

SeaRead

Marine Park news from catchment to coral



Australian Government
Great Barrier Reef
Marine Park Authority



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GBRMPA celebrates 30-year milestone

The management efforts of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority as the custodians of the Reef over the past 30 years have been recognised in a special ceremony hosted by the Australian Minister for Environment and Heritage, Senator Ian Campbell.

Speaking at the GBRMPA's 30th anniversary celebrations in Townsville, Senator Campbell said the Reef was heralded as one of the healthiest reef systems in the world today.

"This achievement can be attributed to the foresight of the Australian Government and innovative management efforts of the GBRMPA over the past three decades," Senator Campbell said.

Senator Campbell said the most historic benchmark was the Marine Park Authority's Representative Areas Programme, which was introduced last year as part of the Park's zoning plan after extensive consultations with the tourism and fishing industries, the State Government and the local community.

"The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park is now hailed as the best protected reef system in the world with more than 33 per cent of the Park highly protected," he said.

The GBRMPA was established in 1975 as the management agency responsible for the care and protection of the Marine Park. It was formed when the *Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Act 1975* came into operation, which made provision for "the establishment, control, care and development of a marine park", and the creation of the Authority.

Senator Campbell has also recently announced the terms of reference for the review of the *Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Act 1975*, stating that the review is part of the Australian Government's election commitment to improve the performance of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority, its office holders and its accountability frameworks.

"This Act needs to be modernised to ensure it complements and works in harmony with the Australian Government's primary legislation for environmental regulation, the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*.

"We need to ensure this world-leading Authority can guarantee the protection of the Marine Park's biodiversity and conservation values, as well as maintain sustainable fisheries and sustainable tourism industries."

"The Australian Government will work closely with the State Government and will be consulting with key stakeholders in the coming months."

Senator Campbell said the Authority will continue to be the primary source of advice on the conservation and management of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park and will maintain its presence in Townsville and in other coastal centres.

"It has an impressive track record and all Australians can be proud of its achievements for the protection of the Reef over the last 30 years. This review will focus on ensuring the Authority's governance arrangements not only meet modern best practice, but also define world's best practice."



Acting Chairman of GBRMPA John Tanzer & Hon Senator Ian Campbell cut the cake in celebration of the 30 year milestone.

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Message from the chairman

the Hon Virginia Chadwick

Welcome to the sixth edition of SeaRead. As highlighted on the front page we recently celebrated 30 years of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Act with a special ceremony attended by over 200 guests including the Minister for the Environment and Heritage, Senator Ian Campbell. It was a wonderful opportunity for staff and guests to talk with the Minister about the efforts over the last 30 years to ensure the Reef's protection into the future.

The celebration also saw the Minister present long-serving Authority staff with commemoration certificates. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the following staff for their personal commitment and hard work over many years.

Sandra Anderson (24 years), Martin Robinson (23 years), John Baldwin (22 years), Peter McGinnity (22 years), Mary Berkelmans (21 years), John Barrett (20 years), Peter Cronin (17 years), Cathy McKeller (17 years), Anna Harrebomee (16 years), Barney Bebendorf (15 years), Rosemary Burdeu (15 years), Suzie Davies (15 years), Lyn Hastings (15 years), and Michelle Pearson (15 years).

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Senator Campbell said the review would not be revisiting the outcomes of the rezoning of the Marine Park.

The review will be chaired by the Secretary of the Department of the Environment and Heritage, David Borthwick, assisted by Barbara Belcher, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet and Jonathan Hutson, Department of Finance and Administration.

The panel will travel to major coastal centres along the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park and stakeholders will be invited to meet with the panel to present their views.

Public submissions are invited with a closing date of **30 September 2005**.

The Terms of Reference for the review and information on the public submission process are available at www.deh.gov.au/coasts/mpa/gbrmpa



L-R: Mr John Tanzer, Acting Chairman GBRMPA, The Hon Senator Ian Campbell, Minister for the Environment and Heritage, The Hon Senator Robert Hill, Minister for Defence (Minister for the Environment and Heritage 1996-2001), The Hon Dr David Kemp (Minister for the Environment and Heritage 2001-2004), Mr Peter Lindsay, Member for Herbert

Congratulations also to Reef HQ volunteers Tom Walter, Shirley Richards, Maggie Eichenbrenner and Jennifer Brazier who were also presented with certificates having served at the Aquarium since its opening in 1987.

Regards

Virginia Chadwick
Chairman, Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority

END



Staff members who have served 15 years or more at the Authority with the Hon Senator Ian Campbell



Guests help to celebrate 30 years of managing the Marine Park

END

New Tyto Wetlands to benefit the Reef

The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority and the Hinchinbrook Marine Advisory Committee has congratulated the Hinchinbrook Shire Council, 'North Queensland birdman' John Young and community volunteers on the new-look Tyto Wetlands near Ingham, which provides a beautiful area for people to visit and enjoy as well as benefits to the environment and the Great Barrier Reef.

Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority Director, David Wachenfeld, said the rehabilitation of coastal and inland wetland areas helped to protect the Great Barrier Reef from declining water quality.

