

ANOTHER CASSOWARY ROAD DEATH !!
Midday 12 June 2010 — Adult Male cassowary near St Mission Bch turnoff
2 chicks orphaned—Brings death toll to 4 adults in 7 months



BULLETIN



Margaret Thorsborne wears a 'Save the Reef' campaign T shirt remembering the battle led by John Büsst and Judith Wright in the late 60's to stop mining for oil on the reef

‘Ninney Rise’ set for heritage listing

- New approach to Council planning
- Another cassowary road death
- Alarming statistics on world's species decline
 - Cassowary Tagging Project
- WOW film festival at C4 Theatrette
 - Save The Cassowary campaign
 - And more

Special Terrain feature - Possible cassowary roadkill solutions

Mission Beach is special - Love our place – Love our pace

ANOTHER ADULT CASSOWARY ROAD DEATH!

Road to Extinction

14 June 2010

It is beginning to be a case of 'Ho hum, another one' as the endangered cassowary continues to be killed on the Mission Beach roads at an unsustainable rate.

The latest death on Saturday, Queens Birthday long weekend at midday was of a male caring for chicks as it attempted to cross the road at its regular crossing point near the South Mission Beach turnoff. The two chicks are now prematurely left to survive on their own.

It brings the cassowary road death toll to four adults in seven months and 60 in 15 years.

"Each year this adult cassowary has lost chicks to car strike at the same location and there have been many reports of near misses" "It isn't only a matter of the unsustainable rate of deaths" said C4 spokesperson Liz Gallie, "it hits at the very core of community pride and identity"

In 2008 the death of one of the chicks at the crossing prompted a rally of concerned community members.

"There is tragic irony in the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS) 'recent crossing' sign being attached to the 80 kmh road sign"

The willingness of the Queensland Main Roads Department to trial traffic management solutions at Mission Beach is most welcome", said Ms Gallie, "but it is being questioned by the increasingly concerned community why the speed limit cannot be simply lowered throughout the township given the multiple deaths at known locations.

"It may be a case of not enough soon enough. This is an iconic endangered species we are talking about. If the cassowary is allowed to be lost at Mission Beach, the Cassowary Coast Region would not only lose its icon but a major part of its tourism economy and appeal".

For over two decades there have been countless plans developed and hundreds of thousands of dollars spent in the name of cassowary management and protection and yet the known threats to their survival are increasing.

"The Cassowary is an endangered species and icon of North Qld and the environment of the Tropics and, therefore, needs to be taken seriously by every Australian.

This is a moral issue that really concerns all of us and should be important news in the national papers for everyone to see".



The targets of the Traffic Management Strategy in the new CSIRO and Terrain 'Mission Beach Habitat Network Action Plan' released last week are that;

- Cassowaries are not killed by vehicle strikes
- Fewer motor vehicles per person are using the road

"It is an *action plan*" Ms Gallie said "Unless all the partners identified in the Plan commit to act now with an aligned and coordinated approach, it threatens to be just be another plan sitting on a shelf as the cassowary continues on the road to extinction"



61 known road deaths from 1995 to 2010 shown here by the size of dots representing the number of deaths at each location.



As a result of two cassowary road deaths within a month at the end of 2009, a workshop was held by the Main Roads Department which was attended by government, community and industry groups to discuss strategies and possible road treatment solutions for the Mission Beach area.

The outcome was a unanimous decision to trial a section of road at 'Garrett's Corridor' with speed reduction and signage warning of regular cassowary crossings. The final design of the road works was determined and guided by the department's policies. Public response to the trial has been encouraged and welcomed.

Since the workshop there have been two more deaths on roads at known crossing areas within the approach boundaries of the Mission Beach villages. The latest being of an adult male caring for two chicks.

It is obvious that there needs to be a whole of Mission Beach Road management strategy. Developments that have already been approved, stand to increase traffic to unsustainable levels in regard to cassowary road deaths.

Speed limits must allow for cassowaries to safely cross roads to access their essential habitat.

There has been millions of dollars spent on studies and plans for more than 20 years and we **know** what action needs to be taken.

The State **FNQ2031 Plan** calls for constraint in development at Mission Beach.

The Terrain/CSIRO developed **Mission Beach Habitat Network Action Plan** outlines the necessary action that needs to be taken to protect the special values at Mission Beach.

The Cassowary Recovery Team is also spending a lot of resources to address the actions outlined in the **Cassowary Recovery Plan**.

There is nothing new about any of these plans. They identify the same **actions** that need to be taken.

State Government must put in place policies that will achieve constraint at Mission Beach.

Most importantly, the Cassowary Coast Regional Council must start making decisions that show their respect for and commitment to the MBHNP they have adopted as their environmental advice document in the CCRC Corporate Plan.

The community needs to see that commitment **NOW** by **actions** that will protect the special values at Mission Beach.



C4 Editorial

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Photos by Liz Gallie
(except where otherwise credited)

It is the beginning of the cassowary mating season. We have been following the progress of three families at Mission Beach. One dad with three chicks is known by the residents around the Mission Shores area and seen making risky crossings on Cassowary Drive into Garrett Corridor. Another with two chicks (a third chick died as a result of car strike) regularly crossing between Wheatley Road and Mission drive, South Mission Beach. And a third male with one chick in Garrett Corridor at Mission Circle.



Reports are coming in now of the chicks becoming separated while female birds are in the vicinity. Soon the chicks will be chased away to fend for themselves. Little is known about what happens to the juveniles as few of them reach adulthood. It is at this time when they are at their most vulnerable to dog attack and being killed on the roads.

When cassowaries mate they stay with each other for about a month before the male sits on eggs laid by the female. It is also at this time that birds moving around the landscape together are more at risk on the roads such as with the two adult birds seen recently on the El Arish Mission Beach Road near the lettuce farm.

We ask the community to please not feed the young birds when they are finally left on their own and to be aware of the possibility of birds being in pairs near roads for the next few months until the end of the mating season.

The magnitude of the damage to the land and sea environments and species as a result of the BP oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico is beyond imagination. The Oil Slick has unfolded to be the biggest environmental disaster in history. Millions of gallons of oil have poured into the ocean before finally being plugged and the highly toxic dispersants being used are as destructive as the oil itself. Scientists laid out the worst case scenario in which the oceanic conveyor belt would carry it up the US coast and even into the Gulf Stream the northern hemisphere's most important ocean current system. Photos are already emerging of the sickening affects on the wildlife perishing from being covered by it or ingesting it. Coral reefs will die, endangered species will disappear and marine food resources will be dramatically affected. Scientists will be studying the affects of this disaster well beyond most of our lifetimes.

Without conservation visionaries like John Búst and poet Judith Wright, who led the battle to stop the Great Barrier Reef from being mined for lime and oil, we'd probably have oil rigs on the Great Barrier Reef today. The legacy of their efforts shows how the community can have a positive influence on the future of our environment.

"Ninney Rise", the home of John Busst is set to be placed on the State Heritage Register. Read more about "Ninney Rise" on page 6.

Please be **cass-o-wary** while driving on the roads in the Mission Beach area.

C4 Management Team

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Following the road death of yet another large healthy adult female cassowary, which brings the road death toll to 3 in 6 months, we are publishing a special feature by Terrain NRM on possible traffic management solutions.

The four page feature seeks to capture various ideas put forward by people in the community in recent times. (See page 18)

16th WOW Film Festival

Stimulating ... Challenging ... Entertaining ...

Strathfell Film Society
will be holding the 2010 WOW Film Festival at the C4 Theatre over the weekend of **19th and 20th of June.**

Only \$10 for both days

Best selection of new Australian & International short films - fiction, documentary, animation, music videos and vodules created by women filmmakers.

WOW Festival Director Sil-Nyin Cameron will be travelling from Sydney to introduce the weekend screenings.

Program

Saturday 19th June 7pm

Short Film Program Australian Shorts - 85 mins

Nine award winning short films ranging in genre from Comedy to Drama and including Dance and documentary.

FEATURE FILM "Four of a Kind" 1 hour 45 mins

– A Thriller. Directed by Fiona Cochrane. Love, lies, betrayal, murder... sometimes it's better to omit the truth.

Sunday 20th June 7pm

Experimental shorts including the Winner of the Best Tropfest Film - 2008 Drama, Comedy, Animation.

FEATURE FILM "I Wish I Were Stephanie V" Comedy– 86 minutes. A vibrant romance, comedy, and drama by Laura Sivis and Cloe Traicos.

Look for the posters on your local notice board

More information phone **40655000**

Mission Beach Cassowaries Need your help!

Do you see a cassowary/s on a regular basis on your property or in your yard?

You have valuable knowledge that will help determine;

- individual birds,
- where they are,
- how big their foraging range is,
- how many roads they cross and how often,
- what their family structure is,
- how many of their chicks make it to adulthood... and more.

This important information will be able to help with the planning needed for the cassowary to survive at Mission Beach.

To register, please call C4 on 4068 7197 or email c4@cassowaryconservation.asn.au



'The End of the Line', currently being shown in cinemas nationally, is the groundbreaking documentary that exposes the crisis facing our oceans. This beautifully shot feature film follows Charles Glover's investigative work into the fatal impact of over-fishing. Made over two years, it was selected for the Sundance and Hot Docs Toronto Film Festivals in 2009. Well worth seeing!

Many thanks to Steve Ryan from CAFNEC for travelling to Mission Beach to screen the movie at the C4 theatre following our last general meeting.





Nursery/Arboretum

Local native plants are perfectly adapted to the local climate and conditions, they require less care and provide food sources for many birds, butterflies and other wildlife.

We have been very busy for the last few months planting thousands of trees lovingly grown in the C4 nursery, back into our local environment.

The plantouts for our Community Coastal Revegetation Project are well underway with over 500 trees being planted along the foreshore. C4 recently received funding for this project through the Australian Government's Caring for our Country Community Action Grants.

Working closely with the CCRC Revegetation Unit, and community groups, we aim to remove and control invasive weeds and replant native coastal species along the coastal dune, providing food



Fala Hunter, Kirifi Hunter and Bella Mitchell planting a Beach Callophyllum on the foreshore near Clump Point

and habitat for wildlife, reducing erosion and creating a buffer zone for storm surges.

Mission Beach Preps and Grade 1 kids enjoyed getting their hands dirty and planting coastal trees, with the help of parents and teachers, at the north end of Mission Beach. Each tree has a little wooden stake next to it bearing the name of the child who planted it. The kids have been returning to 'their' tree to visit their tree and watch it grow.

We also had a very enthusiastic Grade 7 class from Mission Beach School, who planted lots of Sea Lettuce, Beach Almonds and beach vines in



Grade 7s

another site in the coastal zone between C4 and Clump Point. It was great to see how much the kids enjoyed their day planting trees, learning about coastal plants and the role they play in protecting our beach. These kids will be involved in designing signage to be erected at the plantout sites which will aim to educate people about the importance of coastal vegetation.

The Girringun Rangers also joined with us to weed and plant up an area along the beach. We found many species of weeds, many of which most likely grew from garden cuttings dumped in the area. These problem weeds were removed by hand and then replaced with many coastal species including Pandanus, Beach Callophyllum, Beach Almond, Sea lettuce, Crinum lilies and more. We also did a day of weeding and then planting at the Clump Point Lookout, a very significant site for the local Djiru people.



Girringun Rangers Hedley Fisher and Larry Leadie planting Kangaroo Grass on Clump Point.

Big thanks to the Cassowary Coast Regional Council Revegetation Unit, the Mission Beach School kids and teachers, the Girringun Rangers, the Djiru Traditional Owners and our C4 volunteers for all their hard work to rehabilitate and reclaim the coastal foreshore.

All of the plants which have gone into these plantings have been grown in the C4 Nursery by our amazing and dedicated volunteers, so thanks to you all too!!!

Remember the foreshore is public property and it belongs to the **whole** community. So come and help us plant trees in our last two community-coastal plantouts in June, and do your bit to protect our precious foreshore.

The next community coastal plantout will be held at the Cutten Bros Track area on the 18th of June. Meet at 9.30am at the Jetty carpark Call C4 for more details on 40 687 197.

As part of our contribution to the Mission Beach Film Festival, C4 donated 1500 trees to be planted in the local area. Working in partnership with QPWS, CCRC, the Giringun Rangers, the Green Army and community volunteers, these trees were planted on Bicton Hill, where the old transmission towers between Narragon Beach and Bingil Bay, have recently been removed. This was a great day with over 30 tree planters planting all of the 1500 trees in a morning!! This was then followed by a BBQ lunch provided by QPWS.

