

SeaRead

Marine Park news from catchment to coral



Australian Government
Great Barrier Reef
Marine Park Authority

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New staff to listen to Great Barrier Reef Community Issues

As we pass the first anniversary of the rezoning of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park it is appropriate to reflect on the many lessons learnt by the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority about community engagement. Ongoing research suggests that most people think that the efforts we went to, to connect with and listen to people were very good; while some said we could do much better - and we're listening.

We have a new priority: to enhance management decisions, compliance and stewardship through embedding a better culture of effective, best-practice community engagement across the GBRMPA.

As a mark of this commitment, earlier this year the Federal Minister for the Environment and Heritage, Senator Ian Campbell, announced four new regional Queensland offices for the GBRMPA and the appointment of eight staff dedicated to community engagement activities.

The regions being staffed will be identified as Cape York, Far Northern, Northern, Central and Southern, the latter four roughly equating to the old Marine Park planning regions.

"Part of the Government's commitment is to ensure the concerns of regional communities were clearly heard by the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority. This initiative will be an important step in this process," Senator Campbell said.

Three officers will be based in Cairns with one specifically focusing on Cape York issues, while the other two will focus on the Far Northern coastal communities from Cooktown to Mission Beach. One additional officer will be based in Townsville to ensure the needs of the Northern region (Hinchinbrook to the Burdekin) are covered. Two Mackay-based officers will address the Central region needs of the Bowen to St Lawrence area and two officers in Rockhampton will liaise with Southern region communities from Marlborough to Bundaberg.

In Cairns and Mackay the Regional Liaison staff will co-locate with the Day-to-Day Management Unit Compliance staff.

This initiative is being supported through the establishment of a new Community Partnerships Group to better coordinate all of GBRMPA's liaison activities and to improve the degree to which people have a say in management of our Great Barrier Reef Marine Park. Dr Leanne Fernandes was recently appointed to the role of Director of the Community Partnerships Group and Belinda Jago as Senior Project Manager for the Group. Both had extensive experience during the RAP consultations along the Great Barrier Reef coast.

"These permanent positions will build on the good work of the GBRMPA's Local Marine Advisory Committees and will seek to engage coastal communities in further discussion about the stewardship of the Great Barrier Reef for the benefit of those relying on the Marine Park for employment and leisure activities," said Minister Campbell.

"The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park means many different things to various communities in the region and having regional liaison officers strategically positioned along the Reef's 2000 kilometre coastline helps to ensure we understand the needs and wants of these communities," he said.

STOP PRESS

GBRMPA Chairman receives AO

Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority chairman the Honourable Virginia Chadwick was made an Officer in the General Division of the Order of Australia (AO) in the Queen's Birthday 2005 Honours List. Mrs Chadwick received her AO for her service to conservation and the environment through management of the environmental, heritage and economic sustainability of the Great Barrier Reef and to the New South Wales Parliament, particularly in the areas of child welfare and education.

END

Message from the chairman

the Hon Virginia Chadwick



Welcome to the 5th edition of SeaRead. We've been getting a lot of valuable feedback from readers telling us that they are finding the magazine useful and interesting.

By predominantly featuring stories about what others are doing in and for the Marine Park rather than just what GBRMPA is up to, I hope that we are helping to reinforce our view that community and co-operative input is what will really benefit the Marine Park in the long term.

The development of our Community Partnerships continues at a good pace with senior appointments already made (Dr Leanne Fernandes as Director and Belinda Jago as Senior Project Manager) and selections for the Regional Liaison positions likely to be complete by the time of publication. We have already found good office accommodation in each of the regions and are looking forward to opening these new offices and substantially increasing our capacity to connect into local communities.

Other important reef initiatives such as the progression of the Reef Water Quality Protection Plan have also taken place in recent months along with the announcement of the new Reef Guardian Councils initiative to complement our very successful Reef Guardian Schools programme.

Regards

Virginia Chadwick
Chairman, Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority

END

Indigenous visions for Sea Country

Representatives from three Aboriginal groups in Queensland have outlined their vision for shared management of 'sea country' in a new report published by CRC Reef. The report highlights Traditional Owners' extensive knowledge of marine and coastal resource management.

The report compiles case studies from Traditional Owners from Gooreng Gooreng, Giringun Aboriginal Corporation, and Ambilmunga Ngarra Aboriginal Corporation with Balkanu Cape York Development Agency. These studies illustrate the strength of Traditional Owner interest in cooperative management of their sea country.

"Our sea country is a great place, and a lot of people like to visit. We want to make sure that we're working effectively with management agencies to look after our sea country together," said Mr Phillip Rist, CEO of Giringun Aboriginal Corporation.

"The case studies show that there are flexible ways to combine Indigenous rights and responsibilities, with government responsibilities. The report suggests ways in which cooperative management partnerships could develop and will be a starting point for discussions," said Professor Helen Ross, from the University of Queensland whose team compiled the case studies.

James Innes, Manager Social Sciences at the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA), who was also involved in the study, said the Authority was keen to develop partnerships with Traditional Owners.

