



# Increasing conservation/development conflicts at Mission Beach

Presentation  
Cassowary Recovery Team meeting  
13 November 2018



“The Djiru people are the Aboriginal Traditional Owners of the land and sea country of the Mission Beach area.

The Djiru people’s sense of identity as ‘rainforest people’ is very strong”.

From Mission Beach naturally promotional booklet







“An integral part of the Djiru peoples relationship with the rainforest is the gunduy (cassowary), which is important to the health of both the people and the rainforest”.

From Mission Beach naturally promotional booklet







For decades the community has been proactive – helping to protect the exceptional natural environment and cassowary population



**MISSION BEACH  
SANCTUARY**

A CO-OPERATIVE PROJECT OF  
THE LOCAL CONSERVATION AND  
TOURISM ORGANISATIONS  
PROMOTING MISSION BEACH  
AS A SANCTUARY

QUEENSLAND AUSTRALIA

Want to take your next holiday in two World Heritage areas and help the local community keep them special?

C4 started the first eco tours at Mission Beach in 1997

**Mission Beach Sanctuary Tours**



**Heritage Rainforest Discovery Tour**  
Includes 50km Scenic Drive.  
Pick up from your accommodation.  
Relaxed local area tour including local historical sites and beauty spots.  
The fascinating Tam O'Shanter State Forest where you will enter the world of tropical rainforest.  
Tread the board walk among the rustling Lincala palms.  
Visit the giant strangler fig adorned with epiphytes, orchids etc.  
Find a quiet corner ... perhaps see a cassowary.  
Returning via beautiful Bingil Bay stopping off for a visit to the acclaimed environmental centre.  
Book at your accommodation or phone 687216 or 685241.  
\* Pick up commences 1.30 PM.

**Adults: \$28**  
**6 - 14 Years: \$14**  
**Family Discounts**

**Refreshments included.**



Kids design signs to place on the roadside





## Community helps cassowaries cross roads



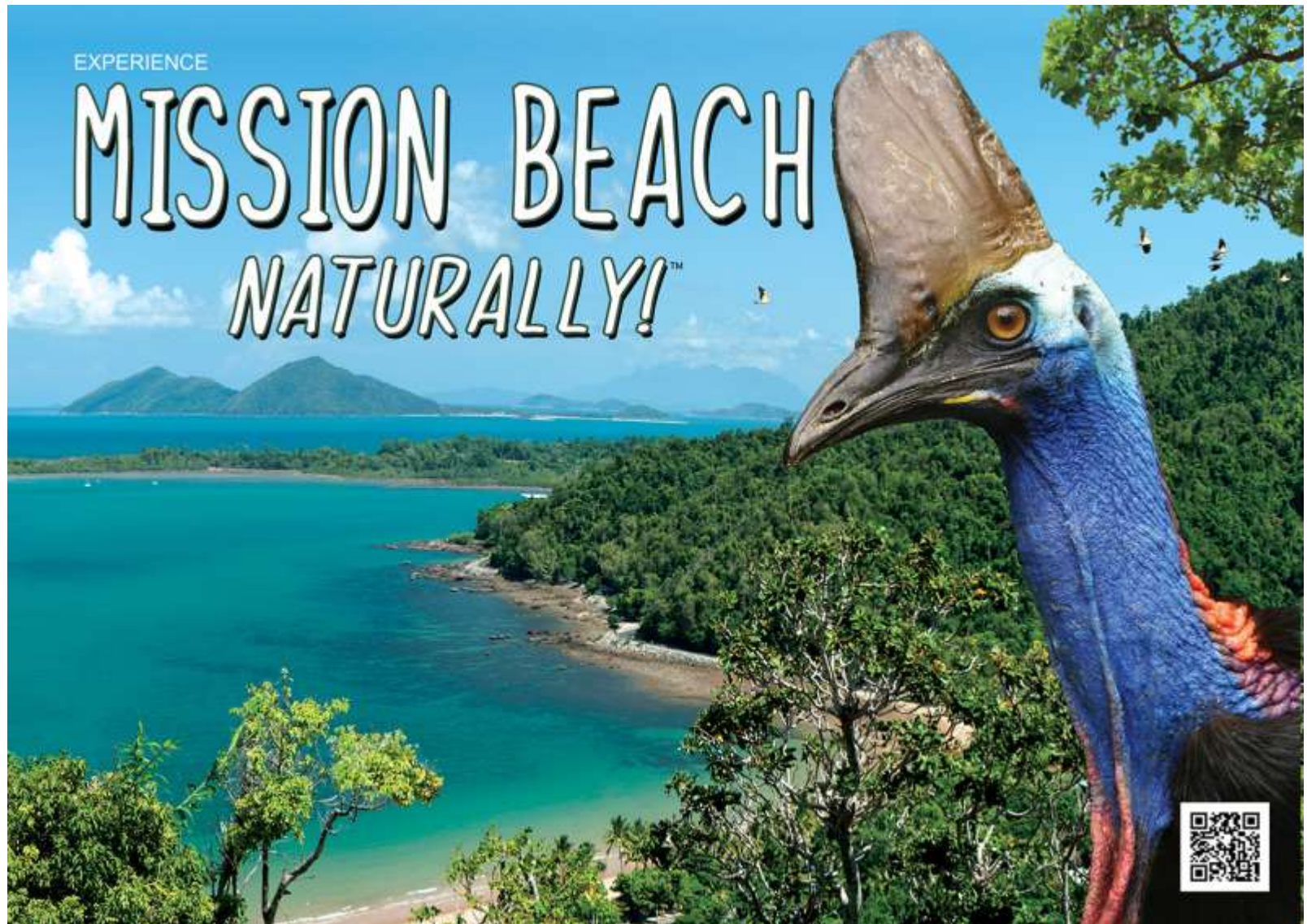


The Mission Beach  
Community Cassowary Festival  
has been established





A strong community identity is being reinforced through the 'Mission Beach naturally' branding





# Presenting the special natural and cultural values of Mission Beach





The community works with governments to find solutions to address the threats to cassowaries





Governments have responded



# Governments have responded

## Development denied!

40% of the remaining cassowary habitat at Mission Beach is not protected

Key sites must be secured now. We need to protect essential cassowary habitat by any means it takes, whether it is by buy back, fair incentives to landholders, or adjusting planning schemes to introduce legislation on a local, state and federal level.



Councillors and community organisations support buyback and bans on clearing



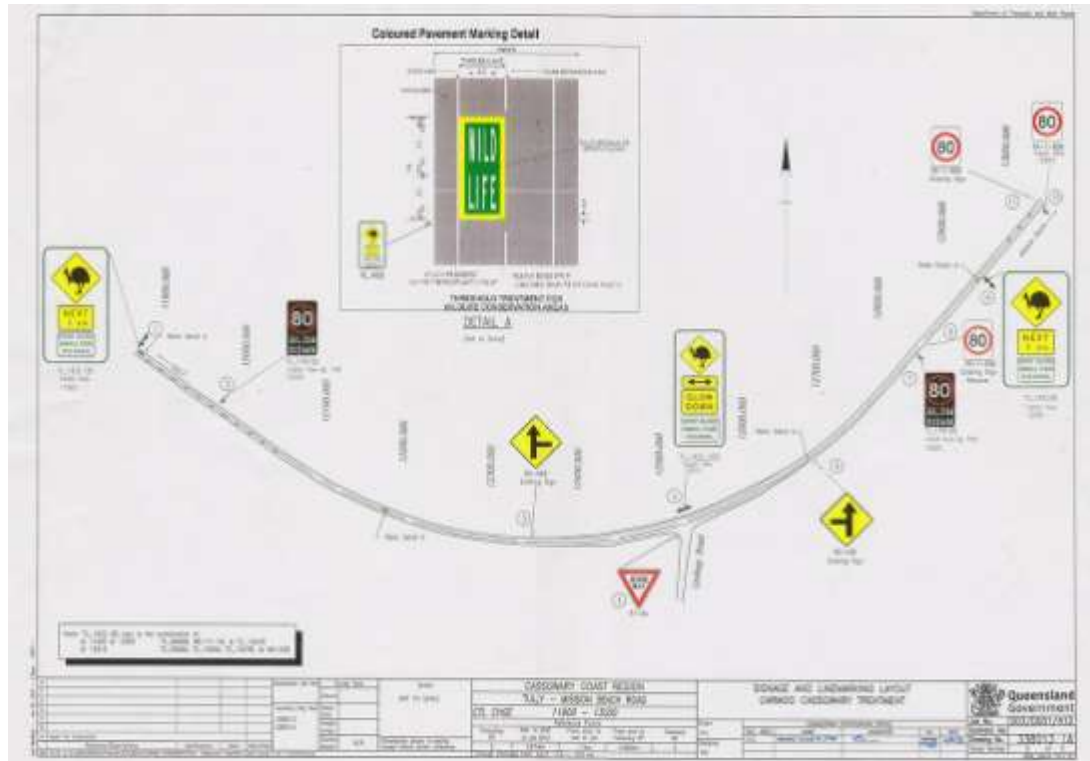
The Federal Environment Minister found a development proposal to be '**clearly unacceptable**' under the EPBC Act because of the impact it would have on the endangered cassowary



Governments have responded



# Governments have responded





Governments have responded





## Community input has been reflected in plans

### Cassowary Coast Regional Council

**Resident population in 2006:** 29 642

**Estimated resident population in 2031:** 32 923

**Major regional activity centres:** Innisfail

**District regional activity centres:** Tully

**Village activity centres:** Cardwell, Mission Beach

Mission Beach is located near Tully and consists of North Mission, Wongaling and South Mission Beaches. It occupies a narrow strip of land between the Wet Tropics and Great Barrier Reef World Heritage areas and contains significant areas of ecological significance including essential habitat of the endangered southern cassowary. The survival of this ecologically important species is critically threatened by continuing habitat loss and car strikes.

The urban footprint at Mission Beach will be constrained to minimise future impacts on ecological values, coastal hazard risks and loss of the village character. Densities are to be kept low and building heights limited to avoid increasing traffic generation and urban impacts. Future development should occur around village nodes and avoid linear form, maintain and restore cassowary habitat, and ensure good corridor connectivity.



