

Coralines

MAGAZINE OF
THE GREAT BARRIER REEF AQUARIUM



Turtle hatchings a public affair

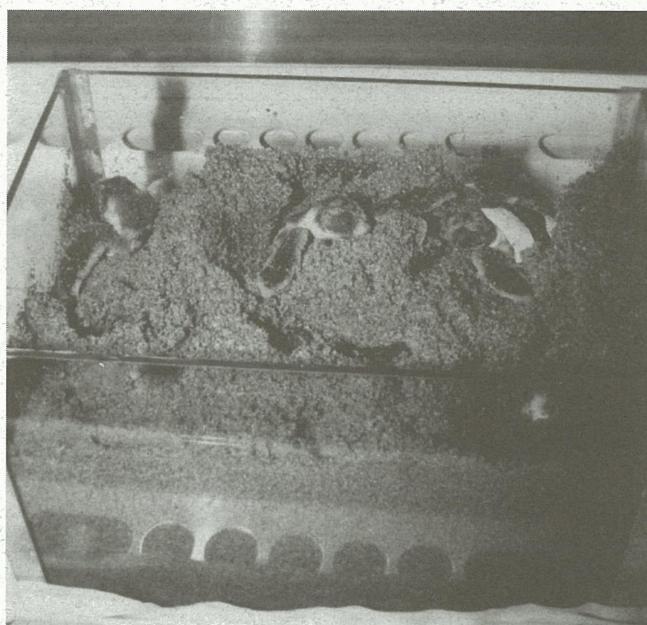
Twelve flatback turtles emerged bleary eyed from their shells on 11 January this year but not in the usual privacy of some coral cay in the Great Barrier Reef region. Aquarium visitors were able to, for the first time ever, witness the turtles hatching out of their shells. For two months the fragile eggs had been incubated in a humidicrib donated by Townsville company, Medtek Pty Ltd. The turtles' excellent health can be attributed to this as the humidicrib created the right conditions for the sensitive eggs to develop.

The hatching process is a slow one. The turtles break out of their shells, slowly crawling up through the sand and then spend the next few days resting and using the remains of their yolk sacs for food. This process takes three or four days and only then are they ready for a swim. The Medtek humidicrib enabled about 1500 people to see parts of the hatching process.

The eggs were incubated at an average temperature of 30°C in a humid environment. The temperature of incubation determines the sex of turtles - higher temperatures for females and lower temperatures for males. Although their sex is not recognisable till later in life, we know by the incubation temperature that the Aquarium hatchlings will probably all be female.

Turtle egg collecting, hatching and the subsequent rearing has been occurring at the Aquarium for some years now. Aquarium volunteers and staff and researchers from the Queensland Department of Environment and Heritage collect in November. The eggs are carefully transported to the Aquarium as the embryo is very sensitive to movement and then checked weekly to monitor development.

After their first month, most of the hatchlings are released into the ocean. Those that remain capture the curiosity of our visitors and help create a greater understanding about turtles and hopefully marine life in general.



The first flatback turtles emerge from their shells in the Medtek humidicrib. Photo: G. Shield



Volunteers keep up a rigorous routine of food preparation, feeding, weighing and measuring. Visitors can witness the youngsters being fed everyday at 12.20 pm on the Observation Deck otherwise the baby flatbacks will be lazing about in their pool in the Coral Cay exhibit.



