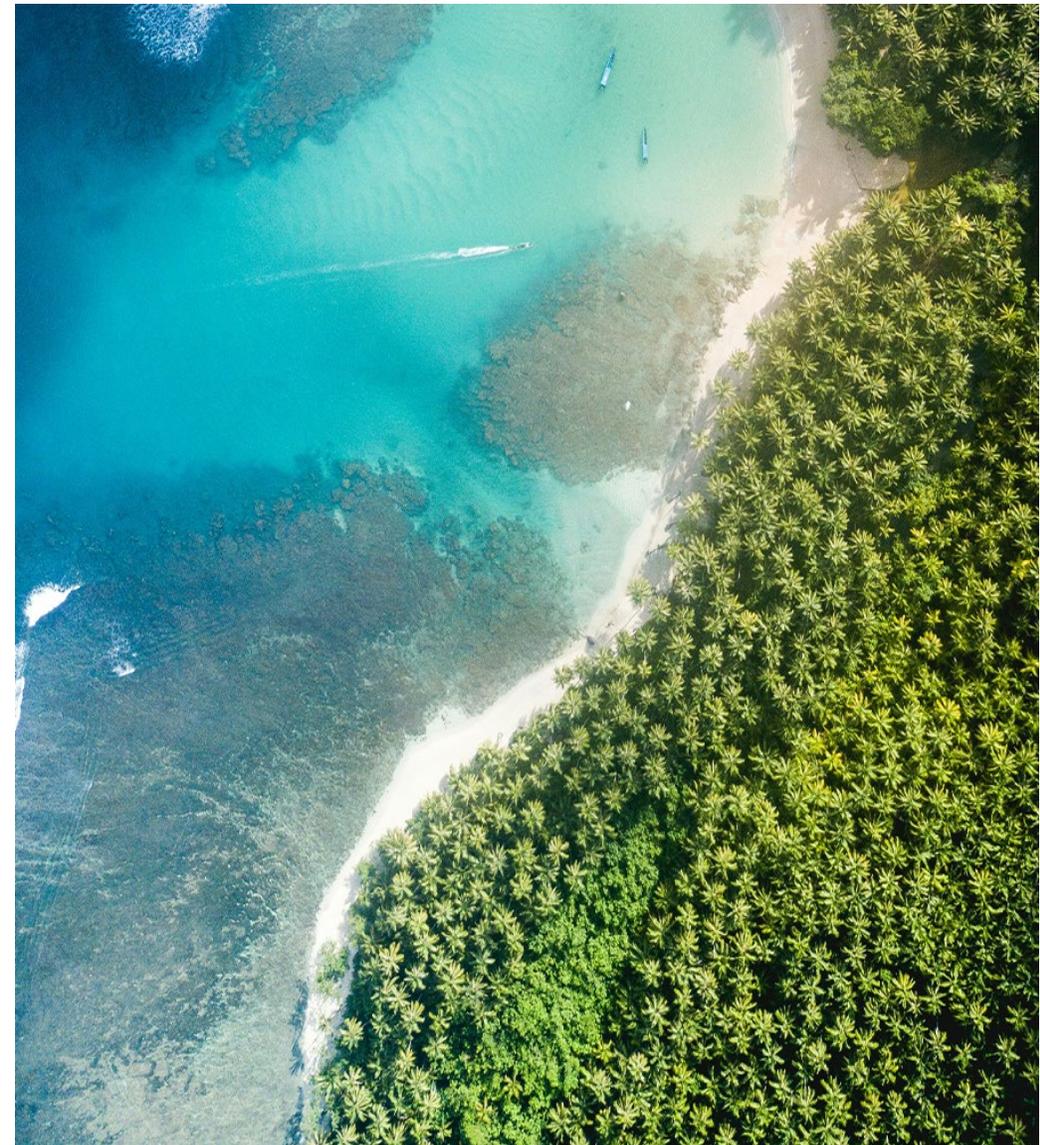
IMOS Governance Review

- Throughout 2025 NCRIS and the IMOS Governing Board conducted simultaneous, separate governance reviews.
- NCRIS has informed the NCRIS community that Not-for-Profit (NFP) models based on Australian Institute of Company Directors (AICD) guidelines are now considered best practice. *Several other NCRIS programs are already NFPs.*
- The IMOS Board is currently considering evolving IMOS from an Unincorporated Joint Venture (UJV) with UTAS as Lead Agent, to an independent NFP governance model.
- It is important to note the proposed change is not an initiative by UTAS to move IMOS out of the university, nor is it a move by IMOS to depart the university.



