Cassowaries at Mission Beach

Recovery or Extinction
First presented at the Cassowary Summit in 2010 . . . just as relevant today

Recovery or Extinction
Do we really care?
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 continue to increase.
Mission Beach is a special place
It is often described as “Mission Beach Magic”

It’s a place where the rainforest grows right down to the sea

It isn’t just the beach and the offshore islands

And a place where you have the best chance to see a cassowary in the wild
The Cassowary ‘Gunduy’ has always played an important role in the culture of the Djiru traditional owners.

90% of visitors who come to Mission Beach want to see a cassowary.

It is the emblem of our shire.

Tourism economy at Mission Beach relies on the natural values.
Habitat loss is the number one threat to the cassowary but legal clearing of their essential habitat continues.

This is what is happening to some of the very rare rainforest/cassowary habitat at Mission Beach.
56 known cassowary road deaths in 15 years

All roads at Mission Beach travel through cassowary habitat

Development continues to be approved without proper consideration and planning for the increased traffic it brings
Speed limit 80kph
We can’t even get the road speed reduced in known Cassowary crossing areas

In the Mission Beach area these signs are the only protection cassowaries have for crossing roads to access their essential food
Dogs are a big threat
At Mission Beach dogs are allowed to roam and hunt in areas frequented by cassowaries

The local vet has said that dog attack may be responsible for the same amount of cassowary fatalities as vehicle strike

Developments continue to be approved in cassowary habitat without strong enough laws to ban, restrict or control dogs
Fences

Free movement now blocked by residential development

Cassowaries can sustain mortal injuries by coming into contact with fencing. They can become entangled, their beaks can be torn off and they have been known to break their backs running into fences while fleeing in fright.

Fencing is posing new and serious threats as cassowaries are entrapped and isolated from their essential food source.
Development denied!

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

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

The Federal Environment Minister found a development proposal to be ‘clearly unacceptable’ under the EPBC Act because of the impact it would have on the endangered cassowary.
Will we be the generation that hangs our head in shame knowing we didn’t act while watching the cassowary’s decline toward extinction?
Or will we take responsibility now to find solutions that will allow the cassowary to survive and thrive in the wild within its important population strongholds?