

# SeaRead

Marine Park news from catchment to coral



Australian Government  
Great Barrier Reef  
Marine Park Authority



Issue 10 • May/June 2006

## What's inside

Indigenous trainees' epic voyage to monitor coral bleaching	3
Creepy crawly crustaceans help monitor pesticides	4
Divers plunged deep to help the Reef	5
New information kits available for Traditional Owner Groups	6
Tourists give turtle second chance	7
Sign and slogans connect Woongarra State School to the Marine Park	8
Camp Quality kids experience the Reef up-close	9
Alaskan students discover Reef through video technology	10

## An Historic Agreement for the Traditional Use of Marine Resources



From left: Fay Barker (Board Member), Ross Rolfe (Board Member and EPA/QPWS Delegate), John Andy (Djiru), Claude Beeron (Girramay), Marjorie Kinjun (Gulnay), Hon. Virginia Chadwick AO (GBRMPA Chairman), Clarence Wyles (Warragmay), Victor Bligh (Nywaigi), Phil Rist (Nywaigi), Chicka Turner (GBRMPA), Russell Butler Snr (Bandjin), Dr Evelyn Scott AO (Board Member)

In an historic agreement, Giringun Traditional Owners will work with Commonwealth and State Government agencies to manage traditional hunting in the Marine Parks.

The first Traditional Use of Marine Resources Agreement (TUMRA) was accredited by the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA) and the Queensland Environmental Protection Agency (Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service).

Prepared by the Giringun Traditional Owners, the TUMRA applies to sea country between Rollingsstone and Mission Beach, and includes provisions for managing the traditional use of marine resources activities.

GBRMPA Chairman Hon. Virginia Chadwick said the agreement sets a benchmark for how Traditional Owners and government agencies can work together in a cooperative relationship to sustainably manage sea country and its resources.

"This new approach to the management of traditional hunting within a specified part of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park and the Great Barrier Reef Coast Marine Park shows a commitment from both governments and Indigenous people to closely work together to address these important issues which are both culturally and ecologically significant," Virginia said.

"It is a significant achievement and is consistent with the Commonwealth Government's new 'Sustainable Harvest of Marine Turtles and Dugongs – A National Partnership Approach' that was developed in 2005."

The members of six Giringun sea country groups (Djiru, Gulnay, Girramay, Bandjin, Warragamay and Nywaigi) worked to develop the agreement over the past two years.

Under the agreement, which is accredited until 2008, the Traditional Owners have agreed to not hunt dugongs, to limit turtle hunting, and to monitor illegal Marine Park activities through cooperative working arrangements.

The Chairperson for the Giringun Aboriginal Corporation John Andy said by signing the agreement they were taking steps to protect their traditional sea country for the future.

### DISCLAIMER

While all efforts have been made to verify facts, the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority takes no responsibility for the accuracy of information supplied in *SeaRead*.

© Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority 2006

Please note that you are welcome to photocopy *SeaRead*. However, if the text is reproduced separately, it must not be altered and must acknowledge the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority as the source. Illustrations must not be reused separately without permission. Please contact the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority if in doubt.

# Message from the Chairman



the Hon Virginia Chadwick AO

A number of positive activities have taken place over the last few months, and I am pleased to update you on just some of these outcomes and achievements.

Among the most significant is the first Traditional Use of Marine Resources Agreement, which acknowledges the important cultural value of the Marine Park to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

For more than 60 000 years, their traditional connections have been part of the unique maritime culture of more than 50 Traditional Owner groups along the coast and islands

from Bundaberg to the Cape York Peninsula.

A spirit of giving also characterised the last few months. GBRMPA staff donated their own money to the Queensland Premier's disaster relief fund for those affected by Cyclone Larry. Given our proximity and close ties to the region, I commend our staff for their compassion for fellow north Queenslanders.

The Authority also donated more than \$15 000, the proceeds of an environmental prize and employee fundraising, to Camp Quality. The donation will enable more than 200 children and their families to spend a

day exploring the Marine Park. We will keep you updated on the trips through photographs and stories in upcoming editions of SeaRead.

Regards

Virginia Chadwick  
Chairman  
Great Barrier Reef  
Marine Park Authority

END

## Fish, frogs and logs feature in new wetlands display

**More than 25 000 litres of water, 800 fish and a three-metre high waterfall are the three vital ingredients for the new wetlands exhibit at the ReefHQ Aquarium in Townsville.**

The display, showing the connection between wetlands and the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park, will be officially opened in the coming months.

It is one of the most visually exciting and innovative exhibits ReefHQ aquarium has completed to date.

ReefHQ Technical Operations Manager Sascha Thyer said the display, which took eight months to complete, was constructed with environmental efficiencies and water conservation in mind.

"We have set up a filtration system that ensures minimal water use and minimal discharge of wastewater, and plants are used in the system to encourage natural recycling of nutrients," she said.

"Some of the fish will eat the plants, minimising the need to add food to the system so the system will hopefully be relatively self sustaining."

