Australian Government
Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts

Media Release
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Climate change and local councils

Scientists will this morning brief local government mayors and CEOs about the effects of climate change in Far North Queensland.

Reef and Rainforest Research Centre (RRRC) Senior Scientist Dr Suzanne Long will co-host an Essential Science Breakfast Briefing at the Far North Queensland Regional Organisation of Councils (FNQ ROC) meeting in Cairns today.

“Climate change poses enormous planning and policy problems for local governments,” Suzanne said. “Through regular briefings like these we aim to help keep our local councils well-informed and able to deal with these issues as they arise.”

Mr Tony Mooney, former Townsville Mayor and a current member of the Premier’s Council on Climate Change, will also co-host the briefing, interpreting the implications of the science from a local government point of view.

“I saw around one hundred scientific presentations at the annual Marine and Tropical Sciences Research Facility Conference in Townsville last month,” said Tony, “and the likely consequences of climate change in North Queensland for local councils really stood out for me as a big issue.”

The Reef and Rainforest Research Centre is the non-profit, North Queensland-based company that administers the Australian Government’s $40 million Marine and Tropical Sciences Research Facility (MTSRF). The MTSRF funds around 300 scientists to research solutions for many of the most serious environmental problems facing north Queensland.

At the briefing, Dr Long will also announce that the RRRC will be working with the Antarctic CRC and the Queensland Office of Climate Change to bring a national series of free seminars and workshops about sea level rise to North Queensland. The seminars aim to train coastal infrastructure owners, planners, engineers and policymakers to set appropriate design codes for new infrastructure, assess the risk to existing infrastructure and set prudent guidelines for coastal developments and infrastructure maintenance.

The seminars are scheduled for 23 June in Cairns and 24 June in Townsville, with a follow-up workshop in Cairns on 8-9 September 2009. For further information, visit http://www.sealevelrise.info/

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