



Ecotone

Newsletter of the Cairns and Far North Environment Centre Inc.

Vol. 26 Number 3

September 2006

Green groups hail famous victory for East Trinity Wetlands

by Denis Walls and Jon Metcalfe

August 17 2006 was a red letter day for the environment movement in the Far North with the news that the state government had finally gazetted the land it bought at East Trinity in 2000 as a Reserve for Environmental Purposes under the Lands Act 1994. Since original acquisition the area has had the proverbial Sword of Damocles hanging over it, in that it remained in volatile freehold title, highly likely to be sold again by any government in the future.

However, good judgment has prevailed and the land is now protected with the intention of preserving and enhancing the site and paving the way for eco-tourism ventures. Desley Boyle herself said: "It will be able to be used for tourism and community purposes that are environmentally sustainable". Unwritten at the moment, is the desire by Desley, and of course the environment movement, to set up a Wetlands Park on the land with a visitor centre adjacent to the bund wall at Hills Creek.

Environmentalists have long argued that such a large environmental area like East Trinity, so close to the heart of the city, if rehabilitated correctly, could not fail to become a major eco-tourism draw card and a generator of wealth and employment opportunities. Rehabilitation of the serious acid sulfate soil issues caused



by original clearing would also generate a whole new field of environmental research and intellectual effort, which could be used right across the world's tropical areas where serious degradation of mangrove ecosystems has occurred.

The gazettal of the land for environmental purposes comes after 15 years of hard labour by various groups including the precursors to the present Wetlands Park committee, the Save Trinity Inlet group, CAFNEC and the Far North Greens. It is testament to the influence and commitment of environmental groups in the Far North. It was their agency, in focusing on the wishes of the community to preserve the beautiful eastern backdrop to the city, that brought about this very welcome decision.

To all those who invested time, money, energy and advocacy to achieve this excellent outcome, well done and all praise to you. This is a victory to celebrate and to refresh the spirits at a time in our history when wins don't come very easily.

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Campaigner's report

Hi again to all CAFNEC members. It's been a busy few months since the last Ecotone and I'm beginning to see that this pace is somewhat normal for our little office. The recent *Envirofiesta* took a lot of time and energy but, ultimately, it was a success and a great advertisement for the organisation. Thanks to all who helped make it happen.

No sooner is *Envirofiesta* over, than we have an election on our doorstep. Elections can be great opportunities for achieving shifts in policy and cementing past gains as well as throwing up potential problems, for example, Nallinga Dam receiving ALP support. A short, sharp, well-focused effort over the following weeks will be well worth the effort. CAFNEC is about making a difference and getting our voices heard. Elections are the time for that voice to be heard loud and clear, so please heed the calls to action if you can.

I have been trialling Thursday evening volunteer nights (see last Ecotone), but have found these to be poorly attended so I will discontinue them until further notice. A new day and time may be chosen and will be advertised in Ecotone and elsewhere. Meanwhile the steady flow of volunteers continues through our door. As always, volunteers are always very welcome at CAFNEC. Drop by and find out what you can do to help increase the capacity of CAFNEC to campaign in the Far North.

In brief

Annan River (Yuku Baja_Muliku) National Park created

The creation of the 8830ha Annan River (Yuku Baja_Muliku) National Park under a new Indigenous Land Use Agreement is welcome. A 2280ha Annan River Resource Reserve was also created to accommodate a major wind farm proposal.



Archer Point – wind farm to power Cairns. Great news! Is it?

Wind farms have been the focus of not a few controversies of late and in Cape York we may have our very own. The proposed Archer Point wind farm promises much in power generation, but it is to be located on land that has been earmarked for the Annan River (Yuku Baja_Muliku) National Park. Recent moves by the State Government have led to the creation of a Resource Reserve over the site whilst the economic feasibility of the project is determined. I, after two years, the wind farm is not found to be viable, the land will then be transferred into national park. CAFNEC believes this is a prudent move and will continue to monitor progress.

Archer Point has an average wind velocity of 6m/sec, right on the threshold for viability (*Queensland Transmission and Supply Corporation*). Anyone who has been there can vouch for its suitability and a major renewable energy project in the Far North is certainly welcome. Whether Archer Point is the most appropriate place for this project remains to be ascertained.

Genetically Modified (GM) crops and the Far North

A commercial release of GM cotton in WA's Ord River area has

been given the go ahead. This has implications for all of northern Australia. An existing moratorium on GM crops north of 22deg south has meant that this potential menace has been largely absent. This moratorium recognised the serious potential impacts of new weed varieties in northern Australia.

A new brochure on the risks and threats of GM cotton in northern Australia will be available very soon. Please contact me if you would like copies for yourself or for distribution.

A trial of GM sugarcane is currently planned for 2007-2010 on three six-hectare sites in Queensland, including one in the Cairns region. Public comment will be called for in mid November. Please contact me if you would like more information, or to help in writing submissions and/or campaigning.

Cook Shire Draft Management Plan

The Cook Shire Plan public submission process ended a few weeks ago with CAFNEC making a submission to this process. Cook Shire is vast, covering most of Cape York, making Cook Shire Council one of the region's most important land management agencies. CAFNEC had several concerns with the Draft Plan and made a submission addressing several issues.

The lack of clarity and depth of the Desirable Environmental Outcomes (*See IPA Article*), lack of conservation and vegetation overlay mapping, the lack of wildlife corridors in urban planning and re-zoning of land in coastal lowland areas subject to climate change impacts. There seemed also to be a lack of consideration to ongoing land-related negotiations occurring in the region, especially in relation to State tenure resolution processes. Also of concern was the lack of discussion and identification of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander rights and interests in relation to land use and zoning arrangements within the current draft, together with shortcomings in acknowledging Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural heritage provisions, protocols and sites.

