

# INNOVATION AND ENTREPRENEURS

## PACIFIC COAST ECO BANANAS

The innovative, award-winning Mourilyan-based Pacific Coast Eco Bananas group celebrated its 10th anniversary in October 2010, and the enterprise has matured, say Principals Frank and Dianne Sciacca .

The company's new automatic packaging project is ready to enter its second stage.

“This is not done anywhere else in

the world, and to protect it, we have patented the process and the associated technology, which scans, sorts, packs and seals the bananas,” Dianne said.

The process, now semi-automated, by the start of stage 3, will be fully-automated, and the whole project will be complete at the end of 2011. This will enable the business to become more cost-effective, access different markets and go overseas.



## MAMU RAINFOREST CANOPY WALKWAY

A business plan prepared by directors of Mullenbungoon, title holders to land adjacent to the Ma:mu Canopy Walk, was completed in August 2010, secretary Kevin Wone said.

He said the board had begun examining ways to advance the original plans to develop the property with an interpretive centre, food outlets and indigenous art and souvenir shops.

Another advance for the project was the beginning, in June, of the flow of \$1 a head (per tourist) to the traditional owners under an Indigenous Land Use Agreement with the State Government.

Operations manager Doug Wilson said attendance figures leading up to the canopy walk's second anniversary in August were slightly down on the previous year.



## PARONELLA PARK

Innisfail's major tourist magnet, Paronella Park, continues to break all records.

Joint proprietor Mark Evans, said the enterprise was expanding and diversifying.

Paronella Park's new enterprise, in the ballroom of the Shangri La Hotel in Cairns, is a gourmet theatre dining

experience operating seven nights a week, and tells the story of an early arrival in North Queensland.

In addition, visitors to the park can now view the recent restoration of the hydro-electric system, which powers the entire Park, including the caravan park, while 25 per cent of the power produced goes back into the grid.



## JOHNSTONE RIVER CROCODILE PARK

The Johnstone River Crocodile Park is one of three Far North Queensland farms operating under the banner of crocodile specialists Harvest Homes Pty Ltd.

The group breeds and handles more than 10,000 crocs, including 2000 on the Innisfail property, which plans to grow its numbers to 10,000 crocs ranging from hatchlings to mature age within the next 18 months, Mr Young said.

On the farming side, more than 1000 skins are processed at the Mareeba farm and exported to France, Italy and Japan.

“Our saltwater crocodile leather is recognised as the best in the world, and is used to make the finest handbags and fashion accessories,” Mr Young said.

“Recent work on the farm includes building six new grow-out ponds to house 1800 crocs from hatchlings to 1.8 metres long, and we will keep expanding over the next 12 to 18 months.”

Tourism is a major part of the operation, attracting more than 150 visitors a day, mainly backpackers from throughout Europe and Asia, and touring Australian families.

