



Conserving threatened wet tropics vegetation

NQ Dry Tropics aims to improve threatened ecological communities (TECs) between Paluma Range and the coast.

This project targets three TECs:

- Broad leaf tea-tree woodlands;
- Littoral rainforest (Beach scrub); and
- Lowland tropical rainforest.

These TECs provide habitat for two endangered species, the Southern cassowary and Mahogany glider.

NQ Dry Tropics is delivering this project by working with landholders to protect and improve TECs on their property.

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AT A GLANCE

FULL TITLE

Empowering Communities to Conserve and Connect Threatened Vegetation in the Wet Tropics

LOCATION

Black River catchment

TIMEFRAME

June 2024 - June 2028

FUNDER

Australian Government Natural Heritage Trust

LEARN MORE

Scan the QR code or visit our website to learn more.

www.nqdrytropics.com.au/project/conserving-threatened-vegetation/



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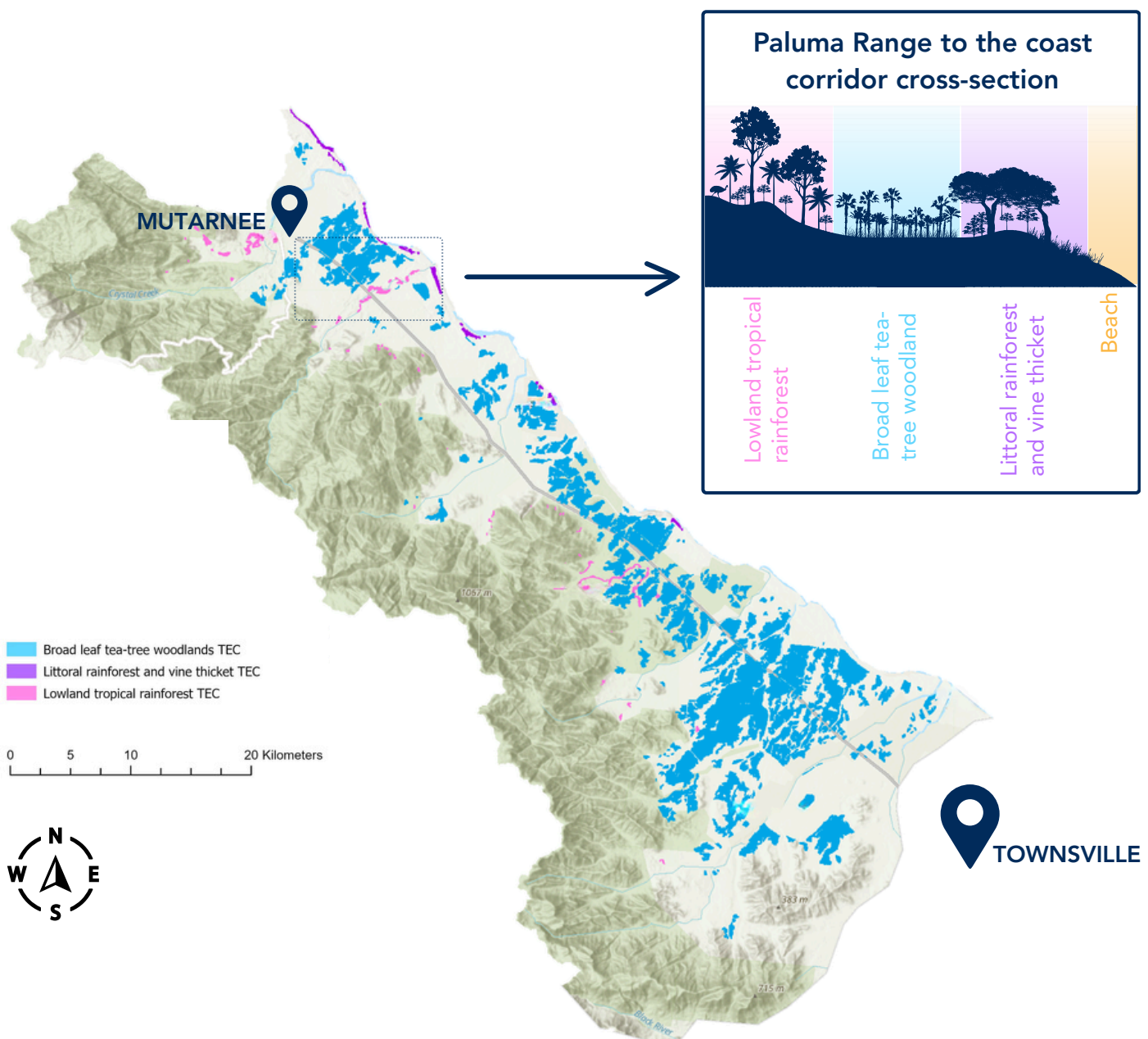
Australian Government

This project is funded by the Australian Government Natural Heritage Trust and delivered by NQ Dry Tropics, a member of the Commonwealth Regional Delivery Partners panel.

