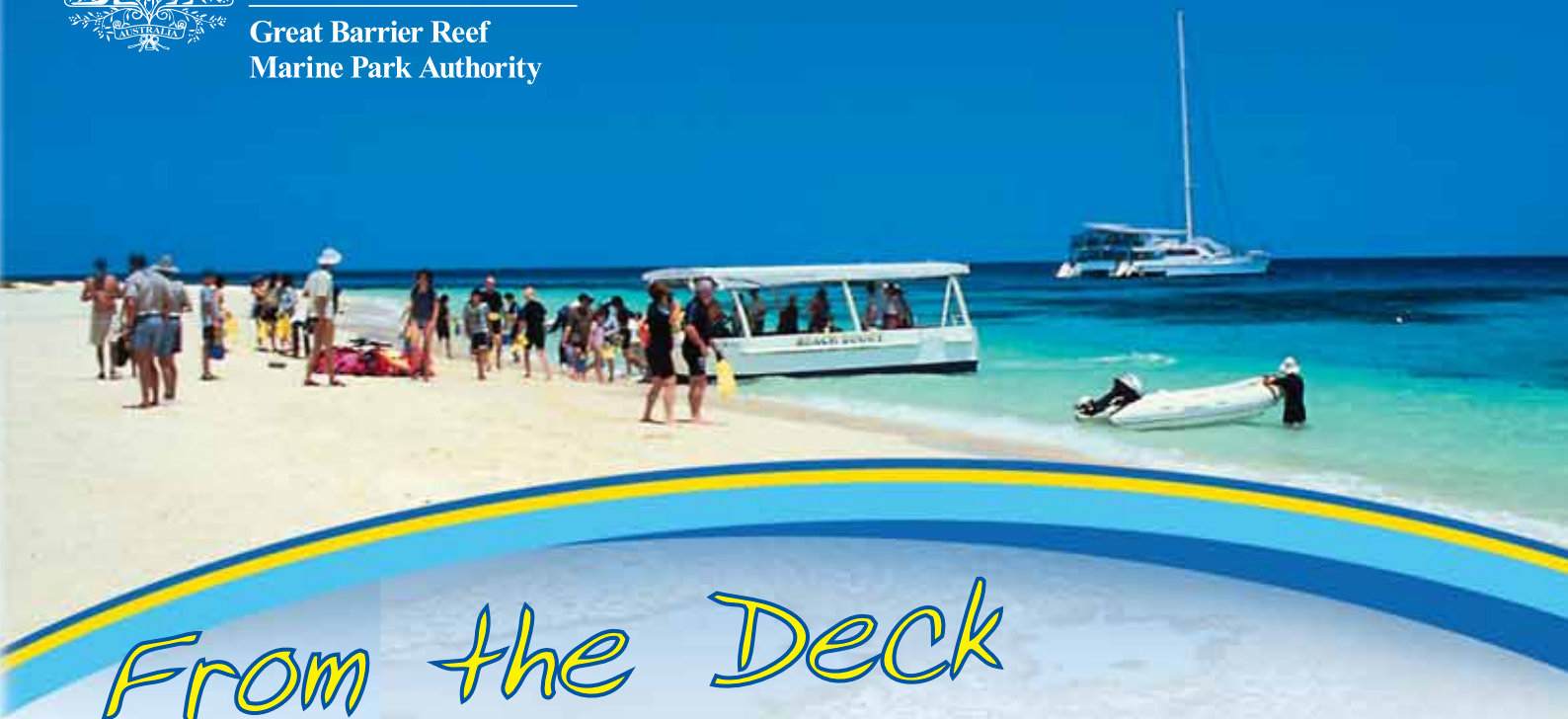




Australian Government

Great Barrier Reef
Marine Park Authority

DECEMBER 2007
NEWSLETTER - 23



From the Deck

Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority welcomes new Chairman

Our new Chairman, Dr Russell Reichelt, started on 1 November and brings a wealth of skills and knowledge as the former Managing Director of the Reef and Rainforest Research Centre (RRRC), former CEO of CRC Reef Research Centre, and former Director of the Australian Institute of Marine Science (AIMS). Dr Reichelt has more than 30 years experience at both national and international levels and has always championed the creation of strong partnerships to achieve the sustainable use of marine resources.



We are looking forward to working under his leadership to continue to deliver world-leading tourism management and presentation in the Marine Park.

From the Director's Desk

In 2007, awareness about climate change, its potential impacts and the benefits taking action bring to both the environment and business bottom-line have reached an all time high.

Many Great Barrier Reef tourism operators have been proactive in taking steps to minimise their climate change footprint over recent months and I encourage those who haven't yet made a commitment in this area to identify where they could make improvements.

In another first for Great Barrier Reef tourism, I'm pleased to announce the launch of a climate change initiative between the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority, the South Australian Tourism Commission and Ecotourism Australia to develop a climate change module for tourism operators. This module will outline key areas and practical steps to help operators make a difference.

I'm also pleased to mention we have been awarded one of only six 2007 Tourism and Transport Forum Corporate Leadership Awards.

