

# Newspaws

Spring issue For, of and by Department of Environment, Conservation and Tourism staff September 1988

## Weather for turtles



The department's information and media services section recently spent a harrowing 24 hours involving Col Limpus and his turtle research group at Shoalwater Bay, central Queensland.

Damian McGreevy arranged for a Brisbane-based Channel 7 crew to record the concentration of green turtles in the Bay and Col's attempts to gather data on the creatures.

The light rain that met the party on arrival in Rockhampton Airport changed on the trip out to heavy rain and light winds. A mid-afternoon arrival coincided with torrential rain and rising winds.

Undaunted, the crew of Kerri Wilson and Drew Llewellyn commenced filming and continued into the night under the not-too-protective covering of a plastic groundsheet.

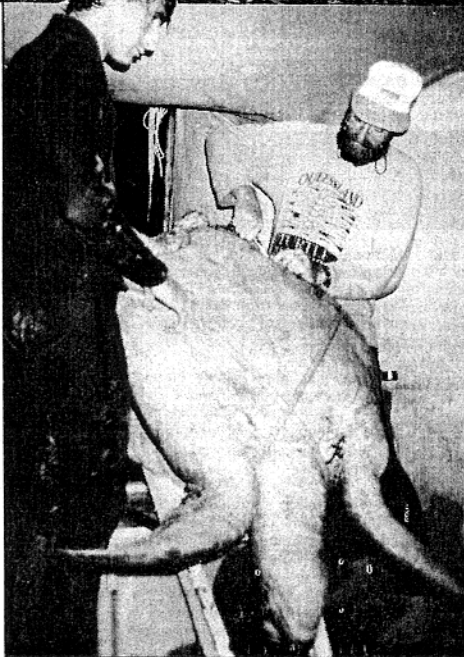
By late night, rain was coming down in buckets and gale-force winds were threatening to collapse Col's main research tent.

The camera finally succumbed to the moist conditions, two tents became small wading pools, and the 4WD became the night's bedroom. Dawn brought no change to the camera, a sunken research vessel, and a tired, irritable crew.

Some 130mm of rain overnight made the trip out to the Stannage Bay road of great interest while swollen creeks near Couti Outi station made travel out precarious.

Channel 7 HQ demanded an urgent return. Calls to Robyn Kreis and other regional staff in Rockhampton resulted in an emergency airlift from a neighbouring property carrying an extra three passengers, fridges, tripods, and a heavier than usual cargo of wet, smelly clothing.

Overnight in Rockhampton and a raid on some library footage resulted in a four-minute segment screened nationwide. All in a day's work!



## Package thumbs up

The vast majority of Q.NPWS field staff have indicated their support for the proposed Parks and Wildlife Employees Award and supplementary arrangements.

This vote of confidence was expressed at the end of seminars held throughout the state in August by Lyn Gough and Lester Harth.

Much valuable information was collected during the sessions.

This will be used to refine the documents before further

discussions with management and unions.

A meeting with unions has been scheduled for 14 September.

By now, work agreements and performance elements should have been determined for all Ranger staff.

This is a reminder that once these documents are finalized (following budget allocations), copies are to be forwarded to the Director of Conservation.

D-day is 15 September.

## All move to single building

The Department of Environment, Conservation and Tourism is to have its headquarters at 160 Ann Street, Brisbane, formerly the MIM Building.

A flurry of activity to prepare accommodation has followed the decision.

All city staff are expected to be working in the building by the end of November.

The present plan is to stage the shift. The first group will move by late October.

This will comprise all staff presently on the 24th and 25th floors of the State Law Building plus the balance of Corporate Services Division staff excepting the Technical Services section in the MLC Centre.

The second stage will see other staff moving a short time later, probably about mid-November.

Early advice is that the department will occupy floors 13 to 19 of the

building plus half of the ground floor which will be the public contact area.

Mr Peter McDougal is the architect in charge of the operation. He is working on floor layouts. The Works Department is being assisted by consultants Charles Ham and Associates.

Our liaison with Works is through our property management section. Enquiries to Roger Newnham on 227 5492.

