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Developers warned

on cassowary ~~safety~~

FEDERAL Environment Minister Peter Garrett has released a set of guidelines for developers in cassowary country following his well-publicised intervention to stop a Mission Beach subdivision.

Mr Garret wants people living between Cooktown and Townsville to have their say on a draft policy about the endangered southern cassowary.

He said the nationally threatened species policy would guide people planning to build or develop in or near cassowary habitat, and help them avoid impacting on areas important to the cassowary's survival.

Julie Lightfoot
lightfootj@tcp.news1td.com.au

Mr Garrett exercised little-used powers last year to step in and completely rule out a development proposal at Mission Beach, saying even strict planning conditions would not have been enough to protect a vital cassowary corridor.

Yesterday, he said the cassowary's survival was central to the long-term viability of rainforest communities.

"They are crucial to rainforest regeneration because they eat fruits and disperse the

seeds in their droppings," Mr Garrett said. "But one of the big problems they face is being cut off from the areas they need for survival like feeding and breeding habitat.

"More and more they're finding corridors they use to reach the habitat they need are blocked by development."

Cassowary experts have helped with the draft policy which maps out cassowary habitat and shows people how better design can reduce impacts on the species and avoid further isolating them from their habitat areas.

The policy would also provide

developers with more certainty about where developments could proceed, he said.

The draft document has been released today for public comment, the same day as the launch of a non-regulatory draft community plan by Terrain NRM at Mission Beach which proposes a land buy-back scheme and restrictions on cats and dogs.

▶▶To view or comment on Mr Garrett's draft policy go to www.environment.gov.au/epbc/publications/casuarius-casuarius-johnsonii.html.

▶▶To see the draft Mission Beach community plan log on to www.terrain.org.au/missionbeach.

Cassowaries win big against developers

CASSOWARIES are to be further shielded from developers under new federal government efforts to keep the endangered flightless birds alive.

Developers wanting to build between Townsville and Cooktown will be urged to consider ways to design around the birds and their habitat, or risk having their plans rejected.



Federal Environment Minister Peter Garrett will today release new guidelines for building in cassowary habitats.

Cassowaries are protected under national laws.

Last year Mr Garrett rejected a development at Mission Beach, saying it would have an unacceptable impact on the birds.

"Land clearing, development and traffic are the key threats to the southern cassowary," he said.

"One of the big problems they face is being cut off from the areas they need for survival such as feeding and breeding habitat."

The draft policy is available for comment at www.environment.gov.au/epbc/publications/casuarius-casuarius-johnsonii.htm

Emma Chalmers

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