

**PROJECT ACTIVITY REPORT - FINAL**  
**For the Project period to 30 June 2007**



### **Summary**

The Project was established in April 2005 with a grant of \$1 million from the Commonwealth under the Biodiversity Hot Spots Program, following a personal representation by ARF Chair and CEO to the then Federal Environment Minister, facilitated by the Member for Leichhardt.

The project was aimed at developing a model for endangered species recovery through the following sub programs and principles.

### **Principles**

The project's principles were based on a study in 2000 by the Wet Tropics Management Authority – *Cassowary Corridor Report 2000*. The Authority proposed a mosaic of protected land, National Park and private land between Cairns and Cardwell through which the cassowary could find adequate food and safe passage to successfully breed (from an estimated fragile base of 1500 birds). This became known as the *Cassowary Corridor Project*.

A key component of the Cassowary Corridor was the linking of protected areas (mainly National Parks) with private land under revegetation and protection through conservation agreements and conservation covenants.

The identification of areas where cassowary were known to range were to be identified and then protected and enhanced, thereby increasing survival of the species. These areas were termed "salients".

Salients would then be used as a point from which to expand outwards towards other protected areas using stewardship payments to landowners for the use, development and/or protection of corridors for cassowaries or by strategic acquisition of land.

Acquired land could be resold with conservation covenants, thereby providing funds for further conservation activities.

In summary, the project was based on finding cassowary habitat in use by the birds; helping to maintain and improve this habitat; and then move to link this with other protected habitat.

### **Components of the project**

In addition to the above principles, the project was to be based on good science and work in partnership with both the Queensland Government and National Cassowary Recovery Plan. This would necessitate a close working relationship with Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS) who have legislative responsibility for native species in Queensland.

It would also mean that the 2000 Cassowary Corridor Report would need to be updated to 2006 standards, using new vegetation mapping and a new five year Cassowary Recovery Plan, developed by QPWS.

ARF also proposed funding should be directed to DNA profiling of wild cassowary from dung samples, through the CSIRO. Furthermore, the ARF sought funding for the development of a community education component and for fundraising from the private sector to support the project. The final funding arrangements provided for the following activities:

- Update of the 2000 Cassowary Corridor Report to base future decisions for cassowary recovery;
- DNA Research;
- Land acquisition and landowner incentive (stewardship);
- Funding for Salients (improvement/purchase);
- Revegetation of key land in the corridor;
- Community education;
- Fundraising; and
- Administration.

### **ISSUES**

The contract for the project specified that the Wet Tropics Management Authority (WTMA) was to provide an approval role for the project's activities. Unfortunately WTMA was unable to adequately fulfil this role and early on sought additional funds from the Commonwealth for this purpose. These funds were not forthcoming.

As a result, ARF provided a detailed Business Plan for the project and developed criteria and pro-forma which would guide decisions on payments to landowners,

sites for revegetation and land acquisition. Initially WTMA provided input into this plan and into the criteria for expenditure allocations.

In order to provide a sound scientific basis for expenditure if the funds, ARF commissioned Biotropica Pty. Ltd to work with WTMA and QPWS to provide a blue print of the 'cassowary corridor'. This report was an update on the 2000 Cassowary Report and contained detailed analysis of vegetation, cassowary habitat and identified over 300 private properties on which conservation action would be needed. It was peer reviewed by Dr. Steve Goosem, principal scientist at WTMA (in 2006) and a plain English version of the report was produced. This updated report formed the basis for decisions for the remainder of the project.

WTMA did not play an active role in the project beyond this point and Biotropica were consequently engaged to provide scientific reports for future decisions.

Cyclone Larry devastated much of the project area in March 2006, which effectively put the delivery of the program back 12 months.

## **OUTCOMES**

### **Update of the 2000 Cassowary Corridor Report**

This was successfully completed by Nigel Tucker and the team at Biotropica, working with all key partners. The report identified geographically the extent of the Cassowary Corridor between Cardwell and Cairns, including new east-west linkages. In particular it identified over 360 private properties which were critical to creating successful linkages and therefore safe habitat for cassowary.

Biotropica also undertook individual site assessments (and written recommendations) of land identified as potential salients or applicants for landowner stewardship payments or acquisition by ARF.

### **DNA Research**

An initial proposal in 2005 from CSIRO and QPWS to undertake DNA research was redefined in 2006 and ARF agreed to fund the CSIRO to undertake testing of cassowary blood, feather and dung to see if it was possible to extract sufficient quality DNA. This research has indicated limited early success and will continue until late 2007.

A lot more research into cassowary numbers and behaviour is required. ARF is currently raising private sector funds to establish a permanent research station at Garners Beach and to extend the CSIRO research.

