



Ecotone

Newsletter of the Cairns and Far North Environment Centre Inc.

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False Cape update

by John Rainbird

On the development front, the campaign to save False Cape still dominates the agenda. Of late we have had some great additional support and input from various individuals which has helped progress elements of the campaign that needed more effort. Dan Smith from ImageSmith is building a website for the campaign at no cost (www.falsecape.org.au), and Steve Lane from Makad has also offered to assist with graphics at no cost; we are enormously grateful for their support. We also need to say a special thanks to Kirsty Ruddock and Hayley Blackman at the EDO-NQ (see EDO legal update on page 5) and Mark Buttrose from Save Our Slopes, who have been instrumental in helping us tackle this enormous development.

Despite the development supposedly being a dog free zone in the interests of the environment, two large guard

dogs were allowed to roam free on the site overnight until the developer was asked to remove them after EDO tipped off the Department of Environment and Heritage. We have also received a number of photographs taken on site showing the newly constructed roads and numerous large loose boulders on steep slopes earmarked for housing. These photos do nothing to alleviate our concerns about environmental damage and future safety issues. Despite the rhetoric from the State that they are helpless to intervene, and despite advice from their own assessment officer to reject the application, the Department of Natural Resources and Mines approved road access to the site through a state reserve.

We are now in the courts to take the council, in particular, to task for blatantly ignoring the relevant planning codes for hillslope development. This case is gaining increasing attention across the national environment sector as a test case for inappropriate coastal



Bulldozed road at False Cape

development. We are grateful for the support from our barristers, Stephen Keim and Tracy Fantin, and we have managed to raise a significant amount of funds required to cover court costs; however, we still require additional funds. We urge you to help us win this David and Goliath battle – write to the paper, support the court case, lobby your MP.

Please help us ...

to distribute the pamphlet on Cairns East Trinity Scenic Rim – see a photocopied version of this colour pamphlet with this Ecotone. To help, please contact CAFNEC on Ph: 4032 1746.



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President's report

Farewell Nicky

Nicky Hungerford, inveterate campaigner for the forces of good and slayer of the forces of evil, CAFNEC stalwart and overall amazing woman has left us to take her extensive portfolio of skills offshore. Nicky's departure will leave a pair of very big shoes to fill (not wanting to scare off prospective applicants!). CAFNEC's position in the community as an effective non-government organisation and our financial capacity to continue the campaigner position is due in no small way to Nicky's contribution over the years.

On behalf of the Management Committee, Nicky, "Thanks a million, see you later and good luck". See you later because we're sure we will, being the CAFNEC addict you are!

Management Committee doings

CAFNEC Management Committee and staff held a planning meeting in November to map out priorities for 2006. We identified several management focus areas including policy and procedures reviews, workplace health and safety, funding, and equipment upgrades. A WH&S audit has since been undertaken by members of the MC to ensure we comply with WH&S regulations, and policy reviews are underway. We are currently considering a potential grant for equipment upgrades. The concept of MC portfolios, as mentioned in my last report, was considered and modified to sub-committees. If you have a specific area of interest you would like to be involved with on a volunteer basis, please contact CAFNEC for sub-committee contact details.

A regular item for discussion is *Envirofiesta* planning. This is well in hand thanks particularly to Nicky, Paul and Lena. Lena was employed by CAFNEC on a short-term contract to co-ordinate

our grant applications for the event and did an excellent job. If you have an interest in helping to co-ordinate the event, your time and efforts would be most welcome. Please contact campaign@cafneec.org.au

False Cape

False Cape is of course high on our agenda. CAFNEC continues to work with Save our Slopes, Environmental Defenders Office and individual members of the community to protect Cairns scenic backdrop and environmental values. See the articles on pages 1 and 5 for an update. The Wilderness Society kindly arranged for CAFNEC to have a stall at their recent John Butler concert and for the banner that was hung in the auditorium and left up during the concert (top right).

Public outreach and education

As part of our public outreach and public education, I had an opportunity to talk to outdoor education students at TAFE recently. Students undertaking this course will be employed as outdoor education teachers or tourist guides. This was a welcome chance to promote CAFNEC, discuss some of the issues in FNQ and discuss how environmental messages can be



Banner displayed at the John Butler concert

delivered to tourists and students. Organisations are welcome to contact CAFNEC for similar educational engagements.

General meeting

CAFNEC will host an evening of short environmental films on April 10th. A reminder and more details will be sent out closer to the date. This will also be an opportunity to introduce our new campaigner, so please come along and welcome him/her.

Thanks Bill

Our thanks to Bill Bray who has stepped down from the Management Committee after nearly three years. Bill has been an invaluable member of the MC, providing strong support for staff, representing CAFNEC on various committees and playing a pivotal role in CAFNEC events such as *Envirofiesta*, the Wilderness Bike Ride and much much more.

Yours for a Peaceful, Green World.
Di Horsburgh



Kerryn and Di fly the flags for False Cape

So long and thanks for all the fish

by Nicky Hungerford

The rain is teaming down, the palms dripping and the friendly frogs out the window are croaking. A cyclone is looming off the tip of Cape York – and Marie’s predication that there is often a cyclone on her birthday seems to be ringing true. The Wet is finally here and FNQ is looking fabulous.

