



Media Alert

For Immediate Release

Tuesday, 5 July 2005

The Inaugural meeting of the Australasian Centre of Excellence in Reef Research and Management

The global Coral Reef Targeted Research & Capacity Building for Management (CRTR) Project's Australasian Centre of Excellence (COE) will hold the first meeting of its regional users advisory group in Townsville on Thursday, 7 July 2005.

The CRTR Project is a global program involving more than 70 scientists and four Centres of Excellence in Australia, Mexico, Philippines and Tanzania. It has funding of more than AUD\$23m in cash and AUD\$70m in-kind support, including from the Global Environment Facility, World Bank and the University of Queensland.

The Australasian COE is a 'hub' for a variety of CRTR Project Working Groups and regional organisations to conduct research and improve capacity building for management of coral reefs in the region.

The advisory group's objective is to support and foster greater communication and cooperation between researchers and managers of reef systems in Australian and the surrounding region.

Professor Ove Hoegh-Guldberg, the Australasian COE's Chair and the Director of the Centre for Marine Studies at the University of Queensland, said that the users panel is the first step in developing a comprehensive Australasian network of scientists, reef managers and policy makers and presently includes agencies such as AIMS, JCU, GBRMPA and UQ.

'This is about finding out what governments need from researchers so that we can answer the questions that will help managers protect reefs and ensure the future livelihood of the people who live off them', he said.

The Australasian COE is focussed upon linking together experts from reefs systems around the country and the surrounding region including Indonesia.

'Townsville is recognised as providing strong support for reef research and tapping into this experience is important,' Prof. Hoegh-Guldberg said.

'But there are many other significant reefs in our region and I hope the Australasian COE can be used as an opportunity to increase the exchange of knowledge and useful management tools with Australian agencies and other close neighbours.'

The Coral Reef Targeted Research & Capacity Building for Management Project was initiated in December 2004 and is in Phase One of a 15-year project to be run in three phases.

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The meeting is being held at the Museum of Tropical Queensland and media interviews can be conducted at 11.30am or by appointment. by contacting Professor Ove Hoegh-Guldberg 0401 106 604.