CAFNEC will continue to work with the Cook Shire Council and hopes the final plan will reflect the input of the community. I thank Ellie Bock for putting this document together and the EDONQ for their invaluable advice and continued vigilance. CAFNEC received calls from concerned residents, highlighting local concern with the Draft Plan. These calls were valuable in identifying problem areas and I encourage anyone with concerns over local planning outcomes to get in contact.

The Far North Wilderness Bike Tour is approaching fast

From the 23rd to the 30th September, the bike tour takes riders from Cardwell to Cairns via the rainforests and wilderness of FNQ. This is one of CAFNEC's great highlights of the year and I only wish I could take the time to do it all; I think I will have to make do with joining for a day or three. There are still places available for riders. A \$200 deposit secures you a place. The full cost is \$575 for the entire trip plus \$45 for train if required or \$220 for support-person with car, if needed. Families are also welcome with a support car.

If you want to help make this a success, come in and take some flyers to promote the event. Helpers are also needed for the final curry night on Saturday 30th September and all CAFNEC members are welcome. Cook a curry, or bake a cake.

In other good news, the decision by a majority of Douglas Shire Councillors to pass the Shire Plan should result in a great step forward in preserving the Daintree. This, and the gazettal of sections of East Trinity, have been welcome results of Desley Boyle's tenure as Environment and Local Government Minister. Desley worked hard on these issues and has responded to strong public pressure for action.

Steve Ryan



Coordinator's report

to have the stars align with Cairns MP Desley Boyle becoming minister for both Environment and Local Government and Planning. Desley can take a great deal of the credit for this historic outcome due to her belief in the protection of the Daintree and for committing herself and her government to both funding the buy back and ensuring the planning scheme secured the forests from further development. Congratulations to the many who worked hard for this historic day.

On the day I write this, the news has come through that the Douglas Shire Council has finally signed off on the planning scheme that will secure the Daintree lowlands from further development. The long, protracted campaign to protect the rainforest that Sir Joh in his wisdom sold off to Mr Quaid appears to be finally drawing to a close. It has been a rollercoaster ride which has seen many players come and go over the years. Through it all, Mayor Mike Berwick has fought long and hard to protect the forests for which his council ultimately has responsibility. The last two years have been particularly hard with the election to council of several pro-development councillors who have opposed the required development restrictions. We have been very fortunate

The State election is once again upon us and whilst the State has delivered great outcomes for the Daintree and East Trinity, the Premier's plans for dams and pipelines are impressing no one in the environment movement. The announcement that \$6 million dollars will go into design work for Nullinga dam on the Walsh River confirms the Premier is making bad policy on the run, undermining the processes around water planning implemented by his own government. One the other side of the coin Cairns Mayor Kevin Byrne, whilst still advocating dams, is finally also talking water conservation and better demand management!

The campaign to protect the last fragments of cassowary habitat in the Mission Beach area drones on whilst Rome burns. Urgent action is required here and our groups will continue to push for mechanisms to ensure we don't see these populations disappear.

The EPA's decision not to allow access to the False Cape site through a state reserve has thrown a spanner in the developer's ambition to develop the site. However, it is unlikely to stop the development. Our court case is still in motion with the hearing set for November 16.

Thanks again to all our wonderful supporters and volunteers and those who helped make *Envirofiesta* 2006 such a huge success.

John Rainbird

WANTED Editor for Ecotone

The job involves text editing and layout four times a year.
Contact Steve Ryan on
4032 1586

Amongst Trees – Images of the rainforest of north-east Queensland

Text by Rupert Russell, illustrations by photographers Paul Zbrowski and Arjan Murdoch, paintings by artists Sandra Ford, John Rainbird and Ellen Terrell.

This new book, born out of a collaboration of several local naturalists and artists, focuses its attention on what you see when you look down instead of up when entering our rainforests. The book is in A4 landscape format, with a frontispiece of a pair of Chowchillas by internationally-acclaimed naturalist and wildlife artist Bill Cooper. Costing \$24.95, copies are available from John Rainbird or local book stores.



 **AGM** 
CELEBRATES
CAFNEC'S
25 YEARS!

Come and join us celebrate a quarter of a century of working to protect FNQ's natural environment.

Thurs Sept 14th
Cominos House
6.30pm

We'll take you on an illustrated journey of CAFNEC past to present
Light supper provided

President's report



**WE'VE GONE SILVER
(BUT WE'VE BEEN
GOLD FOR A LONG
TIME)**

CAFNEC is 25 years old!

This is our 25th anniversary as the peak regional environment organisation – what an outstanding achievement and one we should not underestimate. We have outlasted five state premiers and their governments and have endured despite funding

cuts, local government attempts to close us down and repressive laws designed to stifle environmental debate and undermine environment groups. Successive staff and management committees have kept the doors open, maintained our integrity and continued to argue for the protection of the region's environmental integrity. We have been instrumental in the protection of thousands of square kilometres of habitat across forests, woodlands, reef and rivers. We've contributed to environmental law and policy reform, initiated environmental education programs, challenged inappropriate development in the courts and been a source of inspiration and information for thousands of people and their environmental campaigns. There is much to celebrate and much still to be done.

