

Annual Report and
State of the Wet Tropics Report
2009–2010



**WET TROPICS
MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY**



WET TROPICS MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY

20 September 2010

The Hon Kate Jones MP
Chair, Wet Tropics Ministerial Council
Minister for Climate Change and Sustainability
PO Box 15155
City East QLD 4002

Dear Minister,

I am pleased to present the Annual Report and State of the Wet Tropics Report 2009–2010 for the Wet Tropics Management Authority.

I certify this Annual Report and State of the Wet Tropics Report meets the prescribed requirements of the *Financial Administration and Audit Act 1977* and the *Financial Management Standard 1997* particularly with regard to reporting this agency's governance arrangements, objectives, functions and performance, as well as the agency's additional reporting and tabling obligations for this report.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "P Valentine".

Assoc Professor Peter Valentine
Chairperson,
Wet Tropics Management Authority

**Annual Report
2009–2010**

Table of contents

Highlights	5
Introduction	9
Administration of the Act	10
Program reports	23
Planning and Conservation Program	23
Communities and Partnerships Program	32
Business Management Program	41
Terms and abbreviations	49

Highlights

The Wet Tropics Management Authority has a distinctive and privileged role in northern Queensland. Based in the region, with a Board comprising regional leaders, the Authority works with State, Commonwealth and local government agencies, community organisations and industry to ensure protection of the outstanding universal value of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area while ensuring that the Area plays an important role in the life of the community. This is always a challenging task but the Authority has enjoyed another successful year during 2009/2010.



*Dr Peter Valentine, Chair,
Wet Tropics Management Authority*

New Directors

Having served a term as a Director of the Authority in the past, I accepted with great pleasure my appointment as Chair of the Wet Tropics Management Authority in February 2010. My role as Chairperson provides me with an opportunity to pursue my lifelong passion for the protection of natural landscapes, addressing the challenge of engaging communities in protected area management and ensuring high standards of management are maintained. I thank the Ministerial Council for its confidence in nominating me to the role. I must also pay tribute to my predecessor Chairperson, Lt Gen (Retd) John Grey AC. Lt Gen Grey made a magnificent contribution to leadership of the Authority, broadening and strengthening its links with the community and guiding the Authority through challenging times.

The Authority welcomed the appointment of Cr Julia Leu to the Board in June 2010. Cr Leu brings very substantial knowledge of local government and of community engagement practice and she has a deep grounding in the Wet Tropics community. I am sure she will make a very strong contribution to the governance of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area.

Also welcomed was the re-appointment of Dr Alastair Birtles to the Board after completing an initial three year term. Dr Birtles, who represents the Wet Tropics on the Australian World Heritage Advisory Committee, has made a very strong contribution to the Board and I am confident he will continue to do so.

For the first time in several years, as at 30 June 2010, the Board comprised its full complement of Directors. It is important to maintain continuity in appointments as vacancies arise during 2010/2011.

Caring for Our Country

The Authority remains grateful to the Commonwealth Government for its financial support for the Authority under the Caring for Our Country program. The Commonwealth commitment to fund the Authority for the duration of the Caring for Our Country program and its invitation for proposals for additional investments into the Wet Tropics region under the same program is most welcome and adds an increased degree of financial stability to the management of the World Heritage Area. The Authority will continue to ensure program implementation aligns with the goals of the Caring for Our Country program in the context of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area.

Cassowary Summit

The Authority, in collaboration with the Cassowary Recovery Team, hosted a Cassowary Summit in September 2009. Over 250 individuals representing science, tourism, conservation, education, indigenous, community and government interests attended. The summit activities included a conference, a question and answer forum and a community festival. The summit provided an opportunity to celebrate cassowary country and to raise community awareness that cassowaries are important to protect. The summit represented the Authority's continuing commitment to building connections between scientists, managers and the Wet Tropics community in managing the World Heritage Area.

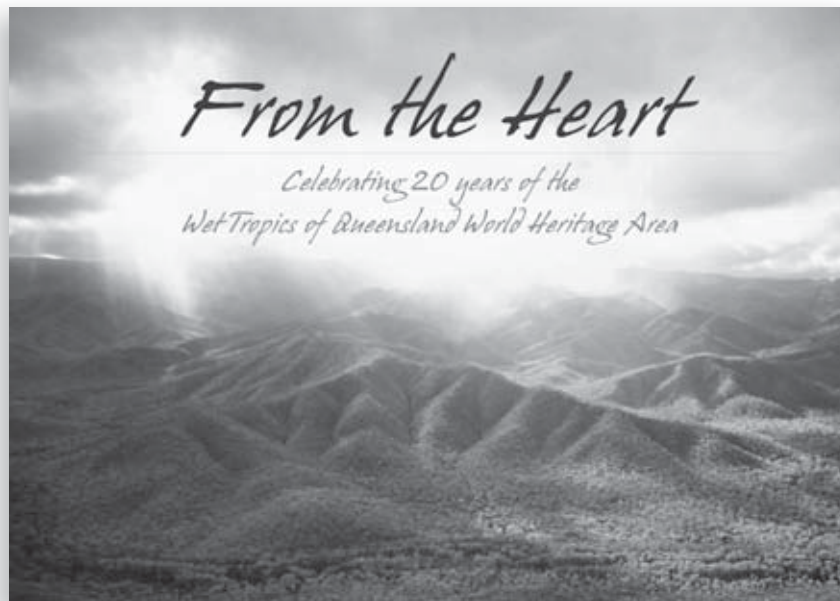
Indigenous Tourism

WTMA identifies Indigenous tourism as a key priority area within the broader context of Wet Tropics World Heritage tourism. This reflects the aspirations of many Rainforest Aboriginal people to develop tourism enterprises as an important economic pathway for sustaining the cultural heritage values associated with the Wet Tropics cultural landscape. The Authority delivered three pre-feasibility workshops to support Indigenous tourism enterprises. This resulted in the formation of the North Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Tourism Alliance which directs Australian Government support for Indigenous tourism development in the region.