Central to the display is an interactive touch-screen with regional wetland information, helping visitors enhance their knowledge, understanding and awareness of wetlands within the Great Barrier Reef Catchment.

The exhibit has a timber "observation deck" in the foreground, overlooking a mural by renowned artist Ian Richter who has worked on murals for films such as *Moulin Rouge* and *Mission Impossible II*.

The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority's Water Quality and Coastal Development Group Director Hugh Yorkston said the exhibit showed how wetlands were an essential part of the ecosystem.

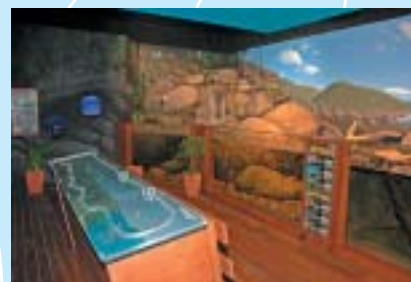
"The exhibit shows the importance of wetlands and how they can be directly affected by land-based activities leading to impacts on the quality of water entering the Marine Park," he said.

"We hope the exhibit prompts visitors to take an interest in wetlands and help protect the Marine Park by implementing practices on the land, in their homes, workplaces or schools to help improve water quality."

The exhibit is a collaboration between the Burnett Mary Regional Group, Mackay Whitsundays Natural Resource Management (NRM) Group, Burdekin Dry Tropics NRM, Far North Queensland NRM, Townsville City Council and NQ Water.



Under construction: The wetlands exhibit begins to take shape



Finished product: The wetland exhibit will allow visitors to Reef HQ to understand the connectivity between wetlands and the Reef

END

# Indigenous trainees' epic voyage to monitor coral bleaching

**A research vessel with four Indigenous trainees helping scientists monitor coral bleaching docked in Townsville recently as part of an epic five-week voyage along the Queensland coast.**

Lwayne Boslem, Mathew Seaton, Ewan Kepple and Pedar Lawrence were onboard *Pelican 1* to share the experiences of travelling through their sea country with scientists from the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA).

The trainees helped scientists by diving, taking underwater photographs, recording results, using and maintaining scientific equipment, and crewing a boat operated by Pelican Expeditions.

GBRMPA's Climate Change Response Unit Manager Paul Marshall said the project was a valuable partnership between Traditional Owners and scientists.

"This innovative project supports on-going reef monitoring work by

the GBRMPA and is an important collaboration between environmental managers and Traditional Owners," he said.

"We also enjoyed seeing the trainees get hands-on experience in the workings of the ship and the important research and monitoring processes."

*Pelican 1* is a 19-metre sailing catamaran designed for marine research, environmental, social, and educational projects.

The journey began in Bundaberg and wrapped up in Cairns.

The pilot project supports the passage and training for Coxswain certificates and open water/dive masters tickets for the trainees.



Indigenous trainees' onboard *Pelican 1*

END

## Bimbi Eungie out on patrol

**A new specialist team focused solely on compliance in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park has proven a great success since it began operations in July 2005.**

The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority's (GBRMPA) Field Operations Team comprises three experienced Marine Park inspectors, based in Mackay and Cairns. The team operates from a purpose-built vessel, the *Bimbi Eungie*, specifically designed to conduct compliance and surveillance in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park.

The team provides a highly mobile unit that can be deployed to strengthen existing surveillance and compliance in key locations. The Field Operations Team joins seven agencies with more than 150 enforcement officers in monitoring zoning across the entire Great Barrier Reef Marine Park.

The GBRMPA continues to urge users of the Marine Park to not only check zoning maps before they venture out on the water but also to take their maps with them. Knowing where you are at all times will help to avoid possible fines. Some examples of recent court results are shown below:

Location	Offence	Fine
Feather Reef	Unpermitted Fishing (Recreational Fishing)	1 x \$1400 1 x \$950 1 x \$1000
Between Brook Shoals and Hinchinbrook Island	Unpermitted Fishing (Recreational Fishing)	1 x \$2000
Wilson Shoal	Unpermitted Fishing (Recreational Fishing)	1 x \$2000 2 x \$800
South Molle Island	Unpermitted Fishing (Recreational Fishing)	1 x \$1200 1 x \$750

**Remember you can do your bit to keep the Reef great by reporting any incidents you see by emailing [compliance@gbmpa.gov.au](mailto:compliance@gbmpa.gov.au) or phoning (07) 4726 0510 or (07) 3830 8246.**

END

"Our people want to get the message out that we are very responsible and want to look after our sea country. We can see benefits for everyone if we work together with the government to save turtles and dugongs in our sea country," John said.

The GBRMPA and EPA/QPWS have been working closely with a number of Indigenous groups along the Great Barrier Reef coast to develop new arrangements for the sustainable use of marine resources, and the new TUMRA has created considerable interest from other Traditional Owner groups.

It is proposed that during 2006 there will be a number of events celebrating various aspects of the Giringun TUMRA as they are implemented, including new signage and brochures.

