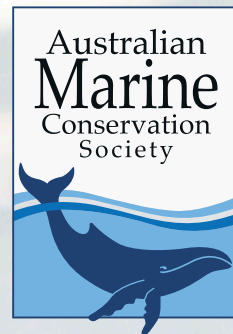


# Annual Report 2019



**A year of defending our oceans**





# A note from our CEO, and President

## Australia's oceans have never needed us more.

Global ocean warming is transforming life beneath the waves. Our Great Barrier Reef has lost half its coral cover and changed forever. Marine species are headed south and kelp forests are disappearing beneath our eyes. Fisheries are still catching too many fish and drowning our threatened species. In 2019 our oceans are still overused and underprotected.

That's where the Australian Marine Conservation Society (AMCS) comes in. For over half a century we've been balancing the scales, driving better legislation, bigger vision and stronger stewardship of the seas around us.

With few exceptions, every marine sanctuary around Australia, every sustainable fisheries reform, every pivotal progress made for our Great Barrier Reef has been down to our influence. We achieve our mission through targeted research, public education, and intelligent advocacy. So despite the enormous challenges to our natural world, we've made big waves this year, thanks to hundreds of thousands of Australians just like you.

Working together in 2019 we secured long-fought water pollution laws along our Great Barrier Reef coast that will boost coral health in the face of rising sea temperatures. Along with expert climate scientists and Australia's Reef tourism industry, we launched a groundbreaking Great Barrier Reef Safe Energy transition report to help keep the temperature rise below 1.5 degrees. And in April, teaming up with the peak marine tourism body and over 150 operators, we launched a historic Reef Tourism Climate Declaration which calls on governments to stand up for Far North Queensland businesses and jobs by taking urgent climate action to protect our Reef.



AMCS CEO Darren Kindleysides



AMCS President Jason Hincks

One of Australia's largest fisheries operates the entire length of the Reef and Queensland's coast. As a result of our advocacy we've made GPS vessel tracking mandatory to help stamp out illegal fishing throughout Queensland. We're making sure threatened turtles, dugongs, and dolphins are no longer caught up in our Great Barrier Reef through a state-wide generational fishery reform process. We've been strengthening anti-shark finning measures in northern Australia, and we've secured the first ever plan to protect our iconic and vulnerable Top End coasts, which will boost conservation, culture and tourism.

In 2019 we brought you a bigger, bolder and better sustainable seafood guide! Through our GoodFish project, we've assessed yet more seafood species, made a smoother app and website, and joined forces with over 70 restaurants around the nation who've committed to drop red-listed fish from their menus. And, thanks to ocean lovers like you we're turning the tide on plastic pollution, with bans on single use plastics like bags starting to roll out around Australia.

And finally, we're pleased to report that this summer was a historic victory for Antarctic whales. For more than a century, whaling fleets have hunted the Southern Oceans each summer, but now – at long last – Japan's whaling fleets have withdrawn. Thanks to you and whale lovers around our blue planet taking action, Antarctic whales are finally free from the harpoons.

We have the vision and temerity to get there. We know what we need to do. And we can't do any of it without you – Australians from all walks of life around our country. None of this would have been possible without you. Thank you.

Jason Hincks – AMCS President  
Darren Kindleysides – AMCS CEO

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## Acknowledgement of Country

The Australian Marine Conservation Society acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of this land and sea country, and pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging. We acknowledge that this land and sea always was and always will be Aboriginal land and sea.

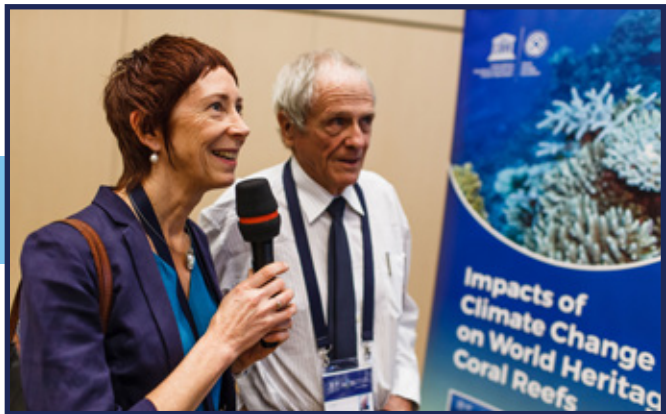
Front cover: A vulnerable green turtle hatchling

Photo credit: Alex Kydd

# 2019 AMCS HIGHLIGHTS

It was a busy and productive year. Here's a snapshot of what we achieved, thanks to our incredible supporters.

Our critical work to defend Australia's oceans is detailed in the following report.



## JANUARY

Western Australia bans single-use plastic shopping bags

## MARCH

Japan withdraws from Southern Ocean whaling

## APRIL

Historic Reef-climate declaration from 150 FNQ businesses and AMCS

## JUNE

The World Heritage Committee meets in Baku, Azerbaijan. AMCS Director of Strategy Imogen Zethoven AO presents on how climate change is affecting the Great Barrier Reef

## AUGUST

AMCS volunteers mobilise in Cairns during the Council of Australian Government (COAG) meeting to push for urgent climate change action

## SEPTEMBER

AMCS secures stricter rules off South Australia to reduce dolphin injuries and deaths from gillnet fishing

In a win for our Reef, AMCS helps secure new farm pollution laws

## OCTOBER

The Federal Minister of the Environment launches *East Antarctic Marine Park: Maintaining Australia's Legacy* report, produced by AMCS and partners

AMCS publishes the landmark *Reef Safe Carbon Budget Report*, and meets with members of the Queensland Parliament to convey a clear plan to decarbonise our economy

## NOVEMBER

New brand and website go live for the highly successful GoodFish initiative

Launch of new film *Roper River and Limmen Bight*, to raise awareness of the Northern Territory's second-only marine park, the first to be established in 30 years

## 2019 CAMPAIGN WINS

1

Great Barrier Reef water pollution laws

2

Southern Ocean whales freed from harpoons

3

Single-use plastics bans gaining momentum

4

Combating illegal shark finning

5

Bigger, bolder, better GoodFish



# FISHERIES

Australia's oceans are special – they provide refuge for a rich diversity of marine species, many of which are found nowhere else.

