

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Great Barrier Reef: Assessing its Health from Space

The **International Astronautical Congress 2017** will welcome on **Thursday 28 September 2017**, from **17:45 – 18:45**, **Paul Hardisty**, Chief Executive Officer of the Australian Institute of Marine Science, for a Highlight Lecture on Australia's great natural wonder: the **Great Barrier Reef**.



Stretching for over 2300 km, Australia's Great Barrier Reef (GBR) is not only one of the great natural wonders of Australia, but of the entire world. It is home to a vast number of marine species and provides recreational opportunities for visitors from all over the globe. The Reef hosts more than 600 different types of soft and hard coral, and fish and mollusk species number in the thousands. This vast number of ecological communities make it one of the most complex natural ecosystems in the world.

This gem of the world is under severe attack. Coral bleaching is devastating the very fabric of the reef with ominous consequences for the species that inhabit the reef. It only takes an increase of one degree Celsius in the local water for approximately one month to generate a bleaching event. Presently, the GBR is undergoing another severe bleaching event.

Heat from the atmosphere is finding its way into the ocean contributing to ocean warming. Satellite observations are helping to monitor the health of the GBR indirectly by measuring various ocean parameters and directly by studying the reef itself.

This highlight lecture, moderated by **Chiaki Mukai**, Senior Advisor of JAXA and Vice President of the Tokyo University of Science, will discuss:

1. the history of the reef;
2. the health of the reef;
3. the causes of the attack;
4. how we can measure and track the conditions from space;
5. what the prognosis is for the reef and the species that reside there.

Members of the press are invited to save the date, and register to ensure that they receive accreditation. Please send confirmation of your registration to abed.aldaas@iafastro.org so that we can ensure that you are properly accredited.

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