"We're glad to be part of work like this, and to assist Traditional Owners in developing Traditional Use of Marine Resources Agreements for the sustainable management of their sea country," he said.



Hinchinbrook Channel is part of the Bandjin people's traditional sea country

CRC Reef and the case study authors hope that the studies will be used each in their own right, as starting points for discussion of co-management with GBRMPA; and also as a set, illustrating the nature of Traditional Owner aspirations towards co-management and ways of developing complete or partial co-management regimes.

The report is available at www.reefcrc.org.au/publications/techreport/techrept56.html

Written by Chloe Lucas, CRC Reef

END

GBRMPA receives peak National Award for rezoning



The Federal Minister for Local Government, Roads and Territories, the Hon Jim Lloyd presenting the award to GBRMPA Director of Conservation, Heritage and Indigenous Partnerships Jon Day

The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA) was recently honoured with two major national planning awards relating to the recent rezoning of the Great Barrier Reef.

The comprehensive planning program for the Great Barrier Reef, which culminated last year with the new Zoning Plan, was recognised at the National Awards for Planning Excellence in Melbourne.

The Federal Minister for Local Government, Roads and Territories, the Hon Jim Lloyd presented the GBRMPA with Australia's peak national planning award, **"The Planning Minister's Award"** on behalf of all the Planning Ministers in Australia.

The GBRMPA was also announced as the winner in the **"Community Based Planning Award"** category (awarded for a planning project which demonstrated achievement of community goals).

The Minister for the Environment and Heritage, Hon Ian Campbell congratulated the Authority saying "Winning both the 'Community Based Planning' category and 'The Planning Minister's Award' is a marvellous achievement of which you can be justifiable proud."

"That these two awards are just the latest in an impressive list of awards for the Representative Areas Programme speaks volumes for the dedication and commitment of the Authority's staff," he added.

Member for Herbert, Mr Peter Lindsay said "The Planning Minister's award is a significant national recognition by planning peers, not influences by government, of the tremendous effort that was put into the consultation and planning process of the Representative Areas Programme. The leadership and the staff of GBRMPA are to be congratulated for winning these national awards."

Congratulations also from the Chairman of the Association of Marine Park Tourism Operators, Mr David Hutchen who said "We at AMPTO are proud to have been associated with the GBRMPA in relation to the Representative Areas Program."

END

GBRMPA staff and Reef HQ volunteers get their hands dirty on Hinchinbrook Island

GBRMPA staff and Reef HQ volunteers once again headed up to Hinchinbrook Island recently for the 4th annual beach clean up celebrating Dive into Earth Day.

Millions of people worldwide celebrated the 35th anniversary of Dive into Earth Day with the theme "Protect Our Children and Our Future".

Reef HQ's Manager of Public Programs and Volunteers, Julie Spencer said the idea of the beach clean-up at Hinchinbrook Island is to give something back to the environment and do something active to protect our Reef.

"The staff and volunteers always have a great day and their reward is seeing the difference we make to an environment as unique and diverse as Hinchinbrook Island," said Julie.

The day started with a 6:15 am departure from Townsville, and after a quick stop in Ingham for a McDonalds breakfast, the group were ready to catch the Hinchinbrook Island Ferry by 9am.

It was then time for the big clean up at Ramsay Bay and North Shepperd Beach, with the most common things found being pieces of broken plastic, bottles, styrofoam and the least common a large door!

General Manger of the Hinchinbrook Wilderness Lodge, Chris Knight was more than happy to support the day by providing free ferry transfers to the island. "Hinchinbrook Island is surrounded by diverse marine habitats that provide food and shelter to a variety of animals, including dugongs and turtles," said Mr Knight.

"North Shepperd Beach is well known as an area where flotsam gets washed in from the ocean and it's great to see GBRMPA staff and Reef HQ volunteers helping to remove this rubbish before it is able to re-enter the marine park and cause harm to our marine life," he said.



GBRMPA and Reef HQ volunteers cleanup Hinchinbrook

END

Future Leaders share their ideas on World Oceans Day

Students from schools throughout Townsville and Thuringowa gathered on June 8th to celebrate World Oceans Day at a Future Leaders Congress for 'Sustainable Oceans'.

The Future Leaders Congress has been run by the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA) in collaboration with the Townsville and Thuringowa City Councils for the past four years, celebrating a different theme each year.

This year students from Belgian Gardens State School, Heatley Secondary College, Townsville State High School, Holy Spirit School, Vincent State School, Willows State School and Thuringowa State High School all participated in the congress.

The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority's National Education Programs Manager, Angela Colliver said she was amazed at the ideas the students presented and the care they showed for the Great Barrier Reef and its sustainability.

"Students knowledge and understanding about water quality as an issue and what they can do to improve the quality of water that leaves their school or home gave me enormous hope for the Reef's future," said Angela.

Students gathered at the Townsville City Council Chambers where they were first spoken to by representatives from the GBRMPA, the Townsville City Council Creek-to-Coral programme, the Townsville Port Authority and the Natural Resources and Environment Forum.

The students then educated their peers with their own presentations covering certain key questions, including how declining water quality can affect the Reef and the impact it has on industries that rely on the Reef, what can be done to look after our catchment areas and how their school is helping to improve water quality.

