

# SeaRead

Marine Park news from catchment to coral



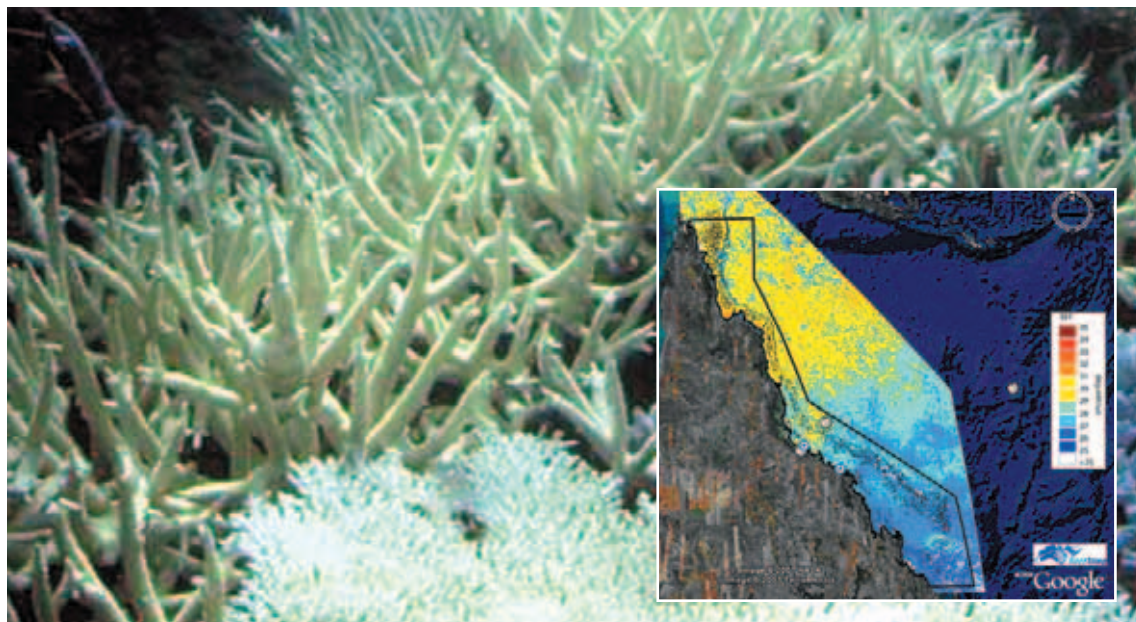
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## Groundbreaking coral bleaching monitoring tool



Reef Temp (inset) enables marine managers to monitor coral bleaching risk

Monitoring coral bleaching risk is now easier thanks to advanced technology that monitors changes in sea surface temperature in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park.

ReefTemp is the first sea-surface temperature monitoring and mapping tool in Australia developed specifically for monitoring bleaching risk.

Jeff Maynard from the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA) Climate Change Response Programme said the online tool revolutionised coral bleaching monitoring.

"ReefTemp uses satellites in space to calculate sea surface temperatures," he said.

"The information is automatically projected on to maps of the Great Barrier Reef, enabling scientists to see a colour-coded visual representation of the ocean's temperature.

"The system helps us see if there are any areas in the Reef experiencing above-average temperatures over a long period of time.

"Coral reefs are very sensitive to sea temperatures, with a few degrees Celsius variation enough to cause coral bleaching."

Coral bleaching occurs when there is a breakdown of the relationship between corals and their zooxanthellae, microscopic plants that live within coral tissue.

Zooxanthellae assist the coral by providing them with food for growth and their normal healthy colour. When corals are stressed, they expel their zooxanthellae.

As a result, they may lose their colour and their ability to gain energy is reduced, resulting in their white coral skeleton becoming visible through their clear tissue.

"ReefTemp shows us where we can undertake fieldwork to better understand how bleaching effects the Reef," Jeff said.

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# Message from the Chairman



the Hon Virginia Chadwick AO

In July this year, I will be retiring from my role as Chairman of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority.

It has been an extraordinary journey and I am proud to have been part of a team that has helped make a real difference to the care and protection of the Great Barrier Reef.

The agency has set international benchmarks for marine conservation and worked hard to ensure the Marine Park is one of the best protected coral reef ecosystems in the world.

This has been achieved thanks to an amazing staff of marine managers within the agency whose passion and insight for the Reef has been inspirational to me.

It has also been made possible due to the dedication and support of

other government agencies and the many people within the community who have worked tirelessly to improve the Reef's outlook.

We have shared the common goal of caring for our magnificent Reef so it can survive for future generations to enjoy.

Educating the community about the importance of protecting the Marine Park has been a vital part of our work. It has gone a long way in fostering a sense of ownership and inspiring the community to conserve the marine environment on their doorstep.