C4 volunteers also participated in a community plantout on Council Reserve land, in an important cassowary corridor behind Tropical Coast Raw Materials, with the Cassowary Coast Revegetation Unit, Queensland Parks and Wildlife staff, the Giringun Rangers and the Australian Rainforest Foundation. This was another great day with a huge area of weeds replaced with native rainforest trees.

One hundred trees were also recently donated to the Girl Guides, for their centenary celebrations. These trees were planted at a site at Garradunga near Innisfail. A number of understory plants were also donated to the QPWS Cassowary Rehabilitation Centre. These plants are to be planted in the cassowary pens to give the cassowaries in care, more variety of natural food sources.



Mission Beach Grade Prep and 1s planting trees on our foreshore

PLANT OF THE MONTH – GOLDEN PENDA (XANTHOSTEMON CHRYSANTHUS)

We have had an amazing strike rate on the Golden Penda seeds we planted last year. We have lots of strong, healthy tube stock and we are keen to get them planted in the ground.



The Golden Penda is a medium sized tree growing to about 25m with vibrant yellow bunches of flowers blooming from the end of the branches between Feb and Nov. It has beautiful leaves with a rusty tinge and is naturally found from Cape York to Cardwell area, but is a commonly planted street tree in towns along the east coast. The Golden Penda is a beautiful garden tree in the right place, attracting many nectar feeding birds and butterflies. The Golden Penda is also the floral emblem of our shire. Come and get a Golden Penda for your garden today! At \$2 each what are you waiting for!!!

We have a great variety of plants in the C4 Nursery available and ready to plant in your garden. Most of these are only \$2 each, with some even further discounted including Native Ginger (*Alpinia caerulea*) and *Cordyline cannifolia* (Native Cordyline). Both of these plants are small-sized and are loved by many species of birds.

Because local native plants are perfectly adapted to the local climate and conditions, they require less care and will provide food sources for many birds, butterflies and other wildlife. Come down to the nursery on Fridays and we can give you advice on what plant is perfect for your garden.

We are always keen to meet new plant lovers who are interested in helping us grow and plant more trees in our local area! Volunteer days are Fridays from 10am, where we pot up baby trees, plant seeds, tackle the weeds and talk about plants and the amazing place that is Mission Beach and our home. We also welcome visitors to Mission Beach keen to learn more about the local area to come down and get involved. For further information about local plants, volunteering or upcoming tree planting, please contact me on Fridays at C4 on 40 687 197. See you there!

Nina

Ninney Rise

Home of conservation pioneer John Bússt

If it wasn't for conservation visionaries like John Busst and poet Judith Wright, we'd probably have oil rigs on the Great Barrier Reef today



The Great Barrier Reef is safe largely due to one man and now his Bingil Bay rainforest home is set for listing on the Queensland heritage register.

The house at Bingil Bay was built by John and Allison Bússt and is a rare Queensland example of the Montsalvat owner-builder movement. The Bússts used local materials to build the house and incorporated many unique design features such as using exotic bamboo for ceilings and architraves.

Community for Coastal and Cassowary Conservation (C4) nominated Busst's home "Ninney Rise" for heritage-listing in 2004 because of the significant part Bússt played in Queensland's conservation history.

The house was used for the headquarters during the very political community campaign to stop the Queensland government from permitting companies to mine the reef for limestone and oil.

The 'Save the Reef' campaign was fought in the late 1960s – early 1970s which, after a Royal



Commission into mining on the reef, resulted in creating the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park, its management Authority and the legislation to protect it in 1975.

If it wasn't for conservation visionaries like John Bússt and poet Judith Wright, we'd probably have oil rigs on the Great Barrier Reef today.

Our cover photo shows veteran conservationist Margaret Thorsborne wearing one of the T Shirts she, and other supporters wore during the 'Save the Reef' campaign.

Conservationists hope Bússt's home, will be heritage-listed within months. But there's a catch. At the same time they are heritage listing it, the Queensland government is putting it out to tender for tourist development.

In 1979 Busst's home was bought by Kate Eisig Tode, an American world traveller and philanthropist who spent the rest of her life in her adopted country and home at Bingil Bay.

Mrs Tode had a lifetime history of philanthropy and involvement with environment organisations around the world. While living at "Ninney Rise" she sold a large northern portion of the property (now a national Park), to Queensland National Parks for \$1.

In 1990 when National Parks inherited the gifted property, it was widely understood Mrs Tode's intention was for it to be kept without commercial development and used for no monetary gain.

The process of placing "Ninney Rise" under protected estate began. Some minor boundary issues were encountered which were being resolved but never progressed. Instead the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service advertised the 1.98 hectare freehold property for sale. The community rallied in protest and the property was withdrawn from the market.

The property has now been included on a list of seven National Park areas being offered for private development and the first to be advertised for expressions of interest.

The site which is known to be utilized by the Bingil Bay/Garners Beach cassowary population is situated adjacent to a section of Clump Mountain National Park and is recognised in the Wet Tropical Coast Coastal Management Plan as an important cassowary corridor. In the key coastal site of Mission Beach it states;

- *Habitat and connectivity is at threat from development in areas where national parks and other protected areas are separated by other tenures, particularly in the Bingil Bay to Ninney Point hinterland area. Retention of connectivity between these sections through inclusion within national parks or establishing conservation agreements and covenants is a particularly important issue for the long-term viability of the southern cassowary and the important wildlife corridor to the Muff Creek area.*

The State has outlined sustainability guidelines for the expressions of interest for eco tourism development. C4 believe the following considerations need to be included in strict guidelines for any use of "Ninney Rise".

- The site be gazetted as a protected area,
- a comprehensive heritage survey be undertaken, including the grounds, and a heritage conservation plan for the site be prepared and made available for public comment before any development is considered.



- the heritage values of the site be conserved and presented according to the best practice heritage principles,
- extensive revegetation where compatible with heritage values to strengthen the corridor abutting the National Park as shown below,
- a cassowary/human interaction plan be prepared and implemented,
- draft development plans be made available for public comment,
- development be referred as a controlled action under EPBC.



**C4
NEEDS
YOU!**

We are in real need of volunteers to help out at our front counter. This can be organised to suit your time frame, be it morning, afternoon or all day.

Our hours are 10.00am to 4pm Monday to Friday and 9.30am to 1.30pm Saturday. If you would like to find out about volunteering, please phone on 4068 7197 or call in for a chat. It is a most rewarding thing to do as our visitors are all interested in the

environment, are stunned by the beauty of Mission Beach and naturally one of the first questions is 'where do I see a cassowary'?

They all show a great interest in our nursery as well and are amazed at just what C4 has been doing for the Mission Beach area. Many are also locals who bring in their own visitors. We're a friendly mob and we'd love you to join us.
Helen Holland



Habitat Matters

It's 'business as usual' at Mission Beach

There was a flurry of calls to C4 regarding the sound of clearing to the west of the Clump Point Jetty. The vegetation block in this vicinity is a very important habitat linkage where cassowaries are known to frequent. It forms one of the remaining fragmented habitat corridors from the World Heritage Area to the critically endangered littoral rainforest. It is part of the 40% of cassowary habitat occurring either on private land or within the urban footprint that is not protected.

A pamphlet circulated by the Council about the natural values of the Clump Point area identify it as the only basalt headland in the Wet Tropics.

Further studies on the vegetation growing in the Clump Point area are urgently needed to fine tune existing mapping. They may well find the remaining coastal lowland rainforest growing in the Clump Point area is a unique ecosystem.



The Federal Environment Agency needs to be advised if any clearing of vegetation is planned in this area including regrowth.

Peter Heywood Tully Mission Beach Road 6 lots on 13 hectares

This proposed subdivision was covered in the last Bulletin. Since then a revised plan has been submitted to the DEWHA to address concerns received during the public comment period. The development design has not been significantly changed—especially in relation to clearing of remnant vegetation to accommodate two of the lots situated in the main habitat linkage corridor or the placing of the effluent irrigation in vegetated areas.

LJ and EJ Blennerhassett 42 Housing lots

Described in the Tully Times as **LOTS OF LOTS**, the reconfiguration of two lots into 42 housing lots has been approved at Campbell Street and Rick Road. (X) This will mean all the land set aside for urban development between Campbell Street and Boyett Road has been subdivided to the full western extent of the boundary and abuts a rural zone currently being farmed with bananas.

It appears that it will also allow for vehicles to utilize Rick Road to access Boyett Road which will increase traffic into a rural area and cut through the two sections of the rare coastal basalt rainforest of Clump Mountain National Park.

The inappropriate residential development on Boyett Road, situated *outside* the urban footprint and on

Good Quality Agricultural Land A1 (Y) will already increase traffic cutting through the two blocks of the National Park. The possibility of a through road from the new development will mean increased traffic that may require a road upgrade to accommodate traffic from both developments and would threaten wildlife access through the thin unprotected vegetation corridors from the World Heritage area to the coastal National Park.



Pacific View Drive, Wongaling Beach 48 Lot Residential Subdivision and Associated Infrastructure.

Recently another high density development was approved by the Cassowary Coast Regional Council that will allow the destruction of cassowary habitat in a wetland area mapped as a strategic coastal cassowary corridor. (Biotropica Wongaling South Mission Beach Habitat Linkages)

The development of 48 small house lots (four containing units) is within the urban footprint.

It is situated between Mission Hills and Reid Road and encompasses the vegetation strip running the length of Wongaling.



When Mission Hills was developed, the top of the hill was excavated and dumped on the wetland. At the time, the development was known locally as 'Missin' Hill'.

An identical situation happened at

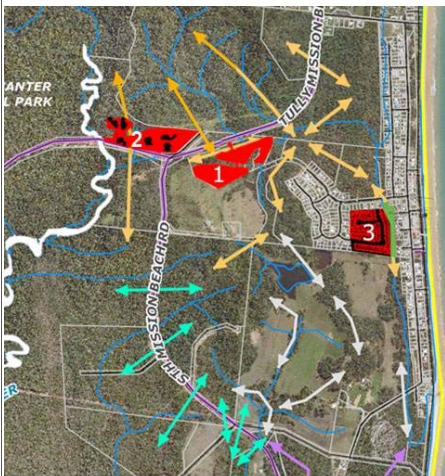


Garners Beach. The proposed 11 lot development called '**Nemourna**' is sited on the excavated hilltop that was also dumped on a wetland below and is now being falsely claimed to be built on an old quarry.

In the Pacific View development application, the vegetation is described as degraded, diminishing

its importance, but cassowaries are often seen by the residents whose properties are on the boundary of the site. The vegetation corridor allows for north/south movement and dispersal of juveniles. If the corridor is allowed to be developed it will not only destroy essential habitat but reduce free movement in the landscape of the cassowaries that currently occupy the area.

Viewing the broader landscape, incorporating the approved developments of 'Your Resort Home' (1) and the proposed Peter Heywood development (2) (situated at the South Mission Beach Road turn-off), the birds will be left with only one seasonal uninterrupted corridor east of the Hull River that will funnel them to a road crossing on a corner of road known for a high incidence of traffic deaths.



1) Your resort Home 2) Peter Heywood
3) Pacific View

If the new subdivision development is allowed to go ahead in its present form, another coastal lowland wet area will become a drain beneath a housing development and a cassowary corridor will be blocked.

C4 believes that the development

should be reduced in scale and planned in a manner to minimise destruction of existing vegetation, including the wetlands. In the case that some clearing is unavoidable it should be compensated by rehabilitating land to enhance corridors or gaps in connectivity and create a net gain of habitat in the immediate area. This would be consistent with the recommendations of the Cassowary Recovery Plan and the Mission Beach Habitat Network Action Plan.

There needs to be an appropriate contribution to traffic management to offset the impact of the number of vehicles the development will introduce onto roads cutting through cassowary habitat and known cassowary crossing areas. The site should be regulated a no dog zone.

The Council has the power to ask for fair and reasonable conditions when approving development but the only conditions seen to be imposed are from the text book e.g. conditions relating to sediment control in this high rainfall area are in line with the guidelines set out by the FNQ Regional Organisation of Councils. History has shown the inadequacy of these guidelines for our area by the extensive plumes of sediment spilled into the Marine Park from the construction of developments such as **Narragon Cove**, **MiCorp** and the first stage **Blennerhassett subdivision**.

The development is a Controlled Action still currently being assessed under the Federal EPBC Act.