## Community input has been reflected in plans



### Protecting endangered species

The southern populations of the southern cassowary (*Casuarus casuarus johnsonii*) and mahogany glider (*Petaurus gracilis*) are listed as endangered species under the *Nature Conservation Act 1992* and the *Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*.

Both taxa are national and state priorities for recovery actions. Southern cassowaries are large animals requiring large areas of habitat and access to clean water. They are also major long distance dispersal agents for large fruited rainforest trees and considered a keystone species. Mahogany gliders occur in coastal lowland habitats, many of which are endangered from past clearing. While these two species are Wet Tropics icons, conservation of

FRQ biodiversity cannot be dependent solely on the implementation of protection measures for these animals alone.

Mission Beach and hinterland, southern Atherton Tablelands, and Daintree to Cape Tribulation are considered as priority areas for biodiversity conservation (DOUGPS, 2000). In the Mission Beach area, urban development is contributing to significant ongoing decline of the small cassowary population. Current urban impacts upon cassowaries and their habitat—especially increasing losses due to road traffic and dog attacks—are not believed to be sustainable. These areas are not considered appropriate for high-density urban development.

2000). In the Mission Beach area, urban development is contributing to significant ongoing decline of the small cassowary population. Current urban impacts upon cassowaries and their habitat—especially increasing losses due to road traffic and dog attacks—are not believed to be sustainable. These areas are not considered appropriate for high-density urban development.

Despite continued community involvement, development/conservation conflicts are increasing

Changes to legislation are reducing environmental protection and denying meaningful public consultation

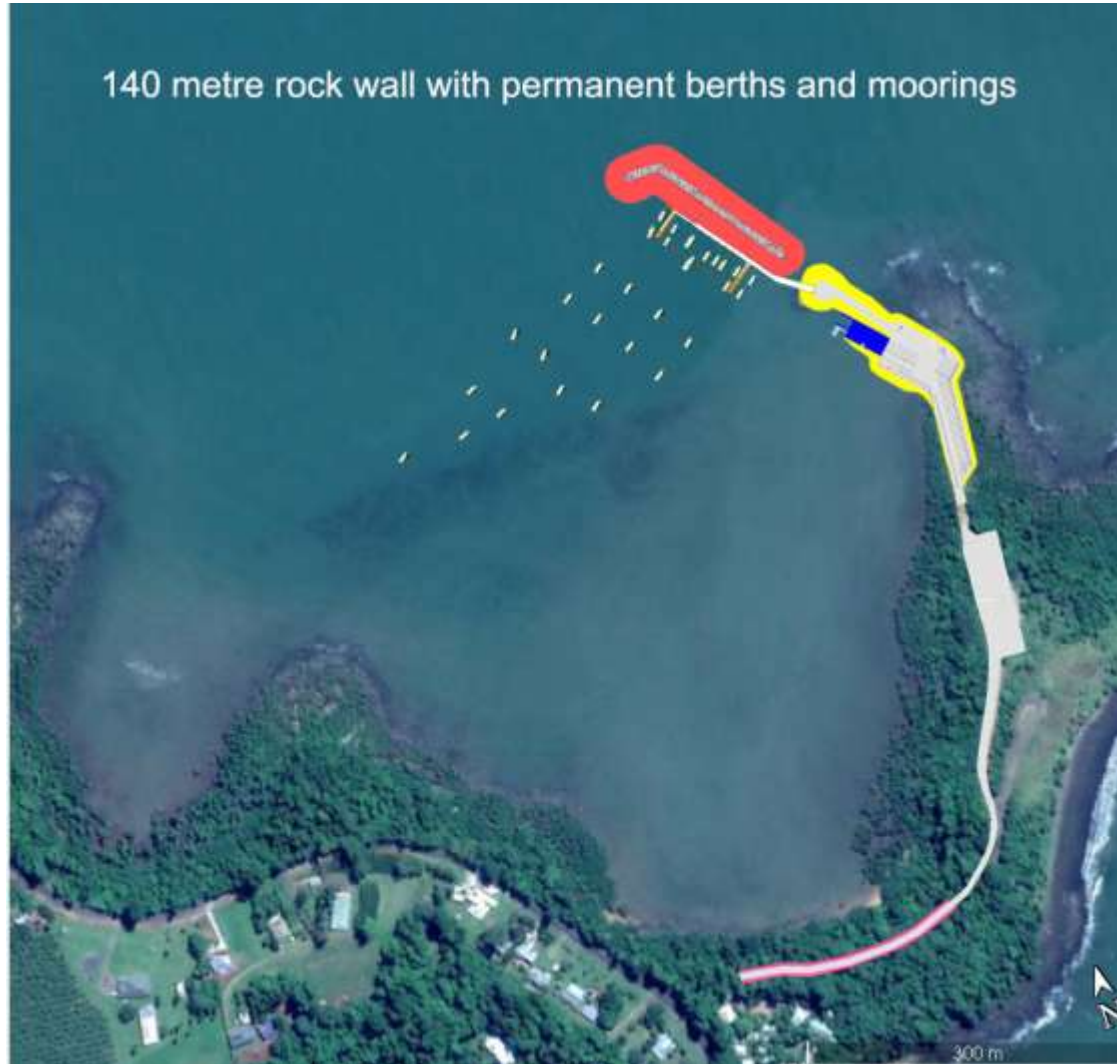
Areas of State Significance

No adverse impact

- ~~Protect the high environmental values~~
- Respect the rich environment



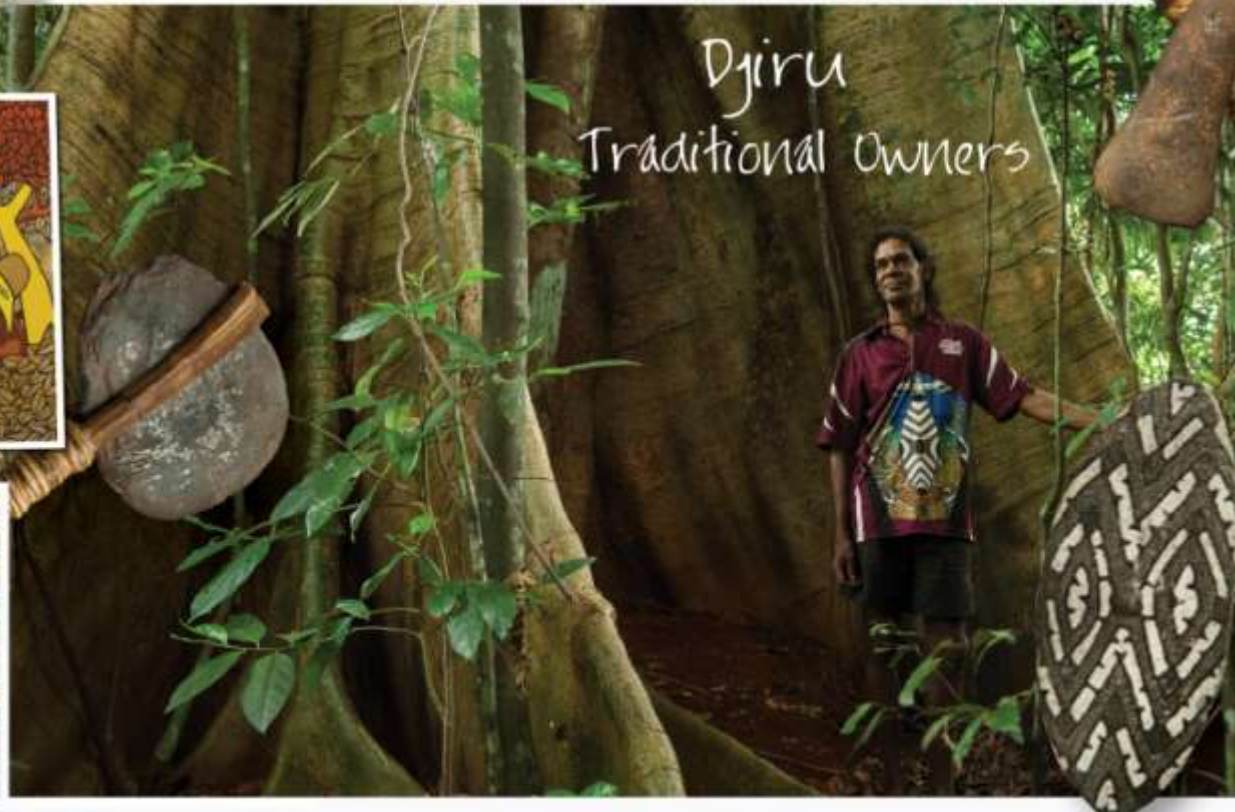
Removal of protection and lack of Federal and State intervention is increasing conservation/development conflicts such as the expansion of marine infrastructure at Clump Point





“Clump Point is universally seen by the Djiru people as a core place in their homeland”.