This work has given me a great sense of pride and, while I will be sad to leave, I know the many dedicated staff at the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority will continue their great work managing the Reef.

It is not possible for me to fully express how grateful I am to everyone for their contribution – the agency's achievements and good international reputation would not be possible without the strong skills and commitment from staff and stakeholders alike.

Thanks for making this role such a rewarding and interesting journey. I wish you all the best in the future.

Regards

Virginia Chadwick  
Chairman  
Great Barrier Reef  
Marine Park Authority

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"We use this information to help us better manage the Reef so it can cope with a changing climate – improving water quality and protecting plants, animals and habitats builds the Reef's resilience."

The online maps provide high-resolution (2km x 2km) visual information on sea surface temperature, enabling monitoring of bleaching risk for individual reefs.

This summer, ReefTemp enabled scientists to see coral bleaching was unlikely because of sustained, lower-than-average sea temperatures.

Anyone with an internet connection can view the maps, as well as long-term information that is recorded on sea surface temperature.

ReefTemp was developed by the GBRMPA, CSIRO Marine and Atmospheric Research and the Bureau of Meteorology.

It builds on work done by the United States National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

For more information:  
[www.gbrmpa.gov.au/corp\\_site/info\\_services/science/climate\\_change](http://www.gbrmpa.gov.au/corp_site/info_services/science/climate_change).



## Upcoming report gives outlook on Reef

*A new report into the health and pressures on the Great Barrier Reef will shed important light on the future of this natural icon.*

Work on the first Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Outlook Report is underway, with the report expected to be finalised by 2009.

The report is one of several recommendations from the Australian Government's review of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Act.

GBRMPA Chairman Virginia Chadwick said the five-yearly report would help map the agency's future management programmes and priorities.

"The report will look at the Reef's health, its pressures and the future for the industries it supports," she said.

"We will be involving the community strongly in its preparation.

"We have only just begun this project but are very excited about what it might show and the contribution that local knowledge can make."

The report will include input from Marine Park managers, researchers, local industries, community groups and the public.

## Interesting Facts

### All creatures great and small

Gnathostomulids are tiny worms that live in between the grains of particularly fine marine sands. They may reach 3 mm, but most are between 0.5 and 1.0 mm in length.

# Guidelines firm up whale and dolphin watching rules

*Animal conservation has received a boost in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park following the implementation of a whale and dolphin conservation operational policy.*

The operational policy ensures whale and dolphin watching in the Marine Park is in line with national guidelines and provides increased protection for these animals.

Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA) Species Conservation Project Officer Sarah Salmon said the policy was a key tool for protecting whales and dolphins.

"The operational policy involves working with reef users and managing their activities in the Marine Park to ensure human interactions with whales and dolphins are sustainable," she said.

"It supports regulations, relating to whale and dolphin interactions with humans, introduced in June 2006.

"It also highlights the need for identifying important habitats for whale and dolphin resting, calving and mating.

"These areas will require special management of human-related impacts on whales and dolphins such as reducing interactions between whales and vessels."

Sarah said the operational policy also focussed on protecting humpback whales, which were increasing in numbers in the Marine Park.

"People are more likely to encounter these animals because



*The amended policy aims to protect whales and dolphins*

there's more people out on the water and an increase in humpback whales in the Marine Park," she said.

"In recognition of this, the operational policy gives tourism operators and recreational boaties some flexibility when they encounter whales incidentally.

"The aim is to ensure people can observe these magnificent animals, should they encounter them, from a safe distance to ensure the animal's safety and welfare is not compromised."

Under the operational policy, whale watching occurring incidentally in the Marine Park does not require the listing of the activity on the tourism permission from the Authority.

This is provided it is conducted in accordance with the regulatory approach distances.

In the future, dedicated whale watching activities will be able to

occur in the Marine Park as part of a tourist programme.

Operators conducting dedicated activities will be required to be appropriately certified and recognised as high standard by the Authority and the activity must be listed on the permission from the Authority.

The operational policy now also allows whale watching in the Mackay/Capricorn Management Area by high standard operators, when it previously wasn't.

A grace period of two years will allow tourism operators involved in whale watching to become appropriately certified and recognised as high standard by the Authority.

The operational policy amendments follow extensive consultation with marine management agencies, the tourism industry and the community.

For a copy of the operational policy visit [www.gbrmpa.gov.au](http://www.gbrmpa.gov.au).

## Boat registrations on the rise

*More boaties and anglers are out on the water than ever before, according to statistics from Queensland Transport.*

And the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA) is encouraging the newcomers to brush up on zoning before entering the Marine Park.

GBRMPA Operations Director Mick Bishop said this was timely given boat registrations had increased by 20.5 per cent over four years.

"The data from Queensland Transport confirms boating is increasingly popular in Queensland and one of the preferred ways to enjoy the Marine Park," he said.

