



Speech By  
**Scott Stewart**

**MEMBER FOR TOWNSVILLE**

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**PRIVATE MEMBER'S STATEMENTS**

**Australian Institute of Marine Science**

 **Mr STEWART** (Townsville—ALP) (3.24 pm): I would like to extend my adjournment speech from the other night when I spoke about the visit that the Minister Assisting the Premier on North Queensland, the member for Thuringowa, Minister Miles and I made to the Australian Institute of Marine Science, or AIMS. I want to explain to the House the work that is done and the investment that has happened at AIMS.

AIMS has what they call the SeaSim, the sea simulator, which cost \$35 million to establish. That investment allows for continuous research, simulating the ocean at any particular time and with a number of variants incorporated into the experiments. For example, they can control the temperature of the water or simultaneously determine the level of turbidity. The amount of sediment that is continuously suspended in the water can be varied and adjusted. Prior to having the SeaSim, the experiments had to be done by hand. In other words, they used to warm up the water, tip it into the live coral container and take the measurements while the temperature of that water decreased. The SeaSim allows them to continuously run various experiments over an extended period to determine the biggest impact on coral.

The unfortunate thing is that, while the Palaszczuk government is committed to the Great Barrier Reef—and members have heard us talk about that at length this week and we have all heard about the announcement by UNESCO—the federal government is not backing it to the same extent. At the last budget announced by the federal government, we noticed a \$7.8 million cut in funding to the AIMS research institute. That is a huge shame, not only for the Great Barrier Reef but also for Queenslanders. We all know that annually the Barrier Reef brings in \$6.5 billion in reef tourism alone. That is a huge injection into our economy. A \$7.8 million cut in funding from the federal government will have a huge impact on our economy.

Research has discovered that over the past 27 years the crown-of-thorns starfish has attributed to 42 per cent of coral decline, which has a huge impact on our reef. At this stage, the only way that they are being managed is through manual removal or the injection of toxins into the animals.