VOTE ENVIRONMENT

Just when you thought it was safe to get up in the morning, an election is announced. It's not that difficult to respond with a big yawn as we prepare for three weeks of anything but meaningful or insightful policy announcements from the Tweedledee and Tweedledum parties.

Nevertheless, elections can be a time to progress environmental outcomes so I urge you to use the time left to ask your candidates some probing questions about their policies for protecting Queensland's environmental heritage and to make your vote count towards saving our wild places and wildlife. For an update on environmental policies and election asks visit www.cafnec.org.au and www.voteenvironmentqld.org.au

Envirofiesta

The Management Committee and staff of your Environment Centre are thrilled with the success of this year's *Envirofiesta*. This event truly is the quintessential environment festival in Cairns. Every year, a core group of people involved in its preparation and execution commit to an extraordinary personal effort so success is a sweet reward. On behalf of the management committee, I thank Paul Christie, *Envirofiesta* artistic director, and the *Envirofiesta* crew for their tireless efforts and ability to create the wonderful *Envirofiesta* vibe, Michael, our treasurer who has to worry about and keep track of the money, and our indomitable staff; John, Marie and Steve, our new campaigner, who took on so much organising and did it so well.

Far North Queensland WildCountry: an election focus

WildCountry is The Wilderness Society's continent-wide, long-term conservation plan for the protection of the key ecological processes and connections across Australia. It is an innovative and visionary approach to the protection of nature.

The Far North Queensland WildCountry project is an ambitious strategy to protect the great wild regions of Cape York Peninsula and the Gulf Country.

As part of the Queensland election 2006 campaign, The Wilderness Society in Queensland has developed a comprehensive \$200 million plan over the next four years to protect this outstanding region. The Far North Queensland WildCountry project builds on more than 20 years of campaign experience working throughout tropical north Queensland.

The project is based on five critical foundations:

- The development of a scientifically sound and effective legal, policy and planning framework to protect WildCountry;
- The creation of a comprehensive national park system;
- Ensuring the sensitive and compatible use of land, water and seas outside the protected area system;
- The development of new economic development opportunities through the promotion of the 'conservation economy'; and
- Ensuring community involvement and support for WildCountry.

During the remainder of the election period, The Wilderness Society in Queensland will be promoting the protection of Far North Queensland WildCountry as a key election issue.

To learn more about the campaign and to follow important news and events as the election unfolds, visit www.voteenvironmentqld.org.au

Lyndon Schneiders
Queensland Campaign Manager
The Wilderness Society (Queensland) Inc



AGM

AGMs are an essential part of running an organisation and an opportunity for members to participate in organisational management. CAFNEC staff and financial annual reports will be presented and members are welcome to raise issues or ask questions. Please come along if you can; we'd love to see you there. As usual, the current members of the management committee will step down and a new committee elected. If you are interested in nominating, please call Marie for a nomination form to be returned by Tuesday, 5th September.

How You Can Help

Join or renew your membership / Donate to CAFNEC - Call Marie 4032 1746 (Tues-Thurs)

Volunteer - Call Steve 4032 1586 or John 4032 1746

Join the Management Committee - Call Di 4093 8901 or Marie 4032 1746

Help with FNQ Bike Ride - Call Jon Metcalfe 4052 1019

Spread the good word about CAFNEC - Tell everyone.

Yours for a peaceful and green world
Di Horsburgh

Last call to stop Highway Madness?

by Sid Walker
FoE Kuranda

This issue of Ecotone is due out just before the 2006 Queensland State election. At the time of writing, three candidates (Green, Labor and Liberal) have nominated for the constituency of Barron River, which covers Kuranda and the Cairns northern beaches.

Denis Walls for The Greens rejects the \$500 million + proposed 4-Lane Highway from Smithfield to Kuranda - and related developments planned by the State Government that would turn the beautiful and environmentally rich area of Greater Kuranda into sprawling, car-dependent new suburbs. He advocates major new investments in light-rail, rail and other eco-friendly transport solutions.

The two major party candidates stand in stark contrast.

They support the 4-Lane Highway through World Heritage Area - and presumably support flow-on development that would lead to urbanization of the greater Kuranda area (although they prefer not to mention that).



Neither has even agreed that the matter should be open for a genuine, broad-ranging public review. Both would be well advised to raise their game.



While we'd prefer a consensus around sound long-term planning, FoE Kuranda hopes the electorate will punish candidates who fail to address key concerns of our era such as climate change and the long-term trend towards fuel scarcity - and who are determined to push full-steam ahead with this crazy Highway plan. We deserve better leadership than that!

Advocates for the Highway promise that the 4-Lane Highway will improve traffic conditions on the Cairns to Mareeba route, but that requires a very long-term view. Highway construction will take more than a decade, so expect long delays on the current Range Road for at least ten years! During construction and once completed, the Highway will become a permanent scar on the landscape for residents of Cairns' northern beaches.

The elaborate, long-winded 'environmental approvals' processes for the 4-Lane Highway have taken no account AT ALL of issues such as climate change, peak oil and the evident need to design for a fuel-efficient future. These concerns are

deemed beyond their terms of reference. This is grossly irresponsible 'planning'.

At this election the future of the environment in the Barron River electorate is at stake. Current policies lead to a major downgrade of our environmental heritage and colossal misallocation of public funds needed for other useful projects.

Please call each of the candidates. Let them know this is a key issue that will help determine your vote. Demand, at the very least, a public planning review that DOES take into account the major environmental issues of our time - BEFORE we finalise the largest-ever public infrastructure investment in this electorate.