### **Land acquisition and landowner incentive (stewardship)**

The use of financial incentives to landowners to provide good cassowary conservation outcomes on their land is a powerful tool. It means that ARF does not have to acquire the land, often a significant cost, to achieve a similar conservation outcome. It also provides opportunity for ongoing dialogue with the landowner and a trickle down effect with those in receipt of stewardship funding often influencing neighbour's opinions and behaviour.

ARF advertised its stewardship program and considered each application in accordance with the Business Plan. That is, the land needed to be in the cassowary corridor and it needed to meet criteria for payment established through a pro-forma.

ARF was forced to modify its approach to stewardship funding however, following Cyclone Larry. Rather than work with individual landowners, who were then clearly focused on rebuilding, ARF, in consultation with WTMA, concentrated on the Tully-Innisfail precinct and in particular the Mission Beach area and developed precinct wide, conservation on private land actions.

The first of these was a rapid response to the feral pig problem in the aftermath of Cyclone Larry. Habitat refugia were being degraded by the now hungry pigs, whose large numbers were clearly more evident following the cyclone. Competition for the little cassowary food and habitat that remained was a clear threat to cassowary survival. The resultant program, professionally delivered by Paul Smith of NQ Feral Pig Management Solutions Pty. Ltd ("Boar Busters") was successful and highly regarded by the community.

In contrast, both the FNQ NRM Board, local Councils and the QPWS were loudly criticised for non action. The cyclone hit in March and ARF had contracted, resourced and trained a pig trapping program in place by July.

Landowners were able to concentrate on conservation issues rather than rebuilding shattered farms by early 2007. By this time ARF had developed a further precinct wide response to invasive weeds on private lands. The weed growth following the cyclone was faster and more virulent than previously.

There were a number of considerations in agreeing to provide financial support to landowners to deal with weeds. Weeds in themselves are not a direct threat to cassowary, but they do compete with cassowary food and provide a seed bank to affect waterways and land used by cassowary.

However, ARF also noted that in order to gain landowner support and confidence – and long term support for revegetation, riparian improvement and covenants on title – landowners first needed to be engaged.

ARF's Weed Management Strategy provided the perfect opportunity to engage targeted landowners, while addressing the impact on cassowary habitat.

Key components of the Weed Management Strategy include assistance with individual land weed management plans, monitoring and evaluation, training in weed identification, treatment and application of herbicides and small grants to assist landowners with the cost of actions. Education and training through field days is a vital component of the Strategy because it develops a residual capacity in the community.

ARF has considerable skills in managing a revolving land fund and in real estate practice. A 60 hectare rainforest remnant was identified at El Arish (in the cassowary corridor) – Lot 5 Leo Road, Maria Creek. Biotropica conducted a detailed analysis of the block and recommended purchase by ARF in late 2006.

This salient provided an opportunity to engage surrounding landowners and was strategically placed between two protected areas (see Attachment 4). It also contained over 90% remnant rainforest, known cassowary habitat and a watercourse. ARF purchased the property in 2006 for \$1,900 per hectare. Surrounding land was priced at between \$7,000 and \$11,000 per hectare.

The land has since been improved with significant weed treatment and non native tree removal and will now be offered for sale with a single development right for a dwelling and >90% of the land under a conservation covenant or Nature Refuge through Queensland EPA.

Negotiations with neighbours continue for connectivity to nearby Maria Creek and protected areas through stewardship programs.

### **Funding for Salient improvement**

A number of salients were identified early in the project. In particular the Department of Defence land at Tully and Cowley Beach were known cassowary habitats. The relationship between the ARF Chair and the Chief of Army was instrumental in allowing ARF to undertake research into cassowary behaviour in these locations.

Two other salients were identified pre Cyclone Larry. The Singh corridor at Bingil Bay was subject to a scientific assessment by Biotropics and it was noted that two important creeks flowed through 250+ hectares of bananas abutting the World Heritage Area. The property was also listed in the Cassowary Corridor Report 2006. Negotiations commenced in 2005 and fell over in 2006 when, following Cyclone Larry the owners sold the property. The new owner is prepared to consider conservation works, but does not take possession until October

2007. Some remedial pig trapping has been undertaken on this property to maintain contact.

The other salient is likewise well located near Maria Creek at El Arish with excellent remnant vegetation. The owner is currently a Rainforest Guardian with ARF, having purchased and covenanted a block previously. However, this land is not subject to a local government rate rebate and differences in conservation principles between the owner and the Council have soured any chance of getting covenants on this land at present.

This situation is indicative of the mistrust in the farming community of government and the conservation sector. Clearly, the suspicion from past conflicts between local conservation group C4 and many in the Mission Beach farming and commercial community linger on.

In recognition of this situation, ARF moved to take on a third salient, which has provided an opportunity to deliver a multitude of conservation outcomes and build trust in the local community.

ARF believes that these actions actually prove that the model proposed in the Cassowary Conservation Project work.

