

NERP Tropical Ecosystems Hub Project Factsheet

Relative social and economic values of residents and tourists in the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area

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Project summary

The Wet Tropics World Heritage Area is famous for its wildlife, biodiversity and natural beauty, but none of these important assets are bought or sold in the market place, so none are explicitly 'valued' with a price. Recognising that absence of price does not mean absence of value, this project seeks to improve our understanding of the importance of these non-market 'values' to a variety of different stakeholders. How important is a beautiful view or a cassowary to the community, to tourists and to the tourism industry? How would people feel if there were fewer (or more) opportunities to enjoy those beautiful views or to observe these charismatic birds?

Why this research is needed

Today's business leaders and policy makers need information that helps them deal with complex problems affecting those living in and around World Heritage areas. They may need to answer questions such as:

- Would residents be happier, and/or would more tourists come to the region if there were more opportunities to enjoy a region's non-market values?
- What losses would different stakeholder groups suffer if development eroded some of the region's values?
- How are preferences and priorities for these non-market values likely to change in the future?

This project will provide vitally important information that will help people in and around the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area (WTWHA) answer questions such as these. It will also help to improve methods for assessing non-market values (for use throughout the world).

Research-user focus

The project will deliver outcomes that are useful to a range of stakeholders including local, state and Australian Government bodies, the tourism sector, conservation planners and academics. Identified research users include the Wet Tropics Management Authority, Terrain NRM, and Alliance for Sustainable Tourism.

Research Provider:



Find this project at www.nerptropical.edu.au
Theme 3: Managing for Resilient Tropical Systems
Program 12: Managing for Resilience in Rainforests
Project: 12.3



How important is a beautiful view...



...or a Cassowary? The WTWHA has many significant non-market values.

Outcomes

This project will:

- Improve our understanding of the importance of many of the WTWHA's non-market values to a variety of different stakeholder groups.
- Increase the capacity of researchers, industry, agency managers and planners to assess non-market values associated with World Heritage Areas – in Australia's Wet Tropics and throughout the rest of the world.

Information generated from this project will thus provide a range of stakeholders including policy-makers, researchers and the tourism sector with the tools and the information needed to help assess conservation, management and marketing priorities and to make predictions about the way in which changes in population and tourist numbers might affect those priorities.

For more information about this project, contact:
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Photos taken in Zoe Falls, Hinchinbrook Island & Mission Beach by David Souter