



Australian Government

Great Barrier Reef
Marine Park Authority

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NEWSLETTER - 15



From the Deck

From the Director's desk

This has certainly been a successful year for the Tourism and Recreation Group, with the launch of many new exciting initiatives such as *Onboard, Responsible Reef Practices, Reef Facts for Tour Guides, Eyes and Ears*, and the *Moorings Register* (the first ever online register of moorings in the Great Barrier Reef).

This year also saw a renewal of the Crown-of-thorns starfish (COTS) Control Programme contract between the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA) and the Association of Marine Tourism Operators. This contract will see \$660 000 provided over the next two years to control COTS outbreaks at popular reef tourism sites. Since 2002, the programme has covered over 169 sites on 57 reefs and more than 77 000 COTS have been killed.

The GBRMPA also hosted the first Climate Change Forum for tourism industry leaders at the 20th Tourism and Recreation Reef Advisory Committee meeting in Cairns in November. The forum provided an important opportunity for reef tourism operators to listen to world-renowned speakers on climate change and find out what it could mean for the future of the Great Barrier Reef and their businesses.

Finally, I'd like to take this opportunity to wish you and your family a happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year. We look forward to working closely with you again in 2006.

Lisha Mulqueeny
Director, Tourism and Recreation Group

Get the low down with Reef Facts

The first *Reef Facts for Tour Guides* fact sheet is now available and being distributed to deck staff and reef interpreters to assist in the accurate presentation of Great Barrier Reef facts and management issues.

The first *Reef Facts* fact sheet presents a "big picture" view of the Great Barrier Reef, with upcoming editions focusing on hot topics such as Indigenous sea country, marine mammals and sharks.

The aim of *Reef Facts* is to introduce best practice interpretation techniques and, by presenting facts in an interesting way, enhance the tool kit for reef tour guides.

To order extra copies of *Reef Facts*, contact Lorelle Schluter on (07) 4750 0705 or email l.schluter@gbmpa.gov.au.



our great barrier reef
let's keep it great





Hop onboard

Onboard – The Tourism Operator's Handbook for the Great Barrier Reef is our new online website keeping you up-to-date with everything you ever wanted to know about conducting a tourism operation in the Great Barrier Reef.

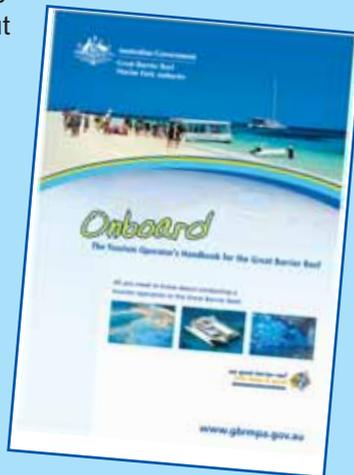
Onboard features information on permits, certification and *Responsible Reef Practices*. You can find Onboard online at www.gbrmpa.gov.au.

"The information is simple, logical and clear to understand...Great tool!"

Deb Lewis, Whitsunday Charter Boat Industry Association.

"It looks awesome!"

Wendy Keala Karr, Hawaii Ecotourism Association.



Use it or lose it!

If your tourism permit was granted since 13 August 2003, you must commence operations in the Marine Park within two years of the date your tourism permit was granted. The date you need to keep in mind is on the top left-hand corner of your permit.

If you hold a special tourism permit (e.g. a capped permission) you are expected to make reasonable use of that permit. "Reasonable use" means an average of 50 days per year per vessel / aircraft endorsed on that permit. For example, if you have four vessels on a special tourism permit, you will need an average of 200 days of use per year to meet "reasonable use," and these 200 days can be spread across use of all four vessels. Permit use will be reviewed when you apply for a replacement permit.

More details on commencing operations and use of special tourism permissions can be found in the Permits section of Onboard at www.gbrmpa.gov.au or please call Vicki Bonanno on (07) 4750 0868.

