



# From the Deck

## From the Director's desk

The past months have brought significant changes within the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA).

With a review of our operating structure underway, Chairman Dr Russell Reichelt has announced the appointment of four General Managers, replacing two former Executive Directors. Peter McGinnity has been appointed to manage the Marine Park Development Division, Margaret Johnson the Strategic Policy, Communication and Government Division, and Bruce Elliott the Corporate Services Division.

The Tourism and Recreation Group (T&R) will continue to report to Andrew Skeat, now General Manager of the Marine Park Management Division, which also includes staff from permits, planning, compliance and regional offices.

Staff changes have occurred within T&R. Lisha Mulqueeny has extended her maternity leave – and I will be Acting Director until her return. Martin Robinson has been appointed Acting Manager Tourism, and the Manager, Climate Change position has been extended for 12 months.

The team has been working hard through these changes to ensure efficient progress and delivery of tourism programs. You will read about some of these in this edition – I hope you enjoy it!

**Chris Briggs**

A/Director Tourism and Recreation



## From the Deck goes "green"

The GBRMPA is responding to climate change by taking *From the Deck* (FTD) from the printed pages to the webpage! This will be the last printed edition of FTD, and from now on you can expect a quarterly email with all the news on tourism and recreation in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park. Enclosed is a reply paid/fax back form for you to tell us your preferred email address to receive FTD.



## High Standard exchange benefits

There was definitely a 'green' buzz at the Australian Tourism Exchange (ATE) held in Perth in 16-20 June 2008.



ATEo8, Australia's biggest international trade show, was a great opportunity for the GBRMPA and Ecotourism Australia to

promote the green EcoCertification tick. Most buyers had their sights set on the Great Barrier Reef and saw value in recognising the high standards of EcoCertified operators.

Being promoted in international tourism shows is not the only 'exchange' benefit associated with being a High Standard Operator, according to Steve Edmondson from Low Isles Sailaway.

"Gaining Advanced Ecotourism certification and a 15 year extension on our Marine Parks permit allowed us to undertake long-term planning in our business and improve our product and hardware. It gave us important business credentials", he said.

If you are interested in becoming part of the GBRMPA's High Standard Program, contact Ben Palmer at [ben.palmer@gbrmpa.gov.au](mailto:ben.palmer@gbrmpa.gov.au).

### The Climate Action Certification Program

a new eco-certification scheme trialled by tourism operators on the Great Barrier Reef, will be officially launched at the inaugural **Conference on Green Travel, Climate Change and Ecotourism** Adelaide and Regional SA, 17-20 November 2008.



## How much do you contribute to climate change?

Too hard to calculate, you say? Well, not anymore!

Thanks to our new EMISSIONS CALCULATOR you can now have the answer in a few easy steps. Just get your electricity and fuel bills, and login to [www.emissionscalculator.gbrmpa.gov.au](http://www.emissionscalculator.gbrmpa.gov.au) to access the calculator.

It has been developed specifically for marine tourism operators by the GBRMPA, so you will get an accurate

estimate of your operation's carbon footprint! It will assist in reporting, establishing baseline data, and tracking trends to see how to reduce your emissions.

Any questions about the Calculator? Contact Jill Brown at [jill.brown@gbrmpa.gov.au](mailto:jill.brown@gbrmpa.gov.au).



## Renewable energy workshops

Are you running a diesel generator as part of your operation?

Tropical Energy Solutions and Hidden Valley Cabins are organising a renewable energy workshop specifically for marine tourism operators on 23-24 September 2008. You will learn how to

use renewable energy, how much it costs, and how to deal with suppliers.

Payback periods for these systems can be less than two years, meaning this workshop could save you thousands of dollars!

Cost is \$699 per person. Call Hidden Valley Cabins on (07) 4770 8088.

## The Sightings Network turns one!

This program has been very successful in its first trial year, with dedicated crew submitting over 750 sightings forms detailing over 3000 animals (including large schools of fish) and other events.

Highlights of the year include a fish eating a crown-of-thorns starfish, a Queensland groper with a stingray in its mouth, whale sharks playing around boats, and a waterspout seen off Craig Point in the Whitsundays.

The Sightings Network will now be expanded to all Marine Park operators, so tell your crew and guests to grab their pens and sightings forms and keep their eyes open for anything exciting!

The Sightings Network is a mechanism for crew on tourism vessels to report

iconic animals, biological activities like coral spawning, and extraordinary weather-related activities like waterspouts. This helps managers to have a better idea of what's going on in the Marine Park, and also provides valuable information on behaviours and ecosystem functions for researchers.

Want to know more about this project and/or become involved in the Sightings Network? Contact Fiona Merida at [fiona.merida@gbrmpa.gov.au](mailto:fiona.merida@gbrmpa.gov.au).





## Moorings compliance update

As part of the GBRMPA's moorings compliance strategy, field audits of moorings have been carried out at a range of sites throughout the Marine Park. The audits have revealed many of the permitted moorings are non-compliant with the GBRMPA's requirements, specifically in relation to displaying a Mooring Reference Number (MRN). Operators need to ensure their mooring has a permit, the MRN is clearly marked on the buoy, and the mooring is maintained annually.

Failure to meet these requirements and other obligations outlined in individual permit conditions can result in a range of actions including suspension of relevant permits and/or the issue of infringement notices carrying a \$330 penalty.

For information on moorings email [anne.caillaud@gbrmpa.gov.au](mailto:anne.caillaud@gbrmpa.gov.au).

