

WTMA PLAN REVIEW.

IT IS OBVIOUSLY CLEAR FROM TODAY'S REPORTS, OUR WET TROPICS MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY IS SLOWLY BEING STRANGLERED WITH LIMITED FUNDING ALLOCATIONS AND BUDGET CUTS.

AS A MEMBER OF THIS GROUP I HAVE SEEN THE MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY OF THIS OUR MAGNIFICENT WORLD HERITAGE AREA REDUCED BOTH IN SIZE AND FUNCTIONABILITY. I HAVE SEEN THE POWER PLAY BETWEEN THE MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY, AND VARIOUS AGENCIES AND POLITICS.

I SEE AS WE HAVE ALL HEARD TODAY OF UNCOMPLETED PROGRAMS TO CONTROL PESTS AND WEEDS WHICH ARE DESTROYING OUR HERITAGE AREA AND IN FACT UNLESS CONTROLLED HAVE THE POTENTIAL TO COMPLETELY DECIMATE ALL OF THAT WHICH WE ARE CHARGED TO PROTECT, CONSERVE, PRESENT, REHABILITATE AND TRANSMIT TO FUTURE GENERATIONS.

UNDER THE EXISTING STRUCTURE OF THE MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY THE GOVERNMENT AGENCIES OF THE STATE OF QUEENSLAND HAVE ACCEPTED THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE ON SITE AND ON GROUND MANAGEMENT.

IT IS CLEAR THAT THESE AGENCIES HAVE FAILED DISMALLY AND CONTINUE NOT TO PROVIDE SUFFICIENT RESOURCES. THESE AGENCIES AND POLITICAL DIRECTIONS SEEMINGLY ARE LIMITING THE FUNCTIONS OF THE WTMA AND RESTRICTING ACCESSES AND PRESENTATION OF THE WET TROPICS MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY AREA.

I THEREFORE PROPOSE THAT THIS COMMITTEE PRESENT TO THE BOARD OUR CONCERN AND THAT WE NO LONGER HAVE ANY CONFIDENCE IN THE ABILITY OF THE AGENCIES OF THE QUEENSLAND STATE GOVERNMENT TO DISCHARGE THEIR OBLIGATIONS.

I FURTHER SUGGEST THAT THE MATTER IS SO SERIOUS THE BOARD MAY CONSIDER PRESENTING THE FACTS TO THE INTERNATIONAL BODY OF THE WORLD HERITAGE AREAS WITH COPIES TO THE FEDERAL AND STATE GOVERNMENTS.

Norman Whitney  
18<sup>th</sup> February 2005

# COMMUNITY CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

Term of Appointment 8<sup>th</sup> June 2004 to 8<sup>th</sup> June 2007

		Primary Interest Area	Geographical Area Represented
Minelle	Creed	Aboriginal	Cairns
Charles	Morganson	Aboriginal	Cardwell
Ross	Rogers	Commerce	Tablelands / Cairns
Jax	Bergersen	Conservation	Mareeba
Marcus	Bulstrode	Conservation	Johnstone
Marina	Gurtzis	Conservation	Douglas
Nicky	Hungerford	Conservation	Cairns
Linda	Venn	Education/Community	Thuringowa
Pino	Giandomenico	Local Government	Hinchinbrook
Brian	Hewitt	Local Government	Thuringowa
Jeff	Pezzutti	Local Government	Cairns
Norman	Whitney	Neighbour	Cairns
Diana	Wood	Neighbour/Community/Conservation	Cook
Andy	Gierz	Recreation	Cairns
Caroline	Coppo	Rural Interests/ NRM Board	Hinchinbrook
Bood	Hickson	Rural Interests	Eacham
Jan	Cameron	Rural Interests/Tourism	Eacham
Alison	Gotts	Rural Interests/Tourism	Douglas
Nigel	Stork	Science	Cairns
Nigel	Tucker	Science	Eacham
John	Courtenay	Tourism	Cairns / Tablelands
Diana	Pregl	Tourism	Atherton

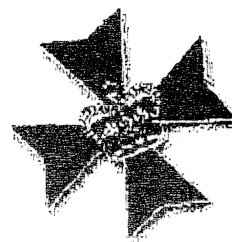
# NEWS RELEASE

## NATIONALS

**Rob Messenger MP**

Shadow Minister for Education & the Arts

Member for Burnett



18 November 2005

## Wet Tropics disaster

Double-dipping, sleight-of-hand accounting and shabby mismanagement by the Beattie government has left vast tracts of World Heritage Area in Queensland's Wet Tropics at grave risk of being lost to a highly invasive weed, the State Opposition warned today.

