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From the **DIRECTOR**
Darren Kindleysides

FIFTY years

It has been the year of fifty years.

AMCS marked our remarkable first 50 years fighting for Australia's coasts, seas and their prodigious diversity of life.

But we also grieved the unexpected and devastating loss of our dear colleague and friend Felicity Wishart who died suddenly just days after her 50th birthday.

Our 50th year has, then, been a year of incredible lows and highs. This issue marks both, and I will mention one.

When we formed in 1965, becoming one of Australia's first conservation groups, we cut our teeth through the first campaign to save the Great Barrier Reef from coral mining. It's perhaps fitting that in our 50th year we have pulled off yet another landmark win for the Reef, securing a ban on the dumping of dredge spoil throughout the Reef's waters.

AMCS was instrumental in this hard fought and hard won victory. We forced the issue of dumping onto the agenda and then led an impressive campaign to bring it to an end. The Reef is 46 million cubic metres of sludge better off for our efforts.

It is hard to underestimate the significance of this achievement – made all the more remarkable because of the intense opposition from decision makers and big industry that had to be overcome with sheer guts, hard work and unfaltering conviction. The campaign has not only given the Reef a better future, but has also lifted the bar for environmental protection in Australia – it is one of the biggest results for Australia's environment in recent years.

Felicity played a crucial role. She spearheaded the Fight for the Reef campaign, keeping the belief that the Reef could and would win out. We had Ministers queue up to tell us that the dumping ban was impossible. Flic's attitude with this was, as with everything, *'well the difficult I can do immediately, the impossible may take a little longer'*.

That maxim marks the spirit that has coursed through the Australian Marine Conservation Society for 50 years. We won't take 'impossible' for an answer. The ban on oil drilling on the Reef, the ban on live shark finning at sea, the ban on whaling, were all thought impossible. And the challenges our blue planet faces can seem that way. Think coral bleaching or the Pacific garbage patch. The challenge is immense, but we can and must succeed. And it is that drive, that ability to see the possible where others only see the impossible that has characterised AMCS over our first 50 years. And I believe it will set us apart over the next.

So, as we look back in this special anniversary issue, please feel proud of our most recent achievement, it is a victory of people power. But also please be proud of the role you have helped play in AMCS. Whether you have volunteered your time, signed a petition, been part of a campaign or donated to support our work, you have been part of us and you have made AMCS what it is today, 50 years down the track.



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“At a time when politicians are hell bent on silencing environmental charities it’s worth reflecting on what would be missing today if AMCS had not been doing its job for the past 50 years. From the Great Barrier Reef to Ningaloo, no other organisation has done more to secure a healthy future for our seas and shores. So happy birthday AMCS – and thank you.”

Tim Winton, Author, AMCS Patron.

OUT OF THE

News from around our shores

FIGHT for the REEF update

Our Great Barrier Reef has been placed in peril with the re-approval of the Carmichael coal mine in October. The mine would be the largest in Australia and one of the largest in the world, requiring a mega port at Abbot Point on the Great Barrier Reef coastline.

In August, we had a win when the Federal Court overturned the mine's approval. However Environment Minister Greg Hunt has issued a new approval to allow the project to proceed.

This will result in more dredging, more ships passing through the Reef and more mining of coal, which when burned contributes to global warming. This is the biggest threat to the future of our precious and much-loved Great Barrier Reef.

AMCS condemns this decision, which puts the interests of the coal industry over the interests of the Australian people, the Great Barrier Reef, its wildlife and the tourism industry that relies on it.

We remain optimistic that the project will not proceed. The Fight for the Reef campaign is one of the largest, most sustained community campaigns in Australia. The global price of coal is in sharp decline. Major banks have withdrawn investment from the project. The Wangan and Jagalingou Traditional Owners are against the mine and have proceeded with court action.

Local paddlers form a heart-shaped flotilla for the Great Barrier Reef in Airlie Beach
© Vanessa Dale.



And we are winning the fight. In 2015 we celebrated a landmark victory for the Reef when the Queensland Parliament passed the Sustainable Ports Bill. These new laws ban the dumping of millions of tonnes of industrial dredge spoil in the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage waters. From the Whitsundays to Warsaw, communities around the world celebrated this incredible win. For three years we've fought tirelessly to protect the Reef from rampant industrialisation. Thanks to people power we've stopped capital sea-dumping in the marine park and the World Heritage Area. But we need to keep the momentum going to ensure our coral remains colourful and our Barrier Reef remains great.

The Reef can survive and thrive, but only if we turn rapidly and decisively to clean, renewable energy. AMCS continues working with businesses, individuals and communities along the Reef coast and beyond to hold our governments to account. With Felicity Wishart's memory in our hearts, we fight each day for the future of this largest living ecosystem on Earth.

Minke whales are not yet free from the harpoons.



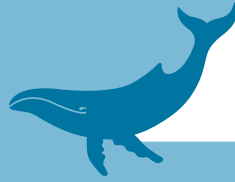
WHALING back on the Agenda

Once again the Government of Japan has thumbed its nose at the global community over whaling in the Southern Ocean.

Japan's return to Antarctic whaling is in defiance of the 2014 International Court of Justice ruling that Japan's Antarctic whaling broke international law and must stop. Following this ruling, the Government of Japan halted Southern Ocean whaling for one year, but then came forward with a new whaling plan to harpoon almost 4,000 minke whales over the next 12 years for claimed 'research' purposes.

Japan's Antarctic whaling has failed the test of international law, and the test of science. Australia has shown global leadership before by taking Japan to the international courts. The Australian Government must once again stand up to Japan.

BLUE



Check us out on twitter for live updates & news: @AustMarConsSoc

A Marine Park for SYDNEY

The NSW Government is currently investigating ways to protect our coastline from Newcastle to Wollongong. The area, called the Hawksbury Shelf Bioregion covers the coast, estuaries, lakes and lagoons, beaches, and state waters out to three nautical miles.

AMCS and our colleagues are calling for scientifically robust, multiple-use marine park protection with fully protected marine sanctuaries at its core. This would be based on the long-established CAR planning principles (comprehensive, adequate and representative).

A marine park for Sydney with high levels of sanctuaries will sustain and replenish our marine life. As with all marine parks, fishing and conservation will go hand in hand.

This will give our blue backyard the best resilience against increasing global pressures from pollution, overuse and a changing climate. We've got terrestrial national parks around our harbour and coastline, but we have none in the sea. This must change – for all our sakes. We must create a Marine Park for Sydney to sustain and replenish our sea life. This is our chance to get it right.

We must ban single use plastic bags, which get into our waterways and are mistaken for jellyfish by sea turtles
© Troy Mayne www.oceanicimagery.com



Australian Senate review of MARINE DEBRIS

According to Australia's leading scientific agency, the CSIRO, three quarters of the rubbish on our coastline is plastic. Most of it is sourced from Australia, not the high seas. Unsurprisingly, most of it is concentrated near our cities.

Plastics break down and get into our rivers and seas, where they entangle, choke and starve our sea life. Globally, one in three sea turtles has ingested plastics and over 40% of seabirds have plastics in their gut. If we don't change our ways, this will increase to 95% of seabirds by 2050.

This year, new research has found that

even some corals on our inshore Great Barrier Reef are becoming clogged by eating indigestible microplastics. It has got to stop.

The Australian Senate conducted an inquiry in 2015 into the threat of marine plastic pollution. AMCS spoke up for our sea life, asking the committee to ban single use plastic bags and introduce a national Cash for Containers system, which legislates for a ten cent refundable deposit on drink containers. These are two of the most effective ways to take plastic off the plate for our marine life! The Senate is expected to release their findings in April 2016.