"There are now more than 67 400 boat registrations in Great Barrier Reef coastal communities – more than ever before."

New boaties and anglers should be aware fishing is not allowed in Green Zones and there is limited line fishing in Yellow Zones.

Anyone – except unattached commercial dories - can enter a Green Zone to anchor for boating, swimming and snorkelling.

Travelling through a Green Zone with fish on board is allowed.

Stowing fishing gear on board the boat or in rod holders with a hook still attached is also allowed in a Green Zone, provided the fishing apparatus is out of the water.

Following changes to the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Regulations last year, Marine Park enforcement

officers can now issue infringement notices of \$1100 to recreational fishermen found illegally fishing in Green Zones.

Free zoning guides and maps are widely available from bait and tackle shops, visitor information centres, ship chandlers and Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service and Queensland Boating and Fisheries Patrol offices. Alternatively boaties can contact the GBRMPA on 1800 990 177 for a free map.



*Boating is still a popular way to experience the Marine Park*

# Tully's water plan a community effort

*The Tully community is leading the way in developing water management practices that make environmental and economic sense.*

Scientific research, community knowledge and agricultural industry expertise has come together to develop the Water Quality Improvement Plan.

The plan will identify ways to reduce pollutant loads in the Tully/Murray catchment.

CSIRO scientist and Far North Queensland Natural Resource Management Board programme leader Dr Frederieke Kroon said research showed the community was travelling well overall when it came to improving local water quality.

"The plan represents the next step from excellent work that primary producers are already undertaking to improve water quality," she said.

"This includes reduced fertiliser application, minimal tillage and green cane trash blanketing."

Carol Honchin, Water Quality Project Manager with the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority, commended the farming community for being so proactive.

"The industry has already taken steps in its management of sediments and nutrients, reducing inputs by up to 41 per cent in the last five to seven years which all helps to protect the Reef," she said.

"This planning process demonstrates the effectiveness of an inclusive approach in addressing these complex issues."

Water Quality Improvement Plan steering committee chair Bill Shannon said the plan wasn't about pointing fingers or accusing anyone of being polluters through poor farming practices.

"This whole process is about understanding how we all interact as a community and how this impacts on our waterways and the Reef," he said.

"We want to make sure we have practical solutions that make sense for the environment and the people implementing them."

Far North Queensland Natural Resource Management Board CEO Alan Dale said the next phase of the project involved a draft plan and



Davidson Creek near Tully during this year's wet season floods (photo courtesy of Frederieke Kroon, CSIRO)

implementation strategy being released in July for six weeks of community consultation.

"We have all sat around the table as a community, looked at the scientific findings and generated as much discussion and debate as possible."

Alan said the benefits of the plan process would hopefully include enabling industry to stay ahead of regulation.

"Regulation isn't the answer. We need a local approach with local

solutions for keeping our waterways and Reef healthy," he said.

"I believe the collaborative action that has helped here will be adopted by more and more communities trying to create realistic management practices."

The plan is being developed as part of the Australian and Queensland Governments' Reef Water Quality Protection Plan.

## Cleaning up is everybody's business

*One of Gladstone's most important but neglected wetlands got some tender loving care on Clean Up Australia Day, earlier this year.*

The Gladstone Local Marine Advisory Committee members donned gloves to clean up the natural wetland and adjacent foreshore at the South Trees Industrial Estate.

Committee Chairman Warwick Sheldon said it was important everyone did their bit to protect wetlands, which filter pollutants in water before it ends up in the Marine Park.

"Clean Up Australia Day provided the whole community with a great incentive to get out and make a real, practical difference," he said.

"We know the damage rubbish can do to marine animals so the day was a terrific opportunity to get rid of that rubbish properly before it makes its way to the Reef."

Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority Rockhampton-based Regional Liaison Manager Dave Lowe also joined the clean up.

"It was great to see the Gladstone Local Marine Advisory Committee participating in the local clean up," he said.

"We removed heaps of plastic and other litter from the area before it ended up in our waterways and ultimately the Great Barrier Reef."

## Helping the Reef starts at home

*Householders are encouraged to take some simple steps at home to help protect the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park.*

Over the coming months we'll share some of the everyday choices you can make to cut greenhouse gas emissions and reduce the impact of climate change on the Reef.

### Travel

*accounts for 33 per cent of household greenhouse gas emissions*

An average family sedan emits four tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions each year. To neutralise this you would need to plant seven fully-grown trees. Each kilometre of car travel avoided saves half a kilogram of greenhouse gas emissions and about 20 cents in operating costs. Remember walking or cycling creates zero greenhouse gas emissions and has health benefits as well.

### Water heating

*accounts for 16 per cent of household greenhouse gas emissions*

Using gas for heating water generates less than half the greenhouse gas per year than an electric system - equivalent to reducing your car usage by half.

