

# Forging the Future of Tropical Marine Science

## The AIMS@JCU Strategic Alliance

Cherie Motti  
July 2026



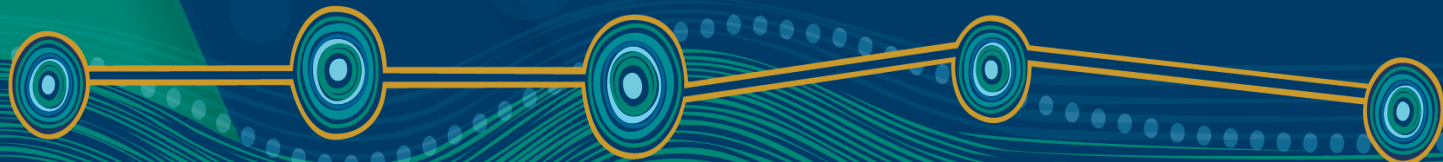
# Acknowledgement

**AIMS@JCU** acknowledges and recognises the Traditional Owners of the land and sea country where we live and conduct research and pay our respects to elders past, present and future.

We honour their continuing culture, knowledge, beliefs and spiritual relationship and connection to country.

We also recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as Australia's first scientists.

**Through collaboration & two-way knowledge sharing,  
we can learn from each other.**



- Who are we?
- What we do
- Developing Tomorrow's Marine Scientists
- Setting yourself up for success
- Eligibility & Application Guidelines for AIMS-Co-Supervised JCU HDR Projects
- Essential Info: 2027 AIMS@JCU HDR Scholarships



# Who are we?

Where can you find us?

ATHM Building 48  
Room 219

- **AIMS@JCU Office**

- Research Director: Dr. Cherie Motti
- Office Manager: Ms. Lauren Gregory
- Administrative Officer: Mrs. Rebbecca Clancy
- Administrative Assistant: Ms. Gemma Wickens

- **AIMS@JCU Science Advisory Committee**

- |                      |                             |
|----------------------|-----------------------------|
| – Dr. Kamran Shafi   | Prof. Mostafa Rahimiazghadi |
| – Dr. Line Bay       | Prof. Mia Hoogenboom        |
| – Dr. Claire Streten | Prof. Damien Burrows        |
| – Dr. Michelle Dyer  | A/Prof. Amy Diedrich        |
| – Ms. Tara McLaren   | Prof. David Bourne          |