MiCorp Reconfiguration of two lots to one lot for multiple dwellings at Seafarer Street

is a prime example of how current densities allowed within the urban footprint will contribute to a level of population growth that will be environmentally unsustainable. With 900 units already approved at Mission Beach, how many more will be approved before the new planning scheme (still 5 years away) is introduced that has the potential to address the serious environmental harm resulting from the present planning schemes?

Wahroonga Holdings 13 lots Luggar Bay

The design of a thirteen lot subdivision at Luggar Bay may, if the finer details are addressed, be held up as a development that has a low impact and net gain for the environment. The land is currently used for grazing and contains fencing designed to keep out kangaroos. This would also stop free movement for cassowaries.

The proponent plans to revegetate large areas of cleared land in an attempt to replicate the first stage of the gated development at the southern far end of South Mission Beach. It is proposed to be a no dog zone. The first stage of the development was a one dog per house body corporate rule until the majority voted to allow two dogs. As there is no barrier between the two developments compliance to this condition may be a concern as is the plan to develop another walkway to the beach at the southern end of the subdivision.

The development is a controlled action and is still being considered by the DEWHA. We will be very interested in the outcome considering the new significant impact guidelines. We hope to give a positive report to a development that has a **genuine** low impact on, and gain to, the environment.

The latest development being reviewed under the EPBC Act is the 2nd stage of the CCRC Bikeway Walkway

None of the developments the Cassowary Coast Regional Council (CCRC) have approved include any conditions that show an understanding of the impact people, cars, dogs or invasive exotic plants have on the natural values of Mission Beach.

The recommendations in the Mission Beach Habitat Network Action Plan, which have been incorporated in the CCRC Corporate Plan as the environmental advice document, are not reflected in any of the decisions.

Mayor Bill Shannon acknowledged the '*serious environmental harm*' that is being allowed to happen at Mission Beach. "You only have to go up in a plane to see that" he commented in a recent conversation but then repeatedly states that "landholders have existing development rights", and that the "mix' is about right" between the environment and development, sitting firmly on the fence and placing a full stop to action.

C4 welcomes John Cleary to the Management Team, in the role of Habitat Coordinator. John's input as an environmental planner will bring much needed expertise to our area in this crucial new planning stage of Mission Beach.

Liz Gallie

Forest Kingfisher (Todiramphus macleayi)

Walking up our drive-way, there is a flash of blue from the power lines as the line of Forest Kingfisher's dart away. Or sometimes there is just one, a little braver than the rest, who will sit and watch you go by.

These beautiful little birds have a dark royal blue head with pale turquoise on the back. They also have a large white spot over their bill and a black mask over their eyes with white around their neck and on their tummy. They grow to around 20-25cm in height.

A native of Papua New Guinea, Indonesia and Australia, they hang out in a wide range of habitat's including open sclerophyll forest, edges of swamps and mangroves, farmlands and beaches. Ranging from the top of NT to northern NSW. Food sources include grasshoppers, beetles, spiders, small liz-



ards, frogs and worms. They build their nests in tree hollows, or fallen trees, also digging burrow-like nests in banks or termite nests in trees. Both sexes defend the nest vigorously.

Breeding is between October and January, in which they lay 3-6 eggs. Both Mum and Dad, as well as helpers from last season, help with both incubation and feeding the babies. Fledglings are fed for at least a month before leaving the nest.

Our other Kingfisher friends are:

Little Kingfisher, our smallest kingfisher species, it is blue with small white patch on neck; **Azure Kingfisher**, orange underparts and violet sheen; **Sacred Kingfisher**, turquoise back with dark head, cream collar and dark eye stripe; the visiting **Buff-Breasted Paradise Kingfisher**, this striking bird has a thick red bill, two long white central tail feathers with brilliant blue and black back and yellowish tummy.

Mission Beach Wildcare Inc.

How Can You Help?

Even if you can't commit to looking after injured or orphaned wildlife, there are many other way to help us care.



WHO ARE WE? a group of volunteers who have a love of native wildlife and care for injured or orphaned critters. Some of our carers specialise in furry critters, whilst others look after birds, or frogs, or reptiles.

GIVE blankets, cages, play pens etc. We are always in need of spare cages, and baby or injured critters need nice warm fleecy blankets to help us keep them warm.

SPONSOR by adopting a critter, you are helping us feed them. As volunteers we buy all food for our rescued baby's ourselves.

MAKE warm critter bags or knit beanies. Baby's need lots of nice warm bags to live in and need loads of spares too.

DRIVE injured wildlife to the vet. It is of great assistance to our volunteers if we have help getting injured critters to the vet.

PHONE help man the Wildcare Hotline: Be a part of our group by helping deliver injured or orphaned wildlife to the right carer, we all have experience in different areas.

BE A CARER it is a rewarding experience. We have experienced carers in many different areas, all of whom are willing to help out new carers. You will have loads of back-up and a wealth of knowledge.

DONATE your money helps us care. It enables us to buy food and warm comfortable "hospital beds" for injured wildlife. It also helps us provide necessary training and workshops for our carers.

JOIN US you don't have to be an active carer. Your membership fee is more like a donation, and you have the knowledge that you are helping us care.

COUNCIL ADOPTS NEW APPROACH TO PLANNING

It seems the Council has learnt a new term – ‘Community Engagement’. The Mayor has talked about this on a number of occasions and has cited it as a ‘major focus under the new Local Government Act’. Well that sounds great – but what exactly does it mean? A quick check of ‘engagement’ in the Oxford Dictionary reveals

‘Bring (troops) into conflict; enter into conflict with Hence ~EMENT’

Well there have been differences of opinion between the Council and the community in the past but that sounds a bit extreme (although it does add a new angle to the process of getting engaged to be married!).

So what does the Council mean by ‘community engagement’? A quick trawl through some planning related documents produces a more appropriate explanation. It seems that ‘community engagement’ is an approach used in planning, based on some key principles. For example it should:

- be continuous through the life of the project;
- encourage active rather than passive involvement;
- be meaningful to all parties;
- involve the community in decision-making with clarity of their role;
- be inclusive and use two-way consultation;
- build credibility, rapport, trust and confidence;
- educate and increase awareness;
- utilise listening and feedback;
- be well planned and implemented.

Now this may seem quite unfamiliar to many in the CCRC community but it seems the Council is pretty keen to adopt this approach. So why the change?

Well, the Local Government Act says the Council should do it. It even points to the requirement for a ‘Community Plan’ that will help drive much of the Council’s approach to decision making. So look out for a Community Plan process beginning soon – you’ll recognise it by the characteristics listed above.



Another reason is that many Councils have been using this approach with great success for many years, decades even. So of course our Council (and who wouldn’t encourage them) wants to stay at the ‘cutting edge’ in planning.

Planning documents, again, highlight the benefits of this approach. For example it should:

- satisfy the needs of the planning framework/agencies/Acts;

- foster a sense of support and ownership of proposals, the planning process, and outcomes;
- promote the sharing of knowledge between all parties;
- create a better understanding of community interest and values, gathering local insight into all aspects of community development, including the setting;
- help determine community attitudes, concerns, and levels of acceptability;
- help address concerns, and explore options that have the least effect on all interested and affected parties and key stakeholders; and
- inform the community of the nature and effects of proposals, allowing them to make informed, appropriate responses.

Well that sounds fantastic – Our Council working collaboratively with us to identify values and work out the best way to protect these values. This is not just for nature conservation but all kinds of values related to the community and its development.

Currently, Council staff are doing the rounds of the community centres with the Statement of Proposals for the New Planning Scheme, inviting people to come and discuss it with them. Well we know that in the past the Council has not included key stakeholder comments from the initial round of ‘consultation’ into this document, nor have they provided feedback. They have also said that, under the new planning Act, they do not have to use this document and have indicated that will not modify the report after this current round of ‘consultation’. ‘What?!’ I hear you say. Don’t

worry, and rest assured - that is the ‘old way’ of doing things. With the new ‘Community Engagement’ approach we will be able to recognise our values, concerns, and suggestions in this document, and we will get a feedback document explaining how they have

been dealt with.

We congratulate Our Council for having the foresight to adopt this ‘Community Engagement’ approach before they commence on the critically important processes of preparing a Community Plan and a new Planning Scheme. The future for Mission Beach and all the other special places in the Cassowary Coast region now looks much brighter.

P. L. Anning



Mangrove forests in worldwide decline 08 April 2010

More than one in six mangrove species worldwide are in danger of extinction due to coastal development and other factors, including climate change, logging and agriculture, according to the first-ever global assessment on the conservation status of mangroves for the IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature) Red List of Threatened Species.

As a result, 11 out of 70 mangrove species (16 per cent) which were assessed will be placed on the IUCN Red List.

Mangroves are vital to coastal communities as they protect them from damage caused by tsunami waves, erosion and storms, and serve as a nursery for fish and other species that support coastal livelihoods. In addition, they have a staggering ability to sequester carbon from the atmosphere, and serve as both a source and repository for nutrients and sediments for other inshore marine habitats, such as seagrass beds and coral reefs.

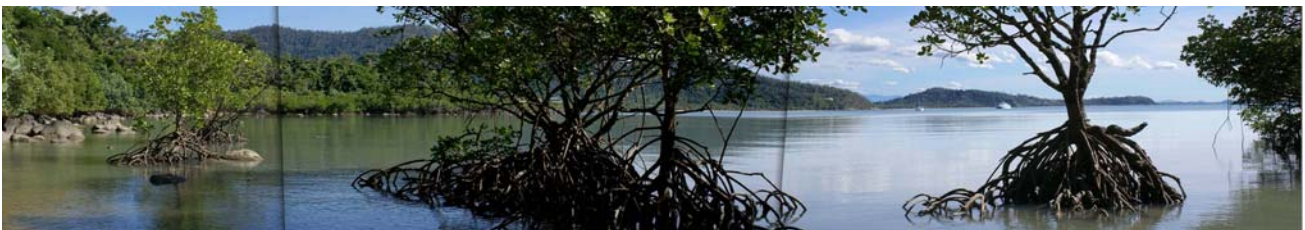
The study appears in the scientific journal PLoS ONE. It was carried out by the Global Marine Species Assessment Unit (GMSA), which is part of the Biodiversity Assessment Unit, a joint initiative of IUCN and Conservation International, together with the world's leading mangrove experts.

IUCN and Conservation International, together with the world's leading mangrove experts.

"The potential loss of these species is a symptom of widespread destruction and exploitation of mangrove forests," says Beth Polidoro, Research Associate of the GMSA at Old Dominion University and principal author of the study.

"Mangroves form one of the most important tropical habitats that support many species, and their loss can affect marine and terrestrial biodiversity much more widely."

Mangrove forests grow where saltwater meets the shore in tropical and subtropical regions, thus serving as an interface between terrestrial, fresh-water and marine ecosystems. These forests provide at least US\$1.6 billion each year in ecosystem services.



THE IUCN RED LIST OF THREATENED SPECIES

A staggering 40 per cent of the entire mass of the world's plants and animals have disappeared between 1970 and 2000

The hairy-nosed wombat, southern bluefin tuna and four species of sawfish are just some of Australia's species identified in a major new international report as being at risk of extinction. The World Conservation Union's Red List of Threatened Species released in early May ranks Australia in the top four countries in the world for threatened species, ranging from Vulnerable to Critically Endangered.

The Red List identifies 639 species in Australia as threatened with extinction, with 65 species identified as critically endangered.

However, WWF estimates this number to be much higher - most likely in the thousands - as a result

of land clearing, over fishing, and the impact of weeds and feral animals.

"The Red List is like a health check for the planet and what we can see is that the Earth is sick and we are feeling this acutely in Australia. Unless we take the steps necessary to restore its health it will continue to decline," says WWF Senior Policy Advisor Andreas Glanznig.

"Many of our species have declined to critical population levels, important habitats are being destroyed, fragmented, and degraded, and ecosystems are being destabilised through climate change, pollution, invasive species, and other direct human impacts."

This year's Red List builds on the findings of a major United Nations report into biodiversity around the world released in March.

The UN Global Biodiversity Outlook 2 report found that a staggering 40 per cent of the entire mass of the world's plants and animals had disappeared between 1970 and 2000. It also found that plant and animal species present in rivers, lakes and marshlands had declined by half.

"These sorts of statistics really are quite staggering and show that the abundance and variety of life on this planet is clearly declining at unprecedented rates," Mr Glanznig says.

The **Humphead Wrasse**, *Cheilinus undulatus*, is listed as 'Endangered'. It is one of the largest reef fishes in the world, reaching almost two metres in length, and occurs throughout the Indian and Pacific Oceans.