All staff will be kept up to date with the shift through regular newsletters.

(Watch for word about telephone extensions and postal addresses.-Ed.)

Paul Blake  
Assistant Director  
Organizational Services



## Word from the Under Secretary

At last our department is coming together.

We have been given office accommodation which will allow all of the Brisbane-based departmental organization to be located physically in one location.

The separation of our Brisbane work groups in four locations has been a major obstacle to achieving a feeling of common purpose.

I hope those involved in the shift will see this as a new beginning for departmental co-operation and a common identity.

The reorganization of the Corporate Services Division has been completed. I am pleased with the enthusiasm now being shown by its staff.

The Division of Environment structure and positions will be advertised hopefully in early October.

This will bring 'air', 'water', 'environmental co-ordination', and 'noise' together to work as one group with a common environmental purpose.

The structure and future direction has been workshopped with staff participation.

Results are now being written up and will be published shortly.

Workshop co-ordinator Scott Johnson commented favourably on the very good, constructive approach adopted by the workshop participants.

The Division of Conservation's new structure is also being developed and will be completed by the end of the year.

I know some of you are feeling threatened by the reorganization. This is natural. Most of us do not respond readily to change.

I hope you will bear with me a little longer. I feel our work horizons are being widened by the scope of our new department.

It is giving us more complex professional interactions and a challenge to deal with environmental issues in the broadest sense.

Stan Wilcox  
Under Secretary

# RNA Show introduced Department to public

The 1988 RNA Brisbane show display was the first major opportunity to introduce the Department of Environment, Conservation and Tourism to the public.

A revamped light box with six telephone-style tape recordings featured photographs, text and messages about the new department and its functions.

The special Show Ringtail edition carried similar messages as did six bainbridge board panels with pictures.

Work of the Brisbane River Committee was presented also.

The pushbutton and phone lightbox about animal habitats was recycled from last year and was again popular with the public.

For the first time, our area was designed as a sales as well as a display area.

A large range of products from Q.NPWS and Brisbane Forest Park were displayed and sold.

Especially popular was the show special of Agro's anteater and fun

book. The anteaters sold out by Show Wednesday.

Sales items were put in 2000 plastic bags provided by the Queensland Tourist and Travel Corporation.

While sales at other RNA retail outlets were down on expectations because of Expo, our volume exceeded our hopes and we were very pleased.

Ranger Damian and Agro did a stage show twice daily featuring Agro's new responsibilities of air, water and noise. That Agro is always popular.

In addition to Corporate Services staff from head office, Conservation provided staff from head office and Southern Region.

A special thanks to the water quality inspectors who were there every working day and environmental co-ordination staff who were also available.

Several Brisbane Forest Park staff also worked hard answering queries.

Popular queries from Show visitors were about careers and parks in south-east Queensland.



The Service's indomitable Michael Quinn in uniform but for his Maggie — Peck Off cap answering a visitor's query at the department's display in the Queensland Government pavilion at the Royal National Association's 1988 Brisbane Show.

## Workshop develops goals Staff comings . . . and goings

Tentative purpose and goals have been developed by 24 representatives members of the Division of Environment from a two-and-a-half day workshop held over 19-14 August.

The meeting was convened to inform staff of progress about the reorganization, to share views and ideas, provide input into the Division's possible role and structure, and to develop a timetable to finalise the Division's reorganization.

The Division's purpose and goals revolve

about the perceived need to conserve, protect and improve the environment in Queensland through efficient management and close co-operation with industry, local government, other government agencies, and the general community.

Specific goals identified were:

- Provide legislation to protect the environment, to recognize community needs, and to facilitate state economic development.
- Increase community awareness of environmental management and planning issues.
- Develop an understanding and

appreciation of community needs.

- Provide timely and sound advice to the Minister, Government, local authorities, industry and other clients on environmental issues.
- Define acceptable levels of environmental quality.
- Initiate environmental research programs.
- Develop a working environment which encourages staff initiative and personal development while enhancing corporate efficiency.

Division positions will be published in the Government Gazette in early October.

