



# Dreaming nearly over for gorge gate plans

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A DREAM that has been 17 years in the making may finally become a reality, with plans for the Mossman Gorge Gateway project being launched last week.

If a road closure and building applications are accepted by Cairns Regional Council the \$16 million project may be open to the public within 12-18 months, according to Bamanga Bubu Ngadimunku Inc CEO Damian Britnell.

The Mossman Gorge Aboriginal Community, which has a population of about 170 people, was largely reliant on CDEP funding from the Federal Government, until it stopped in June.

"The funding was pulled quite suddenly, so having this project coming together is very exciting," Mr Britnell said.

"For us it has always been about finding employment that is close, easy and culturally appropriate.

"At this stage, it looks like the centre will employ about 40 people in the off season and up to 60-70 people in the peak season."

The project will see boom gates put in 2km from the gorge with visitors charged a fee to travel to the natural site via electric shuttle buses every eight minutes.

Event and conference space, a cafe, guided tours, indigenous art gallery and shop and a training centre are also planned for a 8.4ha parcel of land bought by the indigenous land council last year.

"This is an opportunity to manage the area in a more holistic way, environmentally, culturally and socially," Mr Britnell said.

"It is also about putting this important site back into the hands of the

community."

Ranger Roy Gibson, who has been part of the project since its inception said he was among the proudest men on earth this week.

"I remember we were watching all the cars go into the gorge and we thought, 'How do we attract these fellas into the community and get the community involved?'," he said.

"The idea also had a lot to do with finding jobs and a way for our people to support themselves and helping the young people become inspired into working with their own culture."

Though the gorge would become less accessible, Mr Britnell said the locals had been taken into consideration with the group working on an identity card which would be similar to the Daintree Ferry crossing concession.

Those willing to cycle or walk to the gorge would not be charged.



Natural wonder: Mossman Gorge