

TURNING THE TIDE

Autumn 2015, Volume 16#1

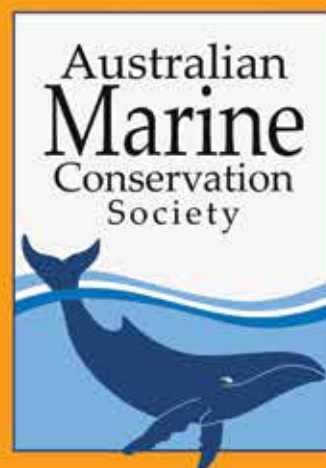
AMCS turns 50

**What next for our
marine parks?**

Still fighting for the Reef

**Founding members
tell their tales**

Devotion to the Oceans



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From the **DIRECTOR**
Darren Kindleysides

Standing on the Shoulders of
GIANTS

I have an altitude problem. At half way between five and six feet, my stature has never been statuesque. Perhaps this is why the saying 'standing on the shoulders of giants' appeals to me – there's a chance I'll increase my elevation.

The expression has been at the front of my mind over the past few weeks, but for loftier reasons. To me it means that we are who we are today because of the achievements of those who have come before us. We are lifted up from the gigantic foundations they have laid.

As AMCS celebrates our 50th Anniversary, I've been looking back through our history and speaking to those who have shaped AMCS and the state of marine conservation in Australia.

Back then, under the name of the Queensland Littoral Society, we held our founding meeting on May 19th, 1965. Our founders, the original champions of Australia's oceans have left an incredible legacy to our oceans and to current and future generations.

They stopped the Queensland Government (under the infamous Premier, Joh Bjelke-Petersen) turning the Great Barrier Reef's corals into limestone by contesting and defeating an application to mine its coral reefs. Shortly afterwards they led Australia's largest sea-based campaign which culminated in the formation of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park World Heritage Area. They pushed for anti-pollution laws for our seas, they convinced governments of the importance of wetlands and mangrove protection.

In time the Society became the Australian Marine Conservation Society, and we stopped live shark finning in Australia, helped end whaling here and overseas, protected Ningaloo Reef and fought for countless other state and territory marine parks. We've reformed fisheries management around the country, brought a halt to massive sea turtle, dolphin and seabird bycatch and helped build the foundations for the largest network of marine reserves on the planet, right here in Australia.

It's a legacy that gives us the platform to keep raising the bar for marine conservation. And we continue the legacy each day.

This edition of Turning the Tide contains an article by one of our earliest Presidents, wonderful man, and Honorary Life Member, Des Connell. He talks about the first battles to save the Great Barrier Reef in the 1960s and 70s. AMCS was instrumental in these campaigns, just as we are today in the ongoing Fight for the Reef. Back then our staff and volunteers were physically threatened and aggressively attacked in the media. They had their houses raided, phones bugged and were followed by security personnel. But they didn't shrink from doing what was needed to save the seas.

So theirs is also a legacy that came at a personal cost. It speaks to the dedication, commitment and endurance that typified those who have worked and volunteered for this remarkable organisation over the past 50 years. It is a quality that endures in our ranks today.

I look forward to sharing and celebrating more of their stories, the stories of giants, in our next edition of Turning The Tide, which will be our special 50th Anniversary edition.

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From the **PRESIDENT** Craig McGovern

Welcome to a special edition of Turning the Tide, the magazine for those devoted to the ocean, as we celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Australian Marine Conservation Society.

We've come a long way since a group of marine science students and divers decided to do something about overfishing and coral mining in South-east Queensland's Moreton Bay. We've played a key role in shaping the way Australia manages our oceans, campaigning in particular for a ban on oil drilling on the reef and stopping its corals being mined for their limestone.

AMCS has been a pioneer in championing sustainable ocean management; from pushing for the first clean water pollution acts, to making some of the first underwater surveys of reef fish in Australia. We drove fisheries reforms so that habitats

weren't bulldozed and threatened species weren't drowned in every trawl. We've convinced governments of the importance of water catchment and wetlands conservation. We've achieved so much more and we celebrate the achievements of many people in this edition including Honorary Life Member and early President Des Connell on page 17. Thank goodness women and men like him cared enough to speak out in defence of our coasts and seas.

And from our modern day campaigners we have updates on the Fight for the Reef campaign – in which the community is winning against big heavy industry and development at any cost. Read Felicity's report on pages 8-9. Fiona Maxwell provides us with an update on the federal government's review of the marine parks network around Australia on page 6. Tooni Mahto tells where the sustainable seafood program is at on page 12.

We meet new Top End marine campaigner Jacqui Taylor, who has much to tell already, despite only being in the job less than a year (p 13).

Throughout these pages are stories from our volunteers, fundraisers and supporters who do what they can to help save the seas in the most wonderful of ways – from cleaning up beaches to painting for the oceans and donating the proceeds of sale (p18). We were also deeply touched to receive donations in lieu of flowers from the funeral of a special young man who left us well before his time (p18). And on page 16 we hear from an inspiring supporter who shares her motivation to leave a bequest to the oceans in her will.

Life is precious, and fragile, just like this blue planet. Every year we have the privilege to enjoy our extraordinary oceans so every year we must do what we can to protect them for the future.

OUT OF THE

News from around our shores

WORLD Ocean Summit

The World Ocean Summit brings together more than 250 global leaders from across different sectors to identify realistic solutions to tensions between economic development and environmental sustainability in our seas.

