



# From the Deck

MARCH 2010  
NEWSLETTER - 29

## GBRMPA roundup

### *Welcome to the first edition of From the Deck for 2010.*

There's a lot of news in this edition that will influence both how you do business in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park as well as how you go about planning for, and running your business in the future.

Importantly, two groundbreaking publications relevant to the Great Barrier Reef tourism industry were released late last year:

- The *Great Barrier Reef Outlook Report 2009* was released by Minister Garrett in September 2009. (See story on page two.)
- The *Great Barrier Reef Tourism Climate Change Action Strategy 2009 – 2012* was launched at Tourism Futures in August 2009. (See story on page two.)

*Reef Permits*, the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority's (GBRMPA) new online permits compliance and management system, is currently being tested internally by GBRMPA staff and we plan to roll out sections of the system for industry testing later this year.

Reef Permits will allow people to apply for a permit, manage their permits including changing contact details, make bookings to Plan of Management areas and anchorages, and submit Environmental Management Charge returns, all online, twenty-four hours a day.

Congratulations to all the operators and crew who support our *Sightings Network* across the Great Barrier Reef. We have recently logged over 2600 sightings in the database, and this information is helping us keep track of key species such as humpback whales, crown-of-thorns starfish and sharks, as well as validating coral bleaching predictions. For a copy of the latest *Sightings Highlights Report* email [sights@gbmpa.gov.au](mailto:sights@gbmpa.gov.au)

The Tourism and Recreation Group has welcomed back a couple of familiar faces; Chris Briggs has returned from the Knowledge Management Group and is Acting Director, while Hilary Skeat is back as Manager Projects after three years with the Strategic Outlook Group. We also welcome Lisa Perrett to our team as part of the GBRMPA Graduate Officer Program. Lisa will be assisting with climate change and policy projects.

### Industry Survey



We will be conducting a survey of 100 marine tourism operators and industry in the next quarter. This survey will help us learn about operator's knowledge of, and action in response to, climate change.

For further details please contact Lorelle Schluter on 07 4750 0705.



Sightings Network photograph of a humpback whale in the Whitsundays taken by Tanya Drury, Islandive.

# Great Barrier Reef Tourism Climate Change Action Strategy

On 17 August last year, the GBRMPA, Queensland Tourism Industry Council and the Association of Marine Park Tourism Operators (AMPTO) launched the *Great Barrier Reef Tourism Climate Change Action Strategy* at Tourism Futures on the Gold Coast on behalf of nine tourism industry and protected area management partners.

The Strategy contains a decisive action plan to address the potential impacts of climate change on both the health of the world's largest reef and Australia's \$5.1 billion Great Barrier Reef tourism industry.

The nine Strategy partners form the *Tourism Climate Change Action Group* which meets regularly to manage implementation of the Strategy. The first implementation report will be provided in the next edition of *From the Deck* and will also be available online.

The *Tourism Climate Change Action Group* is made up of GBRMPA, Queensland Tourism Industry Council, AMPTO, Quicksilver Group, Lady Elliot Island Resort, Whitsunday Charter Boat Industry Association, Tourism Queensland, Ecotourism Australia and the Department of the Environment and Resource Management.



You can access a copy of the full Strategy from the GBRMPA website ([www.gbrmpa.gov.au](http://www.gbrmpa.gov.au)) or contact us on (07) 4750 0775 for a hard copy of the abridged Strategy.

## GREAT BARRIER REEF OUTLOOK REPORT

The *Great Barrier Reef Outlook Report 2009* was released by Australia's Federal Environment Minister Peter Garrett on 2 September 2009. This first Outlook Report highlights the Great Barrier Reef as one of the most diverse and remarkable ecosystems and it remains one of the most healthy coral reef ecosystems.

Climate change, continued declining water quality from catchment runoff, loss of coastal habitats from coastal development and a small number of impacts from fishing are identified as the priority issues reducing the resilience of the Great Barrier Reef.