But it’s time for me to move on again. Yes, after being involved with CAFNEC for 14 years, the last eight as either an employee or a volunteer, I am packing up and leaving the shores of Australia to work in south-east Asia.

I have been getting increasingly frustrated with the way the governments of this country deal with important issues. Their attitude to the normal person is becoming more and more arrogant and what threads they had of connection to their voters seem to have disappeared. Ego and money seem to be the main drivers. This, coupled with constantly banging my head up against a brick wall with important issues, has left me feeling very disempowered. The cure for me is to head off and get some perspective about everything – and where better than living and working in Asia?

Through Australian Volunteers International I have a new job as a communications/media officer for the Foot-and-Mouth Disease Campaign. While based in Bangkok, I will also be working in Burma/Myanmar, Laos PDR, Cambodia, Vietnam, Philippines, Indonesia and Malaysia.

I have loved my work here in the past years and will miss it all very much. It’s always difficult to leave mid campaign – but when I went to Sri Lanka in 1996 for 2 years I felt the same way about the landclearing campaign. And while we have pretty well knocked over broadscale landclearing in this state, it took another five years after I returned to really get there. I am hoping that when I do return False Cape will be well and truly over and that everyone can devote themselves to other things like the impact climate change will have on this region.

I want to thank all the extraordinary people I have worked with over the years. It’s been both a privilege and a wonderful opportunity. You have given me hope in humanity and that FNQ is in fine hands. Very special thank yous to: John Rainbird and Marie Short, my very dear co-workers, whose support and friendship has kept me laughing; Michael Bryan, our wonder treasurer who has kept this organisation buoyant for so many years; all the management committees over the years; the volunteers who cut newspapers, stuff envelopes, write, file, answer phones, staff stalls and organise fundraising events, newsletter, *Envirofiesta* and the Bike Ride; those who put in submissions... the list is endless and that is why we are such a great organisation. Finally, to Stan Gentle, Cominos House caretaker, who always keeps me laughing and stops me from working into the night.

Take care. Good Luck and maintain your passion for this very special part of the world.

Thank you Nicky

So long and thanks for all the spice

by Ellie Bock



Red, fiery and bringing tears to your eyes – describes not just chillies (being a favourite of one of our most favourite people), but the woman herself. Generally the tears are tears of laughter – until it comes to saying farewell.

Whether you’ve met her in the serene surroundings of Cominos House, out in a dusty paddock with the cows and the cockies, or hanging out, having a yarn under a tree up Coen way – you know the woman’s for real. We are saddened to say farewell from CAFNEC to a very rare, very talented individual – Nicky Hungerford.

All who know her or have seen her in action will miss her dearly – be they friends, colleagues, admirers or adversaries (some of the latter may be rather relieved?!).

From her early days at CAFNEC in those days well before some form of (very) mini-permanence arose for the organisation’s campaigner position, Nicky committed herself to the organisation with an energy and zest that still astounds, amazes and sometimes defies all reason (although the reason is admittedly a very good one). Together, Nicky and our coordinator John Rainbird have come to be the public face of CAFNEC.

She has been a key mover within the environment movement in far north Queensland, the Gulf country and the Cape York region for a substantial amount of time and in such a wide-ranging capacity for our organisation that it almost beggars belief how she juggled it all so effectively. Nicky’s stellar presence, contribution and engagement in myriad different forums, committees, boards and institutional bodies was a highlight of the work she has done for CAFNEC and for the environment movement as a whole. She embodies the tenacity and spirit of an exceptional environmental consciousness and conscience in a region where development continues to relentlessly encroach on far northern ecosystems, resources and lifestyles.

A brief bio-snap shows Nicky cutting her teeth early on in the Tasmanian dam blockades, steadfastly and resolutely assisting environmental movements and organisations throughout Queensland during the early and late 1990s and most of the present decade, volunteering to live and work in Sri Lanka for a number of years in the mid 1990s, advising key policy-makers, lobbying her huge heart out, hammering through the green message regardless of who’s sitting in the top seat.....

You could go on for pages about the actions, campaigns, feats, conferences, events, meetings and forums she planned, coordinated, organised, managed, chaired, facilitated and campaigned on. Needless to say she is an individual who is truly one in a billion and all who know her will attest to her great strength of character, her excellent humour (except perhaps in the early mornings) and her formidable perseverance. The really fantastic thing about Nicky is that she doesn’t hold it against you when you don’t exactly agree with her 100% - she remains a passionate environmental educator and inspirational campaign strategist.

Nicky leaves us to continue her good works overseas – as media advisor to government and community organisations in the area of foot-and-mouth disease throughout south-east Asia. Her skills and dedication will be an asset to our neighbours in that region.

We wish her all the very best, safe travels, health and happiness in the next chapter of her busy, ever-changing life.

Til we next meet again – see ya later Nicky!

Coordinator's report

2006 has taken off with a flying start for CAFNEC, with a full year of projects, campaigns and events already filling up our agenda. After two years in the campaigner's position, we are losing the immense talents, passion and integrity of Nicky Hungerford, and her loss will be sorely felt. Thanks Nicky – we wish you all the best in your new role. We have also lost our much loved vice-president, Bill Bray, who is taking a much deserved break from his position on a range of community committees – thanks Bill for your massive support and contribution to CAFNEC, and we look forward to having you back on board one of these days!

