



## Community for Coastal and Cassowary Conservation Inc.

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President: Peter Rowles

Secretary: Peter Trott

Treasurer: Maurice Franklin

### NEWSLETTER April 25, 2015

#### Important dates

Next General Meeting – Saturday May 2, 5.30pm at C4 (That is next Saturday!)

World Cassowary Day 2015, Saturday September 26, at C4, mission Beach.

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## Veteran of cassowary rescue coming to C4

A veteran of cassowary conservation advocacy for the past 20 years, Steve Russell, of Garners Beach, is to be guest speaker at our next general meeting on Saturday (May 2).

He presents some valuable insights into the successes and failures of local conservation endeavours during the turbulent years after World Heritage listing of the Wet Tropics in 1988.

Steve has many years of experience in government and not-for-profit groups ranging from medical and disability to conservation and community.

He joined C4 in 1995 and was a member of the Wet Tropics Management Authority Community Consultative Committee 1997-2003. From 1997-2000 Steve was a member of Johnstone Shire Council, before it was amalgamated with Cardwell Shire Council to form Cassowary Coast Regional Council.

Saturday's meeting starts at 5.30pm and will be followed by supper and drinks. Bring a plate and BYO.



Steve Russell (right) joins former WTMA executive director Andrew Maclean and Allen Sheather in February to celebrate the 50th meeting of the Cassowary Recovery Team and its predecessor, the Cassowary Advisory Group, which Steve chaired between 1998 and 2005.

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## A bridge too far, says management committee

News that Cassowary Coast Regional Council had voted to press ahead with a bridge across the severely erosion-prone creek mouth behind the C4 nursery propagation tunnel alarmed and disappointed the committee.

The proposed \$40,000 bridge to create a short cut in the Ulysses Link walking track instead of using the existing bridge between the Progress Hall and the Visitor Information Centre has been strenuously opposed by C4 since it was mooted in the Mission Beach Foreshore Management Plan.

But despite representations to coun-

cillors, the council voted 4-3 to go ahead with what C4 committee regards as an irresponsible waste of public money.

“The area is very fragile with deep beds of pumice lodged by past storm events,” president Peter Rowles said.

“Since Cyclone Yasi in 2011, the vegetation has started to come back to create a piece of littoral rainforest which is needed to protect the foreshore from further erosion.

“Access to construct the bridge will destroy part of this revegetation and the bridge and track will most likely need to be repaired and replaced every

time there is a major storm event — and for what point?”

After Yasi, a gaping hole extended back 10m from the creek mouth as the tide surge undermined the pumice.

Subsidence at the corner of the council caravan park on the opposite side of the creek became a public hazard two years ago which required two bays to be cordoned off.

The committee has resolved to raise public awareness of the issue because it appears from the comments of councillors that there was little appreciation of the consequences when the vote was taken at the council meeting.

# WORLDWIDE PARTY FOR BIG BIRDS

Zoos from around the world which have cassowaries in their collections are linking with Wet Tropics-based organisers of the second annual World Cassowary Day on September 26.

The Saturday event will provide a mix of high-profile guests and experts with a range of environmental displays, food and entertainment in the park-like setting around C4's environmental centre at Mission Beach.

Terrain NRM will hold a threatened species forum as part of the event so that community groups, traditional owners, scientists, businesses and government can share knowledge and develop better solutions for the recovery of threatened Wet Tropics species.

Kuranda conservationist Paul Webster, who steered the event into being last year, said the inspiration was the fact that so few people in southern



Paul Webster, Peter Rowles and Tony O'Malley after the first planning meeting of World Cassowary Day 2015. - picture Yvonne Cunningham

Australia knew anything about cassowaries.

"We know cassowaries are on the brink," he said. "But we really hope that if more people know about them, the threat of extinction can be pushed back."

C4 president Peter Rowles said a World Cassowary Day 2015 group was developing the program which would include a presentation by a high profile conservation figure.

"We want it to be a catalyst for con-

certed action to save one of our most valuable creatures," he said.

Peter said the fruit-eating birds, whose numbers have plummeted since clearing for agriculture and housing began, are critical to the survival of many rainforest tree species with big seeds dispersed only by cassowaries.

As well as being a keystone ecological species, the Southern Cassowary is an important attraction for visitors to the region. Its impressive size (up to 2m), combined with its black plumage, blue and red neck and wattles and a distinctive 'horn' (casque) make the cassowary a memorable sight.

The Southern Cassowary's range in Australia is limited to the rainforests between Townsville and the Daintree, with Mission Beach being one of the most likely places for people to see a cassowary in the wild.

If you would like to help, please contact C4 on 07 40685362 or 0429 179152.



## Changing face of Lot 66

Guinea grass, dead trees and debris have been disappearing from the edges of Lot 66 thanks to the combined efforts of C4 members, Green Army and Break Thru workers, and contractors funded by grants secured by C4.

These pictures by Jeff Larson show (top) the work getting under way on the north-east corner.

The bottom picture shows the finished landscaping with grass cleared up to the edge of the existing forest. Most of the ground has now been replanted with native species from the C4 nursery.

Landscaping is also under way near the end of Mission Circle where a scaffold is being built to show prospective buyers the outlook from floor level of a house within the building envelope.

It is hoped the 25ha parcel will soon be sold as covenanted nature reserve and the funds which were invested in Lot 66 recycled for purchase of other critical cassowary corridor or habitat.