Exhausted after breaking out of its shell, a baby flatback turtle rests on the sand. Photo: G. Shield

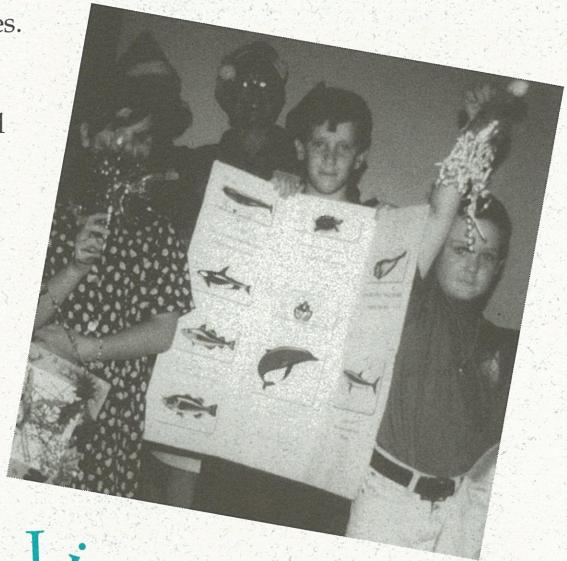
Can Santa sing Jingle Bells under water?

Many Aquarium Members found out that he can! To the delight of the younger Members, they were amazed with his mode of transport and most impressed with his board shorts!

Jolly St Nick arrived with a splash in the Aquarium's gorgeous coral reef. Then he zoomed in on his magical sleigh, powered by beautiful sea horses. He spent time talking with the children then...PRESENTS!!

It was probably the best Christmas party ever, full of fun, games and excitement. Exploring the Aquarium at night, meeting new people and most of all celebrating Christmas, made this a night to remember. Finlay (you must have seen him by now) was quite a party animal, gate crashing just as we were singing the carols. What a way to end the year. Seeing so many happy faces and hearing the excited laughter of families as they shared Christmas cheer makes the Members' Christmas party so warm and special.

Santa promised he would return again this year to meet with his friends at the Aquarium. He says it's the coolest place in the tropics. It may seem a long way away, but mark December 8 on your calendar now for a different slant on Christmas!



Jingle Bells ...



*Jingle Bells Jingle Shells Jingle all the way.
Photos: S. Hutchinson*



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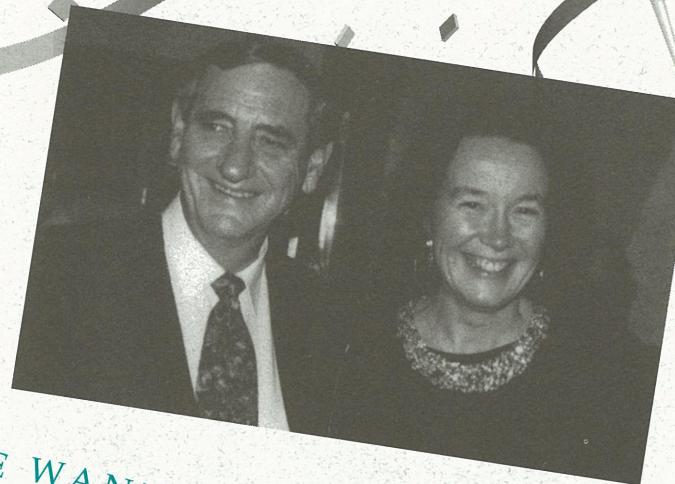
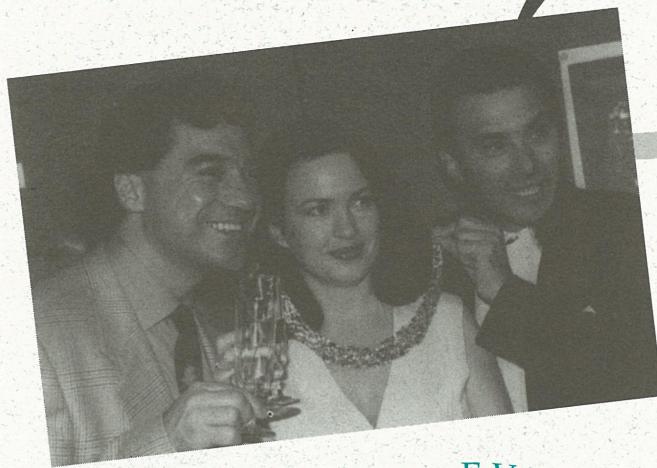
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Great Barrier Reef Aquarium
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The views expressed in this magazine are not necessarily those of the Great Barrier Reef Aquarium and the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority.