CAFNEC has received funding from the FNQ NRMW to organise a meeting of environment groups in our region. We have been keen to progress the idea of hosting a meeting to bring all the FNQ groups together for a while, and it is great we are now able to realize this idea. The key aims of the meeting will be to discuss common issues, consider how we can support each other and discuss avenues for collaboration as well as provide an opportunity to meet key politicians and decision makers. We hope this can become a regular event which will assist us all to work more effectively towards protecting FNQ's magnificent environment.

Free ECOS magazines

For those of you interested in a sustainable future, we have some editions of ECOS magazine to give away. It is a bi-monthly CSIRO magazine reporting on the science and news behind sustainability in the environment and industry. We have a supply of the following editions: Nov-Dec 2004, Jan-Mar 2005 & Apr-May 2005. Come and collect as many as you like from our office in Cominos House, at 27 Greenslopes St, North Cairns. Don't miss out on this very interesting publication!

Jann Crase has stepped into Nicky's shoes as director of conservation and CAFNEC rep on the Northern Gulf NRMW. Nicky played a very significant role in this organisation, and Jann's awesome talents and understanding of northern issues will no doubt ensure that this continues to be the case.

One of our members Andrew Simmonds has offered to be our rep on the Cairns Local Marine Advisory Committee (LMAC) for which we are most grateful – we are happy we again have someone to carry our banner in this forum which is an advisory committee to the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA). Andrew is also assisting me to develop an action for Earth Day, on April 22, to focus attention on the climate impacts on the GBR. We aim to get around 100 or so people in the water to spell out "Save Our Reefs" in the inshore reef area off Cairns. If you would like to be part of this event, please contact CAFNEC.

There has been a lot of focus on the cassowary situation in Mission Beach recently, thanks to the constant lobbying of CAFNEC and C4. WTMA have also thrown their support behind a call for the State Government to take immediate action



to address this deteriorating situation. The Cassowary Recovery Plan has now been revised, and some Federal funding has gone into conducting studies into the situation. Desley Boyle has just introduced a Temporary Local Planning Instrument in the Cardwell Shire to override current planning provisions in relation to lot size and residential densities. Whilst this is a welcome initiative, time will tell as to whether it simply slows down or helps arrest the species decline in this area. We will continue to pressure the State to take stronger action whilst there is still a glimmer of hope for this sub-population.

Whilst there are enormous challenges facing our environment locally and globally, the environment movement is continuing to improve and increase its collaboration in responding to these issues. With the great support of its members, we are determined to turn the tide, so please continue your support – together we will make a difference.

*John Rainbird
Coordinator*

CAFNEC GENERAL MEETING

Join us for an evening of short environmental films covering issues from local to global.

When: 10th April

Time: 6.00pm for a 6.30pm screening

More information: phone CAFNEC: 4032 1746



False Cape legal update

The Environmental Defender's Office of Northern Queensland Inc (EDO-NQ), on behalf of CAFNEC and Save our Slopes (SOS), lodged an application in the Planning and Environment Court in December last year against approvals for a 102-lot subdivision, a resort hotel, townhouses and resort village infrastructure granted to Reef Cove Resort by the Cairns City Council. The site at False Cape, east of Cairns, borders two World Heritage Areas: the Great Barrier Reef and the Wet Tropics of Queensland. At present it is largely undeveloped and forms part of the green mountainous backdrop to Cairns, but the approvals would see around 1500 people accommodated on 40.6 hectares. CAFNEC and SOS are concerned about the adverse impact on visual amenity and the safety of the development, given the site's steep slopes, which contain a number of large boulders.

CAFNEC and SOS are seeking declarations from the Court that the approvals granted by Council are invalid and should have been refused due to significant conflicts with the Hillslopes Development Control Plan (Hillslopes DCP) and the Strategic Plan of the transitional Cairns Planning Scheme. In particular, a substantial part of the development is to be constructed on slopes greater than 1 in 3, in conflict with the Hillslope DCP. The Hillslopes DCP

also requires areas unsuitable for development due to slope steepness and instability to be identified at the outset, which was not done in this case. CAFNEC and SOS will also argue that the Cairns City Council made an error by regarding itself as bound to approve the application because of previous rezoning of the area to Special Facilities Zoning, despite the conflict with the Hillslopes DCP and Planning Scheme.

A Directions hearing was scheduled for Monday 6th February 2006, but the hearing was postponed as the solicitors for Reef Cove Resort Ltd filed an application in the court seeking to strike out the first ground of the SOS and CAFNEC application on the basis that it was akin to a merits appeal and not an application for a declaration. Reef Cove also

challenged the use of expert evidence in the case.

Reef Cove's strike out application was scheduled for hearing on Wednesday 15th February but the application was not heard as CAFNEC and SOS amended their application to address some of Reef Cove's concerns. Reef Cove have indicated that they still wish to challenge the first ground of the amended application. The strike out was heard on 3rd March 2006, together with the challenge to the use of expert evidence. Judgement has been reserved.