"Wetland areas like the Tyto Wetlands help to filter out sediments and nutrients before they reach the Reef's waters and they provide habitats and breeding areas for many marine species, some of which are extremely important to the biodiversity of the Great Barrier Reef," David said.

Hinchinbrook Shire Council Mayor, Cr Pino Giandomenico said the Tyto Wetlands, located off Cooper Street near Ingham, was an overgrown swamp area when the Hinchinbrook Shire Council along with bird expert John Young began rehabilitating the area.

"After receiving funding through the Australian Government's Natural Heritage Trust funds, the Council decided to make this area into a pristine, natural waterway that both visitors to the region and residents could enjoy," Cr Giandomenico said.

"John Young came on board to help us create a bird haven and the Tyto Wetlands, named after a rare species of Owl, is now one of the north's most magnificent birdwatching areas and home to 184 species of birds."

The Hinchinbrook Shire Council will continue to maintain the Tyto Wetlands and will undertake further enhancement projects to create walking tracks and bridges.

After several months of planning and many hours spent knee deep in water, the Council along with the Rotary Club of Ingham and more than 100 North Queensland residents officially opened the Tyto Wetlands on Sunday, 10 July.



John Young enjoys the scenery of the Tyto Wetlands



Community members experience the serenity of the new Tyto Wetlands

END

GBRMPA staff celebrate 1 year of Zoning

GBRMPA staff celebrated the one-year anniversary of the zoning plan on Friday July 1 with Chair of the GBRMPA, Virginia Chadwick, joining with the staff to celebrate the one-year milestone.



Leanne cuts the cake as Virginia looks on



A cake complete with a zoning map to celebrate one year of zoning

END

Regulation amendments help clarify fishing activities

After further consultation with users of the Marine Park, some minor amendments to the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Regulations 1983 came into effect on 12 July 2005.

The amendments to the Regulations have helped to clarify the definition of fishing activities including limited collecting, trolling and the taking of protected species, as well as the definition of a "ganged hook set", however they do not affect the boundaries of any zones within the Marine Park.

A "ganged hook set" is now defined in the Regulations as being one hook when the ganged hook set consists of no more than 6 hooks, each of which is in contact (by the point of 1 hook being threaded through the eye of another, or joined by a swivel or wire) with at least 1 of the other hooks in the set, used to attached 1 piece of bait intended to catch only 1 fish.

In other words, up to 6 hooks can be linked with either swivels or wire to make a ganged hook set and the purpose of using the ganged hook set must be to catch only one fish at any one time with one piece of bait.

Due to confusion regarding drift fishing versus trolling, the meaning of "under way" used in the Zoning Plan has been clarified. Trolling has been clarified in the Regulations as meaning a vessel under way, propelled through the water in a forward direction (whether by engine, sail or human power) and is **not adrift**.

Fishermen trailing baited lines and hooks (including lures) behind a vessel that is drifting in windy conditions does not mean they are "trolling".

The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Regulations 1983 can be found at www.gbrmpa.gov.au or for further information contact the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority on 4750 0700.

END

eCOMPASS points sugar in new direction

Australian sugarcane growers will soon be able to see how they compare with the best growers around without having to leave their farm.

Computer technology will enable them to rate their farm's performance against established standards using a new program on the internet after the launch of eCOMPASS scheduled for September this year.

Ian Ballantyne, General Manager of sugarcane grower representative body, CANEGROWERS, says that the September launch of the on-line eCOMPASS program is another sign of the significant reform taking place right across the Australian sugarcane industry.

"By helping growers identify farm practices which may need improving, eCOMPASS helps growers plan and take practical steps to make their farm a more profitable business," says Mr Ballantyne.

"The voluntary self-assessment program encourages growers to look at cost-effective ways they can improve profitability by adopting industry best practice, and the spin-off effect of helping minimise off-site environmental impacts in the process."

The eCOMPASS system provides a series of assessments for each major area of growing sugarcane, such as cultivation, irrigation, soil health and integrated pest management. Based on the original paper-based workbook, it allows growers to assess how close their operation is to achieving best management practice.

Stringent security measures have been built into the system to ensure that all data entered into the computer remains the private property of the grower. This means that external parties cannot access or collect grower information.

Now sugarcane growers will be able to choose between attending COMPASS workshops, which will still be held regularly in each district, or completing the self-assessment on-line resource, at their own pace, at a time which suits them.

"Demand for the COMPASS program is expected to grow over the next 12-months because it is the first step in the sugarcane Farm Management System (FMS) project. FMS is a new system aimed at further developing the profitability, sustainability and environmental performance of the Australian sugar industry,"

"Launch of eCOMPASS is just another sign that sugarcane growers are continually looking at ways to improve farm management, performance and environmental considerations."

This project is a joint initiative of CANEGROWERS and BSES Limited, and has been funded by the Australian Government's Department of the Environment and Heritage through its Eco-efficiency Program. For more information about the project, please call CANEGROWERS on 07 3864 6444 or BSES on 07 3331 3340.

