



Media release

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New fishway completed at James Cook University

Thousands of native fish will be able to continue their lifecycle in the creek that runs through James Cook University thanks to the completion of a permanent pathway for fish.

Thirty years ago a road was built across the creek, forming a barrier to upstream migration for 13 native fish species to feed and breed during seasonal flows.

A trial fishway was constructed six years ago to help fish pass through the barrier.

It has now been replaced with a better and permanent \$40,000 fishway due to the joint efforts of NQ Dry Tropics, James Cook University and construction companies Abigroup and Seymour Whyte.

NQ Dry Tropics Healthy Waterways Project Officer Paul Duncanson said prior to the trial fishway being built, native species experienced a severe decline in numbers and distribution because their movement had been blocked.

"Pathways such as these are essential for a variety of reasons, such as allowing the fish to migrate and disperse," Mr Duncanson said.

"Giving them the chance to migrate helps keep the fish populations healthier than they otherwise would be, and increases the likelihood of maintaining species diversity."

James Cook University environmental engineer, Ross Kapitzke, said the 20 metre fishway will be monitored during the next wet season to assess its effectiveness.

"The trial fishway built in 2005 meant a whole range of native species were found in the upper reaches of the creek upstream of the university – something that hadn't been seen for around 25 years," said Mr Kapitzke.

"Nine native species were observed both upstream and downstream of the fishway.

"Given the new structure is an improvement on the previous one in terms of design, I would expect that we'll see even more species and a much larger number of fish passing through this new fishway."

The fishway is located at the back of James Cook University along Solander Road.

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NQ Dry Tropics' region includes the local government areas of Townsville, Charters Towers, Burdekin, Isaac, Barcaldine, Etheridge, Hinchinbrook, Palm Island and the Whitsundays. **Media contact** Sara Lando 4722 5729; 0466 014 728.

Working together to improve land and water