END

## Creepy crawly crustaceans help monitor pesticides



The common crab will help monitor the quality of water entering the Great Barrier Reef

**Creepy crawly crustaceans are set to help the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA) shed light on the declining quality of water entering the Marine Park.**

Scientists will use the common mud crab to monitor pesticide concentrations as crabs exposed to pollutants often develop subtle cellular differences and may accumulate certain water quality toxicants.

GBRMPA Manager of Water Quality Research and Monitoring Dr David Haynes said this was a potential long-term indicator of temporal and spatial variation in inshore pollutant concentrations.

"Mud crabs can provide a sensitive, early warning of the presence of

pollutants before conventional monitoring techniques can detect it," he said.

"The presence of the pollutants has no effect on the edibility of the crabs. The toxins accumulate in the animal's liver, which humans do not consume, and not the crab's flesh that people do eat.

"This monitoring is just one of several components under the Reef Water Quality Protection Plan, a ten-year strategy to halt and reverse the declining quality of water entering the Marine Park."

Adult male crabs, with a legal size of 170-200 mm carapace width, will be collected between March and May each monitoring year.

The crabs will be sourced from at least 10 coastal locations along the north Queensland coast between Torres Strait and Gladstone.

The monitoring involves separating the hepatopancreas tissue (the crab's non-edible liver) from the crab's carcass and analysing it for pesticides that tend to bioaccumulate in this organ.

This is just one of five types of monitoring under the Reef Water Quality Protection Plan, which focuses on land-based actions to improve land use practices within the Great Barrier Reef Catchment.

The plan aims to monitor and observe the amount of nutrients and sediment entering river systems flowing into the Great Barrier Reef, and develop strategies to address and halt the process.

A variety of evidence now clearly indicates exports of sediments, nutrients and pesticides from the catchments adjacent to the Great Barrier Reef have increased substantially over the last 150 years.

The Reef Water Quality Protection Plan Marine Monitoring Programme is run by the GBRMPA and funded by the Natural Heritage Trust. The Marine Monitoring Programme was designed and developed by the GBRMPA and is coordinated through the CRC Reef Research Centre on behalf of a consortium of research partners.

The consortium includes the Australian Institute of Marine Science, CSIRO, Queensland Department of Natural Resources and Mines, Queensland Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries, Queensland Environmental Protection Agency, Sea Research and The University of Queensland.

END

## GBRMPA to consult with stakeholders in the Whitsundays to develop site plans

**Interested stakeholders can have input into the Whitsunday Plan of Management when the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA) starts community consultation for the development of site plans for the Whitsundays area.**

The Whitsunday Plan of Management was designed to complement zoning by addressing issues specific to the area - in this case high-density tourism and recreation.

Under the plan each reef, bay and coastal area is assigned a setting ranging from one to five, with one being an intensively-used area and five a protected area.

The Whitsunday Plan of Management requires site plans to be developed for each of the setting five areas.

These are located at Hill Inlet (including the northern end of Whitehaven Beach), Haslewood and Lupton Islands, Deloraine Island, Double Bay East, Cow and Calf Islands and the Eshelby Islands.

GBRMPA staff recently conducted visits to some of these sites to gain a better understanding of the areas before commencing planning.

Once prepared, draft site plans will be made available at [www.gbrmpa.gov.au](http://www.gbrmpa.gov.au). To discuss site plans further or to request hard copy documents contact Matt Carr on (07) 4750 0784.



Hill Inlet requires a Plan of Management as it has been identified as a setting five area

END

## Divers plunged deep to help the Reef

***Divers plunged deep into the waters of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park to collect litter recently as part of Clean Up Australia Day.***

The North Queensland Underwater Explorers Club targeted the area around the Picnic Bay jetty on Magnetic Island.

Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority Director of Water Quality and Coastal Development Hugh Yorkston urged the community to help keep waterways clean.

"There is a direct link between land-based activities and the declining quality of water entering the Marine Park so we encourage the community to take this issue on board," he said.

"Rubbish washed from streets and pathways into stormwater drains eventually ends up in adjacent rivers, streams or even directly into the ocean.

"Everyone can help by keeping drains and gutters free of chemicals and rubbish, and putting all litter in the bin or recycling."



Irena Zagorskis, Ann-Maree Lynch, Barbara Menz, Madeleine Ward and Val Pikoulas give a helping hand to keep Australia beautiful

END

## New partnership set to protect Lady Elliot Island

***The lease-holders of Lady Elliot Island, Reef Resort Management Pty Ltd, and the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA) recently entered into a new partnership that will help protect the World Heritage assets of Lady Elliot Island and provide a unique experience for visitors.***

Lady Elliot Eco Resort Managing Director Peter Gash said they saw themselves as the current guardians of Lady Elliot Island.

"We have the good fortune of watching over this beautiful wilderness environment and of helping to preserve the Island's World Heritage values," Peter said.

"Our job is more than looking after this location for our own benefit. We are also looking after it on behalf of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority and the Australian public and world-wide community."

