Commonwealth of Australia

List of Threatened Ecological Communities Amendment (EC170) Instrument 2021

I, SUSSAN LEY, Minister for the Environment, pursuant to paragraph 184(a) of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*, amend the list referred to in section 181 of that Act by including in the list of threatened ecological communities in the **endangered** category:

Lowland tropical rainforest of the Wet Tropics

as described in the Schedule to this instrument.

This instrument commences the day after registration.

Sussan Ley

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Sussan Ley
Minister for the Environment

Dated .....10/11/21.....

SCHEDULE 1

Lowland tropical rainforest of the Wet Tropics

The Lowland tropical rainforest of the Wet Tropics ecological community is the assemblage of plants, animals and other organisms (i.e. all biota) that comprise a type of lowland tropical rainforest that is found in the Wet Tropics region of north Queensland. It is usually a structurally complex, evergreen tall forest with a relatively high species diversity, and a predominance of mesophyll and notophyll tree species. Vines and lianas, epiphytes and herbaceous ground layer plant species are relatively common. The ecological community also includes lowland structurally simple mesophyll vine forests such as those with a prominent layer of *Archontophoenix alexandrae* (Alexandra Palm, sometimes known as Feather Palm) and/or *Licuala ramsayi* var. *ramsayi* (Fan Palm), typically occurring on poorly drained alluvial plains. Structure and composition of the ecological community may be altered due to natural (e.g. cyclone) or human disturbance.

The ecological community is restricted to the Wet Tropics Bioregion and the Starke Coastal Lowlands subregion in the Cape York Peninsula Bioregion. The ecological community occurs mostly below 80 – 100 m above sea level (asl), with the main area of former distribution being predominantly between 0 – 40 m asl. However, it can also be found up to approximately 300 – 350 m asl where substrate and other conditions are suitable, for example on fertile basaltic lava flows in the East Palmerston and Mena Creek areas west of Innisfail. The ecological community occurs principally on fertile soils, which may be derived from alluvium, basalt, metamorphic and granitic substrates.

Generally the canopy of the ecological community comprises a diverse range of tree species, including *Aleurites moluccanus*, *Alstonia muelleriana*, *A. scholaris*, *Archontophoenix alexandrae*, *Cananga odorata*, *Cardwellia sublimis*, *Castanospermum australe*, *Dysoxylum pettigrewianum*, *Elaeocarpus grandis*, *Ficus variegata* var. *variegata*, *Licuala ramsayi* var. *ramsayi*, *Melicope elleryana*, *Myristica globosa* subsp. *muelleri*, *Nauclea orientalis* and *Syzygium tierneyanum.*

The subcanopy and shrub strata are diverse, and contain a mix of suppressed canopy species and species that thrive in the low light conditions below the canopy. Species include *Ardisia brevipedata*, *Atractocarpus fitzalanii*, *Barringtonia racemosa*, *Brombya platynema*, *Cryptocarya hypospodia*, *C. laevigata*, *Guioa acutifolia*, *Helicia nortoniana*, *Macaranga polyadenia*, *Myristica globosa* subsp. *muelleri*, *Polyscias australiana*, *Rhodamnia sessiliflora*, *Sarcopteryx martyana* and *Symplocos puberula.* Vines are a prominent structural component and are extremely diverse, with the families Vitaceae, Menispermaceae and Apocynaceae most prominent.

The ground layer is typically very sparse, and includes species such as *Bowenia spectabilis*, *Benstonea monticola* and juvenile phase *Calamus* spp. Ferns such as *Blechnum* spp., *Diplazium* spp., *Selaginella longipinna* and *Tectaria* spp. occur frequently, with fleshy herbs such as *Alocasia brisbanensis*, *Alpinia arctiflora*, *A. modesta*, *Hornstedtia scottiana* and *Pleuranthodium racemigerum* occurring frequently.

The ecological community includes a variety of fauna species, including many species that are listed as threatened at a national or state level.