This salient was one hectare of bequeathed land on the edge of the National Park at Garners Beach, which was being used by QPWS and the local community as a cassowary rehabilitation centre. ARF agreed to take over the centre, provide a caretaker manager (who would also work as an extension officer in the local area), improve the treatment (veterinary) and recovery areas; establish a research office, volunteer base and education facility.

The facility was damaged by Cyclone Larry and in the period to June 2006 ARF restored the facility to operational status, treated many sick and injured cassowary and returned most to the wild.

It is now a centre for volunteer training, research and community education.

### **Revegetation of key land in the corridor**

ARF has entered into a contract with the Mission Beach Conservation Committee to conduct revegetation works on land within the corridor, starting with the ARF Leo Road block, prior to resale. Local conservation groups will be encouraged to participate in the project and appropriate revegetation skills will be passed on to the community by qualified ARF reveg staff.

### **Community Education**

A significant investment has been made in developing and presenting cassowary and world heritage values through this sub program. The ARF has opened an interpretative centre and retail shop in a high traffic area of Cairns and has specifically written a range of publications and fact sheets, sourced and stocked cassowary and world heritage posters, prints and information and has developed a web based cassowary education kit for free distribution to all schools.

### **Fundraising**

The ARF has undertaken a range of fundraising activities to encourage the private sector – both corporations and individuals to contribute to cassowary recovery. The Foundation has raised in excess of \$80,000 from various fundraising activities:

### **CONCLUSION**

THE ARF commissioned an independent assessment of the performance of the Foundation in delivering the Cassowary conservation Project. This is attached at Schedule 1. In summary, the report concludes that the ARF's performance in delivering milestones has achieved the provisions of the contract; has delivered the majority of the specified outcomes and in addition, has exceeded their mandate through additional positive activities.

Particular accomplishments achieved by the ARF during the contract period include;

- Built up a substantial degree of trust among residents in the cassowary corridor, in a fractured and suspicious community;
- Completed an update of the Cassowary Corridor report in consultation with other agencies;
- Worked in partnership with QPWS to manage and upgrade a cassowary hospital at Garners Beach;
- Identified six salients in the cassowary corridor;
- Worked in partnership with CSIRO to jointly fund important cassowary research;
- Responded swiftly to implement a feral pig program in critical cassowary habitat following habitat destruction in the wake of Cyclone Larry;
- Raised over \$80,000 from the private sector to support cassowary recovery;
- Acquired 60 ha of essential cassowary habitat at Maria Creek; and

## CASSOWARY CONSERVATION PROJECT

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- Appointed a community conservation officer to work with local communities in the Mission Beach areas.
- Developed a range of educational and interpretative materials.

A great deal has been achieved in the short timeframe of the contract, given the overall community cynicism of projects and programs that had failed or had met with resistance in the past.

Observations in comparing ARF with other conservation organisations<sup>1</sup> are that there are key elements that make ARF successful, namely;

- ARF's ability to effectively communicate with landowners and the community;
- The success with bringing the conservation message to the wider community and the corporate sector (e.g. through Give a Tree for Life program, Adopt a Square, Rainforest Guardians and Protectors);
- ARF's success in procuring significant investment in conservation from private individuals ;
- ARF's success in drawing sponsorship and financial support from corporations; and
- ARF's ability to manage a diverse range of programs with low overhead expenses.

**SCHEDULE 1**

**EVALUATION OF  
CASSOWARY CONSERVATION PROJECT (CCP)**

**COMPILED FOR  
THE AUSTRALIAN RAINFOREST FOUNDATION**

May 2007

The Porchester Consulting Group

In association with

Fred Marchant and Associates

### CASSOWARY CONSERVATION PROJECT (CCP)

#### Synopsis of the Project

The basis of the CCP is to develop a model approach to the recovery of the Cassowary, by involving Australian, State and Local governments, local landowners, community groups, conservation NGO (ARF) and the private sector.

This was articulated in 2000 through the Cassowary Corridor Report, prepared by the Wet Tropics Management Authority (WTMA)<sup>2</sup>. The update of this report with 2004/05 vegetation and regional ecosystem mapping and other science was the guide for the delivery of the CCP contract<sup>3</sup>. The contract allocated funding and outcomes to seven sub programs, viz:

1. The updating of the Cassowary Corridor Report to identify private land that would provide habitat linkages to protected land for the cassowary, in a north-south coastal corridor between Cardwell and Cairns. This has been referred to as the “Cassowary Corridor.” ARF received some previous Commonwealth funding in 2000/01 to commence a revolving land fund in this corridor;
2. Conducting DNA research on cassowary dung to better understand their range and distribution;
3. Land acquisition and landowner stewardship payments to secure and improve habitat linkages between protected areas and in linkages identified in the updated Cassowary Corridor Report;
4. Identifying and securing ‘salients’ – areas of high conservation value for cassowaries which exceed the minimum cassowary requirements for food sources and are protected from predation through purchasing, leasing or stewardship incentives;
5. Undertaking revegetation to improve habitat and habitat linkages;
6. Community education programs to improve the understanding of the cassowary’s plight; and
7. Marketing and fundraising to engage the private sector in supporting conservation of the cassowary.

