



MEDIA RELEASE

World Wetlands Day Celebrations

A Top End day of fun and activity is planned to celebrate this year's World Wetlands Day.

Themed *Wetlands and Water – Supporting life, sustaining livelihoods*, the Day is officially recognised annually on February 2 to mark the anniversary of the Convention on Wetlands signed in the Iranian town of Ramsar in 1971.

However, Window on the Wetlands is celebrating the occasion on February 5 to give people the chance to thoroughly enjoy this historic event.

Window on the Wetlands supervisor Lori Jeeves said there would be educational, static and interactive displays at the popular tourist attraction, located along the Arnhem Highway, approximately 60km south of Darwin.

Ms Jeeves said Sunday's free event would be held from 7.30am to 7pm, which aims to encourage people of all ages to protect and conserve our wetlands.

"The displays will include a piñata and there will be a traditional pandanus weaving display by Marguerita Hayes from 10am to 2pm," Ms Jeeves said.

"This year's theme is highly relevant as the *Pandanus spiralis* is an important plant of the wetlands for Aboriginal people as it supports lives and sustains livelihoods in action.

"Wetlands are important as they support all forms of life – flora, fauna and human – and are also needed in the purification of underground water supplies.

"Now is also a great time to come out to the Window on the Wetlands visitor centre, as it provides a spectacular 360 degree view of the surrounding floodplains of the Adelaide River that have recently enjoyed the plentiful amount of rain recently.

"So I encourage everyone to come out and enjoy what should be a wonderful day."

Ms Jeeves said there would also be a wetlands poster competition for children with prizes including books and stickers. Winners will be contacted on February 8.

The broad aim of the Ramsar Convention is to halt the worldwide loss of wetlands and conserve those that remain through sustainable management.

Australia was one of the first countries to become a Ramsar signatory with 64 sites currently registered in Australia. Cobourg Peninsula, 350km northeast of Darwin, became the first officially recognised Ramsar site on May 8, 1974.

Wetlands can include swamps, marshes, billabongs, lakes, saltmarshes, mudflats, mangroves, coral reefs, fens, peatlands or bodies of water that can be natural, artificial, temporary or permanent. Water within these areas can be static or flowing, fresh, brackish or saline.

Wetlands help purify water, absorb pollutants and provide habitat for animals and plants.

Media Note – For more information contact Lori Jeeves on 8988 8188

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