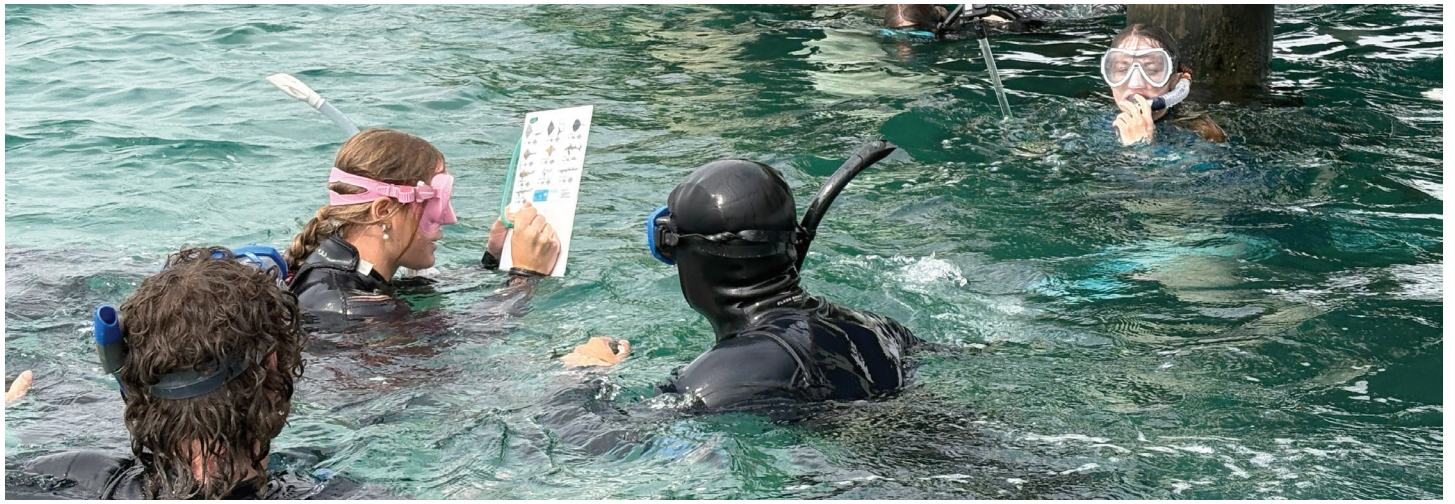




Weather-smart marine event planning

A QUICK GUIDE FOR PLANNING POP-UP EVENTS AROUND GOOD WEATHER

Build a flexible event structure

- Use flexible event windows such as a Mon–Fri block instead of fixed dates.
- Identify several suitable sites so you can relocate quickly based on tides, swell or wind.
- Confirm any operational constraints early, including tides, access and staffing.

Prepare everything in advance

- Develop template communications for emails, social posts, event information and risk documents.
- Finalise risk assessments, safety procedures and equipment lists ahead of time.

Benefits of this approach

- Improved event reliability with fewer cancellations.
- Safer conditions and more efficient use of staff and volunteer time.
- A better overall experience for participants and increased community engagement.

Weather triggers to consider

- No strong (>20 knot) onshore winds in the 1–2 days prior.
- No significant rainfall (>10 mm) in the previous week.
- No rainfall within 24 hours.
- Light or offshore winds on the event day.

ReefWatch trialled a series of short-notice ('pop-up') marine volunteering events to improve participation, diversify engagement, and reduce the number events cancelled due to unfavourable weather conditions. The survey and analysis supporting this quick guide can be found in the full report, available at vnpa.org.au/publications/pop-up.

Planning timeline for a pop-up event

Months–weeks ahead

- Nominate a week-long event window and keep those days free.
- Prepare all communication materials and participant information.
- Finalise all risk and safety documentation.

Two weeks ahead

- Check the long-term rainfall outlook using BoM climate tools.
- Monitor 14-day forecasts to narrow down two or three potential event days.
- Refresh and update communication materials and risk documents.

One week ahead

- Review BoM forecasts for rainfall, wind and swell, and use MetEye for detailed wind direction and speed.
- Apply predetermined weather triggers such as rainfall cut-offs, wind limits and swell thresholds.
- If the forecast is favourable, update promotional messaging, email supporters first for early registrations, and share publicly the following day if places remain.

Final days

- Continue checking weather conditions and confirming site suitability.
- Promote any remaining spaces and reassure participants that conditions look favourable.
- Finalise safety procedures and ensure all equipment is prepared and ready.