

Seaweek 1993-94

Caring for our Coast

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Understanding the theme

It is all too often that the subtle, long term changes to our environment go largely unnoticed until a significant visible problem arises. The marine environment is no exception and perhaps the most subtle adverse changes occur here. There is a need to find out more, indeed the ocean's health should be everyone's concern.

All the world's population depend on a healthy marine environment for their survival. The ocean is a major part of the Earth's life support systems. Plants and animals depend on the coasts and oceans too. Turtles nest on the beaches; seabirds use the shore for breeding; mangroves, seagrass and salt marshes provide rich nursery areas for all manners of fish and sea life and the list goes on.

The theme Caring for our Coast carries a message to all Australians that individuals who care, can make a difference. As the land and sea are connected, we all contribute to the health of our coasts and oceans. What we do each day at home, school or work and how we use and care for the land will affect the health of the oceans. This theme helps to question why the ocean needs to be cared for and if we really do care. It includes issues of:

- The significance and value of the coasts and oceans for us all
- Consequences of our every day actions
- Catchment management
- Regulations, roles and responsibilities
- Community groups and their projects

Exploring the 93 theme - event ideas

Street march - Attracting media attention

What

National day of action organised by Surf rider Qld and Victoria

Where

The streets of Surfers Paradise and Melbourne

How

Working with local communities a march was organised to bring community attention problems confronting our coasts. Media releases were distributed and permits obtained from local police.

Local politicians invited to address rally at end of march and resolutions carried seeking action.

Why

Students and community groups can learn about the role media can help:

- media releases and how to write them
- make a study of how the event was reported in radio, television and print media.
- making key messages and how television picks up on placards.



Local community groups draw attention to major environmental issues



The Beaurock Ballet school students dance for the sea and Seaweek at the Gould League of Victoria open day in 1996

Exploring the 94 theme - event ideas

Punk Mermaids - Using drama, music and dance to interpret the sea.

What

Ballet and drama performed by students and actors to schools and local communities.

Where

Townsville and Cairns

How

The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority worked with representatives from a group of organisations with management and educational interests in the marine environment. Together they developed a set of messages they wanted to deliver for Seaweek, focusing on awareness raising, specific issues and personal actions. Polyp, the first of four performances developed, was a major ballet production. Through evaluation, changes were made to broaden the reach and effectiveness of the shows. After Polyp came The Punk Mermaid, The Live Pop-up Plankton and The Blue Playground using drama, catchy songs, and puppets. The performances were taken out of the theatre and into the schools, markets, malls and shopping centres of Townsville and Cairns.

Educational materials were sent to schools in preparation for a performance and displays were set up at community shows. This enabled students, teachers and the public to follow up on information or issues and explore ways their own actions could care for the sea. These shows educated and entertained thousands for Seaweek.

Why

Punk mermaids, a cheeky plankton, a grumpy beach towel and dancing coral polyps can help save the oceans by getting the users and abusers of the sea excited and receptive for some strong environmental education messages. By being creative they take people through the mental barrier of the water surface. With movement, drama, dance, music, song and humour they present and involve people in the marine world in ways they have not experienced before. Leaping about singing and dancing can not only be great fun but it can also be dynamic environmental education.



Logo source: Wei Papper

Photo courtesy: Joe Piccas

Illustration: Courtesy: Wei Papper

Extending the theme - classroom activities

Activity 1: Who Cares for our Coasts?

Background

Many groups and organisations are involved in managing our coasts. It is up to us to find out what they do and help them to protect our coastal environment.

Aim

- to find out more about coastal management in your area.

What to do

- Identify Federal, State or Local government bodies with coastal management responsibilities eg Environment Protection Agencies, Water Boards, National Parks and Wildlife Service, etc.
- Identify non government groups working on/in coastal issues and areas eg Dunecare, Surf Lifesaving Clubs, Environment Groups etc.
- Make a list of beach users and what they do
- Allocate roles to the students from all those listed above.
- Choose one of the following situations (or write your own) that could threaten the coast and set about solving the issue. In each case a member of the public has observed the threat and must figure out who to contact. What do you think should happen?
 - A rock fisher has been cutting cunjevoi (sea squirts) for bait and has four buckets, although she fishes alone.
 - On a beach walk at low tide, you notice an oily slick washing up on the rocks. You also notice an oil tanker heading out to sea.
 - When reading your local newspaper, you notice a Development Application to Local Council to build a new housing estate on the last stand of mangroves in your area.
 - On a trip to your local lagoon, you notice that lots of rubbish has washed up on the shore after a recent storm.