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<sup>2</sup> *The Cassowary Corridor Report 2000*, described a process for establishing secure cassowary habitat through a mix of land acquisition and landowner payments (stewardship)

<sup>3</sup> Biotropica Pty. Ltd. (Tucker, N. et al) was engaged to update the report and produced *A Framework to establish lowland habitat linkages for the Southern Cassowary between Cairns and Cardwell* – This is known as the 2005 Cassowary Corridor report

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### Contract Delivery

#### *Project Coordination*

ARF provided a strategic business plan to DEH and WTMA within 12 weeks of signing the agreement. The plan is detailed and professionally prepared. It describes processes and policies for implementing the contract outcomes.

During 2005, management of the contract was handled by the ARF CEO with support from one full time staff member and a number of outside contractors. At this time WTMA provided significant office and administrative assistance to ARF.

#### *Comment*

**An assessment has been conducted of the ARF's capacity to deliver conservation outcomes by reviewing of a number of other programs prior to their delivery of the CCP.**

**The ARF established Operation Big Bird in 1999 and purchased, covenanted and resold two rainforest blocks at Garners Beach.**

**They then launched two successful programs – 'Give A Tree For Life' and 'Adopt a Cassowary' in 2001-02.**

**In 2002 ARF received \$1 million from the Wet Tropics Ministerial Council to undertake a revolving fund in the Daintree (DV1). The QLD EPA Audit of the Daintree V1 contract concluded satisfactory of the ARF's performance. In addition, a review of the files pertaining to the revolving of two Garners Beach blocks in the Cassowary Corridor (2002) leads to the conclusion that the ARF's private sector approach to the delivery of outcomes is extremely cost effective.<sup>4</sup>**

#### *Desktop update of the Cassowary Corridor 2000 report*

The choice of Tucker, N. at Biotropica Pty Ltd to update the report appears to be both well received by end users and perceived as professional by peers. The report was completed by the ARF in October 2005 however the final WTMA peer review and subsequent public version release was delayed due to the unfortunate illness of WTMA's Chief Scientist.

#### *Comment*

**The report provided a successful and practical blueprint for the delivery of the contract, with the full support of WTMA and QPWS and developed in parallel with the Recovery Plan for the Southern Cassowary (Cwth).**

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<sup>4</sup> I reviewed the satisfactory QLD EPA Audit of the Daintree V1 contract, the files pertaining to the revolving of two Garners Beach blocks in the Cassowary Corridor (2002) and the administrative costs of the ARF and the FNQ NRM Board from their Annual Reports.

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### *DNA Testing*

A proposal from CSIRO and QPWS to undertake DNA testing on cassowary dung was discussed with ARF at a Cassowary Recovery Team meeting in 2005. ARF agreed to provide funding of \$15,000 from this contract to CSIRO to be completed by December 2005 on the basis of contributions from QPWS and CSIRO.

CSIRO and QPWS were unable to secure funding for the original concept and a revised testing program was devised in 2006. ARF signed a new contract with CSIRO in April 2007 and also agreed to allocate an additional \$15,000 to enable the revised project to proceed.

### *Establish strategically located salients*

The concept of salients - parcels of land that are strategically located and of particular geographic or environmental importance - fits well with the cassowary recovery strategies of identifying areas of high conservation value - cassowary habitat. They are particularly important where they provide for expansion through private property to form connectivity with other protected areas.

The ARF's focus for improving cassowary habitat is the proven provision of geographic connectivity to ensure a safe and continuous habitat for the bird. This is a key strategy of the updated Cassowary Corridor Report 2005 and the ARF business plan.

The contract calls for the establishment of a minimum of five salients. It does not determine what happens once the salients have been identified. The ARF business plan however does identify using salients as nodes from which to expand cassowary recovery programs and in particular by habitat acquisition and landowner incentives on adjoining properties.

At the time of this report it is confirmed that ARF has identified six salients. The major salient is the subject of a stewardship program directly aimed at cassowary recovery and community education via stewardship expenditure (Garners Beach Cassowary Facility) and another has been secured by acquisition of Lot 5 Leo Road, El Arish.

Interviews have been conducted with the ARF's Community Conservation Officer at Garners Beach and key QPWS staff in the area.

