

The Australian Rainforest Foundation
Friday 28th February, 2007 (Embargoed)

LEAP FROG DAY



Cairns kids leap to the aid of our threatened frogs

Launched today **Operation Leap Frog**, an initiative of the Australian Rainforest Foundation (ARF), is encouraging everyone to get involved in keeping the world's frogs alive, kicking and croaking and to help prevent what could be the largest mass extinction since the dinosaurs.

Joined by 130 Cairns school children this 'Leap Frog Day' for a morning of; frog face painting, wildlife talks, frog tales and of course leap frog races, the ARF launched the campaign's website and fundraising initiatives including a 'Frog Fun Activity Book' aimed at children '5 years and up'; all to raise awareness of the frog's plight during 2008 The Year of the Frog.

Dr Victoria Gordon, ARF Chair says that frogs and other amphibians may be small in size but they are considered one of the most important biological barometers of an ecosystem's relative health and they are telling us that something is wrong.

"Likened to canaries in the coal mine: just as miners used sensitive canaries to warn them of toxic gases in the mines, amphibians might be warning us of changing environmental conditions that could eventually seriously impact our health," Dr Gordon said.

"Biologists refer to the species as 'nature's indicators' and with recent study's showing that one-third to one-half of the world's approximately 6,000 known amphibian species could go extinct in our lifetime, we need to listen but more importantly we need to act to help save our frogs now."

"The Wet Tropics region, our backyard, is home to a quarter of Australia's frogs yet critical species are still fighting traditional threats such as habitat loss and pollution while facing new threats from climate change and emerging disease," Dr Gordon said, "We can all do something to help; from making our garden's frog-friendly, protecting existing frog habitat and supporting scientific research. And everything you need to know and do to start helping can be found at www.arf.net.au/frogs".

Further information: www.arf.net.au/frogs

or visit *the ARF Shop, 51 Esplanade, Cairns (Inside the Tourism Information Centre)*.

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Media Background



Operation Leap Frog

Australia has over 219 known frog species, over 60 of those are found in the Wet Tropics region, but over 20 species found in Queensland are listed as Vulnerable, Rare or Endangered.

Our rainforest frogs are under threat from:

1. Pollution and pesticides
2. Habitat loss and degradation
3. Climate change
4. Introduced species
5. Disease

Operation Leap Frog will raise money to protect rainforest frog habitat in far north Queensland and support local scientific research and the international crisis through Amphibian Ark.



2008 Year of the Frog

Amphibian Ark (AARK), an arm of the Amphibian Conservation Action Plan (ACAP) has declared 2008 the *Year of the Frog*, with a global campaign to raise

awareness of the amphibian crisis, and to generate funding for amphibian conservation.

The ARF has registered as a supporter in this campaign and through **Operation Leap Frog 2008** is aiming to promote awareness of the importance of caring for and protecting frogs while raising essential funds to support ongoing scientific frog research and protect vital frog habitat in far north Queensland, while at the same time supporting the International crisis through Amphibian Ark. www.amphibianark.org



Australian Rainforest Foundation

The Australian Rainforest Foundation (ARF) with its head office in Cairns, is an incorporated not-for-profit organisation dedicated to education, research and habitat rehabilitation for Australia's rainforests.

The ARF builds global awareness and support for Australia's rainforests by funding enhancement programs made possible through investment, sponsorship and donations from corporate and private citizens. www.arf.net.au