The Summit, first convened in 2012, has become influential in identifying and driving international, responses to the challenge of

sustaining our oceans in the face of increasing economic use and declining ecosystem health.

AMCS Director Darren Kindleysides will be attending and will bring an Australian perspective to the international debate. Stay tuned for updates from the field.

SEAFOOD Labelling

When a handful of Australians contracted Hepatitis A from imported, frozen berries it made news headlines, and as a result the Australian Government has set up a task force to work on improving food labelling. But what about seafood labelling, which has for too long left us in the dark about our seafood choices? AMCS is part of the Label My Fish alliance, working with Greenpeace, Sealife Trust, Taronga Conservation Society and Zoos Victoria, to improve national seafood labelling. Australia's labelling laws are currently weak. They must be improved so that we know what fish we're eating, where it's from and how it was caught.

As a result of our advocacy, seafood labelling has been included in the Government's current review, which is a step forward. We'll keep the pressure on until we get labelling laws that don't leave us eating in the dark.



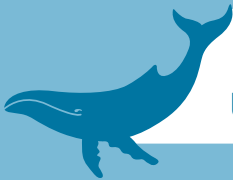
WHALE of a Fail

Despite defeat in the International Court of Justice, late last year the Government of Japan announced plans to return to Antarctic whaling. Under this plan they would kill almost 4,000 minke whales over 12 years for 'scientific research'.

However, the Japanese Government's whaling campaign has been dealt another major blow. An Expert Panel of the International Whaling Commission has rejected the whaling plan, finding Japan had failed to demonstrate the scientific need to kill whales in order to study them. Japan's whaling has failed the test of international law, and it has now failed the test of science. Pressure is building on Japan. If Japan proceeds with resuming Southern Ocean whaling at the end of this year without the scientific justification they will be in clear breach of the ruling of the International Court of Justice and will risk international censure.

Minke whale in the Coral Sea © John Rumney

BLUE



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

COMING soon

To celebrate our 50th anniversary, AMCS is launching our first ever Amazing Oceans Photography Competition. This competition will enable all marine lovers to share their passion and connection with the sea through the powerful medium of photography.

The judging panel will be chaired by one of Australia's leading wildlife photographers Steve Parish and there will be thousands of dollars' worth of prizes up for grabs for the best entries. Winning images will also feature in our 2016 Amazing Oceans calendar. The competition launches in June 2015, so keep your eyes on our social media channels and website for more information soon.



Nudibranch © Aengus Moran



Dolphins like these were caught and drowned in the Geelong Star on its first and second fishing trips.

Geelong Star Factory Trawler KILLS DOLPHINS AND SEALS (just like we warned it would)

We're troubled to report that our worst fears have been confirmed with the *Geelong Star's* very first fishing trips in Australian waters. The factory freezer trawler has killed eight dolphins and four fur seals in just two fishing trips. AMCS has always been extremely concerned about the impact this vessel will have on our threatened marine life, like Australian fur seals, dolphins and seabirds.

In 2012 we stood side by side with recreational fishers and convinced the Australian Government to ban a previous super trawler, the *Magiris* from fishing in Australian waters.

This new factory freezer trawler was permitted into Australia by the Abbott Government, and while not quite as large, it has the ability to do just as much damage to Australia's wildlife. The *Geelong Star* is now the largest vessel fishing in Australia, with its size and freezer capacity allowing it to fish

for longer and cover greater distances than seen before in this fishery. It can fish for jack mackerel, blue mackerel, redbait and Australian sardine off the western, southern and eastern coast of Australia.

There is limited information available about where the catch will end up, but it's most likely it will be exported to Africa as a low cost protein source. The irony of this is that super trawlers have historically depleted fish stocks, particularly off West Africa, which has affected local fishers ability to find fish in local waters.

Industrial-scale factory freezer trawlers just don't belong in our fragile oceans. Please sign our petition to ban these giant trawlers on our website www.marineconservation.org.au or write to the Fisheries Minister at: Hon. Barnaby Joyce, PO Box 6022, Parliament House Canberra ACT 2600.

Nightcliff Island proposal GONE TO MUD

Darwin locals were outraged when the NT Government granted development company Halikos a lease in Ludmilla Bay to explore opportunities to develop a residential island off the Nightcliff foreshore. Geotechnical investigations found only mud, with no solid foundation to build upon. Following large community protests, AMCS,

The Environment Centre NT and residents are extremely happy with the findings, and we are calling on the government to revoke the lease.

Although Darwin Harbour has been identified as a hotspot for biodiversity, only 3% of the catchment is protected. Home to

415 species of fish, endemic dolphins, sea snakes, sea turtles, and the world's highest diversity of mangroves, Darwin Harbour faces greater pressure than ever.

Join the Top End Sea Life mailing list to get involved www.sealife.org.au

There is enormous community support for marine sanctuaries around Australia. Perhaps the federal government wasn't aware of this when it announced a review of our national marine park network. These protected areas were introduced with great public excitement in 2012 - but were suspended by the Abbott Government shortly after it was elected.

By Fiona Maxwell,
Marine Campaigner



What now for our MARINE NATIONAL PARKS?



© Troy Mayne Oceanic Imagery

There is widespread public and scientific concern about the motivations behind this review, particularly with recent revelations that seismic testing has been allowed inside our new marine sanctuaries off the West Australian coast. This includes an area that is an important migratory habitat for humpbacks, blue whales and sea lions. If the Government hadn't put our marine sanctuaries on hold, mining exploration would never have been allowed in these biologically important areas.