The Aquarium is a self funding section of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority.

Cocktails with the crabs, party with the stars



OH LA LA.....EVERYONE WANTS THAT NECKLACE

When the doors close and lights go down not all the reef creatures are ready for bed. In fact it's party time on both sides of the glass. Have you ever been to a function at the Aquarium? Over the last year we have hosted many evening events. Formal dinners, film premieres, cocktail parties, conference receptions, weddings, product launches... It's downright exhausting if you're a fish but what a way to impress.

The *who's who* of 1994 social events is a long list, but one of

the most memorable must be that of Loloma Jewellers. Their launch of the Argyle Diamond Collection was held at a lavish cocktail party with 200 guests. Models paraded the stunning array of precious jewels against a beautifully lit coral reef exhibit. Other pieces were displayed inside the stonefish aquarium and the eel aquarium. It was diamond extravaganza indeed! The million dollar diamond necklace was tried on by most of the female guests under the watchful eye of the stonefish... Oh! I mean the security guards.

Christmas parties filled the

social calendar for November and December.

Coca Cola Bottlers had a live band and a wild night by all accounts. Ansett Australia guests were entertained by Aquarium divers making an unexpected splash down.

For a memorable, unique and well organised event, book a function with us. The Aquarium Functions Coordinator is full of creative ideas to ensure yours is unique. If you want to know more, please call Lee Langley on 818886. Mention that you are a member for a discount.

A Star is Spawned

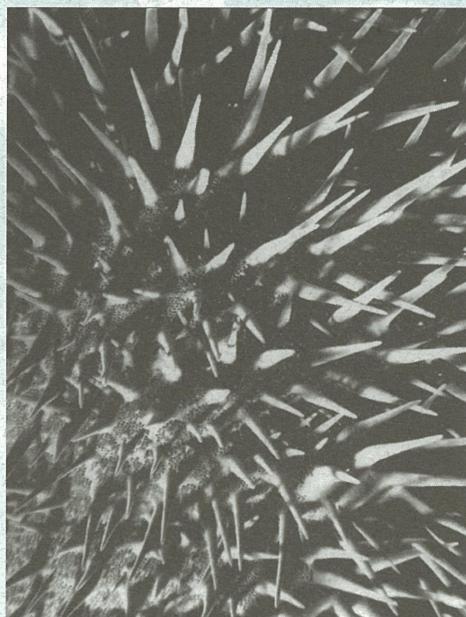
The notorious crown-of-thorns starfish (COTS) is nearly always present on coral reefs but not always visible. To be out of sight is not to be out of the minds of researchers trying to understand this thorny problem. Scientists at the Great Barrier Reef Aquarium, in collaboration with scientists at the Australian Institute of Marine Science, are growing juvenile COTS spawned from eggs and sperm in a significant experiment.

Approximately one-sixth of the Great Barrier Reef has been affected by outbreaks of coral eating crown-of-thorns starfish over the last 30 years. Despite the apparent breeding success of the starfish in nature, it has been extremely difficult to rear them in laboratory experiments. Until recently, the survival rate of cultured juveniles during the first month of life has been so low (less than 5%) that progress of research into

juvenile ecology of the starfish was seriously affected. Rearing of juvenile COTS involves four stages: spawning; larval rearing; settlement; and grow-out. During the larval (planktonic) stage, which lasts 16–21 days, the larvae are fed specially cultured phytoplankton which is maintained in larval rearing tanks at a particular concentration.

After the larval stage, the starfish have developed enough to settle on their preferred initial food, crustose coralline algae. Here they graze and grow to 3–4 cm in diameter in about 6 months at which time they commence eating coral.