### *Comment*

**Feedback from the above parties reveals that a good working relationship has been established with the key players involved in cassowary recovery and landowner incentives. ARF has committed both CCP and its own private sector funds to support a coordinated approach. The ARF is also working with FNQ NRM to coordinate stewardship programs run by both organisations.**

## CASSOWARY CONSERVATION PROJECT

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### *Land acquisition and landowner incentives*

ARF files have been reviewed and it is established that the ARF has in place a landowner incentive scheme, details of which were circulated to the public through advertisements and posters. The scheme fits with other stewardship programs undertaken by most Australian State and Territory revolving fund managers and covenanting schemes.<sup>5</sup>

ARF also has an agreement with the Queensland EPA to promote and support Nature Refuge and Nature Assist programs when promoting landowner incentives.

This is an integrated approach which at ground level involves the joint consideration and often joint funding of stewardship payments between ARF, Qld EPA, QPWS and FNQ NRM. Decisions are determined following discussions between the relevant parties. There is a good working relationship which allows for exchange of information and sharing of expertise. ARF sits on a number of joint committees such as the Cassowary Advisory Group, Cassowary Recovery Team and the Mission Beach Habitat Network Action Plan Committee.

More than 30 applications for stewardship support and in some cases land acquisition, were received by ARF in 2006.

Unfortunately, dealing with these was interrupted by the devastation of Cyclone Larry, which destroyed much of the forested and arable land in the region and brought to a halt any focus on conservation programs in the effected communities.

The focus of the majority of landowners post Cyclone Larry has been simply on survival and rebuilding and it is only now, some 12 months after the event, that they feel able to concentrate on conservation on private land issues.

ARF has resolved to allocate funds to land and stewardship programs:

1. Allocating \$200,000 to improve delivery of cassowary recovery and treatment at the Garners Beach Cassowary facility;
2. Acquire 60 hectares of critical cassowary habitat at El Arish. This is listed as a salient and will form the basis of a node to extend north east to the Maria Creek and east to National Park. I have viewed a report on this land prepared by Biotropica which endorses the acquisition as being complementary with the Cassowary Corridor 2005 Report. The report also provides scientific advice on management and possible resale options<sup>6</sup>;
3. Approve up to \$40,000 to support a wildlife fencing project adjacent to the World Heritage Area and Nature Refuge on private land in the Palmerston corridor (identified in the Cassowary Corridor Report and endorsed by QPWS);

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The conference papers for the 2007 Conservation Covenanting and Revolving Land Fund Managers Meeting in Canberra in April 2007 have been reviewed and confirm that ARF's stewardship program is in line with the methodologies used in NSW, QLD and Victoria.

<sup>6</sup> Tucker, N. Biotropica 2007; Report on the conservation values of Lot 5 Leo Road, El Arish for ARF

## CASSOWARY CONSERVATION PROJECT

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4. Deliver a \$100,000 precinct wide feral pig response immediately post Cyclone Larry, when other agencies were unable to act. This program has been particularly successful and well received by the response contractor, landowners and local community as a whole.
5. An extension of the above feral pig program with Cairns City Council as partner is currently being negotiated.

### *Revegetation Programs*

ARF has approved the expenditure of \$10,000 on revegetation at Palmerston and El Arish on two of the salient properties and will undertake this work in cooperation with the Johnstone Shire Council, QPWS, Conservation Volunteers Australia, FNQ NRM and local landowners.

ARF CEO advises that the involvement of Conservation Volunteers Australia to deliver the outcome is a policy aimed at fostering local community involvement in conservation programs.

### *Community Education*

The ARF interpretative centre and shop situated in Cairns provides a wide range of cassowary and world heritage information to the public including the publication by ARF of a wildlife book.

ARF has also developed a web based Cassowary Education Kit which is freely available to all schools from its web site.

### *Corporate and Community Fundraising*

The ARF has raised approximately \$80,000 from its promotional activities with the expenditure of \$58,000 from the contract's budget allocation. The Adopt a Cassowary program has raised \$42,000 from the private sector and the balance is from interpretative centre sales. In addition, \$30,000 has been received as a donation from a local business.

## **2.3 Assessment of Outcomes – Cassowary Project**

**Appropriateness** – *whether the project objectives and delivery is consistent with program objectives and guidance of the Maintaining Australia's Biodiversity Hotspots Program and also for the Cassowary project, the Recovery Plan for the Southern Cassowary.*

The basis on which ARF made decisions to acquire land, provide stewardship support or undertake other conservation works; or to target specific areas within the Cassowary Corridor, was made with reference to Biotropica's Cassowary Corridor Report 2005 and in discussions with other stakeholders.

The Cassowary Corridor Report 2005 used the existing Cassowary Recovery Plan, WTMA mapping, QPWS/EPA mapping and consultation. It was peer reviewed by WTMA before release to the public.

In specific instances before land acquisition or proposed stewardship payments, Biotropica was engaged to do additional site specific reports for key areas at Bingil Bay which were applicants for stewardship support. The Billy Singh stewardship investigation has been viewed. This was undertaken by Biotropica, into 250 hectares at Cedar and Stony Creeks at Bingil Bay. The Biotropica report on the proposal to acquire Lot 5 Leo Road El Arish has also been viewed.

