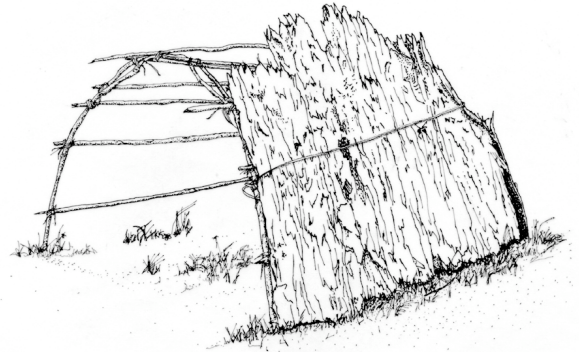


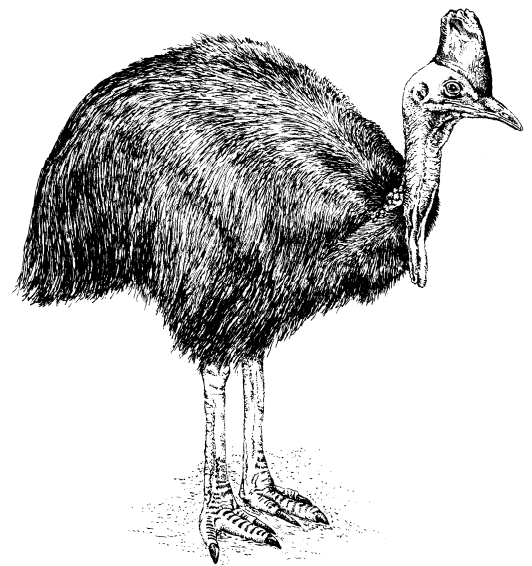
# Tropical Factsheets

## Rainforest Aboriginal Culture

- The Wet Tropics has provided food, shelter, medicine and a way of life to Rainforest Aboriginal people for at least 30,000 years.
- The rainforest is part of the culture of 18 Rainforest Aboriginal tribal groups. Their lives, customs and beliefs are joined with the plants, animals and seasons of the rainforest.
- The Wet Tropics ecosystems have evolved over many thousands of years as Aboriginal people interacted with the land and its resources.
- One obvious effect of breaking that connection has been modern problems with fire. Since traditional burning stopped, some areas are burnt too often and other areas aren't burnt enough. The natural balance has been upset and the environment suffers.
- Places like Uluru and Kakadu were put on the World Heritage list for both nature and culture. Although the Wet Tropics wasn't listed for its culture, it's very important to protect it.
- Rainforest conservation is also linked with Aboriginal culture. For example, cassowaries are very important to many Rainforest Aboriginal people who have customs, stories, songs and dances about them.
- Cassowaries are also prized traditional food and their feathers, claws and bones are used for ornaments and weapons.
- Many of the trees which cassowaries "plant", such as the Burdekin plum, Davidson's plum and blue quandong, are foods which Rainforest Aboriginal people like to eat.
- Modern day pressures of development threaten the future of cassowaries, and also Aboriginal customs and traditions.



*Mija shelter made from paperbark*



*Cassowary*



## What can we do?

- Ask Aboriginal people to help look after the rainforest.
- Help the community to understand the rainforest is important for its Aboriginal culture as well as its natural environment.
- Develop safe places to keep Aboriginal knowledge and information.
- Maintain Aboriginal language and culture by using traditional Aboriginal names and stories for country.
- Write down stories told by Aboriginal elders about their traditional knowledge.
- Map traditional lands and special sites.