



From the Director's Desk



Virginia Chadwick.

The past months bring with them two very significant events for tourism in the Great Barrier Reef. Firstly, The Hon Virginia Chadwick retired from her position as Chair and CEO of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA) on 18 July 2007. Ms Chadwick has shown remarkable leadership on all matters relating to the conservation of the Marine Park and was the

driving force in developing the strong partnership that exists between the tourism industry and the GBRMPA today. Her guidance and wise counsel will be missed, but the foundations she has left for this important partnership will continue. Until the Minister appoints a new Chairman, Executive Directors Andrew Skeat and John Tanzer will be alternating as acting Chairman.

In a fitting farewell to Virginia the GBRMPA's sustainable tourism initiative received the highest accolade from the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC). GBRMPA was awarded the coveted "Destination Award" for the Great Barrier Reef, as part of WTTC's *Tourism for Tomorrow* awards at a ceremony in Lisbon, Portugal on 12 May.

The "Destination Award" is awarded to a destination where a network of tourism businesses, government and tourism organisations have demonstrated dedication to, and success in, maintaining a policy of sustainable

management incorporating social, cultural, environmental and economic aspects as well as multi-stakeholder engagement.

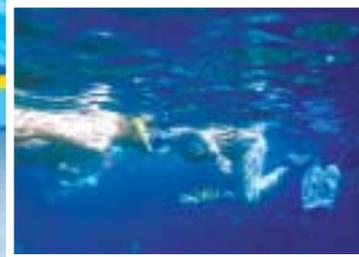
Andrew Skeat, Executive Director (GBRMPA), and I attended the ceremony to receive the award. GBRMPA's win was from 130 applications representing more than 40 countries across four categories. This award represents the collective approach we have jointly taken in tourism, and it is as much yours as it ours. We encourage you to use this award to your advantage, and promote it where you can. For assistance with this, please contact us and we will help you where possible.

Lisha Mulqueeny
Director Tourism and Recreation



Andrew Skeat and Lisha Mulqueeny receive the "Destination Award"





Great Barrier Reef under watchful 'Eye' of crew

Under an expanded three-way partnership between the GBRMPA, the tourism industry and Reef researchers, up to 45 tourism sites will now be monitored for reef health on a weekly basis from Ribbon Reef No.10 near Lizard Island in the north, to Hamilton Island in the Whitsundays in the south as part of the expansion of the Eye on the Reef Monitoring Programme.

Given that many tourism operators visit their reef sites on at least a weekly, and in many cases a daily basis, they are perfectly placed to collect long-term data that is invaluable for research and management. The expanded Eye on the Reef Monitoring Programme is now the largest tourism driven coral reef monitoring programme of its kind anywhere. Forty tourism operators ranging from day trips to pontoons, to live-aboard dive trips and island resorts participate in the programme.

Hon Malcolm Turnbull, Minister for Environment and Water Resources, launched the expansion of Eye on the Reef in Cairns on 4 June 2007, with the first training session being held in the Whitsundays later that week. All operators and their staff were trained in scientific monitoring methods and provided with training manuals, logbooks and monitoring equipment in a hands on day of learning and working together. Cairns and Port Douglas operators received the same training on 14 June.

The majority of tourism operators involved in the programme are ECO Certified or are in the process of seeking certification. Operators receive regular Nature Diaries (reports that outline data trends from their site/s), which can be used to provide greater underwater understanding of their sites, as well as a tool for interpretation and staff training.

All 40 operators are now monitoring their reef sites for the abundance of key marine residents, as well as reef health indicators. The information is collated by the GBRMPA where findings are analysed and provided to scientists at the Australian Institute of Marine Science, James Cook University and University of Queensland.

Kaylene Kontrimas, Operations Manager of Cruise Whitsundays, said "not only was the Programme well presented, very detailed, and easy to understand, but GBRMPA staff made it interesting and fun which really got the group involved. But, by far the most important part of this programme is the interaction between all the operators and the staff of GBRMPA working together to help preserve this beautiful place."

The GBRMPA wishes to thank all of the operators that are participating. It really is fantastic to see so many dedicated and passionate people who are genuinely interested in the future of the Great Barrier Reef.