Both site specific reports approve ARF's proposed expenditure based on conservation values linked to the Cassowary Corridor Report 2005 plus the social and financial outcomes add value to the overall objective.

### *Comment*

**The emphasis placed on community development through stewardship programs and the appointment of a Community Conservation Officer based at Mission Beach, has provided a capacity building resource to the community. This has been reinforced many times in positive feedback from local landowners.**

**In particular, the rapid introduction of a feral pig management program post Cyclone Larry was well received by landowners, when both FNQ NRM and QPWS were unable to act.**

**The project objectives and delivery are consistent with the Cassowary Recovery Plan.**

*Effectiveness – did the project achieve its stated objectives as reflected in public (Ministerial) statements about desired outcomes; project description; milestones and performance criteria in the contracts; for the Daintree Conservation Initiative, consider also the impact of the Daintree planning environment on project delivery and whether the marketing program and income generated met expectations and assisted to build capital for further land acquisition.*

The CCP contract referred to in the above statement, did not identify specific milestones or objectives. There were specific tasks to be undertaken and a time line for these tasks (specified in Annexure A to the CCP contract).

To quantify the ARF's performance with the timeline tasks required in the contract, interviews were conducted with various stakeholders with a view to gauging the overall response to the model proposed by the ARF to the plight of the cassowary (as indicated in Annexure A to the contract).

This report is drafted in April 2007, representing 80% of the contract to end date. A review of quarterly reports prepared by ARF for DEWR has been made and it is noted that seven of the eight milestones have been achieved, and the ninth has been committed through a contract with CSIRO. Certainly, all activities in which there was not an external impact or third party requirement to perform, the ARF has delivered on time.

This has been established by reference to internal documents and reports and by an audit review of ARF financial documents.

ARF has made commitments to deliver the remaining outcomes – largely stewardship payments beyond the contract end date and contracts and memoranda of understanding have been sighted for commitments beyond the contract end date. These have been assessed as being well constructed legally. ARF CEO advises that legal templates are provided at no cost by ARF directors.

## CASSOWARY CONSERVATION PROJECT

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It is also noted that ARF has committed some its own privately raised funds to supplement a number of the programs for which Commonwealth CCP funding is allocated.

ARF maintains (at page 64 of the contract):

*“The Coastal Cassowary Corridor provides an excellent opportunity to demonstrate how a major conservation task can be achieved quickly and very cost effectively. By using the skills and knowledge acquired by government agencies in similar projects (Mahogany Glider program) and linking these with the resources and energy of the wider community, this project has the potential to become a world class exemplar of community partnerships in conservation management.”*

The question is, has the partnership model proposed by ARF worked in this contract? If key success markers were achieved, then the CCP could be held up as a model for delivering threatened species recovery. The ARF was keen to explore this issue in assessing their performance.

Analysis is based on discussions with nominated participants, particularly QPWS and ARF as partners; and landowners seeking to participate through stewardship incentives. While it is probably too early to make a scientific judgement on the model, it is clear that the success factors are present, i.e. a partnership that is working at the on-the-ground level between QPWS and ARF (as well as C4, FNQ NRM and others) and a willingness of landowners to engage with ARF and seek to do ‘public good’ conservation works on private land in support of cassowary conservation. Furthermore, land has been acquired or secured on which essential cassowary habitat is protected or on which cassowary populations are known to be present.

Is limited land acquisition and stewardship by private landowners providing secure habitat and connectivity within the cassowary corridor?

The answer from analysis of this program is clearly in the positive.

Consideration has also been given to the effect on the program should the ARF withdraw. Would there be a residual capacity within the local governments and landowners to continue with the cassowary recovery program?

Again the strategy of the ARF has been to initially deliver best practice outcomes/services and leave expertise within the community. The ARF’s partnership with the Cairns City Council is particularly impressive, with the ARF agreeing to provide equipment and training in feral dog and pig management to Council and landowners so that an expert capacity remains within the community, rather than being delivered by ‘government’ and ceasing when funding expires.

The ability of the ARF to raise private sector funds in support of the cassowary program is also impressive. Over \$40,000 has been raised through the ‘Adopt a Cassowary’ program and \$30,000 in sponsorship from local traders in the Tully area.

The CCP has eight sub programs (see page 63 of the contract) and these form an integrated approach to the recovery of the cassowary in line with the current recovery plan (Cwth).

### ***Comment***

**There is a distinct benefit to the Commonwealth in having ARF deliver the contract outcomes. ARF is able to add value through efficient and low cost administration and the provision of additional funding from the private sector.**

**Efficiency** – *are there other ways to achieve the same outputs/objectives having regard to other community based conservation projects in the region and timescale (i.e. the project was initiated ahead of regional NRM plan and investment strategy and the Biodiversity Hotspots guidelines); Were the projects able to build partnerships with key agencies and stake holders (eg WTMA, EPA, Cassowary recovery team, Daintree Community to coordinate delivery of biodiversity conservation outcomes.*

Are there other ways to achieve the same outputs/objectives? The key to this question is the word “same.”