The students then developed their own charter of shared beliefs to address the issue of water quality and look at how they and their peers could take action to improve the problem of declining water quality.

Alexandria Williams of Willows State School was glad to be able to have her say.

"We need to act to improve picking up litter and putting it in the bin, being consistent in our actions, always being aware of our environment and never being afraid of maintaining the Reef Guardian Charter," said Alexandria.



END

Cane growers demonstrate sustainability with improved farm practices

In the face of increased pressure brought about by ongoing dry weather and escalating market demands, Australia's sugar industry has continued to demonstrate its sustainability says farm leader.

CANEGROWERS General Manager, Ian Ballantyne said that it is encouraging to see how much the sugarcane industry has improved its sustainability in recent years and is right behind plans by the industry to continue improving farm management practice.

"Many in the farming community have been at the forefront of calls for improved farm management practices, joining initiatives such as Landcare or enthusiastically embracing new practices such as zero-tillage farming or the trash blanketing alternative to burning cane," said Mr Ballantyne.

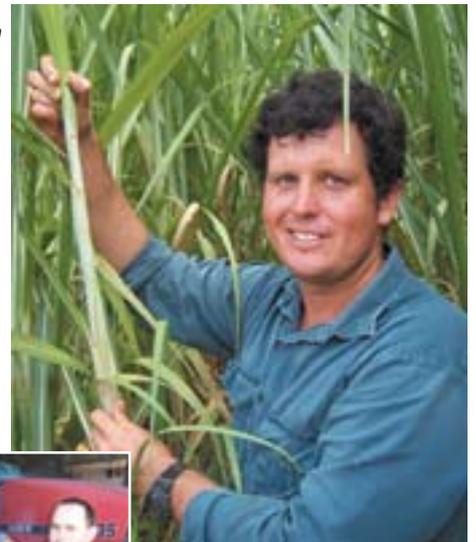
"The industry is pulling together a system known as SUGARCANE FMS to help growers build on the programmes and initiatives they have already been a part of, and put in place a customised documented system to track their farm's individual profitability and progress."

Mr Ballantyne's comments reinforce the findings of an independent environmental audit last year, which revealed that sugarcane growers have taken a lead in adopting sustainable farming practices.

The audit, conducted by C4ES Pty Ltd for the Federal Government, found that many cane growers had voluntarily introduced initiatives which have reduced impact on waterways, the Great Barrier Reef, coastal ecosystems and biodiversity.

The audit found that cane growers not only showed strong commitment to responsible natural resource management, but were already well on the road to progress, with representative body CANEGROWERS leading the charge towards industry-wide adoption of sustainable farming practices.

Chris Hesp is participating in the FMS pilot programme in the Burdekin.



Canegrowers Proserpine Manager, Geoff Bolster talks with local grower Tony Jepperson about the importance of bringing existing programmes together under the FMS programme.

Mr Ballantyne said government bodies and industry are recognising cane's capacity to achieve long-term sustainability and stresses that it was now critically important for the industry to show how it plans to continue its recent achievements.

The tools for SUGARCANE FMS are currently being developed as a result of funding from the Natural Heritage Trust's Environmental Rescue package. More information on the industry's progress may be viewed by downloading the C4ES audit at www.canegrowers.com.au

Contributed by Suzanne Moore, Environmental Communications Project Officer, CANEGROWERS

END

Showcasing high standards in marine tourism



The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority in collaboration with Ecotourism Australia recently attended the Australian Tourism Exchange in Perth to showcase the recognised high standard marine tourism operations of the Great Barrier Reef.

The Australian Tourism Exchange was held in Perth from 18 to 24 June. It is Australia's premier tourism trade event and the largest international travel trade show in the southern hemisphere.

The event is organised by Tourism Australia and provided the GBRMPA the opportunity to showcase to the international tourism trade the high standard Marine Park operators who are certified by Ecotourism Australia through the ECO Certification Programme.

Ecotourism Australia and the GBRMPA announced in August 2004 a new partnership agreement to recognise the ECO Certification Programme (at the Ecotourism and Advanced Ecotourism levels) as a certification scheme for marine tourism operations in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park.

There are now 22 eco-certified tourism operations offering about 40 certified tourism opportunities in the Marine Park, ranging from reef day trips and pontoon operations to island kayak expeditions.

Andrew Skeat, Executive Director at the GBRMPA said that the GBRMPA values the contributions that tourism operators make to the Marine Park. He is hoping that, by showcasing the certified operators, we will be encouraging other operators in the Marine Park to formally benchmark their high standards and become certified, resulting in benefits to both the operators and the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park environment.

"The GBRMPA is developing a range of benefits for certified high standard operations. As well as showcasing these operations, they also have access to 15 year operating permits," he said.

A complete list of eco-certified operators is available on the GBRMPA website at www.gbrmpa.gov.au.

Go to www.ecotourism.org.au for more information about the ECO Certification Programme.

END

NEWRY ISLAND READY FOR CAMPING

As a result of further works on Newry Island, including works by volunteers, Newry Island is now available both for day use and overnight camping.

Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS) have been engaged in a rehabilitation process on the island for several years and with the installation of infrastructure such as barbeque tables and toilets and the designation of campsites, this beautiful spot close to the coast is once again available for public use.

Anybody wishing to camp at Newry Island needs to adopt the usual practice of booking the site through QPWS Mackay office or online at www.qld.gov.au.

An active group of volunteers have been assisting QPWS staff over the last year to help speed up the rehabilitation and once completed, the facilities on the island will allow for camping, day use and the use by school groups and other groups.

The Mackay Local Marine Advisory Committee (LMAC) Chairman John Formosa has helped coordinate a team of enthusiastic volunteers who have assisted in ensuring the rehabilitation of Newry Island.

These volunteers held their forth working bee on the island on Saturday, 20 March 2005 where over twenty volunteers attended and various works were carried out including the erection of barbeque tables, general tidying up, removal of weeds, mowing and other general works.

Another working bee is planned for Saturday, 23 July 2005 to assist the officers of QPWS to complete their works on the island.

Members of the public who wish to volunteer their services for this day should register their interest by contacting:

Ross Courtenay – Senior Ranger QPWS (Mackay)

4944 7808

John Formosa – Mackay LMAC Chairman

4944 0333

Newry Island is easily reached from Victor Creek boat ramp at Seaforth and is easily accessible by small boats in all weather conditions.

It is expected that the island will be a very popular destination for weekends and longer periods, so the QPWS encourage people wanting to camp at the island to book well in advance. Campsites are also located on Outer Newry and neighbouring Rabbit Island.

Creek and offshore fishing, plus crabbing and prawning, are popular activities whilst visiting the Newry Island Group.

The anchorage between Newry and Outer Newry, which is officially known as "Port Newry" is a popular and safe anchorage for using facilities on the islands. In the winter months especially, this anchorage is used as a stopover by many yachts.

END



Willows State School celebrated World Environment Day with a 'Sea of Green'

Students at Willows State School created a 'sea of green' on Friday 3 June when they dressed in their best green clothes to celebrate the World Environment Day theme 'Green Cities – Plan for the Planet!'

Funds raised from the free dress day went towards the 'Indo-Pacific Sea Turtle Conservation Group' who will continue to research the effect human impact has had on the survival of all seven species of sea turtle in the world.

World Environment Day is celebrated each year on the 5th of June to create awareness and understanding on environmental issues and encourage communities to get involved in living sustainably.

Grade three teacher at Willows State School and organiser of the day, Jodie Millard believes promoting an understanding of living sustainably will benefit today's children, as they will be tomorrow's leaders.

"Willows State School is proudly involved in the Reef Guardians Schools programme initiated by the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority that encourages students and teachers to make a difference to help keep both the Great Barrier Reef and the environment great for the future," said Jodie.

"We hope the students will not only have a fun day but learn to appreciate the environment and think about what it means to them and why we want to protect it."

The students were treated with a special visit from 'Lucky T' turtle on the day who performed an educational show for the students.

A special 'World Environment Educational Expo' was set-up featuring informative stalls by various local conservation groups and government agencies, including the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority and each class was presented with a tree donated by the Thuringowa City Council.



Students from Willows State School with Lucky T turtle

END

Plastic Free Tuckshops Receive Stamp of Approval

Reef Guardian schools are helping to minimise plastics by becoming 'plastic free' in their tuckshops in an effort to protect the Great Barrier Reef.

Eleven schools have taken up the challenge and received a stamp that says "We're proud to be a Reef Guardian School. Keep our sea plastic free".

GBRMPA National Education Manager, Angela Colliver said the parents in the tuckshops stamp the students paper lunch bags to remind them that by reducing plastic packaging they are helping to protect the Reef.

"As part of the Reef Guardian programme students learn about some of the dangers plastics pose to marine life," she said.

"Marine animals and seabirds can mistakenly ingest or become entangled by discarded plastic litter so it is important we all try to minimise the use of plastics."

It is estimated that some 1 million seabirds and 100,000 other marine animals including turtles, whales and dugong and countless fish are killed as a result of plastic litter every year.

"This is the second Reef Guardian initiative aimed at minimising plastics. The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority through a Natural Heritage Trust Grant has supplied over 80 schools with calico bags to assist them in becoming plastic bag free."

Congratulations to the following schools who have plastic free tuckshops

- Pialba State School
- McDonnell Creek State School
- St Mary's College (Maryborough)
- Alooomba State School
- Toowong College
- Redlynch State School
- Machans Beach State School
- Central State School
- Wartburg State School
- Bargara State School
- Hervey Bay State School



END

reef guardian News In Brief

Schools are becoming Reef Guardians almost daily. Check out your region to see how many schools came on board in May.

- CAIRNS 3 new schools
- MISSION BEACH 3 new schools
- HINCHINBROOK 2 new schools
- TOWNSVILLE 5 new schools
- MACKAY 2 new schools
- CAPRICORN COAST 1 new school
- GLADSTONE 6 new schools
- BUNDABERG 6 new schools
- SOUTH EAST QUEENSLAND 3 new schools

Is your school a Reef Guardian? To become involved call the GBRMPA on 07 4750 0792.