Green groups under ATTACK

Throughout 2015 we have witnessed a staggering assault on our rights to stand up for nature. The Australian Government held a six month parliamentary inquiry into environment groups, attacking the charitable status of conservation organisations like AMCS. AMCS was one of the first in the country to appear at the inquiry, proudly defending our work to protect our oceans and marine life.

The Australian Government has also been considering changing Australia's environmental laws to restrict the ability of individuals and community groups to challenge environmentally damaging development approvals in the courts. This has farmers, fishers, environmentalists and land owners around the country up in arms. The changes suggest that someone living in Perth shouldn't have the right to challenge a coal mine affecting the health of the Great Barrier Reef.

With escalating population pressure and its inevitable environmental impacts, prudent governments should be strengthening our public laws and supporting the organisations who work on behalf of the community – not undermining us.



The Australian Marine Conservation Society has a rich history as one of the original conservation groups to emerge in the late 1960s under Queensland's Bjelke-Petersen government. From our very first day, AMCS has been the voice of the Australian public who love our oceans and coasts and want them managed competently.

By Ingrid Neilson,
Communications Manager
(with thanks to Di Tarte
and Eddie Hegerl)



WHERE

It all started in 1965, a long way from the sea, around a campfire in central Queensland. A group of marine scientists and avid bushwalkers from the University of Queensland and the CSIRO were on a camping trip at Carnarvon Gorge. Eddie Hegerl (our founding Director) and others were discussing their concerns about coastal habitat loss and pollution, and under the stars that night they pledged to do something about it.

So our independent, not-for-profit group was born. Using science, passion and intelligent advocacy, we began our mission to defend and protect our coasts, seas and marine biodiversity.

In the early days we were called the **Queensland Littoral Society (QLS)**, reflecting our birthplace and our concern for coastal conservation between the high and low tide areas. Years later we broadened our focus to take on national issues (as the Australian Littoral Society - ALS) and in the mid 1990s changed our name to what it is today.

From the very beginning we focused on persuading governments to **create marine parks around Australia**. But first we had to prove that Australia had a vast richness of marine life that was precious, sometimes endemic and potentially in trouble.

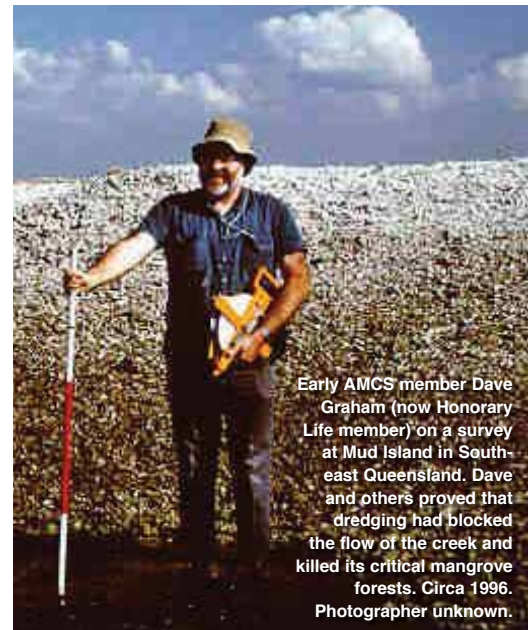
We started **our first underwater surveys on reef fish** in South-east Queensland. Back in the 1960s most of the fish recorded from Australia's oceans were the species that had been caught by commercial and recreational fishers. We undertook most of these surveys on a voluntary capacity on weekend diving trips.

Through extensive scientific surveys and persuasive advocacy, we protected areas like Flinders Reef - a beautiful coral reef three miles off South-east

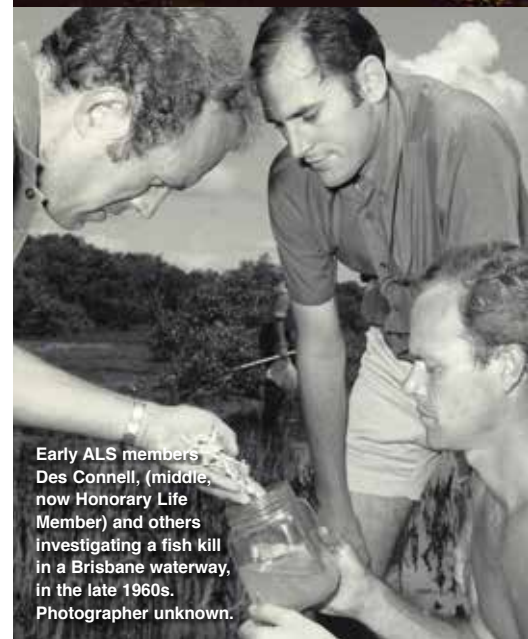
Queensland's Moreton Island and Myora, a biologically and culturally rich coastal ecosystem off Stradbroke Island, or Minjerriba as known by its Quandamooka People.

Our underwater fish surveys also proved crucial in saving a number of coral reef areas from limestone mining from Moreton Bay to the 2000kms of Great Barrier Reef.

Our first high profile activity was in 1967 when an application was sought to mine coral from the reef flat at Ellison Reef, off the coast of Innisfail in North Queensland.



Early AMCS member Dave Graham (now Honorary Life member) on a survey at Mud Island in South-east Queensland. Dave and others proved that dredging had blocked the flow of the creek and killed its critical mangrove forests. Circa 1996. Photographer unknown.



Early ALS members Des Connell, (middle, now Honorary Life Member) and others investigating a fish kill in a Brisbane waterway, in the late 1960s. Photographer unknown.

One of our early newsletter covers depicting our logo as the Queensland Littoral Society.

Newsletter of the
Queensland Littoral Society



did we come from?

We recognised that this was a test case for widespread mining of Australia's precious and irreplaceable Great Barrier Reef. We jointly launched the **Save the Barrier Reef campaign** with the Wildlife Preservation Society of Queensland (WPSQ), working closely with its Patron, poet Judith Wright and other notable supporters, environmentalist Margaret Thorsborne, AO, artist John Büssi and CSIRO scientists, Len Webb and Geoff Tracey.

After one of the **largest public environmental campaigns** in Australia's history, the Australian



government banned limestone mining and oil drilling on the Reef and established the **Great Barrier Reef Marine Park in 1975**.

Later in 1981, as a result of our advocacy it was listed as World Heritage, acknowledging its true global significance.

Since our earliest days, AMCS has been extensively involved in tidal **wetlands conservation**, forging the path to persuade governments at all levels that wetlands should be protected as marine life nurseries, natural coastal barriers, and filters that are critical for improving water quality as well as very efficient at carbon capture.

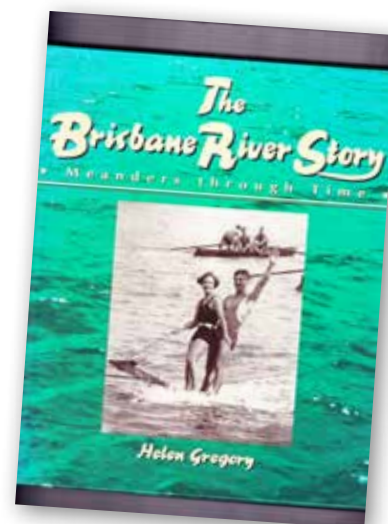
In 1967 we established an expert group of volunteer scientists that began carrying out the first extensive natural resource inventories of Australian tidal wetlands. As a result of this work many threatened wetlands around Australia have been protected in conservation reserves. Places such as the Boondall Wetlands and Southern Moreton Bay in South-east Queensland, Trinity Inlet in north Queensland and Towra Point and Jervis Bay in New South Wales would not be protected today without our vision and hard work.

