

Community Engagement

Reaching out to communities through regional shows and events



Summary

The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority attended five regional shows in 2008 and one regional show in 2009 for the purposes of engaging with Great Barrier Reef catchment communities on the topic of climate change. A multi-media interactive display, which included games, demonstrations, educational videos and arts and crafts was used to engage families in order to deliver important climate change messages. The theme was 'Climate change affects us all'.

Background

Climate change is considered the greatest long-term threat to the Great Barrier Reef but this issue has only recently been elevated in the public consciousness. Thus, GBRMPA required a method of positioning itself within Great Barrier Reef catchment communities in order to raise the profile of climate change as an important issue for these communities. An interactive display was developed to attract attention, engage community members, and convey key climate change messages. This approach allowed GBRMPA staff to draw people in using hands on 'ice-breaker' activities, which were consistent with the GBRMPA's move away from distributing print materials (for environmental reasons) and towards

fostering meaningful interactions with community members.

Objectives

The purpose of community engagement on climate change issues was to:

- Increase the profile of climate change as an issue of importance
- Raise awareness of the link between climate change and the Reef in communities in the Great Barrier Reef catchment
- Position the GBRMPA as an important constituent of Great Barrier Reef catchment communities

Project name: Community Engagement

Project code: Various

Outcome: C2.2

Year: Ongoing



Outputs

- Development of an interactive display based on the theme 'climate change affects us all'
- Attendance at regional shows throughout Queensland

Outcomes

- The interactive display was a new approach to community engagement for GBRMPA and was well received by internal staff and external stakeholders (with both groups continually requesting to use the display - e.g. Laura Festival, NAIDOC week, regional events, etc.).
- The display was extremely successful in engaging community members
- Based on qualitative estimates from staff

members attending the shows, the average visitation time of people using this display was more than twice that for previous GBRMPA displays.

Future directions

The GBRMPA is dedicated to long-term community engagement efforts. The expanding Reef Guardians program and various community projects operated by regional and other staff are evidence of this. Regional shows and events will continue to be supported where appropriate opportunities arise.



For further information contact the:
Climate Change Group
Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority
PO Box 1379, Townsville Qld 4810
07 4750 0759
www.gbrmpa.gov.au