Like I always say, ‘every week is Seaweek’ when we live by the coast, on an island, in this big blue planet. Our marine environments give us so much to learn, so much to love and so much to look after. With this concept in mind MESA developed Seaweek, to celebrate the amazing ocean biodiversity and its role in our lives. As well as to acknowledge the importance of education, which works towards awareness, attitudes and actions for marine and coastal care and conservation.

This Undercurrents is a Seaweek special, it aims to bring you some of the Seaweek action and a little MESA news but none of the normal features. The next newsletter will be in July with a focus on studying marine/environmental education (please send your stories in any time before 30 June).

MESA acknowledges and greatly appreciates the work of so many throughout Australia to run Seaweek events, big or small over the years. May the stories and photographs inspire you to begin planning for Seaweek 2004, 7 -14th March.

MESA Editor Barbara Jensen bjensen@nor.com.au

Seaweek 2003 Exploring our oceans March 9 to 16

The theme for Seaweek 2003 was ‘Exploring our oceans’. This theme took us away from familiar coastal environments and exposed us to the deep blue ocean. It provided a chance to delve into past, present and future exploration of the final frontier on our home planet. Five ideas to help get into the theme were proposed and called the ‘Seaweek bunch of five’: Explore the ocean without leaving the shore; The great ocean exploration debate; Ocean exploration forums; ROV’s Down Under and Celebrating Ocean Exploration. Following in this newsletter are some of the activities. Enjoy!
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MESA NEWS: MEMBERSHIP CHANGES MEMBERS’ POLL”
Important letter for all members

Please Vote

1. Why we are changing the structure?
2. Why we are polling members?
What is the Proposed Fee structure?
What are the benefits of MESA membership?
Seaweek - the beginning . . .

An article by Julie Swartz, one of our beginning members

Reaching back through the mists of time, I think the idea for Seaweek was born at a Victorian MESA conference at Tooradin in 1984. John Tomkin, Vic MESA president at the time had recently returned from an exchange in the US with lots of ideas and ‘yankie’ know-how, including a concept for a national week of sea celebrations.

In the early days of MESA (Marine Education Society Australasia), one of our greatest challenges was to get the marine environment onto the agenda, into the public psyche, onto school curricula….we set out to ‘marinate’ everything! We also felt a need to celebrate, rather than commiserate, promoting positive messages that would ‘turn people on’ to the sea. A national awareness promotion such as Seaweek seemed to fit the bill.

It took the creative energy and dedication of marine educator, Pauline Halpin at the Marine Discovery Centre in Queenscliff to get things started. Seaweek began as a local event, using crab surveys and an art competition to familiarise communities and schools with coastal habitats in their areas. With Pauline’s sheer enthusiasm, the idea quickly spread around the states and we were inundated with art work from all over the country. Seaweek had become a national event. And so it began . . .

A glimpse of our marine environments at Seaweek

You may know and love your own coastal and marine patch, where you live or when you visit the beach but have you ever wondered what else is going on around our massive island coastline. Seaweek is usually just before Easter ie March or April. Choosing a time that suits all states is impossible because we have to worry about ‘the wet’ at one end or ‘the waves’ at the other.

Included throughout this newsletter are ‘Seaweek Glimpes’ a quick look at the Australian marine scene in March. We gathered this information in 2001 but I expect for many of us, 2003 told a very different story. With thanks to MESA members and Alan Reid, Timelines Project (more information www.gould.edu.au).


In order to dig out all those wonderful resources, activities, events and information about Seaweek, MESA wrote a booklet called Seachange in 1999. It was designed to inspire primary teachers and community educators to plan and provide marine education. Is was published with great help from Bob Moffatt of Wet Paper, another life time campaigner for MESA and marine education

Seachange is still available on our MESA website Peter website link please and outlines the past Seaweeks with three headings, ie Understanding the theme, Exploring the theme – event ideas and Extending the theme – classroom activities. Several activities from Seachange are included later in this newsletter.
From little things big things grow . . .
Barwon Heads, Vic – Festival of the Sea

Mark Rodrigue, Parks Victoria (and our MESA President)

Now in its 3rd year, the Festival of the Sea came about as a result of simple idea and conversation with a friend who is President of the Barwon Heads Traders Association. I had returned from a Seaweek meeting and was pushing the notion of community celebration of relationship with the marine environment. As the location for many of the outdoor scenes for the ABC’s “Seachange”, Barwon Heads seemed like the perfect place for such a community event. The idea fell on to fertile soil and now the event is a fixture on the local calendar and the Festival of the Sea group an incorporated community association.