## Staff comings . . . and goings

Department staff changes in the last quarter include:

Appointments — Tony Woo, computer systems officer, Brisbane; Julie Doyle, admin. assistant, Brisbane; Michelle Rodiger, admin. assistant, Moggill.  
Temporary appointments — Janice Stafford, librarian, Brisbane; Vicky Marshall, scientist, Brisbane; Rob Atherton, ranger, Moggill; Tracie Keeley, Paul McPhee, Ian Duncan, Nerida Roberts and Wayne Halfpenny, temporary clerks, Brisbane; Tina Hanley, temporary admin. assistant, Brisbane.  
Promotions — Tina Dalton, to education officer; Damian McGreevy, to promotions officer.  
Transfers — Mike Stapleton, to Local Government; Scott Findlay, to CITEC (Computer Centre).  
Resignations — John Reynolds, deputy director, Noise Abatement and Air Pollution Control; Jacqueline Kina, admin. assistant, Water Quality; Bob McTaggart, manager, marketing and commercial operations, Corporate Services.

## Psssssst . . .

Noosa information centre is sparkling new and ready for official opening soon.

Spare time hobby of department photographer Darren Jew with friend Louise Dobinson on display at a Coastal Colours exhibition at the Imagery Gallery, South Brisbane, this month.

Yes, it's photography. Darren spends much time portraying the Queensland coast and the 14-day exhibition (10-7 daily) shows some of his recent efforts.

Ron Walk reports the Q.NPWS display at the Bicentennial exhibit at Maryborough was very well received. A large marquee had 30 to 40 people for most days.

Blinks the koala, a possum and gliders were big attractions. Young people came with myriads of questions and went away with balls of knowledge and thinking what wonderful people rangers are!

Pleasing to see how much effort Michelle Zelow puts into such activities. She even gets her husband involved.

One of the Bicentennial exhibit dancing stars was one of our own in the Mothar Mountain Moonshiners square dance group.

If so much effort goes into the Freshwater interpretation centre, the park will be booked out. Good on you, Stan!

Special BFP ceremony to award a certificate of appreciation to the park's volunteer co-ordinator Ian Ogilvie.

Ian has had the hard job of organizing some 60 volunteers.

If you didn't get the last Newspaws, ask your local administration officer what happened.

Unless we've suddenly doubled staff numbers, more than sufficient were printed for everyone on the personnel section's records!

Three-day meeting recently put the promotion and planning of Fleay's Fauna Centre under the microscope.

Q.NPWS Cairns trainee Carolyn Pratt was placed third in the 1988 Trainee of the Year competition.

She was nominated by Cairns TAFE staff because of her responsible attitude towards safety in the workplace, and had a trip to Brisbane for the judging.

Cape Pallarenda EP staff calculate that the weekly average number of dogs being brought to the park is 53!

They say an advertising campaign might get the message to the public that domestic animals are not allowed.

Others would suggest they read Ken Whitlock's report of the successful soft-shell campaign that has worked so well at Moreton Island.

Those of us in the State Law Building are grateful to Peter Ralph. He was on the scene in the basement recently when carpet underlay caught fire.

Peter grabbed an extinguisher to avert what could have been a serious matter.

Congratulations to Anne and Tony Moriarty on the birth of son Jared recently.

Marion Bangay's Clydesdale colt won first prize in his class at the RNA Show.

He's a nice horse even though he seems to have done one of Marion's thumbs no good at all.

If you saw the Grand Parade, he and Marion were in it somewhere.

Ernie Wilkinson (Natural Arch) recently clocked up his 25th year working for national parks.

All staff receiving the Australian Ranger Bulletin are reminded to fill in the questionnaire in the last edition or there may not be another issue!

Tom Ryan has been appointed Conservator of Forests filling the vacancy created by the retirement of John Kelly.

The Deputy Conservator position has been filled by Peter Cranny, Assistant Conservator since 1985.

Central Queensland newspaper really got its facts wrong when reporting a Major Mitchell plaque relocation recently.

It had the event at Salvation Rose National Park, not quite the Salvador Rosa section of Carnarvon National Park.

Fauna Protection Squad called to Fraser Island on an unusual assignment recently.

