



## JOINT MEDIA RELEASE

*Federal Minister for the  
Environment and Heritage*  
**Dr David Kemp**  
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*Queensland Minister for the  
Environment*  
**Dean Wells**  
13 May 2003

### **New Wet Tropics Chair and board member announced**

Federal and Queensland Environment Ministers today announced former chief of the Australian Army and Cairns resident, Lieutenant General John Grey AC, will head the Wet Tropics Management Authority Board which manages the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area in northern Queensland.

Lt Gen. Grey replaces Professor Tor Hundloe from the University of Queensland whose term expired last September. The Ministers jointly congratulated Prof. Hundloe for his vision for World Heritage ecotourism, and his significant successes in overseeing the Authority's development of the Wet Tropics Plan, Nature Based Tourism Strategy and Walking Strategy.

Queensland Environment Minister and Chair of the Wet Tropics Ministerial Council, Dean Wells, announced the new Chair prior to the Board's first meeting held today.

"We're delighted to have John on board. He is an accomplished leader of national and international stature and will respond to challenges facing the authority with a level head and strong leadership," Mr Wells said.

"As Chancellor of James Cook University since 1999, he has shown key strengths of strategic vision and corporate leadership."

Federal Minister for the Environment and Heritage, Dr David Kemp, also welcomed Lt Gen. Grey to the position, commending his strong community focus.

"Since his retirement, he has been extremely active in leading and contributing to a wide range of groups including Cape York advisory committees, the Far North Queensland Sugar Industry Task Force in developing industry reforms, to Advance Cairns, a regional agency for economic development," Dr Kemp said.

"This level of experience is highly valuable to the Board and builds on the expertise of other Board members."

Lt Gen. Grey said the Authority would face considerable challenges in the future, including insecurities over future funding, establishing processes and structures for achieving Aboriginal cooperative management, and growing pressure for infrastructure such as roads, dams and powerlines in the World Heritage Area to meet local needs.

"As a local resident, I'm already aware of many of the issues which face our World Heritage managers," Lt Gen. Grey said. "I'm committed to achieving the right balance between protecting this very special World Heritage asset for generations to come and meeting community needs."

The Ministers also announced the appointment of Mr Percy Neal as the Commonwealth Aboriginal nominee on the Board, replacing Mr Eric Deeral from Cooktown.

Mr Neal is a Gurabana Gunggandji traditional owner from the Yarrabah area and has a wealth of experience in Aboriginal affairs as an ATSIC Councillor and a Councillor on the Yarrabah Community Council.

He is currently the Chief Executive Officer of the Bama Ngappi Ngappi Aboriginal Corporation, an organisation focusing on economic development projects, employment and training and cultural issues. He was previously the Corporation's general manager for eight years.

The Ministers are still discussing a second Commonwealth Board Director nomination.

Continuing Board members – Herberton Shire Mayor, Anne Portess, and Townsville-based James Cook University academic, Peter Valentine – will remain on the board until September 2003.

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### **Career summary for Lieutenant General John Grey**

Lieutenant General John Grey, AC, FAIM, GAICD has had a distinguished 45-year executive career in Australia's public sector. He was Chief of the Army from 1992-95 and Chair of the committee which managed the Army's policy level affairs, 55,000 staff and \$2.2 billion annual budget.

John has been Chancellor of James Cook University since 1999 and a member of the Australian War Memorial Council, Canberra, since 1999. He was a founding director of Tarong Energy Corporation from 1997-99 and a Special Consultant to the Chief Minister of the Northern Territory on the UN and East Timor from 1999-2001. He was also Chair of the Cape York Regional Advisory Group and the Cape York Property Planning Technical Group under the Natural Heritage Trust from 2000- 2002.

His commitment to the community in northern Queensland is demonstrated by current activities as Director of Advance Cairns; Member and Leader of the Far North Queensland Sugar Industry Task Force; Member of the Cairns Chamber of Commerce; Chair of the Far North Queensland and Torres Strait Islands Group; Chair of the Order of Australia Association; and Foundation Patron of the Far North Queensland Youth Assistance Fund.

Earlier commitments include Member of the Welfare Exit Committee and Rural Readjustment Scheme (Tobacco Industry); Assessor with the Australian Heritage Commission; Member and Session Chair of the Organising Committee Mining, Petroleum and Supply Expo Cairns in 1997; Member of Cairns Legacy Club from 1997-98; and Chair of the National Legacy Conference in 1997.