Reduce greenhouse gas emissions and save money by taking shorter showers and only using hot water when necessary. If installing a new hot water system think about a solar system.

*Source: Australian Greenhouse Office and the Cooperative Research Centre for Greenhouse Accounting.*



*Walking to work helps reduce greenhouse gas emissions*

## Volunteers thanked for keeping eye on Reef

*Volunteers have been praised for helping keep an eye on coral bleaching in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park this summer.*

More than 145 tourism operators, conservation officers and keen members of the public participated in the coral bleaching monitoring programme BleachWatch.

BleachWatch involves reef users providing reports to the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA) on the health of coral at sites they visit regularly.

GBRMPA BleachWatch Coordinator Johnston Davidson said the information helped the agency understand coral bleaching and climate change's impact on the Reef.

"BleachWatch is an opportunity for everyone who goes out on the water to help scientists and researchers monitor coral bleaching," he said.

"Given the size of the Marine Park it helps us detect the early stages of

coral bleaching events over a wide geographic range.

"This year's reports were invaluable for confirming the status of coral communities and confirming there was no bleaching this summer.

"It was great to see so many people participating in the programme and we encourage more people to take part next summer."

Participants from Port Douglas in the north to Lady Elliot in the south have been providing BleachWatch reports since the programme began in 2002.

Participants are trained to detect any changes in coral colour or structure and submit online reports about the coral after each reef trip.

The information is used to help monitor bleaching, with scientists visiting any sites that have bleached to collect more information.

The on-ground monitoring occurs in conjunction with other monitoring, such as the new satellite monitoring system ReefTemp.

## Protected Species

### Seabirds

The Great Barrier Reef is home to approximately 215 species of birds, of which 29 are seabirds that are attracted to the region for its plentiful fish and squid.

Between 1.4 and 1.7 million seabirds breed in the World Heritage Area. Twenty-five per cent of islands in the Marine Park have nesting birds. Birds add nutrients to cays and carry seeds that contribute to terrestrial flora.

### Threats

Human impacts are among the main threats, particularly visitors who unknowingly disturb nests or scare off breeding adults. Other threats may include defence exercises, entanglement in fishing gear, predatory cats, and traditional egg collecting.

### What's being done?

Many islands and cays have annual and seasonal closures and restrict visitor numbers to protect breeding birds. International agreements also aim to protect birds.

### What can I do?

Birds are common on many beaches and islands. Keep boats well away from birds, steer clear of nests, watch your step around camouflaged eggs and chicks, avoid loud noise and leave the area if birds appear stressed.

### Useful information

[www.gbrmpa.gov.au/corp\\_site/key\\_issues/conservation](http://www.gbrmpa.gov.au/corp_site/key_issues/conservation)  
[www.gbrmpa.gov.au/corp\\_site/info\\_services/publications](http://www.gbrmpa.gov.au/corp_site/info_services/publications)





## Great Keppel land back with Traditional Owners

*Woppaburra Traditional Owners celebrated an historic milestone when they recently received freehold title to 170ha of land on Great Keppel Island.*

Deeds to five parcels of former unallocated state land were handed to 40 trustees at a ceremony on Great Keppel Island.

The ceremony included traditional dancing and speeches by elders, followed by the first meeting of the Woppaburra Land Trust.

The deed of grant to the Woppaburra Land Trust was the second in the Rockhampton region this year under the *Aboriginal Land Act 1991*.

The Great Keppel land transfer is the 58th since the Act came into affect. A total of 1.3 million hectares of land is now back with Traditional Owners.

The Woppaburra people are among more than 70 Traditional Owner groups with cultural connections to the land and the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park.



*Woppaburra Traditional Owners received freehold title to 170ha of land on Great Keppel Island*

## Small town prepares for a big celebration

*The town of Laura is gearing up for one of the biggest events on their calendar – the 17th Laura Aboriginal Dance and Cultural Festival.*

The biennial event is one of the few opportunities for remote communities in Cape York and the Gulf of Carpentaria to get together to celebrate their culture.

This year's event kicks off on 22 June and is expected to attract hundreds of dancers, musicians and artists from Cape York and others from around Australia.

It will include a range of events, activities and educational stalls.

Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority staff will be on hand to talk about working with Traditional Owners to manage sea country.

Laura is located 320kms north of Cairns and 142kms west of Cooktown.

It is an excellent starting place for exploring the culturally rich landscape and the northern part of Cape York Peninsula.

More information on the festival is located at [www.laurafestival.tv/index.html](http://www.laurafestival.tv/index.html).

