



REEF CHECK AUSTRALIA

MEDIA RELEASE

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Coral charity challenges climate change

This October 24th will be a day of action, international action. What's it all about? The "hot" topic of Climate Change and its imminent irreversible impacts on our planet.

International campaigner 350.org is launching a global campaign ahead of the UN Climate Change conference in Copenhagen this December to encourage the adoption of 350 parts per million as a limit for CO2 concentrations in the world's oceans.

The campaign at 350.org and now 350.org/australia is all about raising awareness and engagement with the science behind climate change and equally taking meaningful action. There will be groups of people calling for '350' all over the world, from Easter Island to the Taj Mahal and the Sydney Opera House.

If there's one image that will hit hard at Copenhagen this year, it's 350.org's iconic Great Barrier Reef shot. Made possible by Townsville-based charity, Reef Check Australia and its dive industry supporters in Port Douglas, this image will be hitting media headlines all over the world this October.

It features scuba-divers underwater on Agincourt Reef - one of the most picturesque sites on the GBR – unfurling a huge 350.org campaign banner before holding it aloft as a giant challenge to climate change.

Mark Miller, Reef Check Australia's Board Chair, was delighted to be able to help, "It's fantastic that our volunteers can get involved in a high profile international campaign like this," he said.

"They're normally the un-sung heroes of the reef, quietly doing their bit to preserve this Australian icon, so they deserve a moment in the spotlight".

Posing for photographs is certainly something RCA volunteers don't often get a chance to do whilst conducting their underwater monitoring. They're usually busy taking their own photographs of corals as part of the vital information they collect on changes in the health of the reef.



Additional still images and HD vision are also available.

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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 Gemma Routledge at Reef Check Australia via email, communications@reefcheckaustralia.org or telephone 0428 987 457.