

CoralWatch explains how citizen scientists can help save world's reefs

A volunteer science program has mapped more than 2000 reefs around the world. Now, to mark National Science Week, the CoralWatch boat will be on Moreton Bay.

Paula Shearer, Redlands Community News August 9, 2019 5:02pm



CoralWatch uses virtual reality headsets to help people understand the coral reef monitoring program. Picture: CoralWatch.

Not-for-profit citizen science group CoralWatch will operate two tours of Moreton Bay next weekend to mark National Science Week.

The University of Queensland program will be on the water to showcase the current state of local reefs with tips on how the community can help protect them.

Participation is limited to 40 people (children must be aged 5-plus) on each tour and tickets are just \$7.50.

Setting out on board the *MV Inspiration*, CoralWatch will showcase Moreton Bay's coral reefs using drop cameras, underwater footage and coral health charts.



CoralWatch will run two cruises on board the *MV Inspiration* as part of National Science Week. Picture: Coral Watch.

The program is designed to showcase what coral shapes and colours exist, how humans affect the reef, and what actions they can take to save them.

CoralWatch manager Diana Kleine said many people were aware of coral bleaching, but not the magnitude of the problem.

“National Science Week is the perfect opportunity to improve awareness of the challenges the reef is facing and empower Queenslanders help save the reef by living more sustainably,” she said.

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“We want to let people know that they can help save the reef from home.”

Launched 17 years ago by UQ marine biologist and neuroscientist Professor Justin Marshall, CoralWatch has assembled a workforce of more than 7000 volunteers across 78 countries.

Schools, dive centres and environmental groups all support the project by recording and reporting on coral health to contribute to the CoralWatch global database.

“We have harnessed the efforts and talents of citizen scientists to collect data on over 260,000 corals from over 2000 reefs around the world,” Professor Marshall said.

“There are not enough scientists to monitor all the world’s reefs, so this data on reef conditions worldwide is invaluable for scientific analysis and environmental monitoring.”



The floating environmental education centre will take participants on a tour of Moreton Bay. Picture: Coral Watch.

The CoralWatch tours will be held on Saturday, August 17, at 8.30am and 11am, departing William Gunn Jetty, Manly. [Bookings](#) are essential.