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Monday 16th of June 2003

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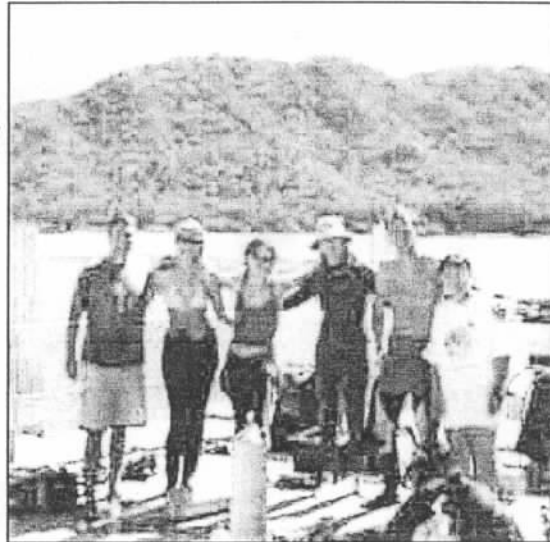
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June 6th 2003

## Nelly Bay reef gets a checkup

*This Sunday a team of volunteers and students from James Cook University will be surveying the reef at the southern end of Nelly Bay beach (near Coconuts). The survey is part of an ongoing International program called Reef Check which monitors the health of reefs on an ongoing basis.*

Jos Hill, who's Australia's Reef Check coordinator, told Magnetic Times that the planned Island visit will be the second in so many months. "We recently surveyed Geoffrey Bay, near the wreck of the Moltke (in Arcadia by the car ferry terminal) and found there was a high abundance of algae and silt, which could be an indication of nutrient pollution and channel dredging however there were also many hard corals and other invertebrates. The site will be visited again each year in order to build a picture of how the reef changes over time" said



Jos who also commented that the Moltke Wreck site was the thirtieth local site visited by the team so far this year. Other sites near Townsville have included Davies, Wheeler and Keeper Reefs.

The Reef Check group will be surveying Alma Bay in coming weeks too and will be doing a follow-up video transect of their work at Geoffrey Bay.

The Island will become a training base for future Reef Check teams. "We will be looking for additional volunteers within a couple of months and hope to commence a training program in September" says Jos, "Interested divers should have a rescue or equivalent qualification and a minimum of 50 dives".

This training course will teach divers about coral reef ecology, threats to their health and solutions to these problems. By participation in this program, divers will gain insight into how coral reef scientists work. Jos says that the knowledge gained from this experience will enhance your diving experiences as you have a better idea what you are looking at.

"Our work on the Island has been enthusiastically supported by Ocean Dive and in particular Darren Mitchell (manager) who's been really happy to help with supplying us with much of our equipment" said Jos

Experienced divers who would like to join the Reef Check team are encouraged to contact Jos Hill on [jos.hill1@jcu.edu.au](mailto:jos.hill1@jcu.edu.au) or 4781 6930. More information on the activities of Reef Check can be found at this site. [www.ReefCheckOz.eyesfull.com](http://www.ReefCheckOz.eyesfull.com)