



**MEDIA RELEASE**

***For immediate release***

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## **REEF RECOVERY PUBLIC ARTWORK ON DISPLAY AT BIG MANGO**

The Whitsunday Reef Recovery and Public Art Project will be visible for all with an installation of artwork at Bowen's Big Mango Visitor Information Centre.

Following the public consultation trial display of 4 artworks sculpted from a variety of materials at Langford Sandbar in the Whitsunday Islands, the pieces are now on display in the grounds of the Whitsunday region's accredited information centre alongside the iconic 'Big Mango' on the Bruce Highway at Bowen.

The art pieces are part of Reef Ecologic's wider project, which includes installation of underwater and inter-tidal interpretive art pieces across the Whitsunday region, coral restoration and educational activities.

Managing Director of Reef Ecologic Dr Adam Smith is excited to see the public become involved in the project through the medium of outdoor art, reef restoration and citizen science. "It's not just the artist's project, it's not Reef Ecologic's project, it's a whole community project. This is a catalyst project that has the potential to grow in the future, with edu-tourism trails that people can be involved in."

Designed and created by local Whitsunday sculptor Adriaan Vanderlugt the pieces provide inciteful comment on commercialization and the reef, as well as joyful elements with play on word concepts.

The artworks range in size and material including marble sourced from Chillagoe in North Queensland and limestone from Mt Gambier. The largest, an aluminium and copper soldier crab sculpture, measures over 3M long and incorporates an upcycled copper boiler.

The Big Mango VIC has close to 40 thousand visitors a year and provides information for the entirety of Queensland, with a focus on the Whitsundays and the East Coast 'Great Barrier Reef Drive'. Using the artwork as a catalyst, the centre has the potential to play a significant role in education and awareness of the GBR, it's connection to our tourism industry and wider community.

Bowen Tourism & Business Chair Jenn Honnery sees the installation of the artwork at Bowen's busy visitor centre as the perfect engagement point for education. "Ultimately, we see the sculptures as a way to encourage visitors into the Information Centre, to learn more about the Great Barrier Reef and to then make their way along the underwater sculpture trail from Horseshoe Bay in Bowen and out to the reefs of the Whitsunday Islands."

Tash Wheeler, CEO of Tourism Whitsundays said “This is a really exciting project and one that Tourism Whitsundays is thrilled to be involved in. We believe these artworks will play a vital part in providing new exciting experiences for visitors to our glorious region, we also hope this project will highlight the local tourism industries commitment to reef health and education”.

Interpretive signage is being developed to complement the visitor experience and to provide more information on the project, including the upcoming underwater installations, one of which is planned to be located at Bowen’s Horseshoe Bay.

The Whitsunday Reef Recovery and Public Art Project which is part of the jointly funded State and Federal Government Tourism Recovery Fund, designed to support tourism in the region following Tropical Cyclone Debbie.

Reef Ecologic are now seeking public comment on the Whitsunday Reef Recovery and Public Art Project. More information: [Whitsunday Reef Recovery and Public Art Project Public Information Pack](#)

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**About Tourism Whitsundays:** *Tourism Whitsundays (TW) is the organisation responsible for destination marketing and visitor attraction for the Whitsunday region. It is the lead agency recognised by Tourism and Events Queensland and the Whitsunday Regional Council to lead the promotion of the region as a tourism destination. Tourism Whitsundays markets all aspects of the region including the Great Barrier Reef, Whitsunday Islands and Coast, accommodation, boating and sailing, fishing, touring, recreational activities, adventure, dining, shopping, weddings and honeymoons, conferencing and business events.*

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