Text adapted from Seaweek 93 poster

Activity 2: Look Litter Lasts

Discuss the following data

- | | |
|---|------------------------------|
| • Parking ticket 2-4 weeks | • Cotton fabric 1-5 months |
| • Orange and banana peel up to 2 years | • Cigarette butt 1 - 5 years |
| • Plastic-coated paper 5 years | • Plastic bag 10 - 20 years |
| • Nylon fabric 30 - 40 years | • Tin can 50 - 100 years |
| • Glass or Plastic bottles indefinitely | |

Activity 2 adapted from the Community Section of the Seaweek '98 Education Kit by Janette & Bob Houston

Activity 3 What Wastes Where?

Background

Our coastline with its rivers, bays and harbours connects the land with the sea. We can all help to care for our coast and the wildlife that relies on it. Consider what we drop, flush, wash or throw away. Where is away? Where does it go?

Aim

- to consider where household wastes go.



Illustration source: Wet Paper

Activity

- Discuss what wastes are produced by an average household at home and while down the street or on the land/farm. List the types of wastes and the methods for their disposal.
- Create a class survey, ask students to fill this in with their family and a friend or neighbour.
- Use the results to create a waste map of your area.

Adapted from the Seaweek '94 Activity Sheet by Glen Tonges

Hidden Question

Can you answer this question? Find the message below by changing each letter into the one that comes before it in the alphabet. For example, change B into A, C into B, D into C and so on.

Adapted from the Seaweek '94 Poster

Source Kym McKaughe



IPX EP
UVSUMFT
TFSMT CJSET
BOE GJTI
VTF?

20 ways to care for our coast

- Celebrate the sea**
Find some friends and actively enjoy the sea to appreciate its benefits.
- Don't use your toilet as a rubbish bin**
String, tooth brushes, tissues, plastics and hair are difficult to treat at the sewage plant.
- Don't pour cooking oil down the sink or drain**
It ends up on the beach. Pour it in a container and put it out with the rubbish that goes to the tip or use it in your compost bin.
- Think of the link - the sea and the sink**
What ever you tip down the sink ends up at the sewage plant and then after treatment it ends up in the sea.
- Don't water the driveway, it won't grow**
All that water washes to the beach taking with it chemicals, plant clippings, dirt and oil.
- Plant don't pave**
Decrease the amount of paving and concrete around your home. Landscaping is smarter and allows water to soak into the ground slowing water runoff to the sea.
- Become nitrate free**
Plant native trees and shrubs in urban areas so that fertilizer is reduced. The sea is cleaner without it.
- Choose phosphorus free**
Look carefully at products to see if they are phosphorus free before you buy them. Encourage others to read labels when shopping.
- Fix your car leaks**
More oil ends up in the sea from urban run-off than from tanker spills! If your car drips, the oil will find its way to the ocean when it next rains.
- Scoop the poop!**
Unless you like to swim in animal poop, make sure you and your neighbour pick up the droppings.
Carry a plastic bag and use it as a pooper scooper, then put it in the nearest bin so it can be taken to the tip.
- Slow the flow**
Low flow shower heads, drip irrigators and half flush toilets conserve water. Reduced water use means less to treat at sewage plants and less stormwater.
Water in the morning and evening to reduce evaporation and toughen up plants. The less water that runs out to sea, the less pollution on our beaches.
- Join clean up days**
Clean up Australia Day and other locally organised beach cleanups do make a difference. They show others you care as well as removing that hard to clean rubbish.
- Hold onto your butt**
Our streets and beaches are not ashtrays. Keep cigarette butts out of the gutter.
If you do smoke, make sure you use an ashtray that you empty and put out with the garbage.
Pack your boat to reduce garbage and always bring back all your rubbish including cigarette butts.
- Don't pour engine oil and paint in the gutter**
Pour it into a plastic container and take it to your nearest recycling centre or rubbish tip, or ring your local authority.
- Use walking tracks**
These protect sensitive dune plants and help stop beach erosion.
Dune plants stop the sand from blowing away.
- Keep drains clean**
All rubbish which blows from the land ends up on the beach.
Make sure rubbish from your street can't enter storm water drains.
Secure rubbish bins and keep your street clean.
- Don't spill your bilge**
Don't pump your oily bilge at sea. Use a container or install a holding tank and recycle it back on shore. Refuel your boat on land to reduce oil in the sea.
- Catch what you need and eat what you catch**
When fishing or collecting, leave something for others to catch.
- Recycle, Re-Use, Reduce**
Reduce the amount of material that has to be treated at sewage plants. Food scraps can be put into a compost bin and moved from place to place around the garden.
- Join MESA or MTA's**
Get involved. Both these associations are voluntary and non-profit.



Scoop the poop

Photo courtesy: Wet Paper and Jan Taylor