## Sea Country Snippets

*Introducing Traditional Owner groups along the Great Barrier Reef coast*



### Torres Strait Islander groups

- Torres Strait Islander groups have a long cultural, traditional and economic connection with the Great Barrier Reef region.
- There is a history of traditional trade and exchange between Torres Strait Islander groups and Aboriginal groups along the northern sections of the east coast.
- Torres Strait Islander culture and tradition revolves around the connection to the sea and is expressed through dance, stories and song.



### Wanyurr Madjanji (Pronounced One-yurr Mad-jun-ji)

- Wanyurr Madjanji are a coastal clan of the greater Yindinji group from around the Russell River area.
- The Wanyurr Madjanji peoples have expressed concern about the amount of recreational and commercial activities in their sea country and would like to work with agencies in the future management of their sea country.



# Tourism helps keep the Reef great

*Tourist fees that support the care and management of the Great Barrier Reef have been increased.*

The standard Environmental Management Charge (EMC) paid by visitors on organised tours increased on 1 April from \$4.50 per person per day to \$5 per person per day.

This is the first increase in four years and is in line with Consumer Price Index rises since that time.

Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA) Tourism and Recreation Director Lisha Mulqueeny said EMC funds, collected by tourism operators from tourists, were forwarded to the GBRMPA to support its work managing the Reef.

"Tourists contribute over \$8 million each year to help look after the Reef," Lisha said.

"Tourism has an essential role in helping to protect the Great Barrier Reef.

"Contributions from visitors fund education and research activities, ranger patrols, public moorings, reef protection markers, site planning, information signs and maps.

"The support of the tourism industry through the collection of the EMC and other initiatives is vital to achieve a well-managed and supported Marine Park."

Lisha said posters had been developed to help tourism operators educate their guests about the EMC and how the money was used to manage the Reef.

"We've developed two full colour posters that can be downloaded free-of-charge from the GBRMPA website," she said.

"We're encouraging all tourism operators, booking offices and visitor information centres to print out the posters and display them on their office walls and on vessels.

"This will help ensure visitors understand how important their contribution is to protecting the world's largest World Heritage Area."

The posters are available for download at [www.gbrmpa.gov.au/corp\\_site/key\\_issues/tourism/publications](http://www.gbrmpa.gov.au/corp_site/key_issues/tourism/publications).

## Mucking around in muddy mangroves

*Twenty James Cook University student teachers recently swapped the classroom for the coastline.*

They undertook professional development with Reef HQ's Education Team to learn about mangroves, rocky shorelines, seagrass beds and beachfront communities.

Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority Education Manager Fred Nucifora said the training increased their confidence in taking students on excursions to the coast.

"It's important for them to realise that taking their students out to the coastline doesn't require a great deal of scientific knowledge or field experience," he said.

"We showed them the easy way to conduct educationally beneficial field work activities with their students, and more importantly, how to make learning fun and exciting."

Fred said the training provided the student teachers with an opportunity to observe and participate in various fieldwork activities.

"They learnt about the different plants and animals living in coastal habitats, their threats and what can be done to ensure a sustainable future for our coastline," he said.

"It's important teachers know how to conduct field exercises with



*Student teachers get hands on experience in outdoor education*

their students as children tend to grasp a concept a lot better if they can get out of the classroom and see first hand what they are being taught.

"The more students can understand the coastline and its importance and connection to the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park, the brighter the future will be for one of Australia's greatest icons – our Great Barrier Reef."

## Marine groups call for plastic bag ban

*Plastic bags should be banned to safeguard the marine life of the Great Barrier Reef, according to the Local Marine Advisory Committees.*

The Committee Chairs, representing coastal communities from Bundaberg to Cape York, made the call at their annual meeting in Townsville.

It comes as protected species such as turtles and dolphins continue to be choked or entangled in plastic bags.

The Chairs said consideration could be given to phasing out plastic bags, allowing people time to find alternatives for household items like bin liners.

There's evidence suggesting growing support among the community for reducing plastic, with the environmentally-friendly bags more popular than ever.

Reducing damaging pollution from plastic bags is important to help build the resilience of the Great Barrier Reef.

This is especially important when it is at serious risk from threats such as climate change.

The 11 Local Marine Advisory Committees are voluntary, community-based groups that provide advice to the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority.

Representatives include local community members, interest groups and government agencies such as Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service and Queensland Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries.



*Plastic bags that wash into waterways harm marine life*



## Cleaning up school grounds

Reef Guardian Schools across Queensland took part in the annual Schools Clean-Up Day, an initiative of Clean Up Australia.

The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority's Regional Liaison Officer based in Rockhampton Kalair Conaghan was at Taranganba State School to lend a hand on the day.

She said grade three students at the school had fun in the sun and enjoyed getting out of the classroom to tidy up their school grounds.



Ethan Munnerley takes part in the clean up

## Students sink into Seaweeek

Southern Cross Catholic School in Townsville received a visit from Reef HQ's Lucky T Turtle recently as part of Seaweeek 2007.

