

# Kurrimine to Cowley Beach: Littoral rainforest



## What is littoral rainforest?

Littoral rainforest is rainforest close to the sea. Along Australia's east coast, it is listed as a "Critically Endangered" ecological community under national environmental law (EPBC Act).

The largest remaining area is in Kurrimine Beach to Cowley Beach. Areas of littoral rainforest are found within various land tenures:

- National Park and Conservation Park
- Defence land at Cowley Beach
- State land east of Stephenson Road

The Mamu people are Traditional Owners, and the Mandubarra Land & Sea Rangers also work in the area.



## Values

The Kurrimine–Cowley Beach area has exceptional significance:

- Largest area of littoral rainforest on sand in the Wet Tropics
- Largest area of littoral rainforest on sand within a National Park in the Wet Tropics
- Largest area of littoral rainforest on any soil type in the Wet Tropics
- Largest patch of littoral rainforest refugia in the Wet Tropics
  - Refugia are higher inland dunes that offer protection from sea level rise and storm tides

This large continuous area provides viable habitat for many plants and animals, especially under climate change pressures.



# Threatened Species

Threatened species found here include:

- Southern cassowary
- Spectacled flying fox
- Beach stone-curlew
- Nesting marine turtles
- Arenga palm
- Rare native gardenia

The World Heritage nomination for the Wet Tropics highlighted this coastline for its outstanding universal value.

At Cowley–Kurrimine Beach and the Murray River mouth, coastal processes have created dynamic mosaics of rainforest, Melaleuca and mangrove forests, and dune systems – linking to some of the oldest roots of ancestral rainforests.



## Threats

- Invasive weeds (e.g. guinea grass, lantana, coconut, syngonium, cassava, Singapore daisy)
- Feral pigs
- Altering how water moves through the landscape, including underground
- Sea level rise and storm tide inundation
- Clearing, disturbance and modification from inappropriate development





## Development

- Any new development with potential significant impacts on littoral rainforest may require approval under the Environment Protection Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC).
- Improved mapping of littoral rainforest is a high priority for the Kurrimine–Cowley area to support better planning, improved development outcomes and stronger conservation.



**Legend**

-  Littoral Rainforest (wholly & potential)
-  Protected Area Estate



Mourilyan

Mourilyan  
Harbour

Cowley Beach

Silkwood

Kurrimine  
Beach

El Arish

# Restoring littoral rainforest

Queensland Parks & Wildlife Service (QPWS) identifies littoral rainforest as a key value in local protected areas and led a project with support from the Australian Government's Saving Native Species program through Terrain NRM.

## Project objectives:

- Reduced impacts of pest plants and animals
- Prevented establishment of new invasive species

## Actions undertaken:

- Weed management
- Feral pig control

## Project partners:

- Department of Resources (DOR)
- Mamu Land & Sea Rangers
- Mandubarra Land & Sea Rangers

Previous work: Terrain NRM also funded a DOR-led project at Kurrimine Beach on state land, which included weed removal, pig-trapping, fire management and cassowary habitat monitoring.

## Easy Access

You can experience littoral rainforest right in Kurrimine township.

The Paddy Illich track in the conservation park on Jacobs Rd takes visitors on a short walk through a six-hectare patch of littoral forest.

The signs along the track detail the significant relationships between the plants and animals of the forest and the role these relationships play in the health and biological diversity of the area.

## For further information contact Terrain NRM:

Email - [info@terrain.org.au](mailto:info@terrain.org.au) Tel: 07 4043 8000

<https://www.dcceew.gov.au/environment/biodiversity/threatened/publications/recovery/littoral-rainforest-coastal-vine-thickets>

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