



### Launch of the Kirby

On a hot windy Friday afternoon in November SIMS hosted the launch of the "Kirby", SIMS first research vessel. The boat was purchased through the generosity of the James N. Kirby Foundation with a grant received in mid 2008.

Mrs Deidre Kirby performed the official and traditional task of naming the boat and christening it with champagne following its arrival in Chowder Bay, driven by our scientists.

The boat is a 5.7 metre, centre console vessel which enables our scientists to conduct research up to 15 nautical miles offshore. Its firm rolled sides makes it easy to dive from and it is being used regularly by scientists for equipment deployments and the wobbegong tagging currently being conducted in Cabbage Tree Bay Aquatic Reserve at Fairy Bower.



The grant also funded a floating dock to the west of the wharf where the Kirby is berthed, so if you are passing by keep an eye out for her!

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### Message from the Chief Operating Officer

**W**e have been very busy at SIMS and this edition of the SIMS Newsletter outlines many of the developments and events that have occurred in the last 6 months.

The successful application to the NSW Government for financial assistance for our laboratories and aquarium was a great victory for SIMS as this also cleared the way for the Potter Foundation to provide support for major improvements to the aquarium facility. I would like to personally thank Ms Janet Hirst and the Governors of the Potter Foundation for their support and encouragement of our Institute from its early days.

Another major achievement for SIMS late in 2008 was to reach the goal of over 20 FutureMakers prior to the close off the initiative in early December.

The recent announcement in the Federal Budget of the "Super Science" initiative delivered in excess of \$19M to SIMS for the development of SIMS infrastructure which will enable us to rapidly progress into the Institute envisaged from its inception. This acknowledges the commencement of a new era for SIMS as a world class marine research and training institute.

We could not have come so far without the support of many including our member universities and government organisations, our corporate sponsors (Gadens Lawyers, Duncan Dovico and Defence Maritime Services) and our associated scientists and students who have had a clear vision for SIMS from the very beginning. I can't forget our staff, the handful of people behind the scenes that ensure everything runs as smoothly as possible. On behalf of everybody that has been involved with SIMS I'd like to thank Mark, Tori, Andrew and Charlie for all of their efforts which are above and beyond what they signed on for!

Most importantly we need to acknowledge you, the members of the public, the individuals and families that have made a personal commitment to support SIMS, whether that is through financial support, volunteering your services or even just telling your friends about us. You have been there for us since day one and I assure you that as SIMS continues to move from strength to strength we will be there for you. This facility is not only for the scientists and students who use it, but also for the public, to enhance awareness of coastal and marine issues. Your input is considered extremely valuable and is always appreciated.

This is an exciting time for SIMS and I look forward to sharing the journey ahead with all of you and seeing you soon at one of our future events or lectures.

## Sydney Institute of Marine Science receives \$19.5m grant in 2009 Budget

Sydney Harbour will be the focus of a world-class marine research program to tackle some of the most pressing issues facing Australian coasts, thanks to a \$19.5m grant to the Sydney Institute of Marine Science, announced in the 2009 Federal Budget. The grant will be dispersed over three years.

SIMS scientists will now have access to state-of-the-art equipment and facilities at its Chowder Bay site



to understand and combat threats to marine ecosystems arising from climate change, urbanisation, changing coastlines and marine microbes.

The new grant, from the Government's Education Investment Fund, will be used to set up a unique protected marine aquarium and associated research laboratories, along with pumps, research vessels, mobile radar equipment and sophisticated communications equipment.

This major injection of funds will evolve SIMS into a world-class marine centre, according to SIMS Chairman, Professor Frank Talbot: "The new funding will help to transform SIMS into a unique research aquarium facility. It will provide new laboratories for modern molecular and chemical work, increased research training capacity via a research teaching laboratory, and new accommodation for research students and visiting researchers from around the world."

Professor Peter Steinberg, the lead SIMS's scientist on the EIF proposal, commented that "SIMS is quite unusual as an institution in being broadly multidisciplinary and collaborative in nature, with chemists, biologists, geologists, oceanographers, social scientists and others all focused on solving the problems of Australia's marine and coastal environment."

"The EIF funds will enhance every aspect of SIMS's research activities and research training," says Professor Talbot. "It will provide a true communal research home for collaboration among leading marine scientists, a new multi-institutional training for marine scientists, and a one stop shop for policy advice and management consultation to government agencies."



## Celebration at the completion of our Futuremakers funding drive

In December last year we were privileged to attend the Wardroom at HMAS Penguin to celebrate the commitment of our 22 Futuremakers. At this event, individuals, families and foundations were recognised as lifelong patrons of the Institute. They are now honoured in the entrance foyer of our administration building. This class of membership is now closed and so these people are indeed special to SIMS and will take a significant place in our history.

The evening was hosted by Lieutenant Commander Joscelyn Oates, the Executive Officer of HMAS Penguin and our Futuremakers received a small memento of their commitment after the unveiling of the Honours Board.



Professor Frank Talbot, Professor Peter Steinberg and Chief Operating Officer Paul Hallam spoke of the growth of the SIMS and the exciting future in store for the Institute.