This year's theme was marine bycatch matters, with the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority's Megan Sperring talking to students about bycatch.

Bycatch, the part of the fishing catch that is incidental to the target species, can occur in commercial and recreational fisheries.

In recent years it has become one of the most significant issues affecting fisheries management, both nationally and globally.

During Seaweeek the Education Team also ran two free specifically developed education sessions and a free reef videoconference to schools focussing on bycatch.

## Out of the classroom and into the creek

Central State School students took a special canoe trip down the Ross River and Stuart Creek in Townsville to learn more about local wetlands.

The trip was part of a trial wetlands teaching unit under the Queensland Wetlands Programme, a joint Australian and Queensland Government initiative.

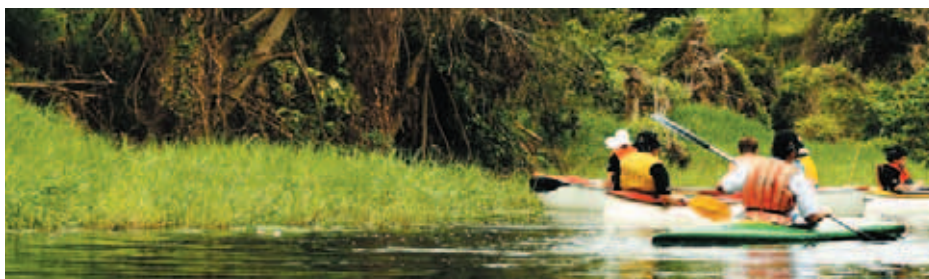
The trip saw students monitor everything from water quality and fish species to insects, soil and vegetation cover.

At each site along the waterway the students collected information about

the creek and its surrounding land use.

This helped piece together its health, any impacts and ultimately understand its value to the Great Barrier Reef.

The students worked with Conservation Volunteers Australia, the Australian Centre for Tropical Freshwater Research, the Environmental Protection Agency, Scouts and the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority to learn the skills needed to complete the fieldwork.



Students enjoy canoeing down the river

## Celebrating five years of Reef Guardianship

The fifth year of the Reef Guardian Schools programme kicked off recently.

Congratulations to those schools that have been involved in the programme since its inception in 2003:

- Boyne Island Environmental Education Centre
- Mercy College (Mackay)
- Cardwell State School
- Belgian Gardens State School (Townsville)
- Townsville State High School
- Northern Beaches State High School
- Burdekin Christian College
- Kelso State School (Townsville)
- Glenmore State School (Rockhampton)
- Bowen State School.



## White turtle named on first birthday

Reef HQ Aquarium's "white" green turtle has been given a first birthday present – a name.

Minty was the name chosen from over 200 entries in a competition run by Reef HQ.

The three judges of the competition - Fred Nucifora of Reef HQ, Fay Griffin of Mackay Turtle Watch and Steve Price of Radio 4TO - announced the turtle's name at a special event in the aquarium.

Reef HQ Director Karen Vohland said it had been just under a year since Minty was found stranded and alone on a beach by the Mackay Turtle Watch monitoring team.

Minty was just days old when it was brought to Reef HQ's Turtle Rehabilitation Centre following an eight hour mercy dash by staff to collect it.

The turtle has thrived since then under the watchful support of Reef HQ carers and is expected to live well into its hundreds.

"Minty is hugely popular with visitors," Karen said.

"Minty's uniqueness has attracted a lot of attention from staff, volunteers and visitors."

Karen said it would be another 30 years before Minty reached maturity and its gender could be determined.

The turtle has leucism, which means it has melanin but its pigment-generating cells are suppressed.

Such a skin condition is uncommon and unlikely to be seen often as leucistic turtles rarely survive in the wild.



Minty was named as part of its first birthday celebration

## Turtle travelled home to Mackay for release

A juvenile green turtle that spent three months in the Reef HQ Aquarium Turtle Rehabilitation Centre has been released into the ocean off Mackay.

Mack, named after the town of Mackay, was suffering from floating syndrome and pneumonia when rescued by Mackay Turtle Watch from Eimeo Beach.

Reef HQ Public Programmes Manager Julie Spencer said the young turtle had made a full recovery.

"Mack was ready for release after a dramatic improvement in health during the three months at Reef HQ Aquarium's Turtle Rehabilitation Centre," she said.

"We used specialist care, anti-biotics and a high-protein diet of chopped prawns, whitebait and mussels to build up Mack's weight and strength.

"Mack went for a swim in Reef HQ's largest aquarium exhibit prior to release and was very active and diving well."

Fay Griffin from Mackay Turtle Watch said it was great Mack had bounced back so well.

"We helped Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service release the turtle off Seaforth near Mackay," she said.