Although widespread, the Humphead Wrasse is uncommon. Its flesh is highly prized, especially in the popular live reef-fish trade. This wrasse is particularly vulnerable to exploitation; even moderate levels of fishing have a significant impact on its numbers. Significantly, restaurants prefer the smaller, juvenile fish, so individuals are fished before they can reproduce. The Humphead Wrasse's coral reef habitat is also threatened by human activities throughout parts of its range.

The global convention to address species threatened by international trade (CITES) lists this species in its Appendix II, thus calling for regulation of trade. Fishing regulations are in place for this species in many areas, but illegal and unregulated trade persists. Tighter controls need to be implemented, particularly as this species cannot be hatchery reared, so all traded individuals come from the wild.



The biggest selling seafood item in Australia is canned tuna.

As supermarkets sell more and more of this profitable product, tuna stocks are in a critical condition. Supermarkets play a key role in the overfishing crisis by selling us overfished tuna.



It's time they take responsibility. Greenpeace's Canned Tuna Guide exposes the supermarkets selling us overfished species or using destructive fishing techniques.

1 (most sustainable) 10 (least sustainable)



No Australian tuna brand uses sustainable tuna

Even the top brands use destructive fishing methods. But the good news is some brands are making positive changes.

Criteria for the canned tuna ranking:

- If the tuna comes from overfished stocks;
- If the tuna comes from illegal vessels or companies;
- If the tuna can is labelled correctly; and
- If the tuna was fished using methods that result in high levels of by catch.

Brands were also ranked on their:

- Commitment to not source tuna from proposed marine reserves.
- Commitment to equitable sourcing policy for tuna.

The rankings are based on an international canned tuna ranking system. Australian tuna brands have some of the worst practices worldwide, with no brand ranking above 30%.



Soil Carbon

“Upon reflection it is the norm for government to rely on the current scientific advice and ignore those who have proven practical examples and knowledge”.

All the great civilisations of history have depended on a viable agricultural base; else they could not feed their armies, workers, tradesmen, governors, and artisans. It appears to many farmers here that Government does little to encourage agriculture in the Wet Tropics, as there is a continuing restrictive legislation.

The current issues for farmers in the Mission Beach area are land valuations which on rural land have in general risen by 250% which is surprising given that there are no recent relevant farm sales, the continuing restrictions on agricultural land and practice, 2031 plan, regrowth clearing and moratorium on water licences. These valuations will disproportionately affect rural rates since under differential rating primary production pays a higher cent in the dollar than residential (4.6 cents for rural and about 1 cent for residential). As values rise the higher rating categories (rural included) will pay a larger percentage of the total rate income. The other topical issue is the moratorium on water licences.

No new water licences are to be issued until the Queensland Government undertakes a full review of the water use in the northern region. Undoubtedly this will lead to added costs (water meters, monitoring, permits) for irrigators and possibly local government hence ratepayers. While the government loudly promotes the concept of full community consultation, few farmers believe that the government will take any ideas from the rural sector or individuals. The Kennedy Valley Water Committee have operated as a cohesive effective volunteer group overseeing their water resource since 1985 but there is no indication that such a model is of interest to the enquiry. Farmers have already adopted the best technology and systems to minimise water use.

There are farming systems available which can greatly reduce dependency on irrigation and restore natural fertility. At the recent water meeting in Tully, Robert Sing stated that farming methods he had developed could greatly decrease dependency on irrigation (and fertilizer and chemicals).

However no government officer challenged or enquired of his ideas.

Upon reflection it is the norm for government to rely on the current scientific advice and ignore those who have proven practical examples and knowledge. A great example of this is Peter Andrews, author of “Back from the Brink”, featured on Australian story, who has clearly demonstrated his abilities in drought proofing Australian floodplain country. He has the solution (painful though it is) to the Murray-Darling problem but is resolutely ignored by government (better to form a committee of enquiry) although scientists from all over the world visit Peter.

Alex Podolinski, chair of BDRAA – certifiers of the Demeter label, has been instrumental in restoring to health many thousands of acres in Australia and overseas, but is steadfastly ignored by government and their agencies. www.demeter.org.au

There are other alternative advisors Dr Maartan Stapper www.farmingsecrets.com. Dr Elaine Ingham www.soilfoodweb.com. who are making a difference.

All these systems increase the organic carbon in the soil by natural microbial methods. Personally one of the most exciting prospects in agriculture is the possibility of achieving Terra Preta (Portuguese for black earth). There are isolated pockets of this amazing soil in the Amazonian Basin and here the natural poor oxisol has been transformed into incredibly fertile black earth – Terra Preta. There are some efforts to achieve this in Australia using bio-char (www.biochar.com.au) and results are encouraging but the concept explored is to apply large amounts of activated carbon to the soil. This carbon is quite beneficial to the soil and the environment but Terra Preta is a living evolving soil and I doubt that the Amazonians applied 40 tons per hectare of charcoal to achieve Terra Preta.

In recent times soil carbon has been seen as an opportunity to provide carbon sequestration with emphasis on the monies available from carbon trading. The real value is the enhanced ability of the soil to grow healthy crops providing tasty nutritional food to all life. The United Nations has an article on their website extolling the virtues of charcoal in agriculture. http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/csd/csd15/PF/info/A_Alimasi.pdf.



Charcoal carbon sequestration.

Biomass carbon is converted to charcoal and then put back into the soil.

About 2500 gigatons of carbon are stored in soils.

This is about 4 times as much as atmospheric CO₂ or total global forest biomass carbon. Addition of charcoal to soils can store significant amounts of carbon, for up to hundreds of millions of years.

Benefits of charcoal carbon sequestration:

- Increase crops yields by up 200%
- Increase food security and decrease rural poverty
- Reduce fertiliser use
- Reduce soil erosion and degradation
- Reduce need for deforestation Improve soil quality by improving porosity, water holding capacity and carbon exchange capacity
- Increase above ground and below ground biomass and carbon storage
- Reduce release of nitrous oxide and methane from soil

Healthy soil can provide healthy crops resistant to disease and stress requiring no chemical input with minimum impost on the environment. Further it will allow soils not in the service of agriculture to also be enriched and used to benefit native fauna and flora.

Like the UN I am excited about this and I feel we should all support these efforts when and if we have the opportunity. Indeed we all, including Governments should look at the bigger picture and the opportunities that are available and channel our energy and resources to this end. A giant step would be to look at soil improvement by any of the methods suggested.

Maurice Franklin

Road to Extinction

Loss of another adult bird to roadkill.



Another adult cassowary was killed by car strike at the approach to Mission Beach. The death was reported to the local Police the next morning. The dead bird was retrieved from the side of the road later in the day and taken to the Garners Beach Rehabilitation Centre for disposal.

It was confirmed by the Tully vet who attended the scene the dead bird was a large mature female and it had sustained massive injuries.

The bird was on the road early in the evening when it was struck by a vehicle and ricocheted into the path of another. The driver of the second car stopped but it was too dark to see what he had hit.

The death of three adult female cassowaries in the same area within six months is a tragic blow for the important population of cassowaries at Mission Beach. All three deaths occurred within a kilometer of each other and on a section of road that cuts through cassowary habitat in a known frequent crossing area.



Transport and Main Roads

Cassowary Safety Trial

Tully - Mission Beach Road between Mission Circle and Oceanview Drive

The Department of Transport and Main Roads is trialling some changes on the Tully-Mission Beach Road in an effort to reduce cassowary deaths on roads in Far North Queensland.

This area has been chosen because it is considered the most significant cassowary crossing link within the Wongaling area. Records show two cassowary deaths have occurred due to being hit by cars.

With the help of the community we have developed a road treatment that includes additional signage, rumble strips and line-marking. The 60km/hr speed zone has also been extended the full length of the trial zone.

We are carrying out this trial because we know that cassowary deaths would be reduced if drivers were more aware and drove slower through known cassowary crossing areas.

To help us to help the cassowary and have your say on the effectiveness of the trial contact:

Email: cairns.office@tmr.qld.gov.au

Phone: 4040 6339

Write to: Reply Paid 6185, Cairns Qld 4870

Your feedback is important to the success of this trial and to the future of the cassowary conservation.

The department would like to thank the community, business and government representatives that assisted in the development of this trial road treatment.

www.tmr.qld.gov.au



SIX MONTHS IN MISSION BEACH

“I guess everyone knows the feeling when you first see a wild cassowary close to you – heart in throat and mind amazed at the presence and power of the animal”

Today is May Day and we have been in Wongaling Beach for exactly six months now – after driving down from Darwin to become “retired” beach people in Queensland. It has taken us most of that time to adjust to the idea that we live here now and are not on a long holiday. Difficult to comprehend when we sit on the verandah and gaze at the Pacific and Dunk Island.

Our house in Darwin sat in the northern suburbs adjoining open woodland and paperbark swamp habitat protected by military land and the airport. Very different to our “new” house here, looking at a sandy beach with regrowth rainforest along a creek line and cattle on the property behind us and national park reserves a few minutes away.



One of “our” Black Butcherbirds, with damaged upper beak – it can still catch lizards.

The differences in flora, fauna and ‘people culture’ have been striking. We have been both pleasantly and unpleasantly surprised by things. Our Darwin garden looked like open woodland with exotics such as flame trees (*Delonix*), an immense traveller’s palm clump (*Ravenala*), bananas, a mango and five-corners along with many fruiting and flowering local native plants and leaf litter and fronds lay everywhere. Messy, but full of birds and animals.

Our inherited garden here at Wongaling looks like many others around it – lots of boring lawn, heliconias and palm trees and with a mass of self-sown native trees fighting for light and space in a big clump across the front. We are slowly dealing with this – and the skink population has exploded since we started leaving piles of leaf litter and fronds down for them (as a zoologist, I want many creatures in my yard).

The black butcherbird family has discovered the bird bath we installed – one of the joys of this area is having these birds carolling in the garden.

In Darwin one had to almost live in the mangroves to have them. Our yard is not yet cassowary – attractive, although we have seen one feeding on white-apples just down the road a bit, so we have hope.

I guess everyone knows the feeling when you first see a wild cassowary close to you – heart in throat and mind amazed at the presence and power of the animal.

For me, it is the same feeling when I encounter a very rare or completely new fish; the word thrilling has been over-used but that’s what it is, a physical thrill.

I have excavated 7 million year old fossils of giant birds such as extinct emus and mihurungs (dromornithids) and as these are extinct, they are somewhat mythical to comprehend. The power of the cassowary is such that it has that same mythical quality. We have fallen in love with these pre-historic palaeognaths. And do not want to see them vanish like the mihurungs (if you want to learn about these giant birds and other megafauna, go to www.australianmuseum.net.au/Dromornis-stirtoni as a start, or check out the book *Magnificent mihurungs: the colossal flightless birds of the Australian Dreamtime* by Peter Murray and Pat Vickers-Rich from the library).

To learn more about the area, its people, the cassowaries and to see if we could help keep Mission Beach in the condition we’d like it to be, we joined C4. We have met an amazing range of people, with backgrounds and skills very different to ours in some ways, and very similar in others. We have learned quickly about community issues and the great range of opinions held about them. We also were amazed at how far some proposed projects



Blue-backed Sprats (*Spratelloides delicatulus*) at Boat Bay. Sprats like marine waters in good condition, and are highly sensitive to pollutants.

have got without what I would consider to be proper process and understanding of potential environmental and social impacts (e.g. Boat Bay).

We discovered why there is so much empty cleared land sitting around, that should have been left vegetated and available as habitat for cassowaries and other creatures and plants. We discovered that the views and opinions of the Traditional Owners do not seem to be highly valued or sought

after – very different from the way in the Northern Territory.

All these things can be fixed, given considerable good-will and effort on all sides.

We moved to the Mission Beach area as we wanted to live by the sea again, in a small tropical community that shared our fascination with the idea of living among quiet beaches, intact rainforest, real mountains with clouds sitting on them, hundreds of birds and fast-flowing clear streams full of fascinating fishes all nearby. And here it is.

Dr Helen K. Larson
Wongaling Beach 4852



Beach Stone-curlew (*Esacus neglectus*) – a pair of these beach-nesting birds inhabit the beach near our house.

MISSION BEACH HABITAT PLAN FINALISED



“The ongoing participation by local people, businesses, scientists and all levels of government has made this a very practical plan that’s already working”

After three years of consultation with the community, industry and government, the long awaited Mission Beach Habitat Network Action Plan has been completed and will be released in June.

The non-binding plan sets out what we need to do to ensure that the rainforest, cassowaries, agricultural lands, village atmosphere, Djiru culture and other special values of Mission Beach survive and prosper.