The mission for the festival is “Celebrating our links to the sea through the diversity of our environment, history, culture and lifestyle”. This year the festival reached out to more people than before and undertook extensive marketing to attract people to the major community aspects of the festival over the weekend of the 15th and 16th March. But what the general public weren’t able to be involved with was the huge education program that accompanied the festival. This article focuses on some elements of this program and the images provide a snapshot of what has made this a hugely successful Seaweek event.

Q: What’s big and red and made of rock?
A: Barwon Bluff of course. And in late 2002 Barwon Bluff became a part of the system of Marine National Parks and Marine Sanctuaries in Victoria, providing it with full protection for its animals and plants. Barwon Bluff has also been a focal point for a number of environment action groups that over the years have worked hard to restore the natural values of vegetation on the bluff itself as well as raise community awareness as to its significance. It then seemed quite appropriate that this years Festival of the Sea should focus largely on the environment of the Bluff and provide opportunities for local people to learn about it in different ways.

Wednesday 12th March – Community Coastal Forum: Barwon Bluff Marine Sanctuary. Sponsored and organised by Dianne Moore from Coast Action / Coastcare, members of the Barwon Heads community and other interested organisations came together for a full day of information and investigation for our new Barwon Bluff Marine Sanctuary.

Parks Victoria staff provided an overview of the natural values of the Bluff (www.parkweb.vic.gov.au). This was followed by an introduction to Victoria’s Reefwatch program (www.reefwatchvic.asn.au), presented with the aim of generating interest for a community Reefwatch group for the Marine Sanctuary. The group then headed out on and under the Bluff for a first hand look at what makes this such an important area and to see some of the issues first hand. Following lunch on the beach the group re-assembled for further presentations by Parks Victoria staff on community involvement in the development of detailed management plans for the Marine Sanctuary and opportunities to be involved in research programs. The day concluded with an overview of Victoria’s marine biodiversity and fishing issues by Dr. Tim O’Hara from the Museum of Victoria. Dianne from Coast Action / Coastcare did a magnificent job in supporting and coordinating this forum and for empowering people to get involved in their local environment.

Land Sea and Sky Slide Night: The Barwon Heads coast is home to a vast array of flora, fauna and marine life. Three speakers introduced residents and visitors to the wonders of our coast and included Trevor Pescott speaking on the birds of the Barwon River from Geelong to the Bluff; David King
presenting the bugs and insects, the ‘creepy crawlies’ of Barwon Heads, while Mark Rodrigue took an underwater trip to the wonders of the Barwon Bluff Reef.

Thursday 13th March
Secondary Schools Day: an event even bigger than last year, Bellarine Secondary College teacher Cheryl Linford and her enthusiastic student Leadership Team put together an exciting and diverse program to engage all of the BSC’s Year 8 students, plus representatives from 5 other secondary schools, in coastal issues and Exploring our Oceans. With a cast of many leaders the students visited the coast, undertook fishing clinics, explored the regions geology, went on rockpool rambles, learned about river revegetation issues, photographed the coast, participated in arts activities and much more. The school students had invited representatives from many organisations to develop and deliver elements of the comprehensive program including the Marine Discovery Centre, Queenscliff; Coast Action; Parks Victoria; Waterwatch; Melbourne Aquarium; Barwon Water; Fishcare; Barwon Coast; and Friends of the Bluff. Further details on the schools day are provided in a separate article from the students in this issue of Undercurrents.

Coastal Managers Forum: As one of leading managers of the Victorian coast, Barwon Coast Committee of Management presented for the second year running a coastal managers forum. This workshop was designed for on-ground managers and workers brings together representatives of the various organisations that are directly involved in the management of our coastal fringe to look at and learn new ideas in integrated coastal zone management.

Photo Competition: The annual photo competition had a diverse range of entries in themes raging from Your Local environment to Travel and Pets. The winners were announced at the special evening presentation.

Friday 14th March
Primary Schools Day: Barwon Heads PS were visited in the morning by local wacky theatre group “Skipjack Theatre” for a performance of their irreverent look at coastal issues “Yuppie Beach”. Focused on an urban family’s visit to the beach for a summer camping trip, the play engaged the audience with many of the issues that stem from a lack of awareness of the sensitive nature of our coastal environments. Following this the whole school went to the beach for a BBQ lunch followed by a chance to explore the rockpools under the guidance of Bellarine SC Leadership Group Year 9 students, that organised the previous day, as well as number of invited staff from Parks Victoria, Coast Action and the Marine Discovery Centre.

