



## And the Winner is .....



The Minister for Environment recently presented the Institute with a 2013 Victorian Coastal Award for Excellence in the category of Community Action and Partnership.

The award was shared with the City of Kingston for our partnership with the 'i sea, i care' program.

Melbourne Water, which is a foundation partner with 'i sea, i care', was also recognised.

Pictured on stage with Minister Ryan Smith are the DRI team, the City of Kingston Manager for Environment and our 'i sea, i care' Ambassadors in the foreground.

2013 has seen a dramatic 234% growth in our ambassador program with 85 active schools and 334 ambassadors!

We are very proud of Mandy and her wonderful young leaders.

## The DRI Story

Have you ever tried to explain to someone about DRI or why you are a supporter? It's not easy, as we do so much!

That is why we have created these graphics to help refresh our web site and for use in other ways to tell our story.

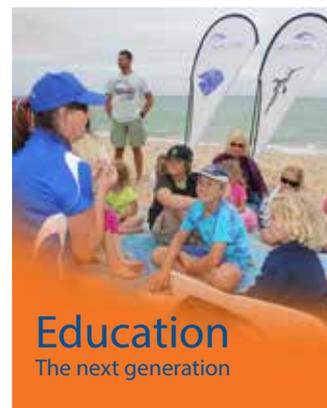
*"DRI helps Victorians to care for all our marine treasures through research, education and environmental leadership."*

Our research programs aim to answer questions needed to achieve conservation outcomes for our dolphins.



Our education programs help school children and adults to understand and appreciate our marine treasures.

Our 'i sea, i care' program develops young leaders who act



as champions and role models in their communities. Some past ambassadors are now becoming the next generation of environmental managers.

We are also show leadership



with roles in the Central Coastal Board, Yarra-Bay Action Plan and other environmental programs.

We will have been doing all this for 23 years next March!

## Concerns for Our Dolphins' Environment

Recent deaths of 800 dolphins off the US due to cetacean morbillivirus is concerning.

Similar to measles, the virus is highly infectious and has also been found in whales.

We could be seeing the results of animals with suppressed immunity due to environmental pressures.

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## Trigger Bros.

CUSTOM BUILT SURFBOARDS

We are delighted to welcome Trigger Bros. as a new DRI supporter. There will be a fund-raising T-shirt range sold in their stores this Christmas and promotion of DRI at [www.triggerbros.com.au](http://www.triggerbros.com.au).



## The 2014 'i sea, i care' Challenge, 7-20 January

- FREE family marine education at locations around the bays
- "Be a Dolphin Researcher for a Day" at DRI (cost involved)

Visit [dolphinresearch.org.au](http://dolphinresearch.org.au) in January for the latest details.



**Proud Partners**

## Adopt-A-Dolphin for Christmas



Join Bella and Mia to give a gift of love for Christmas.

1300 130 949 or our web site.

## Letter from the Chair

By Ian Stevenson

2013 has been a very positive year for the Institute.

Receiving the Victorian Coastal Award in September, successfully rescuing the tangled calf in May, doubling the participation in *'i sea, i care'*, developing new research methods and monitoring the health of a calf injured by a propeller are just part of what we've done.

Our team has also developed new education programs, recruited new volunteers and developed a new community dolphin monitoring program.

Our board has seen changes, with the retirement of Roy Spencer and Denise Orchard and the recruitment of Nina Bonadonna's corporate expertise plus Rod Evenden who brings his legal skills.

However, none of this would have been possible without the support of people like you and our various partnerships.



Our Victorian Coastal Award was in the category of "Community Action and Partnerships" - it is an acknowledgement of the importance of quality partnerships to our work.

The front page covers the DRI story and refers to the three pillars of our work, Research, Education and Leadership.

The Board continues to fully support Jeff Weir and his hard-working, committed staff. We are a unique organisation, passionate about our causes and hard-working to financially expand our future strategies.

I hope you find this discussion helpful to understand what and why we do what we do.

## Concerns for Our Dolphins' Environment

..... Cont P1

Dolphins are susceptible to environmental toxins that are magnified as they pass to them at the top of the food chain.

High toxin levels are known to cause immune suppression and when combined with other stressors such as extremes of weather, food shortages or harassment, can make the animals vulnerable to infection.