Priority tasks include incentives for voluntary habitat protection on private property, for which Terrain NRM has recently applied for \$1.5M Caring for Our Country funding.

“The ongoing participation by local people, businesses, scientists and all levels of government has made this a very practical plan that’s already working and I really thank everyone for being part of it” said Terrain CEO Dr Allan Dale. “But there’s plenty more to do and Terrain is committed to

keep working with everyone to help manage Mission Beach’s outstanding natural resources.”

Dr Ro Hill is a principal scientist working on the plan from the CSIRO. “We developed a new model of adaptive community-based biodiversity conservation through this research, reflecting a deep community partnership between science and industry delivering to the needs of users. Reviewers of our model from the science journal, Environmental Conservation, found ‘this is a fine piece of collaborative research that is at the cutting edge of participatory management’.”

The plan is available from
www.terrain.org.au/missionbeach
Printed and CD copies are available by phoning 4043 8000, emailing admin@terrain.org.au or at Wongaling Library from June.

POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS TO CASSOWARY ROADKILL AT MISSION BEACH

Collated by Terrain NRM for discussion purposes May 2010

"People who live or work at Mission Beach have contributed many ideas"

Introduction

Collision with motor vehicles is the major recorded cause of cassowary death at Mission Beach (59 in 15 years, including 3 adults in the last 6 months). The following article consists of cassowary roadkill "solutions" proposed by various organisations and individuals to date. The ideas are not necessarily endorsed by Terrain or any other organisation, or in any order of priority. Some may be unaffordable, not permitted or ineffective. Nevertheless they are all presented here to encourage discussion and progress. Everyone is welcome to contact Terrain with comments or additional ideas on Ph 4043 8000 or tonyo@terrain.org.au.

Some roads are managed by Queensland government, some by local government. Governments have limited resources to implement solutions. Activities that increase traffic could contribute resources to implement solutions. Solutions need to enable cassowaries to move between habitat areas without negative impacts from motor vehicles. Solutions need to meet government requirements including road safety and environmental protection. Solutions need to be acceptable to the community. Some solutions would work best on certain sections of road. Some would cost more than others. Some would impact more on the community. Some would work better for cassowaries. Community input into the discussion, selection and design of solutions will result in better solutions.



Cassowaries are important to our environment, community and economy and are protected under Queensland and Australian legislation. Much has already been done to address roadkill through signage, reduced speeds and traffic calming. Unfortunately cassowary roadkill continues. Traffic is increasing. Terrain is committed to working with the community, road managers, scientists and other stakeholders to help find and implement effective solutions.

Information including roadside signage

Accurate information on cassowary behaviour associated with roads will benefit drivers and road managers. Different messages might need to be tailored for the different groups of drivers (e.g. residents, workers, tourists, age, gender). We don't yet know if any particular group is associated with roadkill. Particularly for visitors, information

advising of the large size of cassowaries and their endangered status may influence driving. Roadkill information in addition to roadside signage could be considered, e.g. education programs, driver surveys. Regularly updated information might keep the community engaged. It's assumed that tourists generally take notice of existing roadside cassowary signage, probably because it is large. Static signage is less noticed by locals after they've seen it a few times. Existing cassowary signage is reflective but not illuminated, partly because cassowaries generally don't cross roads after dark. Temporary signage designed by the local school for the



Photo courtesy Ron Dalington

Sustainability Film Festival influenced some drivers (including locals) because the messages and/or images appealed to them and/or they knew it was made by local kids. QPWS rangers install temporary "recent cassowary crossing" signage following reports of recent crossings. Ideally, the signage is removed after a week or two so drivers can be confident that any signed area is a currently active crossing. However cassowary roadkill has occurred in a location with such signage. A variable message sign (VMS) is an electronic roadside sign that displays information regarding the oncoming road. The message can be updated readily. The sign may be on a relocatable trailer. There is currently a VMS in place on the main road near Mission Circle advising "cassowary crossing zone, please slow down". Regular reports could be provided by radio, email or text message regarding currently active crossing zones. When existing roadside cassowary signage needs to be replaced, e.g. due to age, local residents including the school could be invited to help design new signage. Standard signage is preferred by some, including road managers.

Driver training and education

Local drivers could be provided with driving training and education. Improving or adjusting driving techniques and increasing awareness of how accidents occur could help reduce or prevent the incidence of collisions. Training could include a special focus on cassowary crossings and the local road environment and rules. Improved driver skill would have obvious benefits beyond cassowaries. Inappropriate training could produce overconfident drivers who drive faster than previously.

Audible cassowary crossing markers

Rumble strips on the road cause vehicles driving over them to vibrate and make noise, alerting the driver to an upcoming road situation, e.g. a cassowary crossing zone. Rumble strips are applied in a series across the direction of travel and could be effective where cassowary crossings are concentrated. Rumble strips are usually applied either side of the crossing (rather than the crossing itself) so that drivers reduce speed before entering the crossing area. Impacts on cyclists and motorcyclists would need to be addressed. On-site speed limit reduction (advisory or regulatory) and signage advising of the rumble strip's purpose would be required. Potential noise issues might limit use adjacent to residences. The impact of noise on cassowaries would need to be considered, e.g. it may favourably alert cassowaries to vehicles or the noise might scare them away altogether. Even at known cassowary crossings, cassowaries sometimes cross a bit further up or down the road, possibly seeking to avoid another territorial bird. Drivers would need to be informed that cassowaries may also cross outside of indicated zones. Rumble strips wear out over time.

Visible cassowary crossing markers

Known cassowary crossing zones (and their approaches) could be indicated to drivers by a system of non-standard coloured reflectors placed on existing roadside guide posts. Similarly, road shoulders in known cassowary crossing zones could be painted a colour, similar to some on-road bicycle lanes. Markers could be placed on the road itself, not just roadsides, e.g. cassowaries or their footprints could be painted across the road. Paint on roads might have safety issues for motorcyclists. Bands of alternate coloured bitumen across



the road already exist. Drivers would need to be informed that cassowaries may also cross outside of indicated zones. Drivers would need to be made aware of the meaning and intent of the visible markers, ideally by adjacent signage depicting a cassowary.

Environmental gateways

Symbolic gateways could be constructed at the start of the major habitat areas on the roads in from Tully and El Arish (e.g. at South Maria Creek and east of Merryburn) so that drivers know they are entering a special environmental area where particular driving behaviour is needed.

Roadside cassowary memorials

When a cassowary is killed in a road accident, a roadside memorial of acceptable dimensions could be installed nearby and within sight of drivers. Main Roads has a Roadside Memorials fact sheet that outlines an application process and the need

to ensure that memorials (including their installation) do not interfere with road safety. Details on individual cassowary deaths could be publicised.

Flashing headlights

Drivers who see a cassowary near the road could warn oncoming drivers of a potential hazard ahead by flashing their headlights. This practice already occurs.

Wildlife detectors

Wildlife detectors activate signals (such as roadside flashing lights) to alert nearby drivers when a large moving object or tracked animal is sensed approaching a monitored section of road. Detec-



Photo courtesy Karl Depak artist impression

tors might include cameras sited to detect large animals moving onto roads. Detectors could possibly be triggered by large moving objects other than cassowaries or might detect adults but not chicks, although chicks are usually in company with an adult. Alternatively, cassowaries could be micro-chipped or fitted with radio transmitters. The transmitters would connect to electronic signs along roadsides where cassowaries frequently cross. When a tracked bird moved near a monitored road, the nearest electronic sign would be activated until the tracked bird moved away from the monitored area. This method might require capturing cassowaries to attach the transmitter. Data from signals could also be used for cassowary ecological/behaviour studies. Drivers would need to be informed that the flashing lights indicate cassowary presence. Drivers might assume that if there is no warning sign, there is no cassowary nearby and therefore drivers might be less attentive. Information would need to be provided to drivers regarding whether some cassowaries may not be triggering warning signs, e.g. there may not be resources to fit all cassowaries, fitted cassowaries might lose their transmitter or the transmitter or signage

might become faulty, chicks leaving the dad and new cassowaries moving into Mission Beach might not be fitted. Cassowary detection might be compromised in forest and may be more effective with wide, well-maintained, cleared road verges.



Roadside vegetation

Existing slashed road verges could be slashed

more frequently and/or existing slashed areas could be extended into existing forest to widen the cleared road verge. In either case, increased slashing of roadside vegetation could have a range of impacts. Drivers might be better able to see fauna on the roadside. Drivers might drive faster because the road environment appears safer. The faster a vehicle is travelling, the longer it takes to slow down/stop. Fauna dependent on forest connectivity might be less able to cross the road. Rope bridges over roads could assist possums etc to cross. Maintenance may not be possible in very wet periods or when slashing resources are inadequate, resulting in overgrown verges with poor visibility. Weed and feral animal access to forest might increase. Grazing on road verges by wallabies might increase. Natural scenery might be diminished. Approvals would be required for forest clearing. Alternatively, some existing cleared verges could be revegetated with low-growing natives or high-crowned trees that don't conceal cassowaries and don't produce cassowary fruits. This might reduce speeds and improve scenery.

Fines for killing endangered species

Drivers causing cassowary roadkill due to speeding could be fined under Queensland and Australian government legislation and possibly lose points and their licence. This prospect might encourage better driving in known (sign-posted) cassowary habitat. The fear of a fine might discourage some drivers from reporting a roadkill and therefore we lose the opportunity to learn from the incident, or the unreported bird might be injured (not dead) and need medical attention, or it might be a cassowary dad that's killed and his chicks are left unattended on the roadside.

Speed limit compliance

The faster a vehicle is travelling, the longer it takes to slow down/stop. There is currently some speeding in cassowary crossing zones. The Mission Beach community could publicly commit to voluntarily



comply with the existing speed limit, rather than authorities using resources to enforce compliance. Community leaders could publicise their commitment to speed limit compliance.

The additional benefits of speed limit compliance could be promoted, e.g. enhanced public safety and reduced traffic accidents. Mission Beach could be promoted as a relaxed "slow down town" where people don't speed. Signs advising drivers of their current speed could be installed. Speed compliance could be monitored and reported back to the community against a target of zero speeding. If voluntary compliance didn't work, the public and/or stakeholders could request policing of the speed limit with mobile and/or fixed speed cameras at known crossing points. Queensland Police Service Traffic Manual includes Police policy on speed cameras and site selection based on public complaints and stakeholder concerns. Fixed cameras could

address specific crossing points whereas point-to-point cameras (which average a driver's speed over a distance) could address broad crossing areas (e.g. roads through National Park). Some people find it difficult driving 80 kph on a road designed for 100 kph.

Speed limit reduction

Speed limits could be lowered throughout Mission Beach or just in particular areas, e.g. National Park/World Heritage Areas or winding sections (e.g. Fenby Gap) or known crossing hotspots. Reducing speed limit through the National Park on El Arish-Mission Beach Rd from 80 to 60 kph would increase travel time by less than one minute. Lowered speed limits might need to be coupled with enforcement and/or changes to the road speed environment to encourage compliance. Speed limits could be lowered at different times of the day or year according to fauna behaviour, e.g. cassowaries generally don't cross at night (but wallabies do; also the May 2010 cassowary roadkill was after dark); cassowary chicks hatch at a certain time of year and have less road sense than adults. Lowering speed limits immediately adjacent to existing low speed areas may be more acceptable to the community and government but there are important crossing zones distant from existing low speed areas. Lowered speed zones could be relocatable to respond to crossing hotspots. "Advisory" speed limit signs could be installed at crossing zones encouraging drivers to voluntarily drive at a certain lower speed. Advisory signs currently exist at Lacey Creek and east of Fenby Gap and are not known to reduce speed. Some local people could strongly oppose further speed limit reduction unless there is evidence that reducing speed reduces cassowary deaths.



Speed bumps and roundabouts

Speed bumps and roundabouts force drivers to slow down. Speed bumps may be dangerous for motorcycles and trucks and generally are not suitable for 80 kph or higher speeds. Roundabouts require a large space and substantial lighting.

Wildlife underpasses and overpasses

These are dedicated fauna passageways, separate from traffic. Cassowaries rarely use culverts because the culverts are small, so sections of road might need to be elevated on piers like a bridge for cassowaries to cross under, or the road could be in a tunnel so cassowaries cross above. Fencing would be required to funnel cassowaries to the underpasses or overpasses.

