



## **Media Release**

**Friday 1st March 2013**

### **Kimberley 'rainforest' listed as endangered by Australian Government**

In a first for the Kimberley, Monsoon Vine Thickets, a rainforest ecosystem, has been recognised as Nationally Endangered by the Australian government.

Environs Kimberley and Indigenous rangers from the Dampier Peninsula have worked together for several years to protect, monitor and manage Monsoon Vine Thickets (MVTs) and they welcome news that the rainforest ecosystem will now be protected under the *Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act). MVTs were nominated by Environs Kimberley in 2009 and 2010, and the 'Endangered' category listing recognises that this ecosystem faces a very high risk of extinction in the near future.

"This is the first listing of a Threatened Ecological Community in the Kimberley under the EPBC Act (1999), and recognises the national environmental significance of MVTs. Our collaborative research found that MVT's are under extreme threat from larger, hotter, more frequent fires than in the past. This threat, along with weeds, feral animals, clearing and development pressures are among the reasons they have been listed," Environs Kimberley Projects Coordinator, Louise Beames said.

MVT's cover less than one tenth of 1% of the Dampier Peninsula, yet contain almost a quarter of the plant species. MVTs provide traditional food, medicine and materials for tools and other uses. They also harbour water sources. They are important for the retention of language, law and culture for Aboriginal groups along the Dampier Peninsula coast. "The risk of extinction poses great cultural and ecological loss," Louise Beames said.

"It's very important that MVTs are recognised and protected; they provide bush fruits and are homes for birds and wallabies, which are all declining from more bushfires through these areas", said Bardi Jawi Head Ranger Phillip McCarthy.

"Our people always knew that MVTs were important, but we hope this recognition will place a spotlight on them and that government departments will provide more resources and assistance (to look after them)," said Mr McCarthy.

"Broome Botanical Society (BBS) studies released in [2010](#) found that MVT patches are inter-dependent and the loss of a single patch will affect all the other patches. BBS nominated six high-conservation priority area patches: Quondong to James Price Point, Cape Borda, Reddell Point/Mission Bay, One Arm Point and Gallen. The listing should now afford these priority and all other MVT patches much greater protection and more opportunities for funded management," Louise Beames said.

"The State of Western Australia still lists the ecosystem as Vulnerable, despite recommendations in 2005 that it be upgraded to Endangered. Although the State conducted extensive consultation in 2010/11, it is yet to release a Recovery Plan for MVTs. The recognition of national environmental significance by the Australian government should be impetus for the release and funded implementation of this document." Ms Beames said.

You can find the listing and associated documents [here](#)

## Who are we?

The West Kimberley Nature Project is run by ecologist Louise Beames at Environs Kimberley and funded by Rangelands NRM WA through Caring for our Country. The State NRM WA funded the complementary practical ecology and fire history components of the project.

The Bardi Jawi and Nyul Nyul Rangers are land and sea managers who monitor, manage and protect their natural cultural resources with the support of Traditional Owners. Informed by traditional knowledge and western science, they undertake a variety of programs on land and sea, and within their communities. Rangers are funded through Working on Country, and facilitated by the Kimberley Land Council.



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Monsoon vine thickets lining the coast at Quandong point, Dampier Peninsula, Western Australia