GBRMPA Manager of Commonwealth Islands Kathleen Swalling said it was fantastic to be working with such a positive and motivated team of people to ensure the future protection of the Commonwealth-owned Lady Elliot Island.

"The Lady Elliot Island team and the GBRMPA have agreed priorities and are working together to improve the environmental management of Lady Elliot Island," Kathleen said.

"The resort's management will continue re-establishing vegetation and bird habitat for the island since it was cleared for guano (bird dropping) mining. Another focus will be the restoration of both resort buildings and some of the heritage-listed properties such as the light keeper's houses."

Kathleen said Peter and his team had a long association with the Great

Barrier Reef Marine Park and were all passionate about both the Reef and Lady Elliot Island.

"The team are committed to working with all users of the Marine Park for better environmental outcomes."

GBRMPA and Lady Elliot Eco Resort Management recently met with local trawl operators who use the waters surrounding Lady Elliot Island to anchor and get some well-earned rest.

"We had a meeting with local trawl operators and together we have come up with a trial plan to not only look at environmentally-friendly anchoring areas where coral is unlikely to get damaged, but to ensure a safe place for trawlers to rest," Peter said.

"In addition, an education programme has been implemented to help visitors understand the important role trawlers play in placing prawns on our dinner table and the need for them to have a safe anchorage at night."

Peter said they were very aware of the balancing act required to ensure the location was adequately protected while ensuring people had the opportunity to experience such unique locations.

"It is important to us that we work in conjunction with the GBRMPA so we can draw on their years of experience in managing these areas of the Marine Park.

"We each have a role to play in the successful management of World Heritage Areas like Lady Elliot Island."

Peter said the Lady Elliot Island team were very excited about the future.

"The GBRMPA has demonstrated to us that they are proactive and supportive of our endeavours to protect this remarkable place.

"We look forward to making a quality contribution to the protection and improvement of the environment that is the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park."

## Interesting Facts

The Great Barrier Reef is about 12 000 years old and is the largest natural feature on earth.



Lady Elliot Island, offshore of Bundaberg, is the southern most island in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park

END



## New information kits available for Traditional Owner Groups

**The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority's (GBRMPA) Conservation Heritage and Indigenous Partnerships group have recently released a new Sea Country Partnerships information kit titled "Working together for sustainable traditional use of marine resources in the Great Barrier Reef".**

The kits are specifically designed for Traditional Owner groups, and are jointly badged with both the GBRMPA and Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service logos reflecting the co-operative government approach for these issues.

GBRMPA's Sea Country Research and Education Officer Melissa Sweeney said the kits were intended to facilitate discussions about the

sustainable traditional use of marine resources issues.

"The kits contain a number of culturally-appropriate brochures that aim to inform and encourage community-based sea country management actions on issues important to Traditional Owners," she said.

"This includes methods for working together to share traditional and scientific knowledge on green turtle and dugong populations, and ways of working together to help these populations grow."

The kit also includes a brochure explaining how to develop a Traditional Use of Marine Resources Agreement (TUMRA) to manage traditional harvest activities.

The new education kits are available by contacting the Indigenous Partnerships Liaison Unit on 1800 802 251 or (07) 4750 0700; or email [indigenous\\_partnerships@gbmpa.gov.au](mailto:indigenous_partnerships@gbmpa.gov.au).

END

## Introducing the Traditional Owner Resource Bibliography

**The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority's (GBRMPA) Indigenous Partnerships Liaison Unit is currently exploring a range of ways to progress sea country research and education in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park through their sea country research and education.**

One of the projects underway is the Traditional Owner Resource Bibliography.

A component of the Traditional Owner Information System, the bibliography combines historical resources with key publications, to provide a comprehensive and focused resource about Traditional Owner groups adjacent to the Marine Park.

GBRMPA's Managing Librarian Suzie Davies said the bibliography was developed by the GBRMPA to more effectively use information and knowledge about Traditional Owners and their relationships with the land and sea within the Great Barrier Reef.

"The bibliography holds more than 800 references to material covering Indigenous history and co-operative management practices within the Great Barrier Reef region," she said.

New material is being added to the bibliography as part of an ongoing process to ensure the resource is up-to-date and comprehensive.

The bibliography is currently available to GBRMPA staff to assist with the management of the Marine Park, and is intended to be made available to the public via the Internet in the future. Library staff are able to assist with literature searches if members of the public wish to use the bibliography before.

For more information contact Library and Image Services on 1800 802 251 or (07) 4750 0700, or email [library@gbmpa.gov.au](mailto:library@gbmpa.gov.au).

END

## GBRMPA staff strengthen links with Woppaburra Traditional People

**Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA) staff recently attended a workshop on Great Keppel Island to speak with Woppaburra Traditional Owners about various sea country issues.**

Woppaburra Traditional Owners are going through a process to have six parcels of traditional land on Great Keppel Island handed back and an element of the workshop was to discuss nominations for their Board Trustees.

The workshop also provided an opportunity for Woppaburra descendants to come together to discuss issues surrounding the management of their land and sea country.