The final hearing has been confirmed for the 12th and 13th April. EDO-NQ and barristers Stephen Keim (SC) and Tracy Fantin are appearing on behalf of CAFNEC and SOS. Interested readers are welcome and encouraged to attend!

	
<p>To celebrate their 10th Anniversary The Environmental Defenders Office of Northern Queensland (EDO-NQ) is having a TRIVIA NIGHT!!</p>	
<p>Friday 31st March 2006 7.30pm Crosswell Hall @ Cairns State High</p>	
	<p>Tickets \$20 per person or Book a table of 8 for \$140</p>
	<p>Drinks will be available for purchase at the bar and nibbles are provided</p>
<p>All proceeds go to assist the casework of the EDO-NQ</p>	
<p>LUCKY DOOR PRIZES AUCTION OF ARTWORK</p>	
<p>For details and to register contact EDO-NQ at edonq@edo.org.au or (07) 4031 4766</p>	

New national park for Cape York Peninsula

Environmentalists in Queensland are celebrating the creation of a magnificent new 200,000 hectare national park in southern Cape York Peninsula. This is the first large scale national park to be created in the region since 1995.

The Jack Lakes National Park was formally created in Cooktown on 15 December 2005. At a memorable ceremony attended by Indigenous Traditional Owners, representatives from the Wilderness Society and the Australian Conservation Foundation and two Queensland Government Ministers, the new national park was declared and a further 200,000 hectares of land were returned to the ownership and management of Traditional Owners.

This historic outcome was the result of 10 years of negotiations between the Queensland Government, Traditional Owners and conservation groups. These lands, formerly known as the Kalpowar blocks, and operated for many years as a cattle station, were purchased by the Queensland Government in 1994 as part of an ambitious conservation initiative aimed at creating a 1200 km long 'wilderness zone' along the

eastern coast of Cape York Peninsula.

The new national park will link the existing Lakefield and Cape Melville national parks to create one of Australia's largest protected areas. The national park will protect important areas of rainforest, nationally significant wetlands and wild tropical river systems; it is home to 96 different species of birds including the endangered crimson and star finches.

Over the past 11 years, the Queensland Government has purchased more than 1.6 million hectares of land, including the Kalpowar blocks, along the east coast of Cape York Peninsula as part of a comprehensive strategy to protect the remarkable natural and cultural conservation values of this wild, diverse, remote and beautiful region. Lands purchased by the Queensland Government include extensive areas of old growth tropical rainforest at the McIlwraith Range and the spectacular white sand

country of Shelburne Bay.

Building on the goodwill and success of the Jack Lakes negotiations, the Queensland Government hopes to create a string of new national parks and Aboriginal lands before the end of 2006.

In a further welcome development, the Queensland Government has commissioned an independent scientific assessment of the World Heritage values of Cape York Peninsula and the steps required for eventual listing. It is expected that the report will be released in mid 2006.

*Lyndon Schneiders
Queensland Campaign Manager
The Wilderness Society*



Photo by Anthony Esposito

ACF celebrates Kalpowar deal on Cape York

The Australian Conservation Foundation (ACF) was lucky enough to participate in the Kalpowar handover ceremony in Cooktown on 15 December 2005. ACF Executive Director Don Henry addressed the audience, which included Queensland Government Ministers Desley Boyle and Henry Palaszczuk, Kalpowar Traditional Owners, friends and family, State Government staff, and conservation representatives, telling them that ACF is committed to the Cape York Land Tenure Resolution process where decisions such as Kalpowar – that deliver both protection to the natural and cultural

values of the region – are realised. ACF is very proud to have played a role with our conservation colleagues The Wilderness Society and CAFNEC in securing this fantastic outcome.

ACF would also like to acknowledge the hard behind-the-scenes work of Nicky Hungerford and CAFNEC in keeping the conservation groups up to date with information and pulling people together for meetings on the whole land tenure process. CAFNEC's role as the highly respected, legitimate regional conservation voice is critical to

ensuring ongoing engagement with the peoples of Cape York. ACF, with the Queensland Government and the Cape York Land Council, was also happy to provide funding towards the production of a DVD documenting the Kalpowar handover. In the DVD ACF's Cape York Officer Leah Talbot talks about ACF's vision for Cape York and congratulates the Kalpowar TOs for sticking it out over such a long process. Copies of the DVD are available from the Cape York Land Council or Leigh Harris at Ingeous Studios.



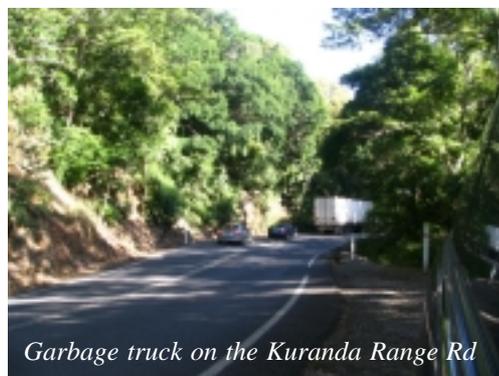
Smelly Business: Friends of the Earth Kuranda calls for waste transport by rail, not road

Friends of the Earth Kuranda (FoEK) has written to the authorities opposing the transport of thousands of tonnes of smelly garbage along the Kuranda Range Road, through the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area. Since the closure of the Bedminster Plant, an average of 15 truckloads per day of putrid waste is transported by road from Cairns to the Springmount dump, near Mareeba.