Threatened ecological communities between Paluma Range and the coast

Ecological communities are naturally occurring groups of plants and animals. Historically, the ecological communities from Paluma Range to the coast supported biodiversity by providing a connected corridor for wildlife, including the Southern cassowary and Mahogany glider. Increased human activity has fragmented this invaluable habitat corridor, threatening the existence of these ecological communities and the species that rely on them.

The Conserving Threatened Wet Tropics Vegetation project aims to improve the condition, extent, and connectivity of threatened habitats between Paluma Range and the coast, indicated in the map below.



Threatened ecological communities

Ecological communities under threat are protected by Australia's national environment law. The threatened ecological community (TECs) list recognises the need to protect and manage what is left of these vital ecosystems.

Broad leaf tea-tree woodlands

Found on Queensland's coastal fringe in high rainfall areas, Broad leaf tea-tree (*Melaleuca viridiflora*) woodlands play a key role in managing water runoff, slowing the flow and holding water.



The Broad leaf tea-tree in flower.

Littoral rainforests and coastal vine thickets

Littoral rainforests and coastal vine thickets, commonly known as Beach scrub, protect shorelines from erosion, shelter more than 70 threatened species, and act as buffers against extreme weather.

These ancient dunes are found along the eastern shoreline of Australia. Beach scrubs are nature's supermarket, with an abundance of native foods.

Lowland tropical rainforests

Lowland tropical rainforests help regulate climate and act as a natural barrier against erosion and flooding. They absorb carbon from the atmosphere and purify water.



Habitat corridor: Paluma to the coast

These threatened ecological communities form a habitat corridor, from the range to the coast, which provide year-round native fruits, breeding grounds and shelter for native wildlife, including the Southern cassowary and Mahogany glider. Protecting this habitat corridor is crucial to their survival.

How we are helping to conserve these threatened ecological communities

These ecosystems face ongoing threats from human impact. The Conserving Threatened Wet Tropics Vegetation project is partnering with landholders to deliver on-ground work, such as weed and grazing land management, aimed at reducing impacts and helping to conserve these ecological communities.



Mahogany glider

The Mahogany glider (*Petaurus gracilis*) is an endangered gliding possum species found only in lowland forests between Ingham and Paluma Range. Its presence indicates a healthy ecosystem with connected habitats.

The estimated remaining population of 1500-2000 relies on Broad leaf tea-tree woodlands for shelter and food such as nectar, pollen, and insects.

Mahogany gliders have lost almost half their original habitat to development and agriculture, meaning efforts to conserve Broad leaf tea-tree woodland is more important than ever.

Recording Mahogany glider sightings

The Mahogany glider is an elusive creature, rarely seen on the ground or during the day, so NQ Dry Tropics has set up a number of monitoring cameras to gather data on the population around Paluma Range.

You can help! If you see a Mahogany glider, report it to Atlas of Living Australia via the iNaturalist AU app. Scan the QR code to report a sighting.



Southern cassowary

Once widespread across northern Queensland, the Southern cassowary (*Casuarius casuarius*) is now endangered with only a few isolated populations remaining between Townsville and Cape York. The southernmost population of cassowaries lives in and around Paluma Range.

These birds depend on tropical rainforests, Broad leaf tea-tree woodlands and Beach scrubs, which provide them with safe habitat corridors and year-round fruits.

Known as the 'rainforest gardeners', cassowaries are crucial to rainforest health, dispersing more than 250 plant species through their scat. Without cassowaries, these ecosystems would struggle to survive.

Habitat loss and fragmentation is the greatest threat to cassowaries. Key impacts include:

- urban and industrial development;
- busy roads cutting through habitat, increasing collision risk;
- dog attacks on their young;
- invasive species; and
- climate change.

Report cassowary sightings

If you spot a cassowary or see evidence of one between Ingham and Townsville, scan the QR code to report it to NQ Dry Tropics.

