



# WET TROPICS MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY

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**MEDIA RELEASE: Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> June**

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## **WTMA hosts workshop for Solomon Islands World Heritage Site**

The Wet Tropics Management Authority is hosting a delegation from East Rennell in the Solomon Islands. The Lake Tegano World Heritage Site Association (LTWHSA) and Solomon Islands Government officials are attending a two week training workshop in Cairns.

The delegates have just spent the past two days in the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area meeting Traditional Owners and exploring National Parks with rangers. They will also experience first hand the Great Barrier Reef and visit ecotourism ventures in the Atherton Tablelands, Port Douglas and Daintree.

“We want to take home what we have learnt through this visit and share our knowledge and experiences with our communities in East Rennell. I am very impressed with the management of the Wet Tropics and the opportunities it provides for sustainable ecotourism and conservation,” said LTWHSA Chair Alfred Tigoika.

“We have already faced many challenges to protect East Rennell, the challenge now is to teach the younger generation and the wider community. To show them the importance of preserving our cultural and natural values, and to respect the environment they live in,” said Mr Tigoika.

Authority staff have thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity to discuss World Heritage issues and show their visitors the spectacular scenery and wildlife of the Wet Tropics.

“This is a great opportunity for two World Heritage Areas to come together. We have discussed challenges that we all face such as climate change, weeds and feral animals, as well as management planning and community participation. I hope this workshop is just the beginning of our partnership with East Rennell,” said WTMA Executive Director Andrew Maclean.

East Rennell makes up the southern third of Rennell Island, the southernmost island in the Solomon Island group in the western Pacific. Rennell is 86 km long and 15 km wide, it is the largest raised coral atoll in the world.

The site includes approximately 37,000 ha and a marine area extending 3 nautical miles to sea. A major feature of the island is Lake Tegano, which was the former lagoon on the atoll. The lake, the largest in the insular Pacific (15,500 ha), is brackish and contains many rugged limestone islands and endemic species.

The East Rennell Lake Tengano World Heritage Site was listed in 1998 for natural criteria including outstanding examples representing significant on-going ecological and biological processes in the evolution and development of terrestrial, fresh water, coastal and marine ecosystems and communities of plants and animals.

East Rennell is a stepping stone in the migration and evolution of species in the western Pacific and an important site for the science of island biogeography. Combined with the strong climate effects of frequent cyclones, East Rennell is a true natural laboratory for scientific study.

The East Rennell project is funded under AusAID’s Pacific Governance Support Program. The Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts (DEWHA) engaged WTMA to deliver key components of the

**Wet Tropics Management Authority**  
**Level 1, Cairns Corporate Tower, 15 Lake Street, Cairns 4870**  
**PO Box 2050 Cairns Qld 4870**  
**Telephone: (07) 4052 0555 Facsimile: (07) 4031 1364**

program which has been prepared in association with DEWHA and the East Rennell project steering committee. This includes representatives from the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), Live and Learn Environmental Education (LLEE) and representatives from the Solomon Islands government.

**Available for interview and photographs:**

- Lake Tegano World Heritage Site Association  
Secretary Mr Rex Pugeika.
- Rennell-Bellona Provincial Government  
Premier Hon. Timothy Johnston
- SI National Commission for UNESCO  
Deputy Secretary General Mr Aseri Yalangono
- WTMA Executive Director Mr Andrew Maclean

**Time:** 08.30 - 09.00 and 10.00 - 10.30

**Date:** Wednesday 3 June 2009

**Venue:** Novotel Cairns Oasis Resort, 122 Lake Street, Cairns.

For further information and media opportunities contact:

Wet Tropics Management Authority

Julia Cooper on 07 4052 0531, Email: [julia.cooper@epa.qld.gov.au](mailto:julia.cooper@epa.qld.gov.au)

or Campbell Clarke on 07 4052 0542, Email: [campbell.clarke@epa.qld.gov.au](mailto:campbell.clarke@epa.qld.gov.au)

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