

PhD project available in Marine Ecology

Maximising positive outcomes for threatened species from coastal infrastructure upgrades

A PhD scholarship is available at Southern Cross University (SCU), Australia to work on a collaborative research project with the NSW Department of Primary Industries – Fisheries (DPI Fisheries) at the National Marine Science Centre (Coffs Harbour). The successful candidate will work with leading researchers involved in maximising positive outcomes for threatened species from coastal infrastructure upgrades.

This PhD project stems from the prediction that rising sea levels will necessitate frontline coastal protection infrastructure (e.g. breakwaters, training walls and groynes) be upgraded over the next 30 years. These works, if done poorly, could negatively impact marine biodiversity, particularly, threatened species. In contrast, if done well, upgrades of coastal protection infrastructure could provide enhanced habitat for conservation-dependent species. Currently, the scientific knowledge required to make evidence-based recommendations to ensure positive outcomes does not exist.

This project will address these knowledge gaps using the (ca. \$15 million) upgrade of the breakwater at Coffs Harbour that is currently underway. It will also focus on the critically endangered marine brown alga, *Nereia lophocladia*, which has only been recorded on or near the Coffs Harbour breakwater.

The position is open to Australian and international applicants. The successful candidate will need to have an Honours or Masters degree in marine ecology or a closely related field. The project will involve boat work and scientific diving. The PhD scholarship will provide a tax free stipend of \$26,682 pa (AUD) and tuition fees will be waived, plus there is additional funding to support the research. Interested applicants should send their CV highlighting their research background to Associate Professor Brendan Kelaher – (brendan.kelaher@scu.edu.au). Only short-listed applicants will be notified. The closing date for applications is Friday 4th September, 2017 but may be extended if the position is not filled.