Saturday 15th March
Street Festival: Closing down the main street for a community information and Sustainable Living expo brought together an exciting mixture of environmental messages combined with the commercial realities
of community markets. Many of the regions leading environment agencies and businesses were represented. Music and food, always an important part of community festivals kept the punters happy from 10.00am until 4.00pm.

**Sunday 16th March:**

**Festival Day:** This is the big day for the Festival of the Sea: From the early morning combined churches service on the beach, to a wide a range of environment activities such as free rockpool rambles, opportunities to visit the newly revamped local interpretive centre, the Lobster Pot, Fishcare’s Get Hooked Fishing Clinics, canoe trips to explore the estuary, guided walks across the bluff and an enormous Environmental Expo featuring the many organisations large and small that have an interest in our natural environment and its conservation. There was something for all the family on the main public participation event for the Festival of the Sea key day with over 10,000 people attending throughout the day.

From seagrass to sand, from river to rockpools, from estuaries to entertainment…. the Festival of the Sea had something for all and raised the profile of our community’s important links to our ocean environment.

**Acknowledgements:**
- Photos kindly provided by Martin Klabbers (www.barwoneads.net). Find a link to the MESA website for all the photographs.
- Special Thanks to Festival of the Sea Environment Group, Jon Duthie, Dianne Moore, Cheryl Linford, Parks Victoria, and the Marine Discovery Centre, Queenscliff

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**Seaweek Glimpse**

**Nelson Bay NSW**

- Fairy penguins come ashore to moult
- Blackberreis are ripening
- Earthworms breeding
- Kangaroo apple in berry
- Bandicoot babies out of pouch
- European wasps around water
- Brushtail possums have first litter
- Conesticks & gymea lilies flower
- Fruit bats mating
- Octopuses lay eggs
- Double-banded plover arrive from NZ
- Puffball fungi appearing
- Bees attracted to male casuarina spikes
- White-throated needletails leave on migration
What an exciting week we had – approximately 300 school students from Tasmanian schools visited the Marine Discovery Centre during the week for a day full of special Seaweek activities and to explore the D’Entrecasteaux Channel. Primary students from Woodbridge District High School visited as well as people from the local community who took the opportunity to drop into the Centre each afternoon.

To finish the week the Marine Teachers Association of Tasmania hosted a workshop in the north of the state. We visited Seahorse Aquaculture, the Tasmanian Maritime College and went on an excursion to a local rocky foreshore. The most important part of the weekend enabled teachers to try out ideas and activities designed to make students aware of our threatened whale species and the impact of introduced species on the marine environment and to share resources.
Learning to protect our marine environment during Seaweek in the NT

MESA NT State Representative Rebecca Solah

Northern territory primary school students are learning how to keep the Territory’s marine environment healthy with a new marine and fisheries education kit launched during Seaweek 2003. The kit was launched at a Darwin primary school during Seaweek and has already attracted a lot of interest among Northern Territory Primary Schools. The aim of the education kit is to provide a resource for schools where our primary school students can learn how to keep Northern Territory fisheries, and the marine environment in which it depends, in good health.

The modules in the kit cover three levels of development for primary school children. The first module is based around the Eagle and Gull story told by the Bardi people of Northern Western Australia and provides an introduction to fisheries awareness. In the second module, students will read ‘The Treacherous Travels of Tasman Turtle’ by Simon McLean and complete online activities to encourage further understanding of the marine environment. Tim Winton’s book ‘Blueback’ and the National Junior Fishing Codes Education Kit, ‘Get Hooked, it’s fun to fish’, are the basis of the third module for the upper primary students.”

The Marine and Fisheries Education kit has been developed by the Northern Territory Department of Business Industry and Resource Development, Fisheries Group and will be available on their website, www.dbird.nt.gov.au, in the near future. Interested teachers can contact Rebecca Solah on rebecca.solah@nt.gov.au for more information.

The popular free Seaweek activity day, held on the grounds of the Museum and Art gallery of the NT, was hosted again this year the Fisheries Group, the Museum and Art Gallery of the NT and the Marine Education Society of Australasia.

Visitor numbers were down a little this year but with the sun finally showing in Darwin those that attended met with a beautiful day on the water.

The day was filled with fun activities including face painting, storytelling, seatriail through the museum, colouring competitions and deep sea animals on display. ‘Exploring our Oceans” presentations included an informative walk and talk by Dr Richard Willan on the importance of mangroves to our marine Environment and Dr Helen Larson who gave a talk on open ocean fishes. Both scientists are well known in the Northern Territory with their presentations very popular. Other presentations included the Fisheries Aquatic Pests Unit showing visitors what animals they work hard to keep out of Australian waters, the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) with their marine debri surveys and the Larrakia Nation launching their Cetaceans poster.
Exploring our oceans - Far South Coast NSW

Debby Lange, President Sapphire Coast Marine Society and MESA Member

Seaweeck here on the Far South Coast of New South Wales started on the Friday 7th March with Bournda Environment Centre presenting a Whale Day with the year 9’s from a local school. The students learnt about cetaceans, their migratory patterns, their eating habits and about their enigmatic habit of beaching themselves. They later practiced rescuing a beached whale using a large dummy whale supplied by the local NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service.