Fences

Fencing could be installed to stop cassowaries from crossing certain roads. Cassowaries might follow the fence to where it ends and cross there instead. Individual cassowaries have a large home range and can be territorial. Fencing could block access to habitat, shorten cassowary's range and force conflict between individuals. Fences might separate adults from chicks. Separating populations might result in inbreeding. Cassowaries get confused by fences and could exhaust and/or injure themselves trying to get through. Cassowaries could become entrapped on the road side of the fence, especially after cyclones. Dogs could use fences to corner cassowaries. Fences could be unattractive. Fences (and overpasses/underpasses) might be appropriate at Smith's Gap on the Bruce Highway where traffic volume and speed is much higher and options more limited than at Mission Beach.

Culverts upgraded to bridges

Where waterways have been put into culverts and the surrounding area filled, culverts and fill could be removed and a bridge installed instead. Cassowaries cross under the Hull River bridge.



www.terrain.org.au/images/stories/programs/terrestrial-biodiversity/mission-beach/wongaling-corridors-fauna-crossings.pdf

Directional mounds

Earth mounds could be constructed along roadsides instead of fences. Mound sides could be steep on the habitat side to discourage cassowary entry onto the road and gentle on the road side to enable cassowaries on the road to get back to habitat.

Sonic Animal Deterrents

These are inexpensive whistle-like devices fitted externally to motor vehicles. When the vehicle is travelling over 50 kph, air flowing through the unit emits a high frequency sound to the fore of the vehicle. The sound is apparently audible to animals up to two kilometres away and "warns" them away. Efficiency is influenced by unit maintenance, road-side terrain, corners and weather conditions. Effectiveness on cassowaries is unknown. Deterrents could affect pets that live near roads.

Road hierarchy

A greater variety of traffic calming options are allowed on roads managed by local government compared to State-controlled roads. Transferring certain roads from state control to local government could allow more fauna crossing options but at a cost to local government. South Mission Beach Rd is currently a main road that could possibly be a local road. Traffic could be encouraged to use Bingil Bay Road rather than El Arish-Mission Beach Road which cuts through the middle of the National Park.

However there are important ecological and social values on Bingil Bay Road too, travel times would increase for some, and a Bingil Bay Rd upgrade would require major works.

Flattening roads (vertical realignment)

In areas where the topography is naturally undulating, the driver's visibility of the road ahead might be blocked by the next crest. Crests could be levelled and gullies bridged to create a flatter road so that drivers could see further ahead, including fauna on the road. Increased visibility might result in increased driver speed and decreased stopping time as well as aesthetic and drainage impacts.

Unstraightening roads (horizontal realignment)



Long straight stretches of road (like the Wongaling stretch) could be given a more winding alignment (like Collins Avenue in Cairns) to encourage lower speeds (and improve aesthetics). Chicanes are traffic islands placed near the road edge making the road less straight. They might need to be lit at night. Winding roads could reduce visibility of cassowaries.

Narrowing roads

Pavement width could be narrowed or road shoulders could be painted (e.g. with chevron marking) to make the road appear narrower and discourage speeding in crossing zones. Painted shoulders already exist on parts of Tully-Mission Beach Rd but fade over time.

Double white lines

Double white centre lines could be painted on roads through cassowary crossing areas to disallow overtaking. Cassowary roadkill has been caused by a vehicle overtaking another vehicle that had slowed to allow a cassowary party to cross.

Traffic volume management

Traffic volume is currently increasing due to ongoing car-dependent development. Traffic growth could be moderated by ensuring future development is low density; voluntarily buying back undeveloped development sites; providing best practice bike paths, walkways and public transport; and providing services and facilities in each village so people don't need to drive frequently between villages (and through habitat). There may not be sufficient population at Mission Beach for a viable best practice bus service. We need to plan for future traffic volumes.



Ecotourism development

Cassowary friendly driving could be encouraged by developing ecotourism as the local business of the future. If local people were employed in nature-based industries, they could be economically motivated to maintain the natural values and minimise roadkill. Tourist transport would need to be carefully managed.

Learning from roadkill

We need to understand the factors that contribute to roadkill in order to help prevent future accidents. Factors include driver and cassowary behaviour and environmental factors, e.g. what was the driver's speed; was the driver a local or visitor; did the roadkill occur at a known cassowary crossing point; was it a straight or winding road section; a flat or steep road; was the road verge forest or mown grass? People involved in traffic accidents (or near misses) with cassowaries can

provide this critical information. Cassowary road incidents should be reported to the DERM hotline phone 1300 130 372 so that DERM and partners can respond to cassowary roadkill incidents and understand the contributing factors. People involved in cassowary accidents could be traumatised and concerned about how they will be perceived by the community and may need support.

Conclusion

People who live and/or work at Mission Beach have invaluable experience and have suggested many of the above ideas. Please think about the above ideas but remember that many of them are as yet unproven and are not endorsed by Terrain or others. If you have comments or additional ideas, please contact Terrain on Ph 4043 8000 or tonyo@terrain.org.au. Terrain is working with all stakeholders to help find and implement effective solutions.

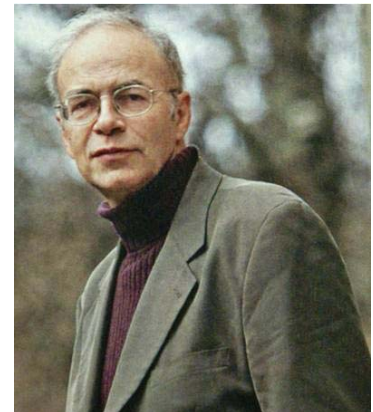


Photos courtesy David Westcott

Peter Singer Philosopher

Studies now show that the so-called 'human' qualities of compassion and altruism are present in dolphins, chimps and gorillas. What does that tell us?

It tells us what Darwin already noticed—that it is not only in our anatomy, but also in our emotional and mental lives that we are on a continuum with the other animals. It also tells us that our ethics need to change. Now only human beings can have basic rights or the moral status of a person. All animals are just 'things' - at law, items of property. That needs to change. We should not disregard or discount the interests of another sentient being just because it is not a member of our species.



Mar 6-7 2010 Weekend Australian Magazine

Action to remove cassowary from endangered list

Cassowary Recovery Team meets for third time

When a species is placed on the threatened by extinction list, under State and Federal law, a Recovery Plan must be written.

The Cassowary Recovery Plan was written by the Qld Environmental Protection Agency in 2001 and revised in 2007. The stated overall objective of it is to *'protect cassowaries, habitats and corridors from threats through better planning, monitoring and community involvement'*.

The recovery plan provides a planned and logical framework for key interest groups and responsible government agencies to coordinate their work.

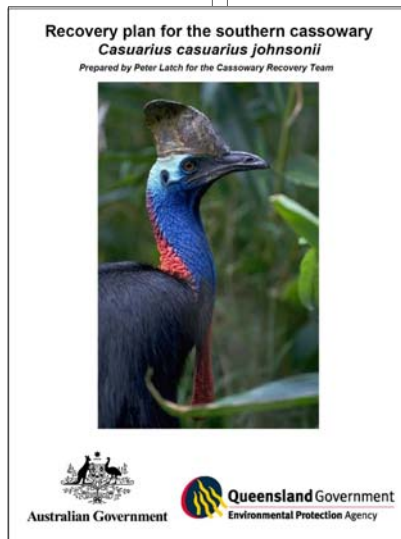
Until now the Plan has not been 'actioned' and the threats to the cassowary have continued and increased.

The Cassowary Recovery Team (CRT) held its

first meeting in June 2009. Meetings are held every three months and are chaired by Wet Tropics Management Authority executive Director, Andrew McLean. The CRT comprises representatives of the Wet Tropics and Cape York regions active in cassowary research, management and community activities. Additional scientific or other expertise may be co-opted as agenda requires.

The Cassowary Recovery Team plays an important role in ensuring community, government and research activities undertaken in support of cassowary conservation through implementation of the recovery plan are aligned and coordinated, and that knowledge is

shared as a basis for informed action. An underlying principle of the recovery team is that all members will benefit from their participation through gaining knowledge and achieving efficiencies in plan implementation.



QPWS/UQ Satellite Tagging Project

Need for an *'aligned and coordinated approach'* to cassowary sightings

A cassowary satellite tagging project was announced by the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service at the Cassowary Summit held in Cairns in September 2009. The trial is a partnership between QPWS and the University of Queensland to tag 20 birds, 10 in urban and 10 in remote areas of the wet tropics.



When C4 voiced their concerns we were assured there would be community consultation before the project proceeded.

The tagging process requires the birds to be tranquilised while a radio transmitter is attached.

The concerns were based on the death of a healthy bird while tranquilised at the Garners Beach rehabilitation facility and the manner in which birds were 'managed' after cyclone Larry as seen in the Bianca Keeley documentary 'Cassowaries'.

Despite radio transmitters becoming common in every day life such as mobile phones and GPS car navigators, current technology still cannot easily transmit a signal in typical cassowary habitat.

"The only reliable way to gather information about how cassowaries move around the landscape is with a traditional tag and following on foot" confirms Dr David Westcott who leads the CSIRO cassowary scat analysis research project.

Cassowaries are shy in nature, can have a foraging range of up to 7 square kilometers and despite their spectacular colours 'disappear' with ease once under the canopy of the rainforest. It makes study of the species very difficult.

Beginning her study of cassowaries after Cyclone Winifred in 1986, Dr Joan Bentrupperbaumer spent thousands of hours

in the rainforest around Mission Beach making notes while waiting for, watching and following the birds.

Working with C4, Dr Bentrupperbaumer established a sightings record, both for casual sightings and regularly seen birds, with a focus on individual identification where possible.

The information has been collected for over 15 years and is made available to anyone interested in the recovery of the species and helps to inform authorities in decision making.

QPWS is responsible for the collection of sightings information and attending wildlife incidences. This includes road strike and the placement of *'recent crossing'* signs. To date the information gathered by the agency is not entered into a data base.

The information would be invaluable to help future planning especially in light of the number of developments being approved fragmenting the natural

landscape and bringing an increase in traffic to our area. Despite C4 voicing their concerns to the QPWS Regional Manager and to Minister Kate Jones personally, the satellite tags were already fitted to five birds at Etty Bay before a meeting was arranged for discussion.

Scientific studies that will help in the recovery of the cassowary are most welcome but in this instance the knowledge gained may be limited to how often a particular bird visits a back yard or caravan annexe. It is also unknown whether the tags will drop off after 40 days as planned or will need to be manually removed requiring further tranquillising and man-handling.

The sightings data base on the new website seems to have been added to the project as an after-thought— doesn't include any more information than is already being collected by C4, QPWS and other individuals and organisations. It does not ask for the extra detailed information that is needed to aid

in the protection of cassowaries.

The use of well known cassowary signage and encouraging people to report to a new contact point may in fact hinder progress by confusing public response and fragmenting current information gathering"

At \$2000 a tag it is disappointing the limited resources available are being spent without an *'aligned and coordinated approach'*. We need to all work together with a focus on specific outcomes.

Current advice is to report cassowary sightings to QPWS on 1300 130 372 or to C4 at 4068 7197.

(C4 asked for video footage of the tagging procedure but to date have not been contacted by QPWS. At the time of this printing, QPWS staff were seen at Etty Bay trying to flush a cassowary out of the bush to retrieve a tag).

Liz Gallie

MINISTER PETER GARRETT RECOGNISED FOR CONSERVATION ACHIEVEMENTS

"This award recognises that conservation is more than a portfolio for Minister Garrett. Instead, it has been a lifetime commitment."

<http://www.environment.gov.au/minister/garrett/2009/mr20091009.html>



The WWF has awarded Federal Environment Minister Peter Garrett the prestigious Leaders for a [Living Planet award](#), in recognition of significant commitments to the expansion and enhancement of Australia's protected areas.

The award, presented to Minister Garrett at the opening of the *Healthy Parks, Healthy People Congress* at the Melbourne Convention Centre on April 11, is one of the highest honours given to individuals by the global conservation organisation.

"Through programs such as Reef Rescue and the National Reserve System, Minister Garrett's commitments to protected areas represent major progress towards the establishment of a safety net for Australia's wildlife," said Greg Bourne, WWF-Australia CEO.

"They also promise real economic benefits in terms of tourism, clean water, clean air and climate miti-

Indigenous Protected Areas and ranger programs promise significant improvements in health and wellbeing for Indigenous communities.

"This award recognises that conservation is more than a portfolio for Minister Garrett. Instead, it has been a lifetime commitment."

Mr Bourne presented the award certificate and letter to Minister Garrett on behalf of WWF-International Director General Jim Leape.

