



REEF CHECK AUSTRALIA

MEDIA RELEASE

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International Clean Up Day on the Gold Coast Seaway

On Sunday, September 26th, 36 volunteers gathered on the Gold Coast Seaway for International Clean Up Day, a global event with more than 15,000 participants in more than 100 countries. Not-for-profit Reef Check Australia and local Brisbane dive shop, Dive World partnered for this underwater and coastal clean up with the support of South East Queensland Healthy Waterways Partnership and the Gold Coast City Council. Through out the course of a few hours, volunteers collected an estimated 100 kilograms of rubbish, everything from a toaster and a plastic Christmas tree to discarded fishing line and bottles. These items represent just a small portion of the estimated 6.5 million tonnes of rubbish entering oceans each year.

Reef Check Australia is a community-based charity that trains recreational divers to monitor coral health on more than 100 sites along the Queensland coast; these surveys include records of marine debris found during surveys. Dive World, a new Brisbane-based dive shop also supports marine conservation efforts and has sponsored this event. The Gold Coast City Council had a number of volunteers participating in the clean up and also provided appropriate rubbish disposal facilities for collected items. South East Queensland Healthy Waterways Partnership kindly sponsored the event, providing numerous supplies that support the clean up team's efforts. *"Healthy Waterways are keen to raise awareness of the issue of litter and debris in waterways and we will support groups and individuals who step up to the task of addressing this problem,"* said Dr Peter Schneider, CEO of Healthy Waterways.

The International Coastal Clean Up, facilitated by the Ocean Conservancy and Project Aware, aims to protect marine wildlife and habitats from the impacts of marine rubbish. The annual event also raises awareness about the effects of debris on the marine ecosystem and promotes stewardship of our marine habitats. *"Plastic bags, cigarette butts, bottles, cans, food wrappers, and loads of other rubbish find ways into our waterways, taking up to 1000 years to disintegrate, and have devastating impacts on our local marine life"* said Andy Wellsted, Academy Manager for Dive World.

Discarded litter in the marine environment has the potential to harm wildlife such as turtles, dolphins, dugongs and sea birds when they eat or become entangled in debris. It also reduces the enjoyment of everyone utilizing the area. *"A lot of marine debris is out of sight, out of mind. Our clean up volunteers helped to reduce the negative impacts of this rubbish not only by removing it from the environment but also by making people aware that it's there,"* says Jennifer Loder, SEQ Project Manager for Reef Check Australia. Information recorded by the clean up team will be reported to PADI's Project Aware, helping to increase understanding about the types and amounts of marine rubbish in the area.

Event proudly supported by:



For additional information and images, contact: Jennifer Loder, SEQ Project Manager 0402284681.

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Images



Reef Check Australia

Reef Check Australia is an award-winning, not-for-profit organisation combining education and research to result in the protection and rehabilitation of the world's coral reefs. Established in 2001 by one passionate individual with a strong vision, the charity has inspired over 100 volunteers to train using a scientifically standardised protocol in established monitoring techniques and now collects and distributes valuable data on reef health to marine resource managers and the wider scientific community. This data can provide vital early-warnings of a decline in reef health.

With a professional approach and recognised integrity, Reef Check Australia works in collaboration with community and industry partners to raise awareness, both locally and further afield through education and participation programs, about the effects of climate change and human impacts on the resilience of the reef.

Support from a number of industry professionals, along with some valued sponsors and several hard-working volunteers all make our current projects possible but, in order to succeed in our mission, we need to do more. As a charitable organisation, donors can make fully tax-deductable gifts to help Reef Check Australia take positive action towards reaching environmentally sound and economically sustainable solutions to the real challenges of coral reef conservation.

Our Mission:

To promote healthy local coral reefs through scientific research, community education and marine conservation.

Objectives:

To ensure a sustainable future for the Australian and Indo-Pacific region's coral reef ecosystems by:

- 1) The generation and publication of select coral reef data that is highly valued by scientists and marine managers.
- 2) The establishment of reef monitoring programs that are accessible to a wide range of the population and yet still produce valuable data.
- 3) The establishment of a coral reef health database for Australia and the Indo-Pacific region that is integrated in to the global Reef Check network.
- 4) For the majority of Australian adults and children to understand the importance of coral reefs and be able to tell you what they can do to help protect them.
- 5) Development and implementation of cutting edge training programs to enhance the value of the data collected by volunteers.
- 6) Quality marine-based education programs for local communities.
- 7) Meaningful participation by local communities in the promotion and maintenance of coral reefs through Reef Check Australia programs or use of the database.
- 8) Promotion of the sustainable use of coral reefs through partnerships with governments, researchers, businesses and community groups.
- 9) Raising public awareness of the economic, ecological and social value of coral reefs.
- 10) Promotion of the Reef Check Australia brand.
- 11) Financial sustainability of Reef Check Australia.

For more information or to get involved check out our website at www.reefcheckaustralia.org.

For further press information and high res images please contact Jennifer Loder at Reef Check Australia via email, seq@reefcheckaustralia.org or telephone 0402284681.



Diving the World Together

Dive World is a new Brisbane-based dive centre specialising in scuba diving, spearfishing and freediving training, recreational activities and equipment sales and servicing. With a contemporary retail showroom, lounge, entertainment area and coffee/bar facilities, the Dive World centre provides a hub for all divers – from those who are new to diving to seasoned veterans.

Dive World is the dive training specialist and offers all courses in an environment that is fun and relaxed, yet thorough, educational experience. Divers dive for the enjoyment and as a recreational activity to maintain their work life balance and Dive World responds to this by ensuring that each and every customer has an awesome experience in diving and in learning.

There is also a formal side to education and Dive World boasts only the best theoretical and experiential training. As a PADI 5 Start Scuba Diving Centre, Dive World maintains a high level of training outcomes and this is complemented by their quality trainers and resources. Dive World also engages Australia's deepest freediver and record holder, Ben Noble, to facilitate the AIDA International accredited freediving course.

Dive World is passionate about ensuring the future of diving and is acutely aware of the importance dive centres have in educating on marine conservation. Dive World partners with various organisations to promote awareness and to be proactive in protecting Australia's oceans, shorelines and waterways. Enhancing the positive profile of diving is paramount to this cause and is of great priority to Dive World.

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