The ‘Nightlife of Merimbula Lake’ walks held on Saturday and Sunday nights were very popular and we had to turn people away as Saturday night’s walk filled up very quickly. Alan Scymgeour artfully led us into the elusive and thrilling world of nocturnal marine creatures by finding many unusual animals and telling us some great stories about each one. We found the large eleven-armed sea star on a jetty pylon and found out that they do not always have eleven arms - the number depends on its age. We also discovered a Blue-ringed Octopus which was venturing out at night and is a common creature in the lake. Perhaps the most exciting find was the bubble shells. They were elegantly laid out on the sand, stranded by the receding tide. We found two types, the Double-banded Bubble shell and the Rose Petal Bubble shell. Amongst the other creatures found were Pistol Shrimps, Tube Anenomes and the Dumpling Squid. Two of the local boat owners offered discounted trips on their ocean cruises. One of these, True Blue, travels out from Merimbula Lake and cruises around the bay and then follows the coast down to Lennard’s Island. One group on this boat was lucky to see, instead of the usual dolphins, some seals and a group of Hammerhead Sharks at the entrance to Pambula River.

Merimbula Aquarium offers free visits to the local schools for Seaweeck. The Sapphire Coast Marine Society, the Bournda Environmental Education Centre and the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service supplied volunteers and paid staff to guide the students around. They had some curious creatures in at the time such as an angler fish, a mosaic Leatherjack et, a mantis shrimp and male seahorses displaying their inflated bellies so the children really enjoyed their tour.

The Merimbula Divers Lodge offered a discounted snorkel tour and the participants had the pleasure of seeing one of our local identities, one of the Black Stingrays that live at the wharf, at very close quarters. These animals are inquisitive and come up from some distance away to have a look at any visitors. One of these is called Stumpy because he has lost his tail. Local divers have seen this particular stingray at the wharf for 12 years. Dolphin Cove Dive offered a night dive at the wharf for those braver souls.

One of the highlights of the week was the Dinner cruise on Pambula Lake. We had a search for some ghost crabs on the shore.
of Pambula Lake and also threw in a plankton net and as a result we found some fascinating planktonic creatures such as a 4 mm long gurnard fish and a 8mm long pipefish.

On the Sunday we had a ‘Birds of Merimbula Lake’ walk which was supported by the local Far South Coast Birdwatchers. On this walk we looked at the seabirds and waders that use the lake and feed on marine life. A sand sculpting competition was held on the main beach of Merimbula. This was held principally for children and we gave them a challenge - they had to find out what a marine invertebrate was and make one. They came up with many animals including a nudibranch, octopus, a nautilus and a sea star. We had a great array of prizes to give away thanks to some generous local sponsors (Merimbula’s Magic Mountain and R.E.D. Industries).

Seaweek was organised by the Sapphire Coast Marine Society and volunteers from this group ran each event.

We had a great time during Seaweek 2003 exploring the oceans in our own way and finding unusual creatures that are not commonly seen.

Photographs from Debby, thank you.

Seaweek Glimpse

Somers in Westernport Bay Victoria

- Banjo shark in shallows
- Whistling kites by beach
- Luminous fungi on banksia logs
- Octopus egg masses washing up
- Seaweek crabs amongst seaweed
- Whistling kites circling above
- Swifts circling low, drifting west
- Meadow argus butterfly seen
- Cunningham skinks by dune pool
- Rufous fantail & leaden flycatcher in gully
- Juvenile yellow robins seen
- Orange bracket fungi on teatree
- Silver xenica butterflies appear
- Speckled footman moths in long grass
- Sea hares washing up
- Australian hobby sighted
- Growling grass frogs by lawn
- Young sea-squirts o sea-nymph stems washed up
- Angel wing shell on high tide line
Coastal Explorer - Far North Coast NSW

Barbara Jensen reporting

I got together with Kerrie and Ted from the new Marine Environments Field Study and Resource Centre at Hastings Point. We planned a wonderful programme of activities for Primary Students. The Centre is close to the beach, heath, river and rocky headland. This position plus the experience and knowledge of Kerrie and Ted and their expansive education resources, make it a very valuable marine excursion. To see more about the Centre visit the website www.AdventureEducation.better.net.au.

