

Working to protect and preserve the Great Barrier Reef.

WHITEOUT - Queensland school students explore ways to address the decline of the Great Barrier Reef from climate change

In response to the imminent threat of climate change to Australia's iconic coral reefs, the Great Barrier Reef Foundation, in collaboration with University of Queensland, launches **Whiteout**, a new public awareness campaign specifically targeting Queensland school students.

GBRF Managing Director, Judy Stewart, said "**Whiteout** highlights the environmental threats facing the Great Barrier Reef to adolescents and promotes ideas and debate about the actions that could be taken to reduce the risks."

"In **Whiteout** we have a new and complementary vehicle specifically designed for engaging with youth - an audience previously beyond the reach of existing GBRF programs which are mainly designed for corporate and adult philanthropic markets," said Mrs Stewart.

"GBRF is very excited about the **Whiteout** youth program - its scientific foundations draw on the close involvement the Foundation already has with the University of Queensland, positioning scientific content, and real research leaders like Professor Ove Hoegh Guldberg, at its core.

Whiteout will be launched with a Panel discussion at the Idea's Festival on Friday 27th of March.

Entitled "**Now You See It Now You Don't**" the forum will be held at the State Library and bring together expert speakers with differing points of view on how to achieve long-term sustainability of the Great Barrier Reef. The audience will be made up of 100 year 8-10 Queensland school students.

Following the forum, **Whiteout** will work to develop a longer-term education and awareness program for students about the Reef, capitalising on the ways in which teenagers communicate and learn with one another— using tools like Facebook and mobile phones. In this way, GBRF wishes to develop a conversation, personal content

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and momentum for learning about issues, like the future of the Reef, that younger people really care about.

These activities will address a core component in the lower secondary science curriculum, blending the arts, science and multi-media fields.

While **Whiteout** will deliver direct learning about the vulnerability of the Great Barrier Reef to climate change, GBRF also hopes to switch secondary students onto discovering the excitement of scientific research as a career as well as the lifestyle of the professional scientist.

Whiteout will work through the State's school curriculum, new technology, science leaders and the State festivals' framework, to engage students in these important issues.

"Climate change is threatening the Great Barrier Reef right now, in the form of coral bleaching and ocean acidification," said Mrs Stewart.

"The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) predicted in 2007 that by 2020, if we do nothing, 60% of the Great Barrier Reef will bleach every second year.

"GBRF hopes the **Whiteout** program will inspire Queensland's school students to participate in the climate change debate, deepening their knowledge of the issues and challenging their thinking about the wonders of the Great Barrier Reef and the organisms that live there."

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