Community Litigants Handbook

Ever wanted to know about your rights to challenge Council approvals of environmentally damaging development? The EDO-NQ and EDO (Qld) have joined forces to produce a publication called the Community Litigants Handbook to help community members do just that! The Handbook is designed to help members of the community to have their voice heard in the Planning and Environment Court by using the law to protect the environment and help to alleviate some of the difficulties the community faces in bringing court action.

This handbook will skill you up in deciding why, when and how to start an appeal in the Planning and Environment Court against development applications.

Learn:

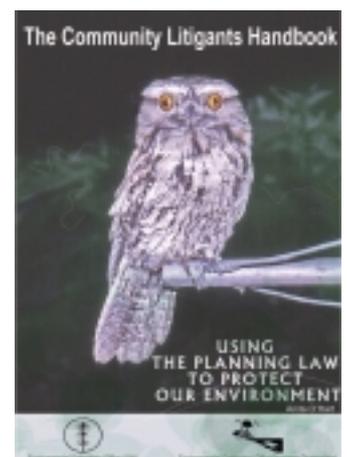
- When and how to commence a court action;
- The costs and risks of litigation;
- How to prepare and file court documents;
- How to prepare your case and increase your chances of success;
- How to present evidence and appear in court.

Packed with tips, easy-to-follow checklists and example court documents, you will find this guide an invaluable tool for running your own planning appeal.

"Individuals and community groups often appear in the [Planning and Environment] Court. What this Handbook does is give guidance and direction to them about the intricacies of the cases, and issues, which arise there. ... I am sure it will be of great benefit to community members with an interest in their neighbourhoods, and environmental questions generally."

Judge Alan Wilson SC
Extract from foreword to the Handbook.

The Handbook is available for the bargain price of \$30 from the EDO-NQ office at Level 1, 96-98 Lake Street, Cairns, QLD 4870. Drop in or contact us on Ph: 4031 4766 or by email on edonq@edo.org.au to order a copy. EDO-NQ accepts cheques, cash or direct deposit to our account for payments.



What's the fuss about IPA?

by Sarah Freeman

Queensland's Integrated Planning Act (IPA) was introduced in 1997 to replace the old Planning and Environment Act (1990). Unlike its predecessor, which relied on fairly rudimentary prescriptive measures to control development, IPA represents a radical new reform agenda and innovative approach in the field of land use planning which can be summed up by the term "**performance based planning**". This means that IPA assesses development on the merit of its **outcomes**, rather than how it measures up to fixed criteria of a given zone. A development can meet the performance criteria in any number of ways, whether that is through height, setbacks, appearance or impact. There are **no prohibited land uses** under IPA, and in theory, development must instead be refused if it is seen to compromise the achievement of the "**desired environmental outcomes**" of the planning scheme.

The **Cairns Plan** is Cairns City Council's new IPA-compliant planning scheme, which came into effect in March 2005. It sets out a 10-15 year vision for Cairns and states what the desired environmental outcomes are for this city, with which all development must be consistent.

However there are a few problems with this approach. Planning based on outcomes may sound good in theory, and in reality it means that the planning schemes provides no certainty, as everything is up for interpretation and negotiation. This means that there is nothing within the legislation to protect the environment and stop "inappropriate development", which can't be contested and reinterpreted. It also only provides for limited scope for community

engagement, as only some development applications have rights of public notification rights, submissions and appeal. IPA makes many provisions for negotiations between the applicant and the authorities, from which the public is excluded. This lack of transparency could be seen as an open door to corruption.

The stated purpose of IPA is to "**achieve ecological sustainability**", and measures are provided as to how this can be advanced. However, IPA does not provide any *binding obligation* for decision makers to ensure adequate, or even minimal environmental protection when assessing development applications. With so few clear binding targets, and so much left open to interpretation it is difficult to see how IPA is ever going to advance towards this purpose, or even how it will regulate development in any more than the most minimal sense.

The coming election provides the community with an opportunity to put IPA's failing right back into the spotlight. Salient issues to raise with the politicians are:

- a) Improving community rights and making the system fairer;
- b) Restoring the Environmental Impacts Statement;
- c) Making planning schemes more intelligible and accessible;
- d) The need to prohibit some development;
- e) Making planners take into account natural resource constraints;
- f) Addressing the deficit of strong, enforceable State Planning Policies and codes to protect environmental values.

Planning is critical to the environment, and IPA is a key piece of legislation in achieving protection and reform. It possibly has more useful and applicable environmental clauses than any other piece of state legislation, which is why it is so important to get it right. Planning should be a central issue in the upcoming election, and it is up to the community to put it on the agenda. For more information on IPA see the Environmental Defenders Office's website: www.edo.org.au

IPA Submissions

The State Government has just released a discussion paper entitled Dynamic Planning for a Growing State - Options for improving Queensland's Integrated Planning Act 1997 and Integrated Development Assessment System. Copies of the discussion paper are available from www.ipa.qld.gov.au/ipaReview/default.asp. Submissions close on Friday 6th October 2006 at 5pm. The Department of Local Government, Planning, Sport and Recreation will also be conducting Community Consultations in Cairns on 18th September 2006 between 6-8pm at Rydges Tradewinds Hotel, Cairns. Please go along and have your say on these reforms. The EDO-NQ and EDO (Qld) will be drafting a detailed submission in response to ensure that concerns of community groups with IPA are addressed. For more information contact EDO-NQ on 4031 4766 or by email on edonq@edo.org.au.

Would You Like To Join The CAFNEC Volunteer Team?