But irresponsible commercial fishing practices harm fish stocks and threaten the future of our marine wildlife. AMCS is committed to working with industry and government to make our local fisheries more sustainable, ensuring an abundance of fish for the future. Priority issues include:

- Overfishing
- Bycatch
- Gillnets and longlines
- Aquaculture practices

In 2019, AMCS launched a website and app for Australia's Sustainable Seafood Guide, which is now in its 15th year. The newly branded GoodFish Guide is Australia's sustainability guide for people who love their seafood and their oceans. The app now includes a guide to restaurants who have committed to remove red-listed seafood from their menus.

Throughout the year, AMCS produced a series of videos featuring sustainable fishing operations in The Corner Inlet (Victoria), and Spencer Gulf (South Australia), and the work of GoodFish ambassador Ben Shewry, chef and owner of Australia's most acclaimed restaurant, Attica. We work to influence seafood markets to be truly sustainable by celebrating sustainable fisheries and restaurants.

The major threat to the survival of endangered spartooth sharks and sawfish is commercial gillnet fishing in habitats critical for their survival. AMCS continued to apply pressure to governments to better safeguard threatened species from the effects of commercial fishing. This included a petition, signed by more than 9000 people, addressed to the Federal Minister of the Environment, to protect these unique marine fishes in the Gulf of Carpentaria. This work is ongoing.



