



Australian Government

Great Barrier Reef
Marine Park Authority

Tourism and Recreation Group NEWSLETTER NO 14

March 2005

The Tourism and Recreation Group's quarterly newsletters provide an update on some of the current issues and initiatives that may affect tourism and recreation stakeholders.

The Directors Desk

Hello and welcome to the first T&R update for 2005.

Encouraging best practice, rewarding high standard operators and simplifying management approaches are a continuing priority for the T&R team in the year ahead.

Formal recognition of all GBRMP EcoCertified operators is now a reality on GBRMPA's website and at trade events such as Australian Tourism Exchange. Work is also well underway on the revision of GBRMPA's best practice guides.

A revamped Tourism Operator's Handbook is a major work-in-progress and is aimed at helping operators understand and navigate through the framework of Great Barrier Reef management.

Our work to improve access to EMC visitation data provides an opportunity for the GBRMPA and industry to better understand emerging Great Barrier Reef use, such as cruise shipping and locations of interest.

I hope that the start of 2005 has been productive for all, and I look forward to the industry working closely with us and each other throughout the year to ensure a sustainable and positive Great Barrier Reef environment.

- Lisha Mulqueeny

CaPOM Amendments Create Operator Opportunities

Recent Cairns Area Plan of Management amendments came into effect on 2 December 2004. The major amendments addressed access issues for larger vessels and provided for up to five new permits for tourism operations based in the Cooktown/Bloomfield area.

Thank you again to all operators who provided input to the GBRMPA on these amendments.

Details are available at
www.gbrmpa.gov.au or
(07) 4750 0700.

Full Steam Ahead with Cruise Partnerships

The cruise shipping industry is booming with an approximately 55% increase in cruise calls to Cairns and Whitsundays from 2004 to 2005. This strong growth is expected to continue with the *Orion* beginning a series of Great Barrier Reef itineraries in April and P&O Cruises Australia announcing a fourth ship will join its fleet in late 2005.

On 7 March a very successful joint workshop between the GBRMPA and cruise industry stakeholders was held, with outcomes including the establishment of a cruise

industry advisory group to ensure improved communication and a closer working relationship.

Contact: *Lorelle Schluter* on
(07) 4750 0705 or email:
l.schluter@gbrmpa.gov.au



Caption L to R: Captain John Foley, Australian Reef Pilots, joins Captain Graham Goodway, *Pacific Princess*, Martin Robinson, Manager Environmental Management Systems, and James Aston, Project Manager Shipping, from the GBRMPA in discussion regarding environmental policies onboard P&O Carnival ships.

Eco-Operators up to standard

Ecotourism Australia is continuing to implement their Australia-wide audit program through independent third party auditors. Already over 80 audits have been conducted. Most operators demonstrated compliance with the best practice standards, but the certification of one operator has been suspended and 11 operators have been requested to rectify minor breaches. Ecotourism Australia is committed to auditing each certified operation at least once in the next 3 years.

**our great barrier reef
let's keep it great**



COTS Control Programme Continues to Protect

The Australian Government continues to support the tourism industry COTS Control Programme to the tune of \$400 000 this financial year. The success of this programme depends on industry involvement. If you are experiencing COTS at your site, please contact AMPTO on (07) 4044 4990 or email: info@ampto.com.au

TRRAC'ing Well

Another successful Tourism and Recreation Reef Advisory Committee (TRRAC) meeting was held in February. Items on the agenda included greater indigenous participation in tourism, legal aspects of how operators represent the Environmental Management Charge, artificial reefs and progress towards the new Tourism Operator's Handbook.

Reef Facts for Tour Guides

T&R is working with marine tourism operators and guides to produce a series of double-sided A4 sheets called *Reef Facts*, which will provide accurate and up-to-date information on the Great Barrier Reef for face-to-face and audio-visual presentation to visitors. Consultation will take place in April, with distribution beginning in May. If you would like to go on the distribution list to receive *Reef Facts*, please email I.schluter@gbbrmpa.gov.au

Reef Facts Teasers

Coral may provide a solution for people needing a bone reconstruction. The coral genus, Goniopora, is very similar to human bone. Templates of the coral, cut to shape, could be used to replace bones lost in accidents or to cancer. Bone tissue will grow over the coral, thereby repairing the damage.
(Source: Tropical Topics: a second compilation, 2002)

Need further information?

www.gbbrmpa.gov.au/corp_site/key_issues/tourism/index.html
or contact us by email: tourrec@gbbrmpa.gov.au

BleachWatch - Observe to Conserve

Marine Park tourism operators have continued to provide valuable contributions to another successful BleachWatch programme over the 2004/2005 summer. Cooler weather conditions have generally limited bleaching to patches of mild bleaching however sites subject to other stresses have experienced more severe bleaching. Contact: Gillian Goby on (07) 4750 0762 or email bleachwatch@gbbrmpa.gov.au

GBR Operators Take Top Awards

Great Barrier Reef operators were well represented at the 2005 Australian Tourism Awards. Particular congratulations to National Category winners Fantasea Cruises (Major Tour & Transport Operators), the Hahn Premium Race Weekend at Hamilton Island (Significant Festivals & Events) and Barefoot Cruises (Unique Accommodation).

Advertising the EMC

Tourism operators are reminded that the Environmental Management Charge (EMC) should be accurately represented in all advertising and, if any additional handling fees are levied, they should not be represented as being part of the EMC.

Would you like this newsletter electronically?

Please provide your details to Kirsten Walpole on (07) 4750 0775 or email: k.walpole@gbbrmpa.gov.au

Bulletin Board

- **Changes to vessel sewage regulations** commenced 1 January 2005. For information see www.gbbrmpa.gov.au/corp_site/key_issues/water_quality/vessel_sewage_regs.html
- **114 commercial fishing licences** will be bought back by the Australian Government at a total cost of \$31.85M
- 20+ of the marine tourism industries 'up and coming' guides attended **GBRMPA's Tourism Training Course** this month. To be part of the next one contact Angela at a.colliver@gbbrmpa.gov.au
- **'The GBRMPA scores top marks** as a protected area manager in the latest industry survey' said Col McKenzie, AMPTO's Exec Director.
- **The DITR Tourism & Conservation** initiative EOI deadline is 6 April. Visit www.industry.gov.au/TourismAndConservation
- **Reef HQ** launches a new 'Behind-the-Scenes tour'.
- **Wildlife Tourism Australia workshop** 'Wildlife Tourism and Conservation, the Perfect Marriage?' on 17-19 April 2005.
- **'Focus on Corals' Conference** 16-17 April 2005 contact r.haywood@cqu.edu.au or (07) 4150 7038.
- Public comment invited until 11 April 2005 on draft **GBRMPA Protected Species Policy**.

