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## **Unique Easter Treat Now On Show**

Easter Buns, Bunnies and Bilbies have fallen by the wayside this year at Reef HQ Aquarium, with a unique “white” green turtle hatchling becoming the highlight of Easter festivities.

The turtle has been diagnosed as Amelanotic, meaning it has a lack of melanin (pigment). This condition causes the turtle to appear completely white in colour, similar to an albino.

Queensland Parks and Wildlife Senior Conservation Officer Ian Bell said such a skin condition is uncommon and unlikely to be seen as Amelanotic turtles rarely survive in the wild.

“They stand out in their natural environment and therefore are an obvious target for predators,” he said.

Reef HQ Aquarist Paul Groves said a call for help from the Qld Parks & Wildlife Service recently sparked an eight hour round journey to Mackay to collect Reef HQ’s newest resident.

“This turtle did not manage to leave the nest and was discovered by a turtle monitoring team,” said Mr Groves.

“Our staff at Reef HQ have been caring for the turtle and we are impressed with progress so far,” he said.

“The hatchling has been feeding well and is growing steadily.”

Whilst the shell has gained a small amount of colour, the body of the turtle is white in colour and this is not expected to change.

Reef HQ Aquarium intends to continue caring for the turtle, and has now placed it on display for the general public to view.

To promote the arrival of this special turtle, Reef HQ has produced a range of white chocolate turtles as an alternative to the traditional Easter egg.

White chocolate turtles will be on sale at Reef HQ throughout the Easter holiday period.

**Photo Opportunities:**

- Reef HQ Staff monitoring the rare turtle
- Interview with Reef HQ Aquarist Paul Groves

**Further Information:**

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