



Press Release 11th July 2006

Daintree landowners welcome partnerships with the Australian Rainforest Foundation

Over 60 Daintree residents attended a public meeting held at the weekend (Saturday 8th July) in Cow Bay hosted by the Australian Rainforest Foundation (ARF) to establish priorities for on-ground conservation projects with Daintree residents.

In 2005 the Australian Government provided ARF with \$5 million to undertake a range of conservation initiatives in the Daintree, including the buyback of land. All initiatives are aimed at reducing the impact of development following the controversial subdivision of approximately 1100 lots of rainforest in the 1980's.

But this public meeting wasn't about buying back land as Roger Phillips, Foundation CEO and presenter at the meeting, explained.

"The ARF has already purchased 24 blocks in the Daintree and the Queensland government another 113. We are now focusing on supporting landowners to look after the rainforest.

"The Foundation recognise's that many landowners don't want to sell their land and that they are already practicing good on-ground conservation in the Daintree. By forming Conservation Partnerships with these landowners and community groups, we can financially support agreed works that improve their land and the environment for everyone," Mr Phillips said.

The meeting encouraged residents to propose the types of works they would like to see carried out in the area and on their land. Feral animals, weed identification and spraying, revegetation and fencing were all issues addressed as were the problems with remote area power supply; along with education programmes for tourism operators and assistance with planning 'Daintree friendly' housing.

"We are encouraging all landowners to submit an Expression of Interest for works and have had requests for over 30 of those forms already, which is excellent." Mr Phillips said.



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"The added benefit of this public meeting is to explain that Stewardship Payments are intended as an investment for the future of the rainforest and the ARF will only fund projects on an individual's land that are protected through a conservation covenant. It was clear from the meeting that landowners are happy to enter into covenants and we can assist with this process."

Up to \$500,000 is available for Stewardship Payments by the end of December 2006, with further funding allocated for 2007. The ARF Stewardship Payment Panel will assess all applications under the funding selection criteria.

The ARF is also looking for locals to form a community advisory group that will propose and coordinate good conservation projects across the Daintree.

Fact sheets about Stewardship Payments and Conservation Covenants, along with Expression of Interest form are available on the Foundation's website at www.arf.net.au. To request the fact sheets and EOI form by post, call the Australian Rainforest Foundation on 4051 2000.

ENDS

Media: Contact Roger Phillips, CEO, Australian Rainforest Foundation
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Attached:

Fact Sheet 1: Conservation Covenants

Fact Sheet 2: Stewardship Payments

Form 1: Expression of Interest – Stewardship Payments

Digital photo: *Daintree landowners propose works for ARF Stewardship Payments*

Pictured from left to right: Michelle Lamond, Dave Schoon, Yetta Passells, Roger Phillips (ARF), Trudy Alberts and Fritz