AMCS was also the first community charity in Australia to focus public attention on the threats to Australia's waterways from sewage waste, industrial discharges and urban and rural runoff. In the 1970s book *Water Pollution in Australia*, our then President, Professor Des Connell, warned that sewage and fertiliser pollution could cause blue-green algae outbreaks. Although Australia still has a long way

to go to properly protect the quality of our waterways, AMCS played a critical role in fostering Australia's current understanding of **water pollution** and its causes and impacts.

Building on this work AMCS produced two books on the Brisbane River, *The Brisbane River: a source-book for the future, a summary of scientific knowledge*, and *The Brisbane River Story, meanders through time, a history of human settlement and use*. This work catalysed the formation of the SEQ Healthy Waterways Partnership, an approach to integrated waterways management that has influenced many large scale waterways management programs both in Australia and internationally.

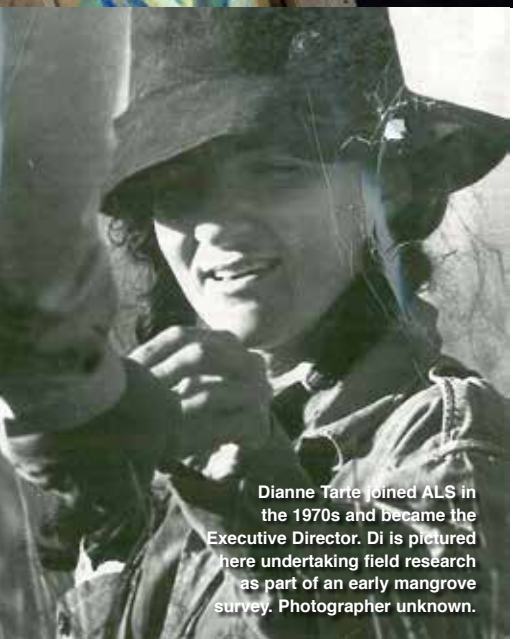
AMCS has continued to fight for our ocean wildlife and habitats around our coastline and out to our deepest seas. The story of AMCS illustrates how a group of passionate and committed people really can make a difference.



Our publication *The Brisbane River Story*, meanders through time catalysed the formation of the South east Queensland Healthy Waterways Partnerships which had a national and global influence on integrated waterways management.



One of Australia's most distinguished conservationists, Margaret Thorsborne, AO (AMCS Honorary Life Member) with a self-portrait of her friend, artist and environmentalist John Büssi. Eddie Hegerl and early AMCS members worked with Margaret, John Büssi, Judith Wright and others in the seminal Great Barrier Reef campaign.
© Liz Gallie 2012



Dianne Tarte joined ALS in the 1970s and became the Executive Director. Di is pictured here undertaking field research as part of an early mangrove survey. Photographer unknown.

50 YEARS ON

looking back and forward with founding Director Eddie Hegerl, AO

Back in May 1965, Eddie Hegerl was a young marine science student who formed a small marine conservation group with a big vision. From that day forward, Eddie forged the path of marine conservation in Australia, alongside marine scientists from Australian and American universities and CSIRO, and citizens concerned about marine habitat loss, water pollution and the impacts of fishing. Initially called the Queensland Littoral Society, we later changed our name to the Australian Marine Conservation Society, reflecting our national focus.



recommendations. The key part of the legislation established the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA), which was critical to managing this massive living system that includes, in addition to the spectacular reefs and islands, really large and important areas of seagrass beds.

That is an incredible achievement. Looking forward to the next 50 years, what do you think are the greatest challenges facing Australia's oceans?

Without doubt it's our ability to deal with the impacts of climate change on marine and coastal ecosystems. The problems are already here. The Barrier Reef is being badly damaged by the greater frequency of intense cyclones and the waters of southern Australia are showing rapid temperature increases. Subtropical and warm temperate species are moving south, but the marvellous marine biodiversity of Australia's southern coastline can't do that and many species of both marine plants and animals face extinction. Rising sea levels, storm surges, coastal flooding, and increased coastal erosion are all very big challenges for the future. We will also need to urgently protect nearshore seagrass beds, and the mangroves, tidal marshes and

Eddie Hegerl was our inaugural Director for over three decades until the late 1990s. Alongside his partner Di Tarte, he left an incredible legacy of achievements for Australia's oceans. We asked Eddie to share his thoughts on the greatest highlight of his time at AMCS, and share his wisdom about the next 50 years.

Eddie, what was your biggest achievement during your time as Director?

"We had regular and sustained successes throughout the 70s, 80s and 90s. It seemed like every other

month we were getting another wetland reserve or marine park declared somewhere around the country. But the all-time high point of my time as Director was when the Australian Parliament unanimously passed the *Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Act 1975*.

Our biggest and most sustained effort for over a decade was to get the Great Barrier Reef protected. At one point we held a major workshop of reef scientists to work out how the federal and state governments could even manage such a vast marine ecosystem. When the Act was passed it very strongly reflected our

connected freshwater wetland systems both from the increased pace of coastal development and from badly planned and hastily implemented coastal erosion control measures.

Do you see marine parks as part of the solution as they give our oceans resilience against climate change impacts, keeping the seas in their most natural healthy state?

Well, we're still far short of an adequate and comprehensive system of marine protected areas in Australia. There has been really good scientific work done on the Great Barrier Reef that

shows very clearly that protected areas benefit recreational and commercial fishers, as well as marine biodiversity. Unfortunately, there are still lots of Australians who remain unconvinced, just like there are still lots of Australians who don't believe that climate change is a genuine issue, despite the scientific data from satellites, the global meteorological network, and at-sea monitoring.

The role of marine scientists and conservationists is to get accurate factual information out into both the community and government. It isn't easy with very limited resources, but the protected areas we already have today demonstrate that persistence pays!

In any case we need to have a regular

dialogue on protecting the marine environment with indigenous leaders, commercial and recreational fishers, the Australian tourism and shipping industries, and, of course, our politicians and public servants as we all have a great deal to lose if our nation doesn't respond effectively to the realities of a growing population and a changing climate.

Thank you Eddie, to you and Di Tarte, for your incredible legacy to AMCS and our coasts and oceans. Australia would be a poorer place without your vision and dedication.

PROUD TO HELP TURN THE TIDE OF PUBLIC EXPECTATION

by Kate Davey, AMCS Director (2000-2009)

For nearly ten years I had the privilege of working as the Director of the Australian Marine Conservation Society. The way I saw it, my job was essentially to inspire more people to do more for our coasts and seas. Our target audience? Australians: politicians, businesses, non-government organisations, the young, the old, families, singles and everyone in between.

Pollution, fishing pressure, development and climate change were (and still are) devastating our coastal and marine habitats. Coral reefs, seagrasses, mangroves, kelp forests, sponge gardens and sea-mounts, and the incredible array of animals that call those habitats home, were all suffering from lack of protection.

As an organisation we had to make more people aware of their plight and get them to stand up and ask our government to do more.

So what am I most proud of? Over the 10 years I worked with the team at AMCS, I witnessed a significant

increase in the level of protection Australia's oceans were afforded and an increase in the regulations that governed their use. But, even better than that, I witnessed a growing expectation within the community that our coasts and seas need our protection and help.

For example, in 2002, the Victorian government protected around 5% of its coastal waters in a network of marine sanctuaries. At the time, this was considered a world first and a game changer in marine conservation. And it was. I am proud to say now however, that 5% is no longer considered good enough by the Australian public.

In fisheries, we have also seen a game changer. With the release of AMCS's Sustainable Seafood Guide in 2004, Australians now ask more questions and have greater expectation that the seafood they buy is sustainable and also correctly labelled.

For ten years I watched with great enthusiasm and excitement as we

turned the tide of public expectation. I watched as donors, businesses, non-government organisations and thousands of Australians joined AMCS as Sea Guardians to fight for a better world. This fight continues and grows stronger every day.