## Science says: Green Zones Work!

Important new research, published in July 2008, has shown the protection of reefs in no-take zones not only leads to more fish on protected reefs, but also to fewer damaging outbreaks from crown-of-thorns starfish. This has important consequences for reef health and biodiversity.

"These results are extremely significant, as they demonstrate the benefits of zoning, not just to the species directly protected (fish), but to the resilience of the ecosystem" said Dr Hugh Sweatman (AIMS)

## Compliance matters

Offences reported between 1 April and 30 June 2008

Offence	Far Northern	Cairns/ Cooktown	Townsville/ Whitsunday	Mackay/ Capricorn	TOTAL
Breach Permit Condition	0	0	10	2	12
Foreign Fishing Vessels	0	0	0	0	0
Illegal Discharge	0	2	0	1	3
Illegal Fishing (Commercial)	0	0	4	17	21
Illegal Fishing (recreational)	0	11	18	35	64
POM Offences	0	3	0	0	3
Unpermitted Purpose	4	10	0	1	15
Other	0	6	4	2	12
State Offences	1	5	22	14	42
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>172</b>

In the March Quarter 2008, 71 permits were suspended for late payment or non-lodgment of EMC.

## Is somebody operating under your permit?

There have been a number of recent instances where operators have leased or loaned their permit to another person. The following outlines the regulations regarding this issue.



who conducted the research. "Fewer starfish outbreaks will mean more coral, more coral provides crucial habitat structure to the entire reef."

This enhanced resilience will have direct benefits for the tourism industry. Results have been published in the peer-reviewed scientific journal *Current Biology*.

If you would like more information about this research contact the GBRMPA's Knowledge Management team at [julia.martin@gbrmpa.gov.au](mailto:julia.martin@gbrmpa.gov.au).

A person (individual or company) must hold a Marine Parks permit before operating a tourism program and only the permittee is allowed to conduct the permitted activities and the permittee remains responsible at all times for the actions of employees, agents or contractors that are conducting activities described in the permit.

The exception is where the permittee has given a written authority to another person to conduct the permitted activities. Under the GBRMP Regulations, a permittee can only give another person an authority if the permit contains specific conditions allowing the giving of the authority. Most permits do not have these conditions on them so check with GBRMPA before entering into any agreements with other persons to use a permit.

Where this arrangement is in place the person or entity that is then operating on the permission must have a copy of the permit and the written authorisation from the permittee onboard the vessel when operating.

If you do have this type of agreement in place, make sure you check with the GBRMPA that you're doing the right thing – contact [permits@gbrmpa.gov.au](mailto:permits@gbrmpa.gov.au).

# Going Green

Big Cat is greening fast. In the past four years, the 390-passenger Big Cat Green Island Reef Cruises vessel got a green retrofit, resulting in a significant reduction in the vessel's carbon footprint.

Modifications included lengthening Big Cat by five metres, fitting purpose-built propellers and enhancing engine management systems. This, combined with slightly lower operating speeds, has reduced the vessel's fuel consumption by over 30%, which stands the company in good stead in terms of per-passenger emissions.

To continue on the green path, Big Cat Green Island Reef Cruises recently undertook a carbon audit as part of its commitment to the Planet Safe Partnership, the

Greenhouse Challenge Plus and the Climate Action Certification Program being trialled by Ecotourism Australia.

"The audit process has highlighted waste as a major component of the company's total footprint and this has become the focus of our attention", General Manager Kim Thomas said. "While we continue to work towards energy efficiency, especially through increasing use of wind and solar power, we are now also working with other Cairns operators to expedite the installation of recycling facilities by Cairns Port Authority."

**Are you doing something innovative to make your operation more 'green'? We'd love to hear from you! Email [tourec@gbmpa.gov.au](mailto:tourec@gbmpa.gov.au).**



## High standard operators



Long-time dive operator, Pro Dive Cairns, recently joined the ranks of High Standard Operators and the effort has already been well worth it.

"It was harder than we thought, but we gained immediate benefits in terms of environmental performance, training and staff induction, and strategic business direction", said Jordic Pellefigue, Sales and Marketing Director.

"The logo and our interpretation program give us a clear market advantage, which responds to the increasing demand for a 'green' product. It will also help us in our tourism awards nominations".

Pro Dive is so pleased with its Eco-Certification status that it is now moving towards obtaining Advanced Eco-Certification.

**To find out more about the High Standard Tourism Program, contact the GBRMPA on 07 4750 0729.**



## BULLETIN BOARD

- If you have a GBRMPA permit, you should have received a special tourism bulletin in late August advising you of important changes regarding the Environmental Management Charge (EMC). Please read it carefully!
- Cruise ship anchorage descriptions have been "tidied up" to be located in a single legal document. The list of anchorages will now be located in the *Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Regulations 1983* and removed from permits.
- If you spot a dead groper or fish in the Cairns/Port Douglas area, please report it by calling 13 25 23.
- Data on recreational vessel registration has been updated to accommodate recent changes to Local Government Areas and to include the whole of the Great Barrier Reef Catchment Area. The data is available on [www.gbrmpa.gov.au](http://www.gbrmpa.gov.au).
- Traditional Use of Marine Resources Agreements (TUMRAs)

have been recently signed with Ma'mu and Wuthathi communities, located respectively around Innisfail and Shelburne Bay areas.

- Preliminary research results showed the Great Barrier Reef dive industry contributes up to \$810 million to the Australian economy annually, and is a significant source of direct and indirect employment.

Your contributions, ideas and feedback are welcome. Please email the GBRMPA's Tourism and Recreation Group at [tourec@gbmpa.gov.au](mailto:tourec@gbmpa.gov.au).

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