

MEDIA RELEASE

NEW HEAD FOR REEF AND RAINFOREST RESEARCH IN NORTH QUEENSLAND

The Reef and Rainforest Research Centre Chairman, Richard Ireland, today announced Sheriden Morris as the Centre's new Managing Director. Sheriden is a north Queenslander with a background in local agriculture with extensive experience of scientific research and management in marine and coastal systems. She will guide the Centre's management of a \$20m per year tropical environmental research program called the Marine and Tropical Science Research Facility (MTSRF). This program is an initiative of the Australian Government, designed to support both conservation and sustainable use of the reef and rainforest in North Queensland.

Ms Morris has been the Research Director for the Centre since its formation last year, and prior to this she played a central role in designing the MTSRF program, which is managed by the Centre on behalf of the Department of Environment and Water Resources. She was instrumental in creating the partnership of 300 scientists and 14 institutions that are now working on the MTSRF program. Ms. Morris said, "The key issues for effective environmental research are to ensure the users of the research and research providers are involved in all stages of its development and delivery, to ensure there is education and opportunity for students in the region, and a practical program of research to ensure the investment of public funds is worthwhile and research is world-class."

Mr Ireland said, "The Reef and Rainforest Research Centre Board includes experts from major industry, key research providers and management stakeholders of North Queensland's rainforest and reef. We consider Sheriden Morris's strategic thinking and practical management skills, along with her broad experience in government and private business has been and will continue to be very valuable to the Centre."

James Cook University and the Australian Institute of Marine Science, two of the major research organisations involved in the MTSRF, have welcomed Sheriden Morris's appointment.

Ms Morris replaces Dr Russell Reichelt who was recently appointed Chairman of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority. Mr Ireland thanked Dr Reichelt for his work with the Centre and also his contribution to the MTSRF Interim Board that preceded the establishment of the Centre.

The MTSRF is part of the Commonwealth Environmental Research Facilities Program (CERF), of which \$40 million has been allocated to develop collaborative, public benefit research between Australia's best tropical environmental researchers to support the conservation and sustainable use of North Queensland's environmental assets - the Wet Tropics Rainforests, the Great Barrier Reef and the connecting coastal regions.

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