



# WET TROPICS MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY

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## **WORLD HERITAGE HEROES APPLAUDED**

Some of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area's most inspirational people were acknowledged at the 2011 Wet Tropics Management Authority's Cassowary Awards held at the Cairns Botanic Gardens on the weekend. (Saturday 5 November).

Speaking at the awards, WTMA Board Chair Assoc Prof Peter Valentine said the Cassowary Awards continue to flourish every year.

"We are delighted to see the very high numbers of award nominations from the various sectors of World Heritage management, conservation, research and presentation. With the urgent need for higher investment for the future health of our environment, it is vital that we have a community that values, respects and cares for our World Heritage Area.

"Past Cassowary Award recipients and our winners tonight are forging the frontier of a Wet Tropics community that has the drive and passion that inspires individuals to look at their environment unselfishly and ask "How can I make a difference?" It is a humbling experience to be in the company of such dedicated and admirable people," he added.

Nature photographer Steven Nowakowski received an award in the category of Arts for his portrayal of Wet Tropics destinations that evoke passion and appreciation for the World Heritage Area.

Mr Nowakowski said he was thrilled to be acknowledged by WTMA and the Wet Tropics community for his photographic skills and volunteer work supporting environmental causes.

"You could say I have one of the best jobs in the world. I get to take photos of some of the most beautiful landscapes in the world, and they are right here in our backyard. We are extremely lucky as a community to live nestled in a tropical green paradise and we should never take it for granted," Mr Nowakowski said.

The Australian Tropical Rainforest Plants project received the Science Award for developing one of the most comprehensive web-based rainforest plant identification keys in the world.

The individuals who contributed to this project are numerous. Team members recognised at the Awards included Dr Judy West who was the project manager, Dr Bernie Hyland, Dr. Trevor Whiffin, Bruce Gray, Frank Zich, Siobhan Duffy and Rebel Elick. Accepting the award on behalf of the project team, Dr. Trevor Whiffin said recognition by esteemed members of the Wet Tropics community was a pleasant surprise.

“The success of Australian Tropical Rainforest Plants is the culmination of the work of many people over several decades. When you finally get to launch a project that you have been involved with for so long, it is such a relief and a real sense of achievement. It is rewarding to see Australian Tropical Rainforest Plants being used as a practical and effective tool for people with various levels of botanic experience, thus unlocking the vault of rainforest plant identification for everyone to enjoy. To be given a Cassowary Award in recognition for our efforts is the icing on the cake,” Dr Whiffin said.

Rainforest Aboriginal and Jirrbal leader Ms Margaret Freeman received the award for fostering and promoting Rainforest Aboriginal Culture. Ms Freeman has been an advocate for Rainforest Aboriginal People's rights for over a decade and has worked tirelessly championing the aspirations of Rainforest Aboriginal people to government agencies.

Millaa Millaa State School received the 2011 Young Cassowary Award for their School Environmental Management Plan. Under the leadership of Principal Stephen Fresta and with the support of the Tinaroo Environmental Education Centre the school established a worm farm and chicken run, paper and aluminium can recycling and a frog pond and native garden. Their most commendable endeavour has been extending a 1950's forestry planting into a rainforest corridor that connects the natural creek bank vegetation bordering the school grounds.

Principal Stephen Fresta said the students were ecstatic to receive an award for their conservation efforts.

“The pupils have been working extremely hard developing and maintaining their projects”.

## **2011 Cassowary Award winners**

**ARTS – Steve Nowakowski**

A professional photographer who captures the majestic beauty of the Wet Tropics that stirs passion and appreciation for this very unique part of the world. Steve has his own publishing business and his images appear in numerous calendars, books and posters.

### **COMMUNITY CONSERVATION – Cairns and Far North Environment Centre (CAFNEC)**

This year CAFNEC celebrates 30 years as the peak regional non-government environmental organisation for Far North Queensland. CAFNEC played a pivotal role in the listing of the Wet Tropics as a World Heritage Area over 20 years ago. Many talented and dedicated individuals from CAFNEC pioneered the conservation movement in Queensland.

### **EDUCATION – Centre for Rainforest Studies (Atherton)**

The Centre for Rainforest Studies (CRS) on the Atherton Tablelands fosters the importance of rainforest restoration and education. Both former and present faculty continue to make vital contributions to the literature and education around rainforest research across the Wet Tropics and around the world. Excellence in the fields of rainforest ecology, natural resource management practices and rainforest plant resilience. The centre actively promotes sustainable practice and has contributed greatly as a World Heritage neighbour and as a member of the Wet Tropics community.