"The summer water temperature gave Mack an opportunity to find seagrass and get reacquainted with the natural marine environment."

Julie said Mack was tagged by Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service staff to enable them to learn more about turtle behaviours and the distances they travelled.

"We ask anyone who sees a marked or tagged turtle to contact their nearest Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service office," she said.

"Anyone who sees a sick, injured or dead turtle, whale, dolphin or dugong should report it to the EPA Hotline on 1300 130 372."

Six out of the world's seven species of marine turtles are found in the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area and all are protected species.

## Look out for us

Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority staff will be attending regional and boating shows along the Great Barrier Reef coast in the coming months. Make sure you come up and say hello – we'll be able to bring you up-to-date with our activities and projects or give you a Zoning Map. Don't forget you can always contact us directly by emailing [info@gbmpa.gov.au](mailto:info@gbmpa.gov.au) or by phoning (07) 4750 0700.



our great barrier reef  
let's keep it great

## Interesting Facts

### Why is the ocean blue?

Ocean water is bluest where there is the least amount of sea life to reflect light. Water close to the coast is a lighter colour as it's shallower and because plankton and sediment suspended in the water act like tiny mirrors, reflecting light.

### Pearls of wisdom

The largest pearl ever found came from a giant clam in the Philippines. It weighed more than six kilograms, looked like a human brain, and was called the Pearl of Lao-tze.

# Chairman says **goodbye** after eight years



*After eight years at the helm, Virginia Chadwick is saying goodbye to the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority.*

The first female chairman of the marine management agency will formally leave in July, leaving a lasting legacy in her wake.

Virginia has provided a long and distinguished service during her time in this role at the forefront of important marine management decisions.

Among her most significant projects and achievements was overseeing and leading the Representative Areas Programme.

Virginia led the agency through a five-year planning process, encompassing everything from consultation to legislation and implementation.

This included the most extensive community consultation process ever conducted on an Australian environmental issue.

After the agency analysed first submissions and representations, Virginia worked with the board and staff to develop and issue the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Draft Zoning Plan.

Under Virginia's stewardship, the whole agency joined forces for this project. Virginia brought commitment and skills to a difficult negotiation process.

The result was an outstanding example of marine managers working together for positive environmental outcomes.

It set an international benchmark in marine conservation and generated international awareness of Australia's sophisticated environmental conservation initiatives.

Virginia's role in overseeing the agency's involvement in other management tools – such as the Trawl Management Plan, Water Quality Action Plan and Reefline Plan – are also noteworthy.

More recently, Virginia strongly represented the needs and interests of the agency during the Australian Government's review into the *Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Act 1975*.

This included close liaison with staff and the review implementation team, as well as taking a key role in coordinating the implementation of review recommendations.

Most importantly, Virginia has left her mark on the staff and agency in general – a culture of motivation and achievement, rigorous management and listening to the needs of the community.

Her genuine interest in environmental issues saw her actively involved across all the agency's core business – everything from school education programmes and tourism industry partnerships to conservation and research.

This interest and involvement won the respect of colleagues and stakeholders alike, and her presence at the agency will be missed by those who worked with her.

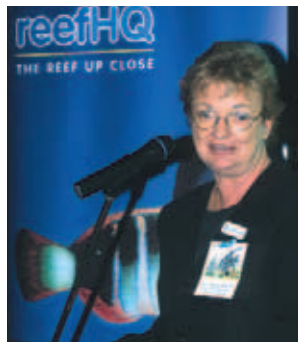
Prior to her appointment as Chairman, Virginia served in the NSW Legislative Council.

She also held various Shadow Ministerial and Ministerial positions and was the first woman elected as President of the Legislative Council.

Making significant contributions in the field of research and education, she has been formally recognised on many occasions for these contributions by her peers.

Among the accolades was being awarded an Office in the General Division of the Order of Australia in the Queen's Birthday 2005 Honours List.

While she may have officially retired from this role, those who know her well believe someone with this much interest in serving the community will never really retire.



# Marine Park Partnerships

Profile of Acting Senior Project Manager – Community Partnerships Group



## Di Walker

Di Walker's passion for the ocean has taken her across the globe, both personally and professionally.

Growing up she lived in South Africa, Brazil and Switzerland before working in hands-on marine conservation roles in Fiji and Honduras.

"Working closely with the local communities in Fiji and Honduras highlighted the importance of including people in the management of a natural resource," she said.

Her role as acting Senior Project Manager with the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority's (GBRMPA) Community Partnerships Group seemed like the logical next step.

"I finished a Masters in Protected Area Management at James Cook University and it was one of my dreams to one day work for the GBRMPA," she said.

"I have worked in marine park management overseas with many different people from different cultures and backgrounds.

