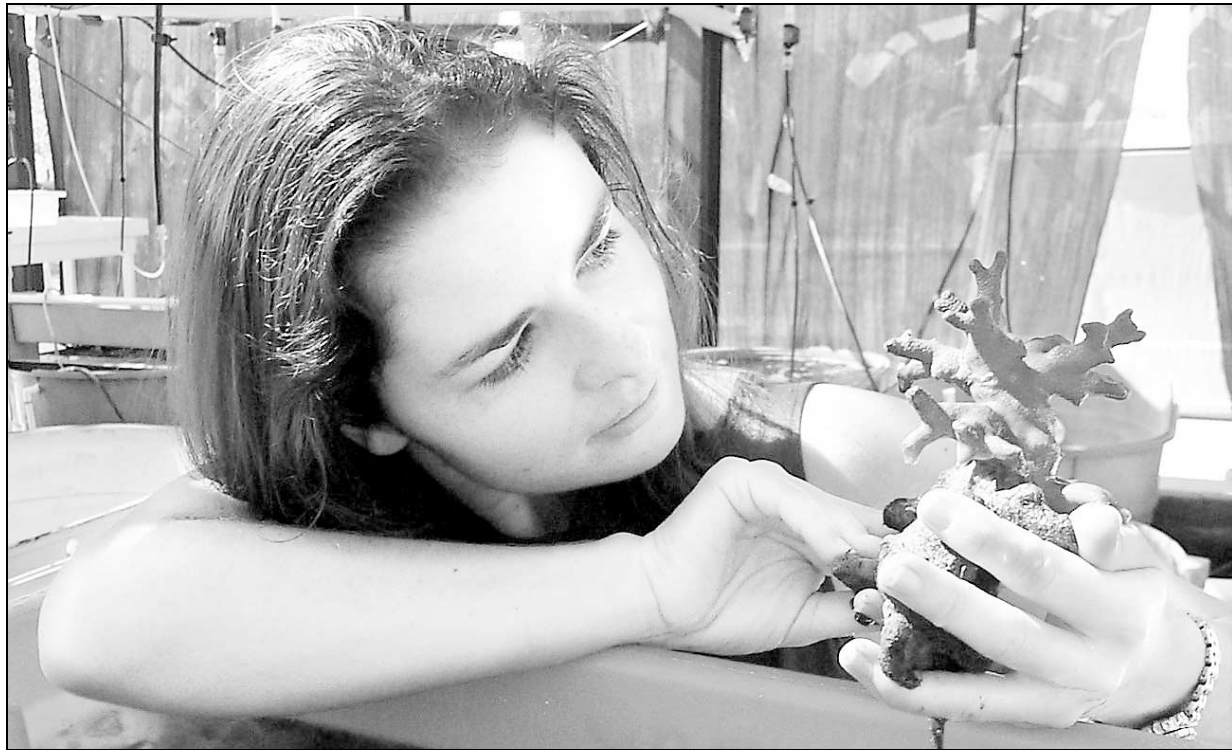


Research probes global warming effect on reef



SURVIVAL . . . PhD student Carolyn Smith at the Australian Institute of Marine Science

A TOWNSVILLE-based marine science institute is spearheading research aimed at understanding whether the Great Barrier Reef will survive global warming.

Scientists have discovered certain corals are blessed by nature with heat-tolerant qualities.

Postgraduate PhD student Carolyn Smith is searching the North's reefs to find out which corals have the most natural heat tolerance.

"By identifying which groups of corals are more tolerant to heat changes, we can predict which areas are more likely to survive and are therefore in more urgent need of protection," Ms Smith said.

"I don't believe global warming will destroy the Great Barrier Reef but I do feel there may be a reduction in the species of coral."