The ARF is well placed, well resourced (financially and operationally from outside of government) and has the respect of many key players in the government/community delivery model.

This has resulted in considerable added benefit to the Commonwealth in the delivery of their expected outcomes.

**Comment**

**There are clearly other ways of buying similar outcomes. However none of those investigated come with the economies and efficiencies of the ARF model.**

Were the projects able to build partnerships with key agencies and stake holders (eg WTMA, EPA, Cassowary Recovery Team)?

ARF has worked successfully to establish a strong working relationship with EPA/QPWS, particularly in the Mission Beach/Garners Beach area. There is recognition by QPWS senior staff that the private sector flexibility and non-government funds raised in support of the Garners Beach Cassowary Facility salient will deliver excellent outcomes for cassowary recovery in the area.

ARF is a member of the Cassowary Recovery Team and the FNQ NRM sponsored Mission Beach Habitat Network Action Plan Committee. It also has a strong relationship with the Cairns City Council pest management team and is currently working with the Council on cassowary threat reduction strategies. ARF attends Cassowary Advisory Group meetings and is working with C4 to provide funding to a range of their proposed cassowary projects.

ARF has also developed a good working relationship with Conservation Volunteers Australia.

**Comment**

**The findings of this report suggest that the CCP project was not the catalyst to good partnering as this existed already within the network dealing with cassowary recovery.**

**What the funding did however, was to enable greater on-ground outcomes and provide leverage, for example, when local government or QPWS funds were jointly applied to various project elements.**

**Transferability** – *can the approach used to implement the project/s be applied to other regions*

The key success drivers for the CCP were:

- the combination of a number of partners and stakeholders;
- a combination of funding sources;
- the raising of community awareness of the cassowary; and
- the raising of private sector funds.

The model which underpins the CCP is a partnership approach to conservation on private land. In fact, the ARF model is similar in some ways to the Queensland EPA's Nature Assist model, in that it seeks to involve and encourage conservation on private land through stewardship.

The key difference however is the flexibility in delivery through a NGO and the allocation of funding to marketing and education.

The ARF argues strongly that education and marketing raise the issue of the cassowary in the media and that resources directed to corporate and individual support of conservation provides significant added value to the project. This is apparent here but more so in the Daintree project.

***Comment***

**If these drivers and methodologies are used in other regions and delivered by an organisation with the expertise of the ARF, then the model proposed and delivered through the CCP could be successfully applied in other areas.**

**AUSTRALIAN RAINFOREST FOUNDATION  
CASSOWARY CONSERVATION PROJECT  
INCOME AND EXPENDITURE STATEMENT  
FOR THE PERIOD 1 MARCH 2005 TO 30 JUNE 2007**

<b>Details</b>	<b>Actual</b>	<b>Approved Budget</b>	<b>Variance</b>
<b>Income</b>			
Grant Funds	1,000,000	1,000,000	-
Interest	62,985	-	62,985
<b>Total Income</b>	<u>1,062,985</u>	<u>1,000,000</u>	<u>62,985</u>
<b>Expenditure</b>			
Administration	183,252	200,000	(16,748)
Research: Update North-South Cassowary Corridor Report (2000)	37,958	32,727	5,231
Establish 'Salient Areas'	173,235	316,818	(143,583)
DNA Testing and Research	10,000	28,182	(18,182)
Land Acquisition and Landowner Incentives	288,153	300,000	(11,847)
Revegetation Programs	-	20,000	(20,000)
Community Education	46,987	47,273	(286)
Corporate and Community Fundraising	57,167	55,000	2,167
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<u>796,752</u>	<u>1,000,000</u>	<u>(203,248)</u>
<b>Surplus / (Deficit) of Income over Expenditure</b>	<u>266,233</u>		
<b>Represented by -</b>			
<b>Cash at Bank as at 30 June 2007</b>	<u>266,233</u>		

**AUSTRALIAN RAINFOREST FOUNDATION  
CASSOWARY CONSERVATION PROJECT  
SCHEDULE OF PURCHASED ASSETS  
FOR THE PERIOD 1 MARCH 2005 TO 30 JUNE 2007**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Purchase Price</b>	<b>Budget Amount</b>
Land: Lot 5 Leo Rd, Maria Creek	282,173	300,000
<b>Total</b>	<u>282,173</u>	<u>300,000</u>

**AUSTRALIAN RAINFOREST FOUNDATION  
CASSOWARY CONSERVATION PROJECT  
SCHEDULE OF ASSETS AND LIABILITIES  
FOR THE PERIOD 1 MARCH 2005 TO 30 JUNE 2007**

**Details**

**Assets**

Cash	266,233
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**Total Assets**

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266,233

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**Liabilities:**

*Other Liabilities: Committed Grant Funds	266,233
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**Total Liabilities**

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266,233

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\* This represents funds that have been committed to complete projects in accordance with the grant agreement.

