

# Reef resource encourages action

WITH CONFLICTING REPORTS CIRCULATING ABOUT THE FUTURE OF OUR CORAL REEFS, UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND MARINE EXPERTS ARE HELPING TO SET THE SCIENCE STRAIGHT.

A new book which demystifies the science surrounding coral reefs and climate change will be officially launched at a media event at Customs House at the end of March.

The fully illustrated *Coral Reefs and Climate Change: the guide for education and awareness* has been published by CoralWatch and supported by The University of Queensland.

Co-authors are educator Craig Reid, Professor Justin Marshall and designer Diana Kleine of UQ, and environmental education officer Dave Logan.

Professor Marshall, an ARC Professorial Fellow at the Queensland Brain Institute and President of the Australian Coral Reef Society and founder of CoralWatch, said many people were confused by conflicting statements about climate change and how this might impact on areas such as the Great Barrier Reef.

"There's been a big swing back towards climate change sceptics, and we wondered why that was," he said.

"One of the main reasons appears to be

that a lot of people don't understand the complex scientific arguments put forward.

"In effect, this book helps convey the messages from the Great Barrier Reef Outlook report, data from the Australian Institute of Marine Science and the International Panel on Climate Change for anyone to read."

Professor Marshall said the book was aimed at anyone wishing to explore the natural wonder and beauty of coral reefs and understand the forces that created and destroyed them.

"Reefs are already beyond 40 percent lost or unrecognisable and are disappearing five times faster than rainforests," he said.

"Our current aim for carbon emission reduction, with 450 parts per million CO<sub>2</sub> in the atmosphere, is a future with no reefs. The best science published in late 2009 tells us that 350ppm CO<sub>2</sub> must be our upper limit."

Professor Marshall said the Native American proverb saying that "We do not inherit our environment from our ancestors but borrow it from our children's" was nowhere more pertinent than our coral reefs.

The 256-page book is aimed at providing solutions and practical exercises and includes a CD with a workbook for teachers, classrooms and anyone interested in learning more through activities.

**INFO → The book is available for \$49.50 through CoralWatch ([www.coralwatch.org](http://www.coralwatch.org)) and the CSIRO**



# Doing the maths on climate change

How much does it really cost to stop deforestation?

A UQ economics expert will help answer the complex question when he gives a public lecture at St Lucia this month.

Dr Colin Hunt, a visiting fellow in the UQ School of Economics will present "The real costs of deforestation" at 3pm on March 26.

Dr Hunt said although no binding agreement had been reached at the recent climate change conference in Copenhagen, one bright spot was the agreement by countries including Australia to slow down deforestation, a major source of greenhouse gases.

Last year Dr Hunt published a book on the topic – *Carbon sinks and climate change: forests in the fight against global warming*. Prior to Copenhagen, he assisted the Papua New Guinean government on the costs and benefits of slowing down deforestation and helped devise its greenhouse policy.

"What is intriguing is the assumption by many researchers that it will be cheap to stop the clearing of tropical forests," Dr Hunt said.

"This is because of a poor understanding of the multiple beneficiaries of logging, agricultural production and processing."

Dr Hunt will present the methodology and the results of his research at the seminar to illustrate the economic and social costs of stopping deforestation in Papua New Guinea.

"Companies must be compensated for loss of profits, but so also must governments for loss of taxes. And then there are the working people who are expected to give up the income and employment opportunities of exploiting their forests," he said.

Dr Hunt will also discuss the problems of underestimating the cost of conservation, using the

expansion of "no-take" zones in the Great Barrier Reef as an example.

**INFO → The lecture takes place in room 103 of the Colin Clark Building, St Lucia. All welcome.**



IMAGE COURTESY COLIN HUNT

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