

**PRESS RELEASE FROM THE REEF AND RAINFOREST RESEARCH CENTRE**

## **Plant Surveys Are Keys to Successful Management of Lowland Rainforest.**

Please find below a summary of research results of a project conducted through the Reef and Rainforest Research Centre. This vital research will enable environmental managers to be able to make informed decisions to assist them protect the rainforests from current and future threats.

*Researchers are collecting information about biodiversity in the Wet Tropics to provide a solid foundation for studies into threats from weeds and feral animals and the impacts of climate change. Focusing on lowland rainforest, they have already completed baseline surveys of 15 of the 16 major regional ecosystems in the Tully, Murray and South Johnstone catchments. Among the communities studied were five previously unsurveyed types of rainforest. Many of the sites revealed rare and threatened species of plants, some of which had not been recorded previously in those locations.*

*Although the research concentrates on plants, it also incorporates information about birds. Both are important indicators of ecosystem health because processes that have an impact on these two groups are also likely to affect others. Plants play another valuable role as a gauge of overall biodiversity and levels of endemism in an area. They act as surrogates for other groups that might be too difficult or costly to survey.*

*The researchers are also recording occurrences of other species, including mahogany gliders, spectacled flying foxes and feral pigs. Supplementary information gathered during the surveys will be invaluable to other studies on the Wet Tropics rainforests. Together these data will provide managers with tools for assessing threatening processes and determining the effectiveness of management practices.*

This research is conducted with the support of funding from the Federal Government's Marine and Tropical Sciences Research Facility (MTRSF).

For Further information of this research or to be put in touch with the key researchers involved please contact the RRRRC on 40507400 or Sheriden Morris (Managing Director) on 0408019167.