Article contributed by Suzi Moore, CANEGROWERS Communications Officer



Proserpine sugarcane grower, Tony Jeppersen reviews the eCOMPASS program with Robert Coco from BSES Mackay

St Mary's College Maryborough put their boating skills to the test



Putting their boat skills to the test



St Mary's College students learn about boating safety

The Reef Guardian School motto at St Mary's College in Maryborough is "you can't teach a person an experience", therefore it is all hands on for the grade eleven marine studies students, much to their delight.

Each year 60 or more students are taken out on the water to see the environment first hand and raise their awareness on the impacts the Reef faces.

Students first start by looking at their own school grounds and seeing what they can do to improve their environment, this includes recycling projects and minimising waste on the school grounds.

Marine studies teacher at St Mary's College, Bruce King, said the students then head out to stormwater drains and creeks and rivers to see why it is so important to maintain their own school grounds.

"Students are shown the river to reef connection, they see first hand how something as simple as a mars bar wrapper can easily travel from the school grounds and end up in the Great Barrier Reef and potentially harm marine life," Mr King said.

Students are then taken out on the water where they learn practical boating skills and have the opportunity to view the Great Barrier Reef first hand.

Once training is completed, students participate in a three-day boating camp in the Great Sandy Straits and camp in a pristine area where they are able to view a variety of marine eco-systems.

Mr King believes that by getting the students out in the school, at the drains, wetlands and the Reef they are actually putting best environmental practices in to place rather than just learning about them.

"I believe it is more effective for students to be out in the environment practising best environmental practices than it is for them to be sitting in a classroom hearing about it, this way they are more likely to adopt these practices when out on the Reef next time, Mr King said.

"These practical lessons are teaching students valuable life, leadership and personal skills."

END

END

Operators lend a hand to monitor island sites



Checking the monitoring site at Low Isles

Island resort and tour operators are helping to set-up a long-term monitoring programme at eight islands in the Great Barrier Reef to monitor for land-based herbicides and pesticides.

Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority Acting Chairman, John Tanzer, said monitoring at these island sites is just one of the monitoring programmes being carried out as part of the Authority's Marine Monitoring Programme for the Reef Water Quality Protection Plan.

"The Marine Monitoring Programme was designed and developed by the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority to measure changes in water quality in the Reef as a result of the actions being undertaken on the land as part of the Reef Water Quality Protection Plan," Mr Tanzer said.

"The Marine Monitoring Programme is coordinated through the CRC Reef Research Centre on behalf of a consortium of monitoring partners with various monitoring sites being set up within the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park."

"The Monitoring Programme also involves participation from Reef industries and communities with boat operators and resort staff currently involved in setting up island monitoring sites."

Island monitoring sites have been set-up at Low Isles, Fitzroy Island, Normanby Island, Orpheus Island, Bedarra Island, Long Island, Magnetic Island and North Keppel Island with local operators playing a major role in the establishment and maintenance of the sites. Additional monitoring sites are also planned for Lizard and Lady Elliot Islands.

"Each month operators at these island sites will change over samplers, which are used to track which chemicals are reaching the islands and inshore marine environments," Mr Tanzer said.

Andrea Newman, Owner of Long Island Dive and Snorkel is helping to set-up a monitoring site at Long Island and says she is enthusiastic about helping with the programme and learning of the results.

Monitoring of river mouths and coastal waters along the Great Barrier Reef coast is underway and the Authority is seeking the assistance of the community to help with sampling these sites. For more information, contact Deb Bass on 4750 0773 or email d.bass@gbmpa.gov.au.

The Australian and Queensland Governments have developed the Reef Water Quality Protection Plan, which sets out strategies to halt and then reverse the decline in water quality entering the Reef within ten years.

Low Isles was set-up with the assistance of Quicksilver and the island caretaker, Steve.

The **Fitzroy Island** site is being looked after by Resort Manager, Rick. **Orpheus Island** was set-up with resort staffer Martin, in collaboration with Nautilus Aviation.

Normanby Island site is being looked after by the crew of Frankland Island Cruises

Bedarra Island site is being looked after by resort staff, Andrew and Jason.

Long Island was set-up with Bill and Andrea from the island dive shop.

North Keppel Island was set up with Greg from North Keppel Education Centre

END

GBRMPA shares top Environment Award from United Nations

The UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere Programme recently announced the 2005 Sultan Qaboos Prize for Environmental Preservation would be shared jointly by the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority and to Dr Ernesto C. Enkerlin-Hoeflich (Mexico).

In announcing the Prize, the Director General of UNESCO said the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority, principal adviser to the Australian Government on managing the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park, was jointly awarded the prize for its crucial contributions to the conservation of the Great Barrier Reef, a critical global resource.

"Guided by the principle of balancing conservation and sustainable use, the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority has created an innovative framework that, whilst allowing for reasonable human use, will still ensure the healthy survival of the coastal and marine ecosystems," he said.

The approach taken in the Representative Areas Program is now recognised as one of the most comprehensive, innovative and exciting global advances in the systematic protection of marine biodiversity and marine conservation in recent decades.

