



Hon Craig Wallace MP
Member for Thuringowa



**Queensland
Government**

**Minister for Natural Resources
and Water and
Minister Assisting the Premier
in North Queensland**

NEW NATIVE TITLE DETERMINATION COVERS 'JEWEL IN THE CROWN' WET TROPICS COUNTRY

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A Far North Queensland native title determination, expected to be recognised today by the Federal Court, will include some of the world's most environmentally significant Wet Tropics country.

Minister for Natural Resources and Water Craig Wallace said the court was expected to recognise the native title rights of the Eastern Kuku Yalanji people over about 1,269 square kilometres south of Cape Tribulation.

The grant is the fourth largest native title determination in Queensland and 127,000 hectares of new national park and nature refuge will be created.

The Native Title determination will not prevent the public visiting and enjoying national parks and beaches in the region.

Mr Wallace said a large portion of the land and waters, between Port Douglas and Cooktown, was within the World Heritage-listed Wet Tropics. It has been described as the "jewel in the crown" of the Wet Tropics.

"This native title determination only ranks behind three Wik determinations on western Cape York in size," he said.

Mr Wallace is attending the Federal Court hearing on the Yalanji people's traditional country.

The consent determination will see the Yalanji people's native title under their traditional law and customs formally recognised for the first time under Australian law.

Mr Wallace said it would also be the culmination of 15 Indigenous Land Use Agreements (ILUAs) reached in April this year between the Yalanji people, the Queensland Government and other parties.

It was necessary for Queensland to finalise the ILUAs before the native title determination could proceed.

“These agreements, which cover an area almost twice the size of the Federal Court determination, will see the Yalanji people assume control over 64,000 hectares of Aboriginal freehold land.

“This is land that potentially will give them the opportunity to generate jobs and economic benefits for their community.”

Mr Wallace will present a copy of the deed over the first of these Aboriginal freehold lands to a Yalanji representative at the celebration after the Federal Court determination hearing.

Minister for Sustainability, Climate Change and Innovation Andrew McNamara said the native title determination would mean protection for an additional 127,000 hectares as national park and nature refuge.

“This is one of the most spectacular and beautiful areas in Queensland, and one of the most popular tourist destinations in Australia,” Mr McNamara said.

“The determination adds 79,000 hectares to the Daintree, Cedar Bay, Cape Tribulation and Black Mountain national parks,” he said.

“The Eastern Kuku Yalanji people have also entered a Conservation Agreement to protect 48,000 hectares of their freehold land as a nature refuge.

“The Native Title determination will not affect the public’s ability to visit and enjoy national parks and beaches in the region.

“The determination provides improved opportunities for the Yalanji to own, use and manage their traditional country while working in partnership with World Heritage management agencies to protect and sustain the area’s internationally-renowned heritage values.”

Member for Cook Jason O’Brien said the Yalanji people had taken good care of their land for tens of thousands of years and were now responsible for it again.

“The determination will provide an enormous opportunity for the traditional owners to plan for the future,” he said.

“The Yalanji people can now build a prosperous future for their children and grandchildren with the jobs and business opportunities that these agreements will provide.”

The determination of native title for the Yalanji is the 74th determination made in Australia where native title exists and the 39th determination for Queensland.

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