We have seen worrying deaths of dolphins even here in Victoria. In 2006 and 2007 we saw nearly 20 animals die in the Gippsland Lakes, many with severe ulcers on their skin.

Although we don't think morbillivirus was involved in this case, cetacean morbillivirus has been recorded in Australian dolphins.

When the drought broke in 2010 and all sorts of things were flushed into the bay, we saw our dolphins with higher than normal levels of sores on their skin. It seems to have subsided but we will continue to closely monitor our dolphins health.

These are the reasons that we take a whole ecosystem approach and have such a strong focus on marine pollution with *'i sea, i care'* and our other programs.

## Thank you, Midland Insurance

Midland Insurance Brokers have recently become a Corporate Sponsor of DRI. They have an office in Carlton (03 9349 2733) and one in Mt Eliza (03 9775 2355). We

thank them for their support and recommend their services and friendly advice to you all.



## Welcome to our new Members!

Noa Coates	Shane Mathieson	Melissa Roche
Jacqui Croucher	Cameron Quinn	Andrew Stringer
Flynn Kennedy	Ann Robb	Mark Wigg

## Dolphin Tins - we need you

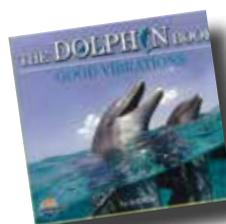
In our last newsletter we told you about some of the local businesses that are supporting DRI by hosting collection tins for us. We currently have over 90 tins out - from Frankston to Sorrento and everywhere in between. But we need help to

check them regularly. If you'd like to physically assist us, and have your own transport, and could spare some time to check perhaps a dozen or so of them in your area - **call us!**

**1300 130 949 or 5979 7100**

## Christmas or anytime ...

**The Dolphin Book \$17 Pen \$5  
Stress Dolphin \$3**



**To order phone 1300 130 949 (plus postage \$2)**

## Thanks to our Supporters

Avante Marine  
Bayside City Council  
Canon Australia  
City of Casey  
City of Kingston  
Club Marine  
Coastcare  
Eastern District Computer Services  
Esso & BHP Billiton  
Fantech  
Good Company  
Ian Potter Foundation  
KISS Print Services  
Lord Mayor's Fund  
Martha Cove  
Melbourne Water  
Midland Insurance Brokers  
Moonraker Charters  
Mornington Sea Glass  
Mornington Peninsula Shire  
National Bank  
Natures Organics  
Parks Victoria  
Perpetual Trustees  
Ritchies Supermarkets  
Trigger Bros.  
Visitor Publications  
Western Port Marina  
White Cleland Solicitors  
Yaringa Marina



## Research News



Sue Mason  
Research  
Officer

The Society of Marine Mammalogy (SMM) conference is a biennial gathering of marine biologists from across the world. The previous SMM conference was held in Tampa, Florida in 2011 and had over 1500 attendees. This time, we have the luxury of only having to travel across the ditch to attend. The conference is being held in Dunedin at the University of Otago. Jeff Weir, the DRI's Director and Sue Mason and David Donnelly, DRI's Research Officers, will be attending. DRI will be represented at the conference through authorship of three posters and one oral presentation. Further details about the conference and photos will be included in our next newsletter.

### Report Dolphin Sightings



## REMEMBER

**Don't deliberately approach dolphins closer than 100m (jet skis 300m).** Severe penalties apply for breaching the regulations.

Report cases of harassment to **DEPI on 136 186**. Or call DRI and we can help.

**Keep dolphins in the Bay  
STAY 100 METRES AWAY**



## Community Dolphin Monitoring Project



November 24 launched our new "citizen science" program designed to provide a 3-hour snapshot of the activities of dolphins, birds, seals and also humans from Mount Eliza to Mount Martha.

Volunteers worked at the Ranelagh Club in Mount Eliza, Mills Beach and Snapper Point

lookout in Mornington and Mount Martha Yacht Club. Above are Rick, Jacque and Jasmine busy "spotting" at Mornington.

We had a fleet of special marine binoculars with built-in compasses and sight-lines that enable the precise location of sightings.

The binoculars were purchased with a grant from Esso Australia Resources Pty Ltd and BHP Billiton Petroleum Pty Ltd.



We are delighted that dolphins were recorded at three of the four sites as it validates the methodology and the involvement of volunteers.

A special thank you goes to our friends at the Mount Martha Yacht Club and the Ranelagh Club.