Unfortunately/fortunately Seaweek was also weatherweek and buckets of rain greatly reduced our programme, (ie at last ‘the wet’). A couple of weeks later Pottsville Primary Students managed a visit. Kerrie showed the students live sea creatures via a microscope projector, an amazing experience whatever your age. Ted led a discussion and took the students into the concept room to touch, examine and question. And I finished off with a quick chat about the Cape Byron Marine Park, at our doorstep. The students interest and involvement showed the importance and relevance of this type of educational experience.

Seaweek Glimpse

Cairns

- wet season, mid-March
- Flying foxes are up and about long before dark, drawn out by flowering melaleuca trees - their favourite food, can be seen streaming out of their mangrove roosts across the mudflats around dusk
- Lots of butterflies about on the coast and islands - especially Cairns birdwings (in all stages), perhaps due to extra foliage on caterpillar foodplants following the wet season.
- Bee-eaters and other birds migrating.
- Newly-born brush turkeys and orange-footed scrubfowl emerging from mounds - many seen on continental islands offshore.
- Young black-necked storks (Jabiru) leaving the nest.
- Mangrove heron nesting, often in mangroves.
- Kwila, or Qld teak, flowering on the beaches.
- Kuranda quandong shedding fruit - hard nuts with tasty kernels, eaten by white-tailed rats in rainforest clad islands.
- Moth (Daintree) orchid flowering from March to August - white flowers.
- Guttarda bush flowering on beaches at night.
- Daintree penda may fruit heavily, producing carpets of seedlings.
- Box fruit trees flowering along the beaches at night and falling in morning - up to 200 x 10cm long stamens in white to pink.
- Fire vine fruiting - red filigreed disc with shiny black seed, the size of a match-head, in the middle.
- Sassafras trees fruiting - woody capsule which splits into numerous plumed fruit, each with single seed, designed to be wind distributed.
- Red wattle blooming on coast and Tablelands.
- Crocodiles hauling themselves out of the water more frequently from now on to bask in the sun in wetlands, esturies and along the coasts.
- Box jellies still around in coastal waters, swimmers must swim only within stinger nets
- Skies alternate between brilliant blue and blankets of low grey clouds, days are hot, humid, sticky.
- The one cyclone of the wet season so far passed over Cairns without anyone noticing....
Just a drop in the ocean of resources - Some Seaweeek activities

Visit the Seachange Section on the MESA website for many more activities

These educational activities are adapted from the Marine Life Resources Kit of Seaweek’89 by the Marine Studies Centre, Queenscliff.

What am I?

**Aim**
- to describe and recognise some marine life.

**Activity**
- Read the following clues and ask the students to identify the animal described:
- “When I am not feeding people think I am merely a blob. Unlike you, I have no skeleton to support me and I can only move slowly. I glide across my rocky home on my soft ‘suction-cup’ bottom. When the tide comes in, I open out like a flower and wave my tentacles around to catch tiny animals that I cannot see. When they touch me, I poison them with stinging tentacles and put them into my mouth. It takes me all night to digest my dinner and I have to spit out the hard bits. I think I am a beautiful creature and I rarely get eaten by others because they are afraid of my tentacles”.
- Ask the students to write their own ‘what am I’ clues using posters and books as stimulus.
- Present all the clues to the whole class.

Sea Water Science

**Aim**
- to investigate some properties of sea water.

**Activity**
- Compare the taste of sea water and fresh water.
- Demonstrate dissolving salt in water.
- Evaporate sea water and fresh water in shallow jars (sun or heat source). Students should discover salt crystals from sea water.
- Look through a glass of water to see that it is transparent, then discuss why the ocean is blue.
- Leave a jar of water in a warm place until small oxygen bubbles form at the surface. Students should conclude that oxygen also is dissolved in water.
- Add a few drops of food dye to fresh water in a jar. Pour in sea water, it should sink below the coloured water because it is more dense (heavier), due to the dissolved minerals it contains.
- Test a variety of objects for buoyancy in sea and fresh water.

This activity are adapted from the Primary Activity Booklet in the Seaweek’96 Education Kit by Harry and Jane Breidahl and produced by Scholastic.

Wetland Webs of Life

**Background**
- Food is of vital importance to all living organisms because it provides both energy and materials for growth. Food webs provide a picture of energy flow in a community of plants and animals. They also show some of the complex interactions and relationships of an ecosystem.

