



# From the Deck

## From the Director's desk

Over the past few months, the Tourism and Recreation team focussed on getting out into the Marine Park to meet and work with operators and crew.

We received terrific feedback on the recent *Get Onboard Industry Training Workshops* and thank all operators who attended, particularly Cairns Dive Centre and the entire Whitsunday's crew. Positive feedback also followed our annual *Cruise Ship Industry Forum* where we announced the availability of four new cruise anchorages in the Cairns area.

Significant inroads have been made towards streamlining management arrangements and training materials for bareboat operators up and down the coast, and we have increased the rewards package for certified high standard tourism operators.

We also heard loud and clear that the industry wants us to get even tougher with enforcement of minimum standards. In addition to compliance measures, we are looking to develop a specific strategy to address underperformance.

In the coming months we will continue this face-to-face communication, with more *Get Onboard Industry Training Workshops* planned for the southern areas of the Marine Park.

We believe maintaining and invigorating the connection between the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority and the industry will increase our shared understanding of environmental conditions and priorities, and the commercial realities of running a tourism business in the Marine Park.

Lisha Mulqueeny  
Director Tourism and Recreation Group

## Tourism industry gets onboard for industry training workshops

Over 130 managers, operators and crew took part in the *Get Onboard Industry Training Workshops* held by the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority in May at the Whitsundays, Port Douglas and Cairns.

The workshops aimed to provide the industry with some practical tools to make it easier to do the right thing in the Marine Park, including information on zoning and ensuring that operations are at the cutting edge of environmentally sustainable and world-class tourism.

There were two types of workshops – one for managers and operators, and another for staff and crew in each region – enabling information to be tailored to the different audiences. Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service also took part in the sessions and fielded a range of questions on daily management.



our great barrier reef  
let's keep it great



Continued from page 1

### Key topics covered:

- The link between responsible reef practices, best practice interpretation and high visitor satisfaction
- How to showcase Great Barrier Reef Marine Park protection and World Heritage Area status to companies' competitive advantage
- How to easily navigate through Marine Park management arrangements
- The latest information about the Marine Park
- Supporting staff in training and education.

*"The crew felt this was an excellent opportunity to have face-to-face contact with staff from the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority and other government agencies, and really assisted with their own professional development. The operators said it made sure they were on top of the latest management arrangements for the Marine Park." - Deb Lewis, Executive Secretary of Whitsunday Charter Boat Industry Association.*

Attendees received workshop folders with the latest information about Marine Park management and making the most of permits, a Responsible Reef Practices booklet, an electronic copy of *Onboard*, and hints on providing world-class interpretation.

Further workshops are planned for later this year. Information will be posted on the *Onboard* website, under 'High Standards/Training Opportunities', at [www.gbrmpa.gov.au](http://www.gbrmpa.gov.au).

## Watch out for whales

The whales are back! And so are our whale information nights.

Our pre-season humpback and dwarf minke whale information night in May saw Marine Park experts provide attendees with great facts about whales to wow their passengers with, guidance on interpreting whale behaviour, and what to do when you encounter or have a close call with a whale.

- Be alert and watch for whales at all times
- If near whales, vessels are required by law to stay at least 100 metres away and 300 metres away in the Whitsunday Whale Protection Area
- In all areas jetskis must stay at least 300 metres away
- Keep a lookout and avoid disturbing the whales, especially mothers and calves
- Reduce your vessel speed to minimise the risk of collision in areas where whales have been sighted
- If operating a vessel, aircraft or helicopter, abide by approach restrictions (refer to *Onboard* for more information)
- Be quiet when you are around a whale
- Do not get in the water if you see a whale and if you are already in the water do not disturb, chase or block the path of a whale and if possible return to your vessel
- If there is a sudden change in whale behaviour, move away immediately
- Report sick, injured, stranded or dead whales to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Hotline 1300 130 372.

New regulations for whale and dolphin watching, and swimming with whales, took effect on 17 June 2006. For more information visit *Onboard* at [www.gbrmpa.gov.au](http://www.gbrmpa.gov.au).



*Humpback whale and calf*

## Help us help you get the messages to your crew

Feedback from the *Get Onboard Industry Training Workshops* revealed crew were not receiving information passed on from the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority to operators.

This includes newsletters and even information about the workshops itself. Crew also indicated they were extremely interested in Marine Park matters and wanted to be better informed.

To assist in passing on information we provide to your crew, Industry Engagement Officer Dean Miller is developing a mailing list specifically for marine tourism crew.

This mailing list will keep them up-to-date with the latest Marine Park matters, education and training material, and also provide information about becoming involved in Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority partnership programmes.

For more information contact Dean Miller on (07) 4750 0715 or [d.miller@gbrmpa.gov.au](mailto:d.miller@gbrmpa.gov.au).





## Full steam ahead on cruise industry initiatives

The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority's recent *Cruise Ship Industry Workshop* brought together a diverse range of industry leaders to kick-start an information sharing partnership and to discuss access projects.

Participants ranged from regulatory agencies like the Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA) to cruise operators such as Carnival Australia and Captain Cook Cruises.

Introductory presentations by Carnival Australia, AMSA and Tourism Queensland were followed by group discussion on updating the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority Cruise Shipping Policy, industry representation, and prioritising Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority cruise projects in the next financial year.