Director of Conservation, Heritage and Indigenous Partnerships at the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority, Jon Day, said the zoning plan implemented in July last year, will bring great benefits to the conservation of the entire Great Barrier Reef ecosystem and significantly enhance the resilience of the Great Barrier Reef to cope with external pressures like coral bleaching.

"It will assist industry to achieve increased levels of environmental and financial sustainability and most importantly, it will ensure the Great Barrier Reef remains 'Great' for future generations," Jon said.

The Sultan Qaboos Prize for Environmental Preservation, made possible through a donation from His Majesty Sultan Qaboos Bin Said Al-Said of Oman, aims to acknowledge outstanding contributions to the management of the environment. The prize is awarded every two years, and the 2005 prize will be awarded to the joint winners during the World Science Forum in Budapest, 10 November 2005.

More information at <http://www.unesco.org/mab/qaboos/sutanq.htm#Winners>

END

Electronic charts now incorporating zoning boundaries

Incorporation of the Zoning boundaries is now available for most recreational chart plotters. C-Map, Garmin and Navionics, the three main companies supplying electronic charts for the recreational market have incorporated the boundaries into their products and all are now available for purchase. The inclusion of the zone boundaries will make it easy for anyone with a compatible chart plotter or GPS to know which zone they are in and what activities they can undertake. Plotters that currently support C-Map NT, C-Map MAX, Garmin BlueCharts, Navionics Classic or Navionics Gold are all able to display the new charts. Details on each of the products can be found at the following websites:

<http://www.c-map.com/>

<http://www.garmin.com/>

<http://www.navionics.com/>

To find out more about purchasing new charts or upgrading your existing ones talk to your local bait and tackle shop or marine electronics retailer

END

GBRMPA celebrates NAIDOC 2005

The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority's Indigenous Partnerships Liaison Unit (IPLU) recently organised a number of events to help celebrate NAIDOC week, 3 - 10 July 2005.

GBRMPA Indigenous Partnerships Project Officer, Gail Barry said NAIDOC stands for National Aborigines and Islander Day Observance Committee and has been celebrated in different ways since 1957.

"Today, NAIDOC week is celebrated nationally each year, not just by the Indigenous community, but also by government agencies, schools, local councils and workplaces. This year's NAIDOC week theme was "Our future begins with solidarity" and Benjamin Hodges designed an outstanding poster to represent the week titled "Lift Our Spirits," Gail said.

"NAIDOC events involving GBRMPA staff included a series of talks by Indigenous people about their experiences, a traditional islander meal for GBRMPA staff and a stall at the NAIDOC festival."

John Tapim and Gail Barry, both from the IPLU, began the NAIDOC programme by sharing their personal and cultural backgrounds. Many GBRMPA staff were keen to hear about the differing backgrounds of some of their colleagues.

Three guest speakers and Townsville Elders, Mr. Russell Butler, his wife Mrs. Yvonne Butler and Mrs. Eva Kennedy, shared their personal experiences under the oppressive Aborigines Preservation and Protection Acts, 1939 to 1946. Their families finally gained exemption from the Act to live as free people as late as the 1960s. Russell elaborated on Bandjin mythology, incorporating Indigenous history of the Great Barrier Reef. Russell also brought in samples of bush food that grows along the Reef coastline.

In addition, a traditional Kup Muri, prepared by a local Torres Strait Islander family, provided an exotic culinary experience for GBRMPA staff.

"Staff from the Indigenous Partnerships Liaison Unit marched in the traditional NAIDOC parade on Friday, 8 July 2005. GBRMPA staff then held a stall in Central Park as part of the celebrations," Gail said.

"All the activities contributed to a very successful NAIDOC experience and provided a great opportunity for GBRMPA staff to participate in and learn more about Indigenous culture, especially from their colleagues."



GBRMPA staff help to celebrate NAIDOC week 2005



Chicka Turner and John Tapim check out the cooking mound



Traditional cooking of Kup Muri



GBRMPA staff enjoying Kup Muri

END

GBRMPA staff 'go bush' for the 16th Laura Dance Festival

Seven GBRMPA staff (Gail Barry, Melissa Byass, Jon Day, Jo Johnson, Chris Manning, Randall Owens and Jenny Zadkovitch) recently travelled to Laura to attend the 16th Laura Dance Festival. Located 650kms north-north-west of Townsville, the small country town of Laura attracts thousands of visitors each festival, all keen to experience and celebrate Queensland's unique Aboriginal culture.

The GBRMPA staff teamed up with others from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS) to set up a public information stall at the festival.

"The festival provided a good example of EPA/QPWS and GBRMPA working together to promote complementary aspects of natural resource management, with a specific focus on both Indigenous land and sea country management", said Melissa Byass, Project Officer in GBRMPA's Indigenous Partnerships Liaison Unit.

"Over 370 people visited the stall over the three-day period, showing particular interest in fisheries, Marine Park zoning, water quality and various programs of the Indigenous Partnerships Liaison Unit" she said.