Minister Garrett is the first Australian recipient of a *Leaders for a Living Planet* award, which has been awarded to over 50 government and non-government conservation leader since 2002, recognising a wide variety of initiatives. Recent recipients include Nepal's *Climate-For-Life* Ambassadors Apa and Dawa Sherpa.

Specific commitments made by Minister Garrett recognised by the Award include:

- \$200 million to reduce pollution affecting the Great Barrier Reef.
- \$180 million to expand the area protected within the National Reserve System.
- \$50 million for Indigenous Protected Areas, \$90 million for Indigenous ranger programs and \$10 million to support Indigenous participation in emerging carbon markets.
- A target to expand protected areas to at least 125 million hectares (a 25 per cent increase) by 2013.
- A renewed national strategy for the National Reserve System that focuses on protecting critical habitats and the viability of species and ecological communities threatened by climate change by 2030.
- Progress on national marine protected areas including a new conservation zone over the Coral Sea.

The importance of Garrett Corridor

Clearing for agriculture and residential development has resulted in the creation of a lacework of habitat linkages connecting larger blocks of vegetation such as the World Heritage area to the west of Cassowary Drive and the lowland rainforest in the Porters Creek catchment area (locally referred to as R214) to the east. Some of the linkages are only several metres wide along drainage lines.

It is not known exactly how many cassowaries utilise the coastal lowland block but road crossing sightings are regularly reported to C4 and occur at all the habitat linkages.



The largest of the remaining local corridors in this area is now known as the Garrett Corridor (Shown with X). It gained its name after the Federal Environment Minister found a residential development proposal on lot 66 at Rockingham Close 'Clearly Unacceptable' under the Environment Protection Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) Act.

The vegetation block is wide enough for several birds to move within it and to allow for juvenile dispersal. Cassowaries can live up to 50 years and once establishing a foraging range, occupy it for life. They co exist with a number of other birds, being tolerant only from a distance except during the mating season.

Without more habitat, the population cannot expand. To maintain the present population the remaining habitat linkages need to be protected and enhanced so safe movement between the remaining coastal lowland blocks can be accessed without territorial conflict.

Residents who see cassowaries on a regular basis can recognise individual birds in their area and become familiar with the dynamics of the interaction between them. Generally the birds they see will be a female, a male which raises chicks each year and a juvenile for a period of time.

The pair shown at left are known as 'Charlie' (12 years old) and 'Lizzie' (17 years old) Each year they mate and Charlie rears chicks. They are the dominant birds well known by residents at Mission Circle on properties situated along the World Heritage boundary on the ridge to the eastern part of the corridor. They are regularly seen crossing the road.

Residents are also following the progress of 'Limpy',



Photo Tara Webster

a cyclone Larry survivor, now an adult, that avoid the two established birds to survive.

Other birds are also seen from time to time but the corridor is not wide enough to support more without conflict.



The residents at Spurwood Close, Koda Street and Kurrajong Close all know the dad and three chicks seen almost daily for the last six months. The family cross the road into Garrett Corridor and at least once have been sighted crossing the road at the Wongaling Creek Bridge toward Royal

Palms Estate. They have been reported recently at Mission Circle vying for a share of the large red apples currently fruiting (*Syzygium sharoniae*) and are not being tolerated by the resident female.



Photo Robert Tidey

All the habitat linkages are important for cassowary continued access to the remaining lowland vegetation.

Garrett Corridor gives the best opportunity for chicks growing up on the eastern side of Cassowary Drive to move through and find a territory of their own in the protected World Heritage area.

Mission Beach is a small place. Combined community knowledge is invaluable to establish effective measures to help protect the important population of cassowaries against the impacts of development.

Even the building of the bikeway/walkway placed the birds crossing the road at Mission Circle at a high risk of traffic strike. There were no measures put in place to allow for continued free movement during the construction phase.



Everyone in the community can be of great help by letting us know when you see a cassowary either when you are driving or if you see them regularly at your place.

C4 Management

For Sale

Glut of real estate—glut of signs—no control



'For sale' and 'auction' signs are dominating our landscape. Visitors to our area are saddened and appalled at the degrading of the natural beauty and visual appeal of Mission Beach. Even Main Road Signs such as at the entrance to Mission Beach above are being cluttered with local promotional boards from garage sales, private businesses, restaurants and real estates.

The signs at the intersection are not only illegal but don't give a positive first impression to visitors arriving at Mission Beach.

The developments do not blend with the landscape and will change the demographic being attracted to Mission Beach, in turn lowering the bar of expectation of our World Heritage valued area.

Short term economic gain is set to undermine the character, and compromise forever, the special values which include the relaxed village atmosphere and the needs of our wildlife.

The Cassowary Coast Statement of Proposals for the new Planning Scheme, out now for public comment, does not reflect that urgency or the community input through the mandatory public consultations that have been held so far.



The vision statement for Mission Beach in the Johnstone Shire Planning scheme alone states;

Mission Beach village will develop as a unique residential location and ecotourism destination which capitalises on the outstanding natural attributes that surround it. The village will develop a unique urban design identity that is environmentally responsive, maintaining and enhancing the natural character of the area. The scale of development will be consistent with maintaining a relaxed intimate village setting and sense of local community. The scenic presentation of the area will maintain the effect of an undeveloped, natural coastline, when viewed from, the waters edge or from off shore.

How many signs are needed to advertise a single sale? Real estate agents need to take some responsibility. Photos on their websites do not show this reality.

One of the first items of concern identified by the Visual Amenity Advisory Group (VAAG) was the random placement of A boards in the Village Green.

There is enough policy written for Mission Beach in existing Plans for the Council to act now regarding visual amenity. The Johnstone Shire Planning Scheme, the two Coastal Management Plans, the FNQ2031 Plan and the Mission Beach Habitat Network Action Plan all recognise the exceptional scenic and environmental value of Mission Beach. The lack of enforcement is allowing the situation to persist.

The Council is approving developments and subdivisions without appropriate conditions that is introducing a style more suited to Port Douglas or Noosa.

It is an embarrassment and a Community shame that first time or return visitors see such a lack of respect for our area.

Come on Mission Beach, if the Council won't lead the way, lets take responsibility and show ownership and pride in our magic place.

It is up to every one of us.



AUSTRALIA — EMPTY OR FULL?

"we are hooked on the idea of endless growth, , because that's the only policy we allow for".

Prime Minister Kevin Rudd's off-the-cuff call for a big Australia - 36 million by 2050, set off a furious debate earlier this year. Mr Rudd's remarks appear to have been made without any scientific evidence of expected growth rates, or with any consideration of the nation's sustainability or infrastructure needs.

The current increase in Australia's population is unprecedented, 22 million people and rising rapidly.

Just over every minute of the day, a new person is added to the country's population, 443,000 every year. We're growing faster than the USA, Britain or the EU and faster than many developing countries including China. We've up-ed the birthrate, producing 50,000 more babies a year now than in 2000. The level of overseas migration has risen from 100,000 per year in the 1990's, to around 240,000 now.

Professor Bob Birrell, one of the country's leading demographers at Monash University, said Prime Minister Kevin Rudd's target of 36 million people would be overshoot based on the current net migration rate. Professor Birrell said "It would involve a serious deterioration in quality of life and a fundamental change to the way people live."

By the year 2050, Brisbane and Perth's population will likely double. Cities such as Sydney and Melbourne with populations of 7 million would evolve into mega high rise metropolises on the scale of Hong Kong, with a drastic deterioration in quality of life for its inhabitants. We're at risk of seeing increasingly dysfunctional cities with fragmentation and break-down of the transport system, leading to frustration of residents trying to get around. Australia would continue to have the highest per capita greenhouse gas emissions in the world.

In a recent survey of more than 1000 people, the Lowy Institute found that while there is support for increased immigration, Australians are not quite prepared to embrace the Government's prediction that the nation will reach 36 million people by 2050. The poll shows 72 per cent of people support a rise in Australia's population, but 69 per cent want it to remain below 30 million people.

A population policy should begin with an understanding that Australians are not living sustainably now, we are hooked on on the idea of endless growth, because that's the only policy we allow for. There needs to be a recognition from all governments that the drivers of this unsustainability are continual population growth and economic growth

and both those levers need to be tackled. As Dick Smith says, "Think of your grandchildren, because they are going to have the difficulties that we're creating."

The future population size of Australia will be determined by policy decisions affecting fertility, life expectancy and immigration levels. These adjustments shouldn't be too difficult to make. At present Australia's birth rate is being artificially lifted by the baby bonus. In fact there are a good number of countries with falling fertility rates well below the replacement level of about 2.1. These include Italy (1.2), Japan (1.4), France (1.7), UK (1.7), China (1.8), USA (2.0). Australia's fertility rate is currently 1.97 (2008), deaths are expected to exceed births by the 2030's.

The business community would have us believe that by 2015, Australia will be short of 240,000 skilled people each year. But

there is evidence that simply ramping up immigration adds more to the demand for labour than it contributes to the supply. When a tradesperson comes in to take a job and that person's family is included, they add more to the demand for infrastructure than the contribution to the supply of labour to build the additional infrastructure.

A bigger population will put pressure on our already sprawling and traffic-clogged major cities. There are concerns about overcrowding, about house prices and the environmental strain that 36 million Australians would cause. Australia already has severe and worsening soil salinity problem plus scarce water supplies.

In 2000, research commissioned by the Australian Conservation Foundation and the National Farmers' Federation estimated that \$6.5 billion in investment will be required each year over the next decade to repair salinity damage. Electricity supplies are already at a premium, and every mainland state has had to build one or two desal plants.

Rapid population growth without improvements in agricultural capacity will result in fewer exports and/or more imports in order to feed the population.

"A bigger Australia doesn't mean deeper soils, larger river flows or more rainfall. We're only bigger in one sense - the increase in the total number of humans, crammed into the narrow coastal strip", says former NSW Premier Bob



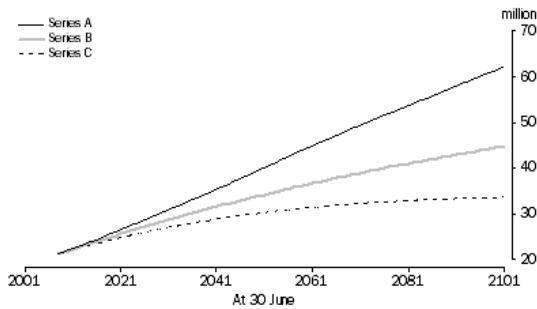
Whilst it is true that the population is aging, we've should be getting people to stay in the work force longer, to work more productively for longer.

MAIN PROJECTION SERIES - Australia

	ASSUMPTIONS		PROJECTED POPULATION AT 30 JUNE			
	Total fertility rate(b) Babies per woman	Net overseas migration (c) persons	Life expectancy at birth (a)		2056 million	2101 million
			Males years	Females years		
Series A	2.0	220,000	93.9	96.1	42.5	62.2
Series B	1.8	180,000	85.0	88.0	35.5	44.7
Series C	1.6	140,000	85.0	88.0	30.9	33.7

(a) From 2056
 (b) From 2021
 (c) From 2010-11 in Series A and C. From 2007-8 in Series B
 (Source Australian Bureau of Statistics)

The effect of these assumptions on Australia's estimated population are shown below.



The important issues for Australia's future are how we maximise quality of life in Australia, whilst minimising unsustainable exploitation of the environment. Quality of life is not just about average per capita income.

It should also embrace the distribution of the national wealth, achievement of individual potential and quality of leisure. An excellent quality of life will always attract the best migrants and provide good prospects for our brightest and best.

A large population for Australia does not guarantee higher living standards or sufficient critical mass for manufacturing. It is how clever a country is that matters more. Successive Australian governments have not sufficiently encouraged innovation. The message for a low-population country like Australia is to simply aspire to be the best.

The debate over Australia's future population should not be allowed to distract attention from issues that are of vital importance irrespective of the outcome of the debate. Whether we opt for a modest population outcome of about 25 million or agree to boost it to a higher figure, the important issues remain - the environment, innovation, export growth and productivity improvements.

Preston Clothier

Djiru Country



Bingil Bay pre Cutten brothers settlement

Buyback and incentives for landholders

Rainforest Rescue buys back 12th Daintree property *to protect it forever*

The not-for-profit organisation Rainforest Rescue, (rainforestrescue.org.au) has just purchased and protected another property in the Daintree rainforest in Far North Queensland through their Daintree Buy Back and Protect Forever Project.