Mark Walder, Operations Officer at Barwil Agencies Australia, was among those who attended. He said it was a valuable opportunity for the cruise industry to communicate directly with the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority.

"Last year's workshop was a groundbreaker and it's so good to see even greater support this year from the number of attendees," he said.

"Congratulations. I thought the workshop was very well done again and well worthwhile. I wish some of the other government agencies would take a similar approach."

Given the continued growth and expansion of cruise operations in the Marine Park, these workshops are essential to ensuring stakeholders are properly informed and able to have direct input into the management of the cruise sector.

As part of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority's cruise industry information exchange initiative, James Aston and Lisha Mulqueeny met with John Foley (Australian Reef Pilot) and Rumen Georgiev (Environmental Officer) onboard the *Pacific Princess* (pictured).



## EMC helps maintain a healthy Marine Park

The Environmental Management Charge, or EMC, is an essential contribution to the success of the Marine Park.

The EMC funds generated by your clients are spent on all aspects of Marine Park management from education and research to ranger patrols and policy development. This is an important message to convey to your clients so they are aware how their EMC is used.

Regardless of private arrangements that may be in place, permit holders are responsible for complying with the conditions of the permit and ensuring the full and timely lodgement of all applicable EMC reports and payments.

For more information on the EMC visit [www.gbrmpa.gov.au](http://www.gbrmpa.gov.au) and click on the *Onboard* icon.

## Mooring grace period ends

If you have a mooring in the Marine Park, you must have a permit from the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority and make sure the mooring reference number is clearly marked.

This follows legislation that came into effect on 1 January 2006 making it mandatory to display the mooring reference number on all moorings. The six-month grace period that allowed permit holders to comply with the legislation ends on 1 July.

If the mooring is also a buoy mooring approved by Maritime Safety Queensland (MSQ), the unique MSQ reference number must be also displayed in a manner consistent with the MSQ buoy mooring standards.

If you are unsure of your mooring reference number, check the online moorings register or contact the Permits Unit on (07) 4750 0700 or email [permits@gbrmpa.gov.au](mailto:permits@gbrmpa.gov.au).

If you would like further information about the new regulations and the requirements for displaying your mooring reference number, contact Leanne Brown on (07) 4750 0788 or email [l.brown@gbrmpa.gov.au](mailto:l.brown@gbrmpa.gov.au).

*Mooring reference numbers will make it even easier to use the moorings register. The moorings register, available on the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority website, facilitates the sharing of moorings in the Marine Park through providing information on mooring location and contact details for that mooring. You can use the mooring reference numbers when searching the register.*

## Bulletin board

- To further assist cruise ships visiting the Marine Park, the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority approved four new cruise ship anchorages at Agincourt Reef, Moore Reef and Norman Reef (two anchorages). This brings the number of anchorages throughout the Marine Park to 31.
- The Department of the Environment and Heritage put out a tender for companies interested in implementing the Marine and Tropical Sciences Research Facility (MTSRF) programme. This closed on 30 May. For more information visit [www.deh.gov.au/programs/cerf/marine-tropical.html](http://www.deh.gov.au/programs/cerf/marine-tropical.html).
- Townsville is hosting the 14th Annual Ecotourism Australia Conference between 30 October and 3 November 2006. More information is online at [www.ecotourism.org.au](http://www.ecotourism.org.au).
- The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority received 15 registrations of interest for the dedicated use moorings proposal in the Whitsundays. A summary is available at [www.gbrmpa.gov.au](http://www.gbrmpa.gov.au) under 'Latest News'.

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## High standard operators

Congratulations to the four tourism operations who are the latest to join the ranks of high standard operations in the Marine Park. This brings the total number of certified operators to 27, with over 50 individual tourism products. Well done!

- Big Cat Green Island Cruises - Ecotourism certification for three products operated in the Cairns area
- South Sea Sailing - Advanced Ecotourism certification for its product on the *MV Malaita* in Port Douglas
- Voyages Heron Island - Advanced Ecotourism for three products
- Maxi Action - Advanced Ecotourism in the Whitsundays for *Maxi Ragamuffin*.

Bernard Heimann (pictured), Director of Maxi Action that operates *Maxi Ragamuffin* in the Whitsundays, sees benefits for any operator wanting to improve their business in both the Ecotourism Australia certification process and the actual certification.

"To be honest, we were relieved when we finished the application! It took months. The best thing about the actual certification process was that it's definitely helped to improve our business processes and our compliance with marine legislation.



"The interpretation we are now delivering to our clients has improved as has our staff training and documentation. The improvements came through working through the certification.

"I believe people are now looking for the eco logo when they're selecting a tour, and it's setting products apart. We're now eligible for a 15 year permit to operate in the Marine Park, so getting certified was a worthwhile business decision."



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

Please provide your details to Nicole Robbins on (07) 4750 0775 or email [tourec@gbrmpa.gov.au](mailto:tourec@gbrmpa.gov.au)

Your contributions, ideas and feedback are welcome. Contact Dean Miller in GBRMPA's Tourism and Recreation Group by phone (07) 4750 0715 or email: [d.miller@gbrmpa.gov.au](mailto:d.miller@gbrmpa.gov.au).