The juvenile size of the crown-of-thorns starfish and its preferred habitat of crevices have made it difficult to study the early life of the animal. Work at the Aquarium will be assessing conditions that allow starfish juveniles to survive the first six months of life.



A close up of spawning female crown-of-thorns. Photo: Dr P. Moran

ACTIVITIES PROGRAM

The following activities are free for Members or available with the cost of Aquarium admission.

*THEATRETTTE PRESENTATION ON THE GREAT BARRIER REEF: 10.00 & 11.00 am & 12.00, 1.00, 2.00, 3.00 & 4.00 pm (Daily)

*DIVER TALKBACK: 10.30 am (DAILY)

Talk to the diver in the water of the Coral Reef Exhibit. Amazing stories with your questions answered from the deep.

*DISCOVERY TOUR: 11.20 am & 2.20 pm (DAILY)

***ANIMAL FEEDING TOUR:** Follow the Aquarist and see how Aquarium animals eat. Routine is not part of their diet so it might be Tuesday and Saturday one week and Wednesday and Sunday the next, always at 3.20 pm. Phone to confirm the day.

***SHARK FEEDING:** Sunday, Tuesday and Thursday at 3.30 pm The feeding is often preceded or followed by a talk on sharks.

***KIDS' CORNER (a craft session for children):**
Saturday and Sunday 11.00 am - 12.00 noon & 2.00 - 3.00 pm
School Holidays: 11.00 am - 12.00 noon (Daily)

***SUNDAY SESSIONS:** 2nd and 4th Sunday of the month: 1.30-2.00 pm Sunday sessions are great! You have a chance to explore the reef in more detail with experienced Aquarium staff. Why not get out of the summer heat, relax and be fascinated.

Other activities may be scheduled during the day.
Please phone to confirm times.

**The Aquarium reserves the right to cancel or change program times. To confirm daily events please telephone the Aquarium on (077) 818886 Monday to Friday and (077) 818891 weekends only.*

UNDERWATER DREAMERS

An Aquarium sleepout just for kids!

Kids, have you ever wanted to sleep with the sharks or curl up with a coral? Then join us and all your favourite fishy friends for a night of art, craft and games. See the parrotfish make its own sleeping bag. Watch the day creatures go to sleep as the night stalkers reveal themselves. Bring your own sleeping bag and torch. Light supper and breakfast provided. NO PARENTS ALLOWED!

Ages:	6-12 years	
Date:	Friday, 7 April 1995	
Time:	7.00 pm -8.00 am	
Cost:		
Members	1st child	\$22.00
	2nd child	\$18.00
	3rd child	\$16.00
Non-members	1st child	\$27.00
	2nd child	\$23.00
	3rd child	\$21.00
Bookings close:	Friday, 31 March 1995	
Minimum:	20	Maximum: 30

CORAL REEF BIOLOGY

A marine biology course for beginners

This course aims to give you a chance to appreciate the Reef, right on your doorstep. Qualified marine biologists will inform and entertain you with lectures and workshops conducted over six nights. No prior knowledge of coral reef biology is required!

Dates:	Course commences 24 April 1995	
Time:	7.00 - 9.00 pm	
Cost:	Members	
\$70.00		
Non-members	\$90.00	
Students/Pensioners	\$80.00	
(valid cards required)		
Bookings close:	Thursday, 13 April 1995	
Minimum:	30	Maximum: 60

**GREAT BARRIER REEF
AQUARIUM**



NIGHT STALKERS

The underwater darkness is full of secrets and surprises. Find out what happens in the Aquarium when the sun goes down. Aquarium interpreters will be your guiding lights for two fascinating hours of exploration. Don't forget your own torch.

Date: Friday, 19 May 1995

Time: 7.00-9.00 pm

Cost: Members

\$15.00 Family of 2 adults and 2 children
(\$3.00 for each additional child)
\$7.50 Individual

Non-members

\$40.00 Family of 2 adults and 2 children
(\$8.00 or each additional child)
\$15.00 Individual

Bookings close: Friday, 12 May 1995

Minimum: 20 **Maximum:** 30

HOME AQUARIUM COURSE

Learn to create your own slice of the reef. Uncover the tricks of the trade when Aquarium experts show you how to set up, stock and maintain your own salt water aquarium in our two-night course.