Are your mooring days numbered?

On 1 January 2006 new GBRMPA legislation comes into effect making it mandatory to display the mooring reference number on your mooring.

There will be a six month grace period from 1 January to give everyone time to ensure their moorings are marked either in a manner consistent with the Maritime Safety Queensland buoy mooring standards or in a permanent and legible manner (for bouys not in State waters).

If you are unsure of your mooring reference number, contact the Permits Unit on (07) 4750 0700 or email permits@gbrmpa.gov.au.

If you would like the contact details for the person who manages your mooring to be registered on our online Moorings Register, contact Leanne Brown on (07) 4750 0788 or email l.brown@gbrmpa.gov.au.

Want to improve your onboard interpretation, educate your staff and monitor reef health?

The GBRMPA's Eye on the Reef partnership programme is a joint initiative between the GBRMPA, the tourism industry and researchers to:

- Foster stewardship of the Great Barrier Reef
- Facilitate information exchange
- Educate and motivate industry staff and reef visitors about the issues facing the Great Barrier Reef and its management.

The programme, which includes staff training opportunities and support for onboard interpretation, will be expanded to 40 operators in 2006.

If you'd like more information on Eye on the Reef, contact Andrew Chin on (07) 4750 0810 or email a.chin@gbrmpa.gov.au.

Heads up on the EMC

The Queensland Office of Fair Trading is examining how reef tourism operators represent the Environmental Management Charge (EMC) in their brochures and other promotional material.

While it is not mandatory to advertise the EMC separately to the ticket price, if operators choose to do so they must correctly identify the EMC as \$4.50 per person per day.

Examples of correct EMC advertising are available from the Tourism and Recreation Group by contacting Kirsten Walpole on (07) 4750 0775 or by email k.walpole@gbrmpa.gov.au.



Eyes and Ears on the reef

The Minister for the Environment and Heritage Senator Ian Campbell recently announced the GBRMPA's Eyes and Ears Incident Reporting Initiative.

Under the initiative, tourism operators will provide valuable compliance information to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of enforcement efforts in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park.

"What we hope to see is an improved system for safeguarding the Reef," Senator Campbell said.

"As the largest commercial industry in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park, tourism operators with their daily presence on the Reef are the regular eyes and ears of the community."

We encourage all tourism operators to get involved by contacting Chris Briggs on (07) 4750 0864 or email c.briggs@gbrmpa.gov.au.

Raine Island and other Special Management Areas

Did you know there are Special Management Areas (SMA) throughout the Marine Park where specific management arrangements improve conservation of the area and manage use?

Specifically, when you operate in the far north you should be aware of the Restricted Access SMAs for Raine Island Reef (11-243), MacLennan Cay Reef (11-070) and Moulter Cay Reef (11-130). You cannot enter the waters surrounding the island and cays unless you:

- Have a Marine Parks permit from the GBRMPA and QPWS specifically allowing that access
- Are accessing the island or cay and you have a QPWS permit to access that island or cay.

Mooring limits

Please remember time limits apply to the use of public and shared moorings, and these should be strictly followed to ensure equitable access to Marine Park destinations.

T&R staff matters

Lorelle Schluter, formerly the Industry Engagement Officer in the Tourism and Recreation (T&R) Group, has been promoted to the Manager Sustainable Development and Policy. The T&R Group is currently recruiting for a Project Officer – Policy and an Industry Engagement Officer. These positions are expected to be filled early in 2006.

Recognition for reef advocate

Congratulations to Dave Hutchen who was awarded the Marie-Watson-Blake Award for Outstanding Contribution by an individual at the 2005 Queensland Tourism Awards.