The Government's Review Panel has now finished their public consultation rounds. They're now tasked with evaluating over 13,000 detailed written submissions and 18,000 online survey responses and will report their findings to the Government.

Over the last few months we've seen a wave of support for our sanctuaries from scientists, divers, snorkelers, fishers, tourism industry, small business owners and people like you who speak out for our oceans. In the small community of Bremer Bay in Western Australia, over half of the resident population made submissions in favour of protecting this beautiful bay

and its amazing offshore canyons from destructive fishing and oil development.

On the up side, there is no doubt that the review panelists and the government are hearing the overwhelming message that Australians support their sanctuaries. AMCS and our conservation colleagues are now working hard to make sure they act accordingly to retain, increase and implement our world class national network of sanctuaries to protect the forgotten treasures that were left out.

Meanwhile we have recently wrapped up a national tour of our new film The Sea & Me after 12 full house screenings in coastal communities around Australia. The Sea & Me explores the extraordinary seas surrounding Australia and the inspiring communities, business owners, fishers, divers and researchers who look after them. Looking at communities where

marine sanctuaries have been in place for up to 20 years, the film shares success stories of world-class conservation and recreation working hand in hand.

If you missed out you can watch it on our website <http://www.marineconservation.org.au/pages/marine-parks.html> or if you're interested in hosting a local screening please email us amcs@amcs.org.au

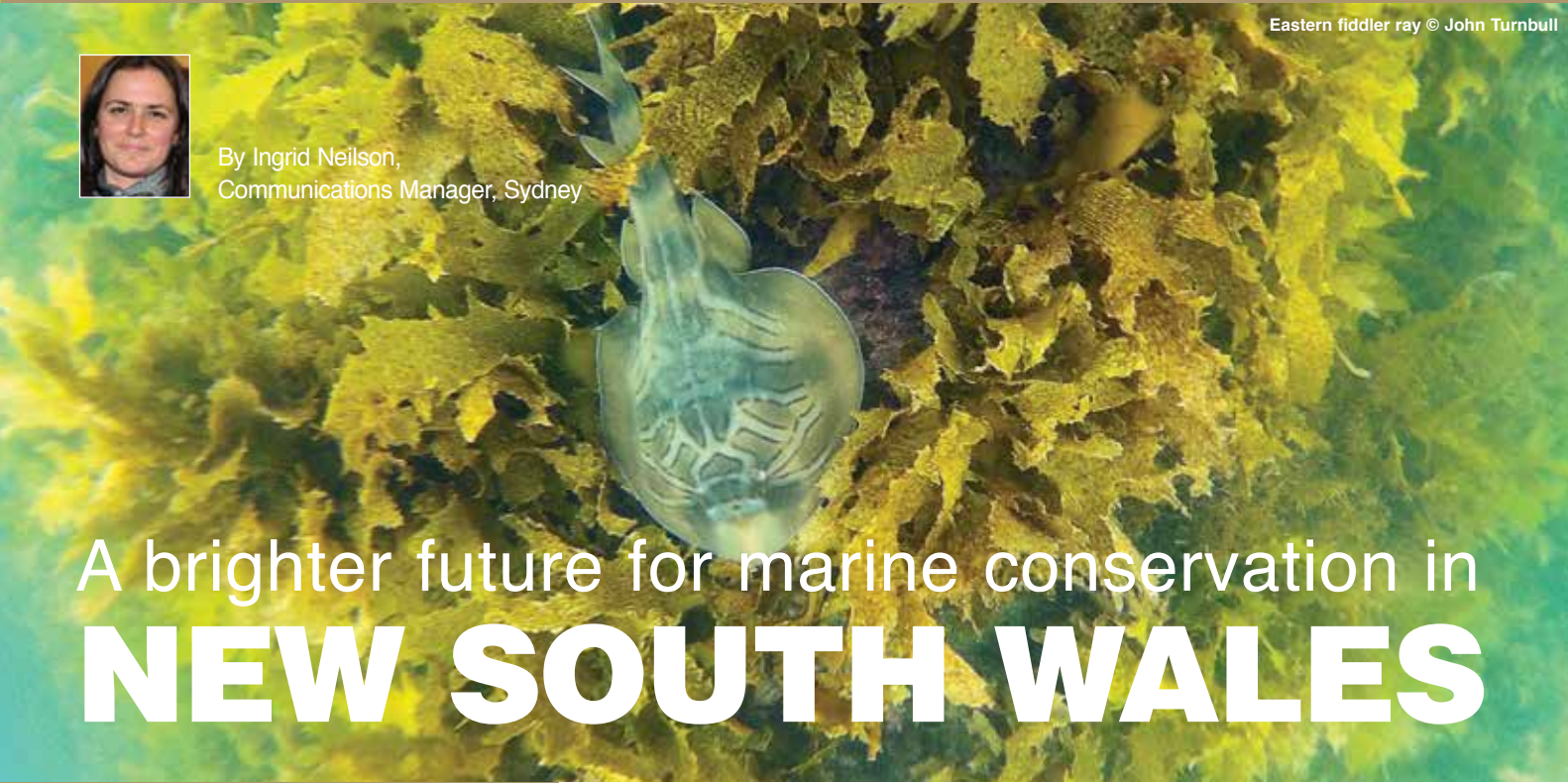
There is incredible momentum around the country to defend our sanctuaries and it's entirely thanks to you and our inspiring network of supporters. AMCS has been attending review panel meetings around the country and we prepared our own extensive submission. We were extremely heartened to see thousands of our supporters making submissions of their own!

