



# Keeping Queensland's Wilderness... your choice

Protecting, promoting and restoring Queensland's wild places




## Protecting Cape York Peninsula's Heritage

Cape York Peninsula is one of the last great wild places on earth. It is a land of nature and culture in abundance, where Indigenous peoples' connection to their Country is active and strong, and where less than one percent of the land has ever been cleared. Cape York is unquestionably a candidate for future World Heritage protection. Such protection requires leadership and cooperation from the Queensland and Commonwealth Governments, and a strong community approach that supports natural and cultural values, delivers sustainable jobs, manages the impacts of development, and creates a prosperous future for the people, lands and wildlife of the region.

The next Government in Queensland should seek community agreement for declaring Areas of International Conservation Significance and concluding a working World Heritage proposal for Cape York Peninsula by the end of 2010. This must involve achieving the free, prior and informed consent of Cape York Traditional Owners. Other priorities for the protection of Cape York include:

- » Protecting Wild Rivers and expanding the network of Protected Areas in the region
- » Ensuring appropriate land and river management across the landscape
- » Supporting sustainable employment and eco-tourism opportunities to create a sustainable economic future for Cape York and its people, and
- » Supporting Traditional Owners to play an ongoing central role in securing the future conservation of Cape York

To enable these outcomes, we seek state commitments of \$10 million to expand conservation areas and Indigenous homelands; \$2 million for community outreach and education on Cape York; and for state agencies to deliver on key aspects of the Cape York Peninsula Heritage Act and parallel World Heritage processes.



## Woodlands / forests and climate change

Queensland's next Government must act to support existing woodland and forest protection and realise the huge climate benefits of protecting re-growth vegetation, by:

- » Maintaining the existing SEQ Regional Forest Agreement
- » Strengthening compliance to halt illegal clearing
- » Extending existing land clearing laws to protect ecologically sensitive areas currently at risk of clearing, such as riparian areas, wildlife corridors, endangered vegetation and land subject to erosion and degradation
- » Prohibiting the conversion of native ecosystems to carbon or biofuel plantations
- » Developing carbon schemes to encourage the voluntary protection of re-growth vegetation, and the retention of intact vegetation on Cape York's Indigenous Community Use Areas

Legal broad-scale land clearing of remnant woodlands and forests in Queensland ended in 2006. One of the most important conservation initiatives in Queensland's history, this protected 20 million hectares of woodlands and forests, many important animals and plants, and the carbon stored in these areas previously allowed Australia to meet its Kyoto greenhouse emissions targets. However, hundreds of thousands of hectares of woodland and native forest are still being cleared through illegal clearing, or via specific legal exemptions.



## Keeping our rivers wild

### Rivers are the lifeblood of our landscapes.

While many of Australia's rivers have been seriously degraded and are under threat from climate change, Queensland is fortunate to retain some of our last wild rivers, free of dams and large scale irrigation. Queensland's Wild Rivers Act 2005 is a leading framework for river conservation in Australia. Queensland's success in protecting remaining healthy rivers need to be continued and extended, to see through unmet government commitments on Cape York's wild rivers, and to permanently protect other ecologically significant river systems in western Queensland and along the eastern coast.

The next Government in Queensland must

- » Protect all of Cape York's wild rivers following extensive consultation, and recommit to delivering up to 100 full time Indigenous Wild River Ranger positions
- » Following community consultation, protect a new series of river basins under Wild Rivers laws within the next term of government. Priority rivers are:
  - » Cooper Creek, Georgina River, Diamantina River, Bulloo River, Paroo River
  - » Noosa River, Baffle Creek, Sandy Creek and Waterpark Creek, Gilbert River
- » This will require expansion of the Wild Rivers Act to create a new category of wild rivers, to explicitly recognise existing water uses, and to improve ambiguous and problematic sections in the laws
- » We are also seeking the cancellation of the Traveston Crossing, Nathan, Connors River, Urannah and Nullinga Dams



## Protecting landscapes, biodiversity and special places

Queensland's next Government should commit:

- » \$10 million to continue the State Government's Daintree buyback scheme
- » \$10 million pa to double the rest of Queensland's protected area estate by 2020, plus a 10% annual increase in funding for its proper management
- » To developing a Queensland Biodiversity Conservation Strategy to protect and maintain ecological processes and hydro-ecology across entire landscapes and tenures
- » To creating legislated recognition of Indigenous Protected Areas within the Nature Conservation Act 1992

Queensland is world-renowned for its spectacular environment. Our natural heritage defines our way of life and underpins our prosperity, but it is under threat from environmentally-destructive development and the impacts of global climate change. National Parks and other protected areas make up less than 5% of Queensland's land area, and there is no State-wide biodiversity conservation strategy in place. The future of our natural heritage depends on our ability to maintain ecological processes across the entire landscape, protect special places and dramatically expand the protected area estate. The cultural heritage of the landscape also needs protection.



## Mining and Energy

Our dependence on the mining of coal, bauxite and other minerals is outdated and damaging to our environment.

Uranium mining is a key component of the unsustainable and dangerous nuclear cycle and has direct impacts on the environment in which it takes place.

The next government in Queensland should:

- » Legislate to ban uranium exploration, mining and other aspects of the toxic nuclear industry
- » Develop a strategy for protecting landscape biodiversity and hydro-ecology on the Cape York bauxite province

# About The Wilderness Society



The Wilderness Society is a community based environmental campaigning organisation, dedicated to the protection, promotion and restoration of wilderness and natural processes across Australia. We are unaligned politically, and we use public education and empowerment, advocacy and negotiation, and research to promote and support sound conservation decisions.

During our thirty-year history, The Wilderness Society and its supporters have been instrumental in protecting much of Queensland's magnificent wilderness. Our achievements have included the protection of large parts of the Daintree Rainforest, the white sands of Shelburne Bay, the old growth forests of south-east Queensland and Fraser Island, and many wild river systems, as well as bringing an end to broad scale tree clearing in the state. We have also led the campaign for new conservation employment initiatives such as the Indigenous Wild River Ranger program being rolled out.

Under our WildCountry conservation and campaign framework, The Wilderness Society seeks to promote coordinated whole of landscape approaches to protecting and preserving wilderness areas in Far North Queensland, and other parts of the state, where biodiversity and significant wild rivers and natural places are all under threat.

