



Roebuck Bay Working Group NEWSLETTER

Number 11 • December 2014



Happy Christmas and thanks for your continued interest in Roebuck Bay

Incorporated and insured

Becoming incorporated is a progressive way to celebrate ten years of outstanding work to raise awareness and promote responsible management and protection of Roebuck Bay's natural and cultural values, and status as a Ramsar and National Heritage listed wetland. RBWG has also secured insurances to protect members and volunteers and expanded the management committee to include Dr Alexander Watson. These progressive steps allow RBWG to undertake on ground work and apply for a wide range of public and private funding.



RBWG's final meeting for 2014. © Kevin Smith

Science on the Broome coast

A series of science presentations put on by the RBWG and Yawuru Land and Sea Unit, enthralled audiences in Broome this year. With 15 speakers, topics included citizen science, nearshore dolphins, Kimberley marine parks, the hydrogeology of Broome and Roebuck Plains, laser mapping of dinosaur trackways, the risk of bird flu from wild birds, Roebuck Plain's birdlife, health benefits of rec fishing, Roebuck Bay's salmon and underwater meadows, climate change, and to top it off, a presentation on how to give a sizzling science presentation! With strong media interest, new RBWG friends and volunteers, the series has been a success on all fronts. Thanks Inspiring Australia for funding the inventive series again in 2015-16.



Presenter Dr Steve Salisbury with Ian Perdrisat © Kandy Curran

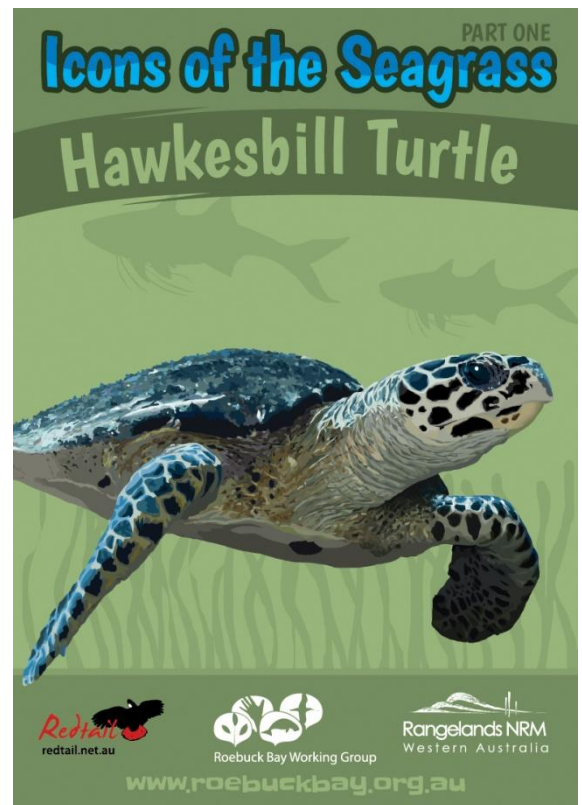


Dr Walker helps presenters connect audiences with scientific ideas.

Icons of the seagrass

The second series of photos and infographics on the iconic species of the seagrass meadows, has captured a strong [Facebook](#) following. Showcasing dugongs, the turtle species that visit Roebuck Bay during the build up to nesting, has allowed people on social media to better understand how they can help look after endangered turtles, dugongs and the seagrass they rely on. The large number of comments on the Facebook page and sharing of posts has been unexpected and encouraging. Indeed, a video of a sea snake on Roebuck Bay's flats has been viewed by 12,000 people - that is the reach of a good Facebook page! Thank you to the many photographers who are donating photos.

Please LIKE RBWG's Facebook page »



Tips for septics during man-gala

It's man-gala (Dec-Mar) season now, and we are seeing a Lyngbya bloom between Town Beach and the Port. With Lyngbya blooms responding to nutrients from wastewater, fertilisers, animal faeces, dissolved garden waste and clear hot sunny days, the timing's right to drop off a letter and fridge magnet to septic owners and managers. Indeed, sewerage can enter Broome's coastal waters from poorly maintained septics (overflow or seepage). The magnets that provide practical tips for a healthy septic, were received with a smile, a chat, and on one occasion, a box of mangos! The areas of Broome on septic, are industry in Blue Haze, Clementson and Broome North, and rural residential homes in Bilingurr, Coconut Wells and Djagween.

Thank you Rangelands NRM

Thank you Rangelands NRM for funding RBWG to undertake practical initiatives to reduce nutrients from entering Ramsar listed Roebuck Bay. The relentless and innovative work over the last five years to prevent nitrification of the bay and Lyngbya blooms, was acknowledged in a [state award in 2013](#).

The infographic has a teal background with the title 'Tips for a HEALTHY SEPTIC & BAY' in large, bold, orange and white letters. Below the title, it states: 'Prevent sewerage from getting into Roebuck Bay and feeding Lyngbya blooms that are bad for marine life.' This is followed by a list of 12 tips, each with a red circular bullet point. At the bottom, it says 'Produced by Roebuck Bay Working Group Inc' and provides the website 'www.roebuckbay.org.au/keep-our-bay-clean-project/in-your-garden/'. Logos for Roebuck Bay Working Group Inc and Rangelands NRM Western Australia are at the bottom.

Nutrient sources contributing to Lyngbya blooms

With two award winning hydrogeology researchers in Broome to provide Science on the Broome Coast presentations in October, the timing was ideal for a collaborative Lyngbya Forum.

Associate Professor Ryan Vogwill and Gayan Gunaratne of the UWA School of Earth and Environment, who won a South Seas award in 2013 for 'bringing together the Broome community to discover the role of nutrient inputs in the proliferation of noxious algae in Roebuck Bay', provided presentations on their research in Broome and brainstormed actions to reduce the high loads of nutrients entering Roebuck Bay.

The hydrogeology research into groundwater and surface water runoff has revealed the highest known loads of nutrients entering Roebuck Bay are from wastewater treatment and disposal sites. Broome's older stormwater drains also contribute nutrients, with the first two flushes of man-gala (wet season) bringing shock loadings of nutrients from garden waste, fertilisers, detergents, wastewater and animal faeces.

These Lyngbya blooms threaten Roebucks Bay's considerable biodiversity, indigenous heritage and economic values. RBWG have written to Water Corporation, Department of Environment Regulation and the State, requesting remediation of the Broome South Waste Water Treatment ponds and improved assessment of re-use and disposal sites in Broome.



Kandy Curran, Dr Malcolm McKenzie, Grey Mackay, Kylie Weatherall, Associate Professor Ryan Vogwill, Gayan Gunaratne



Bloom of Lyngbya (Dec 2014) and cactus algae. © Kandy Curran

Celebrating the bay with films

RBWG is providing the opportunity for the community to make short films about Roebuck Bay. To gain the technical skills, free workshops will be held on filmmaking and editing. A selection of short films will be premiered at a Roebuck Bay Film Festival in August 2015. Further details of the film festival and prizes will be forthcoming. If you are interested in participating, contact [Kandy Curran](#) »



© Kandy Curran

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

RBWG works to raise awareness and promote responsible management and protection of Roebuck Bay's natural and cultural values, and status as a Ramsar and National Heritage listed wetland. Thanks to the Management Committee: Kevin Smith, Grey Mackay, Alexander Watson, RBWG members and Project Manager, Kandy Curran.