END

Reef Guardians doing their bit to restore our **Wetlands**

Schools involved in the Reef Guardian Schools programme have been achieving amazing results in conserving their local wetlands and helping restore them to their original state.

As part of the programme, schools are encouraged to rehabilitate degraded areas within their school and community and address outputs that may affect the Reef.

Wonga Beach State School was recently awarded the Education Award and placed second overall in the Douglas Shire's Sustainability Awards for their wetlands revegetation project.

Rick Weimar from Wonga Beach State School in Far North Queensland said it was important for students to understand the valuable role that wetlands play in absorbing pollutants and providing habitat for animals and plants.

"This year the students have been involved in rehabilitating a local wetland area adjacent to the school grounds. By doing this we hope to trap nutrients and sediment which would otherwise flow into the Reef lagoon," Mr Weimar said.

"When we first noticed the wetland it was overgrown with hymenachne, a weed of significant concern, since then the students have been involved in clearing the weeds from the area, which saw the local council getting involved, and working together with the community volunteer group in planting over 1000 trees in the area. This is part of the water quality activities in the programme to increase the biodiversity of the school and its surrounds. We eventually hope to have a vegetation corridor linking our wetlands, grassland area and rainforest plot," Mr Weimar said.

Students from Mossman State School in Far North Queensland have been working with the local council in restoring their local wetland at Parkers Creek. When the students first arrived at the wetland area they looked at the plants and animals native to the area and conducted water quality monitoring and a general clean up of waste.

This year the students will build on the knowledge they have gained and work towards clearing out the weeds and vines in the area that should not be there and work with the council to plant native trees in order to restore the area to its original state.

Students at Mount Larcom State School in Central Queensland are focussing on sharing their knowledge and educating the community on how everyone can protect and lend a hand to improve the health of their local wetlands. The students explored a variety of wetland areas such as mudflats, mangroves and lagoons and looked at how introduced species were affecting the area. They also looked at how human impact was having a negative affect, i.e. waste, and how the students could improve the situation.

The students then held a "Reef Fest Night" where members of the community attended and the students made presentations through speeches and plays to educate the public on why and how they can protect their local wetlands. The students will continue their work this year.

Overall, thousands of students involved in the Reef Guardian Schools programme around Australia are rehabilitating and improving their local wetlands and are encouraging others in the community to think about how they can contribute to a more healthy and sustainable environment for the future!



Wonga Beach State School students, Daniel Fry and Sam Halstead explore their local wetlands



Wonga Beach State School students participate in water quality monitoring

END

Reef Guardians spread their **water wise** messages through TV ad



WIN Television filming students showing people they should wash their car on the lawn.

Students from Belgian Gardens State School in Townsville have shared their water-smart messages with thousands of community members through the release of their very own television advertisement.

The school won a \$725 grant from the Department of Natural Resources and Mines to create an educational 'infomercial' highlighting the importance of water conservation in the Townsville catchment area. The ads ran throughout Queensland Resources Week from May 22 to 29.

Reef Guardian co-ordinating teacher at Belgian Gardens State School, Gayle Joyce was amazed at how many community members the students were able to reach through the airing of their ad.

"The ad was shown each day that week during Mornings with Kerri-Anne and also during Australia's Funniest Home Videos as well as other time slots," Gayle said.

"As part of the Reef Guardian School programme students take part in an education programme called Rowes Bay Junior Rangers. Part of their project includes making tools to pick up rubbish at Rowes Bay, reporting the amount of rubbish they collect and offering suggestions to the Townsville City Council about ways to reduce litter.

"Students filmed the advertisement at the Rowes Bay beachfront, as well as a local drain, a home garden and at the school."

The theme of the ad supports the theme of this year's Queensland Resources Week - 'Bridging our communities, water for life'.

The ad included a range of water-smart messages such as the need to mulch gardens, wash cars on the grass and keep gutters free of litter and garden waste.

"We feel it is important that we as teachers, give the students in our care "real-life" opportunities to reinforce learning that takes place in the classrooms," Gayle said.

END

Hands on reef education experiences at Reef HQ

Many of Reef HQ's reef education programmes have recently been enhanced by new interactive activities including the "Reef Rangers" education programme.

During this programme, students take on the role of "Reef Rangers". They investigate a range of the human impacts that affect marine ecosystems and in particular the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park. During their Reef HQ experience, students are encouraged to pursue investigations about the ways we all can try to minimise human impacts on the Great Barrier Reef.

Reef HQ Education Manager, Fred Nucifora said the education team has recently designed a new 'Zoning and Sustainable Fishing' activity that has become part of the "Reef Rangers" programme.

"This activity highlights the need for sustainable use of marine resources, introducing the concepts of size and possession limitations and clearly explaining the types and purposes of Marine Park zones," Fred said.

"During this activity, students take a simulated trip around the Marine Park and are empowered to read the zoning Activities Guide as they approach or enter into the different Marine Park zones.

"Students discuss what activities are allowed within the zones and any specific regulations that they must be aware of within the zones."

