

Media Release: FITZROY BASIN ASSOCIATION

11 October 2011

Locals to learn and share knowledge of healthier coasts

Two CQ locals will learn about traditional and innovative approaches to protecting coastal landscapes when they represent our region at the Queensland Coastal Conference next week.

Michael McCabe and Heather Richards will join more than 250 delegates from across the state at the conference in Cairns, thanks to sponsorship from the region's peak natural resource management group, Fitzroy Basin Association Inc. (FBA).

The Queensland Coastal Conference will be hosted by the Giringun Aboriginal Corporation in Cairns from 19-21 October, with the theme 'Ancient Knowledge, Contemporary Innovation'.

Michael McCabe believes attending the conference will enhance his efforts to engage people in the care and appreciation of our coasts through his involvement in a number of local groups and his role as Coordinator of Capricorn Conservation Council.



L-R: Shannon van Nunen, Michael McCabe, Heather Richards

"I am passionate about raising community awareness of our regional landscapes, seascapes and relatively intact ecosystems," Mr McCabe said. "This quest is especially important as we experience significant population growth, expansion of resource extraction and shipping, and predicted changes in storm frequency and intensity, increased ocean acidification and sea level," he said.

Heather Richards said the trip will provide her with a wealth of knowledge that she can apply in her new role of Sustainability and Environment Officer with Gladstone Regional Council.

"Hearing and learning from the experiences of the guest speakers will enable Council's relations with other industries and community groups within the Port Curtis area and beyond to thrive during this period of intense development," Ms Richards said.

She said the learnings she made would be promoted through Council's involvement in programs such as Reef Guardians, Port Curtis Integrated Monitoring Program, and the Gladstone Region Environmental Advisory Network.

FBA Coastal Coordinator Shannon van Nunen said community delegates were supported to attend the conference to improve the region's knowledge base and encourage greater peer to peer learning. "We have absolute champions in our coastal communities that FBA believes would benefit from the experience," Mr van Nunen said.

"But importantly, Michael and Heather will share their experiences back to our community in their own words, and in doing so they will improve others' capacity to understand and mitigate the pressures on coastal and marine environments within our region," he said.