



School's an island to itself

Saturday, October 18, 2008

© The Cairns Post

SOME schools adopt police officers or football players but Innisfail State High School has gone one better with its own tropical island.

Grinning students walked the pristine beaches of Russell Island, off Innisfail, yesterday and swam in the clear blue sea with turtles after making history by becoming custodians of a Great Barrier Reef island.

"It's beautiful ... so peaceful," Elly Inoke said of her school's favourite getaway, which doubles as an outdoor classroom.

Innisfail State High students have been going to Russell Island for 17 years.

Now they will work alongside marine managers from the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority, Queensland Parks and Wildlife and the indigenous community in an official partnership brokered during the International Year of the Reef.

Marine studies teacher Tanya Martin said a baseline study of the island, including flora and fauna sightings and coral inspections, was their first mission under the new partnership.

Changes to the island's environment over 20 years had been significant.

"Coral was almost pristine but it has since been knocked around by three cyclones and also by boat anchorings and probably run-off," she said.

"We've witnessed some coral bleaching and an increase in cane toads but we've also seen regrowth in coral.

"Two years ago, after (Cyclone) Larry, it looked like a bomb had gone off under the water so regrowth is great to see."

An island classroom gave students the chance to link theory to a beautiful but fragile eco-environment, she said.

Share this article

- [Digg this](#)
- [Post to del.icio.us](#)
- [Post to Newsvine](#)
- [Post to Facebook](#)
- [Add to kwoff](#)
- [Fark](#)
- [Post to Stumble Upon](#)
- [RSS](#)
- [What is this?](#)

Cairns.com.au is not responsible for the content of external sites.



Island class: Innisfail State High School student Elly Inoke takes in the delights of Russell Island.

Also in Local News



[The bloodied face of Cape policing](#)

POLICE reinforcements were sent into the Cape community of Pormpuraaw yesterday after an officer was king hit and almost knocked unconscious. [more](#)



[Miracle survival at sea](#)

TWO men and a woman plucked from shark-infested waters 30 hours after their trawler sank went almost straight back to work on another fishing boat yesterday. [more](#)



[Buyers rush homes](#)

REAL estate agents and developers are predicting their busiest weekend in months as buyers rush to take advantage of the Federal Government's \$21,000 free kick. [more](#)



[Glamour, stars at heart of fashion](#)

FROM diamonds to high fashion and star-studded glamour - the third annual Essence an Eye on Fashion had it all. [more](#)



[She's all revved up](#)

Kylie Duff is aiming to get hearts racing in her quest to win the Miss Indy title. [more](#)

[Print this story](#)

[Privacy policy](#)

Cairns Post Pty Ltd Copyright © 2008