



Marine Conservation Program

We have teamed up with Passions of Paradise, a leading scuba diving and outer reef operator in Cairns with a high commitment to environmental sustainability. Together we are offering our Marine Conservation Program run on the Great Barrier Reef combining firstly the adventure of scuba diving with the opportunity to help the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA) monitor and identify reef health indicators on the Great Barrier Reef.

Our Marine Conservation Program was developed to allow people with little to moderate reef experience to be involved in the marine conservation effort. Assisting us with an established GBRMPA monitoring program called “Eye on the Reef – Rapid Monitoring” your efforts will help a dedicated team of Marine Biologists and other industry professionals in monitoring long term coral health on the Great Barrier Reef.

Our team and our partners will be working together to ensure each marine conservation volunteer walks away with a great deal of self-fulfillment from participating in our unique Marine Conservation Program, involving diving, adventure and volunteering, on the Great Barrier Reef in Cairns. Your involvement will contribute to the reef’s long-term protection and provide GBRMPA with additional data helping to identify and monitor reef health indicators.

“The Great Barrier Reef is the world’s largest coral reef ecosystem and includes over 3000 separate coral reefs and supports an immense variety of life!”

Become part of our dedicated team and make a genuine contribution to marine conservation and care for the Great Barrier Reef. Your efforts will make a difference for future generations.

Day 1 : Welcome to Cairns (Sunday)

Arrive to tropical Cairns and transfer to your hostel. Enjoy your day discovering Cairns by foot. Points of interest include a stroll along the Esplanade, the Botanic Gardens, a swim in the Lagoon, the port and the CBD. Group briefing late afternoon/ early evening at a time TBA.

Note: Participants should arrive at the hostel by 16:00 in time for the briefing. Briefing time to be confirmed by your local host.

Day 2 – 3 Open Water Course – Training Center (Open Water Students only)

Over the next 2 days you will do the first part of your scuba diving adventure. Get picked up by the dive school early morning and transfer to the training center, where you will commence your theory on scuba diving with your qualified instructor. Put all the theory into use in the pool during your practical sessions where all your underwater skills are honed under the watchful eyes of your instructors. After lunch on day 3 it is time for your theory test and a briefing of the upcoming days out on the Great Barrier Reef. Transfer back to the hostel late afternoon each day.

Note: days 2 - 3 Open Water students only. Free time for all other participants. **Rescue Divers:** your course commences on day 3 at the training centre with theory. Travel to the Great Barrier Reef on day 4 and complete your course over the next 3 days.

Day 4 – 6 Great Barrier Reef (Open Water, Advanced Open Water, Nitrox, Rescue courses *)

Depart early morning on day 4 on your Great Barrier Reef dive adventure. All participants will complete their respective courses over the next three days. Once you arrive on the Great Barrier Reef begin exploring the underwater world on this magnificent natural wonder. Return to Cairns late afternoon on day 6. Transfer to your hostel and free time. (B,L,D*)

Note: Advanced Open Water, Nitrox and Rescue students will do their respective courses during this trip. Certified divers have the option of doing a live aboard trip incl. 10 recreational dives. *No dinner on day 6.



Day 7 – 8 Cairns/ Fitzroy Island & Turtles

Your conservation adventure continues with a day trip to the turtle hospital on Fitzroy Island (either day 7 or 8 – TBA. **See Note.**). Transfer by ferry to Fitzroy Island in the morning, 45 minutes from Cairns, where you will meet other volunteers working at the Cairns Turtle Rehabilitation Centre. You will learn about the work done by this organization, meet some of the patients and, possibly, go behind the scenes to lend a helping hand. Tasks may include feeding turtles, cleaning tanks as well as a beach clean-up. Return to Cairns at midday or alternatively stay on the island for the afternoon. If the latter enjoy free time. Do one of the walks on the island, relax on the beach or swim and snorkel. The afternoon ferry returns to Cairns approx. 17:45.

Note: The experience at CTRC will take place either on day 7 or 8. The maximum number of our participants at CTRC at one time is 4 persons. Should the Marine Conservation group size exceed 4 persons we will be splitting the group into two, with one group visiting CTRC on day 7, the second group on day 8. This is at the request of CTRC and is to keep the turtles' stress to a minimum, limit the number of people behind the scenes and in turn allow you to have the best possible and most fulfilling experience on the day.

Too many people = stressed turtles and we do not want that

No snorkeling equipment provided. You can hire equipment at your own expense or bring your own.

Day 9 – 10 Great Barrier Reef Day trip – Reef Conservation tasks

Over the next 4 days you will be onboard Passions of Paradise, a locally owned premier operator promoting sustainable day trips to the Great Barrier Reef to enhance your marine conservation experience. Under the guidance of your designated Eco-guide you will undertake a selection of activities each day while diving (2 x dives per day), being Rapid Monitoring surveys and a species count to be entered into Great Barrier Reef Marine Park's Eye on the Reef Sighting's Network (number of activities could vary depending on conditions). Optionally you may also carry out Coral Watch surveys while snorkelling. As a PADI dive centre, Passions of Paradise has the ability to offer divers and snorkelers special recognition for their conservation efforts during your conservation experience. Utilising the Project AWARE foundation, you will receive a certificate of recognition for your contributions to protecting the world's marine environment with an AWARE Coral Reef Conservation recognition and/or a Project AWARE Specialist recognition. Each day you will need to check in at the Reef Fleet Terminal by 0730am and return to Cairns late afternoon.