The three-day festival was a chance for Aboriginal communities from across Cape York Peninsula to get together to perform traditional dance, and to showcase music and other aspects of Aboriginal culture through workshops focused on language, film and craft.

It also provided a good opportunity for GBRMPA staff to learn more about the culture of Queensland's Traditional Owners of land and sea and to share marine conservation messages with the wider community. A guided tour from local Traditional Owner Jimmy Richards to the Split Rock art gallery on the Sunday morning was a highlight for staff and reinforced the importance and strength of Indigenous connection to their country.



Albert Doctor, Kuku Yau, in traditional dress at the Laura Dance Festival



Chatting with the public about marine management issues

END

Connecting Cultures through Tourism

Project Manager in the GBRMPA's Indigenous Partnerships Liaison Unit, Leon Jackson, recently attended the Australian Indigenous Tourism Conference in Perth, which featured speakers from across Australia sharing their experiences in the industry.

The theme for the conference was "Connecting Cultures through Tourism" with some 400 people attending the conference from every state and territory of Australia.

There was a variety of presentations given by speakers including Ernie Dingo (The Great Outdoors), Tony Wheeler (Lonely Planet) and Federal Minister for Small Business and Tourism, The Hon Fran Bailey.

According to Leon, the most valuable sessions throughout the conference were listening to the presentations of successful operators.

"The conference highlighted the fact that Indigenous Tourism in this country is still in the early stages of development, having said that, a number of successful Indigenous Tourism ventures have been in business for some time," said Leon.

"These include a small family fishing venture from the remote Kimberley region of Western Australia, various Aboriginal cultural heritage tour businesses, an Aboriginal gallery and gift shop, and the well known Aboriginal dance theatre company, Tjapukai."

One of the biggest messages to come out of the conference came from Indigenous Tourism operators who said they had to develop their business with very little help or information.

"As the importance of Indigenous Tourism in Australia is being realised, various groups and agencies are being developed to address this problem, there is now much more help available for Indigenous Australians wanting to run businesses, including tourist ventures," said Leon.

The GBRMPA has provided for 13 Indigenous Tourism Permits in the three Plans of Management areas (Cairns, Hinchinbrook and the Whitsundays) within the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park. Anyone interested in applying for an Indigenous Tourism permit can contact the Indigenous Partnership Liaison Unit at the GBRMPA on 4750 0700.

END



Gympie East State School promotes 'Pedal Power'

Gympie East State School is one of the newest schools to join the Reef Guardian School programme and already they are proving their commitment to living sustainability and protecting our environment, including the Reef, by participating in 'Cycle for Sustainability'.

'Cycle for Sustainability' is a cycling road show aimed at motivating and encouraging individuals, schools and communities to take action towards sustainability.

Whilst in Gympie the three-person cycling crew ran presentations at the local civic centre to high school students and primary schools to promote the benefits of living sustainability before launching the trek south on the 27th July.

Reef Guardian Co-ordinating teacher at Gympie East State School, Fiona Cole, invited the crew from 'Cycle for Sustainability' to make Gympie the launching pad for the 3,500km journey.

"Children are our future and therefore we need to educate them on the values of sustainability so they can enjoy a beautiful environment and so too can future generations to come," Mrs Cole said.

"The crew of cycle for sustainability thoroughly enjoyed their time in Gympie and enjoyed presenting their workshops to over 770 students over the two days," Mrs Cole said.

The ride coincided with the first year of the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development.

High School students from around Gympie joined the riders for the first 30 kilometres out of Gympie before leaving them to make their journey south down the coast, ending five months later in Hobart.

Students at Gympie East State School have also been enjoying a life-size model whale that preschool teacher, Mrs Bonnie Thorne, constructed as part of their "Oceans Unit -The Sea & Me."

"Students are able to walk inside the whale and learn all about the amazing mammal," Mrs Cole said.

"As a Reef Guardian school the students are concerned with the amount of litter within the school grounds and the wider community," Mrs Cole said.

"The students are looking at how they can reduce their plastic usage. The year one and two classes have been decorating their drink bottles to promote their usage rather than popper juices with plastic wrapping and have been using sandwich boxes rather than plastic wrap. The school is collecting data to see how they can reduce its weekly waste to landfill."



Gympie East State School students explore their life-size model whale



The Cycle for Sustainability Crew speak to students in Gympie

END

Clarence the Croc is our best mate

My name is Jacob and I am in Grade 7 at Nerimbera State School. My school is a small school with only 19 students and is situated in a valley near the Fitzroy River close to Rockhampton.

For the past few years my classmates and I have been studying environmental issues and our school has proudly become a Reef Guardian School.

This year we have taken a special interest in our water catchment area and to help us along the way we have enlisted the help of Clarence the Crocodile, our travel buddy.

Clarence came to our school to figure out why his river is being contaminated and is now on a mission to encourage students to investigate what is happening in their part of the catchment area.

For the past few months, Clarence has taken his Akubra hat and set off in his comfortable camper box designed by my classmates and I to visit other schools in our region to gain valuable information on the quality of our catchments.