Date: Monday 22 May and Monday 29 May 1995

Time: 7.00-9.30 pm

Cost: Members \$35.00

Non-members \$45.00

Students/Pensioners \$40.00
(valid cards required)

Bookings close: Monday, 15 May 1995

Minimum: 30 **Maximum:** 60

1995 STUDENT VOLUNTEER INTAKE

Student volunteers contribute their time and effort to help the Aquarium expand and improve its services to the public. The students also gain experience in a wide range of areas, such as helping Aquarium visitors understand about the reef, assisting with Friends programs, craft activities, clerical work and some animal husbandry.

The program is open to students in Year 10. Application forms will be available from 1 May 1995.

An Open Day for prospective student volunteers will be held on Sunday 28 May 1995. Applications close 28 May 1995. Training will be held during the school holidays from 19 June to 23 June 1995.

BEHIND-THE-SCENES TOUR

Members only

What's the inside story? What goes on behind the scenes? All will be revealed when you journey on our behind-the-scenes tour which is free to members. All children must be accompanied by an adult.

Date: Sunday, 7 May 1995

Time: 3.00-4.00 pm

Cost: FREE TO MEMBERS

Bookings close: Friday, 28 April 1995

Minimum: 15 **Maximum:** 20

TAILOR-MADE TOURS - AFTER DARK

Who (or what!) roams the galleries of the Aquarium after dark? Become a biological 'peeping Tom' and discover the unique nocturnal behaviour of some of your favourite Aquarium residents. Find out whether the sharks stop swimming at night. These exciting tours will give your group the answers to this and much more.

Date: Whenever you like (as long as someone hasn't booked us out first)

Time: 7.30-9.30 pm

Cost: Contact Aquarium Office for prices

Minimum: 25 **Maximum:** 100

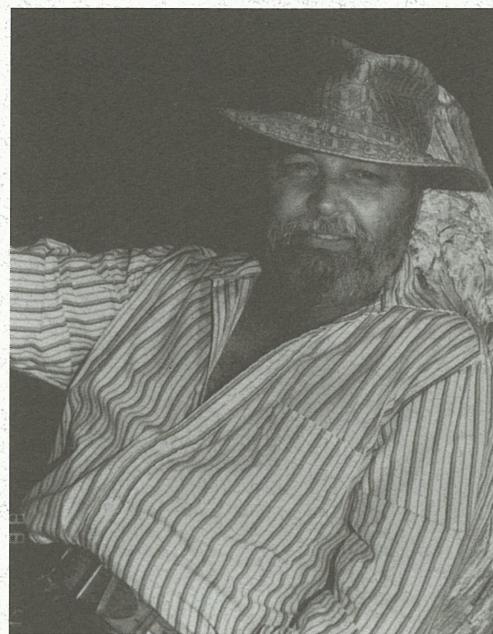
Australia's underwater Ambassador

Multi award winning photographer and naturalist Neville Coleman has been recording the ocean's fauna and flora for 28 years. With over 10 000 dives logged, 100 000 photographs and 40 marine natural history books to his credit, Neville is one of the world's most prolific authors on aspects of the marine environment.

'Words and pictures are the most powerful weapons we have to combat the environmental woes of the world. They put hope back into the hearts, spirit the souls and light fires in the minds of apathy and ignorance', Neville said. 'Every day and night we are touched by the essence of nature. Photography allows that touch to linger.'

As an author and the editor of the acclaimed 'Underwater Geographic' magazine, he has made a major contribution to communicating underwater exploration, education and conservation. He has recorded and photographed over 10 000 species of marine animals; of those 400 are new discoveries, many of which bear his name. His articles have been published by over 150 magazines and his photographs reproduced by the National Geographic Society, Time-Life and Reader's Digest.