The Queensland Government has classified this block and the surrounding area as essential habitat for the endangered Cassowary under the Vegetation Management Act of 1999.

“The purchase of the property was achieved without government funding,” said Kelvin. Rainforest Rescue raised the required \$85,000 through donations from individuals and businesses.

“It’s estimated that only 1,000 Cassowaries remain in the wild so it’s essential to keep all of the remaining habitat. That’s why we chose to purchase and protect this specific property,” said Kelvin.

“The Daintree is an important tourism asset with over 300,000 people visiting every year, most of whom would love to see a Cassowary in the wild, so saving the Daintree is good for the tourism industry and the economy.”

In the mid 1990’s the Johnstone Shire Council recognised the environmental importance of Mission Beach, and worked with the State Government and local community groups on a development control plan for our area.

The Plan won an international award based on the protection of an endangered species. Subsequently this valuable plan was overridden by the State’s introduction of the Integrated Planning Act.

A commitment by conservationists to blockade construction of a road into the Daintree in the early 80’s led to a national awareness campaign resulting in a buyback scheme for a large part of the high biodiversity area. Rainforest Rescue are dedicated to buying back the 180 blocks that are still outside the protected area.

The lack of the same protection for Mission Beach despite recognition of equally high biodiversity values has allowed Mission Beach to be developed in an ad hoc manner creating serious environmental harm.

Bob Irwin visited Mission Beach with Rainforest Rescue CEO Kelvin Davies late last year and called for a buyback of rainforest to save the habitat of the endangered Cassowary. Rainforest Rescue is asking for donations to help protect key blocks of land and give incentives to landholders who have rainforest on their properties.

The C4 Land Gift Fund was established to purchase rainforest Cassowary habitat in Mission Beach that would otherwise be cleared and developed for housing. Thanks to Rainforest Rescue for contributing \$3,000 recently to the C4 Land Gift Fund which



now stands at approx \$82,000.

Please help us raise more funds to show the local, state and federal governments our commitment to protect cassowary habitat.

Visit www.cassowaryconservation.asn.au send your cheque or money order made out to **C4 Land Gift Fund**, P O Box 165 Mission Beach or come into the C4 Environment Centre.

All donations are tax deductible.

The Tropical Rainforest of North Queensland Australia

Address to the Rotary Club, Tully 2nd March, 1966,
by conservation visionary John Büsser



The tropical rainforests of North Queensland are generally known as “scrub”. This is a most misleading term, and is defined by the Oxford Dictionary as “a tract of country overgrown with low stunted trees”.

It is obvious this in no way applies to the extreme rare and beautiful Rainforests of North Queensland which are unique and of very great scientific interest throughout the world. They are unique not only for the diversity of species, but for the fact that they contain eucalypts in association with rainforest.

This rare combination occurs nowhere else in the world, neither in the vast jungles of South America, nor the extensive rainforests in Borneo, Sumatra, Africa, and to the north of Australia.

During 1965 two teams of scientists, one led by Professor Godwin of Cambridge University, England and another led by Professor D’Aubreville of the University of Sorbonne, France paid a special visit to North Queensland to inspect the rainforests, and were most impressed.

They urged immediate steps to be taken to preserve what little is left of this unique Australian heritage. In November 1965, a team of scientists, sponsored by the CSIRO, Dr Jiro Kikkawa, Senior Lecturer in Zoology, and Mr Ian Straughan from the University of Queensland, carried out what was the first officially sponsored ecological survey in North Queensland and probably in Australia.

The object of the survey was to find and delineate certain

areas of North Queensland to preserve in perpetuity for scientific purposes that is research, only. In other words, to establish, in virgin, and as far as possible, untouched areas of rain forest, open air laboratories to investigate the medical and botanical potential of our rainforests. The report is a brilliant model for all future ecological surveys in Australia.

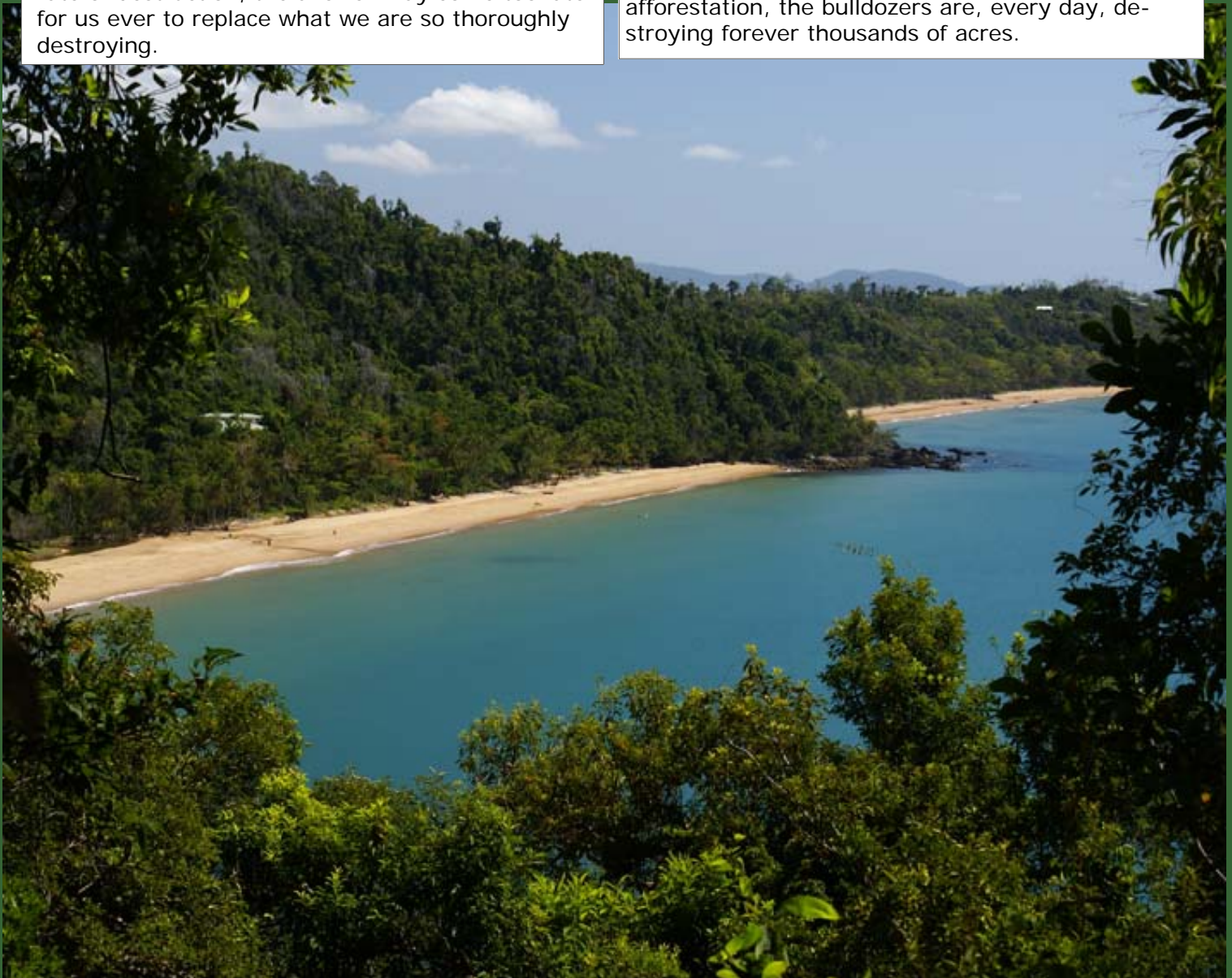
The alarming rate of destruction of rainforests calls for immediate public action. New sugar assignments and cattle fattening schemes are bulldozing the rainforest completely out of existence. In one particular Shire area alone, no less than 92,000 acres have, in the last two years, been totally destroyed forever. Rainforest, once bulldozed, is not self regenerating. So little is known of it's growth pattern, it is impossible to grow the vast majority of it's known trees in plantations. They can only be grown only in their natural state in shade.

The trees of the rainforest are symbiotic – kill one, the other may die. It takes possibly 5 – 7 different species to mature one Black Bean, Maple, or other variety. Scientific work is proceeding on the problems of re-afforestation, but, at the present rate of destruction, the answer may come too late for us ever to replace what we are so thoroughly destroying.

Recently it was announced that a synthetic compound, Tylocrebine, extracted after many years of work, from Tylophora Crebrifolia, a plant discovered by Dr. Webb and Mr Tracey, is being investigated by the National Cancer Institute of America as a possible cure for Leukaemia (blood cancer), which disease is also a by product of atomic radiation.

The rainforests offer a potential gold-mine of possible medical drugs and a great deal of, as yet, necessarily unpublished scientific work that has been proceeding over the last twenty years. It is therefore essential that a halt must be called to the alarming rate of destruction of what was once thought contemptuously as "scrub" and now known to be rare, unique in the world rainforests, and essential for the purposes of medical research.

From the point of view of timber production, there are literally hundreds of varieties, as yet, unmarketed. For example the once despised black and sally wattle, formerly used only for firewood, are now commanding top prices in Sydney and Melbourne as veneers. The potential of the rainforest, both medically and commercially is enormous, yet, before we have even begun to master the problem of re-afforestation, the bulldozers are, every day, destroying forever thousands of acres.



The remaining areas of this valuable heritage is already small enough, extending only from Ingham to Cooktown, approximately 200 miles long by 30 miles wide, and at that, only in isolated pockets in heavy rain fall area. It is interesting to remember that possible areas of the Great Kalahari Desert in Africa were once rainforests, before Man turned his attention to them. The object of scientific research is not to preserve the rainforests from man, but to preserve it for Man.

From the point of view of Tourism, which is rapidly becoming one of Queensland's most important industries, the beauty of the North Queensland Rainforests distinguish this area from every other part of Australia. Their lush, all year round, greenery is a source of both interstate and overseas amazed

delight – nothing like it exists anywhere else in Australia. To quote Dr. L. J. Webb – “On one single acre of North Queensland Tropical Rain Forest, there are more than 100 different species of trees, yet in one acre of eucalypts in Western Australia, there are less than a handful of species”.

The need for the preservation of what little is left of our tropical rainforest is therefore both urgent and vital. In the words of the late President Kennedy, “Our economic standard of living arises, but our environmental standard of living – our access to nature and our respect for it deteriorates. The long run effect will be, not only to degrade the quality of national life, but to weaken the foundation of national power”.

John Büsst



A "Save the Cassowary Campaign" is being launched by the Rainforest Information Centre asking the Federal Government to commit \$60 million for buy-back and incentives for land holders at Mission Beach and The Daintree.



Dear Minister Garrett,
 The Southern Cassowary is an Endangered species threatened with extinction. As little as 1,000 may remain in the tropical rainforests of Far North Queensland.
 Residential development continues to put the Cassowary at risk by destroying and degrading their habitat.
 In 2008 you protected a vital Cassowary corridor by stopping an inappropriate development. Now the Australian people need you to finish the job by protecting all remaining Cassowary habitat in the Daintree Lowland Rainforest and at Mission Beach.
Please commit \$60 million for prime habitat land purchase and conservation incentives to save the Cassowary and their rainforest homes before it's too late.
 As Minister for the Environment please inform me of what action you plan to take.
 Yours sincerely,

Signature: _____
 Name: _____
 Address: _____ Postcode: _____
 State: _____
 Phone: _____
 Email: _____

For more information visit: www.savethecassowary.org.au

To
 Peter Garrett, MP
 Minister for Environment,
 Heritage and the Arts
 C/O
 Save the Cassowary Campaign
 PO Box 47
 Brunswick Heads NSW 2483

Environment Australia
 02 9289 4433
 02 9289 0488
 www.environment.gov.au
 www.savethecassowary.org.au
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Please help with the urgent message, by signing a postcard to send to our Environment Minister the Hon Peter Garrett.

Postcards will be given out at the Mission Beach Markets and can also be obtained at C4 Environment Centre, and the Mission Beach Visitor Centre, Porter Promenade Mission Beach.

To find out more — visit the campaign website on savethecassowary.org.au

Bob Irwin said
“ If we all work together I think we can save the cassowaries at Mission Beach”

You can help buy a piece of rainforest and protect the cassowaries of Mission Beach— your contribution helps, no matter how small.



Donate now to the C4 Land Gift Fund
 Donate online www.cassowaryconservation.asn.au
 or send a cheque or money order to
 C4 Land Gift Fund, P O Box 165 Mission Beach Qld 4852

For more information (07) 4068 7197 or email C4@cassowaryconservation.asn.au