GBRMPA's Dave Lowe, Kalair Conaghan and Gail Barry along with former GBRMPA employee Darren Butler were there to share their knowledge of the Marine Park.

The Woppaburra People were interested in Traditional Use of Marine Resource Agreements, zoning, and how they could be more involved in tourism in the Marine Park.

The Woppaburra People extended their thanks to GBRMPA for their support.



Woppaburra People come together on Great Keppel Island

END

# Tourists give turtle second chance



When the turtle was first brought onboard, it was clear she would not have survived if Orion passengers had not spotted her...



After carefully cutting the masses of net from around the turtle, she was happy to be free...

***On a recent expedition of the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area, passengers on board the Orion Exhibition cruise ship spotted some net floating in the water with a flipper slapping at the surface.***

On closer inspection, passengers saw a marine turtle trapped in an enormous amount of fishing net.

The crew acted quickly, pulling the distressed turtle on board the Orion and cutting her free of the net.



Enjoying some quiet time on board the luxury cruiser...

Orion Exhibition team leader Robin West said it was such a rewarding experience to be able to help this precious animal, as it was clear the turtle would not have survived without assistance.

"It's nice to know that we humans can be of assistance at times, particularly as we are the cause of the pollution, such as nets and plastics, that cuts short a large number of marine creatures' lives," Robin said.



Before diving back into the water and heading on her way

END

## High standard tourism operators showcased in Japan

***The message about the importance of high standard tourism operators in the Marine Park has gone all the way to Japan.***

The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA) worked with Tourism Tropical North Queensland to recognise the high standards of eco-certified operators at the Tokyo Marine Diving Fair.

Run by Ecotourism Australia, the national Eco Certification programme identifies and rewards genuine ecotourism and nature tourism products throughout Australia.

These high standard Marine Park operators receive benefits such as longer-term permits and increased exposure through tourism trade directories and an up-to-date listing on the GBRMPA website.

To view a current list of certified high standard operators or to find out how to become a high standard operator and make a difference to protecting and presenting the Marine Park visit [www.gbrmpa.gov.au](http://www.gbrmpa.gov.au).

END

## Accolades awarded for outstanding achievements

***The inaugural Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA) Visitor Information Centre of the Year Awards was recently held in outback Winton.***

The accolades were handed out at a spectacular outback-themed dinner following the Queensland Information Centre Association 2006 conference.

### Winners

#### ***Individual Award***

June Baker – Tourism Hervey Bay

#### ***Visitor Information Centre staffed with volunteers only***

Babinda Visitor Information Centre

#### ***Visitor Information Centre staffed with up to three paid staff and with or without volunteers***

Redcliffe Visitor Information Centre – Pelican Park

#### ***Highly Commended***

Balonne Shire Visitor Information Centre

Wondai Visitor Information Centre

***Visitor Information Centre with more than three paid staff and with or without volunteers***

Brisbane – Queen Street Mall Visitor Information Centre

#### ***New Visitor Information Centre***

Museum of Tropical Queensland Visitor Information Centre – Townsville

The GBRMPA congratulates all the winners and commends the fantastic job that so many Visitor Information Centres do in helping educate people about the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park.



From left: Sara Trenerry (GBRMPA), Janet Hewitt and Jackie Errington (Brisbane – Queen Street Mall Visitor Information Centre), Rose Snedden and Fay Rowe (Babinda Visitor Information Centre), Nicky Young (Redcliffe Visitor Information Centre) and Jodie Conner (Townsville Enterprise) enjoy the awards night

END



## Sign and slogans connect Woongarra State School to the Marine Park

**Students at Woongarra State School have developed environmental awareness signs that will be strategically placed along the Burnett foreshore encouraging users of the Marine Park to care for their environment.**

As part of the Reef Guardian School programme, students from preschool to grade seven were asked to think of a creative slogan and sign that would help protect the Marine Park.

Woongarra State School Reef Guardian coordinating teacher Sue Brennan said she was proud of the students' achievements.



Woongarra State School students celebrate their sign going up in the community with Burnett Shire Mayor Raymond Duffy

"We arranged to have the students' signs professionally enlarged and scanned onto metal signs before presenting them to the Burnett Shire Council at our Reef Guardian Day," Sue said.

"The Council was so impressed by the students' work they invited them to attend the next council meeting to advise of the best place to put the signs along the Burnett foreshore in order to reach the most amount of Marine Park users."

The signs cap off a big year for Woongarra State School who still had time to stencil gutters in the community with environmental messages, be filmed by Totally Wild, paint a mural of 'Woonette' their adopt-a-turtle, enter various environmental competitions and help raise money for environmental causes.

"Woongarra State School has been involved in the Reef Guardian School programme for the past three years and the students and community of Woongarra have benefited greatly from their involvement," Sue said.

"Following a very busy 2005 we will now rise to the challenge this year in finding new and creative ways, along with maintaining the old, to help protect the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park."

## Guardians go gung ho

**The Reef Guardian Schools programme is in full swing this year with schools keen to join the programme and help protect what is right in their own backyard.**

Sign presentations have been happening up and down the Great Barrier Reef coast with schools committed to do what they can within their school grounds and their community to help keep the Marine Park sustainable for the future.

