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Media Alert

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ROMA BASED FIRE PROJECT COORDINATOR ALL FIRED UP TO WORK WITH LANDHOLDERS

Well known Roma identity Ray Klein has been appointed as Regional Coordinator for the Queensland Rangelands Fire Project which was launched in Roma at a meeting in February by Brian Cifuentes, Project Manager from Cape York Peninsula Development Association Inc (CYPDA).

The state wide project, which will be extended to landholders in Central and North Queensland land owners in the near future, aims to provide a better understanding of fire in the landscape and its impact on production, conservation and traditional owner outcomes and values.

The project uses satellite technology to provide real time fire tracking and, over time, allows CYPDA to produce fire histories to assist landholders to develop fire plans to ensure they get maximum productivity from their land.

Having lived in and around Roma for the past 26 years, Ray is well known to graziers through his previous involvement with fire management, most recently as District Inspector in the Rural Fire Service covering the Roma District.

Ray Klein said, "I have always had an interest in assisting land holders to maintain fire on their properties to sustain their economic viability. I have seen the impact of poor fire management, particularly a lack of fire, which causes the encroachment of woody weeds on otherwise viable land. This is not always the fault of the graziers as persistent drought periods reduce the ability of landowners to use fire to control woody weeds which quickly dominate the landscape."

Fire information will be available through The North Australian Fire Information (NAFI) website www.firenorth.org.au, which identifies fire hotspots, enabling land managers to respond rapidly to outbreaks and also provides fire history maps to assist with better managing fuel loads throughout the year to prevent highly destructive wild fires.

Ray added, "I am very keen to continue working with graziers regarding fire issues and renew old friendships. I will be learning the technology along with property owners, as anyone who knows me, also knows that I am technologically challenged. From what I have seen of the system, it is not hard to pick up on how to use it and I am sure it will be a very valuable tool for land managers in the region."

The project is funded through the Queensland State Government Strategic Reserve funding, and builds on the Cape York Fire Management Program which has been successfully assisting landowners to develop fire plans since 2000.

The project is a collaborative exercise between several Regional Natural Resource Management bodies, the Queensland Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries, Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation, the Queensland Department of Natural Resources and Water, the Environmental Protection Agency and local councils.

Interviews: *Ray Klein, Regional Coordination, Queensland Rangelands Fire Project on 07 4622 1044 or 0447 74 1687.*
Vision: *Picture of Ray Klein and Brian Cifuentes with satellite fire map.*
Media Enquiries: *MaryBeth Gundrum, Communications Manager, Cape York Peninsula Development Association on 0429 385 567.*



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