



SEEKING HELPERS ... Reef Check Australia director Jos Hill

SR465142

Volunteers urged to dive into reef monitoring

By SARAH SULLIVAN

WHAT started out as a Masters research project for marine biologist Jos Hill has turned into an internationally resourced database on Queensland's reefs.

Miss Hill is now Australian Reef Check director and while the money might not be great, the chance to dive some of the world's greatest reefs is unparalleled.

"It has grown from being a little project on the side while I was at uni to becoming a not-for-profit organisation that runs expeditions to Vanuatu," she said.

Reef Check uses a scientific

monitoring method to measure the human impact on Queensland's reefs.

"There wasn't any data on reefs around the world before Reef Check and we are stressing the importance of monitoring management," she said.

The organisation recently received funding from Townsville City Council and Envirofund to research green zones around Palm Island.

Miss Hill said the chance to monitor green zones was a world-first.

"We will be using our recent funding to monitor inshore reefs, under the reef and water quality protection plan," she said.

She was at James Cook University yesterday to give a talk on the organisation and discuss the latest training program Reef Check will be running in June.

About 25 people attended the lecture but because of time and logistics the company is only able to train eight people.

Miss Hill said the main drawback was the cheap diving but the group could only take people with substantial diving experience.

Volunteers need to train for basic coral reef ecology, monitoring methods and teamwork.

Interested divers should go online to www.reefcheck-australia.org.au

Ove de plu

By DANNY F

MANY Townsville suffered a toothache thankful Townsville owner Sarah Ray positions with over

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