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Today: **Wed 4 May**

Port Douglas

22 °C 30 °C

Email

Thursday 25 April 2013

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Roy Weavers

Reporter/Publisher for The Newport.

## Botanic Garden goes public



The six man committee who have been working to make their dream of creating a world class Botanical Garden in Mossman took their first step into the public arena on Tuesday night at the Sheraton Mirage Port Douglas.

Dr Peter Wood from James Cook University and Alan Carle (pictured) from The Botanical Ark made short presentations on behalf of the committee to set out the path ahead to the assembled audience.

Mr Carle explained that this dream has been over two years in the planning, and has now reached the stage where the committee and their supporters feel confident that it is time to open the concept up to public discussion and set about finding a suitable block of land upon which to launch the search for funding and final designs.

As another committee member, Frank Frikker from Wellness in Port stated, "It is time to get serious about finding a block of land. It will make finding investment much easier. Without the land we could find ourselves going around in circles. So we need everyone helping to find the right piece of land."

At this stage, according to the group's brochure, the project would include a Wet Tropics arboretum, themed display gardens, interpretation centre, education centre, experimental farm, art centre and community entertainment centre.

It is expected that the Botanic Gardens would become a world class tourism attraction and a unique centre of excellence for shared knowledge including a research and development facility.

As Mr Carle explained, "At this stage these plans and the proposed design of the gardens can change or be added to. This is why we are keen to open it up to public discussion. We want the final concept to be something everyone believes will fulfil its potential."

Mossman has been chosen because it is an excellent location close to Cairns Airport in the centre of an existing tourism mecca. Mossman lies adjacent to the Daintree rainforest and offers all essential ingredients for a Botanic Garden. It is also strategically positioned near James Cook University, CSIRO and the Australian Tropical Herbarium.

The committee sees the Botanic Garden as a complement to all the existing tourism attractions of the area. In fact, a survey conducted on behalf of the committee produced some welcome results showing that over 91% of visitors would visit such a centre during their stay in the region and be willing to pay for that visit.

The committee sees benefits to the local community, education, rainforest conservation, science and horticulture and employment, infrastructure and investment for the regional economy.

### Who's on the committee?

- Alan Carle from Botanical Ark
- Dr Peter Wood PhD in Tourism from JCU
- Frank Frikker from Wellness in Port
- Tony Woodall from Shannovale Winery

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