



Roebuck Bay Working Group NEWSLETTER

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Happy Xmas and thanks for your continued interest in Roebuck Bay

Proud winners of WA Environment Award

The RBWG has won a second state award on the group's 10 year anniversary.

As well as winning the 2013 WA Regional and Community Environment Award, RBWG was a Finalist in the 2013 WA Landcare Innovative Community Group Award in October this year.

Being recognised in two prestigious awards is a positive endorsement of the proactive work being undertaken by RBWG with Yawuru TOs, community, agencies, industry and local government to reduce runoff from the town and blooms of Lyngbya in the bay. The RBWG has developed community-based management plans and works with partners to solve issues that impact the embayment's high values.

Many thanks to Yawuru Traditional Owners, sponsors and the clever scientists undertaking research to shed light on the causative factors for Lyngbya blooms in the bay and reveal the extraordinary life that abounds in the marine wonderland of Roebuck Bay. Thanks too, to the awesome volunteers and project leaders who work hard to keep Broome clean and monitor shorebirds, invertebrates, seagrass, turtles and dolphins.



Celebrating the Environment Award at CBA Broome. tea. ©



RBWG's Grant Pearson and Kandy Curran accept the CSBP sponsored Environment Award from Trevor Naughton.

Thanks Rangelands NRM for funding RBWG projects 2010 - 2015 ☺

Roebuck Bay Working Group is supported by:



Coastal gardening on film

A new film with beautifully shot sequences explains how to plant a coastal garden to reduce run-off of nutrients and pindan that can feed Lyngbya blooms. The short film shows the extraordinary diversity of life in the bay, including turtles laying eggs, frolicking snubfin dolphins migratory shorebirds being banded and the seagrass meadows being monitored. The RBWG is lobbying for sponsorship to show the film as a short before the main movie at Sun Pictures in 2014.



Innovative film angles of seagrass life. © Mark Jones

Thanks Inspiring Australia and RNRM for funding this innovative project ☺

Coastal gardening a “growing” trend for Broome

Magabala Botanical Park in Broome North drew a happy crowd in August, with local native plant expert Tom Harley demonstrating how to grow a coastal garden that traps rainwater. Smiles were everywhere with endemic plants and books on native gardening in Broome given away by the Society for Kimberley Plants and Animals (SKIPA). RBWG and SKIPA are optimistic coastal gardening will be a "growing" trend for Broome, resulting in low cost gardens, and reduced fertiliser use and polluted runoff into Broome’s coastal waters.



Dig depressions around plants (no lip) over the wet and mulch to trap rainwater and reduce runoff into the bay.

Thanks Inspiring Australia for funding this innovative project. ☺

Funding for Roebuck Bay continues

RBWG has been funded by Rangelands NRM to deliver another outstanding project (2013-15) that will focus on reducing nutrients entering the Ramsar listed embayment. The project includes analysis of Broome soils to determine best practice fertiliser use, stencilling of Broome’s drain inlets with high profile community members, fridge magnets with septic maintenance tips and a Coastal Garden book that includes rainwater trapping advice, plants to grow and avoid, coastal garden designs and bay friendly verge designs.



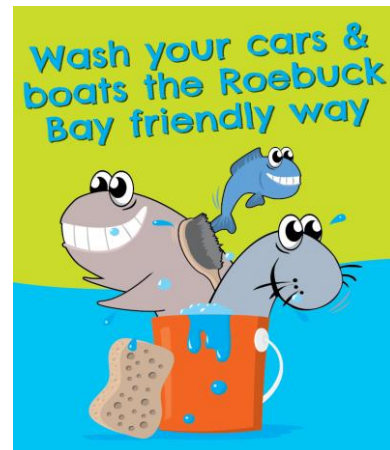
Thanks Rangelands NRM for funding this outstanding project ☺

Roebuck Bay Working Group (43 members) members work voluntarily together to protect, restore and maintain the extraordinary natural and cultural values of Roebuck Bay.

RBWG's friendship drive

RBWG aims to triple its Facebook membership in 2014

using clever infographics, films and photo stories to ignite the interest of its growing audience. The reason for the campaign is to increase awareness of the bay's importance and values on a local, regional and international scale and keep the community aware of lifestyle and behaviour choices which minimise impact on the bay. Quadruple RBWG's Facebook membership by inviting all your friends to **"LIKE" Roebuck Bay's Facebook page »**



Thanks Rangelands NRM for funding this creative project

Primary students hit the mud

Broome Primary students had a memorable excursion on the bay's mudflats recently with RBWG's Kandy Curran and Broome Bird Observatory Warden Mandy Soymonoff. The students loved the excursion, particularly the heavy rain that got the drains flowing just before they started out. These outstanding students picked up rubbish on the mudflats and identified loads of mud dwelling invertebrates.



