



Noosa Biosphere® Reserve Foundation Ltd

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **Environmental and cultural learning added to Noosa's knowledge bank**

Work to create a data bank of environmentally and culturally significant indigenous landmarks and iconic species within the Noosa Shire has begun.

The Marine Ecology Education Indigenous Corporation (MEEIC) was awarded funding from the Noosa Biosphere Reserve Foundation to develop multi-media information for tourism and education centred on the Noosa River and Lakes.

Project facilitator Dr Simon Walker said the aim is to improve understanding of the links between the environment, local indigenous culture and native species in Noosa, and provide opportunities for developing indigenous led ecotourism ventures into the future.

"This project will promote a better understanding of Noosa's indigenous environmental and cultural heritage.

"The knowledge bank can be used to engage the community and visitors in targeted learning and educational experiences in Noosa.

"Information will be compiled in various forms, for example short multimedia presentations, images, video and voice recordings."

The knowledge bank will also support better management of Noosa's natural assets, including the Noosa River, lakes and creeks by building our understanding of this fragile ecosystem.

"The project will directly contribute to increasing our understanding of environmental systems in the Noosa Biosphere.

"It will also increase the breadth of the Noosa experience by providing new tourism and public education opportunities in the region," Dr Walker said.

Named the Environmental and Cultural Learning Trail, seed funding of \$19,500 from the Noosa Biosphere Reserve grant scheme will advance a broader project that aims to support indigenous led economic opportunities within the region for the Kabi Kabi people.

Targeted workshops with the indigenous community will help with the identification of significant landscapes and iconic species.

"We have begun consulting with the local Kabi Kabi people as to what parts of the River are important," Dr Walker said.

Chair and Kabi Kabi elder, Fred Palin said the MEEIC aims to provide Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people the opportunity to reconnect and engage with their traditional and cultural landscapes.

"Facilitating ecological education and learning for environmental restoration with input of traditional owner knowledge is armed at creating opportunities in industries such as Indigenous Tourism," said Mr Palin.

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"The Kabi Kabi nation feel that it's important, not for their people but for everyone to know that the earth is alive and the spiritual bond that they feel for their country can be shared by everyone.

"Their connection to the environment is self-evident in their belief that the earth is the 'mother' and everything has a purpose in nature.

"Our hope is that the younger generation will embrace this project and learn from the input from Western science and indigenous knowledge which is aimed at finding environmental solutions for future generations.

"The MEEIC thanks the Noosa Biosphere Reserve Foundation for their support of the project."

The project is also being supported by Ecological Service Professionals and considerable in-kind support from MEEIC.

Dr Walker said the knowledge bank will contribute to an ongoing initiative to improve economic opportunities for local indigenous people.

"Resources produced from this initial stage of the project will allow additional funding to be sought through state and federal schemes, to support the development of a Kabi Kabi led ecotourism venture," said Dr Walker.

Dr David Dique from the Noosa Biosphere Reserve Foundation said the project will add to Noosa's cultural experience.

"This project will share information about culturally significant landscapes and species through education in a contemporary context – across a wide community audience," he said.

"Sharing important traditional environmental information from across the Noosa region will add to our visitor experience, which is an exciting prospect. We are very pleased to be funding this exciting project."

For more information, visit [www.noosabiosphere.org.au](http://www.noosabiosphere.org.au).

### **About Noosa Biosphere Reserve Foundation**

The Noosa Shire as a region is distinct from other, more developed urban areas on the Sunshine Coast in Queensland and elsewhere in Australia, and has achieved global recognition for the high values of its natural environment. In 2007, this exceptionalism was internationally recognised with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) consenting to the designation of our Shire as the Noosa Biosphere Reserve under its Man and the Biosphere program (MaB). The Noosa Biosphere Reserve Foundation is entrusted by UNESCO and Noosa Council to protect our global status as a biosphere reserve. [www.noosabiosphere.org.au](http://www.noosabiosphere.org.au).