

Reef Check Australia Photography Competition: "What do Australia's coral reefs mean to you?" Finalists Announced

Pictures speak a thousand words: Reef Check Australia and Project AWARE are pleased to announce the finalists for the 2007 photography competition. The goal of the competition was to showcase the Australian public's 'vision' of the value of our coral reefs and the threats that they currently face.

The Finalists

The judges were impressed by the high standard of entries to this year's competition. The competition received more than >120 entries and several thousand votes were cast online at the Reef Check website www.reefcheckaustralia.org. All the category winners will receive Sea&Sea MX10 underwater camera kits donated by Mike Ball dive expeditions.

People and the Reef:	Winner: Justin Gilligan	Runner Up: Chris Jones
Creative Visions of Coral Reefs:	Winner: Chris Hamilton	Runner Up: Justin Gilligan
The Reef in OUR Hands:	Winner: Giles Winstanley	Runner Up: Jeremy Goldberg
Animal Behaviour:	Joint Winners: Giles Winstanley & David Watson	Runner Up: Matt Curnock
Icons of the Reef:	Winner: Gary Brennand	Runner Up: Andrew Green

Reef Check Australia Photographer of the Year 2007

Giles Winstanley; Giles was selected as the overall winner based on his portfolio of images. His images were judged to best capture the range of themes in the 2007 competition. Two of Giles' images were selected as winners of the "Reef in Our Hands" and "Animal Behaviour" categories and a third image received a highly commended rating in the "Icons of the Reef" category. Giles will receive a Canon A630 digital camera and underwater housing donated by Canon Australia and a GBR weekend sail dive trip courtesy of New Horizons.

"Giles has captured a number of stunning images that demonstrate a high level of photographic skill and artistic vision" said Roger Beeden; Marketing and Communications Manager, Reef Check Australia.

Justin Gilligan; Justin was selected as the overall runner up based on his portfolio of images. The judges were impressed with Justin's choice of subject matter and photographic skills. As a result several of Justin's images were selected as finalists: 1) winner of the "People and the Reef" category, 2) runner up in the "Creative Visions of the Reef" category and 3) as a highly commended entry in the "Icons of the Reef" category. In addition to his category winners prize Justin will also receive a voucher for accommodation generously donated by Lychee Tree Resort in Port Douglas.

Reef Check Australia Young Photographer of the Year 2007

Samara Nicolson from Townsville is this years Young Photographer of the Year. Samara's image titled "Mangrove Magic" was chosen as the winner as it represented the important linkages between coastal mangroves and Australia's coral reefs. Mangroves are indeed magic as they are nursery areas for many species of reef fish around Australia. Samara wins a special prize of a double outer Reef trip courtesy of Sunsea cruises in Townsville.

The Exhibition: Reef Check Australia and Project AWARE would like to thank everyone who has participated in making the inaugural competition such a success. An exhibition of finalists' images is currently on display at the Perc Tucker Art Gallery, Townsville 2007. The images can be viewed online and a selection of limited edition prints of the winning images are currently being auctioned on ebay, see the www.reefcheckaustralia.org for details. Next year's Reef Check / Project AWARE competition will play a key role in supporting the 2nd International Year of the Reef in Australia. For information on International Year of the Reef visit <http://www.iyor.org/>.

For further press information including access to images please contact Roger Beeden at Reef Check Australia via email, media@reefcheckaustralia.org, or telephone, (07) 4724 3950.



Reef Check

Reef Check is a volunteer, non-profit organization set up by coral researchers following a meeting in 1996 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.

Reef Check Australia is based in Townsville and coordinates Reef Check activities within Australia including the flagship Great Barrier Reef project and local Townsville project. www.reefcheckaustralia.org.

Our Vision:

To raise awareness of the value of coral reefs, and empower local communities to participate in the conservation and management of coral reefs in Australia and the Indo-Pacific region.

Our Mission:

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

- 1) Promoting sustainable use of coral reefs through partnerships with governments, researchers, businesses, traditional owners and community groups.
- 2) Raising public awareness of the economic, ecological and social value of coral reefs.
- 3) Identifying simple actions that the general public can take to minimize global threats to coral reefs.
- 4) Developing tools and skills with local community members and volunteers to participate in coral reef health monitoring, conservation and management.
- 5) Establishing a coral reef health database for Australia and the Indo-Pacific that is integrated into the global Reef Check network.

Project AWARE Foundation

Our Mission: Project AWARE Foundation conserves underwater environments through education, advocacy and action.

Who We Are: Project AWARE Foundation is the dive industry's leading nonprofit environmental organization. Offices in Australia, the United States, the United Kingdom, Switzerland and Japan combine efforts to protect aquatic resources in 175 countries around the world.

What We Do: Project AWARE Foundation works in partnership with divers and water enthusiasts to combat challenges facing underwater environments. We involve these volunteers in hands-on environmental activities like International Cleanup Day and The International Whale Shark Project. Project AWARE also inspires conservation by incorporating its messages in dive training materials as well as creating awareness and education campaigns like Protect the Sharks, Protect the Living Reef and AWARE Kids. The Foundation Grant Program funds grass-roots environmental projects that address key foundation focus areas, volunteer-supported community activism and critical research with direct contributions made by people like you.