This should be a reminder to the government, that Australians love our seas and want them better protected for today's and future generations. It now falls on the Marine Reserve Review panels, and the Abbott Government, to demonstrate that they are listening.



By Ingrid Neilson,
Communications Manager, Sydney

A brighter future for marine conservation in NEW SOUTH WALES



Eastern fiddler ray © John Turnbull

Now that the dust has settled after the New South Wales election, the future for its sea life looks a little bit brighter. Full protection has now been restored to two thirds of the marine sanctuaries. These were the sanctuaries that were opened to fishing in the Baird Government's last term. The re-elected government seems to have acknowledged the overwhelming ecological benefits of marine sanctuaries as well as their benefits to our coastal communities.

This turn around in the Coalition Government's approach is mostly due to the awareness that great fishing, recreation and conservation are going hand in hand in our marine parks. The Shooters & Fishers Party's retrograde views about marine protection are now supported by only a tiny minority of NSW recreational fishers, who believe marine parks are some sort of attack on their rights.

Thankfully the Shooters & Fishers Party lost the balance of power in the NSW Upper House. This is not surprising given that 40% of our support base for the campaign to restore marine sanctuaries comes from recreational fishers.

There was bipartisan support during the election campaign for a Sydney marine park, including our prized harbour

and the waters from Port Hacking to Pittwater. AMCS will be campaigning strongly to ensure the Baird Government follows through on this commitment, and Sydney's astonishing marine life and iconic coastal lifestyle is protected for future generations.

This will be done by creating more marine sanctuaries like the one prized by the community at Cabbage Tree Bay, which AMCS played a major role in protecting through our project the Marine Coastal Community Network, in conjunction with the Manly Environment Centre, Friends of Cabbage Tree Bay and other dedicated locals.

We will also need to tackle the considerable pollution impacts associated with a major city. We look forward to working together with ocean-loving Sydney-siders and supporters across NSW to create a fantastic legacy for our precious coastline.

Big bellied Seahorse living among kelp at Jervis Bay Marine Park. © John Turnbull



Red morwongs grow bigger in marine sanctuaries © John Turnbull



The crowd at Sea in Me at Fremantle, Western Australia



Wrangling with the REEF

By Cherry Muddle, Gemma Plesman and Felicity Wishart

“The battle for the Reef will never be quite over. That splendid stretch of the Queensland coast is an enrichment of human experience of the beauty of the world that is without parallel. The battle for the Reef stands to the credit not just of Australians but the human race”

Judith Wright 1996



© Christy Harrington Murdoch University.

At AMCS we are constantly moved by the passion of the people for our treasured natural wonder. From tropical far North Queensland to the halls of parliament, communities are creatively fighting the latest battle for the Reef. We’ve rocked, raged, rallied, ridden, run, walked, written, swum, sung, danced, fundraised, paddled, and voted, all for the love of our Reef.

And we are succeeding.

The election of a new government in Queensland has heralded a significant shift in the fate of the Reef, although we are far from safe waters yet.

In a fast and furious election campaign AMCS and other groups called on all parties to deliver a strong Reef protection package: ban dumping and curtail dredging; protect precious wetlands; stop farm pollution into the Reef’s waters; restore native vegetation and river protection laws; bring back our dugongs, turtles and wildlife; turn down the heat and support renewable energy.

While the Greens and ALP delivered strong commitments, the LNP under Campbell Newman did not. In an unprecedented election outcome, at least 2% of the swing against the Newman Government that saw a Labor Government elected, can be attributed to people who voted “for the Reef”.

The first of the Palaszczuk government Reef promises, to withdraw plans to dump dredge spoil in the Caley Valley Wetlands, has been delivered, along with the set up of a Reef taskforce to advise on the best way to reduce farm chemical pollution flowing into the Reef’s waters. There is more to come when the Queensland government introduces the Ports Bill to Parliament, which is expected to include a ban on dredging spoil dumping in the Reef’s World Heritage waters, limits on port expansions and increased protection for the Greater Fitzroy Delta.

What hasn’t been seen from the new Queensland government is a rejection of port expansion at Abbot Point and the fight to stop this unnecessary and damaging development just got hotter.

In April, the Queensland government referred their new plan for Abbot Point dredging and dumping to the Federal

Environment Minister. They plan to dump the dredge spoil at the site of T2, an area of port land sandwiched between the existing terminal T1 and a new T3 terminal area, all adjacent to the internationally significant Caley Valley wetlands.

The Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is yet to be prepared but an approval is likely before the end of the year – that is, unless we can bring enough pressure on state and federal governments.

Notably a global investment advisory agency, RepRisk, has released a report on the most controversial development projects in the world for 2014. The Abbot Point port expansion came in at third place!

Thank you for the amazing support you have given AMCS in our fight for the Reef these past few years. We are making huge waves, and we will be calling on you again in the coming weeks and months to keep the pressure on the Queensland government to deliver its Reef promises, and to fight this third proposed incarnation of the Abbot Point dredging and dumping plans.

Reef 2050 long term SUSTAINABILITY PLAN

In March, Prime Minister Tony Abbot visited Hamilton Island to launch the Government’s Reef 2050 Plan. Developed to address concerns raised by the World Heritage Committee, this joint state and federal plan has some positive initiatives but falls well short of the decisive action needed to save the Reef.