It is with pleasure that I acknowledge the recent arrival of Dr Russell Reichelt, the new Chairman of the GBRMPA.

To close a successful year, highlighted by the expansion of the Eye on the Reef Monitoring Programme, the development of the Eye on the Reef Tourism Staff Training course, and the road testing of a proposal to provide more public moorings in the Whitsundays, I would like to thank all of you for the positive role you've played in partnering with us.

Merry Christmas and safe New Year to you and your family.

Lisha Mulqueeny
Director Tourism and Recreation

our great barrier reef
let's keep it great



Great Barrier Reef islands leading the way in combating climate change

Low Isles will soon become the first climate neutral Commonwealth Island in the Marine Park, thanks to the introduction of renewable energy systems.

There have been some staggering savings. The switch from diesel fuel to biodiesel in existing generators achieved fuel savings of 40 per cent and at least an 80 per cent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions.

Re-activation of an existing four kilowatt solar array reduced biodiesel fuel consumption by 80 per cent with a corresponding decrease in noise emissions.

GBRMPA Commonwealth Islands Manager Kathleen Swalling said the success of this first project meant the agency was looking to adopt renewable energy resources in other locations.

"The GBRMPA will use the project to form the basis for future actions addressing more complex situations on other Commonwealth Islands in the Marine Park," she said.

"We're looking at ways we can incorporate renewable energy systems at Lady Elliot Island, which features an ecotourism resort."

A step closer to more Whitsunday moorings

Public comment on the proposed implementation model for dedicated use moorings in the Whitsundays closed on 19 November 2007 and submissions are now being reviewed.

Officers of the GBRMPA conducted a series of presentations and meetings in Airlie Beach in October, including with the Whitsunday Local Marine Advisory Committee and the Whitsunday Charter Boat Industry Association and nine individual operators over a two week period.

The dedicated use mooring concept allows for private contributions to be made towards public mooring installation and maintenance in return for exclusive use of a mooring for a specified time. The moorings would be available for public use at all other times.

For further information contact Ms Anne Caillaud on (07) 4750 0861 or a.caillaud@gbbrmpa.gov.au

On TRRAC and looking forward

The Tourism and Recreation Reef Advisory Committee (TRRAC) held its final meeting for this year in Airlie Beach on October 24 and 25.

TRRAC participants hosted a well attended Meet & Greet function with local tourism operators and other stakeholders.

Ms Deb Lewis, Whitsunday Charter Boat Industry Association Executive Secretary, Whitsunday Bareboat Industry Association Secretary and Association of Marine Park Tourism Operators Southern Group Secretary, attended the TRRAC as an observer and found it extremely valuable.

"The TRRAC meeting was very outcome focused. Participants were

Call for climate change innovators

Have you made changes in your business to fight climate change?

Do you want to help other tourism operators to help save the Great Barrier Reef?

Then we need you to contact us now!

We are looking for operators across a range of operation types, who are taking on climate change in a meaningful way, to work with us to develop a series of case studies. These case studies will showcase best practice climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies to assist other Marine Park operators and tourism businesses generally to make a difference.

In 200 words or less, tell us how you think you're making a difference in your business. Submissions will close on Friday 29 February 2008 and should be submitted by email to the Tourism and Recreation Group at: tradministration@gbbrmpa.gov.au

Hinchinbrook history revitalised

Director of the Tourism and Recreation Group, Ms Lisha Mulqueeny, joined Mr David Hutchen (left) and Mr Bill Whiteman, to celebrate the launch of Hinchinbrook Resort and Cruises' *Hinchinbrook Explorer*, a new vessel taking Hinchinbrook Channel cruises in the long-departed wake of Tekin Cruises who operated similar cruises over 15 years ago.





incredibly motivated and enthusiastic with plenty of commitment to keep our Marine Park healthy for future generations. It reminds me of why we work so hard on a daily basis" Ms Lewis said.

Is your bareboat legal?

Bareboating in the Whitsundays is a great way to experience the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park and its islands and is becoming increasingly popular with an estimated 48,000 charter days occurring in the region each year.

Briefings to clients explaining the local area management arrangements, such as the zoning, use of public moorings and existence of no anchoring areas, play an integral role in protecting the natural environment visitors have come to experience and are at the core of sustainable bareboat industry practice.

It is a legislative requirement that bareboat operations staff in key roles (the principal or senior staff, the briefer and the radio operator) are appropriately qualified and listed on the GBRMPA register.

The GBRMPA will be publishing the register on our web site in 2008 to assist in managing this type of operation.

Should you wish to register please contact us on (07) 4750 0775.

