
JCU's Statement of Strategic Intent

Creating a brighter future for life in the tropics world-wide through graduates and discoveries that make a difference.

Fish and Fisheries lab @ JCU



Our Mission

Fish for people, fish for the environment, fish for the future.

Our Vision for our work

People living in balance between their needs, livelihoods, sustainability, and stewardship, so that sharks, rays, fish, fisheries, and their habitats, are responsibly managed and effectively maintained for future generations.

Our Vision for the way we work

Our lab culture provides a supportive, grounded, and kind environment that delivers research excellence but also develops outstanding people. We will inspire and encourage people to remain in science, build future leaders, and create a brighter future for those working in fisheries and conservation science in the region

Our values

Our values form the core of what we do and how we work. Our values guide our choices in the types of work we choose to do, the teams we choose to work in, how we approach challenges, and how we define success. Our values have been defined by our team, and as a lab we commit to the following:

1. We do high quality, high impact science

We recognise that scientific quality is a core measure of our work. We recognise that we are resource limited and thus invest our efforts to activities that directly address our mission.

We produce world-class science by applying ourselves diligently to our work. We deliver high quality projects that address key scientific questions and priority needs, and produce useful outputs that progress our vision. Our analyses and data interpretations are scientifically rigorous and balanced. We value quality over quantity. We publish our work in quality peer-reviewed journals, and actively participate in and contribute to our profession by participating in scientific forums and discussions and engaging with scientific organisations. However, we recognise that success and impact in fisheries and conservation require much more than a publication, and we pursue these tangible impacts beyond academia and into industry and society.

We acknowledge that funding, time, and energy are limited. This means that we focus our efforts and attention on the things that matter most. We work on projects that are important to our end users, that engage people in fisheries and the marine environment, and research that helps answer the key scientific questions and emerging information needs in our field. Our real-world impact is evident when we see policies, governance, systems, people, or behaviours change for the better due to the influence of our work.

2. We collaborate

We collaborate with people to create effective projects that consider complexity and help achieve lasting impact.

We recognise the complexity of the natural environment, and of social-ecological systems and human behaviour. We also recognise that effective collaboration with local actors is essential to have lasting impact. Our ideal research approach is multi-disciplinary and collaborative and involves local partners and stakeholders. We recognise that a broad range of skills and expertise is often vital to deal with the complexity of the social-ecological systems within which we work, and that this expertise may lie outside our lab. We seek to work with the best expertise available, and we invest in building and maintaining collaborative relationships.

3. We engage and communicate

We recognise that impact means extending our efforts beyond publishing our research. We also focus on community engagement, we prepare science syntheses, we participate in the public discourse, and provide useful information and advice to fishers, communities, and decision makers.

We practice genuine engagement with stakeholders and pay attention to their information needs and priorities. Wherever possible, we engage stakeholders in developing research questions, methods, data collection, and interpretation of results.

We communicate the results of research in both peer-reviewed journals **and** in media intended for stakeholders and the public (e.g. blogs, fisheries newsletters, social media, and general media). We prepare scientific syntheses, fact sheets, and policy briefs so that we disseminate our science in accessible and understandable ways. Community and industry outreach is always factored into research plans.

We communicate with our colleagues. We include and trust each other by sharing research ideas where appropriate, and we openly seek input and feedback about lab plans, projects, and activities. We are honest and fair, and we communicate with respect and consideration towards others.

4. We act ethically and with authenticity, integrity, and transparency

[We recognise that authenticity, honesty, and integrity are essential to successful partnerships and relationships.](#)

We are trustworthy. We will do what we said we would. We honour our research contracts and abide by codes of ethics and conduct. We are respectful towards our fellow lab members, JCU staff, our collaborators, stakeholders, and members of the community. We give credit where credit is due and openly acknowledge the work of predecessors and collaborators. We keep confidences and take trust seriously. We will never abuse trust by inappropriately using another person's data, ideas, intellectual property, or confidential information.