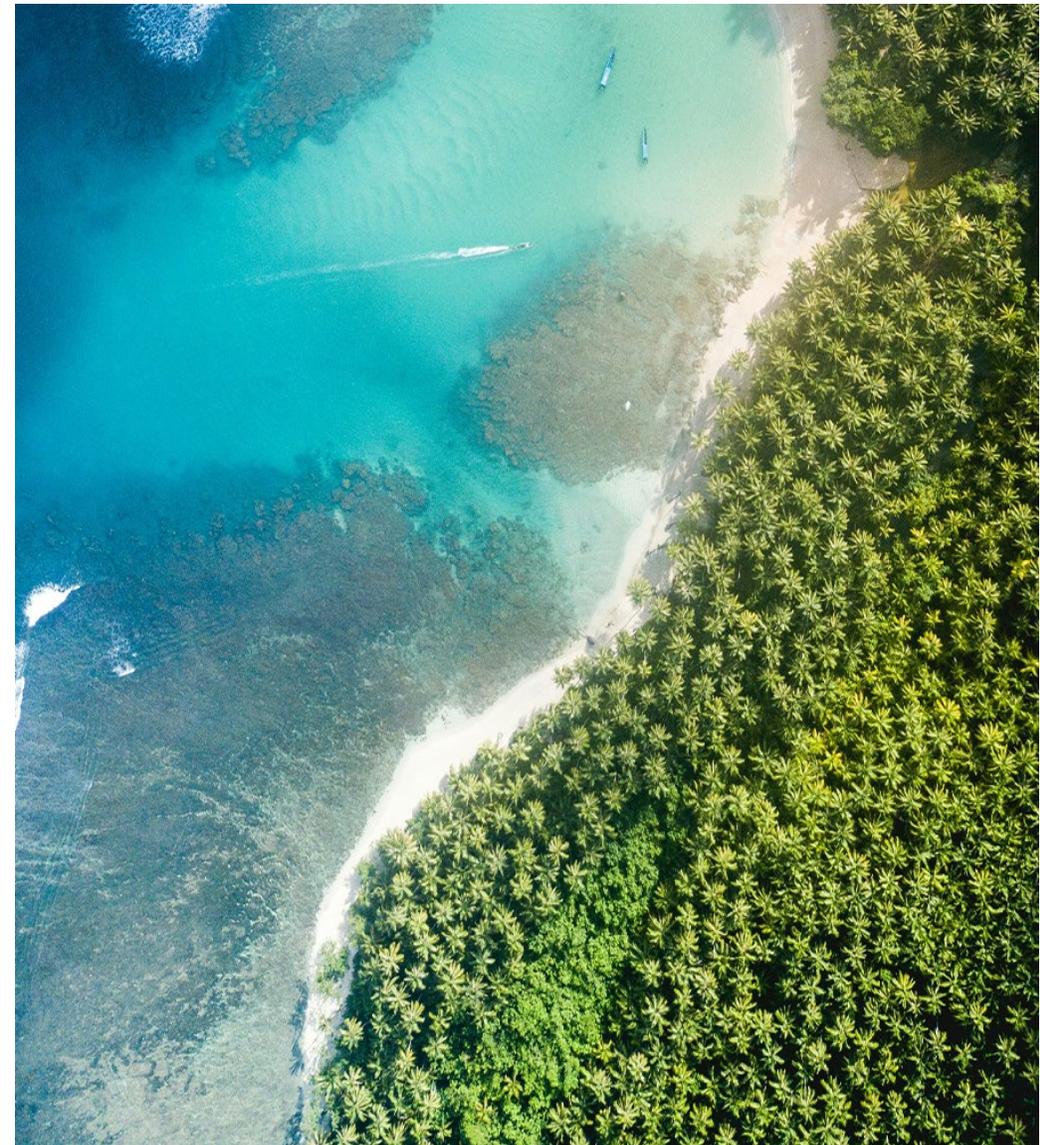
What has been happening?

- The proposed change has been discussed by the IMOS Governing Board and IMOS partners to determine viability of any governance transition.
- IMOS Office staff are currently being consulted about the proposed change to include their feedback in the decision process. If IMOS moves to an NFP model, Office staff employment would need to transition from UTAS to the NFP.
- The IMOS Governing Board will make a final decision on whether to proceed with this change once staff feedback is compiled and considered.
- The IMOS community will be kept informed of any change as decisions are made.