**Aim**
- to build up a complex model of a wetlands food web.

**Activity**
- Ready with a ball of string, ask the students to form a seated circle.
Stand in the centre and ask ‘Who know the name of a coastal wetland plant?’ Pass the start of the string to the student who provides an answer eg ‘mangrove’. Ask ‘What happens to the mangrove leaves before they can be eaten by an animal?’ Whoever answers ‘The leaves become part of the detritus’ is linked to the ‘mangrove’ with the string. ‘What eats detritus?’ is the next question and the student with the answer such as ‘marine worm’ is linked to the ‘detritus’ by string. If you receive more than one answer it is fine to link the ‘detritus’ to a number of students. Continue to build links by asking ‘What eats a marine worm?’ and so on. Once you get to a top carnivore such as a wading bird you should work back by asking questions such as ‘What else would you eat?’ In this way you can build up a complex model of a wetlands food web. Make sure that you build the web with tight string.

Close the game by posing the question ‘What happens if we remove all the soldier crabs from our coastal wetland?’ This can be simulated by asking the crab to tug on the string and anyone who feels this tug is affected in some way.

Coastal Wetland Food Chains:

MESA New Zealand and MESA Australia have developed a strong link, through support and sharing of experience, skills and resources over the years. This activity is from Tanya Jenkins, National NZ Seaweek Coordinator ’99. The activity is taken from the NZ Seaweek’99 Marine Education Resource booklet.

MESA NZ How Did?

In many cultures myths and legends form an integral part of people’s understanding of the world around them. Ask your students to create their own legends related to the sea.

For example how would you describe:
- The separation between North and South Islands.
- Why tides go in and out.
- Why crabs walk sideways etc.
Explore the ocean without leaving the shore

One of the ‘Seaweek 2003: Bunch of five’ big ideas was to survey your beach, as many of the oceans secrets wash up on beaches. For example, the blue fleet, a term used to describe oceanic drifters such as bluebottles and violet snails. Here is a survey form to use for this activity, prepared for North Coast NSW Seaweek by Barbara Jensen.

![Survey form](image-url)
Marine educators awash with Seaweek Expo WA

Melinda Wild Rottnest Island Authority Senior Education Officer and Event Organiser

Western Australia’s leading marine educators were on Rottnest Island, Saturday 8 March, to delve into the deep blue ocean and discover the fascinating features of our under water world as part of the Seaweek Teachers’ Expo 2003. Seaweek is organised by the Marine Education Society of Australasia and aims to focus community awareness and encourage an appreciation of the sea, its living organisms and rich cultural heritage.

As part of Seaweek the Rottnest Island Authority organises and hosts the Seaweek Teachers’ Expo with the inaugural event held in March 2001. It is the State’s premier event to acknowledge Seaweek and is made possible with funding assistance from Fishcare WA. The Expo also involved participation from the Department of Fisheries, Surf Lifesaving WA, Coastcare, AQWA, Perth Zoo, the CSIRO’s Science Education Centre and the WA Museum and WA Maritime Museum.

Targeted at teachers and educators with a particular interest in marine issues, the participants spent the day taking part in one of three workshops on offer, including activities such as sea kayaking, fishing workshops, snorkelling around reefs and shipwrecks and taking part in a touch pool.

Rottnest Island Authority Senior Education Officer and Event Organiser, Melinda Wild, said the event was growing in popularity and feedback from participants indicated it was a valuable initiative. “One of the main aims of the Expo is to promote teacher involvement in Seaweek which in turn encourages them to promote the conservation and protection of the marine environment through educational programs and activities,” she said.

Ms Wild said the Expo was also important in developing links between marine-coastal educators from around the State and to share information on the types of educational facilities, programs and resources that are available for those involved in marine education. “Rottnest Island provides the perfect setting for this event with its diverse natural environment, relaxed ethos and strong conservation values,” she said.

The Seaweek Teachers’ Expo is an annual event and will be held next year in March 2004. Interested people can contact the Rottnest Island Authority for further information on 9292 5937 or visit www.rottnest.wa.gov.au. Photograph courtesy of Melinda Wild.