They answered calls from locals protesting at the action of a Victorian new arrival who took one look at one of the island's special dingoes, took out a rifle, and shot it!

## Interleaves

Welcome to Felicity Stroppiana, regional interpreter for Downs/South West sub-region (while Gordon Stone is acting Regional Superintendent).

Hopefully, Far Northern Region will be able to boast about its new interpreter by Christmas.

A final communication skills workshop is being planned. If you have missed out on previous courses and want to improve your public speaking and personal communication skills, let your regional interpreter or Regional Director know that you would like to attend.

Lots of exciting and innovative interpretive activities are planned for the St Helena Island bicentennial celebrations.

Living history interpretation adds an interesting new dimension to the Department's public contact activities.

A proposed St Helena open day will see participation from many regional staff and revival of skills little used in recent years, particularly interpretation through music.

What's new! A reef walking brochure for Geoffrey Bay (Magnetic Island), Atherton Tableland park guide, Discovering Nature series (all revised), Ringtail's 'Parks for the People' (revised), Central Queensland parks brochure, Noosa information centre display, innumerable Central Region parks brochures, Jourama Falls visitor information, Cassowary brochure, Living with crocodiles, Noosa self-guiding walk, and Rural Nature Conservation.

What's coming? Barron Gorge park guide, Camping guide (revision), South Molle Island and Lindeman Island walking track guides, Koala brochure (revision), Southern Inland park guide, The Park next door, and Heading bush.

So there's lots of activity out there. Good luck with September holiday park programs.

Pamela Harmon-Price

# Respite before the big splurge!

Property management staff are currently enjoying a brief respite from the rigours of a fairly hectic end of financial year.

Orders were flying fast and furious in the last fortnight of June.

Soon to be opened offices at Fort Lytton and Longreach will benefit greatly from the acquisition of items ranging from electric typewriters to a Mitsubishi Canter truck.

Highlights of an eventful 12 months were purchases of a number of large items of plant and equipment.

These included an Isuzu truck for Hermitage, a Kubota tractor

for Edmund Kennedy National Park, and a John Deere tractor for Lake Broadwater.

Vessels purchased were a 12m aluminium barge and an 11m aluminium patrol vessel, both for Moreton Bay, and two 8.5m fibreglass boats for Pallarenda.

Four accommodation vans (two each for Central and Far Northern Regions) are under construction and should be ready by now.

The spiralling cost of new motor vehicles has again hit Q.NPWS even though as a government

department we pay no sales tax.

\$985,000 was allocated last financial year for the replacement of 50 vehicles but actual expenditure was in excess of \$1.03 million.

Negotiations are under way to determine the actual amount of non-recurring special funding for this year.

This should be completed soon. Once the budget is up and running we will take action to spend your money with gay abandon!

Kanwal Josan

## Splash in Bay

Moreton Island management plan, and as a baseline for future monitoring.

The exercise is proposed to be carried out over one three-day to one week period but it may be necessary to split the exercise over two or three weekends.

Service staff outside the maritime estate with appropriate

skills and/or qualifications are encouraged to take part, particularly those in the Moreton sub-region.

Depending on numbers, teams may be assigned to examine different components of the biota.

Representative multiple samples of all the habitat types in the area should be undertaken.

The field component of Operation Splash is likely to be run in mid-October. All interested are asked to contact Tim Stevens at the Southern Regional Centre, Moggill, now.

## Caught out of uniform



Well-known Service staffer Danuta Kolarski married Bob Gur (also of Polish parentage) at Our Lady of the Rosary Church, Bowen Hills, Brisbane. Danuta's Polish dancing class children dressed in colourful national costume formed a guard of honour at the church. Weddings bells this month for Jenny Curnow and Glen Fergus, and Sandra Green and Richard Chamberlain. Best wishes!

## Coast weeds safe

Following expressions of concern that discharge of treated sewage effluent at the Gold Coast Seaway might be affecting seagrass beds in the Broadwater, a 12-month study was set up to investigate.

A report on the work is complete. Results indicate that with the current discharge volume, the effluent is not having any major effects on seagrasses in its vicinity.