FoEK has long held concerns about health and safety issues of toxic waste spills, such as the ammonium nitrate spill in 2004. We have also received regular comments from road users complaining about the nauseating smell when travelling behind these trucks and at least one incident of load leakage creating a road safety hazard. One road worker stated that the smell was making his job of monitoring traffic on the Range Road extremely unpleasant and that the smell permeated into the forest for at least 200m.

We cannot understand why the decision was made to transport the garbage along a tourist route, through the World Heritage Area, creating pressure on traffic flow and road conditions when a rail line, which could easily be extended, runs to within 2km of the Springmount dump. The inclusion of a rail line into the site as part of the developer's proposal was seen as an environmental tick when the development application for the waste station was granted, but alas this potential benefit has not been developed. We urge the environmental authorities to revoke licences for the transfer of waste and toxic substances by road through the World Heritage Area and the State Government to support rail transfer as a more sustainable and less risky transport option.

According to our enquiries into the future of garbage disposal in the FNQ region, this will be an ongoing



Garbage truck on the Kuranda Range Rd

problem, regardless of whether the Bedminster Plant becomes fully operational or not. We have been informed that Mareeba's waste will again be sent to Cairns (as will Douglas Shire's waste) for processing, with residual from all three councils then being trucked back to the Springmount dump via the Range Road.

A viable long-term solution is needed which, among other things, does not put extra stress on the Kuranda Range Road and contribute to a false community perception that the current Range Road is insufficient for community needs.

World Environment Day June 5th 2006 – a day of celebration

by Sue Hayes

World Environment Day (WED), commemorated each year on 5 June, is one of the principal vehicles through which the United Nations stimulates worldwide awareness of the environment and enhances political attention and action.

This year, with the combined environmental forces of the Australian Conservation Foundation (ACF), The Wilderness Society (TWS), Cairns and Far North Environment Centre (CAFNEC) and the Environmental Defenders Office (EDO), we wish to **celebrate** this World Environment Day together with Cairns and its wider regional community.

We aim to do this by holding a specialised evening event on Monday 5th that will include a scrumptious supper and a unique film focussing on environmental themes. Throughout the evening the four organisations will be showcasing successful conservation outcomes in the region which have been achieved through their combined environmental forces.

By harnessing the strength and skills of the local environmental organisations in the region we aim to give a human face to environmental issues, empower people to become active agents of sustainable and equitable development, promote an understanding that communities are

pivotal to changing attitudes towards environmental issues and advocate partnership which will ensure all nations and peoples enjoy a safer and more prosperous future.

We want to engage and stimulate awareness of the environmental threats facing northern Australia and what actions each of us can take to create a greener, cleaner planet.

We are still at the early stages of planning this day and welcome any interested people who wish to help volunteer to coordinate this event.

If you wish to be part of this exciting day then please don't hesitate to call Sue Hayes (07) 4031 5760 or email: s.hayes@acfonline.org.au



Climate change update

by John Rainbird

CAFNEC is convening a meeting in May, in conjunction with FNQ NRMW, which we hope will lay the foundations for the Wet Tropics region to develop a regional response to tackling climate change.

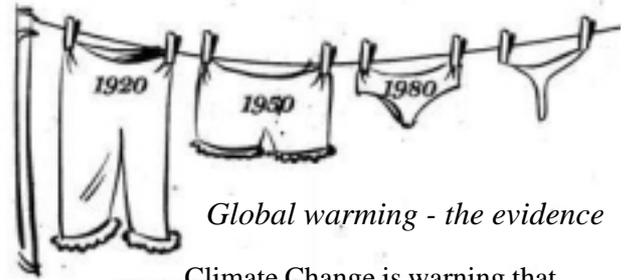
It is unlikely we will see any significant State-based or Federal initiatives to seriously address this issue, as both levels of government are too busy kowtowing to the dirty coal and aluminum industries and the short-term economic gains they bring. Queensland is the world's largest coal exporter, and the State Government is currently salivating over the Bowen Basin coal boom whilst Cairns, the Great Barrier Reef and the montane Wet Tropics rainforests have all been identified by leading climatologists as having very gloomy prospects due to climate change. The aluminum lobby is also extremely powerful. This industry is the largest user of energy in the Queensland industry sector and it has already been putting significant pressure on the State and Federal Governments to omit it from any climate change mitigation measures which may affect its profits.

Given this background, we have decided to try and progress positive action at a regional level. If we can get this project off the ground, we can develop a response, built and owned by the community, which empowers us to tackle this critical issue and delivers benefits to the local economy and community. It will need the support of local governments, industry and the broader community to succeed, and I believe it will.

The recent ABC *Four Corners* program helped to expose the rot at the heart of the Federal Government's appalling response to climate change. Powerful industry forces continue to disseminate falsehoods, often faithfully relayed by the media, and

the truth is still struggling to get out there. One of the great lies is the notion that clean energy sources cannot meet energy demands. Hermann Speer, member of the German Parliament and leading energy expert, has identified Australia as the nation with the greatest potential to fuel its future using clean energy. Germany's move away from coal and nuclear towards a clean energy future has already created 160,000 jobs and they are on track to be free of dirty fuels by 2050. We have no excuse not to be a world leader in this area instead of being a pariah state.