Seaweek Glimpse

Henley Beach, South Australia

- small wave action
- sand crabs washed up
- big tidal movement - quite low tides
- water still about 20C
- lots of seagulls
- no dolphins
- a colonial ascidian washed up
- cooler mornings, shorter days
- brown algae in water
- a few sausage jellies around
- sand level is very low - more sand is needed
- a young Pacific gull
- a crested tern
- a few ulva(sea lettuce) and a small rat in the rocks yesterday
Seaweed in the Sunshine Coast Qld

Tony Isccason Kawana Water High School and MESA Member

Seaweed 2003 at Kawana Waters State High School was a first for a community of 900 students and teaching staff on Queensland's Sunshine Coast. To link Marine Studies courses of the senior school with Seaweed's "Exploring the Deep" theme an aluminium boat was carried into the Resource Centre and littered with objects of interest and posters below the skylights a string net contained benthic bits and pieces and a deep sea nautilus together with more familiar things from coastal waters. Library staff set out a range of books opened to images of the deep sea, marine life and underwater machines from past to present. Pearl shell, a pearl diver's helmet and some brassy nautical touches framed an invitation for students to show their initiative and enterprise to do virtually anything of their choosing that connected with the Seaweed theme.

In days leading up to Seaweed, bulletin notices invited all teachers and their students to "dive in" and listen up for clues to complete quiz questions relating to deep sea exploration. There were 28 missing details on an entry sheet keyed to letters that answered the question:

- What record breaking dive was made by one crew member and one scientist near the Marianas Islands in 1960?

Most entrants decoded US NAVY TRIESTE DOWN 11 KILOMETRES and to identify a student from each year level, a "winner" estimated the number of shells in a jar next to the returns box.

Every student who participated in Seaweed received a certificate of participation. Year level winners received prizes from Gould League and Underwater World and the balance of MESA sponsorship, courtesy GBRMPA, purchased resources for the Library.

The twenty entries was a measure of the initiative that was taken by students from years 8 to 11 and a sign that Seaweed will need some time to establish itself as an event on the Kawana Waters School calendar. Feedback from staff and students was positive and visitations to the Resource Centre were up during lunch breaks.

Seaweed Glimpse

Byron Bay NSW

- Wet season storms and high rainfall combine with full moon (spring) tides
- Some great surfing and amazing ocean watching
- Regional flooding
- Very strong long shore drift
- Beaches eroded and ocean dirty and full of soil etc washed out of the rivers after flooding
- Last sightings of Leopard sharks
- Sea warm and many tropical fish over small reefs
- Plenty of turtle sightings, one with no front flippers
Seaweek Lord Howe Island

Ian Hutton, Lord Howe Island Nature Tours and MESA Member

In February 2003 local operators, along with the Marine Park Manager organised a SEAWEEK LORD HOWE ISLAND program. There was a range of activities for the local community, school children and tourists. Activities included beach and boat snorkels, scuba dives, glass bottom boat trips, guided reef walks, evening slide presentations plus displays and video screenings. This is the third year the activities have been put on, and interest is growing each year. The timing of SEAWEEK LORD HOWE ISLAND is to fit with low tides in February.

Lord Howe Island has one of the most fascinating and pristine marine environments in Australia. At the crossroads of warm currents from the north and cooler currents from the south the Island has a mix of both tropical and temperate marine life.

The warm currents from the north pass over the Great Barrier Reef and sweep larvae of corals south to Lord Howe Island, to form the most southerly coral reef in the Pacific. Other tropical creatures make the reef home; over 500 fish species have been recorded here, with tropical species conspicuous, along with schools of cooler water pelagic fish. The reef is also home to hundreds of invertebrate animals – starfish, urchins, crabs, snails, worms and slugs.

Minimal human development on the Island means that the lagoon and reef are in pristine condition. This unique marine life of Lord Howe Island has been recognised with World Heritage Listing in 1982, and declaration of a State Marine Park in 1999 and Commonwealth Marine Park in 2001.

Information about SEAWEEK LORD HOWE ISLAND 2004 is available from:
Ian Hutton, Lord Howe Island Nature Tours, 02 6563 2447 or alfa@tpgi.com.au
Brian Busteed, Howea Divers. 02 6563 2290 or howeadivers@bigpond.com.au

Seaweek Glimpse

The Tropical Coast – Coastal lowlands

- Common migrant butterflies appear in large numbers in Queensland to lay eggs on cassia
- Pied imperial-pigeons leave during 2nd week
- Satin flycatchers & black-faced monarchs moving north during 1st week
- Many leaden flycatchers & rufous fantails arrive from south
- Sacred kingfishers return
- Red-browed firetails nesting in 2nd Week
- Large yellow fruits of native gardenia Randia fitzalini are falling
- Helmeted friarbirds return
- Spangled drongoes & dollarbirds are migrating north
Kangaroo Island Workshops in SA

SA MESA Representative Alex Gaut

‘On a cool March Saturday morning, teachers from all around Adelaide (and a few from Port Augusta) were up before dawn and packing their bags for a training weekend on beautiful Kangaroo Island. Some had not been there before, so what a brilliant opportunity to combine some PD with a little tourism.’ This is just the beginning of the report of a very successful and enjoyable weekend, night and day for a group of lucky educators. Please take the website link for the full story with photographs, speakers, supporters, sponsors, activities and details. Peter here

Thanks goes to John, Jenny, Eve and Rose for their fantastic support during the workshop, Kangaroo Island Marine Centre, (at Kingscote wharf). And thanks also to Alex and her team, what an amazing weekend!

