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Planning for the impacts of sea level rise in North Queensland

The Reef and Rainforest Research Centre (RRRC) is bringing a national series of information seminars to Cairns and Townsville to enable policy makers, planners and owners of coastal infrastructure understand and plan for the impacts of sea level rise.

The seminars, to be delivered jointly by RRRC, the Australian Government's Office of Climate Change and the Antarctic Climate & Ecosystems Cooperative Research Centre, will summarise the present state of sea level science and describe the method of incorporating this knowledge into risk-based planning.

The RRRC 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.

According to the RRRC's managing director, Sheriden Morris, MTSRF-funded researchers have produced the latest and most detailed climate change forecast for North Queensland, some of which will be presented at the seminars.

"Much of the population in North Queensland, including many island communities in the Torres Strait, will feel the impacts of rising sea levels, and infrastructure owners, local councils and other stakeholders need to be assessing the risks and planning for the future accordingly," added Sheriden.

"These free public seminars are a chance for people to find out what's likely to happen in their local area, and what they should be doing about it."

The free, public 2½ hour seminars will be held in Cairns tomorrow on 23 June, and Townsville on 24 June. Sheriden encouraged everyone with a vested interest in coastal infrastructure to attend. "Councils, engineers, planners, marine tourism operators, and policy makers in particular should take this opportunity," she said.

For further information and to register for the free seminar, go to http://www.sealevelrise.info or call RRRC on (07) 4050 7400.

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