

# The right environment for spreading message created

KANDY CURRAN

A NEW website, [www.roebuckbay.org.au](http://www.roebuckbay.org.au) has been produced by the Roebuck Bay Working Group to show the extraordinary values of Roebuck Bay to the world.

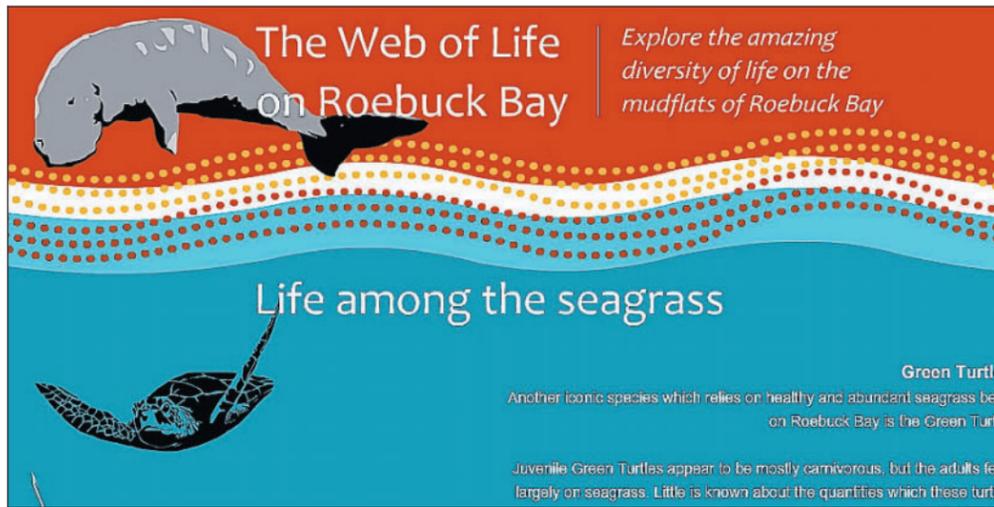
The website is proving a big hit, with interactive learning programs that illustrate the fascinating lives of the migratory shorebirds which use the bay for a brief stopover on their annual journey between Siberia and Australian wetlands.

There are also interactive learning programs exploring three intricate communities that make up much of the bay's fascinating ecology: the mangroves, seagrass and mudflats.

As well as being beautifully illustrated with an extraordinary collection of photos, the website has a calendar of events for people who would like to volunteer.

These include monitoring the health of the seagrass meadows, shorebirds, turtles and mud, and annual clean-ups of rubbish along Roebuck Bay's beautiful beaches.

The monitoring projects run by members of the working group have achieved a great following and raised



Roebuck Bay Working Group's new website informs about the bay, its flora, fauna and ecosystems.

awareness of Roebuck Bay and its inhabitants.

They are all so much fun and worthwhile in terms of scientific outcomes and raising community awareness.

A list of contacts is also on the website, should people wish to report problems such as a crocodile sighting, pollution or illegal fishing activity.

Soon to be launched is a feature on lyngbya. Lyngbya majuscula is a naturally occurring blue-green algae that grows on sediments in shallow water.

The algae has become a nuisance, spreading in Roebuck

Bay since 2005. In February 2009, the shores of Roebuck Bay that form the Ramsar wetland all the way to Crab Creek had black mats of detritus piled on the beaches where shorebirds roost.

The mini-site will explain what makes lyngbya grow and how the community, various agencies, businesses, industry and the Shire of Broome can reduce nutrients from entering the bay that contribute to the algal blooms.

The algae blooms are a critical problem for Roebuck Bay as they have a serious impact on seagrass production and

therefore on the marine life that feeds on the seagrass such as dugongs and turtles.

Seagrass and the mangroves are the nursery grounds for prawns and a wealth of other marine life that makes up the region's commercial and recreational fisheries.

We as a community are the guardians of a natural treasure of global significance, so we should all try to understand this environment and help ensure it is protected.

**Kandy Curran is project co-ordinator of the Roebuck Bay Working Group**

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