

Cairns climbers aiming high



Local climbers, Jay Finucane and Craig Roberts will attempt to climb the highest Antarctic peak within the Ellsworth Mountain Range, Vinson Massif at 5140 metres. Inset: Polar Explorer, Robert Swan lends the duo his support.

Legendary polar explorer Robert Swan will be the special guest at a fundraising event in Cairns on September 9 for local climbers, Jay Finucane and Craig Roberts.

The duo plan to stand atop the highest mountain peak in Antarctica, Vinson Massif at 5140 meters in 2011 when they embark on their quest of a lifetime dedicating their efforts to preserve the environment.

Finucane and Roberts have conquered many mountains over the past 10 years, but Antarctica's Ellsworth Mountain Range is by far going to be their greatest challenge yet. Their expedition is entitled Keep It Cool.

Keep It Cool patron Robert is one of the world's pre-eminent polar explorers and environmental leaders. The first to have walked both the North and South Poles, Robert has made it his mission to work towards preservation of Antarctica by promoting recycling, renewable energy and sustainability to combat the effects of climate change. His group 2041 undertakes to inform, engage and inspire the next generation of leaders to become responsible and be sustainable.

"Decisions made by today's youth will impact our entire planet's ecosystem and the future of life on earth," Robert said.

In 2041 the Protocol on Environmental Protection to the Antarctic Treaty could be amended. The group 2041 works to protect the Antarctic Treaty so that the last great wilderness on earth is never exploited.

According to Roberts, added to the amazing effort of physical and mental strength required is the sheer expense of the expedition.

"We are now in the throes of actively raising \$70,000," Robert said.

"Already we have secured sponsorship from The North Face and It's Extreme for all our climbing gear as well as graphic designers, web hosting and public relations.

"Everyone has been truly forthcoming, but what we really need is financial support."

The fundraiser begins at 6.30pm at Sofitel Reef Casino. Tickets are \$30 per person, \$20 for students www.Keepitcool.info or from Pulse Hair, 14 Spence Street. For more info contact Craig Roberts on 4051 4212 or 0406 659 595.

Kuranda Range Rd works underway

A safer trip along the Kuranda Range is on the way with works started to widen two curves on the Kennedy Highway between Smithfield and Kuranda.

The project will continue until the end of August to widen a curve at the bottom of the range near Avondale Creek, 1.4km from Smithfield.

The \$300,000 works are being carried out under the governments' \$66 million Safer Roads Sooner program. Minister for Main

Roads Craig Wallace said the improvements will be a welcome boost to safety for motorists who commute to and from Kuranda on the vital road link.

Drivers need patience during this month-long project. The works will require single lane road closures, traffic controllers and speed reductions to 40km/h between 9am-3pm.

"These works will improve safety for motorists travelling up and down the range

with a tight curve to be widened, visibility improved and extra asphalt laid," Mr Wettenhall said.

Qld Transport has also started planning the final set of works for extra road widening, gabion wall construction and soil nail installation 4km from Smithfield.

These curve widening works are in addition to more than \$326,000 worth of Intelligent Transport Systems for Vehicle Activated Signs with wet weather sensors.

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