In contrast, it was found that major physical changes to the Broadwater arising out of the Seaway construction and associated works had led to a significant decline in seagrass beds in some areas.

The report is not yet published but is available for department use.

## Gatton is offering degree

Subject to final approval, the Queensland Agricultural College will be offering a new Bachelor of Applied Science course in parks and wildlife management in the 1989 academic year.

The new course will provide a management education which prepares graduates for employment in organizations involved in the management of protected areas and wildlife to maintain and enhance natural, heritage and recreational areas.

The course sets environmental management within a social, economic and scientific framework.

The course of four years or eight semesters will include a sandwich semester where students are required to undertake 20 weeks of course-related practical experience

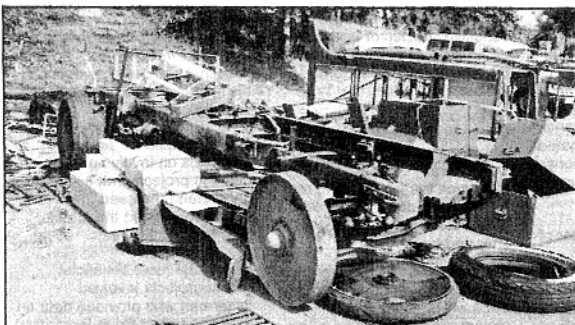
in an organization involved in the management of protected areas or environmental planning.

The course has been developed at the request of and in co-operation with the Queensland National Parks and Wildlife Service.

It has been endorsed by other conservation agencies and prominent industry staff in those areas in which graduates might find employment.

Queensland applicants will be considered for normal entry to the course on gaining a tertiary entrance score of 810.

For further information contact the Registrar, Queensland Agricultural College, Lawes, Qld 4343, telephone (075) 62 0217.



From the heap of chassis, wheels and bits two years ago (above) has come the very latest in transport! (picture below)

It's a 22-seater bus for the Queensland National Parks and Wildlife Service to carry visitors on St Helena Island National Park.

The Queensland Government Motor Garage can be very proud of its restoration of the 1924 International vehicle over 18 months.

It started out as a timber hauler in the Benarkin State Forest and until bought by the Service was owned by the Crumpton family from new.

The International is powered by a 4 litre, 4 cylinder Lycoming engine and was built by the International Harvester Co. in Chicago, Illinois.

It has a four-speed gearbox and is fitted with brakes to the rear wheels and transmission.

## Latest in travel

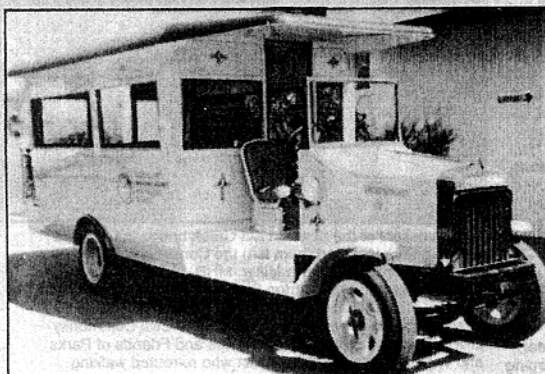
In its restoration, Garage staff used crafts seen too rarely these days.

The vehicle is original throughout with only minor changes for safety or convenience.

Among the changes was the fitting of an electric start to supplement the crank handle.

The bus is such an impressive sight that it's felt it should have a wider role than solely on St Helena so it will be used for appropriate Department displays.

The first is this month at the Colonial George Street Festival in Brisbane.



## Managing stormwater runoff

Environmental quality control agencies throughout the world have generally been successful in controlling or eliminating point source discharges of wastes to local water bodies.

In many urban areas, stormwater runoff has now become the major pollutant input to streams and the most significant factor limiting the use of urban watercourses.

Most of us live in urban areas and are increasingly aware of the condition of our urban

watercourses, and the bays and coasts to which they discharge.

Although they cannot be expected to be in pristine condition, these urban streams should be aesthetically acceptable, capable of supporting a range of the more tolerant aquatic plants and animals and water-associated wildlife, should not pose a threat to health on occasional contact, and be suitable for certain extractive uses such as watering of parks and gardens.