Meanwhile the next draft report of the Intergovernmental Panel on



Global warming - the evidence

Climate Change is warning that scientists are now unable to place a reliable upper limit on how fast and by how much the atmosphere will warm as carbon dioxide levels increase; raising the possibility the earth's temperatures may rise above the ceiling quoted in earlier accounts. Chris Rapley, head of the British Antarctic Survey, warns that the huge west Antarctic ice sheet may be starting to disintegrate, an event that would raise sea levels around the world by five metres. "The last IPCC report characterised Antarctica as a slumbering giant in terms of climate change," he said. "I would say it is now an awakened giant. There is real concern."

Mittagong Forum

Approximately six years ago a forum was convened in Mittagong by former Australian Conservation Foundation President, Peter Garrett, which brought together key environment groups to consider ways to enhance the effectiveness of the Australian environment movement. After some teething problems over the first couple of years, the forum now has a clear process and direction, and provides an important space for discussions on issues which impact on the movement's capacity to deliver environmental outcomes.

Around 25 groups are now members of the forum, and CAFNEC is fortunate to have been engaged in the process for much of this time. Along with Environs Kimberly, we are one of the smallest group at the table, the majority of other groups representing state conservation councils and national and international organisations and

networks. MF has three core areas of focus: training of participants and progressing mechanisms to expand these lessons to the broader movement; developing of mechanisms to assist the movement to become financially more independent; and focusing on strategy and assessing the changes in the national and international geopolitical landscape which may affect non-government organisations in particular.

The forum has also become an important space for developing improved understanding and relationships between groups and individuals; participants are treated with equal respect and consideration, regardless of the group they represent. The forum has been supported by philanthropic funds as well as contributions from member groups. For more information about the forum contact Kate Walsh, the new forum coordinator, on k.walsh@acfonline.org.au

Envirofiesta 2006

Planning is well underway for this year's festival and now the real work is about to begin. The date has been set for 5th August, just a few days before the full moon and just a week after Cairns Peace Week.

The theme of the festival this year will be "Living Simply." Using this theme we will explore the often-overlooked fact that life can be appreciated a lot more when it is simplified. We will also continue to look at the need for those of us in the "civilised" world to make sacrifices concerning our consumption habits, working along the lines of "living simply so all may simply live."



We will present a "Living Simply Expo" where we will showcase lifestyles, activities and tools that can help us simplify our lives and our impact on this beautiful, unique and fragile planet. Our aim for the Expo is to present practical tools, skills and ideas that we can use to make small steps that make a real difference to our lives and collectively to the broader community.

Envirofiesta will still contain all the favourite components such as a local circus content, a dynamic and interactive young people's space, a cottage market zone, roving characters, art exhibitions, cultural and contemporary dancing, a huge quality local line-up on the big stage, CAFNEC's much loved café and garage sale and so on.

Envirofiesta is a great opportunity for local businesses, community and cultural groups, the Traditional Owners and international tourists to share a common respect, love and concern for the natural environment.



The work putting this festival together is huge and needs lots of CAFNEC members to volunteer. There are lots of rewarding and sometimes challenging and enjoyable roles to play in this wonderful community event. Contact the CAFNEC office and leave your details and interests. If you have any personal contacts who could help with things like marquees, tepees, portable toilets, solar panels, or even items that could enhance the décor of the festival, please let us know.

Envirofiesta is solidly placed as the premier environment festival of north Queensland. If your new year's resolution was to help make a difference, meet new friends and have lots of fun then *Envirofiesta* is the project for you.

Paul Christie

Urgent – values survey follow up

Firstly, thanks to all those CAFNEC members on the e-mail list who gave of their time to complete the VALUES survey. I'm now looking for more willing volunteers to complete a follow-up study.

What's it all about? *Values* is one of those words that has many meanings, depending on the how, why, and who of its use. I'm trying to build an overall picture of *values* as a concept by creating what is called a 'concept map'.

Who is asking? I'm a PhD candidate at James Cook University in Cairns. My research is largely about the psychology of language. I'm studying the meanings of *values* as used in discussions of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area. I want to see if there is any difference in the use of *values* between those involved in different environmental pursuits. Are we all talking about the same thing?

What am I asking you to do? Send me your address as soon as possible so that I can post my new study out to you (this one can't be e-mailed). There are three tasks in all, which should altogether take you around two hours to complete. I realise this is a big time commitment that I'm asking of you, but I offer in return my heartfelt gratitude for your assistance and commitment to another important environmental issue.

Denise Dillon
Ph: 4042 1652
denise.dillon@jcu.edu.au
School of Psychology
James Cook University
PO Box 6811
CAIRNS 4870

Treeforce needs tree-planting volunteers

The tree planting season in the far north is from February to the end of May so Treeforce needs willing volunteers now.

The next Treeforce Tree Planting Activity is on Sunday the 26th of March and then every second Sunday after that. Starting time is 7.00am with morning tea beside Freshwater Creek at 9.00am.

