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## **New monitoring system for visitors in wet tropics**

A new system has been developed to monitor the environmental and social impacts of visitors to the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area.

The Rainforest CRC, the Wet Tropics Management Authority and Tourism Queensland have developed the new Visitor Monitoring System so that land managers and the tourism industry can work together to rapidly assess the health of visitor sites and detect any impacts as soon as they begin to occur.

Warren Entsch, the Federal Member for Leichhardt and Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Industry, Tourism and Resources, launched the system on Monday at the Rainforest Dome in Cairns.

A three-volume manual outlines the new rapid assessment monitoring program.

"Tourism and recreation provide enormous economic and social benefits for the Wet Tropics community," Mr Entsch said.

"The manual is a useful and important tool to make sure that visitors continue to enjoy their rainforest experiences and look after the environment.

"It offers the tourism industry and visitors an opportunity to lend a hand to monitor visitor sites.

"The new monitoring system will help to make sure that visitor sites and walks are maintained to a high standard and continue to allow people to enjoy a close-up natural experience.

"The manual will improve monitoring of problems such as erosion near walking tracks, weed invasions and poor visitor behaviour."

The research for the manual was undertaken by staff from James Cook University.

Professor Steve Turton, co-author of the Visitor Monitoring System, said the new monitoring system will complement the extensive visitor surveys already undertaken in the Wet Tropics.

Copies of the manual can be obtained from the Rainforest CRC by phoning 4042 1246 or by ordering from their website at [www.rainforest-crc.jcu.edu.au](http://www.rainforest-crc.jcu.edu.au)