



QUEENSLAND ALUMINA LIMITED

A. B. N. 98 009 725 044

PARSONS POINT GLADSTONE QUEENSLAND 4680 AUSTRALIA

TELEPHONE: 4976 2211 (Area code 07; International dialling code 61-7).

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MEDIA RELEASE

Students Become Worm Farmers

Farming is not included in a typical day's learning for most primary school students but for the soon-to-be worm farmers at St John's Catholic Primary School getting down and dirty to help the environment will be the norm, thanks to the assistance of Queensland Alumina Limited's (QAL) Reef Guardian Fund.

The school is just one of eight who were successful in obtaining part of the \$10 000 funding made available to local Reef Guardian schools on an annual basis.

Established in partnership with the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA), the Fund aims to assist schools to develop and implement a variety of worthwhile environmental projects that contribute to both the school and the wider community.

QAL Health, Safety, Environment and Communities Manager Ross Greenhalgh said the Reef Guardian Fund applications continued to exceed expectations.

"This is the third year the Reef Guardian Fund has been operating and it is great to see schools coming up with interesting, complex projects that involve teaching the students about protecting the environment and living sustainably," Mr Greenhalgh said.

"The Fund is providing an avenue for teachers to implement their innovative ideas without being hindered by the availability of support, and QAL is pleased to be able to provide them with these opportunities."

The Director of Communication and Education for GBRMPA, Karen Vohland, said the Authority continues to appreciate the partnership developed with QAL and is thrilled that the schools are participating in positive activities to improve their local environment and the Reef.

"It is exciting to see initiatives that promote sustainable environmental behaviours both in schools as well as the broader community."

St John's Primary School Reef Guardian Coordinator Angela Robinson is looking forward to the school setting up its first sustainability project, a worm farm.

"We are very keen to create a culture of sustainability in our school and this project will help our waste management while giving the children a sense of wonder, a sense of achievement and mostly an understanding of creating a sustainable future," Mrs Robinson said.

Other projects funded this year through the QAL Reef Guardian Fund include: a hydro electric plant to demonstrate alternative sources of energy, data loggers and water quality probes, a weather station, participation in professional water quality monitoring and a water tank for special needs students to care for their school's vegetable garden.

Work will commence on most projects within the next few months.

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St Johns Catholic Primary School Reef Guardian Coordinator Angela Robinson (right) and Captains Jake Breadsell and Bonnie Clarke accept their Reef Guardian Fund Cheque and Reef Guardian School sign from Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority Director of Communication and Education Karen Vohland and QAL Health, Safety, Environment and Communities Manager Ross Greenhalgh.



St Johns Catholic Primary School Year Four students were excited to accept their Reef Guardian Funding to purchase worm farms from QAL Health, Safety, Environment and Communities Manager Ross Greenhalgh and Reef Guardian School sign from Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority Director of Communication and Education Karen Vohland.

About Queensland Alumina Limited:

Queensland Alumina Limited (QAL) commenced operation in March 1967 with an annual production rate of 600,000 tonnes of alumina. Today QAL is one of the world's largest alumina refineries, producing 3.95 million tonnes of the world's best smelter grade alumina per year. With an average workforce of 1050 employees, QAL is the region's largest employer and annually contributes approximately \$200 million directly to the local economy.

About the QAL Reef Guardian Fund:

The QAL Reef Guardian Fund was established in 2006 by QAL in partnership with the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA). Providing \$10,000 of support annually to Reef Guardian schools in the Gladstone Regional Council Area, the fund aims to encourage the development of environmental projects that benefit both schools and the greater community.

About the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority:

The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority is the principal advisor to the Australian Government, through the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and the Arts on the care, development and management of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park. The Authority works in partnership with other government agencies, industry, community groups and individuals to help preserve the social, economic and environmental values of the Great Barrier Reef.

About the Reef Guardian School program:

The Reef Guardian Schools program is an education initiative of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority that develops partnerships between schools and their communities to work towards a sustainable future for the environment and our Great Barrier Reef. Currently in its seventh year, over 60 000 students in more than 150 schools across Queensland are involved in the program.

For further information and copies of images contact:

Mellissa Case,
Community Relations and Media Specialist
Queensland Alumina Limited
Ph: +61 7 4976 2448
Email: casem@qal.com.au
www.qal.com.au