The Outlook Report will be used to guide work programs within the GBRMPA over the next four years.

The full report and supporting evidence are available from the GBRMPA website at [www.gbrmpa.gov.au/corp\\_site/about\\_us/great\\_barrier\\_reef\\_outlook\\_report](http://www.gbrmpa.gov.au/corp_site/about_us/great_barrier_reef_outlook_report) or contact the GBRMPA at [outlook@gbrmpa.gov.au](mailto:outlook@gbrmpa.gov.au) for a copy or CD of the report.



## Environmental Management Charge Update

### AN INCREASE TO THE EMC CHARGE

As advised early last year, the Environmental Management Charge will increase on 1 April 2010. The standard tourism program charge will increase from \$5.00 to \$5.50 for full day trips and from \$2.50 to \$2.75 for part day trips (trips less than three hours in duration).

### NEW LATE PAYMENT PENALTY AND REINSTATEMENT FEE HAVE COMMENCED

Every quarter, tourism operators legally have to provide information, charging returns, logbook pages and payments that relate to their EMC obligations.

If operators do not provide these, their permit will be suspended, meaning they will be unable to operate in the Marine Park.

Recent changes to Marine Park legislation mean that if a permit

is suspended because the logbook pages, returns, and/or payment were not submitted by the due date, these items must be submitted, along with a late payment penalty and a reinstatement fee, in order to end the suspension.

- The late payment penalty is calculated as the greater of either \$250.00 or 20 percent per annum of the amount owing calculated from the due date of payment.
- The reinstatement fee is \$120.00.

After a permit is suspended, there is a period of ten (10) business days for the outstanding EMC requirements to be met before the permit is revoked. Revocation means that operators no longer have a permit to operate in the Marine Park.

You can learn more about the EMC and its requirements from our *Onboard* website: [www.gbrmpa.gov.au/onboard](http://www.gbrmpa.gov.au/onboard)

# Compliance matters

One hundred and seven (107) possible offences were identified from 65 Incident Reports between 1 October and 31 December 2009.

Activity	Far Northern	Cairns/ Cooktown	Townsville/ Whitsunday	Mackay/ Capricorn	Total
Commercial Line Fishing		5		1	6
Commercial Line, Unattached Dory				1	1
Commercial Trawling	1				1
Indigenous Hunting/ Fishing (State)		4			4
Recreational Visitors *		18	31	20	69
Tourism Vessels *	1	5	14	1	21
Shipping Vessels				1	1
Groundings Commercial Vessels	1				1
Groundings Recreational Vessels			1		1
Groundings Tourism Vessels				1	1
Other Agency Offences			1		1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>107</b>

\* Includes Fishing, Unpermitted Activity, Breach of Permit, Plan of Management, and State Offences

## Changes to previous convictions for illegal fishing in the Marine Park

Some convictions for illegal fishing in the Marine Park handed down between 1 July 2004 and 16 December 2006 will be treated as "spent" under the Spent Conviction Scheme. This means that Australian Government authorities are prohibited from taking into account or disclosing any prior convictions without the consent of the individual.

## REEF HQ TURTLE HOSPITAL

The Reef HQ Aquarium Turtle Hospital was officially opened by Australia's Federal Environment Minister Peter Garrett on 24 August 2009.

Since opening, the hospital has provided care for eighteen sick and injured turtles. The hospital's key role is to rehabilitate turtles so they can be released back into the Marine Park.

The Reef HQ Aquarium is seeking public and corporate assistance to maintain the Turtle Hospital through tax deductible donations or sponsor partnerships. Thousands of staff hours are required to provide around-the-clock care and rehabilitation for the turtle patients. Costs also include veterinary procedures and pharmaceuticals.