Free time each afternoon. (L)

PLEASE ENSURE YOU HAVE YOUR TEMPORARY OPEN WATER CARD OR LOG BOOK WITH YOU ON DAY 9

Day 11 Cairns/ Plastic sorting with local marine conservation organization

This morning you join the team of a local marine conservation organisation, where you will be given the task of sorting and segregating rubbish collected at organised beach clean ups. It is one thing to clean the beaches, but the next task is to get the ball rolling with the upcycling process and this is what your manpower will provide today. If the weather permits and the dates align, you might also be part of a local beach cleanup. Here you can expect a day of fun, education and feel-good action. Learn about the impact of marine debris on our oceans, ask the expert conservation coordinators where the rubbish originates from and find out what steps we can take to fight the war on plastic.

Day 12 Cairns

Today is the end of your tour. Check out and transfer to the airport for your onward or homeward journey. Safe Travels

Included

- Accommodation
- Meals as noted in the program
- Dive course as stipulated in options 1 – 3. All dive courses include 3 day/ 2 night live aboard reef trip
- 2 x day trips on Passions of Paradise with a dedicated reef conservation guide doing Eye on the Reef – Rapid Monitoring and other Marine Conservation tasks
- Project AWARE Specialist Card (all participants)
- Number of dives:
 - Open Water Course + Passions of Paradise: 13 dives on the Great Barrier Reef (pending weather conditions)
 - Advanced Open Water Course/ Nitrox + Passions of Paradise: 15 dives on the Great Barrier Reef (pending weather conditions)
 - Rescue Course + Passions of Paradise: 15 dives on the Great Barrier Reef (pending weather conditions. Rescue Course is subject to availability)
- 1 x day trips to Fitzroy Island and visit at the turtle hospital, with hands-on activities (subject to availability on the day) – SEE NOTE under Day 7 & 8.
- Conservation program participant certificate and t-shirt
- Tour coordination and assistance by our team

Not included

- International and domestic flights
- Visa fees to Australia (if applicable)
- Airport transfers (see Note)
- Reef taxes and levies (approx. \$85 for the 3D/2N reef trip and \$20/ day with Passions of Paradise. **TOTAL Reef Fees: AUD\$125**)
- Dive medical costs (if required)
- First Aid and CPR Certificate cost (only required by participants doing Rescue Dive Course)
- Costs of personal nature
- Optional activities

Note:

- **Dive Course only** – Prior to commencing your dive course you are required to complete a self-assessment Student Diver Medical Declaration. A positive response to any question means that there is a pre-existing condition that may affect your safety while diving and you must consult a medical practitioner preferably with experience in diving medicine to obtain a dive medical certificate that states that you are fit to undertake recreational diver training.
- Dive medicals and medical clearance to dive are the responsibility of the participant.
- Rescue Diver course is subject to availability. Please confirm this option before booking.
- Current First Aid and CPR Certificate is required by participants doing Rescue Dive Course prior to starting their course.
- **Program starts on day 1, being a Sunday**
- Gilligan's offers all guests a free one way airport transfer from Cairns airport to the hostel between the hours of 8am to 8pm. For those wanting to take the FREE airport transfer please go to bus bay 6 outside the domestic and international terminals. A booking is required – to do this please go to <https://cairnsairportshuttle.com.au/bookings/> and use discount code **gilarr57** to ensure you are not charged for the transfer. Maximum of 7 passengers per booking. Please remember to print or save your ticket to present to the bus driver.
- Single room upgrades available at the hostel, pending availability and at extra cost (approx. AUD\$100 per night)

Monitoring Program Tasks:

Participants will be required to complete the following set tasks on each set dive:

- Timed swim (minimum 10 minutes on each dive) - underwater monitoring and species count on the Great Barrier Reef (i.e. corals, marine life species).
- 360-degree survey of sea bed on the dive site – Objective is to clearly identify the animals and plants observed in each section - (macro-algae, live coral, live coral rock, coral rubble and sand).
- Recording of any impacts on coral being observed (i.e. coral bleaching or damage noticed).



Frequently asked questions:

Q. Are airport transfers included?

A. Yes. See **Note** as there are conditions. The return airport transfer is at the discretion of participants. Approx. cost for a transfer from the airport to the hostel is AUD\$16 by bus, AUD \$20-25 by taxi and \$20 by UBER

Q. What facilities does the hostel offer?

A. The hostel has a 24h reception, a pool, a café, a kitchen area, a laundry and a big common area. Gilligans is also the number one bar & nightclub in Cairns.

Q. Are single sex dorms available during the program?

A. No. Dorms are all co-shared.

Q. Can I upgrade to a private room at the hostel or on the boat?

A. Yes, pending availability and at an additional cost at the Resort. There are no options to upgrade on the boat.

Q. What dive equipment is included?

A. All necessary dive equipment is included such as mask, fins and snorkel, BCD, tanks, weights, regulator and wet suits or stinger suits.

Q. Are the dive boats affiliated with PADI?

A. Yes.

Q. Are special dietary requirements catered for?

A. Yes. In case of any special dietary needs or requirements we ask prior notice is given. The hostel as well as the boats always offer a meat and non-meat menu to cater for vegans and vegetarians. In case of allergies or intolerances, we will do our best to make sure your needs are looked after where possible.

Q. When should I arrive in Cairns?

A. If you are doing the full 12-day program you should arrive in Cairns on day 1, which is a Sunday. Your arrival should be before 16:00 to allow for a briefing that afternoon. Your activities start the following day. If you are doing the program for certified divers your start day is day 6, you should arrive on a Friday. Your activities start the following day.