



# From the Deck

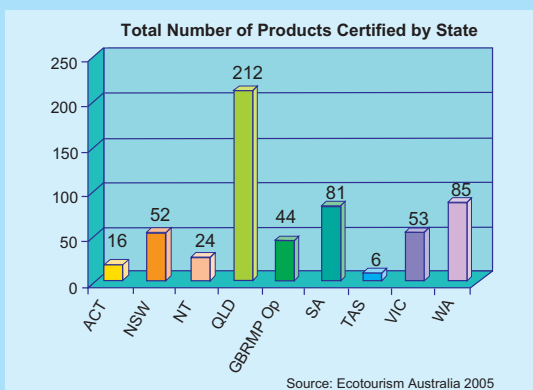
## ECO Certification reaching new heights

Congratulations to those operators who are leading the way by gaining Ecotourism Australia's certification as a high standard operation.

In June 2005, 20 percent of all the certified products in Queensland were operated by marine tourism operations in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park. Marine Park operations are on par with the whole of New South Wales or Victoria.

To ensure the integrity of the ECO Certification Programme, Ecotourism Australia audited 80 operators Australia-wide in 2005 and is committed to auditing all ECO Certified operators by the end of 2006.

The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA) is working closely with Ecotourism Australia to promote the value of being a high-standard operation through increased exposure for these operators on the GBRMPA website, at the Australian Tourism Exchange and other trade shows, and with increased media opportunities.



## SeaweeK 2006 talks up tourism benefits

The GBRMPA, in partnership with the Association of Marine Park Tourism Operators (AMPTO), helped to focus community awareness on marine tourism and the positive benefits it brings to the Great Barrier Reef through supporting SeaweeK 2006 initiatives.

SeaweeK is the annual community education initiative of the Marine Education Society of Australasia (MESA). SeaweeK 2006 (5 – 11 March) promoted safe, sensitive and sustainable use of the sea.

The GBRMPA worked with MESA to develop a poster for SeaweeK 2006 promoting the size, scope and importance of the Marine Park tourism industry. The poster was distributed to 11 000 schools around Australia as well as to tourism operators for use on their vessels and in their booking offices.

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our great barrier reef  
let's keep it great





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The GBRMPA worked directly with Marine Park tourism operators to encourage skippers on tourism boats to up-sell the positive messages of Seaweeek 2006 during their introductory onboard presentations.

Also as part of the GBRMPA's support of Seaweeek 2006, an educational module was developed for use by teachers to broaden students' understanding of reef tourism from a social, economic and environmental perspective.

## Get Onboard industry training sessions

Come and find out all you need to know about operating in the Marine Park at one of our *Get Onboard* industry training sessions planned for both operators and staff during 2006.

Register your interest and tell us any questions you want answered by emailing Kirsten Walpole at [k.walpole@gbrmpa.gov.au](mailto:k.walpole@gbrmpa.gov.au).

## CPI triggers Environmental Management Charge change

An increase in the Environmental Management Charge (EMC) from \$4.50 per person per day to \$5.00 per person per day will take effect on 1 April 2007 and represents the first EMC increase in four years.

The EMC is linked by regulation to the Consumer Price Index (CPI). This link was established in response to a request from AMPPTO in 1998.

In essence, any increase in the EMC is linked to movements in the CPI for Brisbane and any increase takes effect on 1 April in the second charge year after the indexed amount exceeds \$0.40. The basis for the calculation enables operators to receive 12 months notice of an increase.

All Marine Park tourism permit holders are responsible for collecting the EMC from individual visitors and remitting EMC payments quarterly along with related records to the GBRMPA. Just a reminder that it is the permit holder's responsibility to ensure the correct EMC is remitted to the GBRMPA regardless of any commercial arrangements that may be entered into with other operators.

The role Marine Park tourism operators have in collecting the EMC is vital in helping to protect the magnificent Great Barrier Reef Marine Park. This money is used for research, education and Marine Park management, and is essential to maintaining a healthy reef.

