



MEDIA RELEASE

SENATE INQUIRY CALLED FOR AS \$40 MILLION CAPE YORK NATURAL HERITAGE TRUST PLAN FLOUNDERS

Conservation groups have today called for a Senate Inquiry into the failure of the Federal Government to deliver on the Prime Ministers pre-election promise to protect Cape York Peninsula.

To support their call, conservation groups released a review of the \$40 million Cape York Natural Heritage Trust Plan, which shows that of \$12 million promised for expanding and enhancing protected areas, only 1 % has been allocated.

“In 1996, the Prime Minister promised to ensure that Cape York Peninsula’s ‘high conservation areas are fully protected’. Yet seven years later, only \$140 000 of the committed \$12 million has been spent on this,” said Australian Conservation Foundation Northern Australia Coordinator, Dr Rosemary Hill.

“Given the outstanding conservation values of Cape York Peninsula, it is deeply concerning that so little Commonwealth funding has been put into promises to protect high value conservation areas.”

“A Senate Inquiry should ask what has happened to the Prime Minister’s promise and where’s the money?” said Dr Hill.

Mr John Rainbird, Coordinator of Cairns and Far North Environment Centre said “The review does show that \$7 million of a promised \$8 million has been spent on indigenous people’s land management, which we strongly support.”

Mr Rainbird said "The groups are calling for a reformed Cape York Natural Heritage Trust Plan, focussing on:

- A strong voluntary property acquisition strategy for areas of high conservation value;
- Substantially increased funds for National Park and protected areas management;
- Recurrent funding for Indigenous Land and Sea Management Centres and other Indigenous conservation initiatives; and
- A Peninsula-wide conservation plan, including a weeds and feral animal strategy;
- Support for the development of ecologically sustainable industries."

“The recent Commonwealth Biodiversity Assessment highlighted the Cape as a critical sanctuary for Australian mammals and birds and the importance of conservation action. Yet the Prime Minister’s \$12 million promise is missing in inaction”, concluded Mr Rainbird.

To view a full copy of the submission, visit www.wilderness.org.au/capeyorknhtreview.pdf

For further information contact:

Dr Rosemary Hill, Australian Conservation Foundation: 0740 513 892 or 0428 335 296

John Rainbird, Cairns and Far North Environment Centre: 0740 321 746 or 0408 113 281