Compliance matters

Offences reported between 1 July and 30 September 2007

| Offence | Far Northern | Cairns/ Cooktown | Townsville/ Whitsunday | Mackay/ Capricorn | TOTAL |
|--------------------------------|--------------|------------------|------------------------|-------------------|------------|
| Breach Permit Condition | 0 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 5 |
| Foreign Fishing Vessels | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| Illegal Discharge | 0 | 0 | 5 | 2 | 7 |
| Illegal Fishing (Commercial) | 8 | 6 | 7 | 19 | 40 |
| Illegal Fishing (Recreational) | 5 | 20 | 29 | 27 | 81 |
| POM Offences | 0 | 3 | 11 | 0 | 14 |
| State Offences | 5 | 10 | 18 | 50 | 83 |
| Unpermitted purpose | 4 | 6 | 11 | 1 | 22 |
| Other | 2 | 4 | 8 | 4 | 18 |
| TOTAL | 27 | 51 | 92 | 103 | 273 |

Push to cut outboard engines' carbon footprint

Did you know that Australia is one of the only western countries that currently have no regulations or standards to limit air polluting emissions from outboard engines?

To address this, the Far Northern Branch of Marine Queensland (formerly known as the Boating Industry Association of Queensland) approached the Commonwealth Government Department of Environment and Water Resources (DEW) with a proposal to encourage the tourism industry and boaties to reduce their carbon footprint.

Following a report benchmarking the environmental performance of outboard engines and personal watercraft released by DEW last February, the Far Northern Branch of Marine Queensland is working with the government to introduce regulations on emission standards for outboard and personal watercraft imported into Australia. These regulations will be similar to regulations existing in the United States, California and Europe.

The Tourism and Recreation Group is onboard with the outboard issue having:

- conducted a briefing with Mr Wayne Bayne, Chairman of the Far Northern Branch of Marine Queensland;
- facilitated a meeting between the Far Northern Branch of Marine Queensland and the Association of Marine Park Tourism Operators; and
- commenced development of a new Responsible Reef Practice fact sheet to inform the tourism industry and recreational Marine Park users about selecting a "green" outboard engine.

Don't forget to book

Does your permit require you to make a booking when visiting either the Cairns, Hinchinbrook or Whitsunday Planning Areas or a Sensitive Location within these areas?

If so, you need to ensure you have made a booking before entering the Planning Area. To assist you, booking Guidelines are available at www.gbrmpa.gov.au

A Voluntary Emissions Labelling Scheme (VELS) informs consumers about the environmental impact of their purchase thanks to a star rating system. So look for the stars below next time you purchase an outboard engine!



Bulletin board

- Congratulations to Fantasea Adventure Cruising on the opening of their new Great Barrier Reef resource centre in the main street of Airlie Beach in November.
- Minor bleaching events have been reported over the last few weeks in parts of the Central Great Barrier Reef, due to an unusual increase of temperature rate. This information is important to us, so please keep an eye out for bleaching and report it through our BleachWatch network. To become involved in Bleachwatch please email bleachwatch@gbmpa.gov.au
- The Tourism and Recreation Group surveyed Marine Park tourism operators to determine what motivates them to join the High Standard Tourism Programme, with preliminary results released at the 2007 Ecotourism Australian Conference in Melbourne in late November 2007. More to come next edition.
- Five staff from Sunferries participated in the GBRMPA's blood donation on the 23rd of November. Thanks for helping to save some lives!
- The expression of interest process for allocating up to five special tourism permissions in the Cooktown/Bloomfield area closed on 1 December 2007.
- It's great to see that every marine tourism operator to receive a regional and state tourism award this year has been a GBRMPA High Standard Operator. Special congratulations to state winners Quicksilver and Passions of Paradise.

Going green - An operator profile

Contributed by Peter Claxton, Ocean Rafting (Whitundays region)

Our vessels may be colourful and fun to look at, but the serious side of our business is managing our environmental footprint on the water and land.

Our vessels are powered by 4 stroke engines, which are replaced every 2000 hours, keeping our fuel burns to a minimum. Extensive propeller testing has determined the most fuel-efficient combination for each vessel. Each passenger uses approximately 10 litres of fuel to travel over 150km in our Great Barrier Reef Marine Park.

Are you doing something innovative to make your operation more "green"? We'd love to hear from you. Please email: tourec@gbmpa.gov.au



High standard operators

Eco-certification is not reserved for commercial crewed operations. This is what Charter Yachts Australia proved a few months ago when, on 3 August this year, they became the first and only bareboat operator in Australia to obtain Ecotourism Certification from Ecotourism Australia, and the first High Standard bareboat operation in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park.

"Our bareboat charter business did not fit any of the moulds for ecotourism accreditation so we had to fulfil two of the selection criteria sections instead of just one" said John Mol, owner of Charter Yachts Australia. "This accreditation will strengthen our commitment to protect and educate others about this fragile environment", he added.

John Mol and his partner Annie Judd have a life long passion for boats and the Great Barrier Reef and have been in business for seven years. They take their

partnership with the GBRMPA seriously and have included an Environmental Package for all clients to use when onboard.

To join the ranks of High Standard Tourism Operators contact the Tourism and Recreation Group by telephone on (07) 4750 0775.



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

Please provide your details to Karen Stephen on (07) 4750 0775 or email tourec@gbmpa.gov.au

Your contributions, ideas and feedback are welcome. Contact Karen Stephen in GBRMPA's Tourism and Recreation Group by phone (07) 4750 0775 or email: tourec@gbmpa.gov.au