

# The Living Valley



A year ago I had the privilege of working locally with some rainforest researchers from Brazil. These researchers were highly impressed by our rainforests and wildlife, high praise considering they come from the home of the Amazon rainforest.

One afternoon we heard the call of an Alberts Lyrebird. Lyrebirds belong to the most ancient group of songbirds, a lineage unique to Australia. The Alberts Lyrebird is our own unique local species, which only occurs in the Tweed and on nearby mountain ranges. The call of this rare bird is powerful and resonant and mimics the calls of many other birds in the forest perfectly. Lyrebirds elsewhere are known to mimic camera shutters, car alarms and the chainsaws of loggers, echoing the tourist influx or destruction of their own homes!

As we rounded a bend in the trail we saw the Lyrebird in full courtship display only meters from the trail. Seeing a displaying Lyrebird this close was a first for me and to be able to share it with two colleagues from Brazil was a real treat. We stood there awestruck as the Lyrebird did its courtship dance, its white, lace-like tail feathers raised over and veiling its entire body and shimmering as it went from rendition to perfect rendition of the birds of the forest. The Satin Bowerbird, Crimson Rosella, Whip Bird and more were reproduced perfectly, but what took me by surprise was a perfect rendition of the flapping of a pigeon's wings!

The Alberts Lyrebird is a rare and beautiful link to ancient times. Following the evolution of the first flowering plants, when Australia was clothed in rainforest, the ancestors of the Lyrebirds were the first to fill the dawn air with birdsong.

The Lyrebird is truly one of the treasures of the Tweed. This painting of the Lyrebird can be seen on the mural called "Treasures of the Tweed" in Commercial Rd Murwillumbah, if you have seen or heard this iconic bird please contact us at [editor@theweekly.com.au](mailto:editor@theweekly.com.au) or facebook.

Robert Price is a member of Earth Learning Inc, he has first hand experience of plants and animals from growing up in the Tweed / Gold Coast and is a graduate of the University of Queensland in Botany and Ecology.