Salmon and dugongs on paths

Blue salmon and dugongs have been painted on the paths of Broome Primary and "Old Broome" to remind everyone to Keep Roebuck Bay Clean. Mr Broughton's year five class painted the stencils to encourage everyone to reduce runoff of fertilisers, rubbish, sewerage, animal faeces, garden waste and detergents high in nutrients from entering stormwater drains that discharge into surrounding coastal waters where salmon and dugongs live.



Thanks Mr Broughton's year fives, Michael Dale (BSC), Preston & Bonnie (DPaW)

Survey on Lyngbya awareness

An online survey filled out by 39 people at the North West Expo in April indicates growing community awareness of Lyngbya blooms (72% of responses), with a good general understanding of factors that can contribute e.g. runoff containing fertilisers, wastewater, garden waste, animal faeces, pool water and detergents high in nutrients (80% of responses). [Send the survey](#) to friends and colleagues ☺



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Southseas hero award for Roebuck Bay researchers

A team of scientists researching water quality and toxic Lyngbya blooms in Roebuck Bay, have won the 2013 Southseas Ocean's Hero Award. Supervised by Assoc Prof Ryan Vogwill, researchers Gayan Gunaratne and Nicolas Wright who worked with DPaW's Yawuru Rangers, RBWG and volunteers from the Broome community, deserve recognition for their outstanding research and for charging out during Broome downpours to sample the stormwater drains! [Read the short article »](#)



Nic Wright, Asso Prof Ryan Voqwill, Gayan Gunaratne

Features in Science Network WA

Regular RBWG features in Broome Advertiser and Science Network WA are being read by thousands: [Guwayi shorebird tracked through science and culture](#) 3309 views!

Commercial gillnetting ends

The closure of commercial gillnetting license in Roebuck Bay in November has been greeted with a very positive community response in Broome ☺

Invasive weeds removed

Botanist Andrew Mitchell reported the finding of the weed, [Indigofera oblongifolia](#), on a roadside verge on the Great Northern Highway to RBWG in August. DPaW's Yawuru Rangers removed the 20 plants to prevent these invasive weeds from colonizing Roebuck Plains.



Michael Curran keeps his distance as a feeding manta ray puts on a spectacular display. Inset: A white manta ray rolls on its back to show its enormous gills as it fed. Pictures: Kandy Curran

Rays put on feeding display

Kandy Curran
Filter feeding manta rays provided an unforgettable three-hour show off Broome's coast at Riddell Beach over Easter. Two were black all over with white markings underneath, while one had the more commonly occurring white underside. The white manta ray performed continuous backward, mid-water somersaults close to the rocks as the tide peaked, which experts believe is a common feeding technique when there is a high density of food. The flashing of light on the white belly is believed to attract prey. The two all-black manta rays joined in the feeding frenzy, surging through the water using their wide, wing-like pectoral fins to propel them, while the fleshy-looking flaps on either side of their heads, funnelled the food into their mouths. Manta Ray researcher Fraser McGregor, who heads a Murdoch University Research Station in Coral Bay, confirmed from photographs that the three were coastal or reef manta ray, which can grow up to 4m from wingtip to wingtip. Mr McGregor said sightings of manta ray aggregations at this time of year in Roebuck Bay were likely to be associated with coral spawning events along the coast, which happen around each of the autumn full moons and in turn led to large swarms of small crustaceans such as sergestid shrimp — a favourite prey of manta rays. Manta rays were also sighted at Cable Beach and Gantheune Point over Easter. Mr McGregor said the presence of manta rays was a good indicator of the overall health of coastal waters and it was important to limit fertiliser run-off from gardens into the waters of Roebuck Bay. Swimmers and boaters should not get too close to the rays. "If you are in the water with a manta ray, keep three-to-four metres away and if boating try and resist the temptation to get closer than 10 or 20 metres as it may affect what they are doing," Mr McGregor said. If you want to know more about gardening to keep fish stocks and surrounding waters in great shape, then visit the NW Expo on May 4 and 5, to pick up free native plants from the Broome Shire and to hear tips from local gardening guru Phil Docherty. For more, visit www.roebuckbay.org.au.

For enquiries about RBWG's work please contact:

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Disclaimer: RBWG has made every effort to verify all facts in this newsletter

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