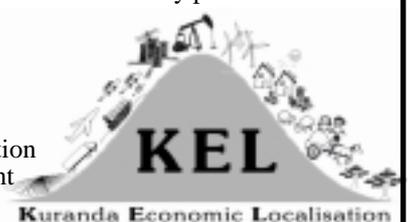
CAFNEC is looking for Volunteers with the following skills. How much time you can offer is entirely up to you. It might be to undertake a one-off task or provide on-going support.

- WH&S audits and emergency training for staff.
- Event planning and co-ordination
- Project-based research
- Writing skills (e.g., submissions; grants)
- Office cleaning
- Good ideas plus time and energy to put them into action.

We offer a friendly atmosphere, our heartfelt thanks and an opportunity to learn about environmental advocacy. Call CAFNEC 4032 1746

K.E.L – Kuranda Economic Localisation – believes that re-localising the scale of our economy promotes....

- Community Cohesion
- Cottage Industry
- Local Food Production
- Social Interaction
- Economic Stability
- Good Health and Nutrition
- Meaningful Employment and
- Ecological Sustainability



Most importantly, re-localisation provides a positive alternative to relying on a global economy which systematically exploits labour, degrades and pollutes our environment and creates dangerous dependency on dwindling global resources, creating a society of passive consumers instead of active and valued members of the community.

If you'd like to get involved or find out more, then call Svargo or Sarah on (07) 4093 9779/ 4093 7755 kurandalocalisation@yahoo.com.au
NEXT MEETING: CHILLI'S PIZZA PLACE, KURANDA
Monday 25th September, 7pm

Climate change update

by John Rainbird

Premier Beattie when campaigning in Innisfail recently said that his government would assist the region prepare for the increase in category five cyclones North Queensland could expect over the coming years due to climate change. It is now becoming increasingly common to hear politicians linking extreme weather events like Cyclone Larry with climate change. Sadly government actions are not keeping pace with the rhetoric. Indeed Queensland's position on climate change closely resembles that of the Federal Government's, where policies are being designed to keep the coal industry afloat with very little focus being placed on the development and expansion of clean renewable technologies or setting serious emissions reduction targets. Premier Beattie has also retracted from a commitment to a national states-based emissions trading program that would start to stimulate investment in low polluting technologies.

The Federal Government's mock inquiry into nuclear energy is a poorly

disguised strategy to progress the expansion of uranium mining in Australia. The Prime Minister appears unable to make the connection between uranium and the proliferation of nuclear arms - no doubt blinded by the dazzle of radioactive dollars.

Despite the recalcitrant stance of certain governments, there is a groundswell of action around the world on this issue which will hopefully soon overwhelm the ostrich brigade. The skeptics are dropping like flies as the evidence for rapid human-induced climate change continues to mount. Governor of California, Terminator Arnie, is helping lead the charge despite his conservative politics, and California is reaping the benefits economically and environmentally. They estimate proposals to cap emissions will deliver a \$60 billion dollar dividend to the state whilst creating 17,000 jobs.

At the local level our initiative to set up a regional response to climate

change is progressing well. The newly formed North Queensland Climate Alliance (NQCA) has a little more ground work to do before launching itself publicly. We have a great team of people behind the alliance and hope to grow the membership significantly once the internal systems are set up. The NQCA has a target of reducing our regional greenhouse gas emissions by 20% below current levels by 2020, and will align with existing processes around regional NRM plans.

Lastly, please join us on Wednesday 13 September at BCC Grafton Street, for the Cairns premiere of 'An Inconvenient Truth', a movie which will hopefully open the eyes of millions to what we are confronting with climate change.

World Rivers Day

**A celebration of the World's Waterways and Wild Rivers
Sunday 24th September**

The Wilderness Society (Cairns) in conjunction with Cairns and Far North Environment Centre (CAFNEC) and the Australian Conservation Foundation (ACF) will be celebrating World Rivers Day, an initiative arising from the United Nations Water for Life Decade 2005-2015, on 24th September at the Tanks Art Centre in Edge Hill. This year's theme "Water and Culture" will be explored with the showing of 'River of Dreams', a story about the damming of the Ord River and the battle to stop the Fitzroy River, in the Kimberly, W.A., from being dammed. The film is narrated by Ningali Lawford who was born at Fitzroy Crossing and offers an account of differing visions for the future of landscape and country - between cotton industry developers and Indigenous traditional owners and conservationists.

Come along for a lazy Sunday afternoon, enjoy some live music, light refreshments, a cold beer and a great movie. For more information please call Di Horsburgh 4041 6666 or email di.horsburgh@wilderness.org.au



Top ten websites for September 2006

There are now thousands of websites on virtually any topic – being pointed to useful sites can be of great assistance if you are looking for alternative perspectives or reputable information. Here are some we find useful. If you have any particularly good sites you want others to know about, let us know and we can consider them for future editions or our websites links page. JR

Grist Magazine – www.grist.org – Environmental News and Commentary
Rocky Mountain Institute – www.rmi.org – established by resource analysts L. Hunter Lovins and Amory B. Lovins.
World Business Council for Sustainable Development – www.wbcsd.ch
Association for the Study of Peak Oil and Gas – www.peakoil.net
Real Climate – www.realclimate.org Climate science from climate scientists
Climate Action Network Australia – www.cana.net.au
Guardian Newspaper science – www.guardian.co.uk/science
George Monbiot – www.monbiot.com – articles by leading thinker Monbiot
Bioneers – www.bioneers.org – solutions using the heart of nature
Earthscan – www.earthscan.co.uk – publishers of books on sustainability

Envirofiesta 2006

Lovegreen Photography



What a day! I have heard the comment "that was the best day in Cairns" from many people - from those with little experience of festivals to those with lots.