On Neville's visit to the Aquarium last August, he was so impressed that he's decided to come back for a week in March to present 'Festival of the Sea'. This will involve a week of marine-oriented activities including lectures and a photographic exhibition. Be it biologists, dive enthusiasts or a classroom full of bright-eyed primary school students, Neville's approach to the art of communication mirrors his vast experience in the field and a great sense of humour. Don't miss this special week.



FESTIVAL OF THE SEA

Sunday 26 March to Sunday 2 April 1995

UNDERWATER GEOGRAPHIC PHOTOGRAPHIC EXHIBITION - Daily 9.00-5.00 pm

Is the largest travelling aquatic natural history photo gallery in the southern hemisphere. Made up of over 100 prints, the exhibition is designed to raise awareness of our aquatic wildlife and to promote photography as a hands-on educational medium in which everybody can take part.

BREAKFAST FOR AQUARIUM VOLUNTEERS - Sunday 26 March 8.00 am

TALKS AND TOURS WITH NEVILLE COLEMAN - Sunday 26 March 11.00-3.00 pm

MARINE EDUCATION WITH NEVILLE COLEMAN - Tues, Wed, Thurs and Friday 9.00-11.00 am

OPEN LECTURE: 'SEX IN THE SEA' - Wednesday 29 March 7.30 - 8.30 pm \$5/person

Where did 'necking' originate? What are some of the bizarre but successful methods used by nature for continuation of the species. Find out the answer to these questions and more when Neville Coleman presents this lecture.

A NIGHT ON THE REEF - Thursday 30 March 7.00-9.00 pm

A chance for visitors to explore the Aquarium at night with Neville Coleman. Adults \$9.00 and children \$5.00, Members FREE.

UNDER THE SEA DINNER, GUEST SPEAKER NEVILLE COLEMAN - Friday 31 March 7.30 pm

TALKS AND TOURS WITH NEVILLE COLEMAN - Saturday 1 April 11.00-3.00 pm

PURE PLEASURE REEF TRIP - Sunday 2 April 9.00-5.00 pm

Wild Science for Schools

By studying nature, we may discover some ingenious solutions to human problems! This theme is explored in some of the newest education programs for schools.

Sink or Swim

How do animals (and people for that matter) move about under water? Activities and hands-on experiments reveal how reef animals have adapted to solve the problems of pressure, buoyancy, and friction. What human parallels might be found? The principle behind a diver's buoyancy vest is the same as for swim bladders in fish. The technically advanced streamlining of boats and submarines has applied concepts learnt from marine animals. Squids discovered jet propulsion long before humans did!

Undercurrents

This interactive program is bound to make waves! Students will better understand the effect of waves and currents on reefs and beaches. They will see why mud and silt from the land causes problems when washed onto reefs. Other activities show how certain colours of light are absorbed at different depths in the ocean.

Put on your dive masks kids for a deep-dive simulation.

Pollution Solution

Pollution and water quality are the subject of another new education program. Students learn how to test for water quality and better understand the effect which some pollutants have on coral reefs.

Heads, Tails, Fins, and Scales

Students investigate the methods used to classify reef animals and how classification systems help people better understand living things.

These new activities aim to equip students with the skills needed to carry out hands-on scientific investigations and practical problem solving. In all of the new programs it is hoped that students will appreciate the enormous amount of practical knowledge we can learn by studying the reef, as well as the benefits to all in ensuring its protection.

Coralines

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Proudly sponsored by I DO I DO I DO Consolidated

DO YOU WANT TO SEE YOUR NAME HERE?

Become a sponsor of Coralines and keep your name in print.
Contact Loretta Saunders on 81 8886 for more details.

How much for 364 days at the Reef?