Members of AMCS and Whitsunday Residents against Dumping managed to bump into the Prime Minister while he was on Hamilton Island. They raised recent concerns expressed by coral science guru Prof Terry Hughes that we can have a healthy Reef or we can mine the Galilee Basin for coal, but we can’t have both. Disappointingly, Mr Abbot responded “yes we can”. Clearly we have some more campaigning to do.

The Reef 2050 plan can be seen here: www.gbrmpa.gov.au/managing-the-reef/reef-2050 and the AMCS and WWF Australia critique is available here: www.fightforthereef.org.au/resources



Volunteers helping the community vote for the reef. © Cherry Muddle/AMCS

© Steve Parish

QLD ELECTION 2015: Voting for the Reef

Two years of solid campaigning for the Reef culminated in a frenetic start to 2015 after Premier Newman called the Queensland election for 31 January.

AMCS Reef staff and volunteers were out in force, collecting thousands of pledges from Queenslanders to vote for the Reef. We held a Reef State Election Forum in Brisbane, organised dozens of market stalls across SE Qld, knocked on hundreds of doors, called thousands of supporters, mobilised regional

Queenslanders from Cairns to Mackay, ran ads on television and made the Reef the number one environment issue and a top issue in the election.

AMCS urged all parties to deliver strong Reef policies and prepared an assessment to enable voters to know where the parties stood. As a testament to our efforts, the newly elected Labor Government has appointed Mt Coot-tha MP Steven Miles as State’s first Minister for the Great Barrier Reef.





www.marineconservation.org.au

Good Fish Project

By Tooni Mahto,
Marine Campaigner



Executive chefs Matt Dempsey from Gladioli and Tulip, Victoria (below) and Chris Irving from The Gantry Restaurant & Bar, Pier One, Sydney (top) are Good Fish Project Ambassadors.

CHEFS' CHARTER

When it comes to seafood, we expect chefs to plate up works of culinary genius. But increasingly diners want chefs to consider the sustainability of the seafood they serve as well.

Chefs get most of their information from their suppliers, who may not always have the health of the ocean on their minds. Our Good Fish Project provides chefs and catering professionals with some independent tools to tread lightly on our seas when serving seafood.

Through extensive market research, we've found that chefs are looking for practical help on serving sustainably. They need a voice on the end of a phone to discuss which fish are sustainable from which parts of Australia, what alternatives exist and who they can work with to be part of a community of like-minded chefs cooking with tomorrow's oceans in mind.

The Good Fish Project Chefs' Charter is an industry-inspired initiative designed to engage chefs and catering professionals in the sumptuous world of sustainable seafood. The Charter is a three tier program, initially guiding and educating chefs on serving and sourcing sustainable seafood. The second level helps chefs refresh their menus with 'better choice' fish, as well as better engaging staff, suppliers and customers. And finally, there's the Ambassador level - an awarded status for chefs and restaurants that actively promote sustainable seafood and are leading the industry towards a greener future.

AMCS knows about sustainable seafood, but our expertise doesn't extend into the restaurant kitchen, so we've engaged Richard Webb, who owned the highly successful and truly sustainable Swampdog Fish and Chips, in South Brisbane.

Richard is working with AMCS to run the Good Fish Project Chefs' Charter and engage restaurants to sign up.

We're delighted to announce that the Surf Coast Shire on Victoria's Great Ocean Road is working with AMCS to roll out the project across the shire. Working with respected Victorian chef Matt Dempsey as a regional Ambassador, the first restaurants to sign up work within the council region, and are shining bright as leaders in the field of sustainable seafood.

Executive Chef Chris Irving from The Gantry Restaurant & Bar is also leading the charge as an Ambassador. It is exciting to have these world class chefs on board.

If you own a restaurant and want to get involved, visit www.goodfishproject.com.au to find out more.

Saving our TOP END SEAS

Hi, I'm Jacqui Taylor, the new AMCS Northern Campaigner! I'm a Darwin born local and really excited to return to the Top End to join AMCS in raising awareness of our largely unprotected Top End sea life.

By Jacqui Taylor, AMCS Northern Campaigner

I have worked, sailed and dived around the globe fuelling my adventures with a colourful career in marine science and management, film and tourism. I have worked across Northern Australia in various jobs, researching coral, surveying cetaceans, and working closely with Indigenous people for sustainable management of their marine resources.

The remote tropical waters of northern Australia remain healthy, and relatively untouched. The outstanding diversity of marine ecosystems are rich in marine life. Extensive seagrass beds, mangroves and corals support six of the world's seven species of marine turtles, a significant number of dugongs and dolphins and highly valued fish populations.

But the waters of Northern Australia are also rich in minerals, oil and gas and according to the NT Government, are "open for business". As the quality of tropical marine habitats decline around the globe, it is more important than ever to safeguard our seas against destructive, extractive activities.

Seabed mining is a hot issue in the Territory. Seabed mining destroys the seafloor by dredging large swaths of the benthic habitat, crushing coral, seagrass and mangroves, the foundations of our healthy Top End seas. Sediments and

minerals are often dumped back into the sea, smothering important fish breeding habitats.

The moratorium on seabed mining was due to expire in March. After a long community campaign against this destructive practice, Chief Minister Adam Giles announced an extension of the moratorium for another three years. Although this decision is welcome, we will continue calling for a permanent ban on seabed mining.



Give Frank a
BREAK



By Kate Simpson,
Communications
Officer

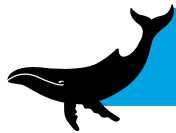
AMCS has joined forces with Australian comedian Frank Woodley to launch a campaign against one of our ocean's biggest killers.