Nationals Shadow Environment Minister Rob Messenger said thousands of hectares of World Heritage Area fanning out from Babinda was now at serious risk of being lost to harungana\* because the Beattie government had starved an eradication program of vital funds.

Mr Messenger said the situation was so bad and the lack of action from the Environment Minister so frustrating, the Wet Tropics consultative committee had taken the unprecedented step of passing two unanimous motions of no-confidence in the Queensland government agencies.

"No-confidence motions have been carried unanimously twice this year ...most recently as August because the consultative committee, people who actually live in the region and know what's going on, have become so frustrated with the Beattie government and particularly with Minister Boyle.

"What they're so angry about is the double-dipping, sleight-of-hand Beattienomics ...where grandiose announcements are made by Mr Beattie and the Minister about Queensland fulfilling its obligations under the World Heritage charter agreements, when in fact all that's happening is the cost of routine maintenance from other park areas is being shifted in the books.

"Essential weed control, especially of harungana is not being carried out and control of feral pigs has all but ceased ....it's an absolute disaster," Mr Messenger said.

He said while Beattie and Boyle claimed to be meeting their World Heritage obligations of roundly \$1.8 million annual funding, none of this money was getting through to dirty-hands-on programs of poisoning weeds and trapping, baiting and shooting wild pigs.

"Beattie and Boyle claim the money's there ....but it's not. They've sneakingly cost-shifted so that routine spending in other QPWS areas is being claimed as work in World Heritage Areas."

Mr Messenger the situation with harungana was now so bad that many locals feared vast tracts of World Heritage tropical forests would be lost forever.

\*Harungana (*Harungana madagascariensis*) a native of tropical Africa was first cultivated around Babinda a century ago for medicinal use and has since spread widely in adjoining forests. A major eradication campaign in the late 1990s was successful in arresting its spread, but failure to follow-up on regrowth now sees the weed infesting many ridges and wherever storm damage has broken the forest canopy.

**Media contact: Rob Messenger 0407 904 134**

N:\Library Press Releases\2005 (JULY - DEC)\026 RM 181105 Wet Tropics Disaster.doc



springborg  
.com

61 7 4056 8154



Speech by

## Robert Messenger

### MEMBER FOR BURNETT

Hansard Thursday, 10 November 2005

## WET TROPICS MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY

**Mr MESSENGER** (Burnett—NPA) (10.12 pm): It is important that the Wet Tropics Management Authority preserves and rehabilitates Queensland's Wet Tropics area and abides by Queensland's responsibility under World Heritage Area conventions. Tonight I condemn the minister for the environment for her blatant disregard of the state government's responsibilities to this fragile area.

The Queensland government has denounced the federal government for reviewing the amount of funding that was directed towards the authority's administrative work. Given the Premier's recent statements regarding the need to cut unnecessary bureaucracy and improve front-line services, I would have thought that the Beattie government would have welcomed these reforms. Did the state increase its commitment to front-line services on the ground management? No. This government has instead engaged in what appears to be a deliberate cost-shifting exercise.

There is considerable community concern that the Beattie government is providing the Wet Tropics Management Authority with funding and then claiming that funding back to complete the necessary programs. Many of the authority staff are seconded from the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service. While they do a wonderful job under enormously difficult conditions and appalling underresourcing, unfortunately, staff are too scared to publicly voice their concerns about the Beattie government's appalling lack of priorities in the Wet Tropics area for fear of retribution and retaliation from their employer. It is a story that I have also heard in relation to Queensland Health.

I understand that this situation has now become so dire that the Wet Tropics Management Authority Consultative Committee moved a unanimous motion of no confidence on the ground management currently undertaken by the Queensland government's agency. The next generation of Queenslanders will suffer as a result of this government's deliberate neglect of our World Heritage areas.

Turning to another issue, this morning I was proud to sponsor a petition tabled in this parliament which speaks out about this Beattie Labor government's discrimination against age pensioners who live in leasehold retirement villages and consequently miss out on the Queensland state government pensioner rate rebate. The petition contained 2,404 angry signatures from residents of retirement villages all round Queensland. This is a petition that the Premier and members opposite should pay attention to and act on. Pensioners who live in leasehold retirement villages should be allowed to claim the \$180 a year rate rebate.

The bottom line is that these Queensland pensioners need to save every cent that they can. This state Labor government is cheating them out of \$180 a year. The final word should be left to Mr Barry Stick who says—

Thank you for all you are doing for us and in particular the single pensioners in Queensland who are finding things hard at the moment. I do not know how Dell and I would survive without the little private super fund. This, however, is running out fast.