You will see the Treeforce sign on the left of the Redlynch Intake Road, 1km past the St. Andrew's School roundabout, as you travel towards Crystal Cascades. Turn left on to the dirt track and follow the signs. Please bring your hat, sunscreen, gloves and covered shoes. For more information phone Lisa O'Mara on 4053 7314.

Bike tour may fold due to lack of skilled volunteers

by Jon Metcalfe

Jobs on the Far North Wilderness Bicycle Tour (3 categories)

Here is a letter from a rider after last year's ride:

Thanks CAFNEC, I haven't stopped talking about the tour since we got back. I've done a number of different bicycle tours and I've never had so much fun, seen so much fantastic country and eaten so well, all done with such great people. I'd just like to sincerely thank you, and all the CAFNEC team, for your efforts in making the Wilderness Tour such a memorable event in my life.

*Kind regards
Paul*

As the above thank you suggests, the Wilderness Bicycle Tour is becoming an event with a big reputation. This is due to the fabulous efforts of many volunteers over the last five years. However, there comes a time when new volunteers have to come in to share the effort. While the Tour is one of CAFNEC's best revenue raisers, its big downside is that it requires skilled volunteers and specialised equipment. However if we all spread the word, those skills and that equipment will emerge; it's happened now for five years!

CAFNEC needs the revenue from the bicycle tour in order to keep its staff levels and thus the ability to campaign locally and regionally. This year the ride is planned for the first week of the September school holidays, 23-30 Sept. However, possibly 12 more skilled volunteers are needed. Ideally, some of these volunteers will also have reliable vehicles which can be used; see right for a full list of jobs and vehicle requirements for the tour. Even if you don't have the skills and equipment outlined, you probably know someone who does. Contact them. Many of the volunteers on the bike tour over the last five years have come from outside conservation circles. The benefits of the ride are numerous for volunteers. Each year we get better at giving time so everyone can have a bit of a ride. Each year we get more organised! Camping out under starry skies for a week is also a treat. But perhaps the greatest benefit is the thanks we get from very appreciative riders, and the knowledge that our efforts will keep CAFNEC's doors wide open for yet another year.

If you can help on this year's tour contact CAFNEC on 4032 1746 or e-mail bikeride@cafnecc.org.au

1 Catering:

- Chief cook/caterer and cooking overseer (1 person)

Plan meals. Organise purchases. Take oversight of meal preparation and give directions to helpers. Adjust plans as needed. (Huge job with many stresses.)

- Kitchen helpers (3 to 4 people)

Take directions from chief caterer and work with him/her to prepare evening meals. Be very familiar with purchases, and also lay-out of fridge. (Huge job with many stresses.)

- Morning breakfast preparation (1 to 2 people)

Liaise with chief caterer and organise breakfasts each morning. Help clean and pack up kitchen equipment each day. Must like early rise.

- Lunch preparation and serving, plus afternoon smoko and after-ride snacks (1 person with vehicle)

Liaise with chief caterer to organise lunch preparation, pack and drive to lunch stops each day before riders arrive. Liaise with forward sign-and-safety car to have them drop morning teas at designated stops. Organise after ride snacks. Must know route lunch-stops very well and have a good idea about the flow and timing of each day.

Vehicle requirements for catering area:

Cars with tow balls are almost compulsory on the tour. They are handy in emergencies if another car can't tow something. Also tow balls can be used with bike racks to tow the Catering Crew's bikes, so they too can have a bit of a ride. Of the seven or eight people in Catering, at least three cars are needed. The lunch person obviously needs a car. In previous years one kitchen helper used her car to tow a medium-size trailer. One other helper needs a car in order that all the catering crew is transported.

2 Camp set up and removal:

- Luggage trailer (a second (minor) job for a volunteer already allocated; in previous years this has been the breakfast person)

Tow big luggage trailer from Cairns to Cardwell loaded with bikes, and back to Cairns loaded with luggage. Heavy load. Need large 4WD. Train the riders to pack luggage properly. Be able to get trailer to next site before first riders arrive.

- Pantec driver and assistants (2 or 3 people)

Must have experience in driving trucks with trailer, slowly and carefully on dirt roads. Ordinary license sufficient. Load and unload Pantec each day. Very physically demanding with constant pressure.

- Bar and facilities trailer (two people, one with car)

Organise purchase of saleable items (beer, soft drink, energy bars) beforehand and help load. Be available every night to serve and keep track of sales. Organise a re-supply if needed. Need car with tow bar to tow a trailer with kitchen equipment. Help load and unload kitchen equipment each day. Needs good organizational ability and dedication.

3 Rider support area:

- Forward signs, water and rider support (1 person with ute)

Need ute with space for 10 water containers. Also need tow bar to tow toilets for first three days. Must know route intimately and know best placement of signs. Be prepared to stop forward-coming cars to warn of danger. Must always be on top of water needs each day, dispensing and filling 200 litres. Must liaise with lunch person for drop-off of water, tables and morning smokos at places where required. Must gather back equipment from tail-end Charlie each day.