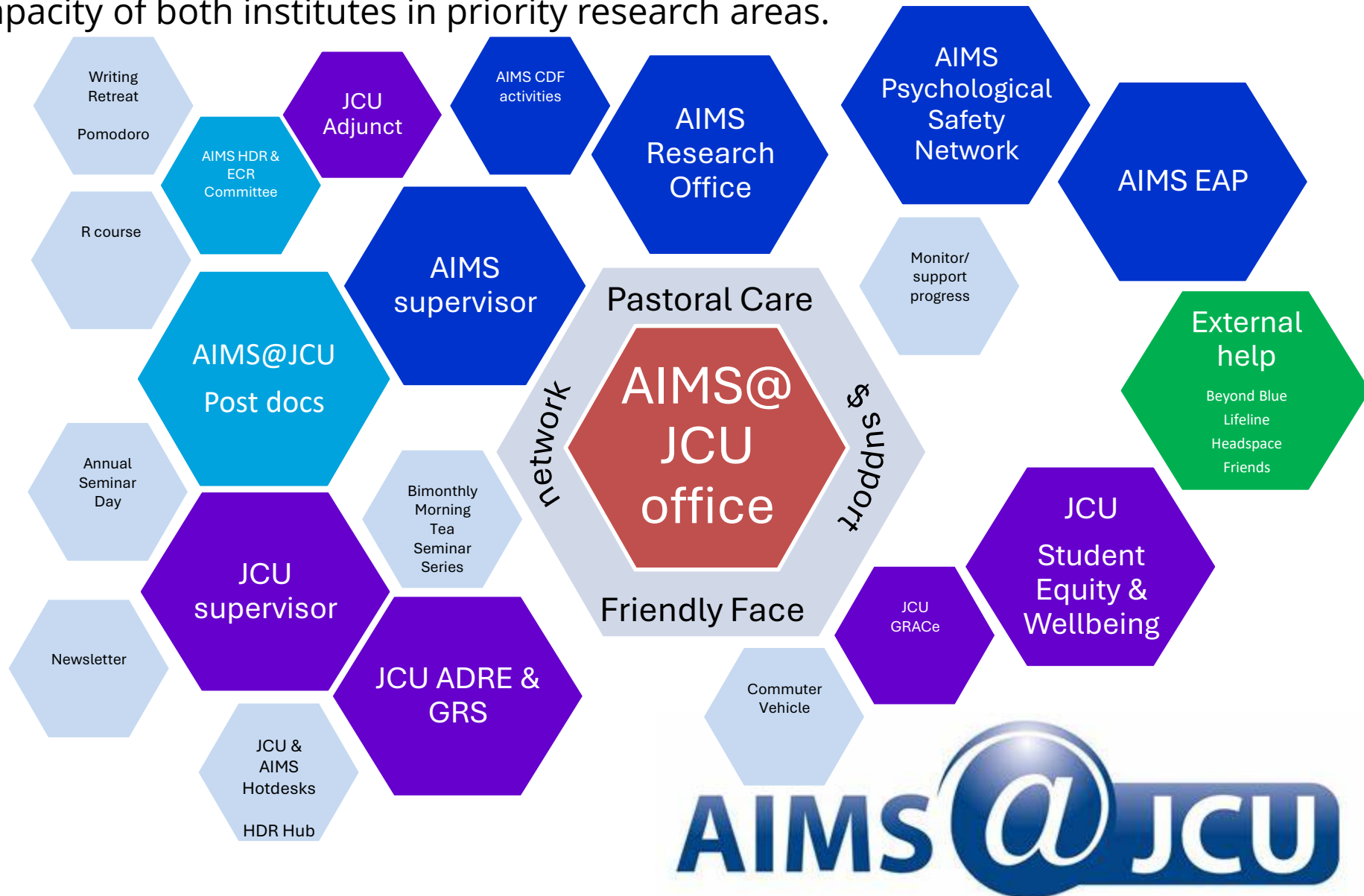
- **AIMS@JCU Executive**

- Dr. Kameron Christopher
- Prof. Ronald White

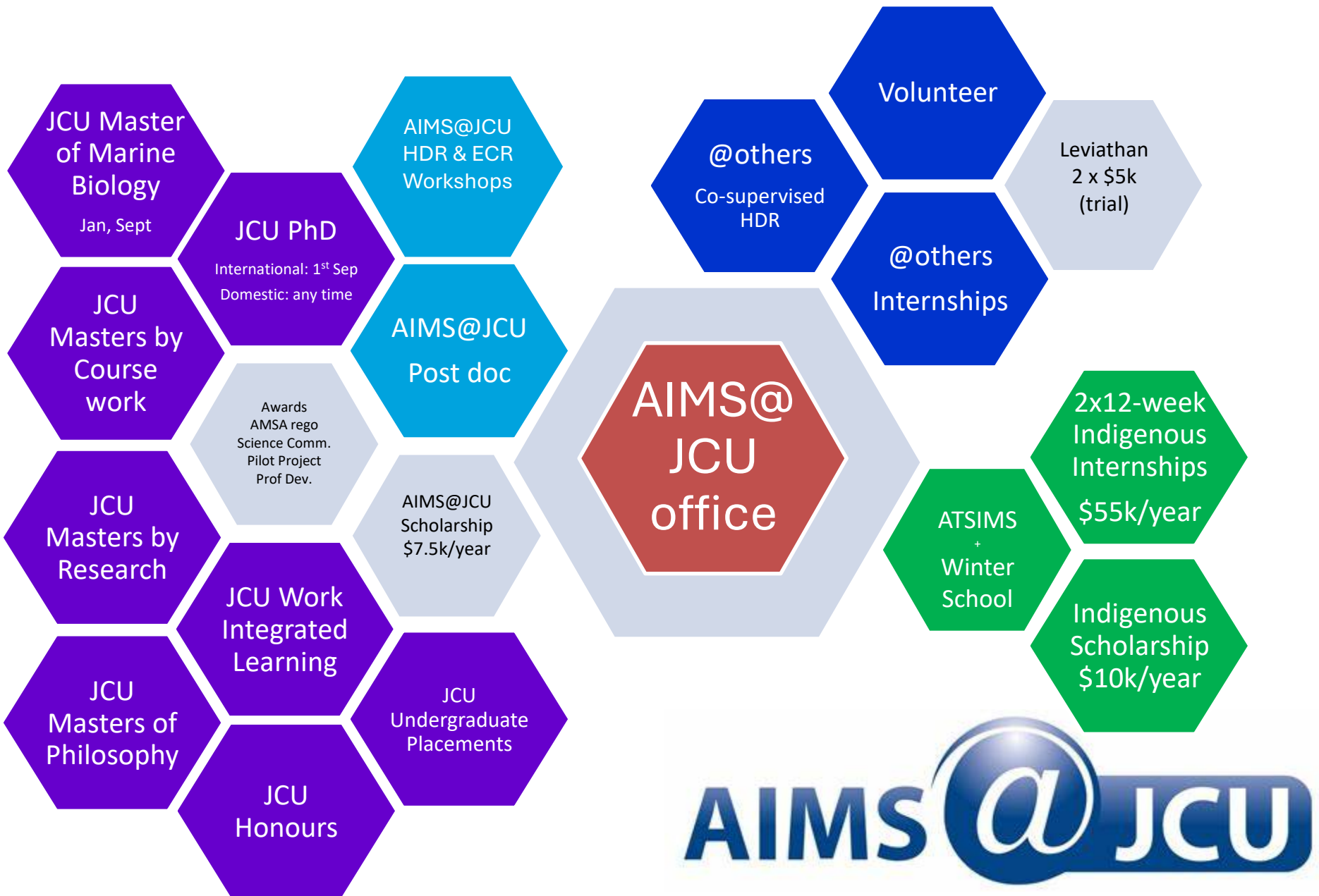


# What we do....

Facilitate & support collaboration between AIMS & JCU to extend the capability & capacity of both institutes in priority research areas.



# Developing Tomorrow's Marine Scientists



# Set Yourself Up for Success – Join Us!

- **Joining AIMS@JCU is simple:**

- Go to <https://aims.jcu.edu.au/become-a-member/>
- Select Staff Membership
- Provide as much information as possible - prospective students and collaborators can search this site.



- **Become a JCU Adjunct (3-year term)**

- Become an AIMS@JCU staff member (see above)
- Complete the AIMS@JCU Adjunct Application form
- Provide as much information as possible – applications will be vetted by the RD and assessed by the JCU Adjunct Divisional Honorary Review Committee. They may seek further background from the RD – so please talk with us.
- JCU sends the formal offer of appointment – sign and return.
- Use the JCU attribution for publications and grants, as per the offer.
- Automated reminder when appointment expires.
- Reapply.



# Set Yourself Up for Success – Join Us!

- **Become a registered JCU Advisor**

- Prior to the candidate commencing go to <https://www.jcu.edu.au/graduate-research-school/advisors/becoming-an-advisor>
- Advise AIMS@JCU once you have completed the training and are registered
- You may be required to complete refresher training, or additional training if changing from Secondary to Primary Supervisor

- **Become an AIMS@JCU Supervisor**

- An AIMS@JCU Advisory panel MUST comprise of a minimum of one AIMS and one JCU staff member.
- Establish a collaborative relationship with a JCU Staff member – we can help you network.
- Together, develop a cross-institutional research project that aligns with joint research priorities