Kate Davey, Art for Sharks charity art auction 2008.
© Sam Charlton/AMCS

FELICITY WISHART

(4 June 1965 – 20 July 2015)

On 20th July this year staff and friends of AMCS and the Australian environmental movement went into deep mourning over the sudden and unexpected loss of Felicity 'Flic' Wishart, who passed away in her sleep, aged 50. Flic was one of Australia's leading conservationists and was an inspiring champion for the natural world – the cause she dedicated her life to.



Felicity addressing a reef rally in 2014.

For thirty years Flic played a fundamental role in many of the key environmental campaigns in Australia. She led some of our nation's most seminal campaigns - protecting rainforests and stopping land clearing in Queensland, confronting the threat of climate change, and protecting our oceans through the national network of marine parks. In her last, greatest and yet unfinished campaign, she headed up our Fight for the Reef campaign to protect the Great Barrier Reef.

Flic was a hugely influential force in the Australian environmental movement. She worked at the

Australian Conservation Foundation, the Queensland Conservation Council, The Wilderness Society and AMCS to tremendous effect. She mentored and inspired many newer campaigners, especially up-and-coming women in the environment movement.

Few worked harder, with as much grace and achieved as many results to protect our precious heritage. As a leader she combined great warmth and humility with an ability to understand and fearlessly challenge powerful forces that threatened life on Earth.

All Australians, whether they realise it or not, owe a debt of gratitude for her work. We are all beneficiaries of her life's efforts.

As campaign director of our Fight for the Reef campaign Flic spearheaded the work that has led to a massive increase in protection for the Great Barrier Reef over the last three years. She was a beloved mentor and guide, friend and confidant, inspiration and leader, mother and partner. Her intelligence, warmth, wisdom and energy are irreplaceable.

For someone with so much love and time for others that we must continue

her work to make Australia a better place for all. Her legacy will endure. Her fight is our fight.

Our hearts are with her family, particularly her partner, Todd and two young sons, Bardi and Clancy and her parents, Ross and Patsy. We will always miss her.

"Flic was a one-off. She wasn't just a force of nature – she was a force for nature. And her record shows it. It's hard to think of an Australian who contributed more to the cause of defending this country. You couldn't fill a Volkswagen with campaigners of her calibre, and I'm talking about a Beetle here, not a Kombi. This tiny, slight woman who made big fat sweaty men shake with inarticulate rage. Because she was smart. She was fearless. She was mighty. And she spoke the truth to people who didn't want to hear it. It was an honour to see her at work. You were glad as hell she was on your side."

Flic wasn't with us long enough. If she'd lived till she was 90 it wouldn't have been long enough. But we were lucky to have her as long as we did. She'll be remembered. Because you couldn't possibly forget her."

Tim Winton, author, AMCS Patron.



Flic at the World Parks Congress 2014

The FIGHT Continues

By Imogen Zethoven,
Great Barrier Reef Campaign Manager

On July 20th I lost my dear friend Felicity (Flic) Wishart. I was living in Washington DC and the next day flew back to Brisbane to be with her family and her larger public family – all her friends and fellow work mates at AMCS and the broader environment movement.

Flic and I first met in 1991 at the Australian Conservation Foundation in Melbourne. I instantly loved Flic, her warmth and intelligence and her natural ability to make you feel part of a team dedicated to changing the world.

Through Flic's connections, I moved to Brisbane and became director of the Queensland Conservation Council in the mid 1990s. Flic and I stayed best friends and after five years she became the next QCC director. I moved to the World Wildlife Fund and ran a Great Barrier Reef campaign to establish the world's largest network of marine national parks (fully protected marine sanctuaries), alongside AMCS and others in the conservation sector

I then moved to Berlin to work for WWF International on a global climate

campaign. My interest in climate issues was because of the Reef and its dire future if we didn't stop global warming. I was thrilled when Flic later joined AMCS to run the Fight for the Reef campaign. I was back in Australia when she made that move, working for The Pew Charitable Trusts to establish the Coral Sea Marine Reserve, right next to the Reef.

Our lives were very intertwined, publicly and as the best of friends.

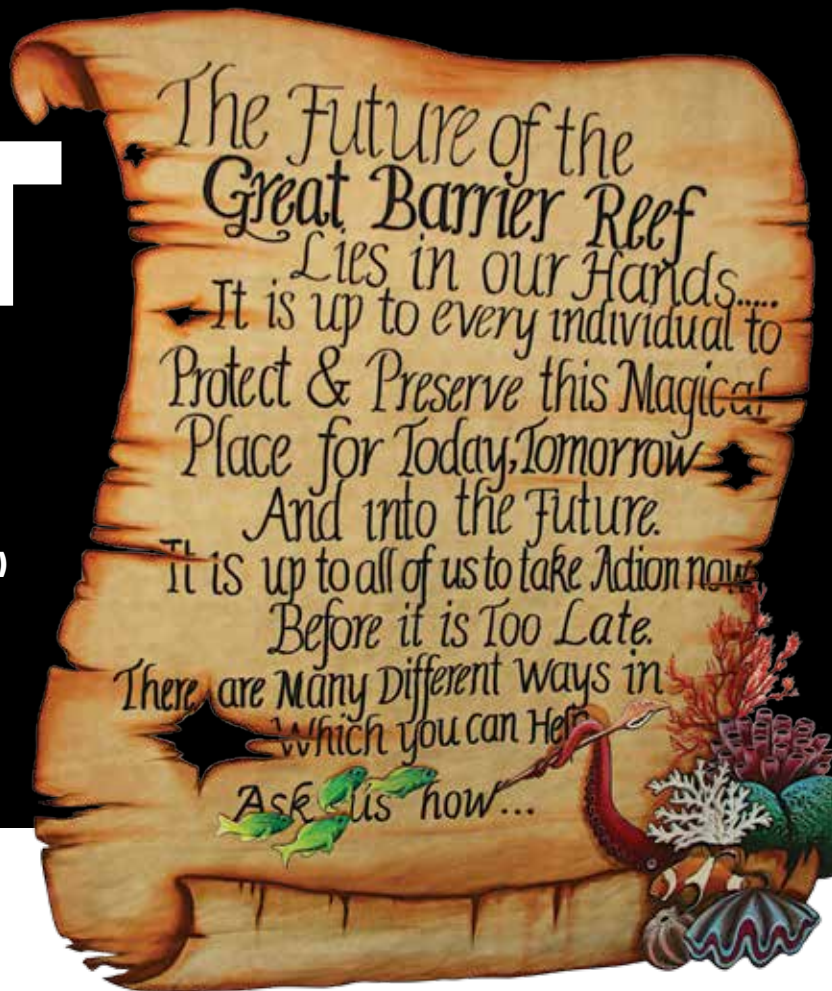
After her memorial services were over, I flew back to Washington DC where I had been leading Pew's global shark conservation campaign for the last two years. By the end of August, I moved

back to Brisbane and put myself forward to fill the enormous gap that Flic had left. I started working at AMCS a week later.

It's a great responsibility to take over from Flic. I hope I can do her legacy justice and continue the fight for the Reef which she led so remarkably well. Under her leadership, the campaign became the most influential environment campaign in Australia.

It is also a privilege to work at AMCS, who (as the Australian Littoral Society) spear-headed the first campaign to save the Reef back in 1965.

Right now, some important decisions are imminent: the Carmichael coal mine and associated rail line, the Abbot Point coal terminal and the proposed multiple use terminal in Cairns – all projects that are wrong and must be stopped. We must make sure our governments tackle the Reef's major threats of global warming, poor water quality and industrialisation. The future of our Reef hangs in the balance. As Flic would say, it's your Reef, but you're going to have to fight for it. And we will.



