



## **OUTLINE OF STRATEGY FOR SKILLING AND EMPLOYMENT WITHIN THE NORTH QUEENSLAND MARINE TOURISM INDUSTRY**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The Marine tourism industry has been identified as an Industry that represents a **SEVERE** skills shortage potentially causing considerable regional economic losses. As such the Cairns Marine Tourism Skills Formation Strategy has been formed to address the current skills shortages including issues of recruitment and retention and to work with Industry stakeholders to formulate a plan to not only ensure future skills sustainability, but develop an industry driven skills plan that will make the Cairns Marine tourism industry a bench mark for its skills ecosystem.

Currently the marine tourism industry in Queensland has a gross revenue estimated at \$2 billion per annum and employs in excess of 16,000 people both directly and indirectly. Its current employment strategy is largely based on a single tiered remuneration scale and is generally not based around the AQTF.

### **SCUBAVERSITY AND MARINE TOURISM EMPLOYMENT**

Scubaversity Pty Ltd holds the contract for the facilitation of the skills formation strategy.

Scubaversity in partnership with Scuba Schools International (SSI) is recognised by industry as a preferred VET provider.

In consultation with industry Scubaversity has identified several factors effecting employment with in Marine Tourism, some examples are:

- The current absence of relevant existing AQTF qualifications amongst industry personnel
- The inability of operators to supervise or deliver AQTF workplace training.
  - It should be noted that at the Cairns Marine Tourism SFS meeting, Friday July 14 2006, the committee members unanimously agreed to adopt the AQTF as the preferred

standard of training and, as such, initiated discussions regarding the development of an Industry remuneration award that directly refers to the relevant AQF levels.

- Lack of current access to or take-up of RPL by the Marine Tourism industry.
- Lack of opportunities or pathways to progress to higher education qualifications
- Lack of Direct links with secondary schools by utilising the Adopt a School program developed by DEST and supported by the Australian Government.
- No traineeship scheme (occupational or school based). Achieve the accreditation of an industry developed training program
- Lack of articulation agreements with the local university for recognition of Industry experience and qualifications for entry into their undergraduate courses.
- Lack of a marketable and structured career path.
- Lack of Collaboration between industry sectors

The typical Marine tourism employee is part of a high skill ecosystem that enables this massive industry of huge regional economic importance to meet the growing demands of its clientele. It is important to ensure that the industry presents its 16,000 current employees, and future entrants with a career path that is well structured, clear and most importantly, rewarding. It is the general opinion of industry that the training of key personnel is a vital component to the attraction of new employees.

Successful implementation of the training and employment model proposed by Scubaversity will ensure that the industry has a holistic skill set to address its entire workforce needs enabling each operator to partner with RTOs for the delivery of competency based training.

The objective of this employment model is to educate the key personnel in enterprises to generate a self-sustaining training network where each operator can supervise, deliver and assess in partnership with Scubaversity/SSI as an RTO, against relevant training packages. This model will ensure a steady flow of continually skilling employees and therefore position the Queensland Marine Tourism industry as a benchmark of best practice in skilling its employees, placing it at an advantage in the world market place.

### **MARINE TOURISM EMPLOYMENT SHORTAGE RECTIFICATION ACHEVEMENTS**

Scubaversity with the committee of the Skills Formation Strategy (Key Industry stakeholders) have achieved significant progression in addressing employment issues for the marine tourism industry since May 2006.

Here are our achievements to date:

