



Save the Nature of the Kimberley

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Media Release

3rd January, 2008

KIMBERLEY ENVIRONMENTALIST WINS *WILD* AWARD

Wild magazine has named Environs Kimberley Director, Maria Mann, winner of its Environmentalist of the Year award for 2007. The presentation by the Victorian-based wilderness adventure publishing house was made to Ms Mann in recognition of her outstanding contribution to the preservation of Australian wilderness.

Ms Mann has been an active member of Environs Kimberley (EK), the peak environmental group in the region, for more than a decade, initially as a volunteer and more recently as its Director.

In the citation for the award, Ms Mann was praised for coordinating efforts to save the nature of the Kimberley, in the process putting EK on the map as the area's peak non-government organization.

Amongst many other contributions to the Kimberley environment, Maria led EK's first and longest-lasting campaign – to keep the Fitzroy River flowing free – against proposals to dam the river for a large scale cotton growing venture, and to transfer its water to Perth. Her level-headedness and strategic sense were major assets contributing to EK's success.

After listing EK's major achievements, the *Wild* citation continues: 'Without Maria Mann's direction and tireless efforts, none of these things would have been achieved and the Kimberley would be a very different place today.'

"This award is very well-deserved," said EK Chairperson Peter Mitchell. "Maria has worked tirelessly for EK, taking on many challenges over the years. She is fearless, and EK's approach – one that favours engagement over a purely adversarial approach is due largely to Maria. It has proved highly successful and won respect for EK's work."

Asked to comment about winning the award, Ms Mann said: "I am absolutely thrilled. It is a great honour, not only for me but for Environs Kimberley. Tributes such as this provide a fantastic boost to people working in the Australian conservation movement, and are truly appreciated."

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