### **GOVERNMENT – Peter Ogilvie**

A leading figure in Queensland protected area management and conservation for many years, Peter Ogilvie is one of the stalwarts of Queensland National Parks system. He played a leading role in the establishment and management of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area as well as Gondwana, Fraser Island and the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Areas. He is a pioneer of community engagement and education in national parks and is always willing to share his bountiful knowledge of the natural and social values of parks and their management.

### **OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT – Peter Hitchcock**

As the inaugural executive director of a fledgling WTMA, Peter negotiated the Authority through the first difficult years following the controversial listing of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area. His experience in protected area and World Heritage management laid the foundations for WTMA as one of the leaders in World Heritage management today.

### **NATURE BASED TOURISM – Alan Gillanders**

Alan Gillanders runs Alan's Wildlife Tours and has been an active member of conservation organisations in the region for many years. Alan has been particularly effective in sharing his enthusiasm and information about the Wet Tropics wildlife to schools, visitors and the general public. He is particularly knowledgeable on tree-kangaroos, birds and nocturnal mammals. Alan has brought his dedication and enthusiasm for people and nature conservation, to outstanding heights for which the tourism industry must be proud

### **RAINFOREST ABORIGINAL CULTURE – Margaret Freeman**

An inspirational leader of Jirrbal Rainforest Aboriginal people's rights and aspirations over a decade through Bama Wabu, the Aboriginal Negotiating Team for the Regional Agreement, the Rainforest Aboriginal Advisory Committee and the Rainforest Aboriginal Leadership Group for the development of the Rainforest Aboriginal People's Alliance and Native title/indigenous land use agreement negotiations.

### **SCIENCE – Australian Tropical Rainforest Plants**

Australian Tropical Rainforest Plants is one of the most comprehensive web-based Rainforest Plant identification systems in the world. The rainforest plant key is a culmination of several decades of work by many botanists and researchers in the Wet Tropics. An extension of work done on the key is the development of courses to assist people with different levels of taxonomic skills and interest to learn how to use the program and gain a better appreciation of the region's rainforest.

### **UNSUNG HERO – Margaret Moorhouse**

Margaret Moorhouse is a highly respected member of the conservation movement in north Queensland. She has served many years on the WTMA conservation sector liaison group and worked on the Townsville Regional Conservation Council. She also spearheads the Alliance to Save Hinchinbrook. Her genuine concern for positive environmental outcomes over many broad issues has required dedication of her time and personal resources.

### **YOUNG CASSOWARY AWARD – Millaa Millaa State School**

With only 77 students, Millaa Millaa State Primary School has been working hard to reduce its ecological footprint as part of the Department of Education and Training's Earth Smart Science Program. The students have developed and implemented a School Environmental Management Plan under the leadership of Principal Stephen Fresta and with the support of the Tinaroo Environmental Education Centre. One of the school's most commendable endeavours has been extending a 1950's forestry planting into a rainforest corridor that connects the natural creek bank vegetation bordering the school grounds.

### **About the World Heritage listed Wet Tropics of Queensland**

The Wet Tropics of Queensland World Heritage Area spans 900,000 hectares along Australia's north-east coast. The area comprises spectacular rainforests which cloak its rugged mountain ranges and sweep down to white sandy beaches and coral reefs. They are the oldest, continually surviving rainforests in the world and provide a unique record of the evolution of plant life on earth. The rainforests are home to hundreds of rare and ancient plant and animal species, many found nowhere else. For more, visit the website: [www.wettropics.gov.au](http://www.wettropics.gov.au)

### **About the Wet Tropics Management Authority**

The Wet Tropics Management Authority has the great privilege of assisting the Queensland and Australian Governments in their international duty to protect, conserve, present and transmit to future generations the Wet Tropics of Queensland World Heritage Area. In addition to protecting the Wet Tropics of Queensland World Heritage Area through administration of the Wet Tropics Management Plan, the Wet Tropics Management Authority promotes scientific research and sharing of knowledge; works to improve the well being of Rainforest Aboriginal people; seeks to give the Area a role in the life of the community and works to support sustainable tourism in the World Heritage Area.

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### **Media contact:**

Andrew Maclean Executive Director, WTMA Mob: 0417 052 495

### **Issued by:**

Pip Miller PR Mob: 0419 681543