

## Nemo knows, but what does the Reef mean to you?

**What does the future hold for the Great Barrier Reef and what part will *we* play? In the most extensive social study to date, CSIRO is asking 5000 locals, visitors to the reef and businesses how they use, relate to and value the Great Barrier Reef.**



Credit: Credit: CSIRO

It will be the [first scientific survey of this scale](#) about people's perceptions for the whole of the Great Barrier Reef, covering marine tourism, traditional owners, ports and shipping, aquaculture, mining, residents and coastal communities.

CSIRO social scientist and project lead Dr Nadine Marshall said decision makers need as much information as possible to understand the role people will play in the future of the Great Barrier Reef.

‘It's the first time personal thoughts and feelings about the reef are being comprehensively collected,’ Dr Marshall said.

‘Years of data exist on the economic, ecological and environmental dimensions of the reef and now we're closing the loop and including the hardest dimension of all – people.

‘We want to understand what the Great Barrier Reef means to those who live nearby, work around it or visit the area.’

The findings will provide vital information to reef managers, businesses and the government to help them make decisions that reflect the needs of the people who interact with the Reef.

Over the next two months CSIRO will be approaching 5000 people from Cooktown to Bundaberg, to take part in the study. People could be approached at a shopping mall, on the beach or at a tourist hot spot. Local businesses will be contacted over the telephone.

Results will be published towards the end of the year when a snapshot of 2013 will be released. It is hoped that the study will be updated annually.

The three-year, \$2 million study is a collaboration between CSIRO's Wealth from Oceans Flagship, the National Environment Research Program, James Cook University and the Great Barrier Reef Foundation.

Source: CSIRO

From **ECOS** online <http://www.ecosmagazine.com/?paper=EC13140>