

## **Media Release**

Sunday, 17 April 2011

### **Moreton Bay Seagrass Watch brings back good news about the health of the bay's seagrass meadows**

In March 2009 the same monster waves from cyclone Hamish which battered the Pacific Adventurer off Moreton Island causing it to lose 31 containers were also scouring away seagrass meadows from some of Moreton Bay's most important sand banks. (See below comparative photographs attached).

It was not long after the March 2009 storm that the Moreton Bay Seagrass Watch team, who monitor Amity Banks (AB1) on the Eastern side of Moreton Bay, brought back the bad news that all the inter-tidal seagrass meadows had been lost.

The good news is that today (Sunday 17th April 2011) the team leader for that same seagrass watch team, Debra Henry (team picture attached – Debra Henry and partner Frank), brought back the good news that the seagrass is on its way back to full recovery and life is returning to the sand banks. (See below photograph)

This is great news given the recent severe floods; we were very worried as the seagrass meadows had only just started to recover in July last year and then came the floods, we could of lost major dugong and green turtle feeding areas like the Amity Banks seagrass meadows.

Seagrass is an incredibly important habitat; many of the commercial fish we eat spend some part of their life cycle in seagrass or mangroves. They provide homes for an array of creatures and help keep our bay clean.

Moreton Bay Seagrass Watch is run by Wildlife Queensland Bayside Branch. This project monitors 57 sites from the Pumicestone Passage to Southern Moreton Bay and deploys over 140 volunteers into the field 3 times a year. It's a very comprehensive community based scientific program providing valuable information for researchers and government agencies.

The latest seagrass surveys are underway and we expect we will see losses of seagrass in some areas of Moreton Bay but we are all very happy that we can still find seagrass strong and healthy in some very important areas.

This is good news for wildlife and good news for commercial and recreational fishers.

Moreton Bay Seagrass Watch has been made possible through a Federal Government Community Action Grant and because of generous support from the Port of Brisbane Corporation, Tangalooma Resort and the Queensland Governments Parks and Wildlife Service.

Simon Baltais, Secretary Wildlife Queensland Bayside Branch & Program Manager for Moreton Bay Seagrass Watch.



The Moreton Bay Seagrass Watch AB1 Team in action on Amity Banks.

**May 2008**



**April 2009 – after 11<sup>th</sup> March storm**



**March 2010**



**11<sup>th</sup> July 2010**



**April 2011**