- Tail-end Charlie/bike trailer (1 person with car)

Usually last, picking up slow riders, food, water and signs from stops. Need car with tow bar to tow fully loaded bike trailer to Cardwell and partly loaded back to Cairns. Must know how to organise space and tie things down. Must know route very well. Must have very high degree of patience juggling slower rider's desires.

- Removal of toilets

Person with car and tow ball, required to attend at Innot Hot Springs on the Tuesday of the week to remove the toilets back to Cairns next morning. (Evening meal and breakfast supplied!) Suit person who can't attend all week but still wants to help.

Summary of vehicle requirements over all areas

- 1) Car to transport catering crew;
- 2) Car to dispense lunches;
- 3) Car to tow medium-sized box trailer;
- 4) Car to tow medium/large facilities trailer;
- 5) Ute for day-water and to tow toilets first 3 days;
- 6) Small 4WD to tow bike trailer;
- 7) Large 4WD to tow luggage trailer;
- 8) Car to tow toilets back to Cairns (1 dy).



Being a tadpole is not always fun!

Our start-and-stop wet season is creating havoc for frog breeding. The good rains fall and the adults feverishly get stuck into

creating the next generation – and a week later, the tropical sun is beating down upon the water and terminating the next generation. Then some more good rain and more tadpoles – before the clouds vanish and more tadpoles die.

Even if the clouds remain, tadpoles are not having much luck. The latest new disease problem detected by the Cairns Frog Hospital appears to be an aquatic virus that causes mass die-offs in tadpoles, bone disease, malformations and sudden death of juveniles. This problem has been coined the “Redlynch virus” until we can get it properly isolated and identified. And, most unfortunately,

this problem is really making the rounds. It is spreading through Cairns suburbs and we’re also receiving dead tadpoles from Mena Creek, Mt. Carbine, creeklines off the Macallister Range, and reports from Mareeba and Cooktown.

Please look in your backyard ponds and contact us if you see any of these signs:

- * tadpole numbers decreasing;
- * bent tails;
- * dead metamorphs;
- * unusually very pale or very dark tadpoles.

We are also looking to sample other bodies of water, so if you see any tadpoles along the roadside or in drains, please note the locations and phone us.

Cairns Frog Hospital 4053 4367
arvos and eves
www.fdrproject.org.au

Ecotone

Is the newsletter of the Cairns & Far North Environment Centre (CAFNEC). Ecotone is published every three months and sent to over 300 readers.

Reader contributions, including letters, are very welcome: content is subject to the editor’s discretion.

Disclaimer:

Views expressed in Ecotone are not necessarily those of CAFNEC as a whole.

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CAFNEC staff:

Coordinator: John Rainbird
Campaigner (acting): Di Horsburgh
Administrator: Marie Short
Ph: (07) 4032 1746 / 4032 1586
Fax: (07) 4053 3779

Email: mail@cafneec.org.au
Address: PO Box 323N
North Cairns, Qld 4870

Web address: www.cafneec.org.au

ECOTONE is produced by Stella Martin with editorial assistance by Di Horsburgh and Marie Short.

OUR MEMBERS ARE OUR LIFEBLOOD!

USE THIS FORM TO JOIN CAFNEC OR RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP

Name Address Post Code

Phone (H) (W) Email

Membership type (Please circle)

Individual	Family	Group	Concession	CAFNEC pays GST on the basemembership fee of \$15.00. The donation component goes to our Gift Fund & is GSTfree & is TAX DEDUCTIBLE for members.
\$15.00 + \$15.00 donation <u>\$30.00 TOTAL</u>	\$15.00 + \$25.00 donation <u>\$40.00 TOTAL</u>	\$15.00 + \$25.00 donation <u>\$40.00 TOTAL</u>	\$15.00 (for the unwaged) <u>\$15.00 TOTAL</u>	

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Post to CAFNEC, PO Box 323N, North Cairns, 4870 (extra membership forms are available from our office)

WHY NOT GIVE A GIFT MEMBERSHIP!

COPY DEADLINE

Deadline for the next Ecotone is 18th May 2006.

Please send or email articles or letters, ideally as Word attachments, not in the body of the e-mail, to CAFNEC (with graphics if you have them).

IMPORTANT DATES:

March

26th: 7am – Tree planting with Treeforce (see page 9 for details)

31st: 7.30pm – EDO 10th anniversary Trivia Night fundraiser, Crosswell Hall @ Cairns High School. \$20 per head

April

10th: 6pm – CAFNEC general meeting, an evening of short environmental films.

22nd – Dive into Earth Day: REEF ACTION

June

5th – World Environment Day

August

5th – *Envirofiesta*

Show off your support for CAFNEC by wearing CAFNEC's cool T-shirt.



Front

It's simple. Just fill in this form and send it to CAFNEC with a cheque or money order – or pop into the office. Generous adult sizes: 14Y; S; M; L; XL – please circle.

Your name: _____

Address: _____

Contact no: _____

Cheques or money order for \$12.50 plus \$5 postage and handling made out to Cairns and Far North Environment Centre



Back

Would you like your Ecotone to come via email instead of by post – and save CAFNEC money? E-mail admin@cafnecc.org.au

**If undelivered return to:
CAFNEC, PO Box 323N,
North Cairns, QLD 4870**

**Ph: (07) 4032 1746
Fax: (07) 4053 3779**