The Reef Rangers programme includes a full tour of Reef HQ aquarium that allows students to gain an appreciation of the beauty and fragility of the Great Barrier Reef ecosystem.

Other interactive activities include using soft toy puppets to demonstrate the concept of marine food chains and biological magnification. Students can also actively investigate what makes them different to fish by dressing up in a fish costume that highlights several of the features a fish needs to survive in the ocean.

To find out more about the Reef Education programmes offered at Reef HQ aquarium.

Please contact the Reef HQ Education Team.

Phone: (07) 4750 0800

Fax: (07) 4772 6093

email: education@reefHQ.com.au

Check out the website <http://www.reefed.edu.au/reefhq/index.html>



reefHQ
AQUARIUM



Students studying the Activities Guide



Students participating in the 'Reef Rangers' programme

END

Marine Advisory Committee takes hands on approach



Townsville LMAC members learning first hand about Seagrass Watch

The Townsville Local Marine Advisory Committee recently visited Magnetic Island to learn first hand about some of the Marine Park related issues facing the island, its residents and visitors.

Chairman of the Townsville Local Marine Advisory Committee, Steve McGuire, said the Committee was keen to take a hands-on approach to local Marine Park related issues.

"While on Magnetic Island we discussed the proposed sea plane operation for the Island, the new sewerage site at Horseshoe Bay, the Magnetic Island World Heritage Values Report and the proposed snorkel trail for Picnic Bay," Steve said.

As part of the day the Committee took part in the first public introduction to monitoring seagrass as part of the new Seagrass Watch for Magnetic Island.

"Seagrass Watch is an incredibly important volunteer monitoring program which helps assess the health of the coastal ecosystem," he said.

"The health of Cleveland Bay's seagrass communities is especially important in that they support a resident dugong population."

Townsville Seagrass Watch recently received funding from an Envirofund grant for the establishment of a Magnetic Island Seagrass Watch programme.

"Seagrass Watch is a fantastic opportunity for the community, including the local school, to become involved in actively protecting their local marine environment."

END

Regional Body Benefits from **January Floods** in the Burdekin



Flooding in the Burdekin early this year provided the Burdekin Dry Tropics Board with a greater understanding of the sources of sediment and how they move through the extensive Burdekin catchment.

Plans to conduct water sampling in the Burdekin were made between several agencies including Australian Centre for Tropical Freshwater Research, CSIRO and Department of Natural Resources & Mines (NR&M) and the sampling teams involved state, university and community members across a network of water collection sites.

The two main road bridges on the Burdekin River, Macrossan and Home Hill, were targeted as key collection sites.

On Saturday, 22 January the rains finally fell and Community Water Quality Monitoring Coordinator for the Burdekin Dry Tropics Board, David Reid, was able to collect samples in the rapidly rising Burdekin River at Macrossan bridge near Charters Towers.

At 2:00am (the peak time of the flood) David was fortuitous in his sampling of water at Macrossan Bridge as the bridge flooded, roads were cut and travelers were left stranded on either side of the crossing.

According to David, his experience was well worthwhile as a good water sample for sediments requires water to be collected several times as a stream rises, peaks and falls.

"The ACTFR's network of graziers was also able to collect samples over several days as their waterways started to rise, whilst NR&M collected samples over several weeks at Home Hill."

"The results of this combined effort are still being analysed and it is expected that the data collected will add significantly to the refining of computer sediment modeling with initial results suggesting close correlation between the model and expected movement of sediments in the Burdekin catchment."

"What is clear is that those on the land who were able to access the flood water from the start made a significant contribution of samples towards the development of an improved model," he said.

Contributed by David Reid, Community Water Quality Monitoring Coordinator – Burdekin Region

END

IMPAC1

The organising committee for the First International Marine Protected Areas Congress (IMPAC1) is finalising the draft congress programme that is scheduled to be announced in early June. As reported in Issue 4 of SeaRead, IMPAC1 will be held 23-28 October 2005 in Geelong, and is expected to attract delegates from around the world. The GBRMPA is co-hosting the congress, along with the World Commission on Protected Areas and Parks Victoria.

235 abstracts (out of the 620 initially submitted) were requested to prepare expanded versions, and it is anticipated that around 160 of these will be invited to present papers in the final congress programme. 'Earlybird' registration for the Congress is open until 10 July. For more information visit the IMPAC1 website at <http://www.impaccongress.org>.

END

New webpage helps understanding of **RAP**

Given the high level of interest in the rezoning of the Great Barrier Reef from marine park area planners and managers around the world (especially in the lessons learnt by the GBRMPA), a new webpage with various hotlinks has been developed and placed on the GBRMPA website.

Visit www.gbrmpa.gov.au/corp_site/management/zoning/planners_info.html

This webpage will be updated as additional information is prepared and further papers are written. Any comments or suggestions to improve this information are welcome. Contact Jon Day by email at j.day@gbrmpa.gov.au

END

New web brochure on Fisheries

CRC Reef has launched a new 'web brochure' about the Fisheries of the east coast of Queensland at http://www.reef.crc.org.au/research/fishing_fisheries/statusfisheries/index.htm

With almost 30 pages of information about the reef line, trawl, inshore, crab and harvest fisheries along Queensland's east coast, the web brochure is jam-packed with information about target species, how much is caught, management, critical issues and lots more. Maps from the Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries show where most of the fishing takes place, and each target species is illustrated by Roger Swainston.