Cassowary Awards

The eleventh annual Cassowary Awards were held at Tjapukai Aboriginal Cultural Park on 7 November 2009. The Authority recognises that conservation of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area depends entirely on the support of the community. These very popular awards are an

opportunity for the Authority to recognise the significant voluntary contributions made by community members in support of the Area. The Awards were presented by Senator Jan McLucas, representing the Australian Government, and Mr Steve Wettenhall, Member for Barron River, representing the Queensland Premier, the Hon Anna Bligh. A highlight of the evening was the announcement by Sen. McLucas of the Commonwealth's funding commitment for the Authority for the four years of the Caring for Our Country program. Also held on the evening were the Young Cassowary Awards, now in their fourth year. These awards recognise the work of students and school classes in helping to conserve the Wet Tropics.



From the Heart

The Authority regularly publishes material that assists in informing and educating the community about the values and management of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area. Of particular note this year was the publication of a commemorative book, *From the Heart*, which culminated a year of celebrations recognising the 20th anniversary of World Heritage listing of the Wet Tropics. With forewords by the State and Commonwealth Ministers, *From the Heart* is a combination of social history, art and story telling that demonstrates the special place the rainforests have in the heart of the community. Its authors, all drawn from the regional community, along with the Authority staff and graphic designers involved in its development merit our particular acknowledgement.

Research

The Authority progressed the renewal of the Wet Tropics Research Strategy during the course of the year, consulting widely within the scientific and broader community. Our aim is to establish the Wet Tropics as a *learning landscape* where we promote research that contributes to the management of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area but which also creates valuable knowledge for the management of other areas of environmental importance. Foreshadowed changes to Commonwealth Government environmental research funding created great concern within the Wet Tropics community. The Authority has worked to ensure that the Minister and relevant Departmental officers are well aware of the importance of continuing research in the Wet Tropics to the region itself and in a wider national and global context.

Thanks

Thank you to my colleagues on the Board and to the Executive Director and staff of the Authority, all of whom are dedicated to achieving the highest standards of management appropriate to a World Heritage Area.

Thanks are also due to the chairpersons and members of our various advisory committees and liaison groups. In many ways, these forums serve as the Authority's eyes and ears, ensuring that the issues, knowledge and wisdom of the regional community are available to the Authority and in turn ensuring its priorities and decisions remain vital and relevant. They make the Authority strong.

Our partner organisations in the management of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area play a vital role. In particular we acknowledge the work of the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service, especially the Regional Manager Wolf Sievers, in closely collaborating with the Authority on most aspects of day to day management within the World Heritage Area. The Authority is keen to further develop this positive partnership along with others that include local governments within the World Heritage Area and the wet tropics regional NRM body (Terrain). The leadership role of the Authority is only effective with the full cooperation and support of our numerous regional partners.



Assoc Professor Peter Valentine

Chairperson, Wet Tropics Management Authority

Introduction

World Heritage and National Heritage listing

The World Heritage Convention has been ratified by 187 states around the world and the World Heritage List includes 911 properties. Australia became a signatory in 1974 and at 30 June 2010 there were 18 Australian properties on the World Heritage list. World Heritage listing is recognition by the international community that a place is such an outstanding example of the world's natural or cultural heritage that its conservation is of value to all people. The Wet Tropics of Queensland World Heritage Area (WTQWHA, the Area) has outstanding natural values, meeting all four natural criteria for World Heritage listing and fulfilling the necessary conditions of integrity. The Wet Tropics of Queensland is considered to:

- contain superlative natural phenomena or areas of exceptional natural beauty and aesthetic importance – *Criteria (vii)*.
- be an outstanding examples representing the major stages of Earth's history, including the record of life, and significant on-going geological processes in the development of landforms, or significant geomorphic or physiographic features – *Criteria (viii)*.
- be an outstanding example representing significant on-going ecological and biological processes in the evolution and development of terrestrial, fresh water, coastal and marine ecosystems and communities of plants and animals – *Criteria (ix)*.
- contain the most important significant natural habitats for in-situ conservation of biological diversity, including those containing threatened species of outstanding universal value from the point of view of science or conservation – *Criteria (x)*.

In May 2007 the Area was also listed on Australia's National Heritage List. The Area was listed for the five National Heritage criteria which correspond to its World Heritage criteria. It is intended that, over time and subject to resources available, the Wet Tropics of Queensland will be reassessed for its full range of National Heritage values. The criteria are:

- the place's importance in the course, or pattern, of Australia's natural or cultural history – *Criteria (a)*.
- the place's possession of uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of Australia's natural or cultural history – *Criteria (b)*.
- the place's potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of Australia's natural or cultural history – *Criteria (c)*.

- the place's importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of (i) a class of Australia's natural or cultural places; or (ii) a class of Australia's natural or cultural environments – *Criteria (d)*.
- the place's importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics valued by a community or cultural group – *Criteria (e)*.

