

Lady Elliot Island has welcomed its latest Master Reef Guides, having completed their extensive training to help share the beauty of the Great Barrier Reef with visitors to the region.

Guides masters at sharing

By Angela Norval

Bundaberg Today’s Angela Norval shares Gior-gia Webster and Apphia Fiora’s experience....

The ninth cohort of Master Reef Guides has experienced firsthand how the world’s only neighbouring World Heritage sites - the Great Barrier Reef and Wet Tropics rainforest - are ecologically and culturally connected as part of the program’s latest Field Training School.

The training, which was held in Cape Tribu-lation earlier this month, is designed to equip participants with advanced interpretation and guiding skills, the latest science, and practical tools to communicate the importance of protect-ing the Reef to visitors from around the world.

Updated curriculum also centred around the Reef’s unique World Heritage values - excep-tional natural beauty, examples of Earth’s geo-logical history, living ecological processes and biodiversity conservation - helping to inspire a deeper understanding and appreciation of one of the world’s most iconic natural wonders.

Twenty guides from 16 High Standard Tour-ism Operators spanning the Great Barrier Reef catchment completed the training, including Giorgia Webster and Apphia Fiora from Lady El-liot Island Resort.

This year’s cohort takes the total number of Master Reef Guide graduates to 166 spanning the Ribbon Reefs in the north to Lady Elliot Is-land in the southern Great Barrier Reef.

For Lady Elliot Island Master Reef Guide Giorgia Webster, her first visit to the Great Bar-rier Reef was when she was 10 years old and she can still remember being completely in awe of its beauty.

Growing up on the outskirts of London, she had never experienced anything like it, from the rainbow scales of parrotfish flashing in the sunlight to the sheer size of giant clams nestled among the coral.

Giorgia said it felt like stepping into another world, and that moment stayed with her.

“Now, being able to share this incredible place with guests from all over the world is one of the most rewarding parts of my job,” she said.

“I was inspired to become a Master Reef Guide so I could deepen my knowledge and bring the reef to life for others, helping visitors not just see it, but truly understand, appreciate, and connect with it.

“I now feel like I’m part of a positive com-munity that encourages individuals to continue learning and evolving together and I’m really looking forward to joining the monthly digital masterclasses to dive deeper into my knowledge of the reef.

“It’s also exciting to feel part of a wider net-work across the Great Barrier Reef, where we can share knowledge and collaborate on guiding ideas.”

For Giorgia, the Master Reef Guide training taught her the power of words and storytelling in creating meaningful relationships between people and the reef.

“I am so excited to go back and apply my newly developed skills to my tours, such as the Glass Bottom Boat trip on Lady Elliot Island, where we teach our guests about the magical underwater world of coral reef ecosystems.

“It is so wonderful to be able to share this knowledge with guests visiting the island and also be on their learning adventure alongside them.

“I hope to inspire others to develop a lasting appreciation for the places they experience, and to feel a sense of responsibility to protect them.

“Whether it be their own local environment, or something further afield, such as the Great Barrier Reef.”

It is interesting to know, that as part of their training, all Master Reef Guide candidates de-livered a final three-minute presentation to one another.

“It was an incredibly powerful experience, as it allowed me to see the reef through the eyes of others.

“Hearing their unique perspectives and per-sonal stories brought a fresh appreciation for its



Master Reef Guides for Lady Elliot Island Giorgia Webster and Apphia Fiora. (The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority and Master Reef Guides)

beauty, and as a group, we found ourselves fall-ing in love with the Great Barrier Reef all over again.”

It was her natural inquisitiveness and deep desire to understand the Great Barrier Reef, making this UNESCO World Heritage Site a constant source of inspiration that saw Apphia Fiora welcome the privilege of becoming a Mas-ter Reef Guide, furthering her knowledge of this complex ecosystem.

Apphia said The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority has curated an incredible net-work of passionate experts.

“Between the dedicated educators and the 166 Master Reef Guides, I feel incredibly sup-ported in my mission to share and protect the Reef,” she said.

“The detailed training we received as Master Reef Guides, opened my mind to the intricacies of the Great Barrier Reef.

“From its stunning beauty, the ecological di-versity, the value of the biodiversity of the Reef, to its deep cultural significance.

“Allowing us to understand the importance of

the Reef, to better share and educate this wonder with our guests from the corners of the globe.”

Through her work on Lady Elliot Island, Ap-phia shares that she feels a personal heartfelt responsibility to translate this experience to guests.

“As I share this island paradise, I aim to in-spire joy and peace, while creating lasting mem-ories and creating a connection and an educa-tion for our visitors on the wonders of the Great Barrier Reef.

“I am dedicated to deepening my knowledge of the Great Barrier Reef to enrich the guest ex-perience on Lady Elliot Island.

“For me, this is more than a role, it is a com-mitment to Reef conservation, fostering aware-ness of vital habitats, and empowering others to minimise their environmental impact.

“I often find that I receive as much joy as our guests, sharing the vastness of this marine habi-tat with them, is truly the most fulfilling experi-ence for all of us.”

While Apphia is excited to be on the island, her training is something she will remember

fondly.

“The week was a constant reminder of the Great Barrier Reef’s astounding beauty.

“From the diverse marine habitats and geol-ogy, to the delicate link between bird life, veg-etation, and the coral reef itself.

“It is clear that this entire intricate system de-serves and requires our care.”

Reef Authority General Manager of Strategic Policy and Partnerships Caroline Turnour, who attended part of the training, said the program reinforces the importance of collaboration be-tween industry, science, and Traditional Owners in safeguarding the Reef for future generations.

“Master Reef Guides ensure that the incredi-ble complexities of the Great Barrier Reef, which is one of the most stunning natural environ-ments on earth, are being presented to visitors from around the world,” she said.

“This not only gives them an experience that they will never forget, but helps to reinforce that everyone can play a role in protecting the Reef and ensuring it remains one of the world’s great-est natural wonders.”



The ninth cohort of Master Reef Guides takes the total number graduated to 166. (The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority and Master Reef Guides)



Apphia and Giorgia were pleased to expand their knowledge of the Great Barrier Reef.



Both Giorgia and Apphia are enthusiastic about putting their training into action on Lady Elliot Island.



5 DAY TRIAL

Over 120 Classes a Week

- **Sauna, Steam room & Icebath**
- **Indoor Heated Magnesium Pool**
- **7 Day Creche**
- **Personal Trainers & Exercise Physiologists**
- **Pro Supp and Merch Shop & Cafe**

Over 170 Weight Machines

14 Heidke street avoca Qld 4670 ph: 07 4152 0342