The Australian Environment Council recently published Water Pollution Control Guide for Urban Runoff Quality Management in an attempt to place this problem in context by outlining planning principles, design concepts and treatment options, and proposing strategies to improve the standard of urban runoff.

A.E.C. Report No.24 is available from the Commonwealth Government Bookshop, 294 Adelaide Street, Brisbane, for \$2.95.



# Course series again popular

A highly successful series of six reef interpretation courses has been completed by marine parks staff in the Far Northern Region.

Our target audience was the public contact staff of our reef tour operations including the field and mainland-based staff.

This key group has substantial potential to act as multipliers for our messages about enhancement of visitor experience and marine park awareness.

The courses, presented by ranger Leigh Harris and management officer John Hicks, took six hours.

Generally, this classroom contact was on two consecutive evenings.

Content comprised about half reef resource knowledge including marine park management and half interpretive skills knowledge.

This mix satisfied most participants as an introduction. Certainly there were some calls for follow-up courses containing further reef resource information.

Courses were held during April and May at venues in Cairns, Port Douglas and Mission Beach.

A total of 200 tour operation staff attended. Major reef tour operators supported the course by providing discounted fares for course participants travelling on course field days with marine parks staff.

A comprehensive set of course notes was prepared in a stylish reef interpretation ring-binder (Marine Parks corporate blue and white design) and presented to each participant.

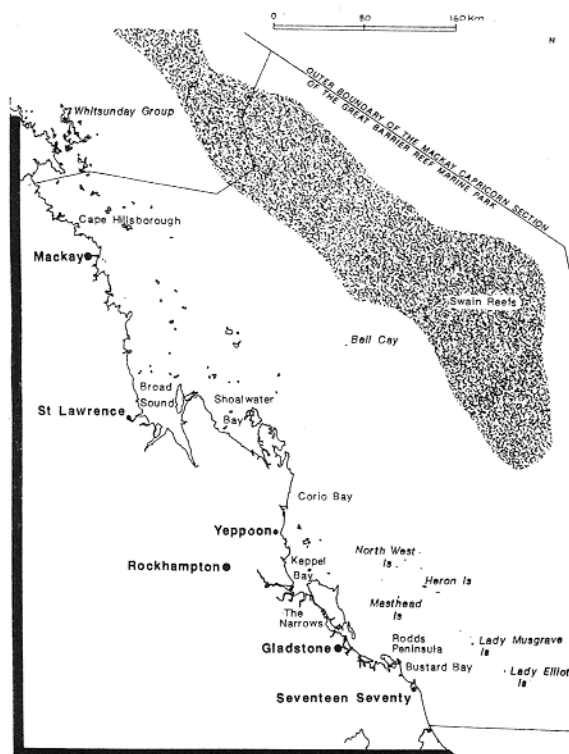
The course fee of \$10 a head helped cover production costs. Our intention in providing the ring-binders was that participants would continue to add their resource material and notes to the folders and use them as a standard reference in workplaces.

Feedback from audiences was very positive and the courses are definitely serving a need in the reef tourism industry.  
John Hicks  
Cairns



## Your cheat sheet

Queensland Mackay/Capricorn Marine Park



Were you caught out by some of the placenames in the marine parks report in Ringtail? Then use this map to give you some general direction and help answer any queries which might come your way. This is no substitute for the set of GBRMPA maps for Mackay/Capricorn now available in what appears to be a very serviceable wallet at relevant offices.

# Pressures on Reef certain to grow

The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority recently arranged a workshop on future planning and management of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park.

The workshop was attended by representatives from conservation groups, recreation and commercial fishing organizations, the tourist industry, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, and government.

International representatives from the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources, Canada and the United States were present.

As day-to-day managers of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park, the Queensland National Parks and Wildlife Service contributed a perspective on the directions for management in the years ahead.

The Service's Acting Director of Field Operations, David Perkins, made the point that the most important task facing managers of the Great Barrier Reef and the island national parks over the next 10 years would be the management of the increasing number of sites being subjected to heavy use.