The corporate benefits associated with sponsoring the turtles include:

- Significant exposure through extensive public relations and media opportunities

- Opportunity to have a turtle named after your company
- Inclusion on our Sponsors Board which is viewed by over 120 000 visitors a year
- Complimentary and/or free Reef HQ Aquarium memberships, entry and venue hire

- Unrestricted turtle viewing
- Good corporate governance

If you are interested in becoming a sponsor or would like further information please contact Christine O'Connor at Reef HQ Aquarium on (07) 4750 0800 or email [christine.oconnor@gbmpa.gov.au](mailto:christine.oconnor@gbmpa.gov.au)



Reef HQ Director Fred Nucifora, Chief Turtle Carer Nick Baker and Hon. Peter Garrett AM, MP Minister for Environment, Heritage and the Arts.

# Going Green

When they decided to go green, Lady Elliot Island Resort management saw big.

Following a comprehensive energy audit of the Eco Resort, management not only implemented energy-saving measures resulting in 24 per cent reduction in energy costs – they also decided to install a hybrid solar power station to replace the three diesel generators powering the resort.

This power station is the largest off-grid power system in Queensland funded under the Australian Government Renewable Remote Power Generation Program.

"The hybrid solar power station consists of 130 square metres of solar panels, battery banks with 48 cells, inverters, and a brand new generator that is a third of the size of our old units" said Peter Gash, Manager Lady Elliott Island Resort.

"It allowed us to reduce our fuel consumption by about 40 per cent –



and as the system is expandable, our long-term goal is to run the resort entirely on solar power and other renewable energies."

Interpretive tours are being conducted to showcase Lady Elliott's commitment to act on climate change, including a tour of the new hybrid solar power station thanks to a new timber viewing walkway.

Are you doing something innovative to make your operation more 'green'? We'd love to hear from you! Email [tourec@gbmpa.gov.au](mailto:tourec@gbmpa.gov.au)



## ENTERPRISE CHARTERS

### Our profiled High Standard Operator

A passion for the Reef, the sustainability of the Marine Park, and a commitment as guardians of the Great Barrier Reef, were the chief motivations for Enterprise Charters to become EcoCertified five years ago, according to Administration and Marketing Manager, Sally Sherlock.

Sally says the process of becoming EcoCertified gave Enterprise Charters a better understanding of their business practices, objectives and future directions.

"All sections of the EcoCertification process were beneficial, and the Interpretative and Customer Services Practices were particularly relevant to our product," said Ms Sherlock.



Becoming EcoCertified has delivered a strong marketing advantage in a more discerning market place demanding eco-friendly experiences and, according to Sally, it has also delivered "the satisfaction that, as reef operators, we have the best practices in place to preserve the Marine Park and its inhabitants".

To find out more about the High Standard Tourism Program, contact us on **(07) 4750 0868**.

Your contributions, ideas and feedback are welcome. Please email the GBRMPA at: [tourec@gbmpa.gov.au](mailto:tourec@gbmpa.gov.au)

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## BULLETIN BOARD

- **Misrepresenting the EMC** is against the Queensland Office of Fair Trading standard rules, and became an offence against the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Regulations in November 2009.
- **Moorings must be maintained** in accordance with their drawings and mooring permit holders can be asked to provide proof of ongoing maintenance at any time to back this up.
- **Throwing sick bags overboard could lead to a \$220 fine.**
- Congratulations to **Passions of Paradise** (Major Tour or Transport and Adventure Tourism) and **Fantasea Adventure Cruising**

(Unique Accommodation) for their success in the 2009 regional tourism awards.

- Congratulations to **Big Cat Green Island Reef Cruises** for winning the 2009 Climate Action Award from Ecotourism Australia.
- Don't forget that from 1 April 2010, the standard **EMC charge is increasing to \$5.50 per passenger per day.**
- Maritime Safety Queensland has developed a guideline to help people in certain marine sectors understand their **marine incident reporting obligations**. View the guideline at [www.msq.qld.gov.au](http://www.msq.qld.gov.au).