Throughout the world, it lurks silently. It will outlive us, outswim us, and threatens to undo us. The predator is plastic and it's floating in an ocean near you.

Our public awareness campaign calls on everyone to do their bit to 'Give Frank a Break' by reducing plastic pollution. We've got to reuse and

recycle it, but we must also break our dependency on it, and reduce our plastic use.

Our campaign also calls on the Australian, State and Territory Governments to support cash for containers schemes, which places a 10 cent fully refundable deposit on drink containers, to reduce plastic pollution.



Watch the video and learn how you can give Frank a break: www.givefrankabreak.org.au

© Troy Mayne, Oceanic Imagery



Give Frank a Break
© Nick Fletcher

CLEAN UP AUSTRALIA DAY
in Williamstown, Victoria



A big thanks to Shannon Hurley and James Cordwell and our incredible volunteers.

This day highlighted the problem of plastic pollution, but also how groups and individuals can work together to achieve positive outcomes.

Of course, cleaning up our beaches shouldn't just be a once a year activity.

Every year, Australians buy 600 million litres of bottled water and use 3.9 billion plastic bags.

Plastic pollution travels easily from land to sea. It blows in from bins and garbage dumps, or flows through stormwater drains into our waterways and eventually the sea. Once in the ocean, it slowly breaks down into smaller and smaller pieces which are eaten by animals at the bottom of our food chains.

Larger pieces of plastic floating at the surface are readily mistaken for food by seabirds and turtles, while plastic bags and fishing lines can wrap around marine life and kill them.

Millions of tonnes of rubbish enter the world's oceans each year. This plastic pollution rides the ocean's currents and reaches the furthest corners of our seas. Plastic is now even in the Antarctic wilderness.

You can help reduce plastic pollution by supporting a cash for containers scheme, saying no to disposable, single-use, unnecessary plastic items, using reusable water bottles and bags, and picking up litter.

The latest on
CASH FOR CONTAINERS

We can't contain our excitement! New South Wales is on board to get a cash for containers scheme!

Australians consume almost 15 billion drinks in containers each year.

Only 40% of these are recycled. The remaining 60% goes into landfill or is littered.

Almost 90% of the marine debris found on Sydney's beaches is plastic, mostly bottles, caps and straws.

Premier Mike Baird announced earlier this year that the state would be next in line for the scheme, which can increase plastic recycling by 80%.

The ACT may follow, with Environment Minister Simon Corbell publicly expressing support for a uniform cash for containers scheme.

Cash for containers is a great way to cut plastic pollution, clean up our beaches, increase recycling and provide income for community groups.

The impact plastic pollution has on our ocean wildlife is shocking. Throughout the world, around one million seabirds and 100,000 marine mammals are killed every year by plastics, either entangled and strangled or choked and starved.

Unfortunately the announcement by Premier Baird led to the Victorian Government all but ruling out introducing cash for containers in their state.

However South Australia and the Northern Territory already have successful cash for containers schemes, and the results are dramatic.

If your state or territory is lagging, visit givefrankabreak.org.au to catch up!



Working with other local groups on Clean Up Australia Day, AMCS volunteers collected over 600 recyclable bottles and cans, 486 straws, 310 plastic bottle lids, 32 six pack holders and 60 large bags of litter.



This shearwater chick died from ingesting too much plastic that is floating in our oceans. We've got to break the plastic addiction.
© Jennifer Lavers

By Shannon Hurley,
Victorian VolunteerCoordinator

Wader Beach was the scene of the crime for all of this plastic debris. As it's normally closed to the public to protect migratory birds, the plastic debris most likely washed up after being pushed along by the currents. This is an example of how currents and the climate can move plastic around our oceans.

As the name suggests, Wader Beach is home to a large flock of waders. Birds are often hardest hit by plastic pollution, with up to 85% of Australian sea birds thought to be affected by plastic through ingestion or entanglement.



givefrankabreak.org.au

The intriguing and threatened
Leafy Seadragon © Troy Mayne
www.oceanicimagery.com



LEAFY SEADRAGON
(Phycodurus eques)

Leafy Seadragons are one of the ocean's most intriguing creatures. One of only three* species of seadragons, these uniquely beautiful fish are endemic to Australia's southern waters.

Closely related to seahorses and pipefish, Leafy Seadragons are a slow moving intriguing species that grows to 45 cm. They are carnivorous feeders, sucking up tiny mysid shrimps or sea lice with their fused pipe-like snouts. Similar to their seahorse relatives in reproductive behaviour, the males bare the eggs on pseudo pouches until live juveniles are hatched at 4-6 weeks.

Leafy Seadragons are the ultimate masters of disguise, becoming all but

invisible among their surroundings due to their leaf-like appendages and colouration. Tiny, translucent dorsal and pectoral fins enable them to glide gracefully through the water, resembling nothing more than a floating piece of stray seaweed.

The Leafy Seadragon's knack for camouflage is so baffling to natural predators that they are rarely at risk of being eaten. Sadly though, this species is increasingly under threat from

pollution and habitat loss caused by coastal development. Their appearance has also made them a target for marine collectors.

Rarely seen by divers, these majestic beauties are the lucky charms of the sea, treasured by those fortunate enough to spot one.

*The Ruby Seadragon was recently discovered in deeper waters (51m) off Western Australia.

LEAVING A LEGACY to the oceans

AMCS was recently notified that we have been included in a will. Leaving a bequest to our charity is one of the most enduring ways to support our work and contribute to the type of world in which we want our grandchildren to live. We asked the wonderful Annalisa Koeman if she would share her motivations here.

