

Townsville Schools Ocean Forum

A lead up to the 2007 *Pacem in Maribus* Conference

Schools from the Townsville region gathered to celebrate the World Ocean Day on Friday, June 8 and to charter a Youth Ocean Declaration for the next International Ocean Institute's (IOI) *Pacem in Maribus* (PIM) Conference. The Schools Ocean Forum was the second to be held in Townsville, after the successful forum held in 2005 prior to the PIM 31 Conference. The Forum, not only celebrated the World Ocean Day, but also concluded the week-long Townsville Environment Week, and was part of the Queensland State Development's Tropical Innovation Festival.

Dylan Furnell, a student from the first Schools Ocean Forum who presented the Youth Declaration at the PIM 31 Conference reminded the Forum of the 2005 Declaration. Dylan called on his fellow youth to be visionary in their deliberations and to think global. He also had a message for the global community. "Ultimately we must work together as a global community, rather than thousands of little ones. We also need to know when our time has been and gone, so we can pass on the knowledge to (future) generations rather than continue along an inappropriate path that ends in destruction of the oceans".

The students from St Patricks College, Cathedral and Hermit Park schools listened intently to presentations reflecting the themes of PIM, given by marine experts and scientists from James Cook University, the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority and the Creek to Coral Programme of the twin cities. After each presentation, round-table discussions allowed students to identify key issues that they would like to feed into their Ocean Declaration. The Declaration will be finalised by the students from the Forum, before being presented at the PIM Conference in Malta.

The International Ocean Institute (Australia) along with its main partners, Townsville City Council, coordinated the event, which was also supported by the Institute of Marine Science, Engineering and Technology (ANZPAC Division and North Queensland branch), the Reef & Rainforest Research Centre, James Cook University and the Queensland State Development.

In concluding the Forum Russell Reichelt, the Executive Manager of the Reef and Rainforest Research Centre and an IOI Governing Board Member donated \$1000.00 towards the representative youth chosen to attend the PIM Conference in Malta, Dylan Furnell.



Participants of the second Schools Ocean Forum