- Consider establishing an Advisory panel that includes:
  - ECR supervisors, particularly AIMS@JCU Postdoc Research Fellows
  - A high overall level of experience;
  - Cross-disciplinary expertise; and



# Eligibility & Application Guidelines for AIMS-Co-Supervised JCU HDR Projects: 2026

- This applies to all candidates seeking entry into:
  - The JCU HDR program
  - AIMS@JCU Scholarships
  - JCU or industry scholarships
- Application Deadlines:
  - Domestic applicants – Accepted year-round
  - International applicants – Deadline: 1 September 2026
  - AIMS@JCU scholarship allocation for both – November 2026
- Key Requirements:
  - At least one supervisor MUST be co-located with the student.
  - Students may be based at either AIMS or JCU.
- Begin the workflow early to secure all necessary endorsements.



# Strengthening the AIMS@JCU Scholarship Application: Key Criteria for Success

- **Alignment with Research Themes** – Priority given to projects that align with at least one research theme in the AIMS@JCU Triennial Plan, or the AIMS Strategy 2040.
- **Contribution to Strategic Goals** – If a project does not directly align with a research theme, applicants must clearly articulate how their proposal strengthens the AIMS@JCU Strategic Alliance and extends the capability and capacity of both institutes.
- **Applicant Qualifications & Experience** – Assessment considers relevance of qualifications, research training, and prior research experience to the proposed project and overall objectives of the AIMS@JCU Triennial Plan.



# AIMS@JCU Triennial Plan 2022 – 2026

Supporting marine and coastal decision making in an era of rapid change

Social Science – human dimensions

- Operationalising multi-value evidence based environmental governance in northern Australia (theory to practice).

