

2009 Spring Appeal

24 September 2009



Dear Friend

We have waited a year since our last appeal, being very aware of the impacts of the economic situation and bushfire disaster earlier in February.

A year ago it appeared that the nasty skin disease, with large sores, that had affected the Gippsland Lakes dolphins had settled down – **and up until two months ago, we thought it had.**

It was not until we started analysing the 2000 high resolution images from our July survey that we realised the skin of many dolphins were affected by the classic lesions of **Dolphin Pox virus.**

This same population has seen over a dozen deaths during recent years (the latest only weeks ago).

Stress, environmental conditions and general health are thought to influence susceptibility to the disease.

The presence of the disease is consistent with our understanding of the high levels of toxins in this population, the impact on their immune system, and the environmental issues facing the Lakes. It also helps to explain how the nasty bacterial and fungal skin infections took hold in so many animals following the floods in 2007.

We know that our dolphins in Port Phillip have similar levels of mercury – creating concern for Ariel's family (who now has three generations in the Bay).

These are signs of ecosystems in trouble.

Sadly, there has never been a more urgent need for us to expand on research efforts to monitor the spread of dolphin pox and for education and actions to reduce coastal pollution.

Yes – we have to do more and we will do more, but we need your encouragement and your heartfelt donation because we can't do it alone!

Please support this vital research by responding to our Spring Appeal. Your help will ensure that we can progress our work to protect Victoria's dolphins and their environment.



As you contemplate our Spring Appeal, you might **consider an alternative way to support our work by becoming an 'i sea, i care' Champion pledge donor.** For less than 35 cents per day (\$10 per month), your regular pledge will help us to make an even greater difference. It helps us to save on the administrative costs of renewing annual memberships and it improves our ability to plan ahead. Many supporters find it convenient and also easier to give a little more, through automatic debits from your bank account or credit card.

If you would like to find out more about becoming an *'i sea, i care'* Champion, please contact the office on 1300 130 949, admin@dolphinresearch.org.au or tick the box below and fax or mail it back to us.

Feel free to contact me if you have any questions.
I look forward to hearing from you soon...

Kind regards,



Jeff Weir, Executive Director



2009 Spring Appeal



Name

Address

City Postcode

Phone Mobile

Email

YES - I support the crucial work of the institute and contribute

\$250 \$200 \$50 other \$ to the **2008 Spring Appeal**

<input type="checkbox"/> I have enclosed a cheque / money order for the indicated sum or <input type="checkbox"/> Please debit my credit card for \$..... Card Details Visa / MC ____ / ____ / ____ / ____ Expiry Date: __ / __ Name on Card: Signature Tax Deductible Receipt to be made out to:

Please send me **information** about:

- 'i sea, i care'* **Champion**
- DRI **Bequest** Program
- DRI **Marine Education** Programs
- 'i sea, i care'* **corporate champion**
- 'i sea, i care'* **school ambassadors**

Return this form by:

Mail DRI, PO Box 77, Hastings VIC 3915 **Fax** 03 5979 7150 or by **phone** 1300 130 949