Please contact Bernie Lee, EMC Project Manager, on (07) 4750 0764 if you have any questions regarding the EMC increase.

## Is your bareboat briefer registered?

The GBRMPA holds a register of all people who are qualified to conduct bareboat briefings for clients. By law, the only people permitted to conduct these briefings must be on our register.

Contact the Education Manager in the GBRMPA's Communication and Education Group to learn more about the register and check if your bareboat briefer is on it. For more information contact the Education Manager on (07) 4750 0881 or by email: [f.nucifora@gbrmpa.gov.au](mailto:f.nucifora@gbrmpa.gov.au).

## Are your high standards paying dividends?

Operating to high standards can bring you tangible benefits from the GBRMPA as well as being good for your operation, your clients and the Marine Park.

The GBRMPA has developed benefits to both reward high standard operators and provide incentives for other operators to improve their performance. The major benefit offered by the GBRMPA is an extended permit term of 15 years for tourism programme permits.

In addition, certified operators are listed on the GBRMPA website and are showcased at various trade events (such as the Australian Tourism Exchange and Tokyo Dive Show coming up in April 2006) and in publications (such as the Australian Ecotourism Directory).

Our new *Onboard* website is packed with information about how to be a high standard operator in the Marine Park. You can:

- undertake **Responsible Reef Practices** to help protect our amazing Great Barrier Reef in your day-to-day operations
- become **certified** so you can be recognised for your high standards, showcased by the GBRMPA and become eligible for a 15 year permit for the Marine Park
- **train your staff** through the Reef Discovery Course - designed for crew who deal directly with clients, especially interpretative staff.

To find out more go online at [www.gbrmpa.gov.au](http://www.gbrmpa.gov.au), click on the *Onboard* icon and locate 'High Standards' in the *Onboard* home page.





## Current Advisory Committee hold last meeting

The Tourism and Recreation Reef Advisory Committee (TRRAC) held its twenty-first meeting in early February on the *Elizabeth E II*, a commercial tourism vessel based in Mackay.

By holding the meeting on a tourism vessel, TRRAC members had the opportunity to see the Marine Park and some of its management issues first-hand.

As the last meeting of the current membership, it was an ideal opportunity to review the progress that has been made in tourism and recreation management since the TRRAC provided its blueprint for management in February 2002.

Details regarding the new TRRAC membership will be announced before the next meeting in early June.



## Cairns moorings to book or not to book

Recent inquiries directed to the Tourism and Recreation Group reveal there may be some confusion regarding how commercial tourism operators may use public moorings in the Cairns Planning Area.

Tourism operators may use public moorings but because public moorings do not fall under the definition of a permitted mooring, they can not be used to gain greater access to the Cairns Planning Area than is contained in individual permits.

As an example, Standard Tour Operations (50 day booking permit) accessing the Cairns Planning Area are limited to 50 days operation and must make a booking. The only exception to this is when operating to a permitted mooring. Where an operator uses a public mooring they are still required to book to access the Cairns Planning Area.

Regional Tour Operations (365-day access to the Cairns Planning Area) are generally able to visit each location 50 days per year. They can not use a public mooring to access a location in excess of 50 days a year. Access greater than 50 days to a location is either through the use of a permitted mooring or via specific endorsement.

To make a booking or inquiry please contact the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service Cairns office:

**Business days**  
9.00 am to 5.00 pm  
(07) 4066 6660

**After Hours**  
7.00 am to 9.00 am and  
5.00 pm to 9.00 pm  
0417 004 815

## T&R staff matters

Leanne Brown was appointed as Project Officer – Policy in February and is working on several projects including dedicated use moorings in the Whitsundays, mooring reference numbers, the online moorings register and the Dwarf Minke Whale Tourism Monitoring Programme.

