

TOURISM AUSTRALIA *Sustainability* STORYTELLERS

JAMES 'MURPH' MURPHY

Captain and Owner, Sea All Dolphin Swims | Victoria



When James 'Murph' Murphy bought Sea All Dolphin Swims, offering unforgettable close-up experiences with the wild dolphins and Australian fur seals of Port Phillip Bay, he knew he had a responsibility to help sustain and restore the ocean environment. But he soon realised there wasn't enough scientific data available to make informed decisions.

He set about integrating a matrix of revenue streams into the business to generate research funds. He established SOEL.org.au – a not-

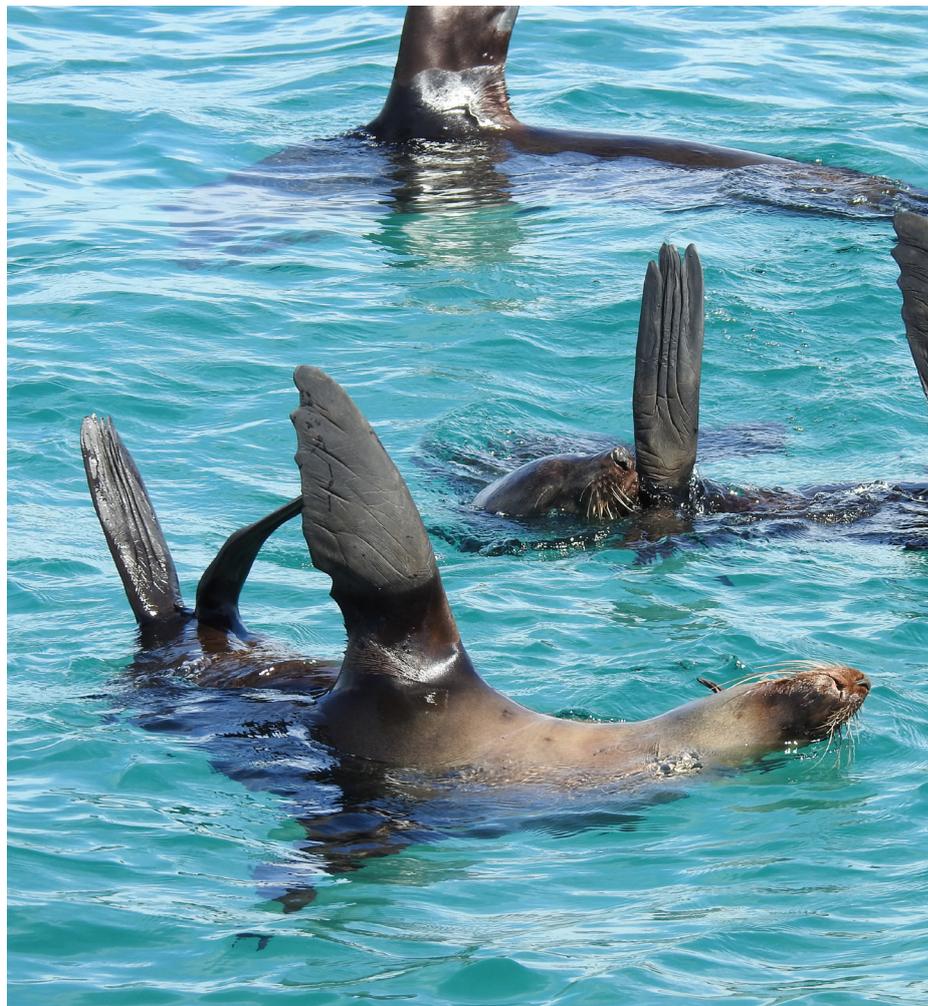
for-profit foundation – and an environmental levy on every dolphin swim ticket sold, with funds going directly to research.

Learning of the Precious Plastics open-source recycling project, Murph established plastic bottle-top collection points – open to guests and the wider community – and purchased machinery that turns waste plastic into anything from hair clips to outdoor furniture. There's the potential to manufacture to order – with proceeds going to SOEL.

"I FEEL LIKE THERE'S A TIDE OF MOMENTUM FOR OUR SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVES, AND ONE STEP KEEPS LEADING SERENDIPITOUSLY TO ANOTHER."



"OUR FOCUS ON SUSTAINABILITY HAS STRENGTHENED OUR BRAND AS A LEADING ECOTOURISM PROVIDER, WHICH HAS BUILT CLIENT TRUST AND HELPED ATTRACT BOTH THE 'RIGHT' CLIENTS AND THE BEST STAFF. WE'RE NOW WORKING ON COLLABORATIONS WITH OTHER TOURISM BUSINESSES AND RELATED INDUSTRIES, INCLUDING MAJOR WETSUIT MANUFACTURERS. THE MORE WE CAN ALL WORK TOGETHER, THE MORE WE CAN ACHIEVE."



As the largest Victorian provider of marine education services, Sea All has the potential to introduce tens of thousands of high-school students to marine conservation through dolphin and seal swim tours. Now, as an adjunct, Murph has introduced plastics recycling workshops.

"The reward is seeing the penny drop for students, when they create something useful from waste and realise that they – anyone – have the power to make a real difference," explains Murph.

The project has added resilience to the business: Murph expects the plastics project to account for two-thirds of future revenue.

To date, SOEL-funded projects have ranged from funding the Pope's Eye underwater camera to monitor marine species, to developing AI

algorithms that identify dolphins over live footage, revolutionising marine mammal monitoring efforts.

Sea All Dolphin Swims recently scooped three gongs at the Geelong Business Excellence Awards – the first time in the history of the awards – including Business of the Year and Young Entrepreneur of the Year.

"I'm hoping that other businesses will see our results and be nudged to ask, 'Am I doing enough?'"

"I can't do it all, but if I can put the right systems in place, the right people will fall into line and we'll be able to give our kids the same opportunities we had." 🌿

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