With the information Clarence has gathered our school will create a book that will be shared with other students to help them understand the impact their actions can have on local wetlands and the Great Barrier Reef.

Clarence's journey will take him to Gogango, Duaringa, Mackenzie River, Comet and Anakie State Schools and Camp Fairbairn Outdoor Education Centre.

The Principal at Gogango State School told us he was amazed at the enthusiasm and creativity shown by his students at the school in deciding how they could help Clarence on his quest.

My classmates and I have also been involved in lots of other exciting projects, such as creating computer animations and web quests that explore local catchment areas and inform others on how to care for our precious waterways.

We will also be participating in our local Future Leaders Congress on Sustainable Oceans and are once again running a Preventing Plastic Bags Polluting the Planet competition.

We are so proud to be a Reef Guardian School and we are having loads of fun learning about the environment and the colourful Great Barrier Reef.



Clarence helping Caine with Environmental Studies



Clarence checking Nerimbera's water usage with Jacob

END

Tourism and Recreation Group provides moorings information online

GBRMPA Tourism and Recreation Group is working with Marine Park users in an effort to highlight the importance of moorings in Marine Park planning and how their use can minimise the impacts of anchoring on the marine environment.

One of the initiatives is an online moorings register, which provides information to the public on all permitted moorings in the Marine Park.

Executive Director, Andrew Skeat, said the online register provided the public with 24-hour access on where moorings are located and who owns them to help make it easier for people to use moorings when visiting the Marine Park.

"The register aims to encourage people in the Park to use moorings whenever possible. People using the register are able to search for moorings by reef name, mooring reference number or permittee name," Andrew said.

During the past few months, a series of successful moorings workshops have also been held by the GBRMPA with tourism operators and the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS) in the Cairns/Port Douglas and Whitsunday regions.



Andrew said the mooring workshops provided an excellent opportunity for marine park managers to work with tourism operators to gain a better understanding of mooring use and anchoring issues in high-use tourism areas.

"Operators have provided advice and recommendations to us on issues such as levels of use and the processes of allocating moorings."

"Consultation with all users of areas with mooring facilities is ongoing in the development of mooring and anchoring policies by the GBRMPA and QPWS," he said.

The online moorings register can be found at http://www.gbrmpa.gov.au/corp_site/key_issues/tourism/moorings_register.cfm or for more information contact the Tourism and Recreation Group on 4750 0788.

END

American students experience the wonder of the Reef up close

A group of American Student Ambassadors have been on the trip of a lifetime touring around North Queensland with the People2 People groups and are seeing the reef up close by staying overnight at Reef HQ Aquarium in Townsville.

The teenage students have come from all over America and are accompanied by an Australian guide who introduces them to the various aspects that Australia has to offer.

Whilst at Reef HQ the students, tour managers and their guide had the opportunity to witness the wonders of the reef by night by participating in a nocturnal tour lead by the Reef Sleep Team.

With the aid of torches, Education Officer at Reef HQ, Carolyn Duncan said the students viewed the marine-life in all of the tanks at Reef HQ Aquarium.

"Although most of the 2,500 inhabitants of the coral reef exhibit are asleep at this time, it is amazing how many of them are active and what certain species do to avoid being eaten while they rest," said Carolyn.

"The staff also led them on a tour of discovery behind the scenes and shared with them what it takes to maintain and run an aquarium as large as Reef HQ."

Being the world's largest living coral reef aquarium, Reef HQ has over 150 different species of fish and numerous species of coral on display, many of which the Americans have never seen before.

"Imagine the thrill they have in waking up in the morning surrounded by 2.5 million litres of water with a living ecosystem right in front of them whilst they eat their breakfast," said Carolyn.

There was a unanimous response from the American students on their Reef HQ experience, "that was totally awesome!"

END

COTS Control Programme gets thumbs up from operators

The Australian Government, through the GBRMPA, is working with the tourism industry to help control the outbreak of crown of thorns starfish (COTS) and find out more about the affects of COTS on particular reef sites.

More than 480 tourism operators recently participated in a survey conducted by the GBRMPA and the Association of Marine Park Tourism Operators (AMPTO) to evaluate the Australian Government's COTS Control Programme.

Carol Honchin in the Tourism Group said feedback from the survey was very positive with more than 80 percent of respondents recording that they were satisfied or very satisfied with the Programme," Carol said.

The COTS Control Programme is designed to assist marine tourism operators to address potentially devastating crown of thorns starfish outbreaks at key tourism sites. The Marine Tourism Industry's peak body AMPTO is charged with managing the control programme on a day-to-day basis.

Mr Col McKenzie, Executive Director of AMPTO said the last quarter saw an increase in COTS taken, however with 73 percent of respondents indicating that they now observe low densities of COTS, we believe the Control Programme is working."

The COTS Control Programme was established in February 2002 and is funded through a range of Australian Government initiatives, including the Natural Heritage Trust, matching contributions from the Queensland Government and significant in-kind support from industry.

Further funding is committed over the next two years from Australian and Queensland Governments.

The GBRMPA also focuses on a number of other initiatives to help control COTS in the Marine Park including activities such as the Reef Water Quality Protection Plan to help improve the water quality entering the Great Barrier Reef.