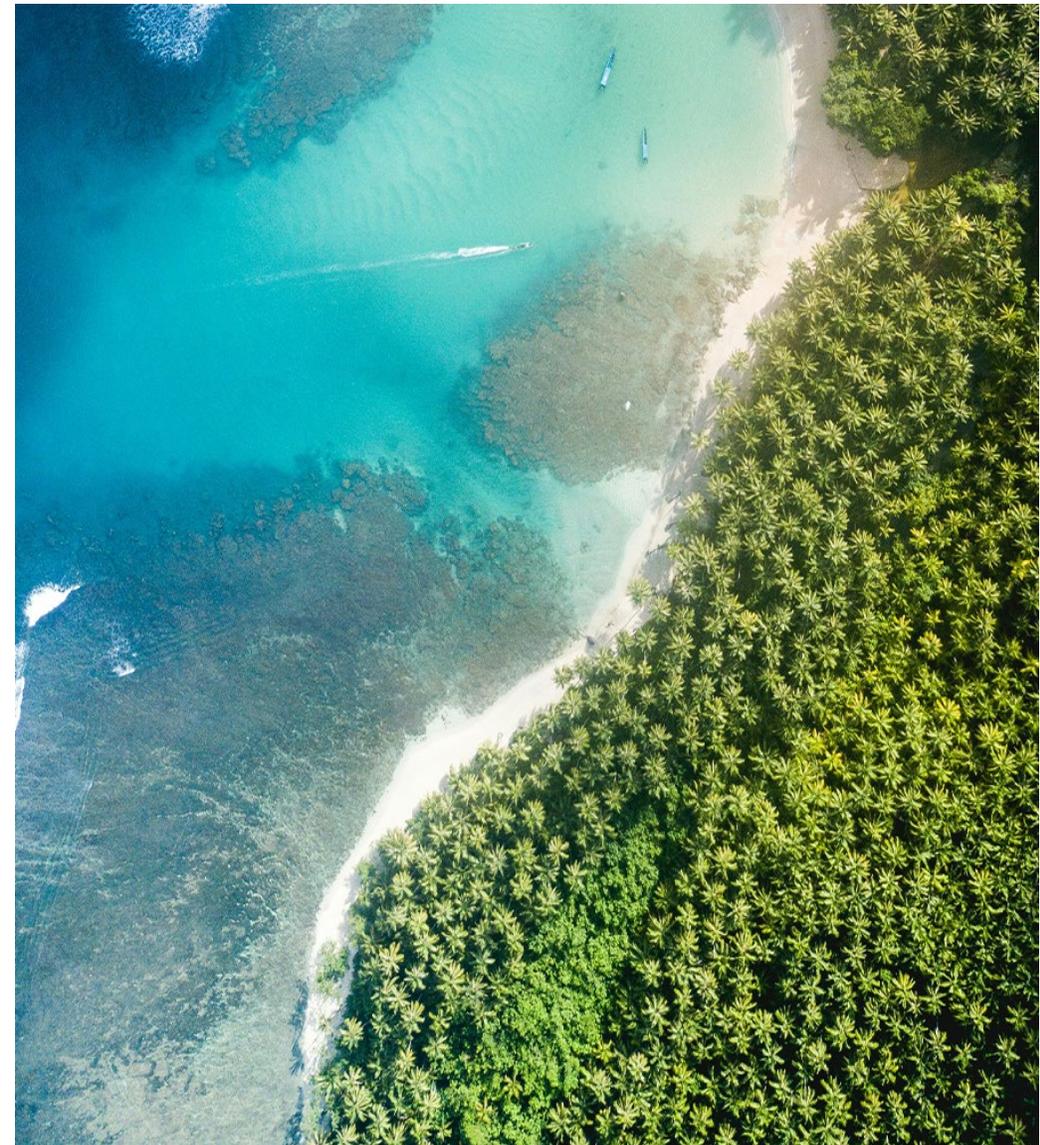
What would change?

- The IMOS Governing Board would transition to an independent skills-based board.
- IMOS partners would have the opportunity to become members of the NFP and additional members could be added including industry, Indigenous or other organisations.
- IMOS could provide funding to groups or institutions beyond the UJV membership.
- The IMOS Office would have additional reporting and financial obligations.
- Project plans, contracts and payments would be managed via the NFP rather than through UTAS legal and finance systems.
- The Science and Technology Advisory Committee may become a sub-committee of the board.



What would not change?

- The vision, strategy and principles of IMOS would not change.
- IMOS structure (e.g. Facilities, Nodes) will continue.
- Primary funding sources such as NCRIS and state government infrastructure funding would continue to be sought.
- The IMOS Office and AODN would continue to manage and deliver the program at the highest possible level.
- The intent is for the IMOS Office to continue to be housed and hosted at UTAS in Hobart.



In short, operations for Facilities would continue as current, just with a different contracting organisation.



