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\$45k fine ruffl feathers

A DEVELOPER and the company's project manager have been fined a total of \$45,000 for a Mission Beach residential project which threatened a cassowary habitat.

Last week, Mission Beach Investment pleaded guilty in Tully Magistrates Court to illegally clearing native vegetation in October 2007 for a proposed residential development.

The project was being assessed for its likely impact on the southern cassowary, a nationally protected species.

But an investigation found the company cleared the land before a referral decision was made.

The project manager was fined \$5000 and the company fined \$40,000.

The court noted the cassowary was an iconic species at Mission Beach and the sentence should ensure developers did not endanger the survival of a unique species.

Environmental Protection Agency spokeswoman Rose Webb said the department took compliance matters seriously and reminded developers they needed to meet their obligations.

Liquid on Mission