We thank the Department of Primary Industries & Fisheries, CRC Reef's Fishing and Fisheries team based at James Cook University, Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority and the Australian Government Department of the Environment and Heritage for their support in compiling this information and reviewing the contents.

For more information please contact Louise Goggin at CRC Reef on 07 4729 8404 or email louise.goggin@crcreef.com.

END

Kids learn about Landcare and then tell the World

More than 350 students and teachers from around Australia and the world will be inspired by what they hear and learn when the inaugural Discovering Landcare Conference kicks off later this year.

The Landcare Discovery Centre (LDC) will host the event in early October 2005 as part of the culminating celebrations for students involved in the *Learning Through Landcare* programme. Totally Wild will be there to film activities and to interview students about the great work that they have done learning about the environment.

Other highlights of the **Discovering Landcare** Conference will include two action-packed days of student led presentations, environmental tours, a Reduce, Reuse and Recycle Forum and a Sustainable Living Trade Show.

The **Discovering Landcare** Conference will be the culminating celebration for students involved in the *Learning Through Landcare* programme. This programme offers teachers support and assistance to develop and implement environmental research or monitoring projects with their students. Teachers are linked up with a scientific or technical mentor, receive free professional development related to natural resource management, and students receive free registration to attend and present their findings at the **Discovering Landcare** Conference. Some of the great projects this year include development of a management plan for Lippia, and habitat creation within a school ground for birds and reptiles.



Over the last three years, the LDC has developed and implemented the *Science Through Landcare* programme with both State and independent schools. In 2005 (the first year of the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainability), the LDC is expanding its *Science Through Landcare* programme to encompass cross-curriculum applications and take it to the next level of excellence with the *Learning Through Landcare* programme and the **Discovering Landcare** Conference. This programme is supported by Education Queensland's Spotlight on Science initiative.

The Landcare Discovery Centre is the environmental educational service provided by the Queensland Murray Darling Committee, Inc.

If you know of any great projects that schools are involved in or would like further information please call the Landcare Discovery Centre on **(07) 4637 6201** for an information pack, but be quick as there are limited places available!

Contributed by Cassandra Grunberger, Landcare Education Officer

END

Environmental Impact Management Update

- **Available now** on the GBRMPA web is the process for public consultation and how you can make a submission in relation to a proposal for a development in the Marine Park that you have an interest in. Visit www.gbrmpa.gov.au/corp_site/management/ and click on the environmental impact assessment link.
- Did you know the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority assesses some 700-permit applications each year including up to 30 major projects.
- An application to install and operate eight moorings in waters adjacent to the Underwater Observatory and the Wilderness Resort at Hook Island (Whitsunday Islands) is currently open for public consultation and will close on 3 July 2005. An information package including further details of the proposal are available from the GBRMPA website at www.gbrmpa.gov.au.
- The GBRMPA ensures the community is consulted where the grant of a permit may impact upon the public's reasonable use of the Marine Park.



Hook Island

END

Creature Feature Coral Reef Pygmy Goby – Family Gobiidae



Photo: JE Randall

- Scientists from James Cook University have recently discovered that the coral reef pygmy goby is the shortest-living vertebrate on the planet, living a maximum of just 59 days.
- They are quite a successful species despite this extremely short life span and are found in high numbers on the Great Barrier Reef.
- Following hatching on the reef where the father guards the eggs, they travel the ocean for 24 days as larvae, find and settle on a coral reef to develop in 10-12 days before spending just 3 weeks frantically reproducing the next generation.
- The coral reef pygmy goby redefines the definition of 'live fast and die young!'

Thanks to Martial Depczynski

END

MARINE PARK PARTNERSHIPS



Profile of Ranger
Heron Island, QPWS
Alan Hollis

Alan is the Ranger and Shipmaster at Heron Island and has worked for the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS) since January 1996. He lives at Heron Island and his main duties involve looking after park infrastructure on the Capricornia Cays National Park, patrolling the Capricorn Bunker waters of the Great Barrier Reef and communicating with Park user groups such as research groups, campers, tourists and fishermen.

Alan regularly patrols the protected waters of the Capricorn Bunker Group of islands and reefs on the patrol vessel, Ranella.

Alan moved to the Gladstone region in 1969 from NSW and he has spent most of his working career between Gladstone and the Whitsundays working in the tourism industry. He first began work at Heron Island in 1972, where he was employed in the boating and diving industry. He then spent most of the 70s working on Heron and Brampton Islands.

Alan also spent two years in the Far Northern and Torres Strait region surveying the reefs between Cooktown and Cape York for a bathymetric survey for National Mapping. He also spent time on patrol charters with Queensland Boating and Fisheries Patrol in the Torres Strait area.

Alan sees himself as a long-term QPWS employee and plans to spend the next nine years working and living on Heron Island to see the projects he is currently working on through to completion.