Picture: Most of the gang and Alex, front row in the centre.

Landlocked but still learning

Retiring MESA ACT Representative Carolyn Stewardson

ACT may be landlocked but Carolyn has been representing MESA and providing valuable marine education for several years now to many ACT students. For Seaweek 2003 they decided to work on three areas:

- Life in the Southern Ocean;
- Antarctica
- Exploration.

MESA is very appreciative of Carolyn’s efforts and expertise over the years, wishes her well and looks forward to our new ACT representative.
MESA NEWS: Membership Changes Members' Poll"

Important letter for all members

1st April 2003

Dear MESA Members,

At our recent Council Teleconference, MESA Council discussed and decided to adopt a new membership and fee structures. As we do not have our Annual General Meeting until September it was decided to poll members regarding this new structure. If the membership agrees with these changes then the new membership fees and structure will be put into place from the start of the 2003 – 2004 Financial Year and be ratified at the AGM in September in Hobart.

Please Vote

To vote on the changes outlined below could you please send an email to: roandgreg@dodo.com and put the subject line "MESA Membership Changes Members' Poll", "Yes, I agree to the proposed changes" or "No, I do not agree." Any comments either for or against would be appreciated but are not required.

Your vote is important however as we need 51% of ALL members to agree before we can adopt the changes. Votes should be sent by 10th April 2003.

Outlined below are the changes and an accompanying explanation. MESA Council considers this to be an extremely important issue, please take the time to read this material and to vote.

1. Why we are changing the structure?

With the move to an electronic newsletter, increased email communication and the expansion of the website the costs associated with servicing members has decreased. We would like our membership fees to reflect these changes. We also would like to grow our membership significantly to include many people who are engaged in various forms of Marine Education in Australia, New Zealand and other countries and do not get the benefits of membership.

2. Why we are polling members?

If we wait until September to make these changes they will not come into effect for existing members until mid 2004 as our membership period is the financial year. We would like to be able to pass on these savings to our existing members as soon as possible and would also like to offer non-members the opportunity to join at these new rates.

3. What changes do we wish to make?

Replace clauses 7 (1) (a) to (d) in our Rules (see below) with:

a) Individual Members. Individual members shall be persons who are or have been engaged in a branch of marine education or conservation.

b) Student Members. Student members shall be persons who are enrolled as full time students studying relevant subjects and can provide proof of their enrollment.

c) Affiliate Members. Affiliate Members are persons who are current financial members of a marine or environmental education or conservation association approved by Council, and can provide proof of their membership status.

d) Institutional Members. Institutional members shall be organisations or institutions which are engaged in marine education or marine conservation.
Overseas Members are also welcome to apply for membership to Marine Education Society of Australasia. Fees for overseas members must be paid in Australian dollars (A$).

What is the Proposed Fee structure?

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Members Type</th>
<th>Fee Structure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individual Members</td>
<td>$27.50 per year (currently $55)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional Members</td>
<td>$27.50 per year (currently $125)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Members</td>
<td>$17.50 per year (currently $55)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affiliate Members</td>
<td>$17.50 per year (not a current category)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Proposed new fees include GST

What are the benefits of MESA membership?

- [www.mesa.edu.au](http://www.mesa.edu.au): MESA members have access to the members section of one of the best marine education sites on the WWW. The site allows them to interact and communicate with other marine educators around the world.

- **Seaweek**: a national celebration of the sea that provides resources to all members.

- **Conferences**: MESA runs an Annual National Conference (this September in Hobart) for marine educators and is working on an international conference in Hawaii in 2005 in association with the NMEA. Members receive a discount to attend these conferences.

- **Public liability policy**: We have organised a comprehensive cover for members to cover them for Seaweek and other activities.

- **Lobbying for Marine Education**: MESA is often consulted and asked to provide representation and input on to local state and federal government initiatives involving Marine Education and Conservation. Marine Education Society of Australasia is a member of the Australian Marine Education Alliance.

- **Support**: MESA members can gain the support and assistance from MESA in developing projects, etc.

- **Discounts**: Council is working on discounts on a range of discounts for members on various programs and products provided by supporters of MESA.

On behalf of Marine Education Society of Australasia Council,

Yours Sincerely

Mark Rodrigue
MESA President