

environment

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Road reflectors idea to reduce wildlife toll

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ROADSIDE reflectors designed to scare moose and deer off Canadian roads are being put forward as an answer to the Far North's wallaby toll.

The reflectors, mounted at animal head-height, are used successfully on Magnetic Island off Townsville to protect agile and rock wallabies by bouncing the lights of oncoming vehicles into their eyes.

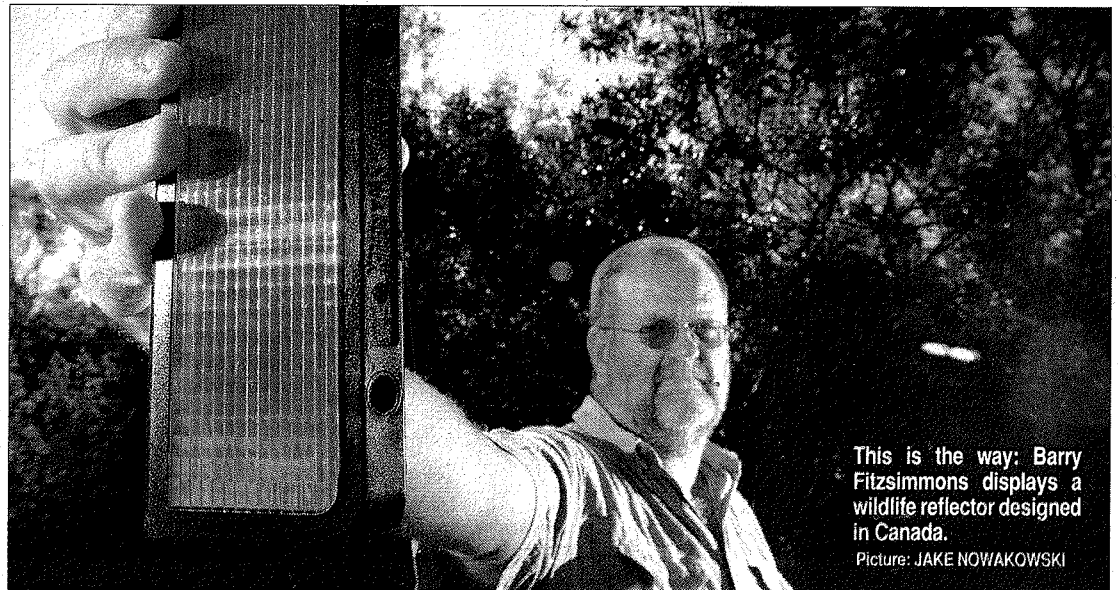
The idea is one of many to be floated at Cairns Regional Council's wallaby summit today.

Machans Beach resident Barry Fitzsimmons said he would take sample reflectors to the summit and would call for them to be used at wallaby hot spots.

He said he knew of major problems on the Machans Beach Intake Rd and at Trinity Beach.

"It's not just wallabies but bandicoots and striped possums that are regularly being killed and a proposal to reduce the night time speed limit to 60km/h (on Machans Beach Intake Rd) has been rejected," Mr Fitzsimmons said.

"There's a kilometre-long stretch, bordered by mangroves,



This is the way: Barry Fitzsimmons displays a wildlife reflector designed in Canada.

Picture: JAKE NOWAKOWSKI

remnant rainforest and scrub, where a lot of wallabies are killed. Developments are forcing more wallabies out."

Nine guest speakers – from zoologists and wildlife vets to cane, environmental and government department leaders – will address today's summit at the Tanks Centre before a panel of experts meets to develop guidelines for wallaby management.

A council spokesman said wallabies were under increasing pressure from habitat constraints.

No firm policy had as yet been accepted by governments or the community, and any new guideline would have to equally consider the interests of government planning schemes, wallaby populations and residents.

Mr Fitzsimmons said his reflectors worked by confusing animals

when multiple panels were lit up in a star pattern by approaching headlights. The reflectors, which cost about \$23 each, could be positioned at a height where the light hits the animals' eyes.

The reflectors on Magnetic Island have been paid for by the local council.

The summit will run from 8.30am-3pm, and speaker sessions are open to the public.

Tighter Reef ships reporting system on way

ALL ships passing southern parts of the Great Barrier Reef will be forced to report positions and be tracked by satellite from July next year under an Australian Government proposal.

The Australian Mari-

time Safety Authority advice follows the grounding of the *Sheng Neng 1* coal carrier this month on Douglas Shoal, outside the existing mandatory reporting zone.

Expanding the reporting and tracking zone must be

ratified by the International Maritime Organisation.

Federal Transport Minister Anthony Albanese has said the ratification process is required because 55 per cent of the proposed new coverage area is beyond Australia's

territorial waters. "In the meantime, AMSA in conjunction with Maritime Safety Queensland will begin rolling out the infrastructure necessary to support the reporting system, such as sensors, communications equipment and

modified navigational software," Mr Albanese said in a statement.

"By beginning this work now, our authorities will be fully ready for the start of mandatory reporting in July 2011."