Over 300 people were involved in the festival in some way, including the precious few who spent those very long days setting up and taking down, the overworked kitchen crew (big thanks to Janet), the young children on their first public stilts gig, international performers, over 40 models and 12 designers on the catwalk, the 70 musicians on the three stages and everyone else that participated and gave us their best on the day.

In terms of music, circus, fashion, cabaret and the kitchen it was the biggest ever *Envirofiesta*. We received close to \$6000 in entrance fees, that's 1200 paying adults (there were also numerous fence jumpers). By some estimates there was over 200 young people there as well.

Envirofiesta is now cemented as one of the key festivals on the FNQ calendar. Our job as members of CAFNEC is to make it even better.

There were many aspects of the production that I was not completely satisfied with (I am half Virgo after all), a number of things were

Lovegreen Photography



The CAFNEC stall

overlooked, underdone or understaffed. This was due to a number of reasons, some of my making but mainly they were due to a shortage of staff and volunteers.

Needless to say we learnt quite a few lessons. One very big one is that we need more volunteers for setting up and for taking on the many small components within the festival. We may also need another day for set-up if we are to truly transform that beautiful park into the world of *Envirofiesta*.

There is a huge list of thank yous to go out, much too long for here but a list will be attached to the documentary production of the day and posted on the website.



The food stall

Those that deserve special commendation are Steve Ryan, Elena McMasters and our tireless production crew Dave Breeze, Dave Hart, Simon Tate, Kia, Lobo, Nick Mills, Conrad Jones, Billy Dread. Thanks also go out to Janet (our champion caterer), Jon Metcalfe for essential electrical wizardry, Rob Rutten for his work organising the gate, Marie and John for managing the CAFNEC stall, Brynn Mathews for coming to the rescue with the film room, Karen for pulling the art exhibition together out of thin air, Susan Breeze and Bobbin for the Fashion Parade and Cabaret show, Justine for organising the circus and Kevin for organising the Kids space. I could go on and on.

Arts Nexus conducted a workshop on paper sculpture and produced a number of pieces that are yet to be finished. These are to be CAFNEC's contribution to the Cairns Festival



Kids, centre stage

street parade on the 16th September. If anybody wishes to help finish these works and participate in the parade please contact me.

It is extremely important to thank the sponsors of *Envirofiesta*. Without the support of the Tanks Art Centre and The Cairns Civic Theatre the event would not have been anywhere near as grand. Their generous assistance with equipment ensured the monies provided by the RADF and Arts Queensland grants could be used in the most effective way. Thanks go also to the Cairns City Council, the Queensland Government, Northern Gulf Resource Management Group and the FNQ Natural Resource Management LTD who all provided much-appreciated support. Much of the land utilised for *Envirofiesta* is owned by the Cairns and District Chinese Association which also supports the day.

I could really go on and on about how good the day was, how important it is to have community gatherings such as *Envirofiesta*, how inspiring it is for those who attended and especially for those who participated. I am sure those of you who turned up already know - and those who didn't should put this in their diaries now - *Envirofiesta 2007* will be held at the same location on the 4th August and it will be that much bigger again.

Cheers and much love and respect to all those who were involved in *Envirofiesta 2006*. See you all there next year.

Paul Christie
Envirofiesta's Artistic Director
CAFNEC Secretary.

Preferential Election Voting System

When political parties talk about “giving preferences” this refers ONLY to their How-to-Vote cards, where they **recommend** how you should record your 2nd/3rd/4th etc. vote on the ballot paper. Beyond that, they have no influence on how your vote is counted on the night.

Every year I am amazed at people who tell me that voting for a minority party is wasting their vote because they believe that only votes for the major parties really count or because they think that preference counting is pre-determined by the parties.

This is not so, because to be successful, a candidate must obtain 50%+1 of the total vote, i.e., an absolute majority. In most electorates, no one candidate receives 50%+1 of a primary vote, i.e., ballot papers that have 1 against their name.

When primary votes do not deliver an absolute majority to any one candidate, preferences are counted, starting from 2nd preferences, until one candidate does have 50%+1 of the total vote. To do this, the party with the least primary votes is then excluded from contention and those votes are then distributed to the remaining candidates according to the next available preference.

Example

For example, let's say you voted Red 1, Green 2, Blue 3 and Yellow 4 in an electorate with 100,000 votes.

For a candidate to win on primary vote, they would have to receive 50,001.

First Count

The first count (i.e., of primary votes, those marked '1') is Blue 33,000, Red 30,000, Green 21,000 and Yellow 16,000.

No candidate has 50%+1. The Yellow candidate is excluded from further counting and those 16,000 votes are distributed according to the 2nd preferences (i.e., the '2' votes marked on those ballot papers.)

Second Count

In this example, 7,000 Yellow voters voted Blue as '2', 5,000 voted Red as '2' and 4,000 voted Green as '2'. After this second count the result is now: Blue 40,000, Red 35,000 and Green 25,000. Still no candidate has an absolute majority so the counting procedure continues. The Green candidate now has the lowest number of votes and is excluded, and those 25,000 votes are distributed according to where voters placed the next available preference for the candidates remaining in the count.

Third Count

In this example, 6,000 of the Green votes are distributed to Blue and 19,000 to Red. After this third count, the result is now: Blue 46,000 and Red 54,000.

Result

The Red candidate is declared elected as she has a majority of votes, 54,000.

