



Eco Barge Clean Seas Inc.

Keeping our seas clean!

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December Newsletter 2014

Welcome to our December newsletter for 2014.

2014 has been another amazing year for Eco Barge with all of our programs and activities continuing to grow from strength to strength! A total of 40 marine debris removal trips were undertaken, including a four-day expedition to the southern Whitsunday Islands that removed an unbelievable 2.7 tonne of marine debris off only 10 beaches. The 12,237 kilograms that were removed this year has now taken the total removed since the launch of the Whitsunday Marine Debris Removal Program to over 119 tonne, which is an astonishing amount of debris for such a small part of the world!

Two more Mackay Coastal Clean Up weekends were also successful in removing a further 6,880 kilograms of marine debris from the Mackay and Sarina coastline.

We have cared for a total of 23 marine turtles in the Whitsunday Turtle Rescue Centre, with seven of these beautiful little animals being successfully rehabilitated and released. We still have four turtles in care, so an extra big thank you to the volunteers that are giving their time to the Centre over the Christmas break.

But of course, none of the above would have been possible without the invaluable commitments and contributions that we have received from our fantastic volunteers and the support that has been provided by the entire Whitsunday community. A huge thank you to everyone that has been involved!

The amazing financial assistance that was provided by our various partners, sponsors and in-kind supporters, as well as our successful grants have also been paramount for our achievements in 2014. We would therefore like to take this opportunity to thank each of them below.

PARTNERSHIPS

BMC: BHP Billiton Mitsui Corporation (BMC's) Oceancare partnership is enabling Eco Barge to support the improved health and vitality of the Whitsunday Marine Park. Established in 2013, the partnership includes the Whitsunday Marine Debris Removal Program in addition to support for the Whitsunday Turtle Rescue Centre, which is ensuring sick and injured turtles in the region receive the care they need. This partnership has had a specific focus on supporting Eco Barge to educate the community including schools on the issue of marine debris, as well as the plight that is currently faced by marine turtles, with forty marine debris removal trips run through the year as a result of the partnership.



BMC

Cruise Whitsundays: Cruise Whitsundays is our region's largest and most experienced marine tourism operator, advanced eco accredited and committed to ensuring the environment remains pristine for all to enjoy. Their support provided assistance across all the programs of Eco Barge, but the highlight was definitely the four-day expedition to the southern Whitsunday Islands that was made possible through this partnership. After the completion of a successful first year, our partnership with Cruise Whitsundays is continuing into 2015.

National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing: The Department of National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing has been a partner of Eco Barge Clean Seas since 2013 as "marine and national parks are a vital part of the Whitsunday's economy and the life blood of the region's tourism industry". The partnership has been important to provide care to the many turtles that have been rescued this year, with six marine debris removal trips also being possible as a result of this support.

GRANTS

Caring for our Country: The project "Reducing the incidence and threat of marine debris in the Whitsunday region" had a surplus of funding and additional project activities were undertaken to expand selected areas of the project at the beginning of the year; including five marine debris removal trips to the hotspot monitoring locations and an extended storm water drain filter trial.

Everyone's Environment Grants: The project "Increasing the involvement of the Whitsunday community in removing marine debris" focused on marine debris both above and below the water, with Eco Barge Clean Seas joining forces with Order of the Underwater Coral Heroes (O.U.C.H) a local dive not-for-profit organisation for trips that were specifically focused on removing underwater marine debris. Nine marine debris removal trips were made possible through this project in 2014.

Friends of Parks: The project "Establishing the Whitsunday Marine Turtle Response Program" focused on initiating a structured program to respond to all reported turtle stranding events; providing community volunteers with the means of safely and effectively responding to stranded turtles; and ensuring the entire Whitsunday community are aware of what to do and who to contact in the event that a stranded turtle is encountered.

Lord Mayors Charitable Foundation: The project, "Mapping marine debris hotspots in the Whitsunday region" gained a more comprehensive knowledge of the incidence of marine debris across the Whitsunday region by focusing on five additional hotspot locations. Similar to the Caring for our Country project varying rates of accumulation were found, with seven marine debris removal trips being undertaken for this project.

SPONSORS AND IN-KIND SUPPORTERS

Cairns Turtle Rehabilitation Centre: The Cairns Turtle Rehabilitation Centre was founded in 2000 and provides the Whitsunday Turtle Rescue Centre with important advice and assistance based on their many years of expertise in caring for marine turtles.

Charter Yachts Australia: Charter Yachts Australia is one of Eco Barge's founding supporters. Their sponsorship in 2014 provided partial funding for one clean up trip and were also the Major Supporter of our 2014 Calendar "Kids Caring for our Coast".



Queensland
Government



CARING
FOR
OUR
COUNTRY



David Edge Marine Contracting: David Edge has been instrumental in providing technical expertise to assist in setting up the Whitsunday Marine Debris Removal Program and provides in-kind support through equipment hire and servicing.

Fauna Rescue Whitsundays: The turtle care permit for the Whitsunday Turtle Rescue Centre is held in partnership with Fauna Rescue Whitsundays.

Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority: One marine debris removal trip was funded to allow six Australian Awards Fellows from Mexico and two members of GBRMPA to observe the impacts of marine debris in the Whitsunday region.

Green Energy Technologies: The generous donation and installation of 3Kw solar system panels by Green Energy Technologies has made Eco Barge HQ even more environmentally friendly, with this support being particularly important to reduce the costs of running the Whitsunday Turtle Rescue Centre.

Kapow Interactive: Kapow Interactive continues to donate web development services to Eco Barge to help promote our accomplishments and to help our volunteers register for upcoming activities.

Reef Catchments: Reef Catchments have been supporting Eco Barge since the launch of the Whitsunday Marine Debris Removal Program in 2009 and have been a **STARFISH sponsor** for the last two years, funding a total of five marine debris removal trips in 2014.

Reef HQ Aquarium Turtle Hospital: The Reef HQ Turtle Hospital provides invaluable expertise to the Whitsunday Turtle Rescue Centre regarding turtles in care, with many of our rescued marine turtles being transferred to this Hospital in Townsville if further treatment is required.

Zinc FM: Zinc FM provides support in the form of commercials, promotions and on-air support for a two year period. We are very excited about beginning our work with Zinc in the New Year.

OTHER PROJECTS IN BRIEF

Clean Streets and Creeks – The first clean-up for the re-launch of this fantastic program will be on the 18th January 2015! Thanks to Reef Catchments, with support from the Australian Government's Reef Programme, these 24 clean-ups will target the land-based litter that is found on our streets, creeks and foreshore areas to improve urban water quality and prevent litter ending up in the marine environment. These clean-ups are a great way for our time-restricted volunteers to get involved as it only requires a few hours of your time. It is also a great activity to get children of any ages involved in the proactive prevention of marine debris.

Mackay Trash Rack Cleaning and Maintenance Project – The contract to clean and maintain the Ecosol Trash Rack Systems at selected sites in Mackay is still on-going as part of the Mackay Regional Council's commitment to marine debris prevention.

Thank you again to everyone that has been involved with Eco Barge throughout the year! We hope you all have a safe and happy Christmas and New Year, and we cannot wait to continue the success of our programs and activities in 2015.

PARTNERS



Australian Government

Great Barrier Reef
Marine Park Authority





BMC



SPONSORS



SUPPORTERS



MARINE DEBRIS REMOVED FROM THE WHITSUNDAY ISLANDS SINCE JULY 2009

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AMOUNT

119,055 kilos

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