

# Reef Check Australia seeks dive instructors to become Reef Check Trainers

Reef Check Australia is calling for expressions of interest from experienced scuba instructors in the Cairns, Port Douglas, Mackay and Whitsunday region and Rockhampton to become course trainers for Reef Check. Reef Check aims to establish additional coral reef monitoring training courses in these locations during 2008. Trainers do not need to be marine biologists but do need significant experience with coral reefs and have sound identification of basic coral and fish family groups. A Reef Check Training Course is normally run part time during the evenings and weekends. The Trainer role will involve 1-2 training programs per year with each lasting 2-4 weeks.

The course participants become Reef Check volunteers who monitor reefs around Australia region on a long-term basis.

Coral reefs around the world are under enormous pressure from human activities and climate change. Although Australia's reefs are among the best managed in the world, they are not immune to these threats.

Reef Check is the United Nations' official international community-based coral reef monitoring program. Reef Check regional teams monitor the health of their coral reefs by completing scientific surveys of designated dive sites according to the Reef Check protocol. The data is then fed back into the Reef Check Australia database and the global database, and is a major contribution to the global coral reef status report.

As a Reef Check Trainer you will have the opportunity to meet a diverse range of people with a united passion to contribute to coral reef conservation. It is also immensely satisfying knowing that you are doing something to protect an environment that you enjoy. Active in over 80 countries, you will become part of the largest coral reef monitoring program in the world and a global network of volunteers.

Reef Check has already successfully established survey teams in Townsville and more recently Cairns, the Gold Coast and the Sunshine Coast and aims to secure interest in the Mackay - Whitsunday as well as Rockhampton region over the next couple of years.

To become a Reef Check trainer you must complete and pass a Reef Check Australia training course in order to become familiar with the material. You will then be asked to present a session of the course to hone your skills prior to running your own.

People interested in participating should check out the short video at [www.youtube.com/watch?v=inGov\\_ipVKk](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=inGov_ipVKk) that gives more detail about the global coral reef crisis and volunteering with Reef Check. They can then register their interest by emailing [support@reefcheckaustralia.org](mailto:support@reefcheckaustralia.org).

If you do not have the required qualifications but are keen to get involved you can take part in Reef Check's new EcoAction program. In particular, the Underwater Reef Guide, which can be used by divers or snorkellers and contains photographs and information on coral reef fish, invertebrates, corals and algae chosen for their regional abundance as well as their important role in the ecosystem. The attached reusable slate allows you to record what you see and you can submit the data online. These products are sold via local tour operators so have a look out for them next time you are out on the reef. More information about the EcoAction program can be found at [www.reefcheckaustralia.org/projects/ecoaction](http://www.reefcheckaustralia.org/projects/ecoaction).

Reef Check are also appealing for 1 million signatures to their International Declaration of Reef Rights, which will be presented to the heads of state of the 101 countries with coral reefs in 2008, the International Year of the Reef. With signatures from Australia making up only 2.57% of the total signatures so far it is necessary that more people sign up to demonstrate support from the country with the largest coral reef system in the world. Sign up at <http://www.reefcheck.org/petition/petition.php>.

**Notes to Editors:**

For more information please contact Lauren Bird or Roger Beeden on 07 4724 3950 or email [media@reefcheckaustralia.org](mailto:media@reefcheckaustralia.org).

**Reef Check**

Reef Check is a volunteer, non-profit organization set up by coral researchers following a meeting in 1993 where the global coral reef crisis was first discussed. Reef Check has been collecting data since the first International Year of the Reef in 1997 and is now active in over 82 countries and territories world wide. It is Reef Check's mission to:

- educate the public and governments about the value of coral reefs and rocky reef ecosystems and the crisis facing them
- create a global network of volunteer teams, trained and led by scientists, that regularly monitor and report on reef health using a standard method
- facilitate collaborative use of reef health information by community groups, governments, universities and businesses to design and implement ecologically sound and economically sustainable solutions
- stimulate local action to protect remaining pristine reefs and rehabilitate damaged reefs worldwide especially through the creation of Marine Protected Areas.

Reef Check Australia headquarters coordinate the regional teams in Australia and are based in Townsville. [www.reefcheckaustralia.org](http://www.reefcheckaustralia.org).