

# Group calls for federal protection to save rainforest block

CONSERVATIONISTS are again calling for Federal Environment Minister Peter Garrett to stop a subdivision in remnant rainforest at Mission Beach, a year after he exercised little-used federal powers to protect the site.

Mission Beach residents say a land buy-back scheme and a ban on

rainforest clearing is needed in their town.

Developers want to create a 26-block sub-division on 24ha of forested land bordering World Heritage rainforest at Wongaling Beach.

Mr Garrett stopped a 40-lot subdivision on the same site last year, using the Federal Government's pow-

ers for only the second time under the 1999 Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act.

At the time, he said he was acting to protect the endangered southern cassowary.

Campaigners say the forested property, bordering the Tully-Mission Beach Rd and Rockingham Close, is

a vital cassowary corridor. Developer Wilmatt Holdings is now planning "low-density residential allotments and a conservation corridor".

Three corridors would comprise 17ha of forested land. Thirteen per cent of the property has been earmarked for clearing.

Mission Beach's C4 lobby group

spokeswoman Liz Gallie has called for the Federal Government to protect the region with a land buy-back scheme similar to the one introduced in the Daintree.

"Even four or five blocks on this land would be too much," she said.

"This is a pivotal time for Mission Beach."