Alan's main projects as the Ranger on Heron Island include the feral animal eradication programme, the weed management programme and restoring Tryon Island. He also spends a lot of time educating users of the Park to ensure they do their bit to look after this precious island and reef area.

Alan loves living on Heron Island and meeting Park users and campers. Alan has two children who are both home schooled on the Island.

In 1977, Alan met his wife while they were both working at the resort on Heron Island. During his full life, Alan has also travelled through Europe and the Mediterranean, but has always returned to the district he calls home.

END

All Aboard For Interactive Island

Visitors to Reef HQ who enjoy more than just observing the antics of Reef creatures and predators can take a trip up the stairs to the new "Interactive Island".

Interactive Island takes visitors from a fish-eye-view in the aquarium to above the water line. The upstairs area has undergone major works to bring to life a tropical island experience full of hands-on exhibits designed to stimulate and excite visitors to Reef HQ.

Visitor Services Manager, Mark Jones said the refurbished interactive zone is significantly different to what it has been in recent times and is confident Townsville visitors will be impressed with the bright and colourful area.

"We have aimed to make upstairs a really fresh and fun place. Our exhibits are designed to deliver enhanced understanding of the Great Barrier Reef and the creatures that live in it," Mark said.



END

Doing your bit to look after it!

Releasing fish to survive

Here are the best practices for handling and releasing fish. Following these practices when fishing will help to ensure the survival of the fish after it is released.

- ▶ Have your equipment close at hand so that you can return the fish to the water as quickly as possible.
- ▶ Do not place a fish on a hot, dry surface for hook removal; use a wet towel on which to rest the fish and use wet hands when handling it.
- ▶ Direct sunlight can damage fish eyes so ensure that eyes are shaded during time out of the water.
- ▶ Fully support the body of the fish at all times to avoid damage to internal organs, which may result from the fish being held upright by the jaw. The best method is to place a hand under the stomach while still in the water and take the weight off the hook. Very large fish should not be removed from the water.
- ▶ Fish should be released by carefully placing them head first back into the water. Some fish may need to be swum around to promote water flow over the gills to ensure revival. Do not just throw fish overboard.



For more information visit the release fish website www.info-fish.net/releasefish.

END

Community Links



A profile of **John Formosa** Chairman Mackay LMAC

John Formosa is the Chairman of the Mackay Local Marine Advisory Committee (LMAC) and he has held this position since October 2002. As a member of the Mackay LMAC, John feels he represents the interests of all users of the Marine Park but is particularly interested in recreational boating and fishing. As a professional, John also has an interest in representing Marine Park tourist operators - particularly his clients who operate their businesses out of the Whitsundays.

John is a lawyer and the partner of a moderate size Mackay legal firm. He has been working at this firm since 1979 and he studied his law degree by correspondence whilst completing his Articles with the firm.

John is married and has five children. Luckily, they all enjoy spending time on the water, though John says they do not all possess the fanatical interest in fishing that he and his eldest son share.

John says he hopes that in ten years time the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park will be more enjoyable for all users and he believes this can be achieved if the work of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority is supported by the LMAC and the community at large.

John says when he first joined the LMAC in 1999, he was uncertain of what its role was. However, it was not long before he saw the benefits of the LMAC through the consultation phases of the Representative Areas Programme. John says he believes the Marine Park Authority will rely more and more on LMACs to provide input from the public and more importantly a point of view outside the Authority.

As Chair of the LMAC, John says he would like to increase the active membership of the LMAC and get representation of the various uses of the Marine Park including Indigenous uses and commercial fishing. He encourages interested parties to join the LMAC, as the greater the interest represented by each LMAC, the greater the input the LMAC can give to the Authority.

John would like to see the Mackay LMAC become more involved in the Reef Guardians programme and local issues and community projects. One of the projects they are presently involved in is the Queensland National Parks and Wildlife Services Visitor Management Strategy for the Mackay/Whitsunday area.

One of John's greatest achievements as Chairman of the LMAC is his involvement with the Newry Island Advisory Committee, which overlooked the development of a plan of management for Newry Island.

"I thoroughly enjoy interacting with both the members of the LMAC and staff from the Marine Park Authority who are always readily contactable and who are genuinely interested in hearing the perspective of LMAC members and the community," John said.

END

Calendar of events

13 July 2005

Mission Beach LMAC meeting

3 August 2005

Whitsunday LMAC meeting

10 August 2005

Cairns LMAC meeting

16 August 2005

Port Douglas and
Hinčinbrook LMAC meeting

23 August 2005

Mackay LMAC meeting

24 August 2005

Gladstone LMAC meeting

25 August 2005

Capricorn Coast LMAC meeting

29 August 2005

Keep Australia Beautiful Week

September 2005

Biodiversity Month

GBRMPA contacts

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If you do not wish to receive this newsletter in the future or if you would like to receive this newsletter via email instead of as a hard copy, please email searead@gbrmpa.gov.au or phone the GBRMPA on 4750 0807.



Australian Government
Great Barrier Reef
Marine Park Authority



our great barrier reef
let's keep it great



Natural
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