

DAVIES REEF DIVE REPORT

By Simon Penprase

NQUEC conducted a day trip to the reef on Saturday the 18th July, with the intention of doing some exploratory diving at Davies Reef. Ray, Jeff, Mike, Dave, Tony, Yvonne and I met Ray's friend and skipper 'Beamo' at the main Townsville city boat ramp at 6:00am. The weather was a little rough heading out, and at several times the wind direction changed, forcing Beamo to alter our course to optimise our approach into the swell.

We arrived at Davies Reef at about 9:30am and anchored up next to a beautiful little reef wall with great visibility down to the bottom in about 10m of water.

Jeff, Tony and I headed off as one group for our first dive and Ray, Mike, Yvonne and Dave made up a second group. My group headed along the reef wall for a short distance, then moved away from the wall to attain some depth and explore the reef slope. We found several anemone fish during our approach back to the wall, as well as a small school of inquisitive rainbow runners, some bump-headed parrot fish and large schools of black tip fusilier. Several table and plate corals have established themselves along the upper sections of the reef wall. This made an interesting near-ground view when seen from below with the sunlight creating a turquoise background. Tony and Jeff finished the dive exploring some swim-throughs which form a series of entrances to the lagoon on the inside of the reef.

After a couple of bacon, tomato and egg rolls, Beamo moved us further along the reef to an area near a large-vessel mooring, with the AIMS weather station visible in the distance. We kept to similar groups for our second dive, but covered two different areas at this new site. Ray, Jeff, Tony and I spent our dive swimming a circuit around a massive bommie which sits in about 20m of water. The structure here was really interesting, with small cave like openings noticeable near the base of the bommie.

My group found more fish around this bommie, compared to our previous dive. In close to the bommie were plenty of small trout, sweetlips and some nice size slady bream. Out away from the bommie we could see silver flashes from the flanks of small mackerel and trevally. Ray also found a very large moray eel partly protruding from its hole.

Dave and Mike reported finding a gap between two bommies where the water temperature was noticeably warmer and which was loaded with mature batfish and sweetlips.

Our trip back to the boat ramp was quick and comfortable as by this time our return course coincided with the direction of the wave troughs.

Beamo provided us with an excellent day trip; his boat is fast and stable and can easily accommodate 6 to 8 divers. Well done Ray and Beamo for organising the trip and I hope the club is able to conduct more of these exploratory day trips in the future.