



Project AWARE Environmental Award Winner 2005

Solomon Watersport is the newest dive resort to open in Gizo, it opened just over a year ago, but in that short time is already a winner of the Project AWARE Environmental Award 2005. This shows Solomon Watersport's strong commitment to the environment and the people of the Solomon Islands.

Project AWARE, is a world wide non-profit environmental organization.

Solomon Watersport in conjunction with Sanbis Resort, Solomon Islands premier dive resort, is also the latest PADI dive centre to be awarded with Project AWAREs Go ECO Operator status for 2006.

"Solomon Watersport is delighted to be awarded with Project AWARE Go ECO operator status 2006. As a Go ECO operator we are committed to providing dive experiences that enhance visitor awareness, appreciation and understanding of the local aquatic environment." Said Sally Svendsen senior instructor of Solomon Watersport.

Joanne Marston, co coordinator of Project Aware Asia Pacific added, "We are pleased to recognize Solomon Watersport as a Go ECO Operator. We look forward to working with them to implement environmental best practices and educate tourists about how to travel responsibly."

Project AWARE Foundation, the dive industry's leading non-profit environmental organization, launched the Go Eco campaign into the Asia Pacific region in 2005. The main objective of Go ECO is for dive centers to minimize their impact on the aquatic ecosystem whilst contributing to environmental, economic and cultural conservation. Dive centers are required to meet best practice environmental guidelines and commit to the Project AWARE Go ECO philosophy

Solomon Watersport is a winner of Project AWARE Environmental Award 2005, for their commitment to the Solomon Islands environment and people.

During the past year Solomon Watersport in conjunction with Sanbis Resort, Solomon Islands premier dive resort, has been involved in many projects to enhance divers experience and involve local communities in protecting their environment. They have organized many beach clean ups with the local community, educating the people on rubbish disposal and environmental issues. Solomon Watersport also ran a Kids AWARE club at a local village, which through games and activities educated the children about their reefs surrounding the island and how to help protect them. Solomon Watersport has been actively involved with repairs and maintenance of a mooring buoy system around Gizo, to try and prevent anchor damage to the reefs.

Sanbis Resort, which for the second year running has been awarded the Project AWARE Go ECO Operators award, has opened a bird sanctuary for any bird confiscated by Royal Solomon Island Police or Customs in illegal smuggling operations. The birds are not kept in captivity but are allowed to fly freely around the resort. The majority of the birds are Electus Parrots, which are on the endangered species list.

Solomon Watersport and Sanbis Resort are continuing their commitment to helping the Solomon Islands by becoming involved with a research project sponsored by the World Fish Centre. World Fish Centre has developed a hatchery that will produce juvenile clams, which will be sold to local villages for on growing. Growing clams for meat is not a realistic short-term proposition as it takes 8 years for clams to reach market size. However, the target market for the World Fish Centre project, which is funded by NZAID, is the ever-growing international marine aquarium market, which takes only 1-1 ½ years in a village grow out system. This project means that Solomon Islanders will be able to derive an income from a sustainable grown marine commodity, and it has other advantages too. As part of the project farmers are required to keep a proportion of their clams aside for broodstock and restocking their reefs. At the same time World Fish Centre staff continue to research optimum techniques for re stocking depleted reefs. One hundred and sixty giant clams (mainly *Tridacna derasa*) were placed on the reef in front of Sanbis Resort by a team of divers lead by World Fish Centre and Solomon Watersport. The clams are all tagged and measured and are placed in strategic areas for an experiment to establish optimum methods for restocking reefs with giant clams.