A

lot! But as an Aquarium Member you can sit back, relax and be the armchair underwater naturalist that any *Life Be In It* campaigner would be proud of. Your membership has bought you the most amazing home aquarium imaginable without the cleaning, feeding, water changes and all the other fuss.

So how much? After five years without a price increase, the only way to go is up. From April 1st (and this is no joke) all membership fees will rise - but don't panic. Current members can renew their membership prior to that date at the old price with the usual 5% discount for early renewal. Don't miss out on this one. You'll be able to visit the Great Barrier Reef Aquarium in 1996 for 1994 prices. You'll also be in the running for a fabulous Ansett family holiday.



Pure Pleasure Tours, Cruises, Holidays

TOWNSVILLE, CAIRNS

BEING AN AQUARIUM MEMBER IS PURE PLEASURE
Sunday 2 April 1995

Aquarium Members Trip to Kelso Reef with Neville Coleman -
acclaimed underwater photographer and author

SPECIAL PRICES FOR MEMBERS ONLY

ADULTS: \$66 (usually \$110)

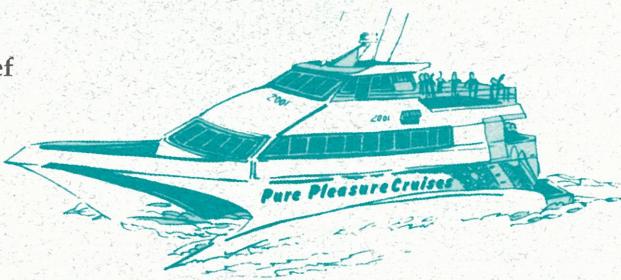
CHILDREN: \$36 (usually \$55)

SCUBA GEAR HIRE: \$36 FOR 2 DIVES (usually \$70)

There has never been a better time to see the reef

- enjoy a beautiful day on the water
- eat a delicious smorgasbord lunch
- travel the smooth riding Wavepiercer 2001

Dive and snorkel with an underwater expert.



Book through Pure Pleasure Cruises, at the Great Barrier Reef Wonderland
To receive these discounts you must present your Aquarium Membership Card and prepay.
To book and phone charge call 213555 and quote your Membership number.

SPONSORSHIP

What's it all about?



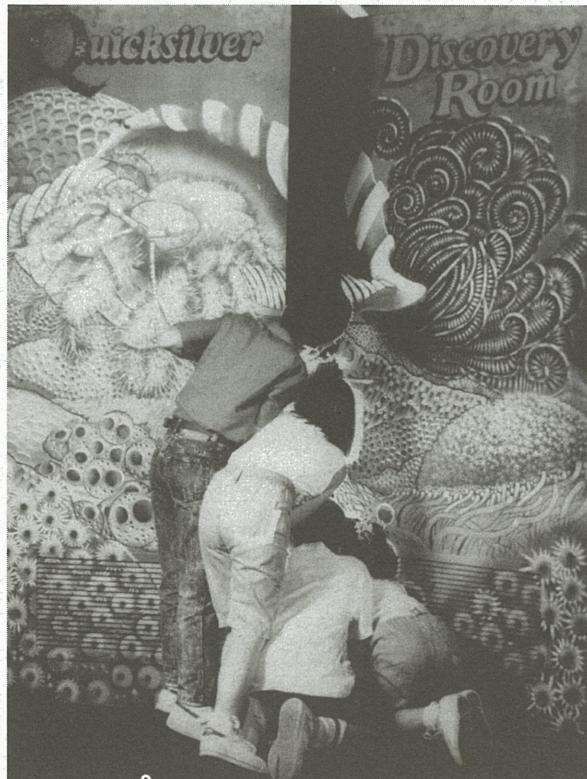
Amongst the Sponsors list on the adjacent page is a very special group . They are the Aquarium's founding sponsors - those who have been with us from day one. If you are new in town you may be interested to know how these sponsors fit in to our organisation.