The Corner Inlet Fishery is a sustainable fishery operating in Victoria

Photo credit: Nick Fletcher

## Fishing for the future

### 80+

restaurants signed up to be a part of GoodFish in 2019

Films produced in 2019 reached

### 136,000

people

### 19

new species added to GoodFish Sustainable Seafood Guide



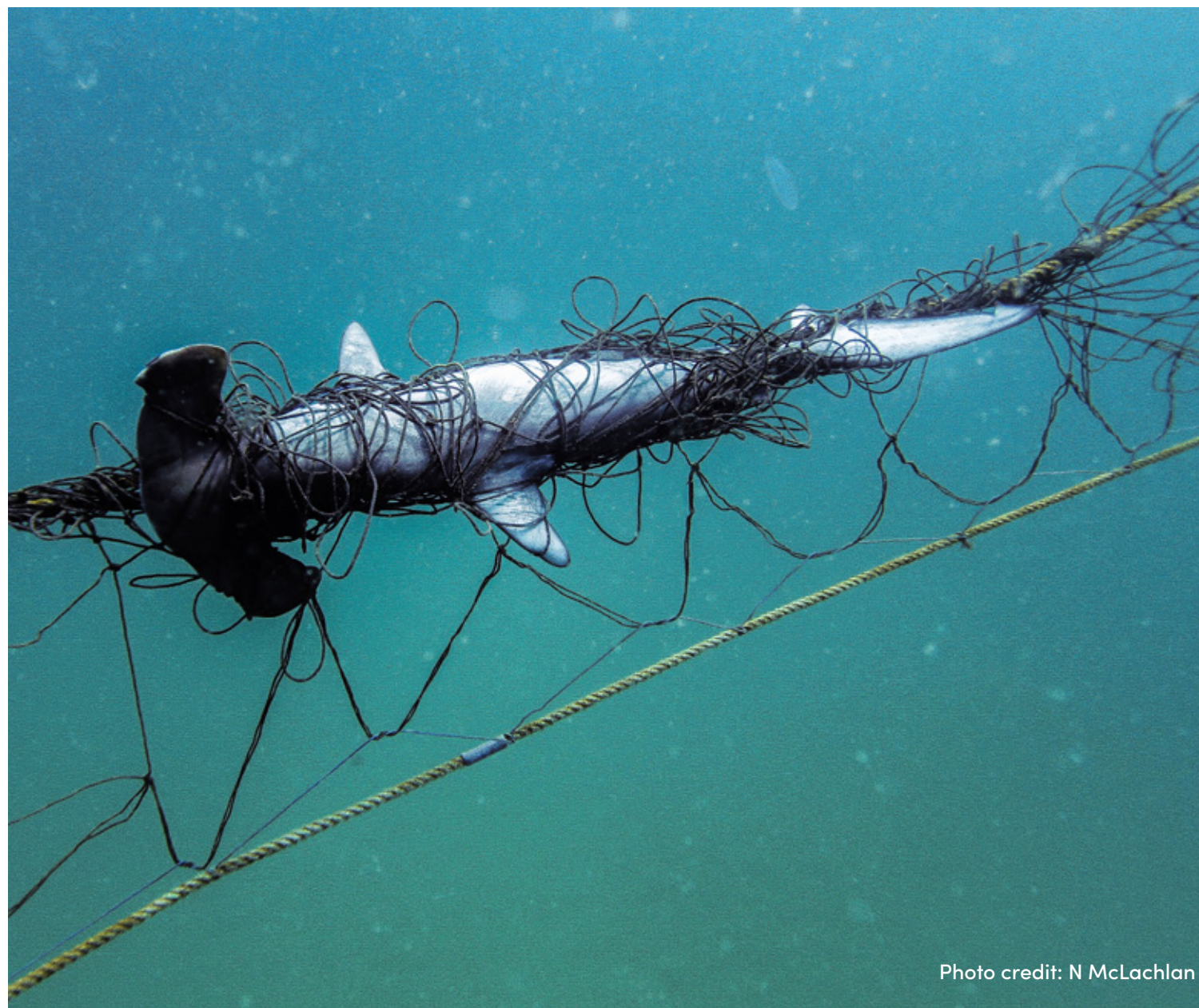
# SHARKS

Sharks are critical to the delicate balance of our ocean ecosystems.

They are majestic creatures, and more fragile than they appear. Killed in nets, caught in fisheries, and targeted for their fins, these vulnerable animals are under pressure.

In February, with partner Humane Society International, AMCS held a special Shark Summit, to bring together State and Federal Government representatives, non-government organisations, and shark researchers. One hundred and fifty delegates attended, producing 13 key recommendations to promote and strengthen shark conservation measures in Australia.

In September, new laws were introduced in Queensland to make hammerhead sharks a “no-take” species for recreational fishers. AMCS fought hard to affect these changes, and has been extensively involved in the *Queensland Sustainable Fisheries Strategy 2017-2027*, since its inception.



In November AMCS started a new campaign to shed light on the cruel practice of shark finning. Half of all Australians are not aware that we participate in the shark fin trade, and 80% support a complete ban on the trade in shark fins. A new video about this practice helped AMCS generate 10,000 signatures to oppose shark finning, within the first week of the campaign alone. State and Territory governments are now considering restrictions on removing fins from live sharks at sea.

We must live in harmony with sharks, and protect the vital balance of our oceans. AMCS will continue to:

- Work towards a ban on the import and export of shark fin products
- Reduce incentives to target endangered sharks in Australian fisheries
- End our country's contribution to the decline in shark numbers

## Maligned and misunderstood



One-third of all sharks and rays are at risk of extinction

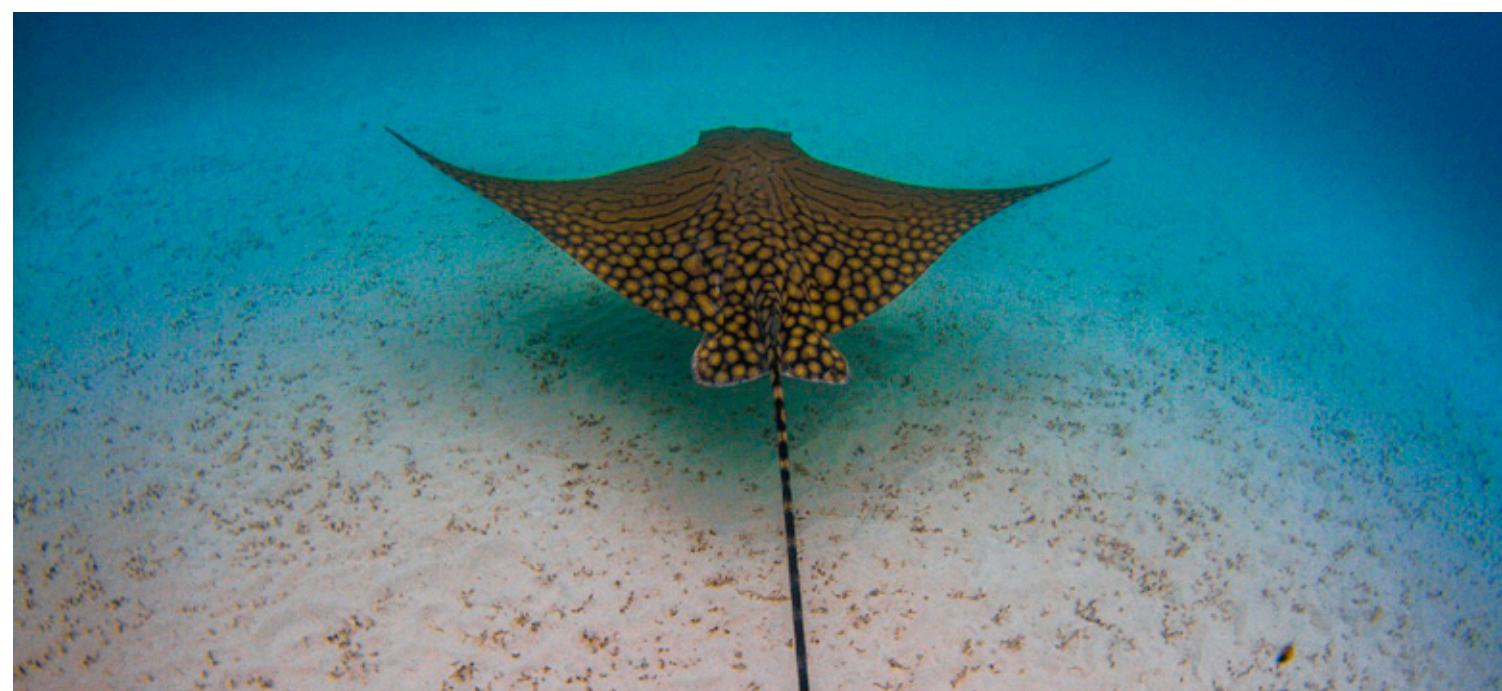


Australia is home to **one-quarter** of the world's ray and shark species

**TEN THOUSAND**

Signatures secured within one week of AMCS launching its 2019 shark finning campaign

◀ A scalloped hammerhead caught in a shark net on Palm Beach, Sydney



◀ An endangered ornate eagle ray. This species lives in tropical waters of northern Australia spanning from Western Australia to northern Queensland



# PLASTIC POLLUTION

2019 was a big year in the fight against plastic pollution.