1. The move from a single tiered employment strategy. With the adoption of the AQTF we are now able to train and qualify staff at lower levels than previously available, this has allowed us to remove the high barrier to entry with regard to qualification level. As you are all aware it is an important insurance and OH & S requirement that all staff are suitably trained in the roles they are undertaking. The adoption of the AQTF has ensured we meet these standards. [STATUS ~ ONGOING PENDING ABILITY TO ADOPT AQTF](#)
2. Successful tender for Traineeships against the Outdoor Recreation training package. As a group we received a pilot program of \$60,000.00 for certificate 3 in Outdoor recreation. This originally funded approximately 8 trainees; with lobbying from within the group we have now increased the funding and secured 15 trainee positions (32 subjects @ \$203.00 per subject). [STATUS ~ TRAINEESHIPS COMMENCED \(8\) 7 MORE TO COMMENCE 2007.](#)
3. A process of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and Recognition of Current Competency (RCC) for existing employees. 30 Positions @ \$200.00 for RPL/RCC awarded through skilling Solutions, information has been distributed via Dive Queensland and AMPTO. [STATUS ~ ON-GOING](#)
4. Adopt a School program ~ Woree SHS as a pilot. This program is proving to be invaluable for Marine tourism industry. As a group we will be presenting at a parent teacher information night in October. We are also developing a pre-vocational certificate 2 with TNQIT and Woree. This will see some flow on effect with local school leavers looking for a career within Marine Tourism. [STATUS ~ PROGRESSING WELL AND ON-GOING EST 60 STUDENTS IN MARINE STUDIES IN 2007](#)
5. Our training courses have received University recognition. This is a huge coup, Charles Sturt University has recognised certificate 4 and Diploma in Outdoor recreation toward a Degree in Tourism. Certificate 4 being 6 months off a Degree and Diploma 12 Months. Discussions with JCU are progression well and should receive same credit. [STATUS ~ IN PLACE WITH MORE ARTICULATION STUDIES BEING UNDERTAKEN.](#)
6. Development of a clear career path. As identified by the group we had a lack of clear career path. The Adoption of the AQTF at June meeting and resulting course developments has now seen a clear career path developed. A student at high school can now participate in the adopt a school program or pre-vocational training (once the course is approved), progress into a school based traineeship (years 11 and 12), then undertake a Full time traineeship (reduced to approx 6 months due to previous training and RPL process) and obtain valuable work experience. Upon completion of the traineeship the participant can complete a cert 4 or Diploma (again fast tracked due to previous training), then onto University. It is quite possible for a careers program student to complete the cert 4 within 12 months after completing year 12. [STATUS ~ INDUSTRY ENDORSED](#)

7. The development of a group of courses cert 1 – Diploma. STATUS ~ This project is close to completion.
8. Changes to AMSA and MSQ licensing. While the SFS cannot claim to be directly responsible as a group for these changes, Members of the SFS have been actively lobbying behind the scenes. As a result MSQ licensing has now become user-friendly. STATUS ~ DUE FOR COMPLETION BY END OF 2007.
9. A small committee has been discussing award conditions with the Maritime Union of Australia. Discussions are progressing well and should result in agreement. Previous attempts to address remuneration with the MUA have failed. STATUS ~ POSATIVE OUTLOOK
10. After hours elements of shipboard safety courses. So far 5 courses fully booked out and completed. STATUS ~ 3 MORE COURSES ON THE BOOKS
11. Passions of Paradise has organised a careers guidance councillor reef trip. Dave and Alan will be presenting information on our new careers path. This will promote our new employment philosophy and training system. STATUS ~ COMPLETED, HAVE NATIONAL INTEREST IN OUR TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT STRATEGY
12. An abundance of employees are now being employed on a Permanent part time basis rather than Casual, this is a direct result of our groups commitment toward addressing skills shortages by offering a more stable employment option to dedicated staff. STATUS ~ 60% OF INDUSTRY EMPLOYEES NOW EMPLOYED ON FT/PT BASIS, REMUNERATION HAS ALSO INCREASED WITH HIGHER LEVEL QUALIFICATIONS (AVERAGE INCREASE 20%)

I am sure that you all agree these are outstanding outcomes from this group. We now need to focus on using these outcomes for the betterment of Industry and to improve employee attraction, utilisation and retention.

### **SCUBAVERSITY PROPOSAL FOR CONTINUED EMPLOYMENT STRATEGY IMPROVEMENT**

To continue addressing the critical issue of the relative high cost of entry into the Marine Tourism Industry Scubaversity proposes the following for consideration of the standing committee of employment issues within the tourism industry:

- Scubaversity requests support for its application to become a Marine Tourism Industry skills center.
- Scubaversity requests support for a pilot program (2 years) for Scubaversity to deliver certificates 4 and Diploma in Outdoor recreation with access to the Federal Governments 'FEE help' student financial assistance scheme.

- That the committee supports the Cairns Marine Skills Center of excellence which once operational Scubaversity will partner with this as a skills center and work collaboratively to achieve the common goal.

Scubaversity with support of Industry believes that the above will address the following key issues for marine tourism industry:

- Skills for jobs and Growth
- Grow the Vet sector with regard to marine tourism generally and within the secondary schools sector
- Promote industry ownership of skills development through new customized skills strategies
- Customising training to meet the needs of our.

This initiative is the catalyst for addressing Skills shortages in Marine Tourism which are now considered to be extreme.

By way of example:

- Current personnel are working a 6 to 7 day week;
  - Non current employees are being asked to return to work to meet industry operational needs;
  - Eight operators have identified an immediate need for 30 skilled staff.
- Industry/community has expressed its support for the initiative Via the:
    - Skills Formation Strategy;
    - Association of Marine Park Tour operators (AMPTO) and;
    - Dive Queensland.

