



WET TROPICS MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY

MEDIA RELEASE: EMBARGO UNTIL 7.00PM SAT 24 NOVEMBER

Cassowary Awards celebrate World Heritage conservation

Eleven Cassowary Award winners were honoured by the Wet Tropics Management Authority (WTMA) at Hartley's Crocodile Adventures on Saturday (24 November).

WTMA board director Tom Gilmore said the Cassowary Awards is an opportunity to thank members of the community dedicated to conservation of the World Heritage Area.

"The Cassowary Awards is our chance to give a pat on the back and heartfelt thanks to the Wet Tropics community. Their passion, knowledge and hard work are the backbone of World Heritage conservation. We couldn't do it without them," he said.

"I'm always impressed when I see over 250 guests turn up to recognise the community's achievements in a wide range of fields such as conservation, science, Rainforest Aboriginal culture, nature based tourism and education. It's inspiring to see so many talented and dedicated people come together to celebrate their collaborative efforts."

The Young Cassowary Awards were once again a highlight of the evening. Individual students and classes received prizes and the opportunity to roam around Hartley's Crocodile Adventures.

"The students' enthusiasm and energy is infectious. They are doing some marvellous work these days to plant trees in their school grounds and spread the message about cassowaries, frogs or climate change in their local communities," Mr Gilmore said. "I congratulate the students, teachers and parents who put in so much effort and influence so many others."

Mr Gilmore emphasised that the Cassowary Awards would not be possible without the ongoing support of its hosts and sponsors.

"Hartley's Crocodile Adventures and Events NQ have provided an excellent venue and facilities. The Young Cassowary Awards were sponsored by the Daintree Discovery Centre, Terrain NRM, Steve and Meredith Russell and The Cairns Post. All our supporters have exceeded our expectations in their generosity. I would also like to thank the Australian Government which funds the Authority to hold the awards each year," Mr Gilmore added.

Cassowary Award winners for 2007 are:

UNsung HERO

Tim Anderson (from Cairns)

Tim is the visionary behind the Barron Green Corridor Project to rejuvenate the banks of the Barron River. Tim's volunteer work over ten years as a member of the Barron River Integrated Catchment Management Association (BRICMA) has been vital to establish and fund the Green Corridor Project.

CONSERVATION

Sandy Clague (from Cairns and Tablelands)

Sandy has been the stalwart for conservation advocacy in the Wet Tropics region for over 30 years. She joined the fledgling Cairns branch of the Wildlife Preservation Society of Queensland in the early '70s and volunteered to look over environmental impact assessments. She was employed at the national parks and wildlife service in 1989 as an environmental planner and retired earlier this year. Along with environmental planning, Sandy initiated the annual spectacled flying fox count and used her vet skills to perform autopsies on stranded wild life that was brought in by staff.

SCIENCE

Wendy Cooper (from Tablelands)

Wendy is the botanist behind the successful 'Fruits of the Australian Tropical Rainforest' book. Wendy invented a classification system of tropical rainforest plants using their fruits as the primary means of identification. Her method has broken new ground in the botanical world. A new edition in 2006 provides a huge amount of detail about the extraordinary diversity of rainforest fruits.

COMMUNITY CONSERVATION

David Leech and Wally Coutts (from Yungaburra)

David and Wally were the main drivers of the Peterson Creek Vegetation Corridor project since 1998 (along with the late Geoff Tracey). The initial work was successful in planting approximately 15,000 trees as stepping stones along Peterson Creek. The project has so far restored and rehabilitated 1.5 to 2ha of rainforest each year along Peterson Creek, linking remnant patches of rainforest using selected species of endangered Mabi (Type 5b) forest. The first stage of the program was to link remnant rainforest, home to a small population of tree-kangaroos. Work has now been completed on eight separate stages and has created a wildlife corridor and recreation asset for residents and visitors.