For more information contact the Eye on the Reef Programme Coordinator, on (07) 4750 0715.

Participating Operators are:

Aristocat
Australian Tall Ship Cruises
Barefoot Cruises Australia
Cairns Dive Centre
Calypso Reef Charters
Cruise Indigo Hamilton Island
Cruise Whitsundays
Daydream Island Resort
Explorer Ventures
Fantasea Cruises
Frankland Island Cruises
H2O Sportz Hamilton Island
HABA Dive
Hamilton Island Resort
Hayman Island Resort
Islandive.com
Kiana Sail and Dive
Malaita Cruises
Mantaray Charters
Maxi Action Ragamuffin and Reef Safari
Mike Ball Dive Expeditions
Ocean Rafting
Ocean Spirit Cruises
Ozsail
Passions Of Paradise
Poseidon Cruises
ProDive Cairns
Quicksilver Group of Companies
Reef Magic Cruises
Sailaway
New Horizon Sail and Dive Adventures
Spirit of Freedom
Sunlover Reef Cruises
Sunsail
TAKA Dive Adventures
Tall Ship Adventures
Undersea Explorer
Wavelength



Whitsundays Training Session, 7 June



Cairns/Port Douglas Training Session, 14 June



On TRRAC

The Tourism and Recreation Reef Advisory Committee (TRRAC) met in Townsville on 20-21 June to provide expert advice to the GBRMPA on matters important in the Marine Park. To see who TRRAC members are, visit www.gbrmpa.gov.au. Hot items on the agenda were:

- Climate change;
- Industry sustainability;
- Recreational use of the Reef;
- Water Quality; and
- Dugong, shark and ray conservation.

Farmers do their bit to look after it

Water Quality Improvement Plans are under development in five regions of the Great Barrier Reef catchment - the Tully/Murray, Burdekin, Townsville-Thuringowa, Mackay/Whitsundays and the Burnett/Baffle. The Plans will establish water quality targets with a view to reducing pollutant inputs to receiving waters, including the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park. Primary producers have already shown great progress in achieving improvements to water quality through best practice measures such as reduced fertilizer application, minimal tillage and retaining organic material from the previous crop to keep soil on farm and improve its condition.

The plans are an important task of the joint Australian and Queensland Governments' Reef Water Quality Protection Plan. For more information visit www.reefplan.qld.gov.au

Is your council a Reef Guardian?

The Great Barrier Reef is set to benefit from a new initiative that looks to achieve better environmental outcomes through local government's role in natural resource management. The Reef Guardian Council initiative also seeks to improve both local government and community capacity in protecting the Great Barrier Reef.

Compliance matters

Offences reported between 1 April and 30 June 2007

Offence	Far Northern	Cairns/ Cooktown	Townsville/ Whitsunday	Mackay/ Capricorn	TOTAL
Breach Permit Condition	0	2	3	1	6
Foreign Fishing Vessels	0	0	0	0	0
Illegal Discharge	0	1	0	0	1
Illegal Fishing (Commercial)	1	10	5	1	17
Illegal Fishing (Recreational)	0	5	26	20	51
POM Offences	0	9	2	0	11
State Offences	0	13	28	5	46
Unpermitted purpose	2	5	5	4	16
Other	0	1	3	0	4
TOTAL	3	46	72	31	152

The first four Reef Guardian Councils are:

- Burdekin Shire Council
- Hinchinbrook Shire Council
- Livingstone Shire Council
- Townsville City Council

In order to qualify as a Reef Guardian Council the following key areas need to be addressed:

- Land Management
- Water Management
- Waste Management
- Community Engagement

For more information contact reef.councils@gbrmpa.gov.au

Operators benefit, benefit, benefit!

ECO Certified high standard operators are being promoted by the GBRMPA in the national and international market place. Representation at the Australian Tourism Exchange (ATE), the country's largest showcase of Australian tourism experiences, and future representation at the Diving Equipment and Marketing Association (DEMA) in Florida, one of the largest diving trade events in the world, means the GBRMPA is encouraging industry specialists to look for the ECO Certification tick to ensure

they are selecting high standard Great Barrier Reef experiences.