Dean Miller has been appointed as the new Industry Engagement Officer and will start with the GBRMPA in mid April. Some of Dean's projects will include the expansion of the Eye on the Reef programme and producing *From the Deck*.

## Cruise Ship Workshop

A workshop to discuss Great Barrier Reef cruise shipping projects, including the updating of the 1999 Cruise Shipping Policy, will be held in Brisbane on April 26. Participants will get the opportunity to have input into several current projects, as well as comment on the policy.

A similar session held last year attracted representatives from cruise lines, shipping agencies, the Australian Reef Pilots, Maritime Safety Queensland, the Australian Maritime Safety Authority and the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service.

Please contact Lorelle Schluter on (07) 4750 0705 or by email at [l.schluter@gbmpa.gov.au](mailto:l.schluter@gbmpa.gov.au) if you are interested in attending.

## Mooring limits

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

## Bulletin board

- In February, Cathy Skippington, formerly the Assistant Director-General of the Environmental Protection Agency, took up the new position of Director, Marine Parks Coordination, within the Parks Division of Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service.
- The deadline for registrations of interest in the dedicated use moorings initiative in the Whitsundays has been extended six weeks to Monday 17 April following a request from the Whitsunday Charter Boat Industry Association.
- The Whitsunday District Visitor Management Strategy will be released for public comment in mid April 2006.
- The Office of Fair Trading had their first successful prosecution for misrepresentation of the EMC in October 2005, followed by two further prosecutions of the same operator in February. The Whitsunday operator has been fined a total of \$8500.

## Advice on Environmental Management Plans

The GBRMPA website has been updated with a new section on Environmental Management Plans (EMP). The site is written in plain English and there are several examples to help people who need to develop EMP plans.

[http://www.gbrmpa.gov.au/corp\\_site/management/eim/eia/emp.html](http://www.gbrmpa.gov.au/corp_site/management/eim/eia/emp.html)

**Lisha Mulqueeny**  
Director (07) 4750 0777

**Hilary Skeat**  
Manager Projects (07) 4750 0842

**Chris Briggs**  
Manager Industry Liaison (07) 4750 0863

**Lorelle Schluter**  
Manager Sustainable Development and Policy (07) 4750 0705

**Vicki Bonanno**  
Project Officer- Projects (07) 4750 0868

**Leanne Brown**  
Project Officer- Policy (07) 4750 0788

**Dean Miller**  
Project Officer- Industry Engagement (07) 4750 0715

**Kirsten Walpole**  
A/Administrative Assistant (07) 4750 0775

**Email:** [tourrec@gbrmpa.gov.au](mailto:tourrec@gbrmpa.gov.au)

**Website:**

[www.gbrmpa.gov.au/corp\\_site/key\\_issues/tourism/index.html](http://www.gbrmpa.gov.au/corp_site/key_issues/tourism/index.html)

## Planning update – planning for Setting 5 areas in the Whitsundays to begin soon

The Whitsundays Plan of Management assigns each reef, bay and coastal area to a 'setting'. There are five setting types ranging from high use areas (Setting 1) to protected settings with low use and particular conservation values (Setting 5). The Whitsundays Plan of Management requires site plans to be developed for each of the Setting 5 areas. These are located at:

- Hill Inlet (including the northern end of Whitehaven Beach)
- Haslewood and Lupton Islands
- Deloraine Island
- Double Bay East
- Cow and Calf Islands
- Eshelby Island.

The GBRMPA will soon commence the site planning process for each of these areas. On 27 February GBRMPA and Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service staff conducted visits to some of these areas to gain a better understanding of the sites before site planning commences.

The GBRMPA and the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service will be consulting with interested stakeholders throughout the development of the site plans, however if there are any particular issues at these sites that you would like the GBRMPA to be aware of, please contact Matt Carr on (07) 4750 0784 or [m.carr@gbrmpa.gov.au](mailto:m.carr@gbrmpa.gov.au).

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

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

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