END

New Regional Liaison Staff announced

In recent months there have been a number of announcements about the new Community Engagement initiatives which will see the Authority open regional offices along the GBR coast.

The Authority has established a new Community Partnerships Group to consolidate and build on local knowledge and understanding developed in the 2000-2004 rezoning of the Marine Park. The new officers' role will be to help transmit information to and from communities and the GBRMPA as well as to facilitate more effective and efficient lines of communication.

In announcing the appointment of regional staff the Minister for Environment and Heritage, Sen Ian Campbell said "part of the Government's commitment is to ensure the concerns of regional communities were clearly heard by the GBRMPA."

The Chair of the Authority, Virginia Chadwick, said the better the Authority understands and knows local communities socially, economically and ecologically the better its management responses are likely to be.

"All of the senior staff for the new Group have been drawn from existing GBRMPA staff, bringing with them a wealth of experience in a range of fields and offering an easy transition from the central office to their regional responsibilities," Mrs Chadwick said

Dr Leanne Fernandes is Director of the Community Partnerships Group based in Townsville assisted by **Belinda Jago** as Senior Project Manager and **Tracey Rehbein** as Administrative Officer.

A diverse group of highly experienced staff has been appointed to work with communities in five different regions.

Cape Region: Simon Towle,
Regional Liaison Manager – Cairns based office

Far Northern Region: Tony Stokes,
Regional Liaison Manager – Cairns based office.

Sarah Offner is the Regional Liaison Officer in Cairns for both the Cape York and Far Northern Regions.

Northern Region: Paula Tomkins,
Regional Liaison Manager – Townsville based office.

Central Region: Randall Owens,
Regional Liaison Manager – Mackay based office with **Cath Harpley** is the Regional Liaison Officer for the Region.

Southern Region: Dave Lowe,
Regional Liaison Manager - Rockhampton based office.
Kalair McArthur is the Regional Liaison Officer for the Region.

END

Local hero remembered for contributions to marine issues



**Wally Muller
1930 - 2005**

Former Capricorn Coast Marine Advisory Committee member, Wally Muller, was a dedicated and captivating man who spent most of his life on the water in the Capricorn Coast region.

In a tribute to Wally's dedication to the region, the Capricorn Coast Marine Advisory Committee has remembered, shared and celebrated Wally's life.

Wally's dedication to exploring the region's waters and devotion to commercial and recreational fishing has placed him in the pages of local history as one of the most loved and committed reef surveyors and fishermen.

Wally was born on 18 July, 1930 at Blackall, Queensland. He was a boarder at the Rockhampton Boys Grammar School and was a brilliant long distance swimmer.

In 1948, Wally made his name in the fishing industry as the first person to commercially fish on the Swains Reef. He also introduced the art of filleting fish at sea and freezing the fillets so the boats could stay out longer, making him a hero amongst many commercial fishermen.

Wally worked for Gulf Oil in the Capricorn Bunker Group when they were blasting for oil in the mid to late 1960's and he navigated the seismic ship that mapped the coastline of New Zealand looking for oil.

Wally spent many years surveying reefs off the Capricorn Coast including navigating the Surveyor General's ship to map all of the Swains Reefs.

The name of Wally's beloved first boat was The River Song and his second was The Coralita, which was built in 1969.

The Coralita was often chartered by groups for diving and fishing trips to the Reef. Wally even took leaders such as the former President of Canada, President Trudeau, and John and Margaret Gorton (former Australian Prime Minister and his wife) out to the Reef on a fishing trip.

Wally was a real local personality and regularly took time out with some of his old school mates and other friends in the community to hold massive card games on board The Coralita. Wally had two sons, Walter (known as Roy) and Alex, who grew up on the water in the Capricorn region.

Many of the local reef's names were given to them by Wally. The naming of one particular reef has become a much loved and retold local story, which goes something like this... "One day, after Wally had finished mapping the Swains Reef area for the Government, he was out enjoying some quiet time sailing around the Swains area. Suddenly, he ran into a reef that was not mapped and Wally didn't even know was there. Wally said "Where did that reef come from?... it's a bloody mystery that one!" and that's how Mystery Reef was named!"

Wally died on 18 May 2005. His ashes are now spread over Mystery Reef.

Information for this article was provided by Wade Mann from the Capricorn Coast Marine Advisory Committee

END

MARINE PARK PARTNERSHIPS



Profile of Regional Liaison Manager, Far Northern **Tony Stokes**

Tony Stokes is the new Regional Liaison Manager – Far Northern, based in Cairns and covering the area from the Daintree River to Tully.

Tony has worked with the GBRMPA in Townsville for more than fourteen years and says he enjoys listening to people and helping where possible.

Tony says he applied for the Regional Liaison Manager position because he had a desire to return to working more closely with the public in community liaison. He also says the decision to take the position is exciting for his family, particularly his wife, Mary, as both Tony and Mary love the tropics and the Great Barrier Reef.