Coastal processes and dynamics

- Quantify the drivers of change and sensitivity of northern Australian coastlines to climate change.

Technology development and data science

- Environmental sensing in nearshore turbid marine habitats (imaging, O<sub>2</sub> sensing, remote sensing).

Modelling and data science

- Numerical modelling approach to the integration of disparate data streams across a range of scales.

Reef Resilience

- Systems ecology approach to link data streams, fill data gaps and understand rates of reef adaptation and evolution.

Nearshore coastal environments of northern Australia



Great Barrier Reef



# AIMS@JCU Triennial Plan 2022 – 2026

## Current AIMS@JCU Postdoctoral Fellows

Dr Sarah Lawless:  
AIMS@JCU Postdoctoral Fellow:  
Ocean Governance

Dr Tomas Leon Corte:  
AIMS@JCU David McKinnon Postdoctoral  
Fellow:  
Modelling Coastal Dynamics

Dr Alzayat Saleh:  
AIMS@JCU Helene Marsh Postdoctoral  
Fellow: Deep Learning Applications for  
Marine Sciences

Dr Gemma Galbraith:  
AIMS@JCU Bette Willis Postdoctoral Fellow:  
Reef Connectivity

Dr Magena Marzonie:  
AIMS@JCU Janice Lough Postdoctoral  
Fellow:  
Reef Responses to Environmental Change

Nearshore coastal  
environments of  
northern Australia



Great Barrier Reef



# AIMS Strategy 2040

## RESEARCH THEMES

Safeguarding tropical marine ecosystems in the face of environmental change



### Future Reefs

Enhancing reef resilience to climate change and environmental pressures.



### Coastal Futures

Enhancing coastal ecosystems, coastal community wellbeing, and livelihoods.



### Blue Economy

Supporting an inclusive and sustainable blue economy.



### Digital Oceans

Enabling data science innovation, capacity, and data integration to support ocean health.



### First Nations Innovation

Elevating Indigenous leadership, science and stewardship.