Beaconsfield State School in Mackay only recently joined the programme however Reef Guardian Co-ordinating Teacher Adrienne Mifsud said the students had already begun projects to help protect their environment.

"The students were recently involved in the 'Clean-Up Your Schools Day' where they cleaned a local waterway and park. They have also been involved in recycling within the school," Adrienne said.

"The students have a display at Mt Pleasant Shopping Centre showing the effects of plastic on the environment and we will encourage the community to take responsibility and stop using plastics.

"A couple of classes will also travel to Reef HQ in Townsville to learn more about the Reef and see it up close."



Gladstone South State School are recognised as a Reef Guardian School in 2006

### Slogans included:

<b>Preschool</b>	Help me survive. See me for life!
<b>Grade 1</b>	Let's all make a stand, keep the rubbish off our sand!
<b>Grade 2</b>	Use your brains. Take care with what goes down the drains!
<b>Grade 3</b>	Be fantastic. Prohibit all plastic.
<b>Grade 4</b>	Don't waste it. Just taste it. Be water wise.
<b>Grade 5</b>	Don't put chemicals in the ocean. They are a poisonous potion!
<b>Grade 6</b>	Leave the sand dunes alone. It's one of nature's homes!

END

END

# Townsville scientist remembered for his contributions to the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park



**Dr Peter William Arnold  
1949 – 2006**

*Local marine scientist, Dr Peter Arnold, was a softly spoken gentleman, whose enthusiasm, amazing breadth and depth of knowledge, and willingness to share information will be sadly missed.*

In a tribute to Peter's dedication to marine science, the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority would like to acknowledge the achievements and passion Peter displayed throughout his career.

Peter was born on 14 May 1949 in Nova Scotia, Canada. He successfully acquired a Bachelor of Science (Honours Biology) and Masters of Science (Aquatic Science) in Canada before moving to Townsville in 1974, where he completed his PhD at James Cook University in 1979.

Peter worked as a research officer and then as an associate lecturer at James Cook University from 1979 to 1985, before taking up the position of Senior Curator, Tropical Natural History at the Museum of Tropical Queensland where he worked for almost 20 years.

Peter's most recent achievements include the identification of a new species of dolphin, the Australian snubfin dolphin. This new species was the first new mammal species to be identified in more than half a century.

Peter also made major contributions to the biology of dwarf minke whales in the far northern Great Barrier Reef and the identification and mapping of seabed biodiversity throughout the Great Barrier Reef. At the time of his death, Peter was close to identifying a new subspecies of the dwarf minke whale.

Peter's breadth of interest in marine science and his thirst for knowledge led to him being considered a world expert on many species, from large marine mammals down to deep sea organisms such as bryozoans.

Due to his expert knowledge, Peter had established collaborations around the world with other scientists, as well as educating and supervising many students over the years.

Peter died suddenly on 7 March 2006. His ashes will be spread over the Ribbon Reefs, home of the dwarf minke whales on the Great Barrier Reef, and in Canada.

The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority offers their sincere condolences to Peter's family, friends and colleagues.

Thank you to Dr Alastair Birtles from James Cook University for providing some of the information contained in this article.

END

## Camp Quality kids to experience the Reef up-close

**More than 200 children from Camp Quality and their families will now be able to experience the wonders of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park, thanks to the generosity of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA).**

The GBRMPA recently donated to Camp Quality more than \$15 000, the proceeds of the Eureka Prize for Biodiversity Research and employee fundraising.

The donation will enable tourism operators in Townsville, Cairns, Yeppoon and the Whitsundays to work with the GBRMPA to provide special day-long reef trips for the children and their families.

GBRMPA Chairman Virginia Chadwick said the reef trips would help make a big difference in the lives of the children.

"The GBRMPA is delighted to provide children and their families with an opportunity to experience the natural wonders of the Marine Park," she said.

"We are pleased the proceeds of the Eureka Prize will be put to good use and proud of our employees banding together to raise money in their own time for such a worthwhile cause."

The Botanic Gardens Trust Eureka Prize for Biodiversity Research was awarded to the GBRMPA for outstanding contributions to the conservation of Australia's biodiversity through the Representative Areas Programme.

Employees topped up the donation to Camp Quality with more funds raised through a social club trivia night last year.

Camp Quality's North Queensland Area Manager Lorraine Duve welcomed the donation from the GBRMPA.

"Fundraising is vital to the continued growth of Camp Quality and we are pleased to accept this contribution from the GBRMPA," she said.

"The full-day boat trips will see the children and their families snorkelling or viewing the coral from glass bottom boats. It will be a fun, interesting and exciting experience for them."



