

Some tips on press releases and media interaction

This page was prepared by Samara Sutherland, who has been involved with media and publicity for both the Whangarei Harbour marine reserve campaign and her Experiencing Marine Reserves community engagement programme.

Think of the media as a great opportunity. Approach the media with a positive attitude. Invite local media along to events and keep them informed of your progress. A good way to ensure that the right information is getting out there is by writing your own press releases. When writing your own press releases or before an interview, think of these questions: Who? What? When? Where? Why? How?

Be **consistent** with contact with the media throughout your campaign and you will find it much easier to establish good working relationships.

Below is an example of a press release (please note that this is a press release for a marine education programme, not a marine reserve campaign) that was emailed to local newspapers. The actual article that was published follows:

Experiencing Marine Reserves
Press Release
April 2003

Schools from the far north travel as far as Leigh, to spend a day with the abundant fish life at the Leigh marine reserve.

Five Northland schools including Taipa Area, Russell, Ngunguru, Helena Bay and Whangarei Heads School are participating in the ‘Experiencing Marine Reserves’ programme, which involves the investigation of marine biodiversity and local marine environments before venturing to the Leigh marine reserve.

Taipa Area and Russell school stayed overnight on the Omaha marae, while the other three schools had day trips.

Marae committee member, Mr Perry Watts said “It is the first time schools from the far north have stayed at the Omaha marae at Leigh and we hope that more will come.”

The main highlight of the programme is the snorkel at Leigh marine reserve and glass bottom boat ride, as well as some written work related to the snorkel and marine reserve. Programme coordinator, Samara Sutherland said “The Northland children were BUZZING on the abundance and size of snapper within the reserve”.

Students were asked to make comparisons between local marine environments and the Leigh fully protected marine reserve. “Students noticed the high abundance of seaweed, large snapper, crayfish and hiding kina, when compared to unprotected area’s, were small kina are in abundance and large predators such as snapper and crayfish were noted by their absence.”

The next stage of the programme is when students put there ‘Experiencing Marine Reserves’ experience to the appropriate action (decided by the students) in their own community. For example some schools might decide that more awareness about marine conservation is needed in their community and they may decide to hold a public meeting to present their marine experience.

The Experiencing Marine Reserves programme is currently supported by the Department of Conservation and Nga Maunga ki te Moana Conservation Trust, which was also recently involved with the successful March 15th ‘seaweek’ event ‘Celebrate the Sea’, which attracted the participation of the Minister of Conservation Chris Carter and Big Day Out performers **Pitch Black** (which put on a fantastic show in the cave) to join in the celebration of marine life at the Rikoriko cave, Poor Knights Islands. About one hundred people turned up at the Tutukaka Deep Sea Anglers Club in the afternoon, to listen to guest speakers, with one of the highlights being, Don Robertson’s speech about Blake Expeditions.

For More information contact: Samara Sutherland 09 433 8205 surfhogs@wave.co.nz

Reserves make splash with pupils

Schools from the Far North travel to Leigh, east of Warkworth, to spend a day with abundant fish life at the Leigh Marine Reserve.

Five Northland schools including Taipa Area School, Russell, Ngunguru, Helena Bay and Whangarei Heads Schools are taking part in the Experiencing Marine Reserves programme.

The programme involves the investigation of marine biodiversity and local marine environments before venturing to the Leigh marine reserve.

Taipa Area and Russell school recently stayed overnight on the Omaha Marae, while the other three schools had day trips.

Marae committee member Perry Watts said it was the first time Far North schools have stayed at the Omaha Marae at Leigh. "We hope that more will come."

The main highlight of the programme is snorkelling at Leigh



□ Ngunguru Primary School pupils have wet fun at the marine reserve.

Marine Reserve and a glass-bottom boat ride.

Programme co-ordinator Samara Sutherland said the Northland children were buzzing over the abundance and size of snapper within the reserve.

"Students were asked to make comparisons between local marine environments and the Leigh fully protected marine reserve."

Students noticed the abundance

of seaweed, large snapper, crayfish and hiding kina, as compared to unprotected areas where small kina were in abundance and large predators such as snapper and crayfish were absent. Students will put their Experiencing Marine Reserves experience into action in their own community.

"For example some schools might decide that more awareness about marine conservation is needed in their community and they may decide to hold a public meeting to present their marine experience."

The Experiencing Marine Reserves programme is supported by the Department of Conservation and Nga Maunga ki te Moana Conservation Trust, which was also recently involved with the successful March 15 Seaweek event



□ Russell Primary School pupils outside Omaha (Te Kiri) Marae.

Celebrate the Sea. The event at the Poor Knights Islands included a visit to the marine reserve by Conservation Minister Chris Carter and electronica duo Pitch Black which performed at the Rikoriko cave. About 100 people later turned up at the Tutukaka Deep Sea Anglers' Club to listen to guest speakers.

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