On January 1, Western Australia banned the use of lightweight plastic shopping bags, and after intense pressure, Victoria followed suit in November. AMCS also helped to secure commitments from the South Australian, Queensland, and ACT governments to introduce legislation to ban single-use plastics, due to come into effect in 2020. These prohibited items would include cutlery, straws, stirrers, cups, and plates – the killer plastics polluting our oceans and our beaches.

These solutions are critically needed. Eight million tonnes of plastic are dumped into our oceans every year, and more than a third of all sea turtles are found with plastic waste in their stomachs. Plastic items can float in our oceans for up to 1,000 years, killing the turtles, whales and seabirds who eat it.

During Plastic Free July, dozens of AMCS volunteers rolled up their sleeves to help clean up Mordialloc Beach, and the Jawbone Marine Sanctuary. AMCS also distributed 35,000 Single-Use Plastic Revolution Action Packs to passionate supporters across the country.

To help raise awareness of the impacts of plastic pollution on ocean wildlife, AMCS delivered a hard-hitting billboard campaign in capital cities, powered by donations. These striking messages were viewed by motorists in September.

All of this hard work is adding up, and pressure is building on decision makers. In August, the Council of Australian Governments agreed to ban the export of plastic waste to other countries.



AMCS volunteers clean up the Jawbone Marine Sanctuary in Victoria, as part of Plastic Free July 2019

Photo credit: Alison Schlitz

## Choking our oceans



80% of plastic removed during the Jawbone Marine Sanctuary clean up was single use



Every sixty seconds, one garbage truck worth of plastic is dumped into our oceans



1.5 billion fewer plastic shopping bags in circulation, following the ban introduced in Queensland in 2018



# MARINE PARKS

Just like national parks on land, marine national parks are crucial to protect the ocean's wildlife and their homes.

Marine parks provide sanctuaries for fish to breed, spawn and grow, and support vulnerable species such as sea turtles, dugongs, and snubfin dolphins. They also help protect fragile habitats, nurseries and feeding grounds, such as seagrass meadows, coral reefs, and mangrove forests. Marine parks like Ningaloo, Jarvis Bay, and Great Sandy are dearly loved and used by Australians around the coast.

We worked with the community to better protect the outstanding marine life in the Great Sandy Straits Marine Park, inland of World Heritage listed Fraser Island. A broad cross section of groups joined our submission calling for greater protection of the RAMSAR wetlands and coastal marine habitats of threatened dugongs, turtles, and hammerhead sharks.

In October Environment Minister Sussan Ley, together with Antarctic explorer Tim Jarvis, launched the new AMCS report – *East Antarctic Marine Park: Maintaining Australia's Legacy*. AMCS worked alongside the Pew Charitable Trusts and Save Our Marine Life Alliance to make Australia a lead advocate for this marine park and create global cooperation for its long term protection. Public pressure ensured that the krill fishing industry continued a self-imposed ban on fishing the Antarctic Peninsula.

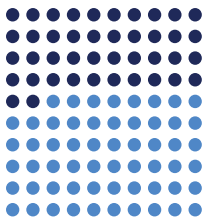
Following the finalisation of the Great Kimberley Marine Park, work has now begun to expand marine parks in WA under the Plan For Our Parks initiative. AMCS and our partners are working to ensure the region's spectacular wildlife, from the leafy seadragon to the blue whale, receive the protection they urgently need.



We continued our work in the Northern Territory, which has some of the last relatively pristine tropical coastlines on Earth. Working with our partners in the Keep Top End Coasts Healthy campaign, we secured a strategy that will set a new course for the planning, protection and management of the region's coasts and seas for the next decade. We worked hard to build a conservation agenda for Darwin Harbour, rich with mangrove forests, dolphins and dugong. During the year we also worked with the community to build a groundswell of support to create the Limmen Bight Marine Park, which is the Territory's second marine park.

Our work to protect the magnificent Ningaloo Reef in Western Australia continues. Through the Protect Ningaloo alliance we campaigned to spare Exmouth Gulf – which is Ningaloo's nursery – from the threat of industrial development.

Acclaimed author and AMCS Patron, Tim Winton, is the ambassador for the campaign. In October, Winton appeared with prominent comedian Judith Lucy on *The Project* to discuss the need to protect this very special part of Australia's oceans.



Australia is responsible for 42% of the Antarctic continent



Over 18,000 public signatures gathered by AMCS to save the Antarctic and its Adelie penguins

100 YEARS

Ningaloo Reef is famous for its whale sharks, which some scientists say could live up to 100 years!



# WHALING

**2019 was a historic victory for Antarctic whales. For more than a century, whaling fleets have hunted the Southern Oceans each summer, but now – at long last – Japan’s whaling fleets have withdrawn.**

This is a huge win for our whales. We have been fighting for decades to get the whalers out of the Antarctic. However, in 2019 Japan also withdrew from the International Whaling Commission to resume commercial whaling in their waters. Japan has turned their back on global efforts to conserve whales in order to kill whales outside international control.

