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## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **Study Reveals Cost of Daintree Power**

The Douglas Shire Sustainability Group (DSSG) has welcomed the release of the Daintree Electricity Supply Study by the Queensland Government. President Didge McDonald said the study gives all parties a much clearer picture of the practical issues and costs involved in a range of power options for the Daintree.

The study looks at six options, comprising three microgrid models and several versions of improved stand-alone systems. The analysis shows that upgrading stand-alone systems, as advocated by DSSG, DCEN and Austrop Foundation, is the most economic solution, would have a lower environmental and cultural heritage impact and would be more reliable.

The 'one big microgrid' proposal presents numerous environmental, technical and commercial risks, and would cost households \$11,000 to \$15,000 more for their power per annum. A subsidy of between \$70 million and \$150 million would be required to preserve customers' current electricity costs, with a lead time of at least six years.

Mr McDonald said that DSSG will be putting the case for further options, including separate microgrids for the two main commercial centres. "We will be meeting with the Government and will be discussing with them assessment of the option of a small microgrid at Cape Tribulation, where there is a concentration of businesses in close proximity and where environmental and cultural values are not threatened, along with a small microgrid at the Cow Bay commercial centre," he said.

He went on to say that none of the options considered could be implemented without significant taxpayer subsidies. "The outcomes of this study clearly demonstrate that the solutions to the issue of power for the Daintree put forward by DSSG and others, with the environment as a central issue, have been based on practical considerations," he said. "Fundamental to any solution is to justify a subsidy in return for a demonstrated environmental benefit, such as a conservation covenant."

He concluded his remarks with a comment on the rancour that has surrounded the power debate. "Much of the public discussion around this issue in recent times has been marred by misinformation, personal attacks and divisiveness. Now that the community has solid data to consider, we expect that a more civilised debate will take place, and we can get on with achieving better power outcomes for the Daintree."

Ends

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