In addition, as part of the "Dive the Wonder Down Under" campaign in the U.S., as well as the Great Barrier Reef generally, ECO Certified High Standard Operators were again promoted by the GBRMPA in a brochure that has reached over 50,000 American divers. To join the ranks of high standard operators contact Vicki Bonanno on (07) 4750 0868.

Can you watch for whales?

The implementation of a new operational policy on whale and dolphin conservation ensures whale and dolphin watching in the Marine Park is in line with national guidelines and provides adequate protection for these animals.

In the future, while incidental whale watching is open to all, dedicated whale watching activities will only be able to occur in the Marine Park as part of a tourist programme. Operators conducting dedicated activities will be required to be appropriately certified and recognised as high standard by the GBRMPA, and the activity must be listed on the tourism permission.

Bulletin board

- Commonwealth Government grants \$300K for crown-of-thorns starfish control.
- Coral Sea Fishers Association (CSFA) and the Cod Hole and Ribbon Reef Operators Association (CHARROA) pioneer outstanding collaboration to curb the use of hook fishing within 1.1 nautical miles of the popular Osprey, Bougainville, Flora, Dart and Heralds Surprise Reefs.
- Reminder: as of 1 October 2007, GBRMPA requires all tourism operators to carry a minimum of \$10 million in public liability insurance.
- Legal drafting of the Plan of Management (POM) amendments is underway with the amended plans still expected to take effect in late 2007. For more information, please contact the Planning Unit on 4750 0700.
- Dr Birtles, who also works with the GBRMPA on the Dwarf Minke Whale Monitoring Programme, is leading a team of scientists from James Cook University in surveying Great Barrier Reef tourism operators and tourists to determine the economic value of these iconic species for tourism in local and regional communities. For more information, email Alastair.Birtles@jcu.edu.au
- Don't forget all you need to know about conducting a tourism operation on the Great Barrier Reef can be found on the *Onboard* website. Visit <http://www.gbrmpa.gov.au/onboard/>
- The Tourism and Recreation web pages have been updated. To see the improvements visit http://www.gbrmpa.gov.au/corp_site/key_issues/tourism.

Going Green – Undersea Explorer

Undersea Explorers' Operation Manager, Jon Marsden, says the company's commitment to the environment was their driving force in looking at running their vessel on bio-diesel made from recycled cooking fat. "We began using about 25% bio-diesel as a trial, approximately 8 months ago. After experiencing no problems at all we increased our usage to approximately 50%" Jon says.

"There has been no difference in performance or fuel consumption of either the main engines or the generators, in fact the engines running on bio-diesel seemed to run a little cooler. We feel, in using bio-diesel that we are helping to offset our "carbon footprint" as it has 40% less carbon emissions, it is also bio-degradable and smells much better! Every week we give a short informal chat to our passengers on the virtues of using alternative fuels and supporting locally manufactured products."

To tell us how your company is 'Going Green', email tourec@gbrmpa.gov.au.



Jaap Barendrecht, Undersea Explorers' Engineer

High standard operators

Greg and Lauren Lambert of Kiana Sail and Dive are active members of the Whitsunday Charter Boat Industry Association, which is committed to raising the standards of the charter boat industry in the Whitsundays. As a logical step in this direction, Kiana Sail and Dive recently achieved the Advanced Ecotourism level of the ECO Certification Program.

Greg and Lauren believe that being one of the recognised high standard operators in the Marine Park will be key to the ongoing viability of their business, particularly as the recognition of the importance of certification becomes more widespread. In addition, Greg says that "the most valuable part of the exercise for us has been the heightened awareness of the World Heritage listed Marine Park that we have the privilege of operating in. I believe that it is incredibly important that



we don't lose sight of the fact that we need to care for this environment if it is to be here for future generations to enjoy.'

To join the ranks of high standard operators contact the GBRMPA on (07) 4750 0775.



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

Please provide your details to Karen Stephen on (07) 4750 0775 or email tourec@gbrmpa.gov.au

Your contributions, ideas and feedback are welcome. Contact Karen Stephen in GBRMPA's Tourism and Recreation Group by phone (07) 4750 0775 or email: tourec@gbrmpa.gov.au