In 2014 we will expand to more locations with regular days.

Contact us if you would like to become involved.

## Common and bottlenose dolphins at play in Port Phillip



## BRAHSS - Behavioural Response of Australian Humpback whales to Seismic Surveys

There is currently a great deal of concern about how man-made noises such as military sonar, oil and gas exploration activity and commercial shipping may adversely affect marine mammals. Little is known about how anthropogenic noise really does affect marine mammals.

The BRAHSS study is one of the largest and most comprehensive studies of humpback whales and their response to seismic noise ever done. It began in 2010 with the

final report due in December 2015. It is a collaborative project between the Universities of Queensland, Sydney and Newcastle, the Curtin University of Technology, the Australian Antarctic Division and the Defence Science and Technology Organisation.

Field experiments have been conducted off the east and west coasts.

This year DRI's Research Officers Sue Mason and David

Donnelly were again invited to participate - and spent five weeks off the Western Australia coast with other marine mammal scientists and researchers gathering data in swells of often 3+ metres. The results will be used in the management of seismic surveys and mitigation procedures.

Follow the day to day events on the BRAHSS Facebook page. <https://www.facebook.com/BRAHSS2013>

## Education News

**Mandy Robertson**  
Education  
Director



As 2013 draws to a close, we reflect on a year of growth and success. There are now 85 schools enrolled in the Ambassador program across the region, with almost 350 Ambassadors taking part in over 25 workshops. Our message that Victoria's treasures are "too precious to lose" is reaching its widest audience ever.

In September we were absolutely thrilled to receive the award for Community Partnerships with the City of Kingston at the Victorian Coastal Awards for Excellence.



The photo above shows Rachel Hornsby from the City of Kingston, Janet Borley and me with the Ambassadors from St Louis de Monfort's, having received our awards at the Melbourne Museum.

A huge thank you goes out to all the schools that have visited us this year, and a big congratulations to my wonderful 'i sea, i care' schools, Ambassadors and co-ordinators for another stunning year of achievements. And lastly our amazing education team, we can't do it without you.

I wish you all a Happy Christmas and New Year, and safe and happy holidays.

## Kingston Celebration



As the second year of our partnership with the City of Kingston concluded, what better way to celebrate than with an evening of presentations and awards at Chelsea town hall.

Ambassadors, parents and teachers joined VIP guests to recognise the achievements of our Marine Ambassadors for 2013 from 18 schools.

The award winners were:

**Supporter of the Year** – Maggie Crofts (Kingswood Primary)

**New Ambassador School of the Year** – Aspendale Gardens Primary  
**Ambassador School of the Year** – St Louis de Monfort's School

**Co-ordinator of the Year** – Winner Julie Wynne (St Louis de Montfort's School)

Highly Commended Rebecca Mercer (Aspendale Gardens Primary)

**Ambassador of the Year** – Winner Rowan Torkington (St Joseph's Primary)

Highly Commended Aimee Buckett (Aspendale Gardens Primary).

*Patterson Lakes Primary School*



*Clayton South Primary School*



*Cheltenham East Primary School*



We would like to thank the following VIP guests for their generosity in donating their time and support for this event:

From state government : Brad Battin MP, Donna Bauer MP and Lorraine Wreford MP.  
From City of Kingston : Cr Ron Brownlees ( Mayor), Paul Franklin (CEO), Cr Rosemary West and Cr Tamsin Beasley.

Also present were Mary Catus-Wood (Melbourne Water), Rachel Murphy (City of Bayside), Nicola Ward and Samantha Margetts (City of Casey).



*Chelsea Heights Primary School*



*St Louis de Montfort's School*

## Ambassadors in Action in 2013



*Tanti Creek catchment workshop (Mornington Peninsula)*



*Aspendale Gardens - Whale for a Day (Kingston)*



*Louise Carr - Bayside*



*Planting with St Joseph's (Kingston)*



*Banyan Reserve - Bayside*

See more photos at  
Ambassadors' Corner  
[dolphinresearch.org.au](http://dolphinresearch.org.au)



We appreciate Melbourne Water's continued support as our major 'i sea, i care' partner for 2013.

**Clubs, community groups - are you looking for something different for your next outing? Get a new outlook on Victoria's Living Marine Treasures - and, we can come to you!!**