

## **Media Release**

For Immediate Release

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### **Researchers, Industry, Government to Review Status of North Queensland Ecosystems**

Many of Australia's leading environmental scientists, mathematicians and social scientists will converge in Townsville this week to review the state of North Queensland's key ecosystems. The researchers are developing new ways for Australia to look after its priceless natural assets such as the Wet Tropics rainforests and Great Barrier Reef which are under pressure from the effects of climate change, increased use and rapid economic growth in the region.

The inaugural Research Synthesis Conference of the Marine and Tropical Sciences Research Facility (MTSRF) will be held 16-20 April. The MTSRF is a \$40 million Australian Government initiative aimed at researching and protecting the Great Barrier Reef, Wet Tropics and the Torres Strait.

This first meeting brings together a unique combination of experts and will highlight impacts of and responses to climate change on tropical rainforests and the reef, the impacts of water quality on the reef, the changes measured since the introduction of the Great Barrier Reef Zoning Plan, and the impacts of increasing population pressure on our World Heritage listed environments. The Australian Government's Marine and Tropical Sciences Research Facility is represented in North Queensland by the Reef and Rainforest Research Centre (RRRC).

RRRC Managing Director, Russell Reichelt, said the quality of the scientific research carried out by the MTSRF is very important if we are to solve the big environmental questions, such as how Australian communities and industry can adapt to trends in climate change that are already having an effect on our reefs and tropical rainforests.

The MTSRF has also attracted \$10 million in partnership funding in its first year from research institutions including James Cook University, the Australian Institute of Marine Science, CSIRO, The University of Queensland and Griffith University.

“The results of MTSRF research must be credible and adopted by both industry and government if we are to address our environmental challenges. Key users of MTSRF research have played a major role in developing the overall research program and will be involved in the Conference to provide the input we need to ensure our research provides the answers that management needs”, Reichelt said.

The MTSRF aims to give Australia a clear view of the health of its tropical rainforests and catchments, reefs and the Torres Strait. It will inform both industry and government managers on the available options for improving environmental management while encouraging environmentally responsible economic development that will benefit future generations.

The Conference program is available for download from the RRRC website: <http://www.rrrc.org.au/>. Interested members of the community are invited to attend and should contact Shannon Hogan on 0427 500 332.

### **Further Information**

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