From Mission Beach naturally promotional booklet



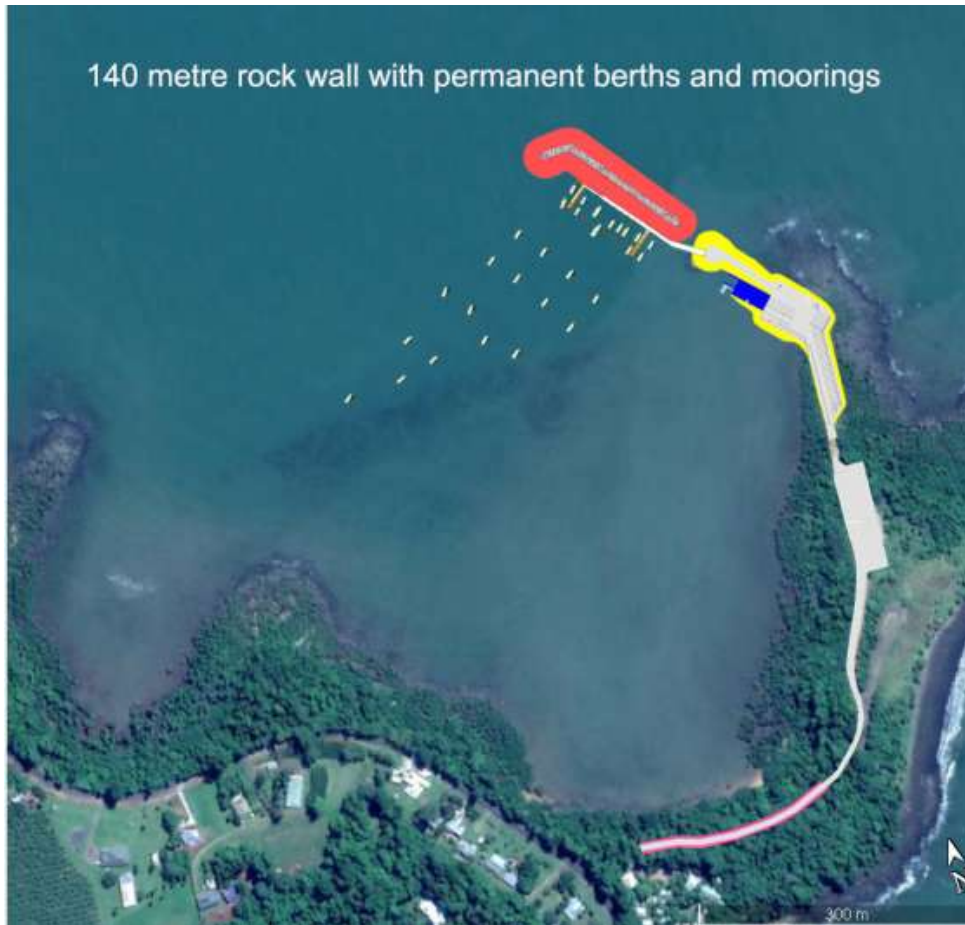


What started out to be an upgrade to the recreational boating facilities was declared a 'Major Development'

Which allowed it to bypass proper assessment processes and public consultation



The purpose of the facility was expanded to include commercial activities including barges, bus transfers, refuelling, etc, effectively creating a port marina hub.



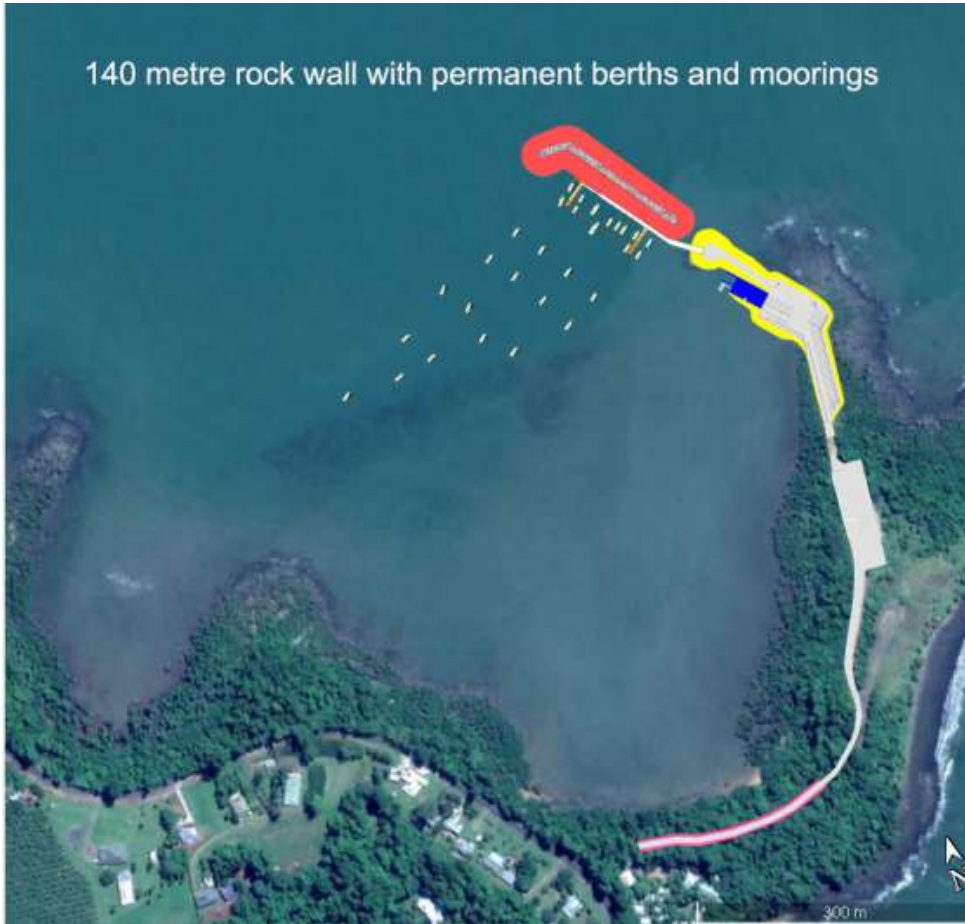
Despite the development having unacceptable, consequential combined and cumulative impacts on matters of national environment significance, it was approved without being made a controlled action

Required removal of rare basalt littoral rainforest/cassowary habitat

Traditional Owner wishes were ignored



140 metre rock wall with permanent berths and moorings



During construction there will be 9 – 12 (up to 18) months of heavy vehicles transporting rocks through cassowary habitat. One truck every 25 minutes. Some rocks will be one per truck

The community request for the rocks to be transported by barge has been ignored

The development is now being described in the CCRC Tourism Strategy as the 'Clump Point marine harbour.'

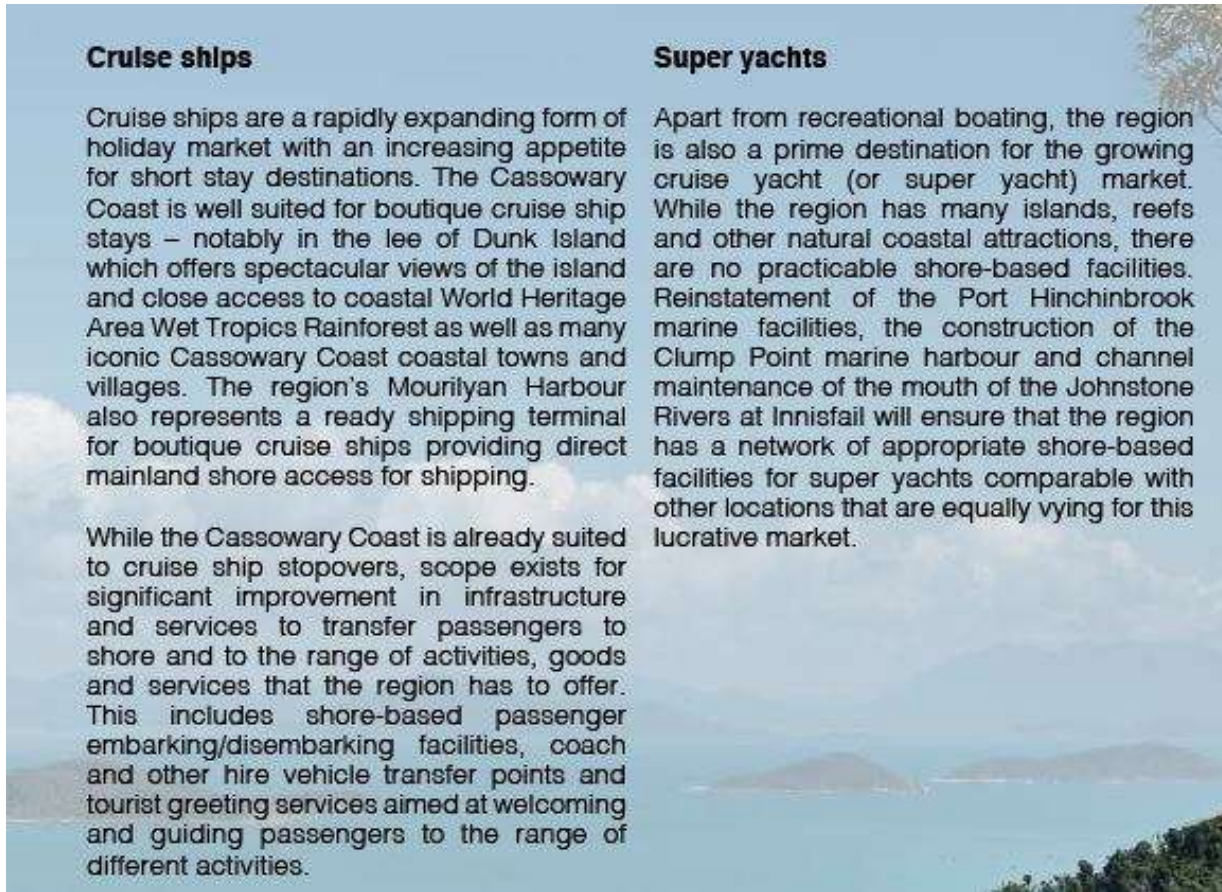
### **Cruise ships**

Cruise ships are a rapidly expanding form of holiday market with an increasing appetite for short stay destinations. The Cassowary Coast is well suited for boutique cruise ship stays – notably in the lee of Dunk Island which offers spectacular views of the island and close access to coastal World Heritage Area Wet Tropics Rainforest as well as many iconic Cassowary Coast coastal towns and villages. The region's Mourilyan Harbour also represents a ready shipping terminal for boutique cruise ships providing direct mainland shore access for shipping.

While the Cassowary Coast is already suited to cruise ship stopovers, scope exists for significant improvement in infrastructure and services to transfer passengers to shore and to the range of activities, goods and services that the region has to offer. This includes shore-based passenger embarking/disembarking facilities, coach and other hire vehicle transfer points and tourist greeting services aimed at welcoming and guiding passengers to the range of different activities.

### **Super yachts**

Apart from recreational boating, the region is also a prime destination for the growing cruise yacht (or super yacht) market. While the region has many islands, reefs and other natural coastal attractions, there are no practicable shore-based facilities. Reinstatement of the Port Hinchinbrook marine facilities, the construction of the Clump Point marine harbour and channel maintenance of the mouth of the Johnstone Rivers at Innisfail will ensure that the region has a network of appropriate shore-based facilities for super yachts comparable with other locations that are equally vying for this lucrative market.





