

6 March 2011

Cleaning Up the Sea - March 6

The amount of rubbish dumped in the sea is three times the annual catch of fish.

Sixty percent of it is plastic and it kills around 100,000 sea animals every year.

NQ Dry Tropics will do its best to reduce this figure on Clean Up Australia Day.

This year Clean Up Australia Day coincides with Seaweeek and what better way to clean up and celebrate Seaweeek than with a festival on March 6.

Duey the dugong will help Townsville residents clean up at Pallarenda early in the morning and join in the fun of Celebrate the Sea Festival afterwards.

The Celebrate the Sea Festival will be a fun, free day for residents to make a difference and find out how to turn the tide to give marine life a better future.

The Festival will showcase 10 local environment groups.

The theme of Seaweeek in 2011 is 'Spotlight on Marine Science'. These scientists explore the least known habitat on earth.

The Festival celebrates this by presenting top marine scientists to talk about how mangroves are kidneys for the reef and how water bugs are health checks for water.

Mark Hammond, a James Cook University marine biologist will be a guest on the day. He said, "Plastic pollution is everywhere. It's in all the habitats turtle use in the wild.

It is an increasing problem and yet the sea and its creatures are one of the more amazing parts of the world to appreciate.

People who come to the clean up and Festival can be a part of helping species in the long run."

There will be lots of interactive children's activities and a free lunch thrown in.

Organiser Laura Dunstan from NQ Dry Tropics said, "The clean up in the morning will be a great, practical activity families can do together. The Festival afterwards is a reward for all the work and demonstrates the need for clean beaches"

“The Festival is especially important for younger generations to learn that they can really make a difference to their local environment.

“Many community groups will be showcasing their environmental achievements and education programs.

“Among the 10 groups Coastal Dry Tropics Landcare Inc is speaking about why native plants are important, Reef HQ on sustainable ways to fish and Marine Wildlife Australia will share how to spot individual dolphins.”

Join us at Celebrate the Sea Festival on Clean Up Australia Day, Sunday March 6, Walter Nesbit Park Pallarenda.

Sign in for the clean up by 8am. Remember your gloves, hat and sunscreen.

Celebrate the Sea Festival activities will start at 10am.

This is a free community event but registration is needed for catering purposes.

Call NQ Dry Tropics on 4724 3544 or go to www.nqdrytropics.com.au

NQ Dry Tropics also supports the Great Northern Clean Up. This is a Clean Up Australia Day event held in September in northern Australia.

Our region includes the local government areas of Townsville, Charters Towers, Burdekin, Isaac, Barcaldine, Etheridge, Hinchinbrook, Palm Island and the Whitsundays. **Media contact:** For further information contact Carla Hutchinson-Reade on (07) 4724 3544/0409121221 or email carla.hutchinson-reafe@nqdrytropics.com.au

Interesting Statistics found in the Clean Up Australia campaign www.cleanuptheworld.org

- Every day, ships throughout the world jettison 5.5 million items of waste
- Between 700,000 and 1 million seabirds are killed from entanglement or ingestion each year
- Seven billion tonnes of debris enters the world's oceans annually, most of it long-lasting plastic
- It takes at least 10 years for a plastic bag to decompose but larger, more harden plastics can take a couple hundred years

What can we do?

- Help clean up our beaches on Clean Up Australia Day
- Don't throw rubbish in the street or gutter because it might end up in the ocean or on the beach
- Re-use your plastic shopping bags or take cloth bags to the shops
- Tell your friend about the dangers of rubbish to marine animals like Duey the dugong