Scubaversity does not believe that the answer to all the Marine Tourism industries employment issues require investment of public funds by way of grant. Grant type funds should be a supplement to a more structured funding option, it is all too common to see public providers use public funds to compete in the commercial marketplace in an unfair manner. Scubaversity believes that the public providers have a social responsibility for the spending of public monies, the public provider generally is removed from industry, inflexible and unable to react to immediate training needs.

It is the opinion of Scubaversity that State Government funding such as **Direct Grant is an inefficient use of public funds, a system where a training provider is funded prior to achieving a market or student (s) is conducive to producing an inefficient training provider, a provider that can rest on its laurels and not necessarily liaise with industry to achieve student/enterprise enrolments. A system where every training provider both public and private are on a level playing field with regard to achieving funding (such as the Higher Education sector funding, HECS/Fee Help) is in our opinion a more appropriate use of public funds.**

**Scubaversity has requested** access to fee help for certificates 4 and Diploma in outdoor recreation, unfortunately due to the structure of the Fee Help system we first need to become a Higher Education provider (we have made some preparations to this process, however it is likely to take 12 – 18 months finalise). Industry believe this avenue of student financial assistance that is repaid to Government and allows those financially disadvantaged potential entrants into the marine Tourism industry to achieve the minimum entry qualifications and achieve gainful employment in the industry.

Marine Tourism does not have a lack of interested people as a potential employment group, it has a true skills shortage due to the up front cost of entry. Supporting Scubaversity for a pilot program allowing access to fee help will categorically assist in the issues that this industry face with regard to employment, as a spin off it will also aid other tourism industries requiring a similar skills set.

Thank you for your consideration, I am happy to answer any of your questions, please contact David.

## Entry cost into Marine Tourism Industry under existing IR policy

### **Cabin Attendant**

Elements of shipboard safety	\$295.00
First aid (workplace)	\$250.00
Oxygen resuscitation	\$110.00
Food and beverage qualification	\$500.00
	<b>\$1,155.00</b>

Note due to multi tasking Cabin Attendants are required to participate as Deckwatch/look outs. To participate in this activity they require the minimum training as listed below as legislated by QLD Govt.

Elements of shipboard safety	\$295.00
First aid (workplace)	\$250.00
Oxygen resuscitation	\$110.00
Food and beverage qualification	\$500.00
Openwater diver	\$400.00
Advanced openwater diver	\$425.00
Rescue diver	\$525.00
	<b>\$2,505.00</b>

Industry preferred  
qualifications for  
Cabin Attendant

### **Divemaster**

Elements of shipboard safety	\$295.00
First aid (workplace)	\$250.00
Oxygen resuscitation	\$110.00
Openwater diver	\$400.00
Advanced openwater diver	\$425.00
Rescue diver	\$525.00
60 openwater dives(3 per day at \$140 pd)	\$2,800.00
Divemaster	\$1,800.00
Divemaster Insurance	\$300.00 (EST)
Association Membership	\$250.00 (depending on association)
professional quality dive equipment	\$4,000.00
	<b>\$11,155.00</b>

### **Instructor**

Elements of shipboard safety	\$295.00
First aid (workplace)	\$250.00
Oxygen resuscitation	\$110.00
Openwater diver	\$400.00
Advanced openwater diver	\$425.00
Rescue diver	\$525.00
60 openwater dives(3 per day at \$140 pd)	\$2,800.00
Divemaster	\$1,800.00
Instructor Insurance	\$450.00
Association Membership	\$250.00
professional quality dive equipment	\$4,000.00
Additional Instructor specialist equipment	\$1,000.00
an additional 40 logged dives over divemaster	\$1,820.00
Instructor course	\$3,850.00
	<b>\$17,975.00</b>

Industry prefer  
to employ Instructors  
due to requirement to  
pay same as Divemaster

**Master 5**

Elements of shipboard safety	\$295.00
First aid (workplace)	\$250.00
Oxygen resuscitation	\$110.00
Openwater diver	\$400.00
Advanced openwater diver	\$425.00
Rescue diver	\$525.00
60 openwater dives(3 per day at \$140 pd)	\$2,800.00
Divemaster	\$1,800.00
Instructor Insurance	\$450.00
Association Membership	\$250.00
professional quality dive equipment	\$4,000.00
Additional Instructor specialist equipment	\$1,000.00
an additional 40 logged dives over divemaster	\$1,820.00
Instructor course	\$3,850.00
Master 5 MED 3 course	\$3,500.00
	<b>\$21,475.00</b>