Administration of the Act

Enabling legislation

The Wet Tropics of Queensland World Heritage Area is managed under the *Wet Tropics World Heritage Protection and Management Act 1993* (Queensland Act) and the *Wet Tropics of Queensland World Heritage Area Conservation Act 1994* (Commonwealth Act). These Acts implement Australia's international duty for the protection, conservation, presentation, rehabilitation and transmission to future generations of the World Heritage Area.

The Queensland Act establishes the Wet Tropics Management Authority and provides the legal basis for the *Wet Tropics Management Plan 1998* (the Plan) that regulates land use activities in the Area through a zoning and permit system. The Wet Tropics World Heritage Area Management Scheme is an intergovernmental agreement signed by the Prime Minister of Australia and the Premier of Queensland in 1990. It sets out broad structural and funding arrangements for the management of the Area. The agreement is scheduled in the Queensland Act and given effect by section 3 of the Commonwealth Act.

The Wet Tropics Management Authority

The Wet Tropics Management Authority was set up to ensure Australia's obligation under the World Heritage Convention is met in relation to the Area. It is funded by the Australian Government and the Queensland Government, reporting to both on its performance against agreed outcomes. The Authority is a body corporate, with statutory powers defined under the Queensland Act.

The Authority's functions, as defined under section 10 of the Queensland Act, are to:

- develop and implement policies and programs for management of the Area
- formulate performance indicators for the implementation of approved policies and programs

- advise and make recommendations to the Minister and the Ministerial Council
- prepare and implement management plans for the Area
- administer funding arrangements
- facilitate and enter into Cooperative Management Agreements
- rehabilitate and restore the Area
- gather, research, analyse and disseminate information on the Area
- develop public and community education programs
- promote the Area locally, nationally and internationally
- liaise with the Queensland and Australian Governments, agencies and international organisations
- monitor the state of the Area
- advise and report to the Minister and the Ministerial Council on the state of the Area.

In performing its functions the Authority must, as far as practicable, consider Aboriginal tradition and liaise and cooperate with Aboriginal people particularly concerned with the Area.

Statutory reporting obligations

Each year the Wet Tropics Management Authority (WTMA, the Authority) prepares a report on the administration of the Act during the year, financial statements for the year, and a report on the state of the Area, as required under section 63(1) of the Queensland Act and section 10 of the Commonwealth Act.

Management structure

The intergovernmental agreement provides for a Wet Tropics Ministerial Council, comprising two Australian Government and two Queensland Government Ministers. Its function is to coordinate policy and funding for the Area. The Minister responsible for the Queensland Act chairs the Council.

A Board of directors is set up under the Queensland Act and consists of seven directors, six of whom serve in a part time capacity. Two directors are nominated by the Australian Government and two by the Queensland Government. The Chair and a designated Aboriginal director are nominated by the Wet Tropics Ministerial Council. The executive director of the Authority is a non-voting Board director. The

Board's key function is to implement programs to meet Australia's international obligations for the Area under the World Heritage Convention.

The Authority operates as a unit within the Queensland Government Department of Environment and Resource Management. As part of the Queensland public sector, the Authority is subject to established public sector legislation, regulations, standards and guidelines governing administrative functions and arrangements. The Director-General of the Department of Environment and Resource Management (DERM) is the accountable officer for the Authority under the *Financial Administration and Audit Act 1997*. The Authority is responsible to the Director-General regarding compliance with State Government administrative and financial standards.

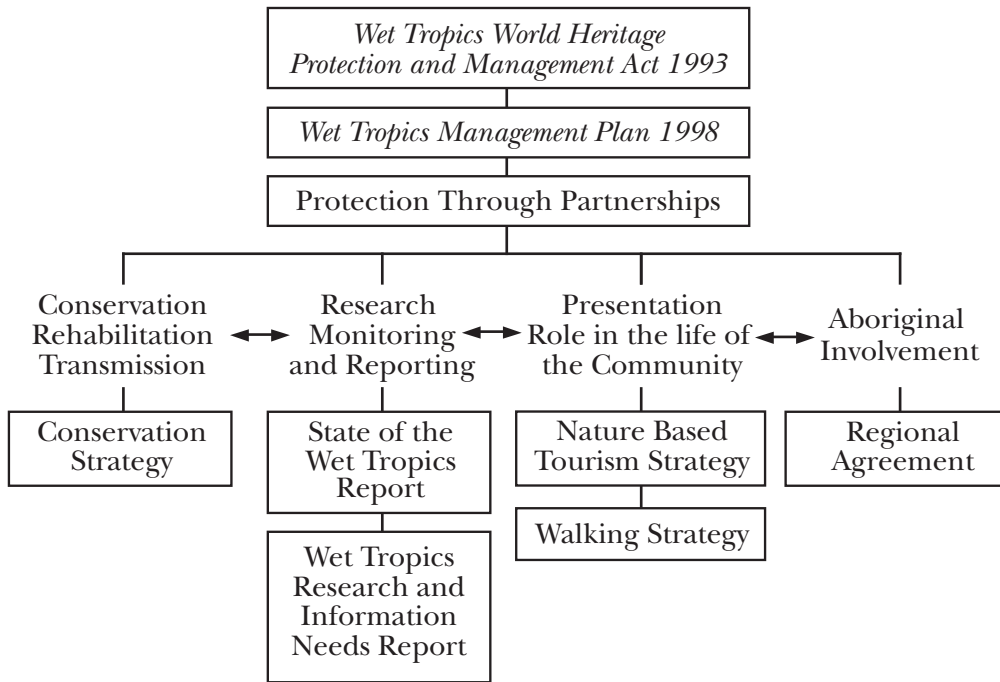
The Authority has two statutory advisory committees appointed by the Board under the Queensland Act. They are the Community Consultative Committee and the Scientific Advisory Committee. The Board has also established, under section 40 of the Queensland Act, the Rainforest Aboriginal Advisory Committee. These committees advise the Authority on policy, programs and research for the management of the Area. The Board has also appointed two liaison groups, the Conservation Sector Liaison Group and the Tourism Industry Liaison Group. The liaison groups provide an information exchange about important and emerging conservation and tourism issues.

