

MEDIA RELEASE



For Immediate Release
10 May 2021

Creating an Underwater Marine Wonderland

The community is being invited to be involved in an art installation project to transform a large fig tree in Airlie Beach into an underwater marine wonderland as part of this year's Great Barrier Reef Festival.

The art installation project has been made possible after the festival received a \$25,000 grant through the Festivals Australia program.

Chairperson of the festival, Margie Murphy met last week with Bloomsbury artist Margaret Burgess and several Whitsundays artists to start planning the project.

Margaret is an award-winning artist whose recent works have had a focus on environmental issues and sustainability including creating sculptures from marine plastics and debris.

She has been working with recycled plastics for about ten years.

This art installation project is all about environmental education and reducing marine debris and puts focus on The Whitsundays at the Heart of the Great Barrier Reef.

The iconic fig tree on the Airlie foreshore near the children's playground will be transformed with fish, coral and other marine features – all made from recycled materials.

Ms Murphy said the installation, entitled 'Immerse', would include sculpture and animated projections to create something quite spectacular.

The installation will be completed in time for the Great Barrier Reef Festival starting on August 5 and will remain for several days before being removed and the area returned to its natural state.

The workshops will all be held at the Lookout Lounge at Coral Sea Marina with the first one on Sunday, May 30 from 10am until 4pm.

Children under 12 must be accompanied by an adult.

All materials will be available on the day but anyone wishing to bring their own could consider old wetsuits, plastic shopping bags and thongs to be used to create fish and coral.

Ms Murphy said the idea of turning the tree into a marine wonderland was something she had been passionate about for several years and it was now possible thanks to the grant from Festivals Australia.

Tourism Whitsundays Chief Executive Officer, Tash Wheeler said the art installation project is a fantastic addition to this year's Great Barrier Reef Festival program.

"The festival is organised by a small dedicated group of volunteers and it is great to see new events added to the program each year," Ms Wheeler said.

"Once again, this helps to cement The Whitsundays as the Heart of Events."

WORKSHOPS

Sunday May 30 (sculpture)

Saturday June 5 (animation)

Saturday June 9 (sculpture)

Saturday July 3 (animation)

Saturday July 31 (sculpture and a lantern making workshop)

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**Tourism
Whitsundays**

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[Click here](#) to register for first workshop.

- ENDS -

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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