

Climate change a hot topic at forum

LEADING scientists from across Australia will open a window into the future of tropical environments when they examine what the future holds for health, agriculture, rainforest and reef at a conference in Townsville today.

More than 170 reef and rainforest scientists and managers from across Australia will discuss how to tackle the critical challenges facing our tropical environments at the Rainforest Meets Reef conference.

It will be hosted by the Rainforest CRC and CRC Reef at the Southbank Hotel and Convention Centre in Palmer St from today until Thursday.

Major themes will address how wildlife, marine life and plant life are expected to cope with climate change, water quality, maintaining biodiversity and how communities, business and science can contribute to conservation management by minimising the threats.

Research issues vital to the well-being of the reef and rainforest to be presented, include:

- Climate change impacts on the Great Barrier Reef ecosystem – risks and management
- Climate change and resilience – insights from two world heritage areas
- Climate change impacts on freshwater fishes of the wet tropics
- Observed climate variability and change in the vicinity of the reef

Tonight there will be a free pub-based public forum titled 'The Tropics in 2030: How will a changing climate affect our future?' anchored by environment specialist Alexandra de Blas and featuring an expert panel, held at the Victoria Park Hotel from 7-9pm.

Those wishing to attend the conference should contact Shannon Hogan via the conference registration desk in the foyer of the Southbank Convention Centre from 7.30am today. A fee of \$150.00 per day is applicable.