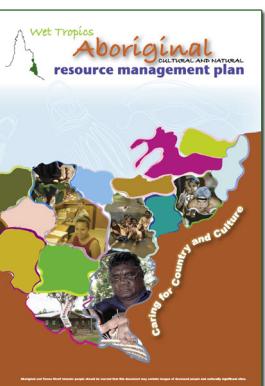


# CARING FOR COUNTRY AND CULTURE

## The Wet Tropics Aboriginal Cultural and Natural Resource Management Plan



For Immediate Release  
Friday 29 April 2005

### Minister Launches a First for Indigenous Land and Sea Management

Aboriginal, political and community leaders from throughout the region gathered today at Warrina Lakes, Innisfail, to celebrate the launch of **Caring for Country and Culture: The Wet Tropics Aboriginal Cultural and Natural Resource Management Plan**.

Three years in the making, **The Aboriginal Plan**, as it is also known, represents a new era in environmental management for Indigenous peoples throughout Australia. This is the first plan of its kind to specifically address the many challenges of maintaining distinct and diverse cultures in a multi-tenured and rapidly changing landscape.

At the launch of the Aboriginal Plan, Queensland Environment Minister Desley Boyle said the event represented an historic achievement for the region's Traditional Owners.

"This document is a blueprint outlining a clear way forward for the region's Traditional Owners to work collaboratively to maintain their culture and Country. Traditional Owners have a unique insight into the land and the Aboriginal Plan recognises their pivotal role in ensuring ecologically sustainable development in northern Australia."

The Aboriginal Plan was developed through a unique partnership between the region's Traditional Owners, the Rainforest CRC and FNQ NRM Ltd. The document identifies the aspirations and a range of management and resourcing options for the Aboriginal Plan region's 17 Traditional Owner Groups. This includes accessing a share of the \$1 billion extension to the Natural Heritage Trust among a range of other funding sources. FNQ NRM Ltd Indigenous Director, Troy Wyles-Whelan, said the document represents a new era in environmental management.

"Aboriginal people in this region want to have strong involvement in both managing and growing this region, as well as maintaining our culture and traditional knowledge. By working collectively we've developed a vision and sound strategy to achieve this through genuine partnerships."

Ma:Mu Traditional Owner and Plan Team member, Dean Purcell, says establishing the necessary range of partnerships with both government and non-government organisations is critical to kick-start the range of sustainable development opportunities identified in the Aboriginal Plan.

"For Aboriginal people managing the environment from a perspective that recognises the linkages and need for a healthy environment, society and culture is fundamental to success. So the Aboriginal Plan aims to produce much needed economic, social and cultural benefits as well as significant environmental outcomes. These will benefit both Aboriginal people and the broader community."



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Aligning with other regional programs is also fundamental to achieving the goals of the Plan. The Aboriginal Plan links with a number of key regional processes, including the Wet Tropics Regional Agreement. The Regional Agreement outlines how the Commonwealth and State Governments will work with Aboriginal people to manage the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area. Many of the Agreement's guiding principles and protocols are acknowledged in the Aboriginal Plan.

## Ends

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File footage will be available on the day with backgrounds and photographs obtained from:  
<http://www.imageevent.com/calendar2005media>

### Indigenous contacts available for interviews:

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### Government contacts available for interviews:

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The Hon Greg Hunt MP	Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for the Environment and Heritage	Media Contact: Ms Fiona Murphy 0423 577 045



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