COMMUNITY CONSERVATION

Bruce Corcoran (from Behana Creek)

Bruce was the first truly green farmer in the Mulgrave area. He is passionate about trees, water quality and sustainable farming practices and has worked long and hard to promote conservation amongst farmers and others in the community. For over 20 years Bruce has worked with the local community to rehabilitate the Mulgrave River catchment. This has included weed control and tree planting. He continues to lead the way as the Terrain NRM coordinator for the Mulgrave River.

NATURE BASED TOURISM

Kym Dungey and Jane Whytlaw (from Kuranda)

Kym and Jane have developed a series of walking books that comprehensively cover the Wet Tropics. They have walked every track, often two or three times, to create informative and reliable text and maps for each walk. Their small business has been a labour of love and their work has been of great service to the community and assisted many people to enjoy walking in the Wet Tropics.

RAINFOREST ABORIGINAL CULTURE

Eastern Kuku Yalanji Negotiating Team (from Wujal Wujal and Mossman)

Between 2000 and 2007 the Eastern Kuku Yalanji people negotiated an Indigenous Land Use Agreement (ILUA) with the Queensland Government to determine the tenure of their traditional lands and how they would be managed. These lands include the Daintree, Bloomfield, Black Mountain and Cedar Bay areas. The Steering Committee gave of their time over eight years to represent the Kuku Yalanji people in these delicate and complex negotiations. The ILUA will promote the aspirations of the Kuku Yalanji people whilst ensuring the protection of World Heritage Area.

GOVERNMENT

Les Jackson (from Innisfail)

Les has been employed by QPWS and lived with his family at Josephine Falls Ranger Base in the Wooroonooran National Park for over 25 years. With no previous background in conservation, Les has developed unsurpassed ecological insight into the functioning of national parks under his control. Combined with determination and hard work far beyond the call of duty, Les has created some of the best natural resource management programs in National Parks in the region. His work to eradicate weeds, undertake annual fire hazard reduction programs and restore the wetlands at Eubenangee Swamp has been exemplary. Les also put in enormous efforts to help clean up visitor sites and parks after Cyclone Larry.

NEIGHBOUR

Peta and Jon Nott (from southern Tablelands)

Since 1994 Jon and Peta have removed lantana, tobacco bush and glycine and replanted over 20,000 native trees on approximately 26ha of their 93ha property which adjoins the WHA on two boundaries. The property is now a Nature Refuge with abundant birds and other wildlife. Jon and Peta have developed a wilderness retreat and are delighted to share their vision with guests.

YOUNG CASSOWARY AWARD

Frederick Michna (from Innisfail)

Frederick has received the Johnstone Shire Australia Day Junior Award 2007 and the National Future Leaders Environmental Award 2007. He is an inaugural member of the Queensland Youth Environment Council and advises the Queensland Government on environmental matters. He is a Director of the Wairambar Rainforest Nature Refuge, his family property next to the World Heritage Area. Frederick has worked hard restoring areas damaged by Cyclone Larry. This has included planting 900 trees and setting up a school based Landcare organisation.

YOUNG CASSOWARY AWARD

Bama Dayal Dance Group (from Kuranda)

Students at Kuranda District State College developed a dance group to communicate their culture through song, dance and art. They have recreated traditional shelters, artefacts and wildlife traps within the school rainforest and have produced posters and displays of various bush tucker.

YOUNG CASSOWARY AWARDS

Outstanding Achievement Award

- Samara Nicolson from Townsville for her efforts to conserve frogs and their habitat.

Continuing Excellence Awards

- Years 6 and 7 at Hambleton State School for looking after their school's rainforest nature trail
- Aloomba State School for organising the annual Tilapia Terminators fishing challenge.

Encouragement Awards

- Year 3, Ingham State School for investigating how to look after the cassowary populations around Ingham.
- Ben Spahr from Kuranda District College for studying water quality in the Barron River.
- Sarah Mayocchi for researching how we can save tropical rainforests.

ENDS.

For further information and media opportunities contact:

Deanna Belbin, Wet Tropics Management Authority

Ph: 07 4052 0531 Mob: 0438 187 691. Email: deanna.belbin@epa.qld.gov.au