The Authority is a small organisation and works in partnership with other agencies, stakeholders and the wider community. The Authority has produced a range of strategic policy and planning documents which guide management of the Area, consistent with its legislative responsibilities. **Figure 1** provides an overview of the Authority's legislative and strategic planning framework.



Cassowary Summit

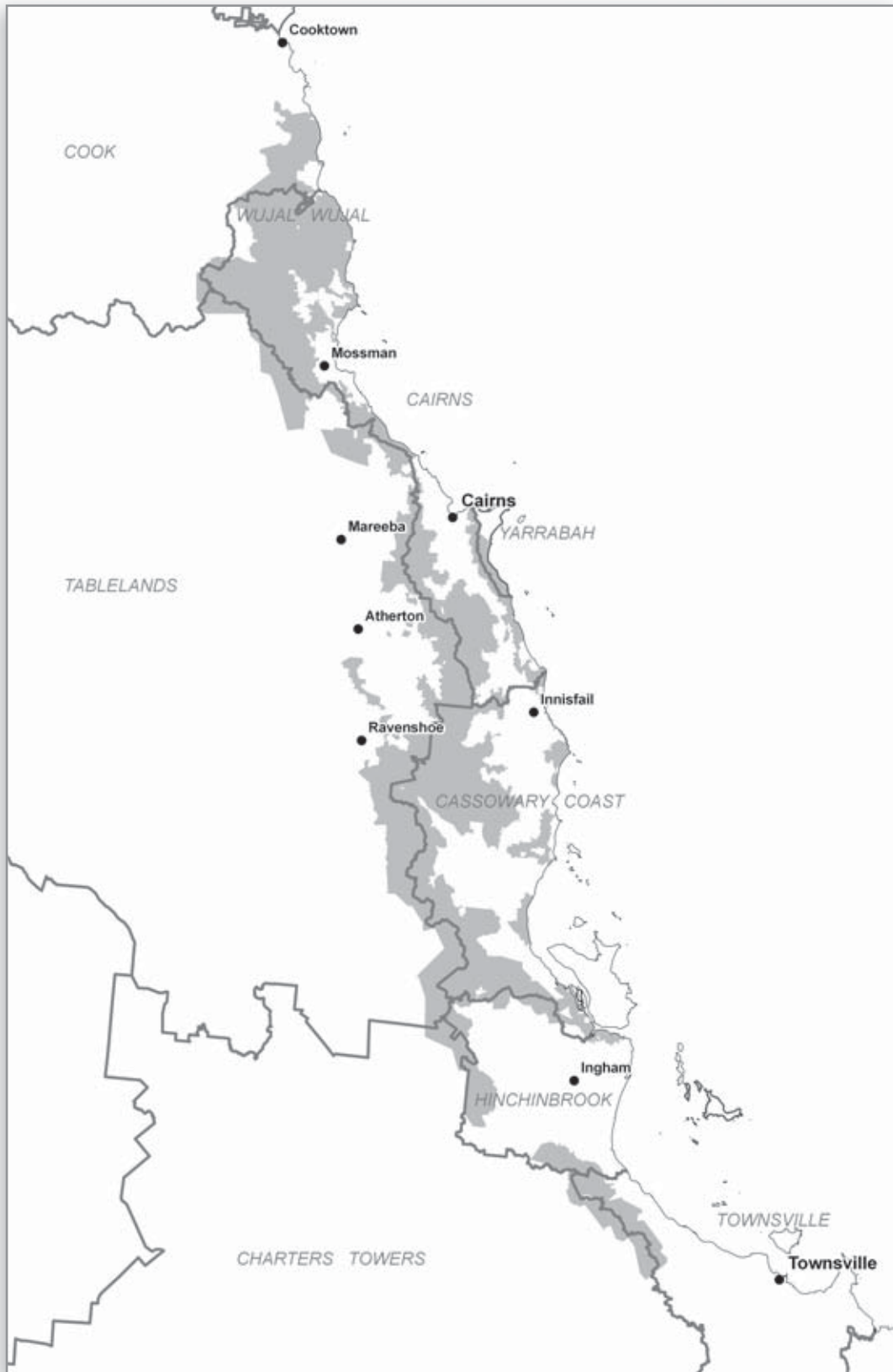
Figure 1. Legislative and strategic planning framework for the WTQWHA.