To attract cruise ships and super yachts

**Cruise ships**

**Super yachts**

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'Judith' in her range at Clump Point

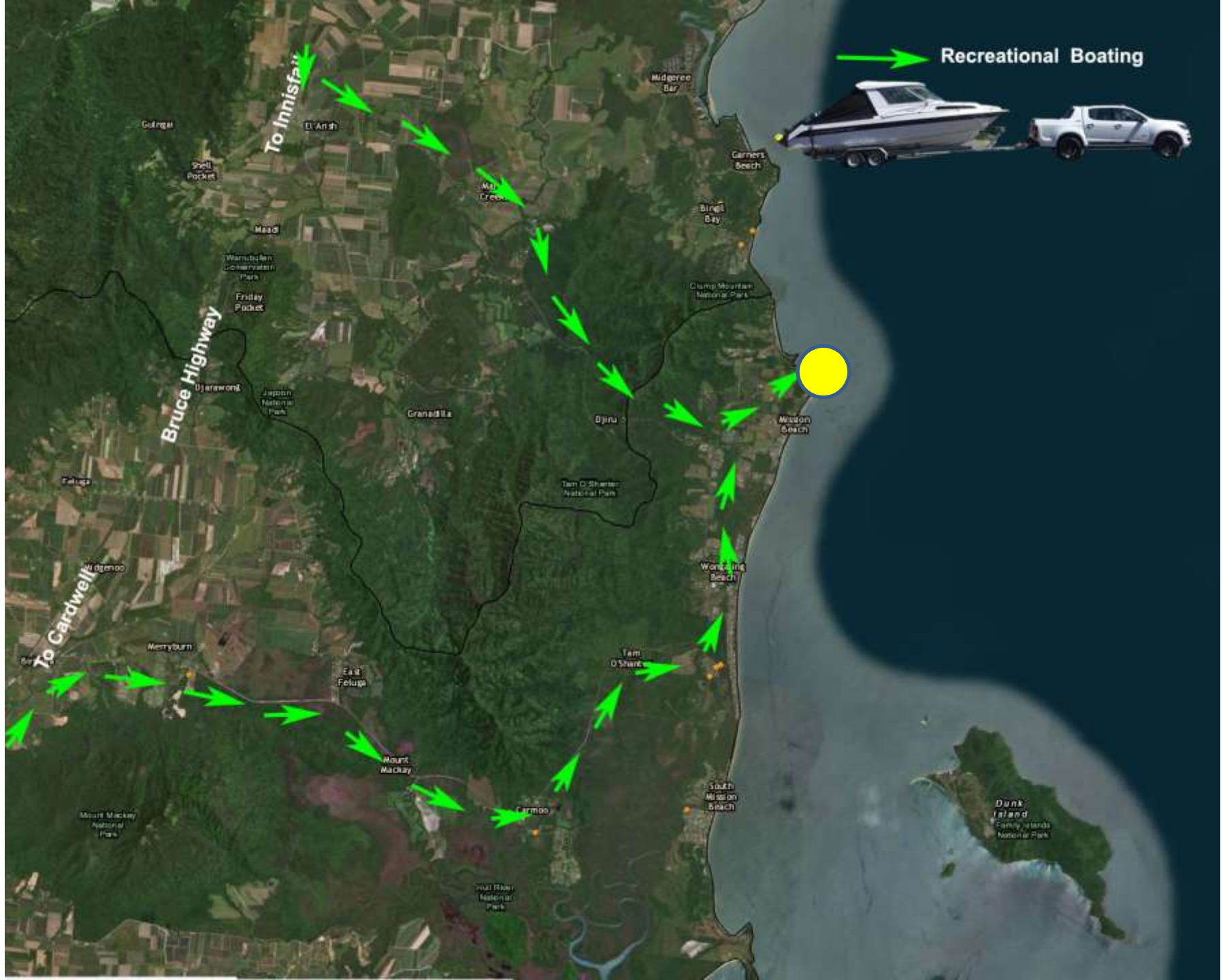


'Judith' photos Paul Toogood

The large scale development will:

- have unacceptable impacts on the natural and cultural values of Clump Point headland and bay
- compromise the low key village character of Mission Beach
- significantly increase traffic to and from Mission Beach through cassowary habitat
- deny 'Judith' access to the headland and rare basalt littoral rainforest