Looking forward

A hectic 2026 lies ahead

- Securing IMOS funding remains a top priority, as is helping the NCRIS team make the case for increased NCRIS funding into the future.
- Managing the IMOS governance transition if it occurs.
- Completing a 2026-2031 Five Year Plan to support the new Strategy
- Supporting the 2026 National Research Infrastructure Roadmap process.
- IMOS 20th Anniversary events and activities



Australian Coastal and Oceans Modelling and Observations (ACOMO) workshop

July 2024

ACOMO is designed to:

- Develop connections with the marine and climate science community
- Foster an inclusive, national approach to modelling and observations
- In 2024 ACOMO was held in collaboration with ACCESS-NRI and in conjunction with COSIMA to expand discussions and connections.
- In 2026 ACOMO will be an IMOS only event hosted in **Hobart, 30 June – 2 July**
- Please save the date and be ready to register and submit an abstract to help advance modelling and observing knowledge and discussions



This is a joint workshop of the Consortium for Ocean-Sea Ice Modelling in Australia (COSIMA) and Australian Coastal and Oceans Modelling & Observations (ACOMO). It is brought to you by IMOS and ACCESS-NRI.



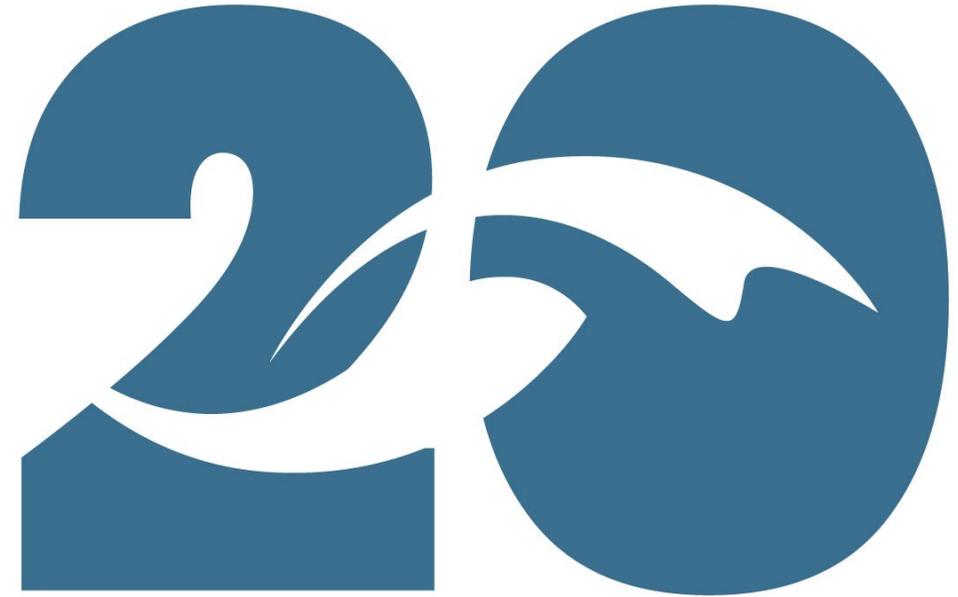
Priorities for 2026 and beyond

- Continuing to enhance and expand data tools and products for end-users.
- Leveraging the MOU with Mercator Ocean International to deliver more for Australia
- Continuing and expanding our approach to Indigenous inclusion and partnership.
- Increasing connections and influence with industry and international partners.



20th Anniversary activities and celebrations

- This meeting and related events
- Special Issue of Marine and Freshwater Research highlighting IMOS Facility achievements.
- IMOS Symposium at the Australian Marine Science Association Conference in Canberra
- World Ocean Day activities
- Expanded annual Highlights document
- Special, expanded edition of Marine Matters
- Various social media campaigns
- Release of the IMOS video shown on Monday



CELEBRATING 20 YEARS
OF SUSTAINED MARINE OBSERVING

Final Note - Acknowledging IMOS in publications

A reminder that users of IMOS data are required to clearly acknowledge the source material by including the following statement in publications:

Data was sourced from Australia's Integrated Marine Observing System (IMOS) – IMOS is enabled by the National Collaborative Research Infrastructure Strategy (NCRIS).

This statement is required over and above the use of in-text citations (i.e., it must be included in acknowledgements text). Correct acknowledgement and citation allow the IMOS Office to demonstrate impact, find uses, and increase recognition of the vital place the observing system has in marine and climate science.



Australia's Integrated Marine Observing System is enabled by the National Collaborative Research Infrastructure Strategy (NCRIS). It is operated by a consortium of institutions as an unincorporated joint venture, with the University of Tasmania as Lead Agent.

PRINCIPAL PARTICIPANTS



SIMS is a partnership involving four universities

ASSOCIATE PARTICIPANTS



IMOS thanks the many other organisations who partner with IMOS, providing co-investment, funding and operational support, including investment from the Tasmanian and Western Australian Governments.