GBRMPA presents Camp Quality with a cheque for \$15 000. From left to right: Belinda Jago (GBRMPA), Virginia Chadwick (Chair, GBRMPA), Chris Manning (GBRMPA), Jai McKenzie (Camp Quality), Lorraine Duve (Camp Quality) and John Tanzer (Executive Director, GBRMPA)

END

# Alaskan students discover Reef through video technology

**Reef HQ Education Manager Fred Nucifora said 31 students from remote northern Alaska recently experienced the Great Barrier Reef without stepping outside their classroom.**

Fred said the experience was made possible thanks to Reef Videoconferencing technology being used at the Education Department of Reef HQ Aquarium, Townsville.

"Venetie is a small and remote Athabaskan Indian village located approximately 56 miles above the Arctic Circle," Fred said.

"The local school district has this year installed videoconferencing technology to enable teachers to introduce students to the outside world."

Ms Gretchen Frank, a teacher at John Fredson School, said she was thrilled at the possibility of opening up the world to her students.

"With a total population of 200, our village culture is focused on subsistence that includes hunting, trapping and fishing. However, technology is a key educational tool for the school," Gretchen said.



Although the snow was falling outside these Alaskan students experienced the wonders of the Great Barrier Reef from inside the four walls of their classroom

Fred, who fields videoconferencing enquiries from schools around the world, said this was the most remote location his team had contacted via videoconference.

"The John Fredson School is an example of how distance is no longer a barrier to education," he said.

"Reef Videoconferencing provides students with an opportunity to interact live with a scuba diver and see thousands of reef creatures.

"These children may not have the opportunity to visit the Great Barrier Reef, but through a Reef Videoconference they have every opportunity to appreciate it and discover what makes it so unique."

Since Reef HQ began offering a Reef Videoconference programme, the number of schools from across the globe experiencing the Great Barrier Reef has grown.

The Reef Videoconferences are conducted from the depths of both the predator and coral reef exhibits of the Aquarium. Using an underwater camera, staff can bring people from around the world up close to a wide variety of marine life and corals whilst also providing live commentary.

"Our videoconferencing programme has been running for six years now and with more and more educational facilities installing the technology, schools across the world are now able to experience the Reef," Fred said.

## Rare white turtle now on show at Reef HQ



The newest addition to Reef HQ

**Reef HQ Aquarium, welcomed its newest addition recently a unique "white" green turtle hatchling.**

The turtle has been diagnosed as Amelanotic, meaning it has a lack of melanin (pigment). This condition causes the turtle to appear completely white in colour, similar to an albino.

Queensland Parks and Wildlife Senior Conservation Officer Ian Bell said such a skin condition is uncommon and unlikely to be seen as Amelanotic turtles rarely survive in the wild.

"They stand out in their natural environment and therefore are an obvious target for predators," he said.

Whilst the shell has gained a small amount of colour, the body of the turtle is white in colour and this is not expected to change.

Reef HQ Aquarium intends to continue caring for the turtle, and has now placed it on display for the general public to view.

Reef HQ is located at 2-68 Flinders Street, Townsville and is open from 9.30am to 5.00pm, seven days a week, everyday of the year except Christmas Day.

END

## Lucky T hits the Road

**Lucky T Turtle recently headed out throughout the Townsville region as part of a joint tourism campaign involving Reef HQ, Townsville Enterprise Limited and the Townsville Bulletin.**

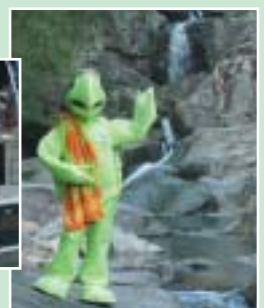
Entitled "Where in the North is Lucky T Turtle?" the campaign is designed to promote Lucky T as an

ambassador for Reef HQ and educate locals about the amazing destinations right in their own backyard. The aim of the programme is to encourage more people to discover their local region.

The series of photos and information on each destination will appear in the Townsville Bulletin from June 2006.



Lucky T 'fishing'



Lucky T goes swimming at Crystal Creek

# Marine Park Partnerships

## Profile of Regional Liaison Manager – Northern



### David Briggs

David Briggs is the Regional Liaison Manager – Northern, based in Townsville and covering the area from south of Tully to the Burdekin.

Although new to the role, taking up the position in February this year, David will be a familiar face to some as he is returning to GBRMPA for a second time after working as a Planning Officer for four years from 1989 to 1993.

"GBRMPA was a fabulous place to work when I was here last and I had no hesitation coming back. The people are so friendly and dedicated to their work," David said.

David was attracted to his current position as he likes to work with a wide variety of people and tries to understand their perspective.

"This position is flexible and I can be involved in all aspects of managing the Marine Park," David said.

"Most importantly though, I want to assist the community to be a part of its management and to be enthusiastic about the protection of the Marine Park and the environment."

David has previously worked for the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service in Rockhampton, Shoalwater Bay Commission of Inquiry, and the

University of Queensland. Most recently, he was with the Environmental Protection Agency in the planning and policy group.

David is happy to be back up in north Queensland as he loves the relaxed lifestyle it offers and the incredible diversity of landscapes.

"I love living in Townsville as it is the right balance of city and country," David said.

David has two boys and enjoys all sports and music. He says his personal goal is for his family to have a good life and to try to leave things better than he found them.

