



MAFRI Research & Education

Alcoa sponsors mobile marine education program at the Marine Discovery Centre.

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Alex Giannuzzi, Marine and Freshwater Resources Institute

With the help of a \$15,300 sponsorship from Alcoa's Pt Henry Alumina operations, the Marine Discovery Centre is again on the move and coming to a school room or community hall near you.

This is the second year that Alcoa World Alumina Australia's Point Henry Operations have joined with the Marine Discovery Centre to deliver interactive programs, which include live animals and plants, directly into school rooms and community halls.

The Marine Discovery Centre is an educational facility that assists people of all ages to discover the wonders of southern Australia's marine environment. It is the educational arm of the Marine and Freshwater Resources Institute.

Programs delivered by the Marine Discovery Centre (MDC) aim to promote conservation and sustainable use of marine and coastal environments through increasing understanding, awareness and action.

The increasing popularity of the Marine Discovery Centre was one of the factors that prompted the development of a board based Outreach Program.

As Alex Giannuzzi, Manager of the MDC explains, "We were aware that many groups had difficulties in making bookings in peak periods. We were also getting feedback back that increasing travel costs were limiting the ability of some groups to come to the Centre, which is based in the seaside town of Queenscliff."

"Because we believe strongly in the educational value of experiencing the marine environment first hand – we looked for way to take the sea– animals and all – to the

boarder community. The Outreach Program was our solution."

Alcoa World Alumina Australia's Point Henry Operations first joined with the Marine Discovery Centre in 2002 to deliver the Outreach program to schools and community groups within the Geelong Region.

Live animals and plants accompany audiovisual presentations that are given to groups in order to provide participants with an opportunity to directly experience the local marine and coastal biodiversity.

"The Outreach program targets Pre-school and Early Years age-groups. Last year the program was immensely popular and in 2003, with the help of Alcoa's sponsorship, the Outreach program will reach even further into the community," Ms Giannuzzi says.

Alcoa Point Henry Operations Manager, John Osborne, said that Alcoa is very proud to partner with the Marine Discovery Centre.

"Not only does this program provide a great educational experience," Mr Osborne says "it gives kids who might never get to the beach the opportunity to be part of the coast and its life."

"Alcoa believes in equal access to education for all and is very pleased to support the Marine Discovery Centre in this venture."

The Marine Discovery Centre conducts a range of programs and provides services to schools, universities, tourism, government agencies, overseas visitors and corporate clients. Philanthropic organisations, corporate



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sponsors and the efforts of a volunteer crew all assist in providing support to the Centre.

The Marine Discovery Centre's programs are well regarded in the community for their high quality and interactive nature. The Centre and its programs have received many accolades including the Victorian Coastal Councils Excellence in Education Award, 2001 and was Highly Commended in the Environmental Experience category of the British Airways Tourism for Tomorrow Awards Special in 2002.

For more information about the Outreach program or other services offered by the Marine Discovery Centre contact Alex Giannuzzi on 03 5258 3344 or alex.giannuzzi@nre.vic.gov.au

For more information about Alcoa and its education partnerships please contact Kylie Cirak on 03 5245 1314 or kylie.cirak@alcoa.com.au

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