

RESEARCH

Project 1.1

Project 1.2

Project 1.5

**PROJECT 1.4****The Bama Plan*****Project Leaders: Professor Geoff McDonald (CSIRO) and Dr Sandra Pannell (CRC)***

The Rainforest CRC is currently involved in the preparation of a new Wet Tropics Natural Resource Management (NRM) plan which will give direction to future funding and prioritise investment from a range of sources, especially the proposed Natural Heritage Trust (NHT) 2.

Rainforest Aboriginal people have lived in and cared for the Wet Tropics region since time immemorial and have expressed their desire to have a more effective role in natural resource management on their country. Today there are many organisations representing the traditional owners of the Wet Tropics region, who continue to fulfil their customary obligations for management of their country.

A Wet Tropics Regional Environment and Natural Resource Management Forum was held in Cairns in March 2002 to discuss ideas about land management and to tackle Natural Heritage Trust (NHT) funding concerns.

The forum identified major problems with Aboriginal participation in the new regional NRM funding arrangements currently being developed for NHT Stage 2.

It was agreed that allocation of all Commonwealth and State NRM funds, including NHT2, needs to be complementary to processes being undertaken for negotiated recognition of Indigenous rights by State and Federal Governments. The forum also strongly emphasized the need for greater input and participation by Rainforest Bama in decision-making and the need for equitable funds to manage country. Several key factors were identified that, it was felt, would enhance management of country.

At a NHT workshop convened in Cairns in August 2002, Indigenous participants agreed that the proposed Indigenous or 'Bama' Plan would form part of the overall NRM plan for the Wet Tropics region (see Weston et al 2003).

Preliminary investigations of existing Indigenous plans and processes, indicate that further

desk-top and field-based research is required to identify the nature of Indigenous NRM aspirations, requirements and priorities within the Wet Tropics region. The research project will be undertaken by a Bama Planning Officer who will work together with NRM planning researchers from Program 1 and be supported by a Bama Project Officer, financed by the Wet Tropics Joint Working Group (JWG).