"The GBRMPA is always upheld as one of the best management examples. I wanted to find out for myself if it was true!"

During her three-year stint in Fiji, Di was involved in setting up the Mamanuca Environment Society, a non-government organisation aimed at raising awareness about the marine environment in the Mamanuca Islands.

It was funded by the 28 tourism businesses in the area. She worked in partnership with the resorts, the four local Fijian villages, the chiefs and their paramount chief, the Ministers of Tourism, Environment and Education.

"There were few resources and I worked alone in a large area with a lot of conflicts; it was a huge challenge," she said.

Prior to that she spent a year and a half in Honduras with Coral Cay Conservation where she trained over 40 volunteers each month to identify corals, fish, algae and invertebrates.

Working with her team, she dived twice a day to collect information on biodiversity hotspots for setting up marine protected areas.

Di brings a fresh set of eyes and a unique skill set to her internal liaison role of achieving best-practice community engagement at the agency.

"Having come from a less traditional marine background gives me a different perspective on Marine Park management and working with local communities," she said.

"I hope I can play a small part in making sure the Marine Park is recognised as a world-class example of managing a large natural area in partnership with local communities."

Like most people who love the ocean, Di's passion for all things marine extends to her recreational pursuits.

Kite-surfing, diving and "anything beach or water based" top her list of hobbies.

## Creature Feature

### Barnacles

- Live on hard surfaces (rocks, boat hulls, jetty piles), other crustaceans and even hitch a ride on turtles and whales.
- Feed with cirri, modified feathery legs used to sweep the water like sieves, and collect particles of food like plankton.
- Stay put after finding a space to live - pushing legs out through a central hole in a cone-shaped shell, it spends its life lying on its back kicking food into its mouth.



## Doing your bit to look after it!

*Drains and waterways connect the land to the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park. Whether you live in a major city, small town or in the country, you can help look after the environment at home, work, school or on the land.*

➔ Keep drains and gutters free of chemicals and rubbish - what goes into drains, creeks and rivers may end up in the ocean

➔ Wash your car on the lawn instead of in your driveway or on the street as detergents wash into nearby drains and may end up in local waterways or the Reef

➔ Minimise soil erosion by maintaining vegetation and groundcover around your home, farm or workplace – this helps protect soil from washing away during heavy rain



## Community Links

### A profile of **Robyn Bell**

Sustainable Farming Projects Manager  
for Mackay Canegrowers Limited  
and Mackay Marine Advisory  
Committee member



After more than two years in Mackay, Robyn Bell says the city has one of the best climates around.

And she's well versed to make the claim, having lived in most states and territories in Australia.

She is equally taking to her new role in the region as the Sustainable Farming Projects Manager for Mackay Canegrowers Limited.

"The thing I love about my job is the people I get to meet," she said.

"I work with people from a range of backgrounds and I learn different things from every one of them."

Robyn works closely with sugar industry groups to promote sustainable farming practices and projects.

This includes liaising with natural resource management groups in the region to plan a way forward for a sustainable future for the environment and the cane growing industry.

"I make positive contributions to the industry by participating in forums, workshops and general discussions with farmers through to policy makers," she said.

"My aim is to have successful outcomes in every project I am involved in.

"Some aspects of projects may fail, however we can learn from our failures as well as our successes.

"Life is one continual learning experience."

Since joining Canegrowers six months ago she has been involved in a range of interesting projects.

Among them was having input into the final draft of the Mackay Whitsunday Regional Coastal Management Plan as a Regional Consultative Group Member.

Robyn's previous involvement in the sugar industry was two years in an environmental/sustainable farming capacity.

Currently, Robyn sits on the Mackay Marine Advisory Committee as a Canegrowers representative.

She is also on the Management Committee for the Pioneer Catchment Landcare Group.

Robyn says she wants to be happy and successful in whatever she chooses to do.

Her personal goal is to one day own a boat and have the opportunity to explore the beautiful Queensland coast.

## Calendar of events

22 May 2007

International Biodiversity Day

05 June 2007

World Environment Day

08 June 2007

World Oceans Day

14 June 2007

Capricorn Coast LMAC meeting

19 June 2007

Hinchinbrook LMAC meeting

20 June 2007

Gladstone LMAC meeting

21 June 2007

Townsville LMAC meeting

21 June 2007

Burnett LMAC meeting

02 – 08 July 2007

NAIDOC 2007

## GBRMPA contacts

Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority  
2-68 Flinders Street  
PO Box 1379  
Townsville Qld 4810

Phone: (07) 4750 0700  
Fax: (07) 4772 6093  
Email: [info@gbbrmpa.gov.au](mailto:info@gbbrmpa.gov.au)

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our great barrier reef  
let's keep it great



Natural  
Heritage  
Trust

Helping Communities  
Protect Australia  
An Australian Government Initiative