L-R: Sandra Williams, Barb Adamson, Imogen Zethoven and Cherry Muddle at Parliament House.



RISE

for the oceans

John Steinbeck said in attempting to make sense of our life here we should look from the tide pool to the stars and then back to the tide pool again. I've been holding onto that thought this year, given the anniversary we're celebrating.

Acclaimed author Tim Winton has been AMCS Patron since 2005. This article is part of a transcript of his speech given at Rise for the Oceans, our 50th anniversary celebration at the opening of Brisbane Festival, in the Concert Hall, Queensland Performing Arts Centre in September 2015.

Because the Australian Marine Conservation Society has its roots in the littoral. In fact it was originally called the Queensland Littoral Society. It was started by beachcombers, by swimmers, snorkellers and by those very special folk who like to lurk in mangroves.

Back in the 60s, when Australian governments could only measure the value of the world's largest coral structure in terms of its uses as a limestone quarry or an oil deposit, a motley band of citizens figured it was worth doing something to protect the Great Barrier Reef. Why? Because they dared to think it had intrinsic value. And at that time, saying this sort of thing was enough to have you marked out as a little odd.

Back then the natural world was still seen as... well, stuff. Stuff that only had value once you killed it, ground it up and put it through a few pipes. Nature was mere grist. It was the fuel that warmed the cathedrals of progress and kept its high priests in power. Nature? Oh, there was plenty of that, enough to last us till Doomsday and then some. A reef – you know, the corals and fish and whatnot – well, fair enough, all that could be pretty, if you fancied that sort of thing. But if you were some sort of flower sniffer who couldn't be realistic about the proper place of things, well then you were probably some kind of communist or a poofter – probably both. This, of course was when men were men and sheep were nervous. When the peanut was king, when sputtering nitwits and bagmen could rule Queensland by gerrymander, intimidation and corruption.

AMCS founder Eddie Hegerl surveying mangroves in the Daintree (Circa 1981. Photographer unknown).



Without question the Great Barrier Reef is now seen as this country's most precious piece of natural heritage. © AMCS

So when it became obvious these newfangled sea lovers weren't just harmless eccentrics, when they simply wouldn't shut up about mining and drilling on the Great Barrier Reef, making their little bumper stickers and having their little meetings up and down the coast and getting their beardy faces in the local paper, well then they marked themselves out as dangerous heretics.

They had to be leant on, followed, spoken to, overheard, shall we say; they were threatened, traduced, even defamed. Back then Australia was another country. And Queensland, Queensland, my friends, was another planet.

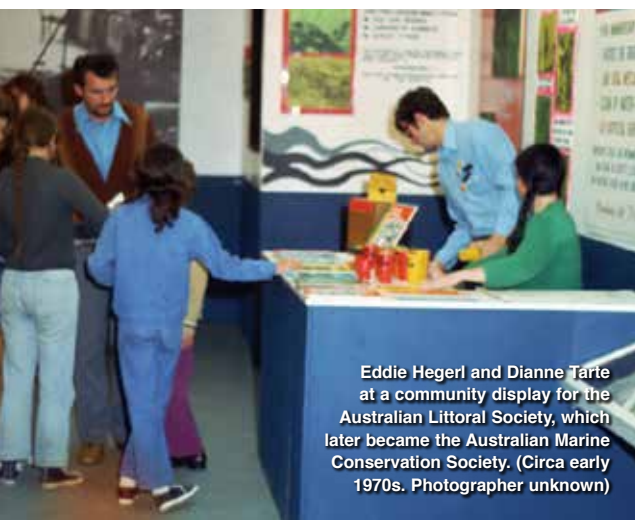
But those heretics and flower-sniffers and mangrove nerds, they didn't shut up. They lit something in the hearts of the Australian people. They taught us to pay attention. They were the vanguard of a bloodless revolution in our society, the roots and bedrock of a new ethic that has changed this country. A nation that began with an invasion and proceeded to prosecute an endless war on nature has slowly begun to lay down its weapons and grow up.

More and more we see ourselves as a part of the natural world, interrelated and co-dependent, to feel a kinship with country, to see our lands and seas as family. To my forebears, who came here as settlers and involuntary tourists, this change of thinking would have unimaginable. It would have even puzzled my grandparents in much the same way as it perplexes the old-world folks who cling to power in sections of government and business and the media.

This transformation is non-sectarian and bi-partisan. It's mainstream. The evidence of that is palpable in everything from school curricula to the language of commerce. All this has happened during my lifetime, and it's been a great privilege to witness it and for the last twenty years to be an active part of it.

I believe it's one of the great sources of hope for our people, something to celebrate and build upon.

Long story short, the Great Barrier Reef became a marine park, not a mine. Later it was added to the World Heritage list. And within a generation it became the most revered natural site in Australia. Without question it is now seen as this country's most precious piece of natural heritage. *Cont'd...*



Eddie Hegerl and Dianne Tarte at a community display for the Australian Littoral Society, which later became the Australian Marine Conservation Society. (Circa early 1970s. Photographer unknown)



Researcher on the Great Barrier Reef © GBRMPA

...Cont'd. It also happens to support the jobs of 60,000 citizens employed in eco-tourism. Strange world, I suppose, if you're a visitor from 1965.

Apparently you can make money from nature without grinding it up and pumping it through a pipe – who knew?

Most foreign visitors don't come here to see our architecture or our infrastructure or even, I'm sorry to say, our high culture. They come here to

see the Barrier Reef. These foreign flower-sniffers and dreamers just want to see stuff. Our useless stuff. And these days we're really proud of our stuff, our nature, our non-human, pre-invasion heritage. Really proud. Even us whitefellas. We think it's worth looking after, worth sacrificing a few things for.

So I just wanted to take this moment to pay tribute to those people who made this idea normal: those amateur collectors, beachcombers and scientists

who started at the margins, literally, geographically, culturally, and politically, who began in the littoral zone, looking from the tide pool to the stars and then back again in an attempt to understand where they were, what they were seeing, and how they might fit in, and what it meant to live in a finite, fragile system – otherwise known as a place – where all life is interdependent.

AMCS has had many members, many staffers and volunteers and donors in these past 50 years. And the achievements of this organization are profound and lasting.

We helped to save the Barrier Reef and end whaling. We were pivotal to the establishment of the new system of marine parks and sanctuaries the nation now enjoys. We're at the forefront of turtle and shark conservation, leaders in the new movement toward sustainable consumption of seafood.

This year our work was central to exposing the federal governments'



AMCS Campaigner Cherry Muddle joins June Normanby and other Airlie Beach locals in part of June's 1000km walk for the Reef.
© Ash Keating/AMCS

AMCS has our roots in the littoral. We were originally called the Queensland Littoral Society. Mangrove roots.
© Matthew D. Potenski/Marine Photobank, 2011



plans to dig seven deepwater coal ports and dump millions of tons of dredge spoil along the shores of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park. If we hadn't challenged them on it, they would not have suddenly seen the light in their own time. We told the Australian people about it, supported many local communities in their resistance to it and became a conduit for ordinary people to make their feelings plain.

And for that we need to pause a moment and give huge credit to our late colleague Felicity Wishart who we lost very suddenly and traumatically a few weeks ago.

A government that had hoped to undermine the national consensus about the preciousness of our reef in much the same way as it did in the matter of climate change, found that when it comes to the reef these people, this nation, is not for turning.

On this issue, at least, you can't confuse them or frighten them. Because

the feeling is mature now, it's gone too deep. And no matter what the Prime Minister and his cabinet may hope and believe, it can never be 1965 again.