"I give regularly to a number of non-profit organisations including those with an environmental and species conservation focus, one of which is AMCS. The oceans are so often discounted and, despite being beach lovers and surrounded by oceans, we as a nation, let alone as a world community, do not prioritise their health as we do terrestrial. The health of oceans and what we are doing to them

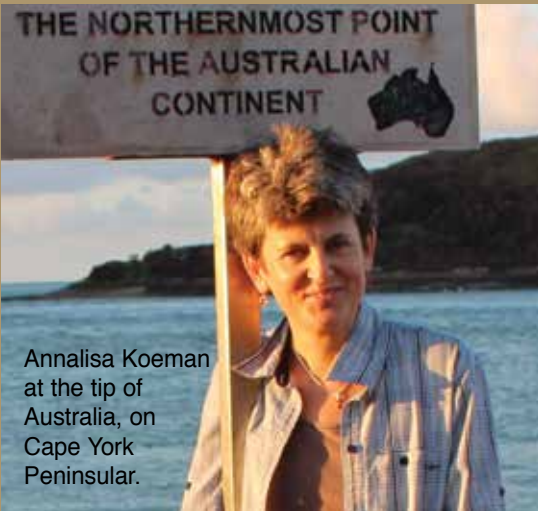
does not occupy the same prominence in our hearts and minds.

It is too easy to over harvest, discard our detritus into, pollute, dynamite and trawl the oceans without being aware of the true consequences of our actions and how they will come back to bite us (or currently are). I have lived in places where dynamite fishing has been used, coral turned into jewellery and all manner of shells and marine life harvested and consumed, where shark fin soup is seen as a status meal, and fishing line and plastic kills turtles, seabirds and other marine life.

In some ways the 'out of sight out of mind' scenario also applies to the atmosphere and how we are changing its composition...and thus global climate action remains slow and insufficient. At a critical point in my life - choosing my university degree - I chose to not do a Bachelor of Marine Science. This was an ill-informed decision, as was my decision to turn down a PhD in Atmospheric Science. Both would have led me to

connect more deeply and understand more about the oceans and their role in the complex climate system. To make up for this I thus wish to leave something of myself to AMCS."

Thank you so much Annalisa. We are honoured to be included in your legacy.



Annalisa Koeman at the tip of Australia, on Cape York Peninsular.



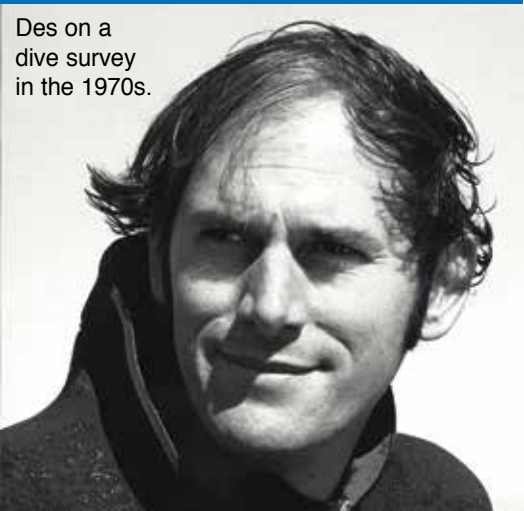
Des and other ALS members in the field in the 1960s.

By Des Connell,
Former AMCS
President



The founding of the Australian Marine Conservation Society, then known as the Queensland Littoral Society, was a very low key affair in 1965. I can recall a handful of people, mainly post graduate students, at the University of Queensland sitting in a lecture theatre discussing diving spots. Eddie Hegerl was the driving force for the society and chaired the meeting. There was no urgent pressure from the political and social forces at work in Queensland and Australia. It was principally a skin diving group with an interest in conservation as well.

Des on a dive survey in the 1970s.



The early crucial battles for
THE GREAT BARRIER REEF

But pressures built up slowly and steadily over the next few years. The marine environment in Queensland was under intense pressure, from water pollution and developers turning wetlands into real estate. Unfortunately little was known about the environmental effects of these developments or how to manage them.

I was elected President in January 1969 at a meeting attended by over 50 members. Between the founding in 1965 and 1969 our society had grown in all respects. It was now being called on by the media to give comment on stories affecting the marine environment. While there was a positive response from some quarters to the Society's comments, often government officials and others were hostile and saw this as the intrusion of a mob of young inexperienced students into their affairs. There was also numerous media attacks on the Society from various politicians and their supporters.

The first major issue concerned the Great Barrier Reef in 1967 when mining was proposed for Ellison Reef, a supposedly dead coral reef. Eddie led a successful campaign to prevent this from happening.

Then, towards the end of 1967, another crisis was developing for the Great Barrier Reef. The Queensland and Australian Parliaments passed joint legislation calling for exploratory petroleum oil drilling. Forty companies applied, some backed by giant corporations, and a major part of the Reef went under lease. A debate largely carried out in the media ensued. Government scientists, and their supporters in the oil industry, said drilling would not be a problem in the case of an accident, because the oil would float on the surface and leave the underlying reef intact. Such a glib and superficial response to this issue

has many obvious deficiencies. Many toxic components in the oil dissolve in the underlying water and the important intertidal zone becomes coated with oil. Birds become coated with the oil and suffer agonising death in enormous numbers.

At this time the orange red stickers with Save the Reef letters in black became ubiquitous in Queensland. They were on cars, letters, bikes, and diving equipment. I believe these were the most effective method to bring the issue to public attention. Our policy at this time was that the Reef should be set up as a marine park and a commission organised to manage it.