This means that by voting '1' for a minority party candidate that resonates with your principles and voices your concerns, a) you send a message to the government that this candidate's policies represent issues concerning the electorate and b) still allows you to give your vote to a major party. Basically, you get two votes.

Optional Preferential Voting

Queensland State elections now allow you to just vote '1'. After that, you can choose to fill in as many boxes as you like (i.e., record your preferences) or you can leave the rest of the ballot paper blank. If you only vote '1', your ballot paper is then exhausted after the first count, as you have not indicated any preferences for the remaining candidates. Whatever you do is entirely up to you. Your choice depends on the message you want to send. With our current two party system it is, however, important that you record your 2nd preference if you are concerned that one major party gets in and the other major party does not.

Read about Preferential Voting and view the above example at www.eqa.gov.au/systems/single/by_category/preferential.htm

Di Horsburgh

WINNERS ARE GRINNERS

Envirofiesta Raffle 2006

CAFNEC's annual *Envirofiesta* Raffle was a great success with some fantastic prizes donated by local businesses! Thanks to our prize donors, everyone who bought a ticket and to those hardworking ticket sellers!

1st prize Daryl Syxo – G14 blue

A cruise for 2 people to the Outer Barrier Reef valued at \$398.00

+ Lunch or dinner to the value of \$100.00 at the Red Ochre Grill

2nd prize Fiona Rainbird – G91 pink

An off-road bike valued at \$350.00 + Luscious fruit, vegetables and various other delectable tasty treats to the value of \$50.00 from The Edge

3rd prize Gitte – G17 brown

Day trip to the reef and introductory dive valued at \$169.00 courtesy of Ocean Free

+ Beautiful beads and exotic jewellery to the value of \$50.00 from Shi Sha Beads

4th prize Sharon Rampton – G23 blue

Trip for 2 to Green Island valued at \$144.00 courtesy of Green Island Reef Cruises

5th prize Fongie Maeva – G49 mauve

Trip for 2 on Trinity Inlet and a tour of the Cairns Crocodile Farm valued at \$118.00 courtesy of Cairns Habitat Cruises

6th prize Kayvi - G6 blue

A spirit tour for one lucky family (2 adults, 2 children) valued at \$60.00 aboard the Daintree Rainforest River Train



Silvia selling raffle tickets

CAFNEC AGM – Sept 14th 6.30pm Cominos House Election of CAFNEC Office Bearers

Nominations are called for all office bearers and members of the management committee, to be elected at the Annual General Meeting. Nomination forms can be obtained from the CAFNEC office or by calling 4032 1746. Completed nomination forms will be on display in the CAFNEC office as required under our constitution. (Please note, only financial members are eligible to vote on the election of members of the management committee).

A quorum of 19 members is required on the night, so we encourage you to attend and share in CAFNEC's achievements and ongoing work to protect our environment.



emPower ENERGY FEST

After seeing the film 'The End of Suburbia' at a community film evening at the Kuranda Amphitheatre, the question was asked...."What do we have in our local area to cope with the changes that are happening with issues such as Peak Oil and Global Warming?"

The question set the energy flowing through a small group of people who soon got together to discuss organising an event that would gather and celebrate all the people in our region who dedicate their lives to working with, promoting and creating renewable energy products and services.

Coming from a varied background, including mothers wanting to create a better future for their children, people involved in the renewable energy field, community activism, green architecture, festival organising, tree-planting, art, music, gardening and beautiful food, this small group put together their ideas and inspiration, and have created the far north's first energy fest ... from little things, big things grow!

The name emPower came through as a word that could bring a renewed strength, both to an individual and a community. With so much disappointment and heartache after everyone gathering and marching, writing letters and having meetings to create a world at peace, many people expressed a feeling of disempowerment as our country was drawn into a war over oil. How many stopped feeling they could do anything to change the world, when it seemed our 'leaders' didn't want to know about this, and other issues we feel strongly about?

emPower ENERGY FEST will bring together a feast of information which will offer each and everyone clear directions on little steps and big steps that can be taken in our homes, our lives and our community to reduce the size of our energy-use footprint on the earth, and to make wiser choices for the on-going health of our environment.

We are celebrating the power of our community and the amazing abundance of creative thinking. Creating a clearer, cleaner, greener kind of lifestyle leads our community towards a more joyful way of living, with localised solutions, building a truly sustainable and localised economy.

emPower ENERGY FEST organisers recognise the Traditional Owners of this beautiful country we live on here, and are inviting the Elders from the communities in the region to take part in the Elders Talking Stick Circle.

We are looking forward to hearing some of the wonderful stories from our local treasures of this knowledge, and to listening to their thoughts and ideas on sustainable and community living. Following the Circle there will be the amazing 100 metre Rainbow Serpent Unity Ceremony.

Also on the day:

- Workshops
- Renewable energy product showcase
- Films
- Painting of the 100m Rainbow Serpent
- Face painting
- Books
- Yummy food
- Music
- Arts
- Stalls

The very first ENERGY FEST at **Kuranda Amphitheatre** will be a great day to emPower the rest of your LIFE!!!

When: Saturday 30th September, 10am to 8pm, entry by gold coins donation. If you would like to contribute your energy to this event, with an energy-friendly stall or workshop presentation, or your music or other skills, or your assistance in any way, please contact the organisers on 4093 7755 or email wind@iig.com.au or management@didjshop.com ...thank you. And, on the day, please bring something special to put into the 'energy centre' – love and thanks.

Public Choice Theory (PCT) – understanding the Howard Government's approach to NGOs — Michael Bryan.

