

MEDIA RELEASE

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Queensland Urgently Needs an EPA

This Earth Day, our environment is crying out for an Environmental Protection Agency.

North Queensland Conservation Council (NQCC) is calling this year's Earth Day (22 April) "EPA Day" in a bid to draw attention to the need for stronger environmental laws and the establishment of an independent Environmental Protection Agency for Queensland.

"Those of us lucky enough to live in North Queensland would agree that the natural places and wildlife we get to live amongst are second-to-none," says Crystal Falknau, Coordinator of the North Queensland Conservation Council.

"We have rainforests, wetlands and the Reef. Our bushland, beaches and creeks provide special places for humans and wildlife alike, but they are all facing massive pressures, which are only getting worse."

Local conservationists are calling on the state government to establish an EPA for Queensland, as pollution, illegal dumping and habitat destruction threaten the region's natural values. The long-delayed decision on this is reaching a crucial point if it is to become legislated in this term of government.

Falknau says "it's unacceptable the government has been delaying the introduction of this for so long while polluters aren't being held accountable and vital habitat is being cleared. Earth Day will become a day of mourning in the future if things don't change."

Queensland is currently the only state without an Environmental Protection Agency, and the North Queensland region has been suffering as a result, according to NQCC. "A short-sighted approach by consecutive state governments has left us without the basic environmental protections that every other state in Australia takes for granted and has relied on for years.

"Not having an EPA means there's no tough cop on the beat to stop those who exploit the system and harm our environment. Without an EPA, we will continue to see illegal dumping, habitat clearing and the pollution of our waterways in the places we love.

The future is in our hands. The Queensland government needs to step up and protect our environment before it's too late. An independent EPA for Queensland is the first step."

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