AMCS and the International Fund for Animal Welfare released a legal opinion from an international law expert showing Japan’s actions opened the country to legal action. Thousands of Australians signed an AMCS petition, addressed to the Japanese Government, urging an end to this unnecessary and cruel practice. We continue to call on our government to once again challenge Japanese whaling through the international courts.

Australia has long been a global leader in the fight against whaling. When Japan tried to get the IWC to lift a 30-year ban (“moratorium”) on commercial whaling in late 2018, it was Australia that led countries to reject Japan’s outrageous proposal. The moratorium must be protected. Since a ban on whaling, humpback whales have made a comeback in Australian waters, with their numbers blossoming to 90% of their pre-whaling population along our west coast, and 63% along the east coast.

Our goal is to create global sanctuaries that give whales shelter, reform fisheries to drastically reduce bycatch kills, and give our whales a chance to recover from decades of whaling.



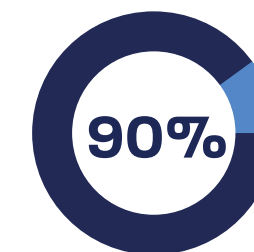
Each year between April and December, humpback whales flock to Australia’s coastlines

Photo credit: Vanessa Mignon

## Time to fight

# 100+ YEARS

Our Southern Oceans are free from whaling for the first time in over a century



of the humpback whale population on the Australian west coast have recovered, from pre-whaling numbers

# 10,000 km

travelled by humpback whales each year – the largest migration of any mammal



# CLIMATE CHANGE

AMCS engaged ocean lovers from all walks of life around Australia to take action on climate throughout 2019.

The impacts of climate change are hurting our oceans, from widespread mangrove forest dieback to coral bleaching on our beautiful Great Barrier Reef. In 2019 AMCS worked alongside the Stop Adani Alliance to put pressure on companies such as GHD, to get them to walk away from working on the colossal Carmichael Coal Mine. Together we made sure the Queensland Government did not do a special royalties deal with Adani.

September saw hundreds of thousands of Australians of all ages participate in the #climatestrike protests in major cities across the country. In October, AMCS launched the Reef Safe Carbon Budget Report in Brisbane. This landmark strategy was shared with 60 key stakeholders from government, business, academia, and the nonprofit sector. It conveys a clear plan to decarbonise our economy.

Its key findings are:

- Global warming needs to be limited to below 1.5 degrees to give the reef a fighting chance
- Queensland needs to cut emissions by 60% by 2030 to do our bit in limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees
- Coal-fired power stations need to be phased out by 2030

We reached new audiences and spread the message widely with a short animated video, *Imagine*. It features the voices of AMCS supporter (and former Powderfinger frontman) Bernard Fanning, and his son. It imagines a time in the future where renewable energy projects are thriving, and the Great Barrier Reef and the many jobs it supports have been protected. The video has been viewed more than 60,000 times.



**Real  
impact**

**87,000**

emails to MPs

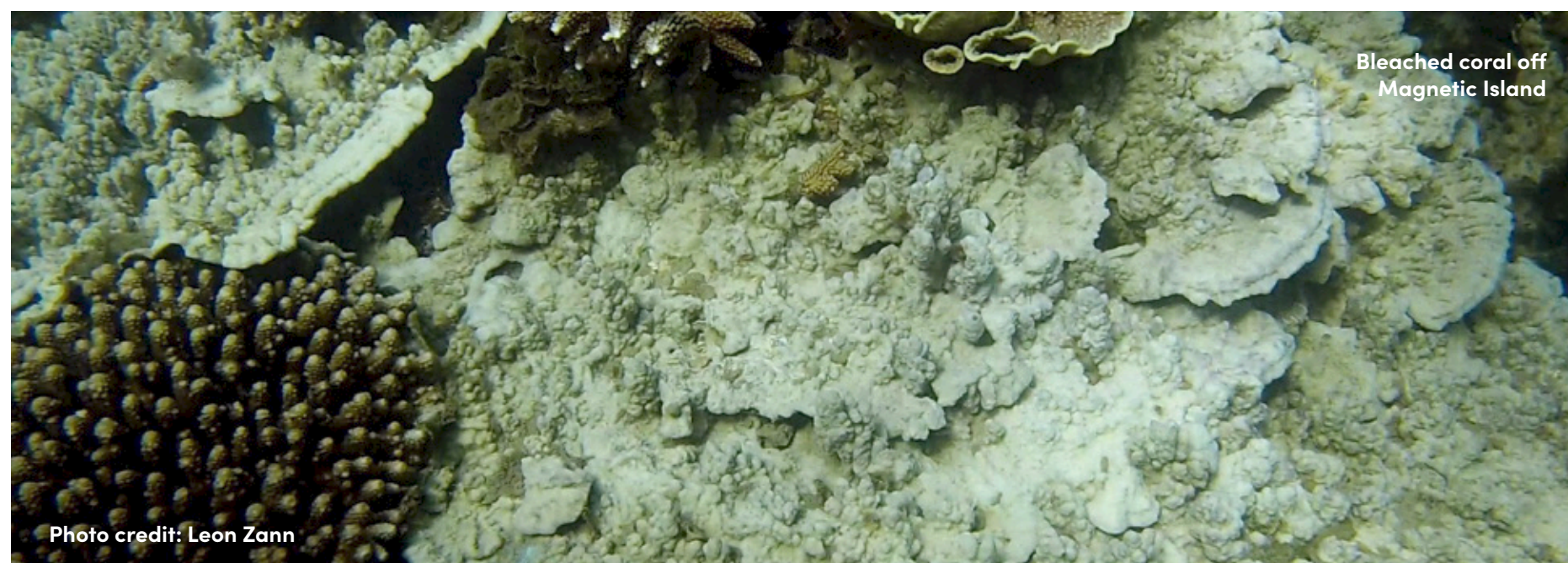
**375**

phone calls

**37**

supporter  
meetings with  
local Qld MPs

◀ AMCS volunteers mobilised in Cairns during the Council of Australian Government (COAG) meeting in August to demand urgent action to protect the Great Barrier Reef