While the Authority is the lead agency responsible for policy, planning and the coordination of management in the Area, it is not directly responsible for on-ground management. Day-to-day management activities such as infrastructure maintenance and pest control are the responsibility of the relevant land managers which include the Department of Environment and Resource Management, infrastructure service providers for power, water and roads and nine local governments. The local governments Area which include parts of the Wet Tropics of Queensland World Heritage Area are:

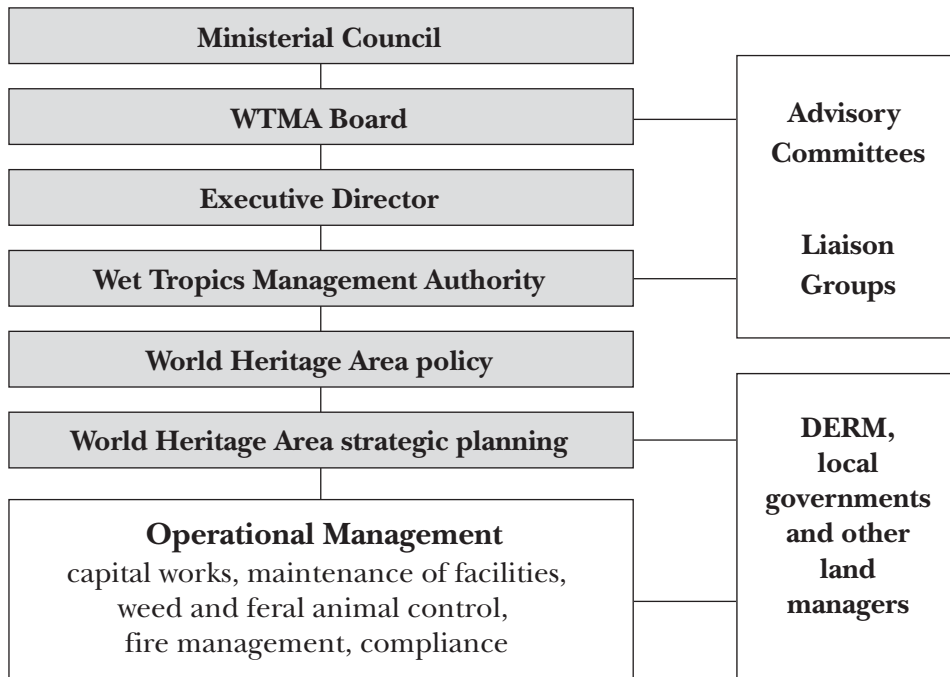
- Cook Shire Council
- Wujal Wujal Aboriginal Community Council
- Cairns Regional Council
- Tablelands Regional Council
- Yarrabah Aboriginal Community Council
- Cassowary Coast Regional Council
- Hinchinbrook Shire Council
- Townsville City Council
- Charters Towers Regional Council.

Figure 2 Local Government Areas which include the WTQWHA



To prioritise and coordinate management activities in the protected area estate within the Area, a partnership agreement is developed each year between the Authority and QPWS. The partnership agreement outlines products and services to be delivered by QPWS under funding provided by the Queensland Government for World Heritage management.

Figure 3. World Heritage Area management



Wet Tropics Ministerial Council

At 30 June 2010 the Ministerial Council comprised:

- Hon Kate Jones MP, Queensland Minister for Climate Change and Sustainability (Chair)
- Hon Peter Garrett AM MP, Australian Minister for Environmental Protection Heritage and the Arts
- Hon Martin Ferguson AM MP, Australian Minister for Tourism.
- Hon Peter Lawler MP, Queensland Minister for Tourism and Fair Trading

No matters were referred to Ministerial Council during 2009-2010.

Wet Tropics Management Authority Board of Directors



*Associate Professor
Peter Valentine*



Cr Julia Leu



Dr Alastair Birtles



Dr Elaine Harding



*Mr Russell Butler
Senior*



Mr Andrew Maclean



Ms Allison Halliday

At 30 June 2010 the Board of Directors comprised:

- Associate Professor Peter Valentine (WTMA Board Chair)
- Cr Julia Leu
- Dr Alastair Birtles
- Dr Elaine Harding
- Ms Allison Halliday
- Mr Russell Butler Senior
- Mr Andrew Maclean (WTMA Executive Director).



WTMA Board

There have been a number of changes in the composition of the board during the year. The Authority welcomed the appointment in 2010 of two new Directors to the Board. Associate Professor Peter Valentine was appointed in February as the Chairperson and Cr Julia Leu was appointed in June upon nomination of the Commonwealth. Dr Alastair Birtles was reappointed for another three year term on the nomination of the State.

The Authority's Board meets on quarterly or as required. All four Board meetings were held in Cairns during the year on 10 August 2009, 9-10 November 2009, 15-16 March 2010 and 10-11 May 2010.

The overall cost of the Board in 2009-2010 was \$38,197. This included meeting fees, special assignment fees, all necessary and reasonable travel expenses and other general operating costs.



Cassowary Award winners 2009

Committees and liaison groups

Community Consultative Committee (CCC)

The members of the CCC are selected as individuals to represent a broad range of community views and expertise from throughout the Wet Tropics region. Their interests and skills include conservation, education, tourism, recreation, local government, Aboriginal culture, science and primary industries. At 30 June 2010 the CCC members were:

Ms Bryony Barnett (*Chair*)

Ms Angela Freeman (*Deputy Chair*)

Ms Jax Bergersen

Ms Pam Birkett

Ms Ellie Bock

Mr Greg Bruce

Mr Marcus Bulstrode

Ms Moni Carlisle

Dr Martin Cohen

Mr John Courtenay

Mayor Pino Giandomenico

Mr Andy Gierz

Cr Brian Hewett

Mr Russell Hore

Ms Nicole Goudberg Moore

Mr Jon Nott

Mr Jeff Pezutti

Mr Ross Rogers

Mr Peter Smith

Mr Douglas Southwood

Mr Nigel Tucker

Ms Linda Venn

Ms Diana Wood

The CCC met on 31 July 2009, 30 October 2009, 5 March 2010 and 30 April 2010. The CCC cost \$9,912 to operate, mostly for catering, venue hire and reimbursement for out-of-pocket expenses and travel expenses. Members do not receive sitting fees.