Recreational Boating



To Innisfail

Bruce Highway

To Cardwell

Goring

Shell Pocket

D'Arish

Mead

Wernick

Friday Pocket

Ojirawong

Jordan National Park

Granville

Ojira

Tam O'Shante National Park

Wong's Bay Beach

Tam O'Shante

Westburn

East Feluga

Mount Mackay

Carmoo

South River National Park

Mudgee Bay

Garner's Beach

Bing's Bay

Clump Mountain National Park

Mission Beach

Wong's Bay Beach

Tam O'Shante

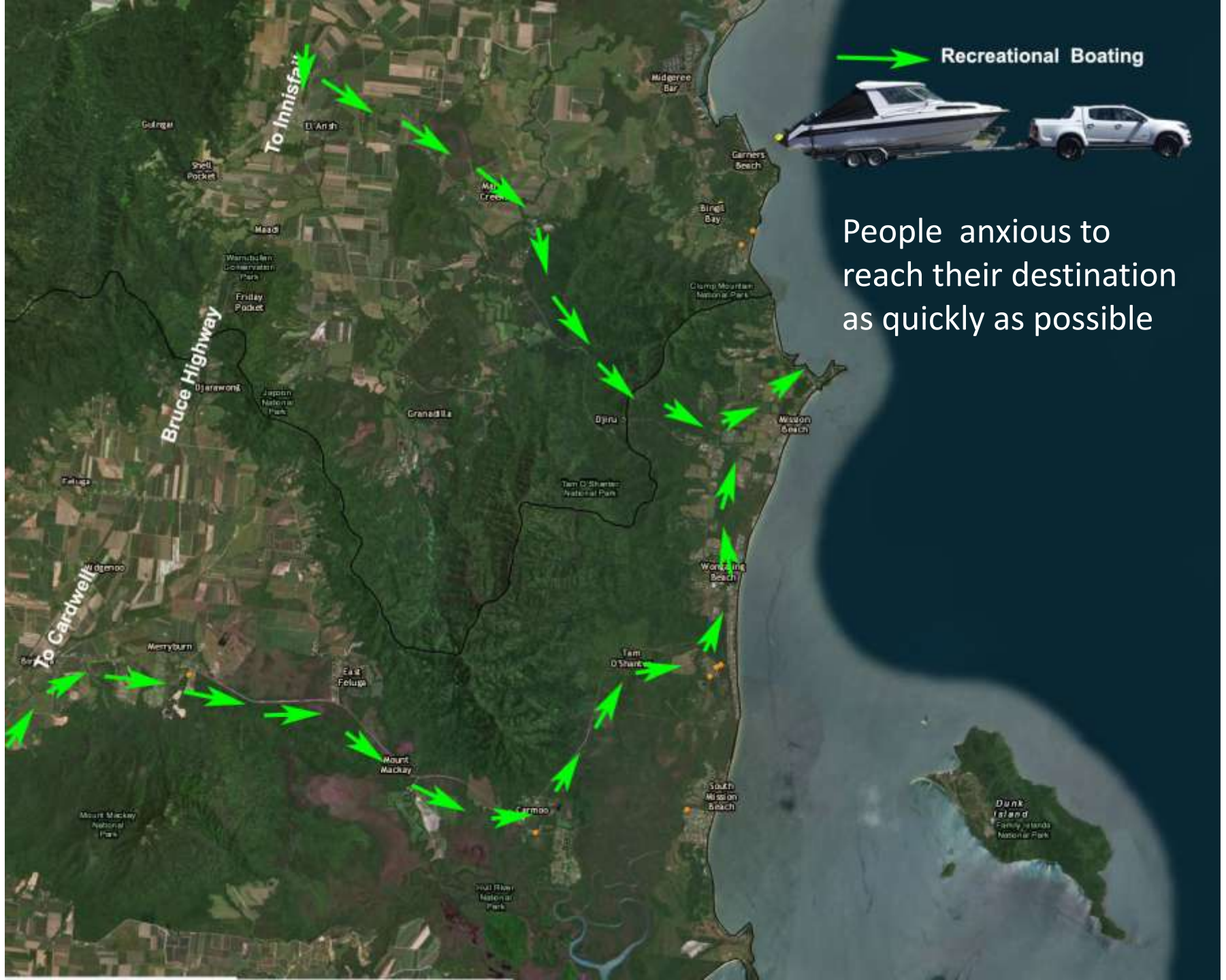
South Mission Beach

Dunk Island

Fanny Islands National Park











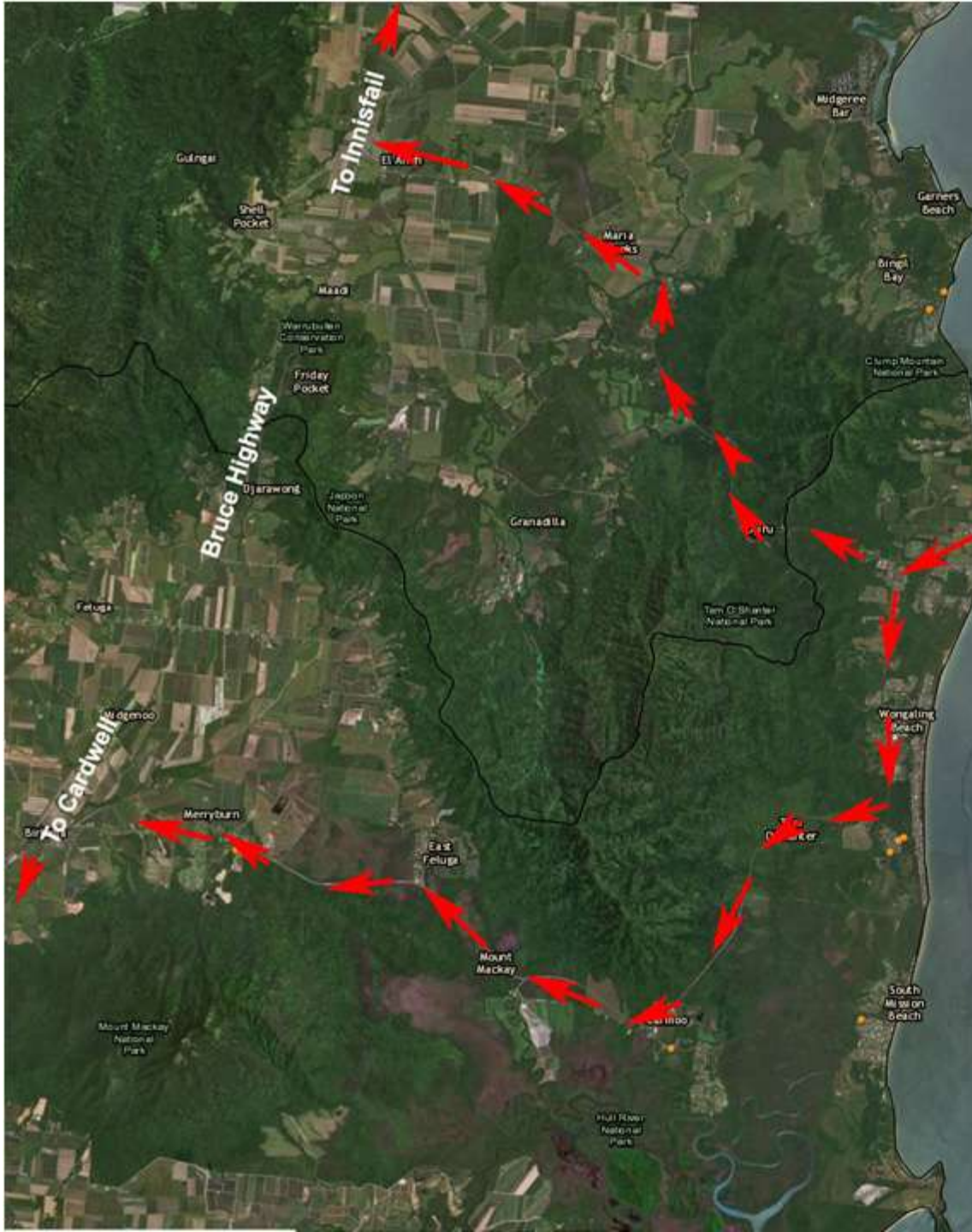
'Small' cruise ships of  
approx 500 passengers

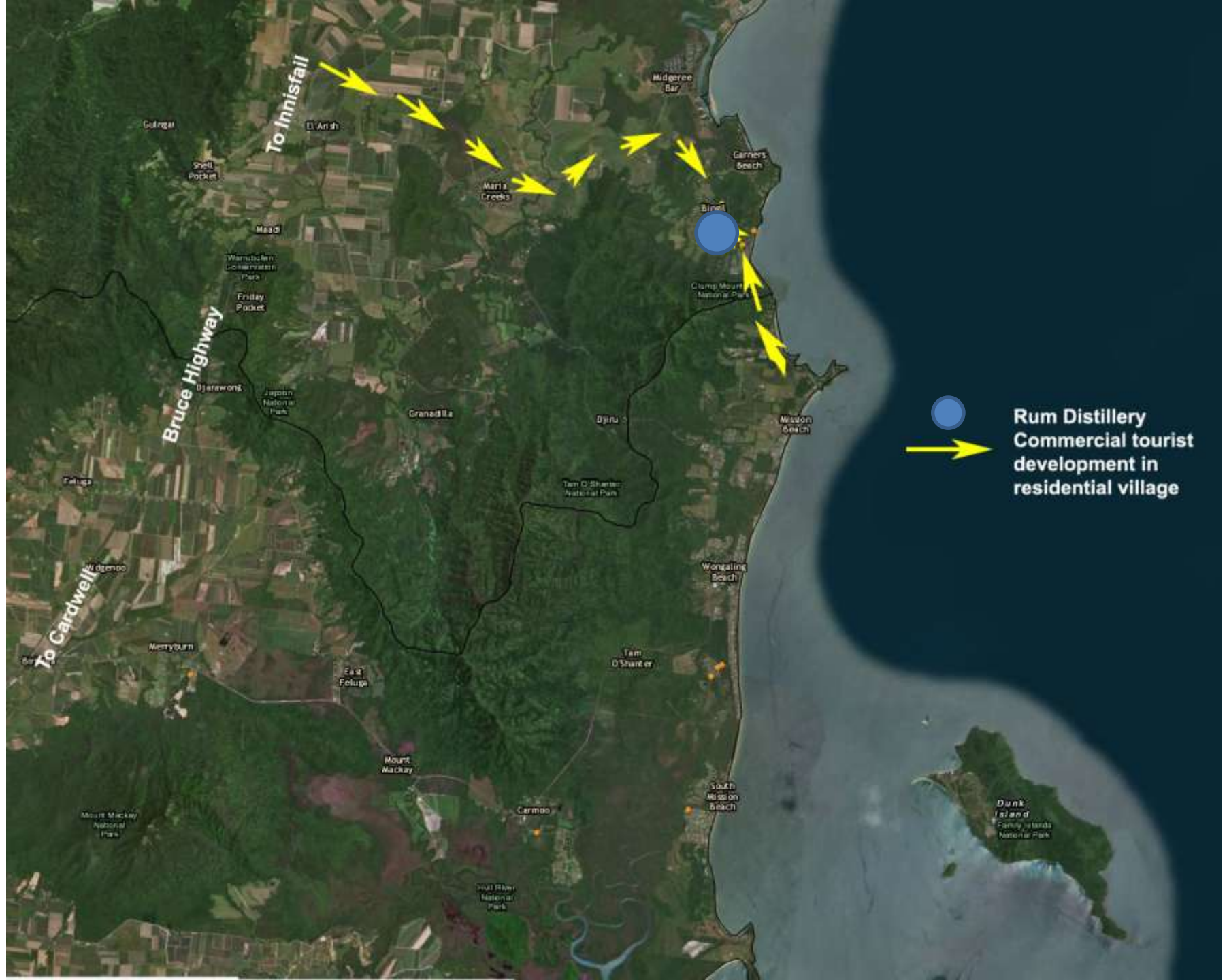
Cruise ship transfers



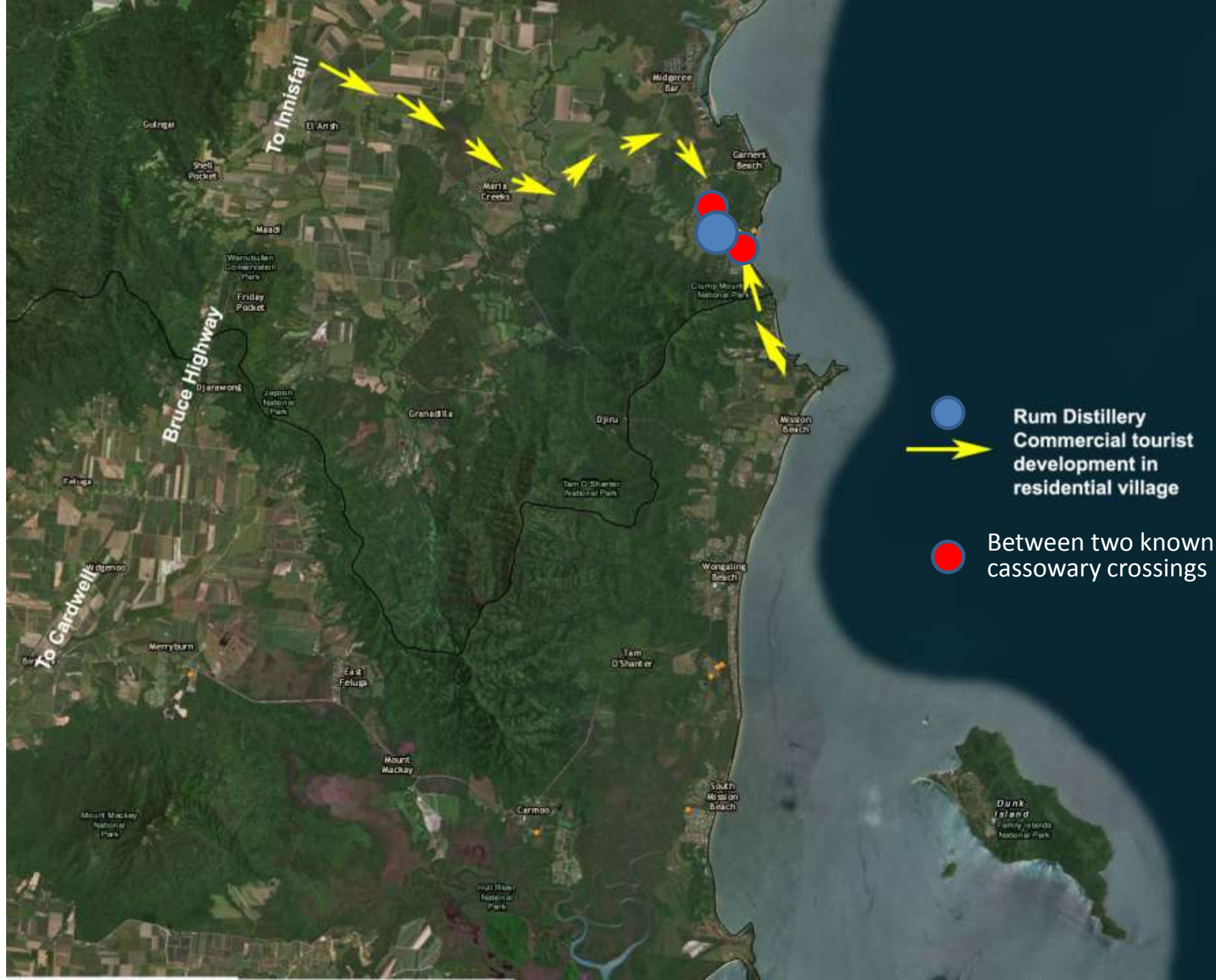
Using Mission Beach as  
A marine port hub to  
access the broader  
Cassowary Coast

Cruise  
Ships











A map showing the Wongaling Creek habitat linkages. The map features a yellow outline of the creek's path, with labels for 'Djirru', 'Wongaling Creek', 'Wongaling Beach', and 'Turn O'Shewan National Park'.