This is an outdated theory still embraced by the conservative end of politics that rejects the pluralist concept of many voices in society debating public policy to develop a consensus. Instead only people chosen by electors or by investors are qualified to govern for the mainstream in a market society.

Non-government organisations are labeled 'special interest groups', 'elites' and 'predatory'. Altruism is denied. Long-term perspective is ignored. NGOs are seen to interfere with the marketplace by making claims for services and resources which together exceed the total amount available. NGOs are defined as 'not accountable' – a reference to their place in the spectrum of sectors under PCT rather than their governance and transparency as organisations.

Fifteen years ago the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Community Affairs said: "An integral part of the consultative and lobbying role of these organisations (NGOs) is to disagree with government policy where this is necessary in order to represent the interests of their constituents." Now PCT underpins the Howard Government's certainty that NGO advocacy is illegitimate. It is seen as a disruptive pursuit of 'self interest', creating pressure for 'excessive expectations' on the economy. The place for NGOs under this doctrine is filling the gap left by small government, not presuming to have a say in policy.

PCT helps us understand the Howard Government's various criticism, de-fundings, purchaser-provider contracts with confidentially clauses, tax office draft rulings about tax-deductibility and GST exemption, welfare outsourcing to NGOs, funding of a shadow peak NGO body to compete with the National Roundtable of Non-profit Organisations.

Information from Joan Staples "NGOs out in the Cold" June 2006
www.democratic.audit.anu.edu.au

Got the taste for some curry?

The Far North Wilderness Bicycle Tour end-of-ride Curry Night is on again!

Let's welcome home the bike riders and their fabulous support crew. Some of CAFNEC's best curry-makers are banding together to give you a feast of the senses and a night of fun!

When: 6pm, Saturday 30th September 2006

Where: Cominos House, 27 Greenslopes St, North Cairns.

All for the price of \$15.00 per head! Drinks available by donation.

For catering purposes please RSVP by Wed 20 September.

For more information, or to reserve your place, call the CAFNEC office on 4032 1746.



CALLING THE FINEST CURRY MAKERS OF A GENERATION:

To help make our night a success, we are asking CAFNEC curry makers to step forward. If you can make a curry or provide some condiments, chapattis or rice or even a dessert, whatever your specialty – vegetarian, beef, chicken - please contact Marie on 4032 1746. Curries can be made in advance and frozen. Also your assistance on the big night to heat up and serve would be great. Let's leave those riders with a lasting impression of our fantastic organisation! So if you can spare a few hours to help out, or make a curry, please let me know. Thanks Marie.

... and Cake Makers ...

Feeling Fruity!

We're looking for fantastic fruit cake makers to donate a cake for the Bike Tour. If you can help, please ring Val Schier on 4055 8428 or 0407 100 886

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.

CAFNEC Management Committee:

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 Vice-President: William Bray
 Secretary:
 Treasurer: Michael Bryan
 Com. Member: Tammy Andrews
 Com. Member: Ellie Bock
 Com. Member: Robert Rutten
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 Com. Member: Emma Ignjic

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ECOTONE is produced by Stella Martin with editorial assistance from John Rainbird and Steve Ryan

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>	

Payment method (Please circle)

Cheque

Money Order

Credit Card

Note: Cheques and money orders should be made payable to CAFNEC

If Credit Card (Please circle)

Bankcard

Mastercard

Visacard

Card No. ____ / ____ / ____

Cardholder Name

Signature

Expiry Date ____ / ____

Total \$

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 5th November 2006.

Please send or email article or letters to CAFNEC (with graphics if you have them).

IMPORTANT DATES in September:

Friday 1st 6pm – Book launch: ‘Amongst Trees’, CoCA, 96 Abbott Street, Cairns

Sunday 3rd 7pm – Film: ‘Darwin’s Nightmare’, Jute Theatre CoCA, 96 Abbott Street, Cairns. \$10 CAFNEC/End Credits members \$8

Saturday 9th – Queensland State election: Vote for the environment.

Wednesday 13th 6pm – Film: ‘An Inconvenient Truth’ premiere. BCC City Cinemas, Grafton St.

Thursday 14th 6.30pm – CAFNEC AGM and 25th year celebrations.

23rd-30th – Far North Wilderness Bike Tour

Sunday 24th – World Rivers Day Film & Music Celebration, TANK#5. Call Di 4041 6666 or email di.horsburgh@wilderness.org.au

27th-28th – CANA conference, Sydney

Wednesday 27th – Global Eco-design Dialogues. Cairns International Hotel. www.globalecodesign.org

Friday 29th to Sunday 1st October – Wallaby Creek Festival

Saturday 30th 6pm – Far North Wilderness Bike Tour Finale Curry Night, Cominos House, 27 Greenslopes St, North Cairns

DARWIN'S NIGHTMARE

This film looks at the impacts of globalisation and corruption on the residents of a Tanzanian fishing village. 111 minutes, rated M. CAFNEC, End Credits and Earthwatch

Sunday September 3rd 7PM
Jute Theatre
CoCA 96 Abbott Street Cairns
\$10
Cafnec/End Credit Members \$8

An Inconvenient Truth
Cairns Premiere Wednesday September 13th
BOOK NOW SEATS LIMITED Tickets
\$ 15.00 Child/Conc'n 12.00
6.00pm sharp for 6.20pm start
Birch, Carroll & Coyle, 108 Grafton St, Cairns
RSVP Monday 11/9 Contact ACF 40315760
A Joint CAFNEC, ACF and Earthwatch Event



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

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

Ph: (07) 4032 1746
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