END

## Creature Feature

### Sea Snakes

- Sea snakes are reptiles. They are related to land snakes, lizards, turtles and crocodiles.
- They give birth to live young in the sea.
- Sea snakes breathe air but can usually stay under water for about 20 or 30 minutes before coming up for a breath.
- About 15 types of sea snake occur within the Great Barrier Reef waters.
- Sea snakes have a poisonous 'bite' that paralyses their prey. They carry some of the most potent poisons known in the animal kingdom but they have small fangs and are not normally aggressive animals.
- Sea snakes are on display at Reef HQ Aquarium, Townsville.



## Doing your bit to look after it!

**Litter on our beaches and within the Marine Park can be a significant danger to wildlife. Turtles, dolphins and whales have died after mistaking floating plastic bags for food and eating them. Fish, birds and marine mammals often become entangled in fishing debris. Help keep the Marine Park free of litter by following these responsible reef practices:**

- ➔ Do not throw rubbish (such as food scraps, plastic, paper, fishing gear and cigarette butts) overboard – take it back to shore for proper disposal.
- ➔ Secure all loose articles, clothing and towels on the deck, to prevent them blowing off or accidentally falling overboard.
- ➔ Collect all litter from the Marine Park when you see it.
- ➔ Retrieve all entangled fishing gear and anything accidentally dropped overboard.
- ➔ Have plenty of properly secured bins and rubbish bags on board and use them.
- ➔ Do not throw travelsick bags over the side of the vessel – this is illegal.
- ➔ Minimise packaging and pre-packaged food when heading out on the water.



## Community Links

A profile of  
**Steve Sharpe**  
Caretaker at Low Isles



When asked what he loves most about his job Steve Sharpe's reply could make you green with envy.

"Like many people, my partner and I have always dreamed of one day being able to live on a tropical island. Now we are both living that dream. What more could you ask for?"

Steve Sharpe is the caretaker at Low Isles; a four-acre coral cay situated on a large oval 500-acre coral platform and situated only 15 kilometres north-east of Port Douglas.

Low Isles is in a Green Zone, therefore Steve's presence on the island helps to ensure the rules are abided by.

"I do not have the powers of a Marine Park ranger but manage by informing people of the rules and submitting incident reports when required. I also maintain the island and train volunteers to help out when needed."

Steve moved to Low Isles in 2003 from the East Kimberley and has grown to love tropical north Queensland.

"It is not unlike the Kimberley. The people are friendly, the environment is spectacular and the local community have a desire to protect their region.

"The special part about our lifestyle is that we can wake up in the morning and head to the outer Reef to catch a gourmet selection of fish, or we can head to the mainland and be immersed in amazing rainforests."

As caretaker of Low Isles, Steve has regular contact with groups and industry that have an interest in the island.

"The Low Isles Preservation Society regularly consult me for advice on how things are going on the island and how they can assist or get involved in any projects. Often I may be employed on a casual basis to assist the tourist operators when they are busy, and the University of Queensland have a research facility on the island and they often request my assistance for certain projects.

"I also volunteer my time with such programmes as the water quality sampling programme run by the GBRMPA. There is currently a sampler set up in the Low Isles lagoon which I change over on a monthly basis."

Steve says surprisingly he does not use the Marine Park for recreational purposes as much as what he would like but that he is always kept busy on the island.

"My partner Louise has two girls who go to boarding school in Cairns but come home most weekends, I have two daughters who visit the island regularly and in addition to all of that we have an amazing little 13 month old baby boy. So between all the kids, and maintaining and managing the island, we certainly never get bored."

Steve's personal goal is not unlike his working goal: to ensure Low Isles remains as beautiful as it is today and to always appreciate the special opportunity he has been given in looking after a piece of paradise.

## Calendar of events

### Month of May 2006

Mackay Whitsundays Healthy Waterways Month

03 May 2006

Gladstone LMAC meeting

04 May 2006

Burnett Mary LMAC meeting

09 May 2006

Hinchinbrook LMAC meeting

10 May 2006

Misssion Beach LMAC meeting

22 May 2006

International Biodiversity Day

05 June 2006

World Environment Day

08 June 2006

World Oceans Day

14 June 2006

Cairns LMAC meeting

## GBRMPA contacts

Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority  
2-68 Flinders Street  
PO Box 1379  
Townsville Qld 4810

Phone: (07) 4750 0700  
Fax: (07) 4772 6093  
Email: [info@gbbrmpa.gov.au](mailto:info@gbbrmpa.gov.au)

If you do not wish to receive this newsletter in the future or if you would like to receive this newsletter via email instead of as a hard copy, please email [searead@gbbrmpa.gov.au](mailto:searead@gbbrmpa.gov.au) or phone the GBRMPA on (07) 4750 0700.



Australian Government  
Great Barrier Reef  
Marine Park Authority



our great barrier reef  
let's keep it great



Natural  
Heritage  
Trust

Helping Communities  
Helping Australia  
A Commonwealth Government Initiative