Tam O'Shaner

**Wongaling -  
South Mission Beach  
habitat linkages**

South Mission Beach



The MBHNAP, including the mapping was incorporated into the CCRC Planning Scheme









Development approved inconsistent with CCRC Planning Scheme

No habitat linkage mapping of this area within the CCRC Planning Scheme

No conditions imposed to address traffic increase through known cassowary crossing areas.

Rum Distillery  
Commercial tourist development in residential village

Habitat linkages/cassowary crossings

5 storey accommodation  
and conference centre  
development on the  
foreshore

High rise development  
400pax conference centre







5 storey accommodation  
and conference centre  
development on the  
foreshore

Exceeds the Planning  
scheme height limit by  
3 stories

High rise development  
400pax conference centre

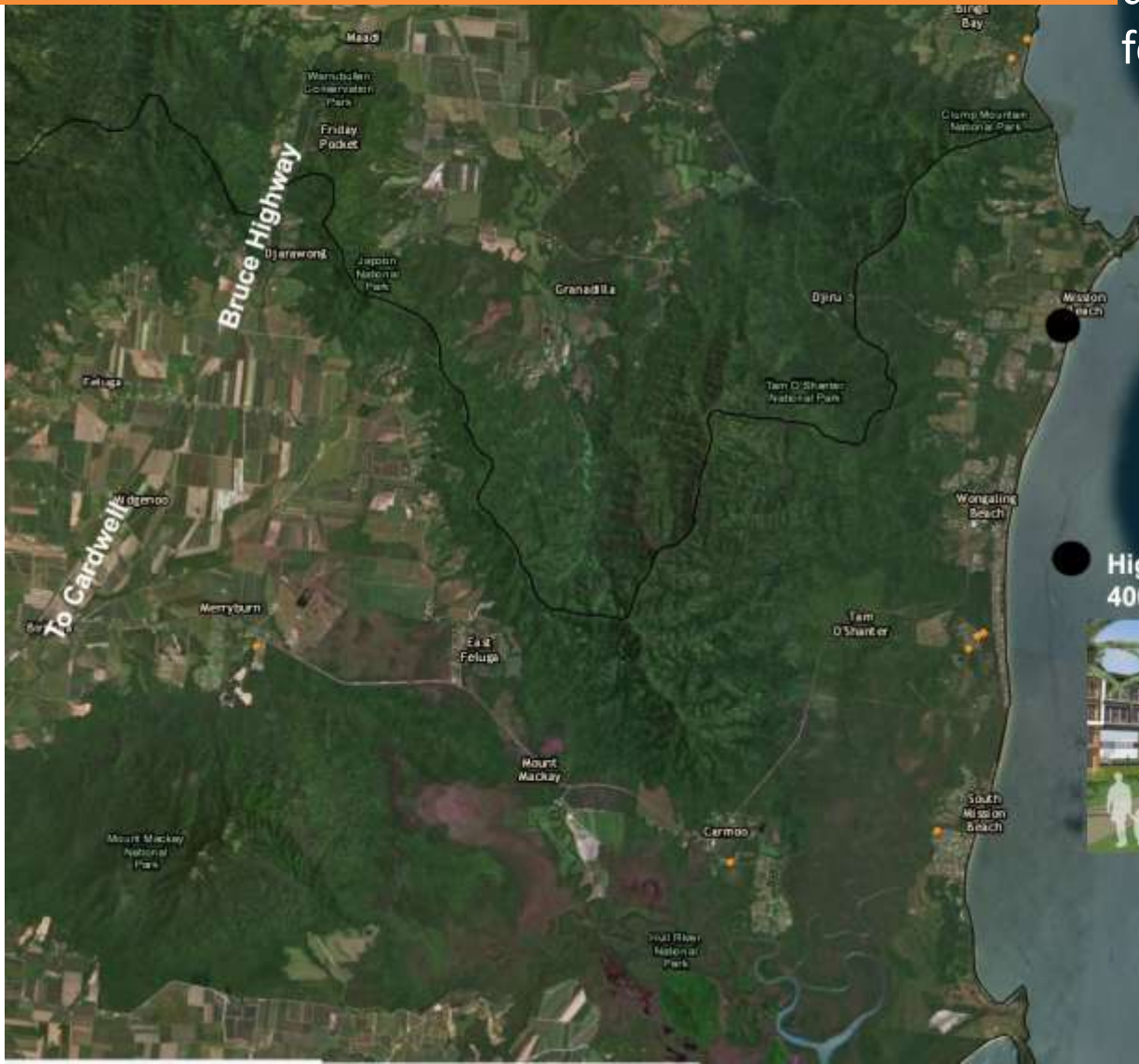


# Ignores vision for Mission Beach in State regional Planning

5 storey accommodation  
and conference centre  
development on the  
foreshore

Exceeds the Planning  
scheme height limit by  
3 stories

High rise development  
400pax conference centre





# Ignores vision for Mission Beach in State regional Planning

5 storey accommodation  
and conference centre  
development on the  
foreshore

**Cassowary Coast Regional Council**

**Village activity centres: Cardwell, Mission Beach**



Protecting endangered species

Exceeds the Planning  
scheme height limit by  
3 stories

High rise development  
1000pax conference centre



# Ignores vision for Mission Beach in State regional Planning

5 storey accommodation  
and conference centre  
development on the  
foreshore

**Cassowary Coast Regional Council**

**Village activity centres:** Cardwell, Mission Beach

Much higher levels of self-containment will need to be achieved in Mission Beach to avoid travel to Tully and Innisfail.



Protecting endangered species

1000pax conference centre





## Ignores vision for Mission Beach in

5 storey accommodation  
re

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# Ignores vision for Mission Beach in State regional Planning

5 storey accommodation  
and conference centre  
development on the  
foreshore

**Cassowary Coast Regional Council**

**Village activity centres:** Cardwell, Mission Beach



Exceeds the Planning  
scheme height limit by

Car travel will need to be managed and  
traffic impacts on cassowaries mitigated.