We kneel at the water's edge and smell life. We look into the tide pool and see clouds. What we see and touch and taste and hear is beautiful in and of itself, it's precious in and of itself. But precious and beautiful too, because it's bound up with us and our mutual prospects, closer than we let ourselves imagine.

We live at a moment in history where we understand that our survival as a species is bound up in the health of the oceans around us, for when they die we die with them. So, my friends, this is our moment. Our chance to rise for the oceans.

© Tim Winton, Rise for the Oceans, Brisbane Festival, Concert Hall, Qld Performing Arts, 5 September, 2015.

Humpback whale © Vanessa Mignon



50 WAYS

we've saved Australia's seas

For our 50th anniversary we've compiled a snapshot of our major achievements since our inception in 1965. From the Great Barrier Reef to marine parks and sustainable seafood, we've turned the tide for marine conservation and created a true legacy for Australia's oceans. Thanks for being part of the journey. These are your achievements too.

SAVING OUR GREAT BARRIER REEF



1 Prevented coral mining on the Great Barrier Reef by contesting and defeating a proposal to mine limestone in the 1970s. We proved that Ellison Reef (off the Innisfail coast) wasn't dead, but thriving with corals and fish.

2 **Prevented oil drilling on the Great Barrier Reef by spearheading Australia's first major marine campaign – to stop oil drilling on the Reef. The campaign lasted for years. We generated the largest petition in Australia at the time and presented 13,120 signatures to Parliament, calling for a ban on oil drilling on the Reef.**

3 Developed world-leading studies to prove the disastrous potential of oil spills around the time of the 'Oceanic Grandeur' disaster. Our field studies provided the scientific information to Australian and international environmental organisations about the threats of oil drilling to coral reefs. This enabled the broader campaign to be based on scientific facts as well as passion.

4 **Spearheaded the major public campaign to protect the Great Barrier Reef in a marine park. The Great Barrier Reef Marine Parks Act 1975 marked one of the greatest days in Australia's history and set up the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority.**

5 Secured World Heritage status for the Great Barrier Reef in 1982.

6 Increased sanctuary zone protection from less than 4% to 34% in 2003.

7 Secured a ban on dumping capital dredge spoil in the Reef's World Heritage Area

8 **Saved the precious Caley Valley wetlands from becoming a dumping ground for dredge spoil. These are some of the last unspoilt wetlands on the Reef coast.**

PROTECTING WHALES

9 Helped achieve Australia's ban on whaling in 1979

10 **Campaigned to secure the global moratorium on whaling in the 1980s.**

11 Advocated international legal action against Japan's so called 'scientific' whaling in the Antarctic which was ruled illegal in 2014 by the International Court of Justice, the highest court on earth.

62ND ANNUAL MEETING OF THE INTERNATIONAL WHALING COMMISSION (IWC)



Early campaign shirt for the Reef

SECURING OUR OFFSHORE OCEANS IN MARINE PARKS

Troy Mayne www.oceanicimagery.com

12

Created the largest network of marine reserves in the world

13

Campaigned for eight new marine reserves, including critical feeding grounds for the green sea turtle, the inter-nesting habitats of the world's largest flatback turtle nesting population, inter-nesting habitats of hawksbill turtles, vulnerable olive ridley turtles and biologically important areas for coastal dolphins. (I'm working on this).



13



16

© Sam Charlton



19

Shy Albatross © Wes Tolhurst

23

Whale shark © Vanessa Mignon



SAVING STATE WATERS

14

Help protect Cabbage Tree Bay Aquatic Reserve in Sydney's northern beaches, working with the Manly Environment Centre and the local community.

15

Secured the Solitary Islands Marine Park in New South Wales

16

Protected Moreton Bay in South-east Queensland, a beautiful tapestry of islands, beaches, corals, rocky reefs and seagrass beds abundant with sea turtles, dolphins, dugongs and grey nurse sharks. The marine park was first declared in 1993 then given greater protection in 2009.

17

Helped secure Victoria's marine national parks and sanctuaries in 2003. This protects 5.3% of state waters which include kelp forests, rocky reefs, sea dragons, fur seals, sea birds and sponge gardens.

18

Secured Lord Howe Island marine park, protecting critical seamount chains and offshore reefs, brimming with biodiversity and endemic species. This is a biologically important place for humpback whales and a breeding area for seabirds such as masked boobys, red-tailed tropic birds and black-winged petrels.

19

Helped secure Kangaroo Island Marine Park in South Australia.

20

Worked with local environment groups to protect Scele Bay in a marine park, so that endemic Australian sea lion nurseries are protected from aquaculture and other threats.

21

Secured the Northern Territory's Limmen Bight as a marine reserve in 2012. It is a haven for dugongs and other animals.

22

Saved Western Australia's Ningaloo Reef from a major marina development.

23

Created Ningaloo Marine Park in WA to protect its incredible fringing reef from fishing pressure and overuse.

24

Conducted some of the first Australian underwater surveys of reef fish in the 1960s.

25

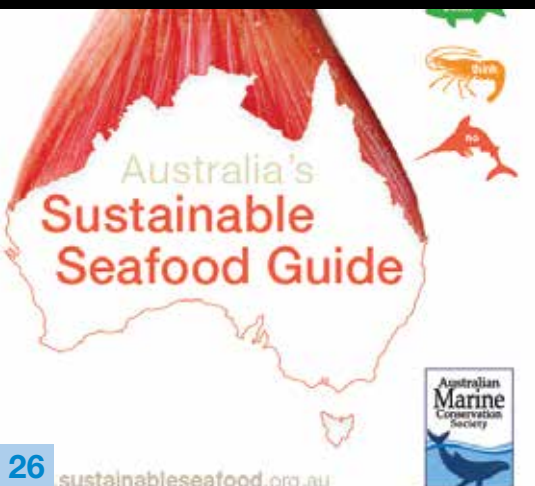
Protected important wetlands, including the World Heritage Kakadu National Park in the NT and the Boondall Wetlands Reserve in Qld. Stopped irresponsible coastal developments through surveying and advocating for extensive crucial catchments and fisheries habitats to be protected in the Noosa Lakes System, Capricorn Coast, Cooloolah National Park, Trinity Inlet and Admiralty Island (Cairns) and Fraser Island.

14



Blue groper in Cabbage Tree Bay marine reserve, Sydney © Aengus Moran

SUSTAINABLE FISHERIES



26 sustainableseafood.org.au

26 Created Australia's Sustainable Seafood Guide, the country's only independent guide to choosing seafood wisely.

27 Created Australia's Sustainable Seafood Guide online – the first online sustainability guide for seafood lovers in Australia www.sustainableseafood.org.au.

28 Developed Australia's only smartphone app for sustainable seafood (for iPhones and Android).

29 Worked with chefs to create the Good Fish Project Chefs' Charter, a way for chefs and restaurants to make real commitments to sourcing and serving sustainably.



Kylie Kwong, sustainable seafood advocate



28

30 Spearheaded the seafood labelling campaign in Australia, partnering with Greenpeace, Sealife Trust, Taronga Conservation Society and Zoos Victoria through the Label My Fish alliance to strengthen our seafood labelling laws so we know what we're eating, where it's from and how it was caught.

31 Saved 40,000 Great Barrier Reef sharks every year by forcing fishery catch reductions.

32 Protected critical habitats of the critically endangered grey nurse shark in Queensland and New South Wales.

33 Stopped the Super Trawler, the FV Margiris, from operating in Australian waters.

34 Saved endemic Australian sea lions by ensuring better fisheries management and monitoring.

35 Protected sea turtles from fishing nets and crab pots through our bycatch reduction work.

36 Helped stop an unsustainable polluting sea cage aquaculture development in Moreton Bay.

37 Created three net free zones off the Queensland coast to protect threatened snubfin and humpback dolphins.



Australian sea lions are better protected
© Troy Mayne www.oceanicimager.com

34

WORLD HERITAGE WONDERS

38 Secured Ningaloo Marine Park on the World Heritage List in 2011.

39 Saved World Heritage Kakadu National Park by surveying and proving the park was dying from the thousands of feral buffalo, which were eating the young mangrove saplings and killing the littoral forests.



