



18 November 2008

The Hon Craig Wallace MP  
Minister for Natural Resources and Water  
PO Box 15456,  
CITY EAST QLD 4002

Dear Minister

**Re Archer, Stewart and Lockhart Wild Rivers negotiation and declaration process**

As you may be aware, The Wilderness Society recently met with a group of Traditional Owners regarding the nominations of the Archer, Stewart and Lockhart Rivers on Cape York, as Wild Rivers under the *Wild Rivers Act 2005*. This meeting was facilitated by representatives from the Balkanu Cape York Development Corporation and followed earlier correspondence from a 'Wild Rivers Reference Group' of Traditional Owners, where we were asked about supporting an extension to the public submission process, which closes on 21 November 2008. I understand that these Traditional Owners made similar representations to you in Cairns around the same time.

The Wilderness Society has responded to the Wild Rivers Reference Group of Traditional Owners in a letter, a copy of which you should have received. In our response, we noted that the issues they have raised with us really require a process of dialogue, debate and negotiation with the Queensland Government. We indicated our view, based on our experience with the previous Wild River declarations in the Gulf of Carpentaria, that the most constructive way to address many of the concerns Traditional Owners have raised is to move directly to a consultation and negotiation phase after the public submission period has closed. We also indicated our support on a number of their concerns.

We have therefore conveyed our belief that it is best for the Government to maintain its current formal closing date for public submissions, which applies to other interests including ourselves. This will also ensure that all submissions can be assessed and the important phase of negotiation, immediately following the closing date for submissions, will not be delayed.

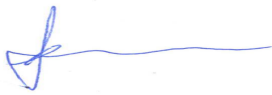
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To facilitate this process, the Wilderness Society is seeking a commitment from the Queensland Government that a phase of dialogue and negotiation, similar to the Gulf of Carpentaria Wild Rivers negotiations process, will take place commencing immediately after the closing date for public submissions. As part of this process, we also seek assurance that Traditional Owners at a community level will continue to be able to communicate their views and concerns to the Queensland Government.

While we recognise that substantial consultation work has been undertaken by your department with Traditional Owners to date, we are now also aware that some Traditional Owners feel they may still need some additional time to prepare their responses. For your information, we have indicated to the group that we would support a supplementary submission process if it was deemed necessary, for Traditional Owners at a community level to make formal written or oral representations as submissions up until Christmas.

I look forward to hearing your positive responses to the proposal that a process of dialogue and negotiation commence after 21 November, as described. Please do not hesitate to contact me on 3846 1420 or [tim.seelig@wilderness.org.au](mailto:tim.seelig@wilderness.org.au) should you require any additional information or wish to discuss the issues raised above.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a stylized 'T' followed by a horizontal line that tapers to the right.

Dr Tim Seelig  
State Campaign Manager  
The Wilderness Society (Qld)