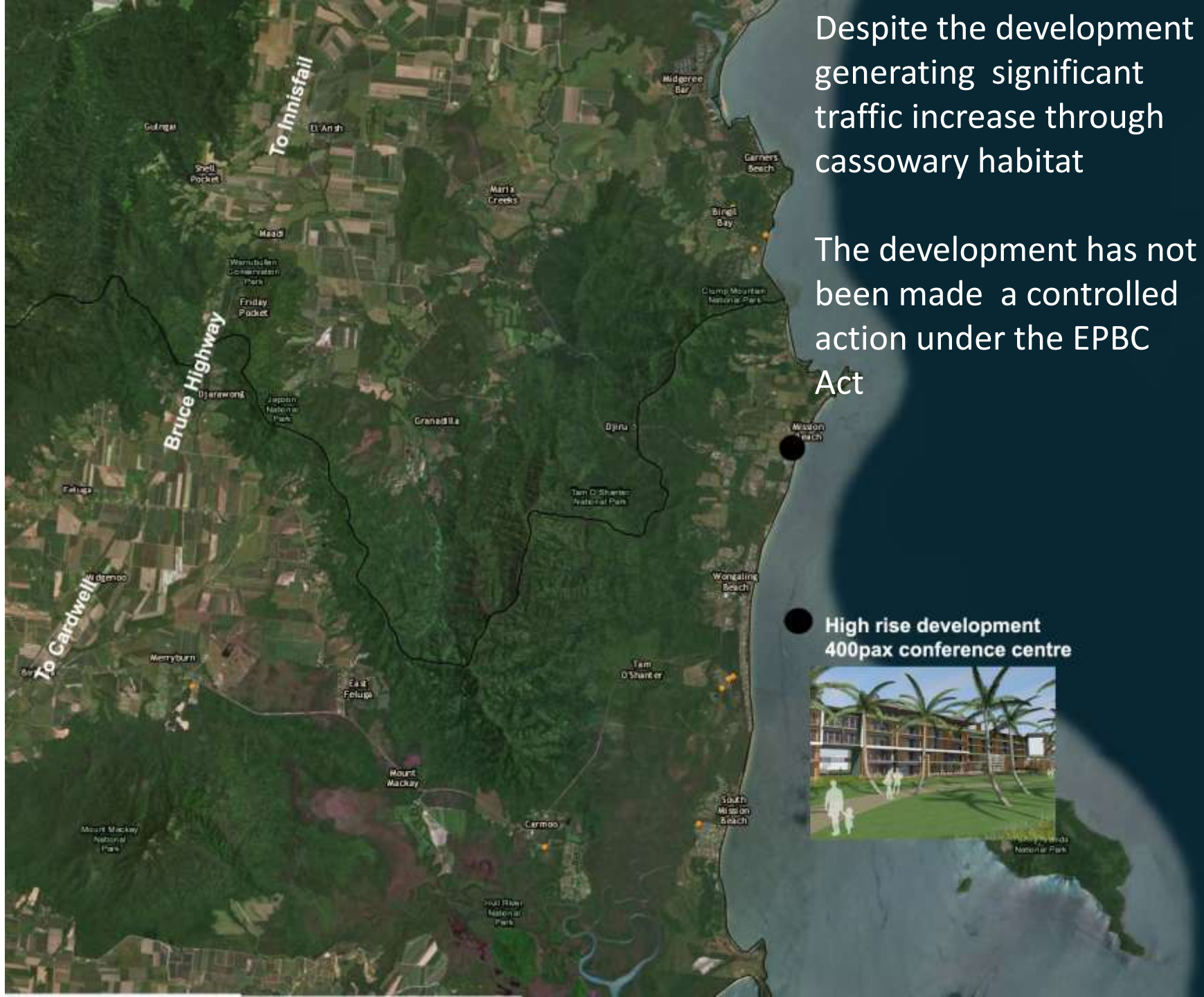
Protecting endangered species





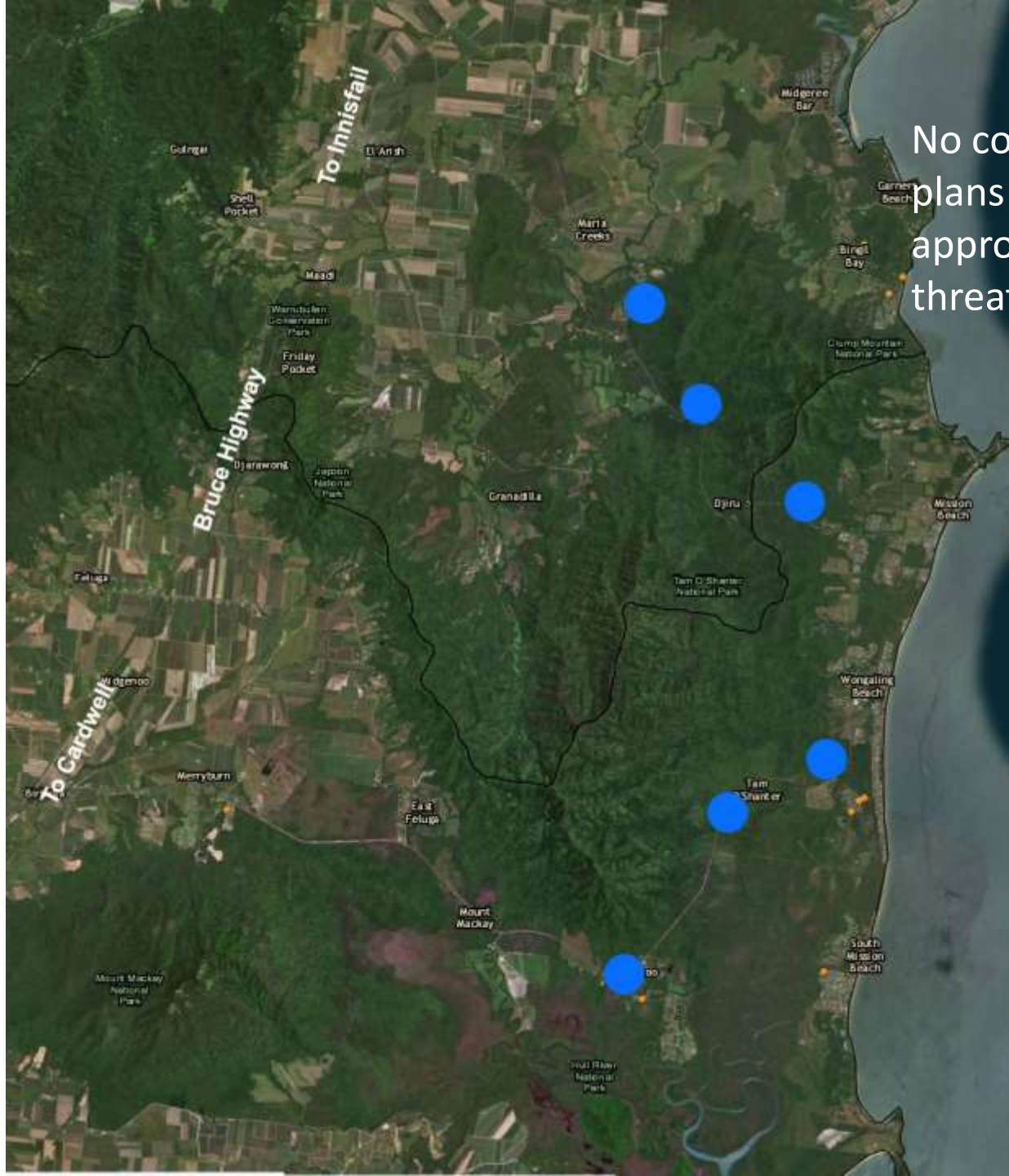
Despite the development generating significant traffic increase through cassowary habitat

The development has not been made a controlled action under the EPBC Act



High rise development  
400pax conference centre





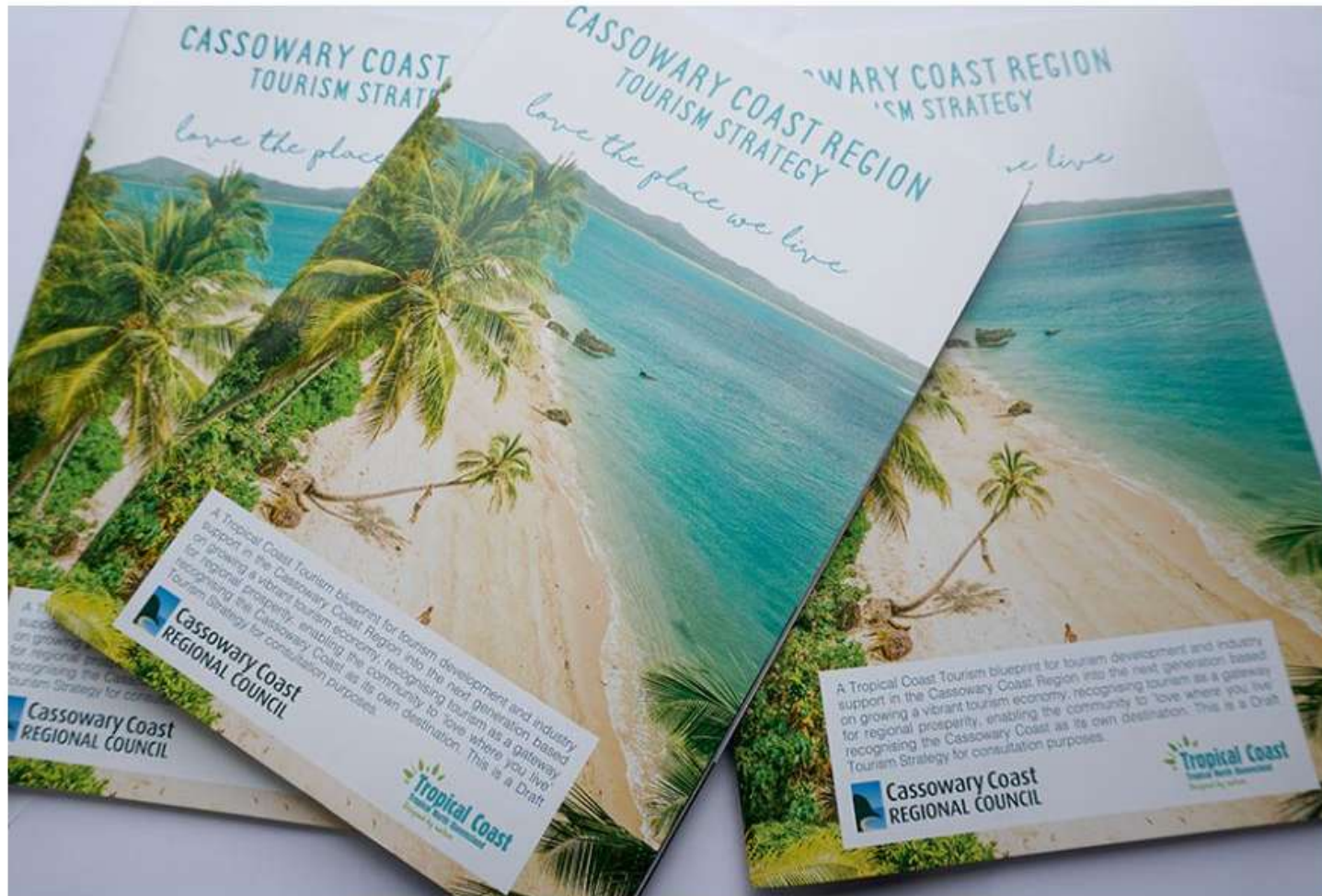
No conditions or management plans are being Included in approvals to address increased threats to cassowaries

● Cassowary death hotspots



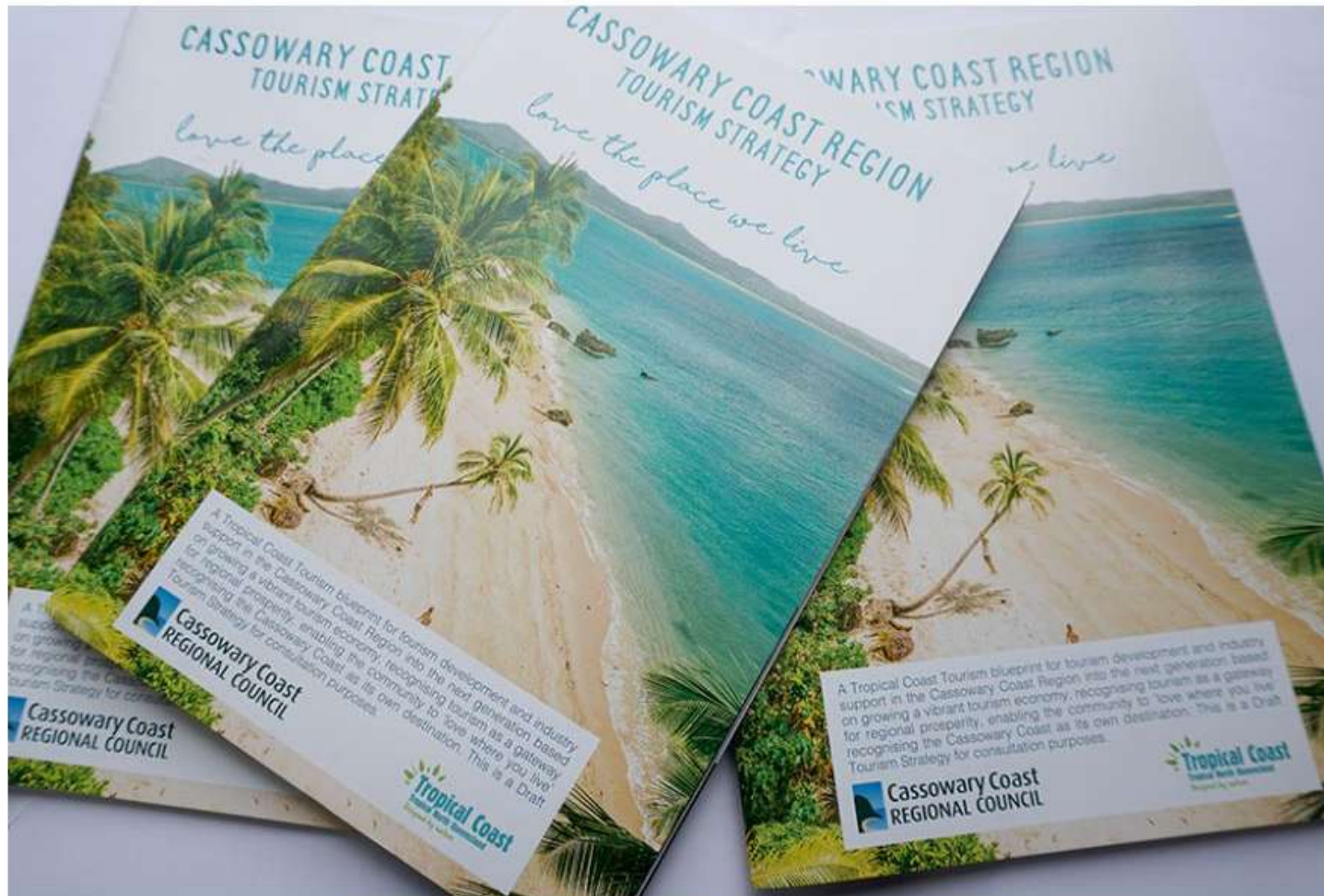


# Cassowary Coast Tourism Strategy





Traditional Owners not mentioned.