38



CONTROLLING BIG INDUSTRY AND POLLUTION

40

Stopped coral mining in Moreton Bay, south-east Queensland.

41

Protected Moreton Island by banning sand mining on the island and advocating for its protection as a national park.

42

Secured a moratorium on seabed mining in Northern Territory waters, the first Australian jurisdiction to stop this damaging activity.

43

Stopped nuclear reactors and heavy industry development being built in Jervis Bay and made it a marine park instead.

44

Protected the Fitzroy Delta from coal ports – home of the threatened snubfin and humpback dolphin!

45

Campaigned for cash for containers deposit schemes and plastic bag bans.

46

Cleaned up our waterways. As a result of our intensive research and advocacy, the Queensland Government enacted the Clean Waters Act in 1971.

45



44



PROTECTING OUR WILDLIFE

47

Stopped the cruel practice of live shark finning in Australia, in which their bodies were dumped back to sea.

48

Protected seahorses and their relatives in NSW through our citizen science program Dragon Search NSW. We generated enough community pressure to convince the NSW Government to protect all syngnathids in the state.

49

Advocated for the great white shark to be listed under national threatened species laws. This means it is illegal to harm and kill great white sharks, which are threatened with extinction.

50

Helped stop Western Australia's irrational and cruel shark cull.

48

Potbelly seahorse © Rudie Kuiter



47

© Nancy Boucha, Marine Photobank



Congratulations to Mark Gray who photographed this winning shot of a Green Sea Turtle. © Mark Gray

CONGRATULATIONS

to the AMCS Amazing Oceans Photographer of the Year!

Congratulations to Mark Gray, the AMCS Amazing Oceans Photographer 2015! Mark submitted a photograph of this Green Sea Turtle which was chosen as the overall winner by acclaimed nature photographer Steve Parish and our panel of judges.

AMCS's Amazing Oceans Photographer of the Year Competition was created to celebrate Australia's incredible oceans on our 50th anniversary. Amateur photographers from around the world submitted an array of exquisite photographs which capture Australia's diverse marine environments, spectacular wildlife and the beauty and power of our seas.

Over 500 entries were submitted over three months. The winners from each category are:

Landscapes category winner:

HAMISH STUBBS

Animals category winner: **MARK GRAY**

Conservation category winner:

MARK GRAY

Macro category winner: **MATT NIMBS**

Fine art category winner:

DAVID WOLTSCHENKO

Thanks to everyone who entered. There are some very talented photographers out there. Heartfelt thanks also to our generous sponsors, who donated a prize pool valued at over \$15,000! Prizes included a weekend for two at the luxurious Southern Ocean Lodge on Kangaroo Island and a range of fantastic surf, dive and photography gear from sponsors such as Adreno, Go Pro and Project Manta.

Sea hare © Matt Nimbs



Common dolphins © Rita Kluge



Black-winged stilt © David Woltschenko

SHOP FOR THE SEAS this Summer

FRAGILE OCEANS

shirts and cards

Our oceans and sea creatures are fragile. Help us raise awareness and fund our marine conservation work with these beautiful new t-shirts! Available in a whale, turtle, and octopus design. You can also purchase a pack of gorgeous greeting cards, featuring two of each shark, whale and octopus design. Heartfelt thanks to Collider for their generous creative and support.



GREETING CARDS

Our oceans and sea creatures are fragile. Help us raise awareness and fund our marine conservation work with these gorgeous greeting cards, featuring six cards, two of each bubble like design: shark, whale and octopus.

Heartfelt thanks to Collider for the Fragile Oceans creative used.



ISLAND NATION

by Tim Winton, AMCS Patron

Island Home is the story of how Tim Winton's relationship with the Australian landscape came to be, and how it has determined his ideas, his writing and his life. Island Home is not just a brilliant, moving insight into the life and art of one of our finest writers, but a compelling investigation into the way our country makes us who we are.



DEATH BY COCONUT

Book

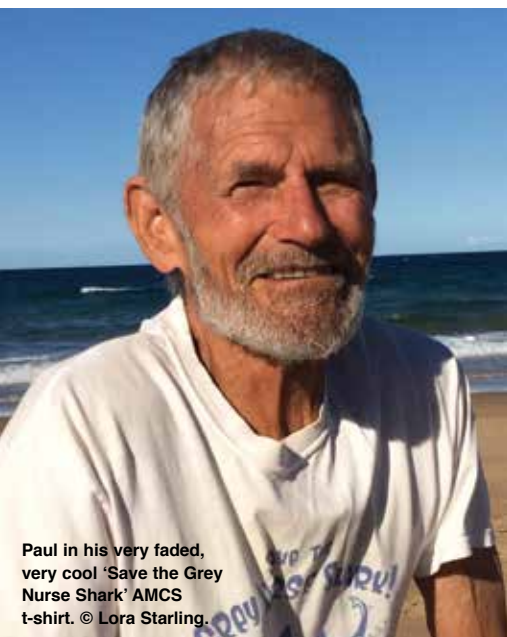
Every year around our blue planet about ten people worldwide are killed by sharks, while around 73 million sharks are killed by humans. This entertaining book lays out 50 unexpected causes of death that are more likely than a shark to bring us unstuck. We should be way more wary of cows, coconuts and Christmas trees. Death by Coconut will delight, inform and entertain. Grab your copy through our online shop today.



Devotion to our **OCEANS**

As a non-profit charity with minimal government support, AMCS relies almost entirely on the financial support from passionate people across Australia. You put wind in our sails and funds in the kitty to power the campaigns for our precious oceans. Here's a taste of some of the highlights from the high seas this year.

LEAVING A LEGACY to our seas



Paul in his very faded, very cool 'Save the Grey Nurse Shark' AMCS t-shirt. © Lora Starling.

Paul Sterling is a dedicated ocean guardian who lives in Bargara, Queensland. He started scuba diving in Gippsland in the 1950s and has since witnessed the marine environment declining "at an unbelievable rate". Paul has fought to protect our seas for 50 years, but says that it is too big a job for a dedicated few and that people like AMCS are the best way to get the message across. He recently chose to leave a significant bequest to AMCS in his will. Here's why.

Paul, we are so touched that you chose to bequeath to the oceans in your will. Can you tell us why you chose to remember AMCS in particular?

You are the only organisation that puts their whole heart and soul into the Australian marine environment. Others spread their work and I feel our seas are very much in need of our protection. We need your organization. You are hands on and in our own backyard.

That is very humbling, thank you. We wondered which part of Australia's seas is the most special to you and why?

I have dived in a lot of areas off the Australian coast. The kelp forests, limestone caves and cliffs are all beautiful, but if I had to pick one spot it would have to be the Barrier Reef. It is such an important place because of the diversity. The Reef is made up of so many different species that depend on each other for its survival. If we break a link in this chain it could be irreversible.

What do you see as the greatest challenge to our oceans' future?

I believe the most important marine species is not the whale, dolphin or turtle, but the baitfish. Almost everything in the sea - seals, penguins, sharks and whales depend on them for their food. Indiscriminate netting is one of the biggest problems, with baitfish depleting at an unbelievable rate. I have seen first-hand evidence of this on my local beach in Queensland where I have noticed the huge depletion of feeding

fish and birds because of the lack of baitfish, their primary food source.

If you were Australia's environment minister, what would you do for our oceans?

