

Guardians of the reef

By OLIVIA KATTER

THE potential damage from fishing, oil exploration and pollution on the Great Barrier Reef were canvassed at the combined schools Future Leaders Congress on Thursday.

Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority education manager Angela Colliver said the Future Leaders Congress was the first of its kind in Townsville.

The congress formed part of Seaweeek celebrations, with 54 students from 12 schools in the region delivering presentations on their ideas and concerns about natural resources.

After the presentations the students compiled a charter of their beliefs, commitment to action and visions for future action.

Concerns about drilling on the reef were a hot topic, with several schools discussing the issue in their presentations. Sunfish North Queensland



HOT TOPIC . . . Ignatius Park's Chris Miegler, Jye Lovell, Matthew Keating and Chris Norton give a presentation on preserving the marine environment

Photo: STEWART McLEAN SM374C01

chairman Vern Veitch said it was important the children be conscious of the threat of oil drilling.

"Oil drilling is the biggest risk at the moment," he said.

Year 10 student Matthew Keating said that he and his

team from Ignatius Park College believed the drilling on the reef was a major issue that should be addressed.

The students used a variety of slides, posters and photos to assist in their presentations, with Hermit Park State

School staging an entertaining role play on the life of rubbish and oil and their impact on the reef.

Ms Colliver said she was "blown away" by the level of excellence displayed at the forum.