Bleached coral off  
Magnetic Island

Photo credit: Leon Zann



# FIGHT FOR OUR REEF

In 2019 AMCS secured critical new laws on Reef water quality and ran our biggest election campaign for the Reef. We mobilised an impressive volunteer team in Far North Queensland to knock on 3000 doors, and secure 600 signatories calling for federal leaders to rule out the Adani coal mine and protect the Great Barrier Reef. AMCS also produced a “Reef Report Card” to compare party policies, which we advertised on social media and in the *Cairns Post*.

Our work didn’t end with the election. We made sure that state and federal politicians felt the community’s concern about our Reef and climate change through ongoing direct meetings. We worked throughout the year to amplify the voices of the tourism industry and everyday Australians who love our Reef.

In June, AMCS Director of Strategy Imogen Zethoven AO shared findings on how climate change is affecting the Great Barrier Reef at the World Heritage Committee meeting in Baku, Azerbaijan.

Poor water quality from agricultural run-off along the coast has been a long-standing threat to our precious Great Barrier Reef. In September, AMCS played a key role to secure new legislation in Queensland to clean up water quality on the Reef. AMCS fought for significant changes to the legislation to ensure they would be as strong as possible, and fought back against efforts to weaken them. This included commissioning a video, advertising in print and online, working with key stakeholders from the tourism and fisheries sectors, and mobilising our supporters to add their voices to the discussion.

The tourism industry are key voices in the Fight for our Reef and we hit a major milestone in 2019 with 150 FNQ tourism operators and businesses signing a historic statement calling for Reef safe climate action.



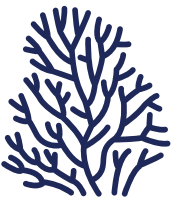
## Our greatest natural treasure

3000

households reached by Cairns volunteers

800

meaningful conversations had about our Reef



The Great Barrier Reef covers 344,400 square kilometres, and includes the world’s largest coral reef ecosystem



# BIG BLUE ELECTION ISSUES

During the 2019 Federal Election, AMCS drew attention to the biggest threats facing our big blue backyard.

It challenged the next Australian Government to think big, and commit to a range of new regulations, and resources, encompassing the following 10 issues.

1

SAVE

our Reef and oceans from climate change

2

STOP

Reef-damaging developments

3

CLEAN UP

Great Barrier Reef water pollution

4

IMPROVE

the sustainability of Australia's fisheries

5

PROTECT

threatened marine wildlife

6

END

commercial whaling

7

RESTORE

Australia's marine sanctuaries

8

REFORM

marine environment laws

9

STOP

plastic pollution

10

SAFEGUARD

environmental charities and advocacy work

AMCS will continue to be the voice for Australia's oceans.

We are an independent charity, staffed by a committed group of scientists, educators and passionate advocates who, thanks to our remarkable supporters, have defended Australia's oceans for more than 50 years.



Stradbroke Island

Photo credit: Anna Franke



# SUPPORTERS

## Thanks and Acknowledgements

With special thanks to the individuals, businesses, and philanthropic trusts who supported AMCS throughout 2019. Your generosity has made a huge difference to our work to protect our ocean wildlife. Sincere thanks to all of our donors, from our highest valued major givers to our Sea Guardians who stand by us month to month. Thank you to our AMCS members, Business Supporters, and members of our Ocean Legacy Circle. We are deeply inspired by the generosity of ocean loving Australians, and supporters from across the sea who invest in our work. None of our achievements are possible without you. You are the wind in our sails.

Sincere thanks to the following Foundations and Philanthropic Trusts:

Australian Communities Foundation  
B B & A Miller Fund  
Besen Family Foundation  
Bunderra Foundation  
CARI Foundation  
The Corella Fund  
Crothers Walton Foundation  
Dalwood-Wylie Foundation  
Digger & Shirley Martin Environment Fund  
Diversicon Foundation  
Dominic and Anne Gallace Family Fund  
Fairer Futures Fund  
Garry White Foundation  
Jaramas Foundation  
Lenko Family Foundation  
Letcombe Foundation

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Madden and Sainsbury Foundation  
Morris Family Foundation  
Oranges and Sardines Foundation  
PMF Foundation  
Quinn Femelle Private Ancillary Fund  
Ravenmill Foundation  
Reef Shark Foundation  
Ross Knowles Foundation  
Ryan Cooper Family Foundation  
Spinifex Trust  
The Caroline Durré Foundation  
The Mullum Trust  
Tides Foundation  
Two Monkeys Foundation

And all our other incredible Foundation supporters who wished to remain anonymous.