Community Consultative Committee meeting

Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC)

Members of the SAC come from a broad range of disciplines including the natural, ecological, socio-cultural and economic sciences. Most are actively involved in wet tropics research programs. At June 2010 the members of the SAC were:

Professor Paul Gadek (*Chair*)
Professor Ralf Buckley
Assoc. Professor Carla Catterall
Professor Iain Gordon
Dr Elaine Harding
Dr Dave Hilbert
Dr Rosemary Hill
Dr Suzanne Jenkins

Mr George Lukacs
Dr Chris Margules
Mr Victor Maund
Professor Bruce Prideaux
Mr Peter Stanton
Dr Natalie Stoeckl
Ms Leah Talbot
Professor Steve Williams

Ex officio members

Ms Joann Schmider (RAAC delegate)
Dr Bill McDonald (DERM)
Professor Steve Turton (TLJV)
Ms Sheriden Morris (RRRC)
Mr Peter Wallace (RAAC delegate)
Mr Andrew Millerd (QPWS/DERM)

The SAC met on 30 July 2009, 5th November 2009, 9 March 2010 and 4 June 2010. The SAC cost \$7,850 to operate, mostly for catering, venue hire and reimbursements for out of pocket and travel expenses. Members do not receive sitting fees.



Scientific Advisory Committee

Rainforest Aboriginal Advisory Committee (RAAC)

The RAAC is established by the WTMA Board under s.40(1)(b) of the *Wet Tropics World Heritage Protection and Management Act 1993*. Each of the 18 Rainforest Aboriginal tribal groups with a connection to lands within the Area nominates a member for appointment by the Board. The RAAC provides the Authority with advice on policies and programs and Rainforest Aboriginal community related issues pertinent to all aspects of the Authority's functions in relation to management of the Area.

At 30 June 2010 the members of the RAAC were:

Ms Rhonda Brim (Djabugay)
Mr Ernie Raymont (Ngadjon-Jii)
Ms Lillian Clubb (Yidinji)
Mr John Andy (Girringun)
Mr Claude Beeron (Girringun)
Ms Maureen Green (Kuku Muluridji)
Mr Arthur Johnson (Wulgurukaba)
Ms Joann Schmider (Ma:Mu)
Ms Jeanette Singleton (Yirrganydji)
Mr Peter Wallace (Kuku Yalanji)

The RAAC met five times in Cairns in 2009 - 2010: on 28-29 July 2009; 26-27 October 2008; 1-3 March 2010; 4-5 May 2010 and 28-30 June 2010. A total of 42 resolutions were presented to the Board. The RAAC cost \$22,933 to operate, mostly for catering, venue hire and reimbursement for all reasonable out-of-pocket expenses and travel expenses. Members do not receive sitting fees.



Rainforest Aboriginal Advisory Committee

Stakeholder liaison groups

Conservation Sector Liaison Group (CSLG)

CSLG members represent key conservation groups throughout the Wet Tropics region. The current CSLG was appointed on 3 November 2007 for a three year term. At 30 June 2010 CSLG members were:

Dr Elaine Harding (*Chair*)
Mr Steve Canendo (Yarrabah Council)
Ms Alice Crabtree (Conservation Volunteers Australia)
Ms Rowena Grace (Terrain NRM)
Mr John Grant (Tree Kangaroo and Mammal Group)
Mr David Hudson (Conservation Volunteers Australia)
Mr Luke Jackson (Quoll Seekers Network)
Mr Tony Jurgensen (Johnstone Ecological Society)
Mr Glenn Kvassay (Quoll Seekers Network)
Mr Patrick Pearlman (Environmental Defender's Office)
Ms Margaret Moorhouse (Alliance to Save Hinchinbrook)
Mr John Rainbird (GBRMPA)
Ms Cathy Retter (EnviroCare)
Ms Rowena Grace (Terrain NRM)
Ms Sarah Hoyle (CAFNEC)
Mr Peter Smith (Wildlife Preservation Society Qld)
Ms Claire Garner (Cairns Frog Hospital)

The CSLG met on 27 July 2009, 26 October 2009, 1 March 2010 and 23 April 2010.



Conservation Sector Liaison Group

Tourism Industry Liaison Group (TILG)

TILG members represent members of the tourism industry with interests in the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area. The current TILG was appointed on 3 November 2004 for a three year term. The term has been extended while The Authority's community engagement strategy is under development. At 30 June 2010 TILG members were:

Dr Alastair Birtles (WTMA Board) (*Chair*)
Ms Leanne Bayne (Tableland Promotion Bureau)
Mr Ron Birkett (Daintree Discovery Centre)
Mr Richard Blanchette (Port Hinchinbrook)
Mr Terry Carmichael (Wildlife Habitat)
Mr John Courtenay (Pacific Asia Travel Association)
Mr Gordon Dixon (Far North Queensland Tourism Operators Association)
Ms Angela Freeman (Australian Tourism Export Council)
Mr Rob Giason (Tourism Tropical North Queensland)
Mr Daniel Gschwind (Queensland Tourism Industry Corporation)
Mr Lawrence Mason (Mason's Tours)
Mr Doug Ryan (Port Douglas and Daintree Tourism Association)
Mr Joe Sproats (Townsville Enterprise Limited)
Mr Rob West (BTS Tours)
Mr Jeff Gillies (Tourism Queensland)
Mr Steve McDermott (Terrain NRM)
Mr Phil Rist (Girringun Aboriginal Corporation)
Mr Damien Britnell (Bamanga Bubu Ngadimunku Inc)
Ms Sonya Jeffery (Echo Creek)

The TILG met on 4 June 2009 and the 1 October 2010. The two liaison groups cost a total of \$3,114 mostly for catering and reimbursement for reasonable out-of-pocket expenses and travel expenses. Members of the two liaison groups do not receive sitting fees.



Tourism Industry Liaison Group

Program reports

The Authority comprises three programs which work cooperatively to manage the World Heritage Area. Reports on the activities of the three programs can be found below.

Planning and Conservation Program

The Planning and Conservation Program comprises staff with skills in environmental planning and assessment, permits and regulations, environmental monitoring and reporting, and environmental research. The Planning and Conservation Program is responsible for the delivery of the following projects:

- Heritage Conservation
- Knowledge Management
- Climate Change
- Wet Tropics Plan Review

Heritage Conservation Project

The Heritage Conservation Project is responsible for the administration of the *Wet Tropics Management Plan 1998* (the Plan) which regulates land use activities and access within the Area. This includes the assessment of permit applications for construction and maintenance of roads, powerlines, water supplies and communication facilities, and motorised vehicle access within the Area. The project also develops policies and guidelines about how best to manage the use of the Area. Environmental codes of practice and environmental management plans are often included as part of permit conditions.

The Heritage Conservation Project also provides advice on development proposals, including those outside the Area, that may affect the Area's natural and cultural values. WTMA staff also work closely with landholders, local governments and other service providers to manage infrastructure and development issues and to improve weed and feral animal control. Key project objectives include:

- implementation of strategies that protect the Area from adverse impacts of development and use
- developing strategies that support the conservation and rehabilitation of the Area
- engaging key partners in management roles that support the protection of World Heritage values consistent with the World Heritage Convention and associated Australian and Queensland Wet Tropics legislation.

Assessment of Wet Tropics permit applications

Authority staff assessed and issued permits to the following agencies:

- Cairns Regional Council: upgrading the Cooper Creek and Mason's Creek crossings on Cape Tribulation road to provide greater flood immunity for residents and tourists.
- Cassowary Coast Regional Council: stabilisation of road embankment on a section of Cardstone road adjacent to the Tully River.

Authority staff continue to assess other development proposals including a proposal by Department of Transport and Main Roads for the widening of the Captain Cook Highway near Tin Creek at Wangetti.

Minor and inconsequential activities

Activities deemed to be of minor and inconsequential impact under the Plan do not require a Wet Tropics permit to be issued. Three permit applications were assessed by staff during 2009–2010 and deemed to be minor and inconsequential in terms of the impact the proposed activity would have on the Area's integrity. These proposals were from:

- Department of Transport and Main Roads for the installation of underground power lines for 'Intelligent Transport System' Rungoo rail crossing, Cardwell
- Queensland Rail for the installation of boom gates at the Conn railway crossing, Bruce Highway
- Cairns Regional Council for the concrete sealing of the switchback section of the Bloomfield track.

Wet Tropics permits issued by the Department of Environment and Resource Management

A large number of Wet Tropics permits are issued by the Department of Environment and Resource Management (DERM) which is a permit entity (or delegate) under Part 6 of the Plan. DERM issues these permits under a memorandum of understanding with the Authority. The 231 permits issued by DERM during the year were for the use of motor vehicles on presentation restricted roads and management roads.

Compliance

There were several incidents of non-compliance reported in 2009–2010:

- Two separate instances of unauthorised operation of a motor vehicle on Wangetti Reserve.

- Unauthorised infrastructure adjacent to the CREB Track.
- Unauthorised built infrastructure on the esplanade near Cape Kimberley.
- Alleged clearing of remnant vegetation within the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area at Bramston Beach.
- Alleged breach of Cassowary Coast Regional Council's Wet Tropics permit conditions pertaining to herbicide application in the Mission Beach area.

Subsequent investigations failed to find sufficient evidence to warrant seeking any prosecution.

Land dealings

The Authority provided advice on land dealings to:

- DERM staff regarding one proposed freeholding, two lease conversions, a permit to occupy and three permanent road closures
- DERM staff regarding the opening of a road to access land subject to the proposed Ella Bay Resort
- State Land Asset Management officers of DERM regarding the renewal of an agricultural lease in Hinchinbrook Shire.

Development referrals

Authority staff provided advice regarding development proposals for the following properties located in close proximity to the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area. This advice was provided to:

- Cairns Regional Council regarding a material change of use development application for a tourist resort in Cow Bay
- Cairns Regional Council regarding a material change of use application to facilitate the construction of a single residence on a property adjacent to the World Heritage Area.

