



Media Release  
(For immediate release)  
August 26, 2009

## **Stabicraft plays role in ecological research**

Secrets of the marine world are being revealed as US scientists reap the rewards of aligning their specialist skills in Tahiti – and a New Zealand innovation is playing a key role.

University of California researchers from the Santa Barbara campus have been monitoring the Moorea Coral Reef since 2004 to observe and gather information on the coral and its creatures.

UCSB Marine Science Institute research associate Keith Seydel said the programme involved a core group of 19 professors with another 10-12 working alongside them on a short-term basis – a concept previously unheard of.

The all-encompassing approach to research ensured a diverse range of skills were being utilised.

“Things that one person doesn’t think are important to their specialty might be to someone else’s field,” Mr Seydel said.

A more complete picture of the precious reef environment was emerging.

“We’re actually encompassing everything – the fish, the coral, the water, the light, the algae. We’re studying the whole eco-system, not just one component of it,” Mr Seydel said.

“Instead of just a little section of the pie, you get to see the whole pie.”

The Moorea Coral Reef was the 26<sup>th</sup> site to be monitored as part of the Long Term Ecological Research network set up by the USA’s National Science Foundation in 1980 to help scientists forecast the impact of environmental changes.

“It would be nice to have lots more of these sites around the world.”

To conduct their valuable research, scientists rely on a fleet of 10 Stabicraft boats, ranging in size from the 389 Frontier to its larger 509 and 609 counterparts.

Mr Seydel enlisted Stabicraft for the job after experiencing the boats’ unrivalled attributes for himself while visiting New Zealand in 2005 – the first shipment to the US promptly following his return home.

“We have a lot of inexperienced users so the stability factor is huge for us,” he said.

“And being able to customise the boats to suit our specific needs was a bonus.”

Aluminium was standing up well to the rigors of a coral reef.

“It gets a dent and it’s not a huge pain to repair it ... the boats aren’t out of the water as often for repairs which is fantastic.”

Gulfland Marine in Whangaparoa has supplied the UCSB programme with the boats for the past five years, the latest shipment arriving recently. The long term nature of the research programme meant it potentially had another 25 years to run.

“We’re just growing and growing – that’s why we keep buying boats from New Zealand,” Mr Seydel said.

“Hopefully your boats will last that long.”

Stabicraft Marine managing director Paul Adams said the company was proud to provide researchers with the tools needed to conduct their important work.

“There are enormous mysteries out there – it’s vital research which will undoubtedly have an impact in the future and it’s rewarding to play a role in that,” he said.

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For further information, contact:

Paul Adams  
Stabicraft Marine  
(03) 211 1828 ext 6