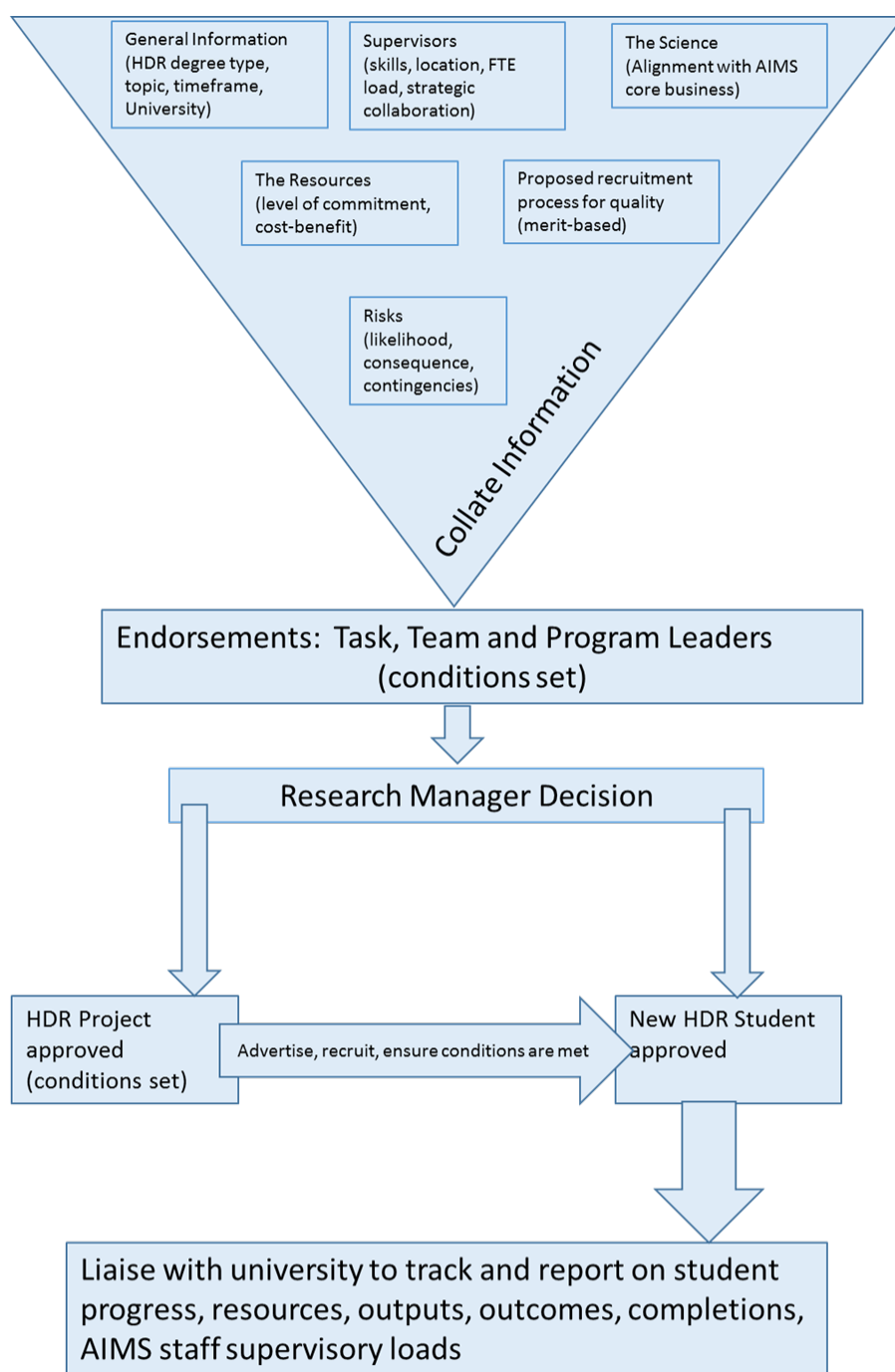


# The Application Workflow

## Pre-submission:

- Define the Project – Meet with JCU researcher(s) & applicant to develop the project scope.
- Submit [AIMS New HDR Project](#) Proposal to the AIMS RO (preferably with input from JCU researcher(s) & applicant) .
- Secure AIMS Endorsement from relevant Team Leader, Program Leader, & Research Manager. Endorsement confirms AIMS' commitment to the HDR project, provides certainty to recruit a student & ensures effective supervisory load management (0.2 FTE). It does not guarantee a scholarship.
- Applicant completes JCU [Higher Degree by Research Application Form](#) & secures endorsements (Advisory panel & AIMS@JCU RD).
- Applicant completes [AIMS@JCU HDR Scholarships](#) Form & if relevant JCU Scholarship/Industry applications.
- Application secures endorsement from Advisory panel & AIMS@JCU RD.





# Need help navigating the workflow?

## We are here to help

[aims@jcu.edu.au](mailto:aims@jcu.edu.au)

[admin.aims@jcu.edu.au](mailto:admin.aims@jcu.edu.au)

[c.motti@aims.gov.au](mailto:c.motti@aims.gov.au)



# The Application Workflow

## Submission:

- Applicant to submit all required documentation via JCU eStudent.

## Assessment:

- All applications are reviewed, assessed & merit-scored as per [HDR Scholarship Scoring Procedure - GRS - JCU Australia](#)
- College Dean endorses assessment & JCU Dean confirms Applicant's admission eligibility – meets HDR course entry criteria.
- JCU GRS notifies AIMS@JCU of Applicant's eligibility, with only those meeting the minimum merit score & providing complete documentation eligible for consideration by the AIMS@JCU SAC for an AIMS@JCU Scholarship.
- AIMS@JCU Scholarships are awarded based on criteria designed to advance the AIMS@JCU program & the capability of both institutes.



# The Application Workflow

## Assessment:

- AIMS@JCU can award up to 16 Equivalent full time student load (or 16 EFTSL) per year, where:
  - PhD = 3.5 EFTSL and e.g., 8 x 2-year Masters by Research; or
  - MPhil = 2 EFTSL 4 x 3.5-year PhD; or some combination
  - AIMS@JCU Scholarship extensions are **NOT** guaranteed & will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis by AIMS@JCU & GRS.
- Eligible applicants who are not awarded an AIMS@JCU Scholarship remain eligible for entry into the JCU HDR program and other JCU and industry-based scholarships.
- All applicants that accept a JCU HDR offer and have an AIMS staff member as a co-supervisor are eligible to join AIMS@JCU as a student affiliate member, regardless of whether or not they have been awarded an AIMS@JCU Scholarship.
- All AIMS@JCU Scholarship awardees must be an AIMS visitor whether or not they are based at AIMS.





## Other Universities

- Liaise with AIMS Research Office for ALL new HDR student projects
- Follow the same AIMS procedure prior to submission of the HDR application to the university
  - You **MUST** get AIMS approval before recruitment of any HDR student can commence
- The relevant university runs their own candidature eligibility/scholarship award process
- The AIMS Research Office can assist.