Congratulations also to the following reef tourism operators who were acknowledged at the awards:

Fantasea Cruises (Reefworld) – Finalist Significant Tourist Attraction

Fantasea Cruises – Winner Tour and Transport Operators (Major)

Aviation Tourism Australia – Finalist Tour and Transport Operators (Major)

Big Cat Green Island Reef Cruises – Finalist Tour and Transport Operators (Major)

Great Adventures Reef and Green Island Cruises - Finalist Tour and Transport Operators (Major)

Passions of Paradise – Winner Tour and Transport Operators (Significant)

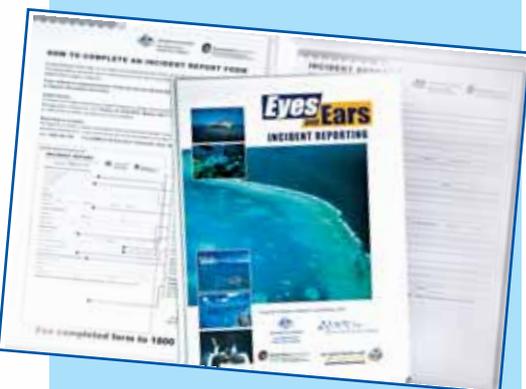
Barefoot Cruises – Finalist Tour and Transport Operators (Significant), Finalist Unique Accommodation

Adrenalin Dive - Finalist Tour and Transport Operators (Significant), Finalist Adventure Tourism

Tallships Adventures – Finalist Adventure Tourism

Pro Dive Townsville – Finalist Adventure Tourism

Fantasea Cruises (Reefsleeper) – Winner Unique Accommodation



Bulletin board

- The amended Whitsundays and Cairns Area Plans of Management came into effect on 16 November 2005. For information visit: http://www.gbrmpa.gov.au/corp_site/management/plans_of_management.html
- Submissions on the proposed cruise ship anchorages off Cairns and Port Douglas closed on 19 December 2005. A decision is expected in January 2006.
- Ecotourism Australia's 2006 conference will be held in Townsville next November.
- Updated Australian National Guidelines for Whale and Dolphin Watching 2005 now available on the web at: <http://www.deh.gov.au/coasts/publications/whale-watching-guidelines-2005.html>
- The GBRMPA's regular CPI review of the EMC is currently underway. The minimum EMC increase is 50 cents (the GBRMPA bears the cost of CPI increases until the total increase reaches a minimum of 50 cents) and operators will be given 12 months notice of any increase. The last CPI adjustment was on 1 April 2003.
- Management arrangements for bareboat operations in the Marine Park are currently being updated.
- Cowboys Reef was officially named in recognition of the North Queensland Toyota Cowboys' outstanding 2004 and 2005 seasons.

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www.gbrmpa.gov.au/corp_site/key_issues/tourism/index.html

Planning webpage updates

The planning webpage has recently been updated to include the following site information:

- Clump Point Site Management Arrangements – developed in response to several applications for the installation of moorings. The documents have been developed in consultation with the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service, Maritime Safety Queensland and the Mission Beach Local Marine Advisory Committee.
- Horseshoe Bay Site Management Arrangements – developed in response to numerous applications for the installation of moorings in the Bay. This document has also been developed in consultation with the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service and Maritime Safety Queensland.
- Cairns Area Plan of Management Site Plans – developed under the Cairns Area Plan of Management in 2001. An additional note has been inserted on the front page of the documents to highlight the One Dory Detached (Conservation Park Zone), the No Dory Detached (Marine National Park) and Public Appreciation Special Management Areas.
- Lady Elliot, Lady Musgrave and Fitzroy Reef Site Management Plans – developed to collate existing management strategies, which were put in place over many years to address issues.

To view these documents, go to: http://www.gbrmpa.gov.au/corp_site/management/site_management.html

Would you like to receive this newsletter electronically and make it easier to share this information with your staff?

Please provide your details to Kirsten Walpole on (07) 4750 0775 or email k.walpole@gbrmpa.gov.au

Your contributions, ideas and feedback are welcome. Simply contact Lorelle Schluter in GBRMPA's Tourism and Recreation Group by phone (07) 4750 0705 or email: l.schluter@gbrmpa.gov.au.