Staff from AMCS Business Supporters Samsonite volunteer to help clean up Mordialloc Beach in Victoria

Photo credit: Alli Harper Photography



## Honorary Business Supporters

Berwicks  
Good Beer Co  
Collider  
Powershop Australia Pty Ltd  
ORIS  
Glenguin Estate

## Gold Business Supporters

Diveplanit  
Sarah and Sebastian  
Samsonite  
Tropicfeel

## Silver Business Supporters

Assembly Label  
Goodwill Wine  
BoldB  
Wattly Ptd Ltd  
Pandanus Pod Ceramics  
Pottery for the Planet  
Pure Underwater Imaging  
Let's Go Surfing

## Bronze Business Supporters

Learning Cloud  
RANT Clothing  
Canning Free Range Butchers  
blinq.art  
R.A.W. Products Co  
Northern Rivers Pottery Supplies  
Squid Ink Artisan Roaster  
Milanja  
Rodney's Bait n' Tackle  
Castaway Jewellery Company  
Liquid Sands

## Volunteers

AMCS relies heavily on the extensive and enduring support from a volunteer network of ocean loving Australians around the country. Our talented, tireless volunteers give critical support through campaigning, holding information stalls, raising funds, and helping out in our offices. Last but not least, thanks to our pro bono photographers who lend their exquisite underwater works in support of marine conservation.



# AMCS BOARD

Jason Hincks (President)  
Mary-Ann Pattison (Secretary)  
Erina Kilmore (Treasurer)  
Brian Donaldson  
Dr Jill St John  
Dr Selina Ward  
Jo Cain

Australian Marine Conservation  
Society Inc is a registered charity.