Usage of the marine park is not evenly spread, and there is a concentration of activity and growing competition for the

more attractive and accessible sites in the Cairns area, the Whitsundays, and the Capricorn/Bunker Group.

Islands often serve as a focus for activity and may show the effects of human usage before there are significant effects on the surrounding reefs.

These effects may include the displacement of nesting by sensitive species of seabird, destruction of vegetation, introduction of weeds, and erosion.

By the time protective works are becoming necessary to cope with usage of an island, there will generally be some obvious effects on the surrounding reef from anchor damage, depletion of fish stocks, and pollution by litter and human wastes.

To date, usage levels over most parts of the reef have been low, but it will be increasingly necessary for protective works to become part and parcel of Great Barrier Reef management.

Visitors to mainland parks are used to driving into the carpark and setting off down the walking track.

But the concept of a 'mooring park' at Low Isles to cater for large numbers of boats without anchor damage or a walking track across a reef flat will come as novel concepts to many reef users.

In his address to the workshop, David identified some likely

trends in the way Barrier Reef day-to-day management is handled.

More emphasis will be placed on public contact techniques that help to magnify the efforts of staff.

For example, one ranger conducting a training course for the staff of tourist operators, or setting up a volunteer program can show much greater rewards than that same ranger devoting his time to one to one contact with park users.

There will also be increasing emphasis on involving reef users in projects that help them understand the need for management and the effects they have on the reef.

One of the most beneficial recent projects involved fishermen who provided data on their catches at Boulton Reef after a three-year closure.

Their returns showed that one-quarter of the fish on the reef were caught within two weeks of the re-opening.

The results of this survey have been thought provoking both for the anglers and for the managers.

Many other interesting papers were presented to the GBRMPA workshop and it provided a worthwhile forum that will help ensure the continued conservation and wise use of the Great Barrier Reef.

# Consider untold nutrient loading on Reef

An international conference entitled Water Quality and Management for Recreation and Tourism held recently at Griffith University was attended by about 170 international and Australian delegates.

Six of our water quality staff were involved, either with organizing or with contributed papers/presentations.

The conference covered a wide range of topics but themes which stood out were bacterial quality for recreational waters and related management issues, water quality in tidal canals and marinas, and management of water quality in the Great Barrier Reef.

A paper prepared by department biologist Phillip Cosser recently detailed aspects of nutrient loading in the Reef region and an evaluation of the quantitative and biological significance of different nutrient sources.

The mass of nutrients added varies by source ranging from an estimated annual input of 9700 tonnes of phosphorous to the Cairns section of the GBR Marine Park from mainland runoff to 2.1 tonnes from a 3000-person sewage discharge.

The biological significance of the inputs also varies.

The sewage input is of very high significance in a limited area whereas the input from a mainland runoff is of significance over the entire reef region.

Clearly, in order to effectively manage the nutrient status of reef waters so that the integrity of the reef system is maintained, information relating to inputs from all sources is required.

Unfortunately, this type of information is largely unavailable

and virtually nothing has been done in the past to address this deficiency.

The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority has taken the initiative and is currently actively co-ordinating and supporting research into aspects of the nutrient dynamics of the reef in an effort to better understand the system and therefore develop responsible management strategies.

The input of nutrients to reef waters is currently completely uncontrolled and the effects of such inputs are unknown.

Given the economic and environmental significance of the Great Barrier Reef, it is clearly in the interest of the Queensland Government to actively support work relating to the water quality of reef waters and those waters discharging into the Barrier Reef lagoon.



Early crossers of the new Kin Kin Creek bridge in Cooloola National Park included (from left) the Conservation Minister, Mr Geoff Muntz, Mr Clarrie Millar, MHR, Lieut.-Col. Brown, Major McKay, and Mr Gordon Simpson, MLA. The work of 32 sappers of 20 Divisional Engineering Support Squadron financed by the Army Training Task in the Civil Community program was supported by volunteers and Friends of Parks and Wildlife in the Gympie district who re-routed walking tracks and oiled the suspension bridge timbers.