I was under heavy personal attack in the media by the State Premier, Joh Bjelke-Petersen, his ministers and various industry officials. But the media and the public were generally supportive of our campaign. Conservation organisations from other states and at a national level as well as international bodies were now involved.

The crisis came to a head on the first day of 1970 when the Courier Mail announced that the Japex self-propelled oil rig Navigator was preparing to drill off the North Queensland coast. This made front page news all over Australia with The Australian newspaper commenting that 'the Great Barrier Reef had been the object of a shameful exercise in buck passing and political dereliction...despite the most sustained public campaign in memory on a conservation issue'.

Decisive events were to follow. Key unions such Transport Workers, Waterside, Storemen and Packers threatened a total ban on the Japex oil rig. The contractors of the rig, Ampol, announced suspension of the drilling operation and asked the government

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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.

ART for Oceans

Thank you to Byron Bay artist Nitsua for donating the proceeds of these beautiful beachy paintings towards our conservation work. We think they are gorgeous and would like one in our office. But the next best thing is to be able to use the funds raised towards our critical campaigns. Thanks Nitsua, from the team at AMCS.



REEF SURVIVAL is more important than coal

By Paul Sterling, AMCS Supporter

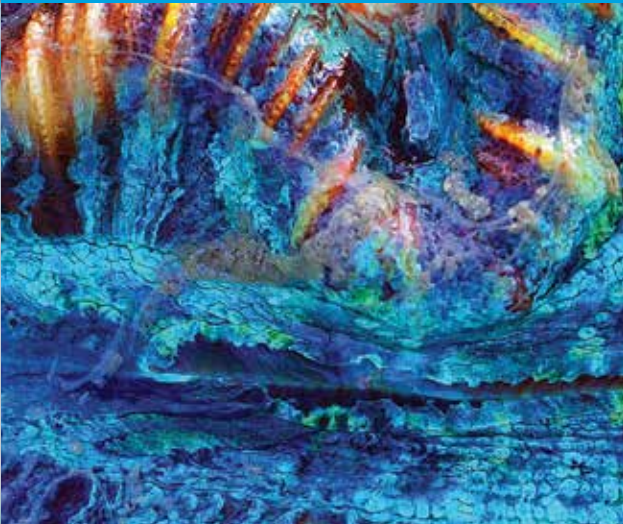
The coral reefs of the world and so much that lives on the reef owe their survival to a microscopic algae, known as zooxanthellae. [This includes] most of the corals, the giant clams, sponges, and the list goes on, but research has probably only scratched the surface.

Another similar algae lives and thrives under ice flows in the high latitudes, but unlike zooxanthellae, it is not symbiotic. This high latitude algae's importance lies in that it is the main food source for isopods and other marine life to feed on which in turn are eaten by krill. Krill in turn are eaten directly or indirectly by just about every bird, fish and seal all the way up the food chain to the largest animal that has ever been in the world, the blue whale. Any change in temperature, oil, chemical contamination or overfishing of krill would have a disastrous effect on our marine life.

This generation does not have the right ot destroy all that, no matter what excuse is conjured up.

The same excuse goes for any extra coal ports off the Queensland coast. Queensland has all the coal ports it needs. It is not imperative that all the Queensland coal is shipped out this century. Coal has been there for a few million years. It will keep!

Under no circumstances should any government be allowed to give the OK to pollute the Great Barrier Reef or anywhere near it. Dump all dredging, be it maintenance dredging or new dredging, on land where it can be contained. Coral reefs cannot survive sediment plumes created from dredging causing eutrophication which is limiting the sunlight that is needed for zooxanthellae and the symbiosis process to work.



If giant clams could talk, they'd be fighting for their homes in the Great Barrier Reef.



VALE

Luke James Woodland

23 April 1986 – 11 November 2014

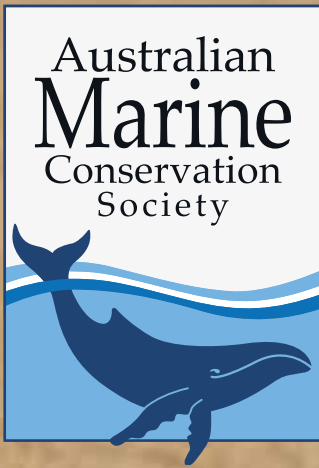
AMCS staff were deeply touched late last year to receive a donation from Rita Nelson in memory of her family friend Luke Woodland. Rita asked his family to send a few words about this young man, whose life was cut short in a motorbike accident. This is what they wrote.

“Luke was a talented and creative guy with his own individual sense of style. Luke was passionate about many things, in particular acting, music and the environment. He had a warm and generous nature and always made time for others. He thoroughly enjoyed spending time with friends and family and lived life to the fullest. It is terribly sad that his life was cut short so suddenly as he had so much to give. We all feel very privileged to have known Luke and to have shared part of his short, yet beautiful life.”

Con't from page 17
to institute an inquiry. Prime Minister John Gorton welcomed this approach but Joh Bjelke-Petersen opposed it. A Royal Commission was set up and subsequently advised against oil drilling on the Reef.

The outcomes of this Royal Commission and subsequent

actions led to the formation of the Great Barrier Marine Park Authority in 1975, to wide national and international acclaim. This final outcome was in accord with the policy of the Society, formulated in the 1960s, for which we fought a long and hard battle. It remains a major national achievement and a landmark for conservation on a global scale.



save it

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