

PROVIDING A BETTER REEF EXPERIENCE"

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One of the real challenges to come from any workshop, this one in particular, is to go away **from** it and translate the information provided into action. We hope to help you in that task.

This segment, although aimed mainly at members of the tourism industry, is also applicable to the data providers because it demonstrates some of the applications and the need for good information.

The industry and the GBRMPA desire certain outcomes: These can be illustrated as

- . Good cash return;
- . Bouquets and positive feedback;
- . Satisfied visitors; and
- . A happy reef.

The four elements apply to the tourism industry such that if good cash return is anticipated then there must be: happy visitors, who will return to a respected operator, who works on a well cared for reef.

The GBRMPA is pledged to provide for wise use by people, and for conservation of the resource, **so**, it also is interested in the same four elements.

The market now is increasingly being **recognised** as more educated, more discerning, and more demanding. They are **a more** educated clientele. Schools and educational institutions now teach sophisticated sciences, environmental studies, **marine sciences** and consumer education.

The products of this approach to **new subjects**, new methods, and broader experience are already today's tourists and visitors. Their more educated children will demand even **more** in five years' time.

To satisfy this market **requirement** an educated provider is now essential. An educated provider will either provide a better reef experience themselves or get an educated assistant to do it for or with them.

It makes good economic sense to do much more than **dump tourists** at a reef and collect them three hours later and **think that** they will again provide dollars, thank **you** for the trip, be satisfied, or respect the Reef:

If I may use the BIOSEARCH/QUICKSILVER operation as an example:

Wendy Richards said "We have entered the age of the educated tourist"; and "many people want more than a sightseeing trip".

She is aware of what a rich reef experience can be and has set about providing a detailed, rich experience for her 'clients.. Concurrently she is researching the reef area and providing both herself and the GBRMPA with data that will lead to better management.

This seminar has provided some tools in the form of information, **namely:-**

value of fringing reefs as a resource;  
biological detail;  
ecological data; and  
management issues.

Our job is to show you some of the method resources or helpful suggestions that are produced by the GBRMPA.

I would hope also that the workshops have provided the stimulus to seek new ways of providing the educated trip, the richer experience.

I would also urge tourism principals to accept the challenge and seek assistants to provide that richer experience. Perhaps, it would be appropriate for the industry itself to develop operator training and/or trained personnel who can be directly recruited for the task. There is entrepreneurial opportunity in this field.

There are unemployed marine biologists. Why do they think their on-ly---future---l-i-es--in-r-e-s-e-a-r-ch-o-r teaching?- Why--no-t--be--a-marine biologist working in the hospitality industry providing this richer experience for tourists? Why don't resorts employ marine biologists (with flair for people relationships) as expert operators? Probably because we have not expected such a thing to happen.

Surely, there is the potential for say regional groups to prompt an expert into training educators who can conduct better tours, or to travel from centre-to-centre conducting operator training courses. Wendy has taken the path of recruiting university graduates but as each operation is different so also will be the staff training requirements.

In 1979 at the Tourism and the Great Barrier Reef Workshop in Mackay, Mr. John Richardson (Assistant General Manager of the Australian Tourist Commission) commented that "**the** attention to detail." is essential. Wendy Richards spoke of great efforts to attend to biological detail and to customer comfort detail. She said "**I** put on a slide show on the way out and once there, supply all the equipment, providing them with only the best".

John Richardson went on to comment that **training was** needed - it cannot be left to **natural instincts**. "When properly trained, Australians are very good." he said. I believe they are second to none but ~~many are untrained and~~ the **experience they provide** reflects it.

What to train operators at is only a matter of analysing needs, **marshalling** resources, **then to go** to it. What is more difficult is to tap into the imagination, **flair**, and foresight that people (including operators) have so that there will be something with which to train operators or to use to provide the rich experience.

Areas such as art experience tours, poetry and literary activities, reef-based drama and 'creative' movement activities are virtually unheard of. Reefs are not just for looking at! and 'swimming on,' or fishing near. They can be enriching in the (aesthetic and cultural, fields as well.

Tom Offord conducts art instruction - cum-tourism trips from Woolgoolga to the Flinders Ranges that are rich experiences for the terrestrial artist. There is scope for the occasional trip to reefs and islands for the brush-lover but I don't know of anyone who does it. Certainly this market would not be as large as the "swim, dive and look" market but who knows? Who has, 'tried it before?

The tranquility of early morning on a reef is inspiring and, 'in the hands of a good operator, many people could have a very enriched trip dabbling at a canvas, creating poetry, engaging in tai-chi, dreaming up creative movement, or putting their imagination to work in the words of a story.

The key here is "in the hands of an expert". Providing for the educated tourist is not a job for the amateur.

We, at 'the Marine Park Authority,, have been assisted' by other experts in developing two ambitious projects. Both are aimed at giving operators some ideas and some expert methods and training,, so that better 'information will result in a better experience for the tourist and visitor.

Calvin Tilley will detail these two products.