Tony has three beautiful daughters, Christie (22), Julia (19) and Laura (17) who are moving all-too-quickly to study, work and enjoy an independent lifestyle.

Tony will move to Cairns on 15 August to officially begin his new role in the region. In the position, Tony wants to develop close, productive connections with ordinary people in an exceptional region of the Great Barrier Reef coastline.

"There's no doubt that a quality exchange of information between the GBRMPA and local people, industries and organisations will enhance the extent of the community's influence on management decisions affecting the Marine Park," Tony said.

Tony loves living in Far North Queensland for many reasons and says it is a healthier place to live.

"There's a ton of reasons for why we love living here. Just the fact that you don't have to rug up to walk out the door is a bonus and when the kids were growing up they always seemed to have less sickness than when we lived down south. North Queensland provides an amazing quality and variety of the outdoors lifestyle and the people are relaxed and humorous but also concerned about the issues in their community."

Tony is interested in all Reef and marine issues, but especially the conservation of species such as dugongs, turtles, whales, dolphins and seabirds and the sustainable use of marine resources by Indigenous people.

END

PINK ZONE REMINDER

Reports have been received that vessels operating within the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park may be transiting through Pink Zones, particularly through the Starcke River Inshore Pink Zone north of Cooktown (P-14-9). A reminder that within the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park a Preservation (Pink) Zone is a "no go" area. A person should not enter a Pink Zone unless they have special permission and extractive activities are strictly prohibited. Unpermitted entry to a Preservation Zone could constitute an offence under Section 38A of the GBRMP Act and may attract penalties of up to \$220,000 for an individual or \$1.1 million for a Body Corporate.

END

Creature Feature

Humpback Whale

Megaptera novaeangliae



- An adult humpback whale grows up to 12-15 metres long and can weigh up to 40 tonnes.
- Since commercial whaling ceased in Australia in 1978 humpback whale numbers have increased by about 11% each year.
- Humpback whales live in the cold open oceans of Antarctica in summer but migrate to warmer calving and breeding grounds in winter, such as the Great Barrier Reef.
- Humpback whales are baleen whales and feed on krill and small schooling fish.
- A single calf is born after a gestation period of about 12 months and will generally stay with its mother for a further year.

END

Doing your bit to look after it!

When visiting islands in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park you can do your bit to look after it by:

- ▶ Always using designated campsites.
- ▶ Do not touch or disturb nesting seabirds or turtles.
- ▶ Dispose of all rubbish correctly.
- ▶ Do not take animals or plants to islands or feed native animals.
- ▶ Take care when washing or cleaning. Do not use detergents, toothpaste or soap in creeks, stream or lakes. Wash at least 50m away from waterways.



Community Links



A profile of **Graham Scott** Chairman Capricorn Coast LMAC

Graham Scott is the Chairman of the Capricorn Coast Local Marine Advisory Committee (LMAC) and has been a member of the committee since it began in 2002.

Graham says he tries not to represent any particular interest group on the LMAC, but he does have a particular interest in recreational fishing and spends many weekends out on the water off the Capricorn Coast. Graham also has interests in tourism, cruising and camping and was once a pro fishing assistant for two weeks.

Graham believes the Capricorn Coast LMAC plays an extremely important role in the community by providing a good information flowpath to and from GBRMPA to various community groups and stakeholders. Graham says LMACs work because members hold an enormous amount of local knowledge.

"I think LMAC members can provide an "honest broker" for difficult issues, particularly when the good ol' mistrust of all things government arises," Graham said.

Graham says his major goal as Chairman of the Capricorn Coast LMAC is to get more regional management and collaboration into all marine issues.

"The big issue for me is getting the best balance we can between use and protection of the Reef for all stakeholders."

Graham says the work done by the LMAC during the rezoning process is one of the Committee's most special achievements and he is proud of the way the community worked together to help ensure the new zoning was acceptable to most stakeholder groups.

Graham says his most rewarding experience as Chairman of the LMAC has been meeting some wonderful people and experiencing an organisation and system with a culture of openness and friendship.

Graham is committed to making a difference in his community. Along with his role on the LMAC, he also holds positions on a range of other committees and community programs including the Capricorn Reef Monitoring Program.

When not focusing on marine issues, Graham manages his own consulting engineering practice in Rockhampton, Graham Scott and Associates. Graham and his wife, Sharyn, have also set up a Bareboat Charter business at Keppel Bay Marina and are working with the Marina to develop "Keppel Bay Escapes".

Graham grew up around saltwater and as a child spent many holidays estuary fishing, crabbing, camping and playing in the seawater. Graham now has three children who also spend a lot of time in and on the water.

END

Calendar of events

03 October 2005

World Habitat Day

05 October 2005

Whitsunday LMAC meeting

08 – 09 October 2005

LMAC Chairs meeting

11 October 2005

Port Douglas LMAC meeting

12 October 2005

Cairns LMAC meeting

18 October 2005

Hinchinbrook LMAC meeting

25 October 2005

Mackay LMAC meeting

23 – 27 October 2005

The first International
Marine Protected Areas Congress (IMPAC1)
Geelong, Victoria

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