

Australia's Daintree rainforest returned to Indigenous owners

September 30 2021



The Daintree rainforest is teeming with wildlife.

Australia's Daintree rainforest has been returned to its Indigenous

owners as the government begins to cede control of the world's oldest tropical forest.

The UNESCO World Heritage-listed Daintree National Park—a 135-million-year-old tropical rainforest—was handed back to the Eastern Kuku Yalanji people in a ceremony in the remote town of Bloomfield on Wednesday.

The vast and steamy jungle is teeming with ancient and [rare species](#)—from a giant clawed cassowary bird to plants that have existed since the age of the dinosaurs.

Eastern Kuku Yalanji traditional owner Chrissy Grant said the move was a historic event that put the community "in control of our own destinies".

In total, 160,000 hectares (about 395,000 acres) of land on the Cape York peninsula—the northeast tip of Australia—is being returned to the area's traditional Aboriginal owners as part of reconciliation measures.

British settlers arrived in Australia in 1788, colonising the continent and leaving Aboriginal groups marginalised.

The [national parks](#) will initially be jointly managed with the Queensland state government, before being transferred into the sole care of the Indigenous group.

Grant said a foundation would be created to provide training and employment for local First Nations people in areas such as [land management](#), tourism and research.

Queensland state environment minister Meaghan Scanlon said the return of lands was a key step on the path toward reconciliation after an "uncomfortable and ugly" past.

"The Eastern Kuku Yalanji people's culture is one of the world's oldest living cultures and this agreement recognises their right to own and manage their country, to protect their culture and to share it with visitors as they become leaders in the [tourism industry](#)," she said.

The government has handed back control of 3.8 million hectares on Cape York to Indigenous traditional owners to date, she added.

© 2021 AFP

Citation: Australia's Daintree rainforest returned to Indigenous owners (2021, September 30) retrieved 26 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2021-09-australia-daintree-rainforest-indigenous-owners.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.