Cassowary only mentioned once – in passing

“ species of animal. It's not unusual to sight turtles and dugongs playing freely in the waterways - The warm tropical waters have made the area home for many species of exotic marine life. Above the ground is home to butterflies, mahogany glider and so many types of birdlife – including the Cassowary, the bird that gave the Cassowary Coast its name.

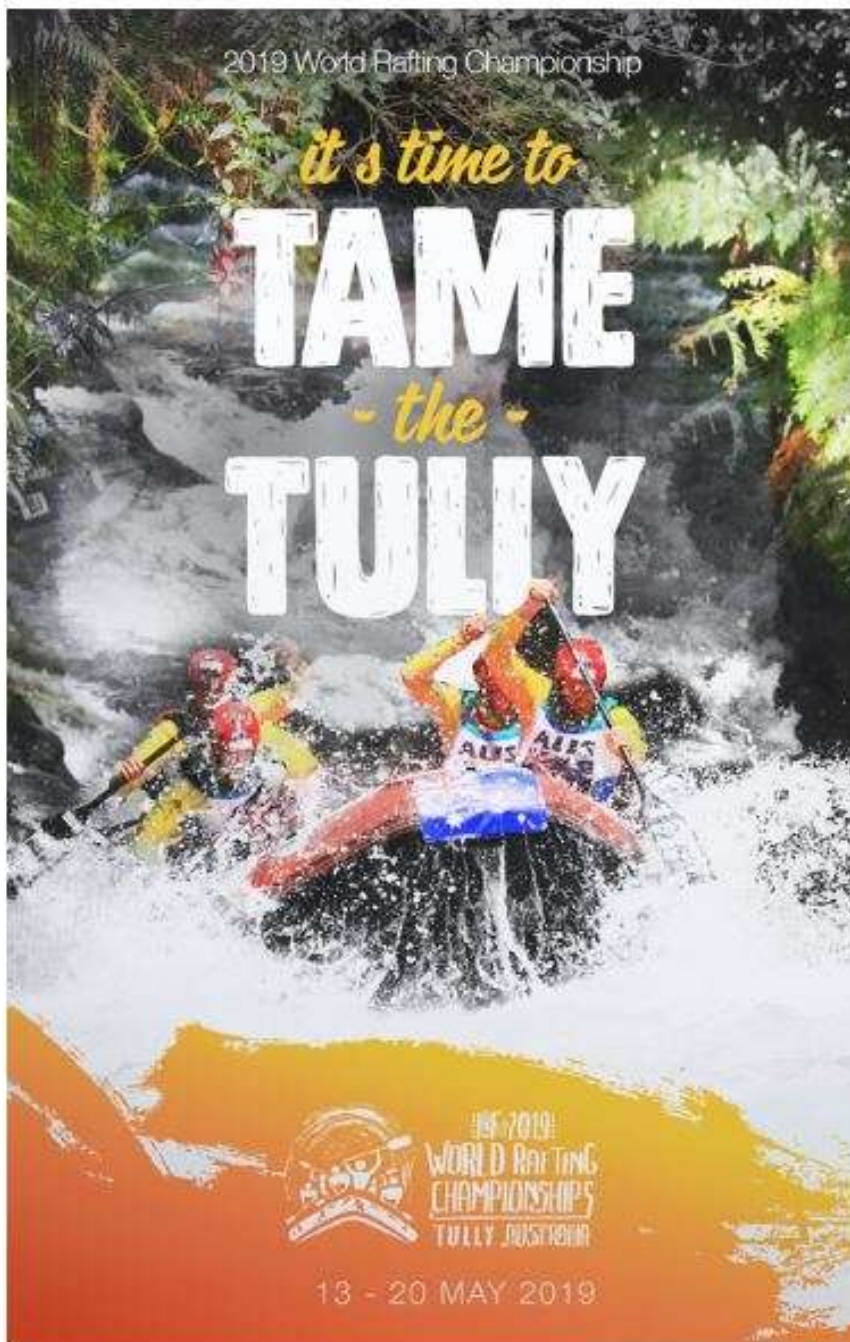
”



Contrary to the State Planning vision for Mission Beach the 2 storey height limit is seen as an impediment to the future instead of a mechanism to protect the special character and the natural and cultural values

“ The Cassowary Coast’s largest tourist area – Mission Beach and surrounds – has planning controls which effectively limiting all new tourism development to no more than 2 storeys. This blanket control and lack of any differentiation in bed-and-breakfast versus larger hotel-style development opportunities has limited commercial bed yields and acts as a significant impediment to further private investment, especially in terms

”

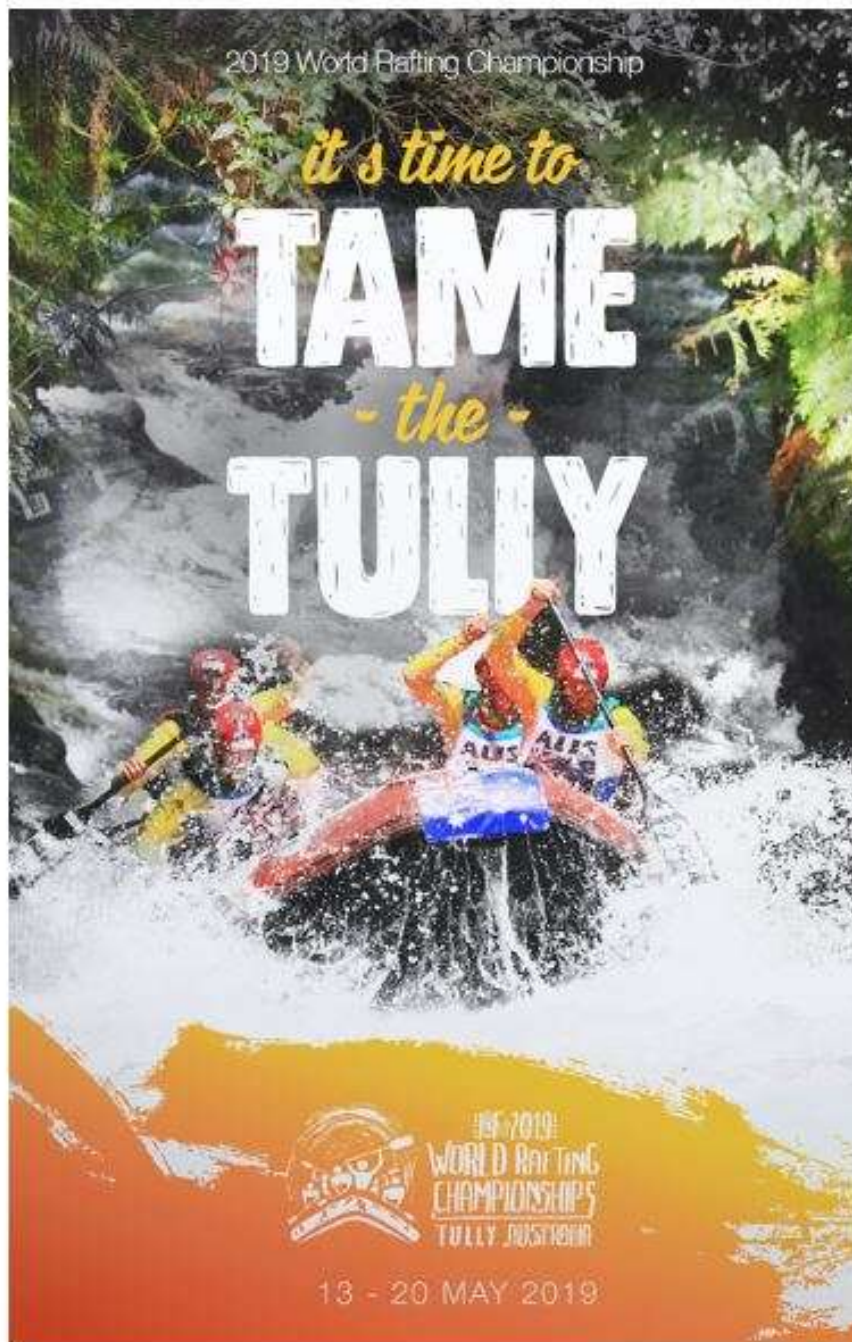


Large events being planned  
such as the 2019 World Rafting  
Championship on the Tully river

5 - 7000 visitors expected in May 2019

Travelling through roads with high  
incidences of cassowary road strike





What consideration is in the planning for impact of increased traffic?

Is there a traffic management plan?



The development/conservation conflicts at Mission Beach are becoming overwhelming

The known threats to the cassowary are increasing

What are we going to do?



Prepared for the Cassowary Recovery Team meeting  
14 November 2018