**AUSTRALIAN RAINFOREST FOUNDATION**

**NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE CASSOWARY CONSERVATION PROJECT GRANT ACQUITTAL  
STATEMENTS  
FOR THE PERIOD 1 MARCH 2005 TO 30 JUNE 2007**

**NOTE 1 BASIS OF PREPARATION**

These grant acquittal statements, being a special purpose financial report of the Australian Rainforest Foundation have been prepared solely to satisfy the grant acquittal requirements of the Commonwealth of Australia.

The information reported in these grant acquittal statements is consistent with the annual statutory financial reports from which it is derived and upon which have recieved unqualified audit opinions.

These grant acquittal statements are prepared on a cash basis from the records of the company. They are based on historic costs and do not take into account changing money values or current valuations of non-current assets.

## INDEPENDENT AUDIT REPORT

To the Commonwealth of Australia

### Scope

We have audited the attached Grant Acquittal Statements, being a special purpose financial report, of the Australian Rainforest Foundation for the period 1 March 2005 to 30 June 2007 as set out on pages 1 to 4. The Board of the Australian Rainforest Foundation is responsible for the Grant Acquittal Statements. We have conducted an independent audit of the Statements in order to express an opinion on them to The Commonwealth of Australia.

The attached Statements have been prepared as required by clause 9 of grant agreement between the Australian Rainforest Foundation and the Commonwealth of Australia. We disclaim any assumption of responsibility for any reliance on this report or on the Statements to which it relates to any entity other than the Australian Rainforst Foundation and the Commonwealth of Australia or for any purpose other than that for which it was prepared.

Our audit has been conducted in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. Our procedures included the re-performance of the calculations in the Grant Acquittal Statements and examination, on a test basis, of evidence supporting the figures used. These procedures have been undertaken to form an opinion whether, in all material respects, the Grant Acquittal Statements are presented fairly in accordance with the funding agreement.

The audit opinion expressed in this report has been formed on the above basis.

### Audit Opinion

In our opinion,

The attached grant acquittals are a true and fair account of the financial transactions and are based on proper accounts and records;

Signed at Cairns this 24th day of October 2007.



WHK GREENWOODS (Cairns)  
Chartered Accountants



JASON TAYLOR  
Partner

**AUSTRALIAN RAINFOREST FOUNDATION  
CASSOWARY CONSERVATION PROJECT  
FOR THE PERIOD 1 MARCH 2005 TO 30 JUNE 2007**

**CONTENTS**

<b>INDEX</b>	<b>PAGE</b>
Income and Expenditure Statement	1
Schedule of Assets	2
Schedule of Other Assets and Liabilities	3
Notes to and Forming Part of the Grant Acquittal Statements	4
Independent Audit Report to the Commonwealth of Australia	5

JT:JM  
24 October 2007

The Directors  
Australian Rainforest Foundation  
PO Box 3006  
CAIRNS QLD 4870

Dear Sir/Madam,

**CASSOWARY CONSERVATION PROJECT: GRANT AUDIT FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 30 JUNE 2007**

We have completed the audit of the above program and advise we have issued an unqualified audit opinion. We also wish to advise that in our opinion and based on our audit testing we believe the Foundation has in place adequate financial controls to accurately record income and expenditure in accordance with the requirements of the grant conditions so as to enable the audit to be undertaken. The Foundation has allocated the residual funds at 30 June 2007 in accordance with the grant conditions and is holding these funds in its Trust Account for future payment of liabilities that will arise during the completion of the project.

Yours faithfully  
**WHK GREENWOODS (CAIRNS)**  
ABN 29 808 793 806



**J TAYLOR**  
PARTNER

Department of Environment and Water Resources

## **CERTIFICATE**

Relating to clause 9.3 of the Grant Agreement – Cassowary Conservation Project

*I certify that in accordance with the terms of the Grant Agreement between the Commonwealth of Australia and the Australian Rainforest Foundation for \$1,000,000 for Cassowary Conservation;*

1. All Funding received was spent for the purpose of the Project and in accordance with this Agreement and the Australian Rainforest Foundation has complied with this Agreement;
2. Salaries and allowances paid to persons involved in the Project are in accordance with any applicable award or agreement in force under any relevant law on industrial or workplace relations;
3. Unspent funds have been allocated against legally binding contracts beyond the Project end date and;
4. An asset, being rural land at Lot 5 Leo Road, Maria Creek has been acquired with the Funds and requirements of the Funding Agreement with the Commonwealth have been complied with in respect to the Asset.



**Roger Phillips**  
CEO