

15th February 2011

Ms Christina Ongley - The Editor
The Bundaberg Newspaper Company
PO Box 3006
BUNDABERG QLD 4670



HEALTHY CATCHMENTS
HEALTHY OCEANS

Dear Ms Ongley

Re – Marine Debris Clean-up Effort on Barubbra Island

Last week I travelled to Bundaberg to assist in the half-day clean-up effort to remove rubbish from sections of Barubbra Island and the Northern Rock Training Wall of the Burnett River.

The clean-up was organised by our organisation, OceanWatch Australia, with funding recently secured from the Australian Government. It resulted in the removal of 2 skip bins of rubbish (about 1 000kgs) - not a bad effort for a half days work.

This clean-up effort however, was only made possible by the goodwill and collaborative support of 4 local agencies – namely the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (DERM), Bundaberg Regional Council, the Gladstone Port Authority, and IMPACT Make Your Mark's National Green Jobs Corps team – as well as volunteers from the local seafood industry. These organisations and volunteers supplied vessels, skippers and a workforce of people who got stuck in and cleaned up a significant area adjacent to valuable fishing grounds for the local seafood industry.

Not only were the people that I met with during the clean-up a pleasure to work with, unbeknownst to them, they were making an important contribution to the seafood industry which is still crippled by the impacts on fishing grounds and infrastructure from flood waters in December and January. As local fishers and residents to this area would well know, the land behind the training wall is a complex ecosystem of mangroves, tidal wetlands and channels which provide highly productive nursery areas for important seafood species, such as crabs, prawns, sea mullet, barramundi, mangrove jack, and so on. Cleaning up this area is therefore a priority for the industry to enhance the habitat and production values of these ecosystems.

Myself, and our Queensland OceanWatch team, Michelle Haase and David Kreuz, are extremely grateful to each of the agencies, staff and volunteers for their support, and wish to publicly thank them for taking time out on Friday to assist with the clean-up. OceanWatch Australia could not have undertaken the clean-up without their support, goodwill and willingness to be involved.

There are other ways in which residents and visitors to the Bundaberg region can help the industry to recover from the impacts of the flood without having to do dirty clean-up work - by buying local caught seafood from one of the local seafood suppliers, you'll be putting money back into the region and helping commercial fishers off their knees.

Brad Warren
Executive Chair
OceanWatch Australia

