

3 September 2010

Kids talk turtles with Traditional Owners

Students around Townsville are learning about the important relationship between Traditional Owners and sea turtles through a series of school presentations called 'Safeguarding the Gungu (Sea Turtle)'.

NQ Dry Tropics Project Officer, Sam Savage, said the education program teaches kids about the cultural connections Traditional Owners have with the sea.

"Traditional Owners have a long standing relationship with the sea and with sea turtles."

"The students will learn about the significance of the sea turtle in cultural celebrations and will get to meet a Traditional Owner."

"They will see a short film prepared by local Traditional Owners; learn about Traditional Owner groups in the Townsville region. Students also get a chance to decorate their own artificial turtle shell."

Historically, the cultural practices and celebrations of Traditional Owners have involved traditional hunting of sea turtles and other marine animals.

While these practices still play an important role in Indigenous culture, today's youth are also learning to assist with turtle tagging and monitoring programs and Traditional Owners are keen to let people know they are taking an active role in sea turtle conservation.

One teacher who participated in the program said the students were very engaged.

"Our students thoroughly enjoyed the experience. The [presenters] were enthusiastic and spoke articulately about the significance of sea turtles to Traditional Owners."

The 'Safeguarding the Gungu' education program is being delivered by NQ Dry Tropics and local Traditional Owners to selected Reef Guardian Schools.

Media event

What: Safeguarding the Gungu (Sea Turtle) educational presentation

Where: Townsville West State School, 17 Wilson St, West End

Date: Friday 3 September

Time: 10:00 – 10:45 am

Media contact

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