



## PRIME MINISTER

FOR MEDIA

5 JUNE 1987

The Prime Minister and the Minister for Arts, Heritage and Environment the Hon. Barry Cohen, said today that the Government would immediately proceed towards nomination of the Wet Tropics of North-East Queensland to the World Heritage List. As part of the process the Government will be consulting with the Queensland Government and parties with interests in the region and will invite submissions to be made within a period of three months. This process is necessary as a nomination would need to be made by 31 December 1987 for consideration by the World Heritage Committee by the end of 1988.

Discussions with Queensland concerning rainforest conservation have proceeded for ten months. The Government has made a generous and reasonable offer of funds from the National Rainforest Conservation Program in the expectation that Queensland would enter into acceptable rainforest conservation arrangements particularly for cessation of logging.

The discussions with Queensland have been conducted in a cordial and frank manner. Unfortunately Queensland still maintains that rainforest logging should continue. This has left the Government with no choice but to consider nomination of the Wet Tropics for World Heritage listing.

The Government is determined that the outstanding values of the region be protected. The Government is sure that its actions will bring home to the Queensland Government the need to change its approach to management of the region.

In considering nomination of the Wet Tropics the Government will formally consult the Queensland Government about the decision and, by a process of correspondence and advertisements placed in the national and regional press, will also invite the views of other organisations and individuals with interest in the Wet Tropics.

Any views put to the Government in this process will be given careful consideration before any nomination is made.

The consultation process with Queensland will include further consideration of the initiatives already offered by the Commonwealth under the National Rainforest Conservation Program. These initiatives will be intended to promote alternative industries such as tourism and plantations which can maximise new job opportunities and ensure that no parties or individuals are disadvantaged.

The Government's action will be widely acclaimed in Australia and internationally and will add another chapter to the outstanding conservation record of the Hawke Government.

A map of the region under consideration is attached.

WET TROPICS OF NORTH-EAST QUEENSLAND