Back in the mid eighties a bicentennial grant was awarded to the Great Barrier Reef Wonderland Association to build the Aquarium. It was a generous amount of money but fell short what was needed to create a world class facility. The Great Barrier Reef Wonderland Association - a group of dynamic civic leaders - set themselves a target of one and a half million dollars to fit out the public galleries of the Aquarium. Local businesses, organisations and individuals could not help being infected by the enthusiasm of this group and their target was achieved through the incredible generosity and confidence of those listed below.

New squids on the block

Since that time other sponsors have come to provide support or renew their support in many different ways. There's been wood and glass and paint, catering services, lighting, dollars and cents, discounted prices on products we need, advertising, editorials, advice, air time and the list goes on. What these sponsors receive in return differs from one business or individual to the next. Undoubtedly their input keeps Australia's national reef education centre performing to the highest possible standards in education and entertainment. The Aquarium supports their sponsors in whatever way they can. As one of our sponsors recently said, 'what goes around comes around'. Call Loretta Saunders on 818886 if you would like to discuss sponsorship options.

Changes afloat in the Quicksilver Discovery Room



The Quicksilver Discovery Room is undergoing some changes in 1995. Displays have been moved to divide the room into distinct student activity centres, each with a work bench for small groups of students. Our aim is to encourage students to work cooperatively. It seems that other Aquarium visitors are also spending more time in the Discovery Room!

Each activity centre has a theme and as the year progresses, new displays will be installed. One of these is a four metre long aquarium which will be used for experiments about wave action, fish streamlining, and buoyancy. These activities are included in some of the new schools programs to be launched this year. Such interactive hands-on activities in the Discovery Room will make it a favourite place for kids visiting the Aquarium!



What exciting things lay in store for students in 1995 in the Quicksilver Discovery Room? Photo: A. Elliott

The Aquarium is a non-profit organisation dependent on funding from the general public. We would like to thank our Aquarium Sponsors, Patron, Members and Supporters for their generous support of this unique Great Barrier Reef education facility.

Sponsors

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Quota Club of Townsville
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Rangewood Developments
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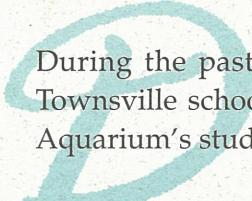
A big Thankyou

The Aquarium staff and volunteers wish to thank Medtek Pty Ltd for their generous donation of a \$10 000 humidicrib. This has allowed the Aquarium to display turtle eggs through out their incubation period.

Aquarium aquarist, Jenny Barnes alias 'Turtle Mother' checks out a new arrival from the Medtek humidicrib.
Photo: G. Shield



Students delve deep into Aquarium operations

 During the past two years, students from Townsville schools have participated in the Aquarium's student volunteer scheme.

Tehana Leong, a Year 10 student from Pimlico High School, gave her reasons for becoming a student volunteer: 'I wanted to learn more about the Great Barrier Reef, and I enjoy meeting and talking to people at the Aquarium'.

Anita Atherinos, from the Townsville Grammar School, is another of our 30 student volunteers. She said that she enjoyed helping young children with craft activities at the Aquarium because it teaches them about reef animals, and how to care for the reef. 'I also enjoy working on the play which the student volunteers are presently producing', she said.



Both Tehana and Anita have had a lot of fun helping with school sleepovers, which are becoming very popular with classes from both Townsville and overseas. Student volunteers are often at the Aquarium at night lending a hand to help other students have an enjoyable and memorable Aquarium experience.

Volunteering is a two-way process. The Aquarium benefits from having eager helpers for its programs and the students have access to information about all aspects of the Reef, aquarium techniques, animal husbandry and the experience of working in a world-class education and tourist facility.

The next intake of student volunteers will be during the June school holidays, when Year 10 students will have the chance to join the team at the Great Barrier Reef Aquarium.

Student volunteers in action around the Aquarium. Photos: R. Burdeau



**GREAT BARRIER REEF
AQUARIUM**

