



17 July, 2006

Commonwealth Bank Gives Coral a Future

The Commonwealth Bank has announced a three-year partnership with the Great Barrier Reef Research Foundation which will enable over 375 marine science students to study the Reef's coral ecosystems with the aim to familiarise and skill participants for future marine protection and conservation initiatives.

The program, named Coral Futures, will see 53 students this month travel to the internationally renowned coral reef research facility at Heron Island, 80 km offshore from Gladstone from 14 – 23 July.

Additional student intakes for the program will take place in 2007 and 2008.

Jill Lester, Executive General Manager - Commonwealth Bank Communications said: "We are delighted to partner and support the Great Barrier Reef Research Foundation through this unique opportunity which invests in the future of our coral reefs."

"The Commonwealth Bank is actively involved in the sustainability of Australian communities. Coral Futures brings us closer to the communities we serve and demonstrates our larger commitment to preserving this powerful yet vulnerable World Heritage site."

"We are also pleased to be continuing our long-standing investment in education. We believe our investment will contribute to the education of tomorrow's coral reef scientists," said Ms Lester.

Judy Stewart, Managing Director, Great Barrier Reef Research Foundation said: "We are extremely fortunate in Australia to be a custodian of the world's largest and, arguably, most pristine coral reef system. By partnering with the Foundation through Coral Futures, the Commonwealth Bank is ensuring that the Reef will continue to be in good hands."

The Heron Island course will provide students with access to the greatest real life laboratory of all. During their stay on the island, the students will study under the supervision of Dr Sophie Dove from the Centre for Marine Studies at The University of Queensland.

Dr Dove said: "The Great Barrier Reef is an immensely complex and beautiful structure. The Coral Futures program allows students to study the marine life and issues that impact it in the best possible classroom – the Reef itself.

"Students in this program will also be exposed to corporations who are proactive about the environment. This is terrific for their development as future leaders in marine conservation."

Katarina Ireland, a marine science student from the University of Queensland, said: "The Coral Futures course will give us the opportunity to learn more about the Great Barrier Reef, gain some experience in research methods and learn from experts who are top in their field. It is also exciting to be going to a pristine environment that is relatively untouched by people and full of animal life."

ENDS

About Commonwealth Bank in the community

The Commonwealth Bank has been actively supporting the Australian community since it opened its doors in 1912. The Bank combines the work of the Commonwealth Bank Foundation, our community partners and our people to achieve social outcomes that enrich the communities in which we live and work. Our community support covers financial literacy, through the Commonwealth Bank Foundation, medical research, the arts, sport, education, welfare and conservation. In June 2006, the

Media contact:

Bryan Fitzgerald
General Manager, Media & Issues Management
Commonwealth Bank
Phone: (02) 9378 2663
Mob: 0414 789 649
Email: fitzgeb@cba.com.au

Harriet Forrest, Horizon Communication Group
Phone: (02) 8572 5600
Mob: 0411 779 058
E: harriet@horizoncommunication.com.au



Commonwealth Bank joined in partnership with the Great Barrier Reef Research Foundation to support the Coral Futures program. This partnership links the Bank's long-standing commitment to the education of young Australians with the Reef itself, bringing the Bank closer to the communities it serves and demonstrating in a tangible way its larger commitment to preserving this powerful yet vulnerable environmental icon.

About Great Barrier Reef Research Foundation

Established in 1999, the Great Barrier Reef Research Foundation (www.barrierreef.org) is redefining the way business, science & government work together to protect and preserve the Great Barrier Reef.

The Great Barrier Reef Foundation raises funds to support research that contributes to the environmental protection, enhancement, preservation and conservation of Australia's tropical reefs, especially the Great Barrier Reef, for the benefit of the world community. It is the only fundraising body focused solely on the Reef. Its aim is to directly augment the investment by government in R&D by adding private investment from Australian corporations and philanthropic bodies to the overall project budget on the Reef.

About the Coral Futures Education Program

One important initiative of the Great Barrier Reef Research Foundation has been its partnership with the Tropical Marine Network (TMN), an alliance between The University of Queensland, The University of Sydney, James Cook University and the Australian Museum.

Under the Coral Futures banner, the Tropical Marine Network conducts short course, elective 'intensives' for undergraduate marine science scientists at their island research stations on the Great Barrier Reef. These courses take the students out of the classroom and into the real-life laboratory of the Great Barrier Reef - in any one year they can experience the Reef at three different latitudes along the Queensland coastline. From quite diverse university campuses, they come together to meet each other and learn, and take critical first steps towards their professional futures.

Media contact:

Bryan Fitzgerald
General Manager, Media & Issues Management
Commonwealth Bank
Phone: (02) 9378 2663
Mob: 0414 789 649
Email: fitzgeb@cba.com.au

Harriet Forrest, Horizon Communication Group
Phone: (02) 8572 5600
Mob: 0411 779 058
E: harriet@horizoncommunication.com.au