I would take a much stronger stance than previous and current governments. I would ensure that no more coal ports were opened, which depend on more bigger ships and more dredging, resulting in eutrophication and potentially irrevocable destruction of the Reef. I would ensure that the well-being of our seas becomes part of the national school curriculum. I would introduce a total ban on shark finning, replace shark nets with less destructive methods and educate the public on the value of sharks to our seas.

Finally I would ensure that all Australian states are united in protecting our seas. For example, Western Australia bans the use of nets in any creek inlet or river, which are the birthplaces of much of our marine life. They have a motto, 'fish for the future'. The whole of Australia can learn from this - after all the oceans have no boundaries.

What message would you leave for tomorrow's children who are not yet born?

I would remind them that the old adage, 'Don't you worry about that' is no longer good enough.

Thank you, Paul. We are deeply honoured by your legacy to our oceans.



WAHROONGA PUBLIC SCHOOL Fundraiser

Thanks to the Wahroonga Public School Environment Committee which ran a school event to raise awareness of the beauty of the Great Barrier Reef, and threats it faces. Students dressed in bright colours to match the Reef and researched the threats to different parts of the Reef. They raised over \$1000 for our Reef campaign!



Letter from 14yo JACQUI FENN

AMCS staff were moved and delighted to receive a letter from 14 year old Jacqui Finn, who wrote: "I would just like to thank you for protecting our oceans and sea life! It gives me confidence to think that we have warriors protecting our shores (you!). No matter what the government does or says, they can't, won't silence us because we will continue to fight! Nothing can stop us from doing what is right. Thank you again. There is no one I respect more than you guys." Jacqui says she has written to "countless MP's" and will keep fighting to protect our oceans. Thank you Jacqui for putting the wind in our sails!



Caption here



RYLEN MCKAY Shark Fundraiser

AMCS was extremely honoured to receive a donation of just over \$300 from 8 year old Rylen McKay. Rylen loves sharks, so naturally his birthday party was shark themed! Instead of presents he asked for donations to go towards our shark campaign.

Rylen told us, "I like sharks, they're my favourite animal. I don't want fisherman to keep killing them. I don't like people catching them because they make them into shark fin soup - I don't think that's very kind."

His family set up some information at his party for Rylen's guests to learn about sharks and how important they are to our oceans. Huge thanks to Rylen and his family for helping out our finned friends!



ASIA'S BON VOYAGE Straddie fun run

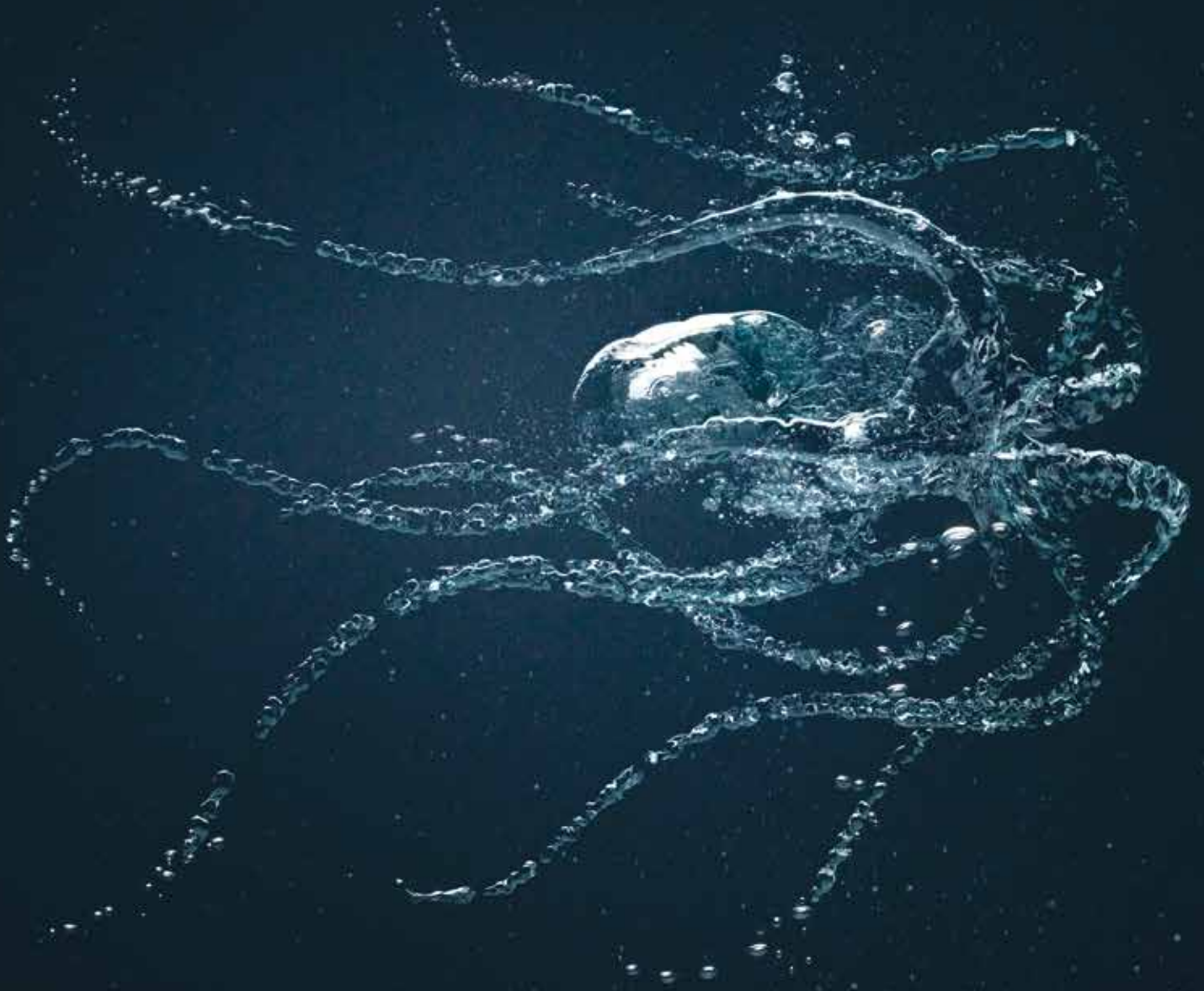
AMCS was sad to farewell our wonderful Office Coordinator, Asia Armstrong, who has jumped ship to research manta rays with our friends and partners at Project Manta. As a parting gift Asia ran her first ever triathlon, the Straddie Salute, as an AMCS fundraiser. This involved a 750m ocean swim, 20km bike ride and 8.5km run. Asia said "I have been lucky enough to be working for the Australian Marine Conservation Society for over four years. I wanted to leave on a high by raising some much needed funds for these guys, who honestly inspired me more than ever by the work they do and the people they employ to do it... They inspired me enough to attempt a triathlon to raise money on their behalf!" Asia raised more than \$1500. Thank you Asia. Bon voyage and best of luck saving mantas!



Caption here

FLIPS FOR THE REEF Everyday Hero

Our fantastic supporter Richard Allen is replacing his shoes with flippers for a month! Richard lost a bet but instead of flipping out over his new footwear he turned his loss into a gain, and decided to raise money for our Great Barrier Reef campaign. Richard has worn flippers everywhere, taking them off only while driving. He wears flippers at work (they're high visibility!), grocery shopping, walking the dog and out with friends. He's even mastered the art of walking backwards upstairs. Richard wants to protect the marine life living in the Reef by putting himself in their shoes! Thank you Richard for such an innovative and amusing fundraiser. We love it!



Our seas are fragile. So please help us
protect them while there's still time,
before all our treasures are just memories.

TIM WINTON, Author, Patron of the Australian Marine Conservation Society

Love our oceans? Join us today
seaguards.org.au