The occasion also marked a new partnership between Defence Maritime Services (DMS) and SIMS. Mr Greg Hodge and Mr Mark Todd, representing



DMS, signed an agreement enabling scientists from SIMS to utilise the Defence Maritime vessels for off-shore research work and the

deployment of IMOS Equipment. This expands enormously the offshore capability of the Institute due to the size and range of vessels owned and operated by the DMS.



*Don't forget we are still running our free public Aquarium Open Days on the first Friday of every month starting at 10am and running for about 1 ½ hours.*

*Bookings for all functions should be made by ringing SIMS on 9969-2664.*

## Funding announcement by the Potter Foundation and the New South Wales Government

On the 24<sup>th</sup> February 2009 Ms. Carmel Tebbutt, the Deputy Premier and Minister for the Environment and Climate Change, Ms. Jodi McKay, Minister for Science and Medical Research and Ms. Janet Hirst, the CEO of the Ian Potter Foundation, attended SIMS to announce a joint \$1.2 million contribution to the institute.

The Ian Potter Foundation and the New South Wales government have joined forces to support



marine research by supporting SIMS. The funding will help SIMS monitor the health of Sydney Harbour, the

impact of urbanisation and the effects of climate change on the NSW coastline. Ms Tebbutt said "We need the best possible research to protect our harbour and our beaches for future generations, we'll be teaming up with some of the world's best marine scientists to achieve this goal."

Ms. Janet Hirst said the Ian Potter Foundation was proud to support marine research and preservation projects around the country. "The Foundation is conscious that ensuring the long term survival and sustainability of our coastal environment is of urgent and immediate concern".

This grant will double the capacity of the research aquarium and expand the research space available to scientists. The final planning stage of the construction is nearly complete and we expect to start construction in late June 2009.



This is the first funding SIMS has received from the New South Wales Government and we look forward to an ongoing relationship with them as they commit to investing in our harbour and the New South Wales marine environment.

## Australia wide climate change conference held at SIMS

### The Eastern Seaboard Climate Change Initiative (E.S.C.C.I.)

In late 2008 SIMS was fortunate enough to receive funding from the Trust Company and the Fred P. Archer Trust to hold a pivotal conference bringing 60 university and government marine scientists from all over Australia together.

Led by SIMS, the workshop on 28-30 April developed new research programs to enable SIMS to expand its use of innovative technology including ocean gliders, underwater acoustic listening stations and automatic underwater vehicles. The conference discussed key areas such as the loss of coastal kelp beds, threats to shellfish from ocean acidification, changing coastlines and how climate change might affect the atmospheric system known as "East Coast lows".

The workshop is part of the SIMS-led East Coast Climate Change Initiative (ESCCI), aimed at understanding and managing the impact of climate change on marine systems.

"ESCCI linked scientists along the East Coast in a coordinated manner to address climate change in a multidisciplinary way," said Professor Peter Steinberg, an organiser of the workshop. "Academic scientists from universities along the coast were joined by scientists from government agencies, such as the Departments of Environment and Climate Change, NSW Primary Industries (Fisheries) and CSIRO. This ensured that the ESCCI conference generated world-class science that can also be used in a practical way to manage and ameliorate the effects of climate change on our coast."

With current successful funding grants, the Sydney Institute of Marine Science will become the hub of marine and climate research from Stradbroke Island in Queensland to Port Phillip Bay in Victoria.

*Our next major members function is a scientific evening scheduled to take place on Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> August starting at 6.30pm. The meeting will be an information night on the \$19.5 million funding grant received in the 2009 budget, with discussion from three scientists on the current scientific work being carried out at SIMS. An email announcement will be sent out closer to the day.*



## WHAT'S HAPPENING AT SIMS DURING 2009?

### Sydney Harbour Week 2009 Open Day

On Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> March SIMS again celebrated its Annual Open Day in conjunction with Harbour Week 2009.



We had many families taking an interest in our interactive microscope demonstrations (some gathering jellyfish from the beach for intense examination!).

The touch tank (courtesy of Manly Ocean World) continues to be enormously popular, as were the displays of cuttlefish and sea urchins. This year we also had exhibits from the Southern Surveyor (Australia's only national marine research science vessel), a replica of the ARGO floats used to measure ocean conditions worldwide and displays and talks about the Australian Acoustic Tagging and Monitoring System.

Lectures on sharks, sedimentation and the overwintering of tropical fish drew large crowds as people enjoyed active discussions with scientists (especially about sharks!). Many volunteers helped us on the day, scientists, friends and members of SIMS as well as volunteer guides from the Foreshore Trust who assisted visitors by guiding them around the site. The help of all our volunteers on the day was invaluable and again we thank them.



With over 1500 attending, more and more people are finding out about the work that we do and the role of science in researching and preserving our marine environments.



Friday July 3rd 10am Public Aquarium Open Day

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15th to 23rd August National Science Week

Wednesday August 26th Scientific Talk (\$10Members  
\$20Non Members)

Friday September 4th Public Aquarium Open Day

Wednesday September 30th Scientific Talk (\$10Members  
\$20Non Members)

Friday October 2nd Public Aquarium Open Day

Friday November 6th Public Aquarium Open Day

Wednesday November 25th Christmas Function

Saturday November 28th Chowder Bay Snorkel

Friday December 4th Public Aquarium Open Day

### BOOKINGS ARE ESSENTIAL

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