

MEDIA RELEASE

20 April 2009

ENDANGERED TURTLE RETURNS HOME AFTER TWO YEARS OF LIFESAVING TREATMENT

On 23 April 2009, one of UnderWater World's long time resident Green Sea Turtles will be released off Mooloolaba beach back into its natural habitat.

The turtle, nicknamed Cuts, first came in to UnderWater World's Turtle Rehabilitation Clinic on 20 October 2007 and, after two years of treatment and a twist of fate UnderWater World staff and volunteers will this Thursday bid farewell to their beloved friend.

After being spotted by a member of the public 50 metres south of Point Arkwright, Michelle Jones, member of the Coolum District Coast Care, was notified of the 'turtle in trouble' and battled the rough seas to rescue her.

"When she was originally found she was washed up on rocks and had a rock on top of her. We noted she had holes in both her carapace and plastron. She was alive but not overly active," Michelle explains.

Once admitted to UnderWater World's Rehabilitation Clinic, Cuts immediately began an intense treatment program.

The deep wounds, giving Cuts her nickname, needed to be stuffed with Betadene soaked gauzes and sealed with silicon three to four times a week in order to prevent water from seeping into the wounds and ultimately minimising the risk of infection.

On several occasions Cuts was due to be euthanized but fought back from the brink of death to see this happy day.

"I didn't realise at the time the severity of her injuries and the amount of time it would take to rehabilitate her. All we knew was that if we could get her down to UnderWater World alive then she had a hope of surviving," Mrs Jones says.

Cuts has been a popular feature of the Behind The Scenes Tour at UnderWater World and will be missed by everyone who has been involved in her rehabilitation.

UnderWater World General Manager, Julie Cullen, explains that in the time Cuts has been in the Rehabilitation Clinic, the staff and volunteers have grown to consider her part of the family.

"Although we are all happy she is finally healthy enough to be released, there are sure to be some tears on the day," she adds.

With an increase in the number of stranded turtles, not all stories have a happy ending. In 2008 alone, 61 turtles were reported stranded and, with this number expected to increase in 2009, UnderWater World has turned its attention to prevention as well as cure and stresses the importance of caring for our environment and marine life.



If you do find a turtle in trouble, please do not help it back into the ocean. Instead, contact UnderWater World on (07) 5458 6280 and notify them of the turtle stranding location.

-ENDS-

Photo and Interview Opportunities

What: Invitation to join the turtle release expedition. Interviews with UnderWater World staff and members of the public who rescued the turtle will be available (spaces are limited).

When: 9:00am, 23 April 2009. In the case of bad weather the expedition will be postponed.

Where: The Wharf, Mooloolaba - meeting at the front reception of UnderWater World.

RSVP: Sandy Harris, Marketing Coordinator – Consumer on (07)5458 6209 or sharris@underwaterworld.com.au by Tuesday 21 April 2009.

For more information please contact:

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