We tell the truth. This means that we will practice courageous honesty in communicating with colleagues, collaborators, and each other. We ask for what we need and provide honest feedback even when this feedback is negative. We are explicit about our limitations, we own our mistakes and learn from them. We recognise that being truthful sometimes takes courage, but will lead to better understanding, respect, insight, and learning.

5. We practice curiosity

[We recognize that being curious leads to better science, better collaborations, and is essential for discovery and creativity.](#)

We are humble. We do not assume to know all the answers and our curiosity means that we welcome input and feedback from others. We are curious and open minded about

other's research, and seek out opportunities to learn. Our lab openly debates science, projects, and ideas, and welcomes opposing views. We try to 'lean into' curiosity even when criticism and feedback may be personally confronting. We recognise that honest feedback and open debate gives us new insights that make us better scientists and people.

We actively listen and actively question. This means that we will seriously consider input from others, and are open to expressing our questions in the spirit of learning and improvement. Where we do have and share opinions, our opinions will be based on evidence and the best data available.

6. We are always improving

We recognise that our work is challenging and complex, and that we need to embrace continuous learning, including learning from our mistakes. We support each other in improving.

We are imperfect. We acknowledge that the pace and complexity of our work means that we must always be learning. We will be mindful of the growth and learning opportunities available to us, and we share learning experiences with each other. We support each other to learn and grow towards our potential. We critically think about what 'success' looks like and evaluate our performance against these benchmarks. We will seek honest feedback from our colleague and stakeholders. We also seek out opportunities for additional training and learning to stay at the forefront of fisheries science and predator ecology.

We acknowledge that mistakes are inevitable. We commit to openly discussing these mistakes so that we can all learn from these experiences. We do not cover up mistakes as this takes away opportunities to learn and improve. We celebrate our wins and share our failures, and we learn from our mistakes.

7. We practice care, stewardship, and respect

We are part of an interconnected social, cultural, economic, and ecological system, and we are mindful of our place within it, and our role in improving life in the tropics.

We are mindful of JCU's Strategic Intent of "Creating a brighter future for the tropics" and we commit to this intent. We are especially mindful for working with partners in developing countries where many of the greatest needs lie. We are respectful towards other's culture, worldviews, and practices, and mindful of the unique situations and roles Indigenous Peoples play as custodians of the environment. We try to understand the circumstances and aspirations of our project partners and stakeholders. We will provide support and expertise when asked by our stakeholders, especially those with the most

pressing needs. We are mindful of how our own conduct and practices can affect others and the environment, and take steps to minimise our impacts. We act with empathy. This means we recognise our role as stewards and through our work and conduct, seek to improve social, cultural, economic, and environmental outcomes where we work.

8. We work with courage

We recognise that our work, and the way we work may involve uncomfortable interactions where cultures, attitudes, and values are in conflict, or where we are disadvantaged because we adhere to these values. We will lean into this discomfort, and we accept the costs of having different priorities and ways of working.

We embrace the value of courage as an integral element of our work and our Lab identity. We will act with courage in the pursuit of our two visions, even in situations where this may lead us into discomfort and potential disadvantage. We will have the courage to reconsider paradigms of conservation and fisheries science that may no longer serve us and to think outside the box regarding the way we run our projects and the way we measure our success and impact. We will take measured risks, be willing to test new methods or approaches that may fail, and invest time and energy into practices that align with these values. We reject the notion that the impact of our work is best measured by a paper or individual's citation metrics or a journal's impact factor. When necessary, we will speak out in defense of science, conservation, and our Lab values.

9. We strive for reciprocity

We recognise our position of privilege in a region that faces immense challenges, and we recognise our role in tackling these challenges as we work towards our mission.

We are mindful of our potential to support “Creating a brighter future for the tropics”. Fairness and reciprocity are core values and we strive to ensure that our projects and activities include fair reciprocity for all partners. Where possible, we will identify and support opportunities to support capacity building and development in our region, including seeking opportunities for local partners to access advanced training education so they can achieve their goals and aspirations.