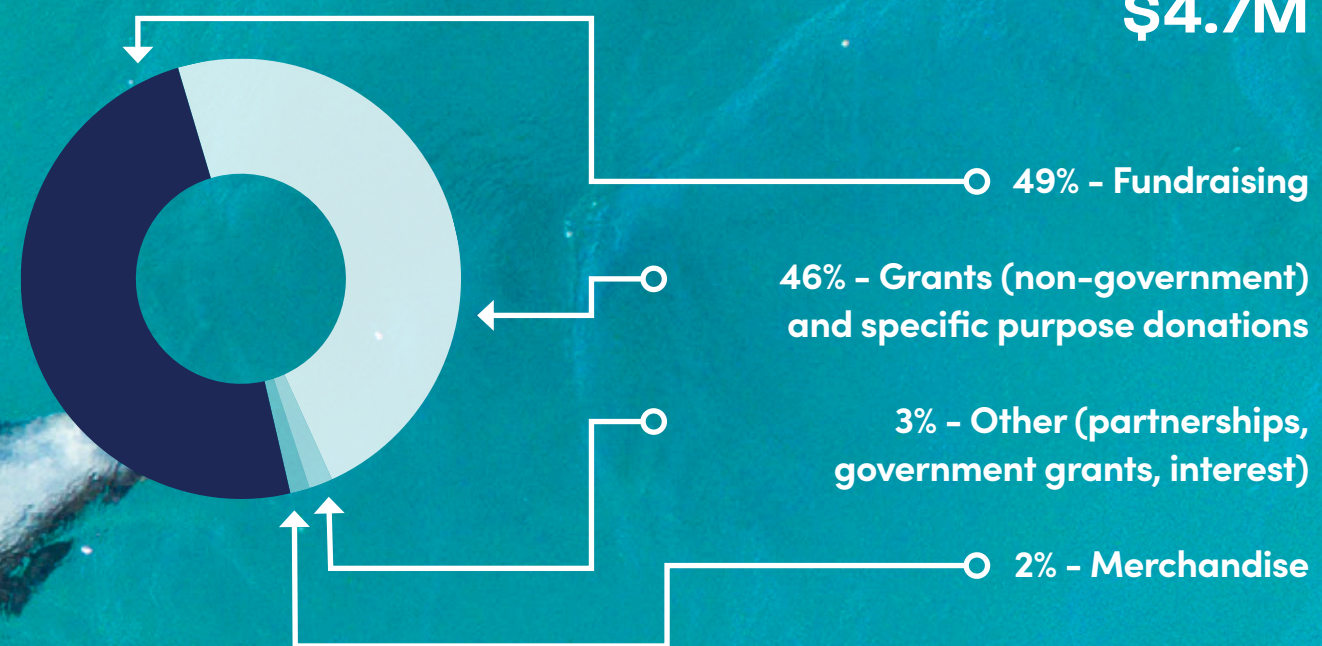
Patron – Tim Winton

**ABN:**  
53 409 718 351

**Address:**  
PO Box 5815,  
West End  
QLD 4101

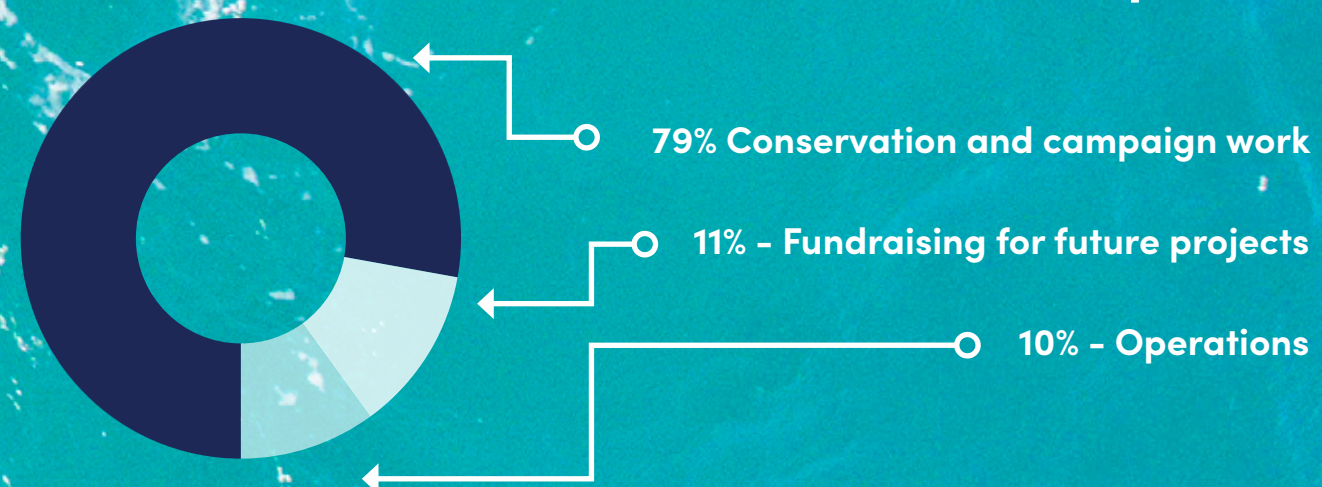
**Email:**  
amcs@amcs.org.au

## 2019 INCOME \$4.7M



Every dollar spent on AMCS fundraising projects raises five more dollars to fund our critical conservation work

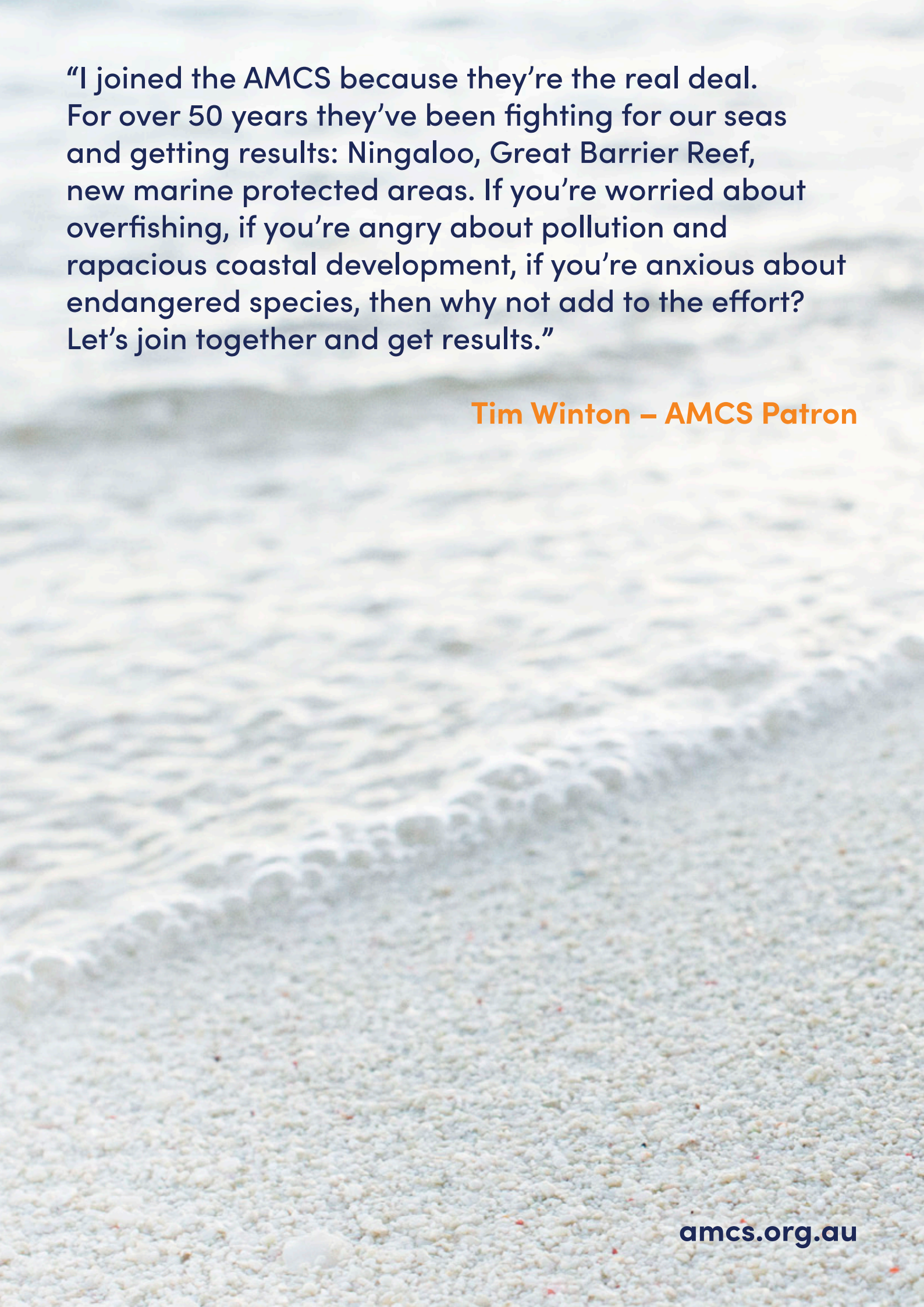
## 2019 EXPENDITURE \$4.6M











"I joined the AMCS because they're the real deal. For over 50 years they've been fighting for our seas and getting results: Ningaloo, Great Barrier Reef, new marine protected areas. If you're worried about overfishing, if you're angry about pollution and rapacious coastal development, if you're anxious about endangered species, then why not add to the effort? Let's join together and get results."

**Tim Winton – AMCS Patron**