Policy Advice

Authority staff provided policy advice on the following matters to:

- Telstra regarding the installation telecommunications infrastructure on Saddle Mountain and Buchan Point
- DERM regarding use dogs to muster cattle in the World Heritage Area near Mount Windsor National Park

- Cairns Regional Council regarding construction of a temporary water intake on the Mossman River
- prospective buyers of two properties one adjacent to and the other within the World Heritage Area
- Balkanu Cape York Development Corporation regarding Mossman Gorge water reserve facilities
- Digital mobile telecommunications on an upgrade of an existing facility near Turtle Cove
- Cairns Regional Council regarding the future development and ongoing maintenance of the Bloomfield Road
- Department of Infrastructure and Planning regarding the proposed Structure Plan for the Mount Peter Master Planned Area
- agencies with Wet Tropics permits regarding an update to the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Pest Medicines Authority condition reference.

Referrals under the EPBC Act

Advice was provided to the Commonwealth Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts about a range of referrals under the EPBC Act associated with urban and rural residential development particularly in the Mission Beach and Innisfail areas.

Weeds and fire

Staff contributed to meetings of the FNQ Pest Advisory Forum and District and Regional Fire Management Coordination Committees. The Authority continued to monitor the former Cardwell Shire's roadside verge rehabilitation program targeting weeds on the Tully Gorge Road. Staff also reviewed action plans for *Stevia ovata* and pond apple.

Knowledge Management Project

The Knowledge Management Project brings together data and information needed to develop knowledge products that will improve the standard of management of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area. The data is also used for fulfilling the Authority's statutory and other World Heritage reporting obligations at the State, Commonwealth and international level. Key project objectives include:

- effective partnerships with the scientific community and other information providers to assist in information gathering and sharing

- preparation and effective delivery of reports, maps and other products relating to conservation management of World Heritage values and integrity
- development and delivery of State of the Wet Tropics reporting frameworks that enable the objective reporting on the condition of the Area and management effectiveness
- development and delivery of a Wet Tropics World Heritage Area Research Strategy and promotion of the concept of the Wet Tropics as a learning landscape.

Research partnerships

Authority staff participated at the Operations Committee of the Reef and Rainforest Research Centre (RRRC), the regional body administering and managing the Commonwealth Government's investment in the Marine and Tropical Sciences Research Facility (MTSRF). The Authority participated at RRRC workshops and information sharing sessions, and liaised with individual researchers on specific issues. The Authority also chaired the RRRC Rainforest and Catchments Steering Committee.

Scientific Advisory Committee

Staff continued to support the Authority's Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC). During the year major issues where SAC advice was sought included:

- the development of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Research Strategy
- the future of rainforest research in the region post-MTSRF
- the review of the Wet Tropics Management Plan
- the development of an environmental offsets policy
- endangered ecological communities
- fire management
- Caring for Our Country funding submissions
- State of the Wet Tropics reporting.

Wet Tropics Vegetation Mapping Initiative

The overall aim of the Wet Tropics Vegetation Mapping (WTMAps) Initiative is to produce a series of 52 vegetation maps at a scale of 1:50 000 covering the entire Wet Tropics bioregion with associated information and data in a readily accessible and user-friendly format. The WTMAps initiative commenced in 1998 and has been a significant

long term project for the Authority. The Authority achieved several major milestones during the year, including:

- the printing of sets of 30 hard copy vegetation maps
- the completion of the full set of 52 high resolution digital 1: 50 000 vegetation map sheets covering the whole of the bioregion. The maps are in a range of file formats for distribution on CD and the Authority's website
- the development of a database to accompany the digital map products which includes a range of information from more detailed vegetation descriptions to photographic examples and facts and figures about each vegetation community.

The complete set of Wet Tropics vegetation maps and associated mapping information will be made publicly available on DVD and through the Authority's website in 2010.

Cassowary summit

The Authority, in collaboration with the Cassowary Recovery Team, hosted a one-day cassowary summit on 8 September 2009. Over 250 individuals representing science, tourism, conservation, education, indigenous, community and government interests attended. The summit activities included a conference, a question and answer forum and a community festival. The summit provided an opportunity celebrate cassowary country and to raise community awareness that cassowaries are important to protect.

Geographic Information Services

The Authority provided geographic information services and products to a varied client base during the year. Clients included local, State and Commonwealth government departments, research organisations, community groups and individuals.

Climate Change Project

The purpose of the Climate Change Project is to improve climate change information capture from other organisations and to deliver reports and advice of strategic relevance to the conservation management of the Area. One of the longer-term aims of this project is to achieve a more integrated and connected natural landscape in the Wet Tropics. This will enhance the resilience of its internationally outstanding biodiversity to cope with the emerging impacts of climate change. It is hoped to achieve the goal of minimising the negative impacts of climate change on the region's biodiversity by maximising the capacity of its species and ecosystems to adapt to future climate change.

During the year the Authority supported the Australian World Heritage Advisory Committee (AWHAC) by producing a synthesis report on the impacts and vulnerabilities of Australia's World Heritage properties to climate change. The report summarised the comments and answers provided by individual World Heritage property managers to a questionnaire distributed by the AWHAC. The report will assist AWHAC in providing advice to the Environment Ministers on the Environment Protection Heritage Council.

Climate change modelling and impact prediction

The Climate Change Project is supporting research into more reliable regional climate change impact predictions on biodiversity in the Area through collaboration with CSIRO and James Cook University (JCU). These partnership arrangements have been facilitated through a Smart State co-sponsor role in the Centre for Tropical Biodiversity and Climate Change (CTBCC) based at James Cook University (JCU). Authority staff also have a research partner role in CSIRO Atherton's MTSRF funded Climate Change project.

Climate change impact monitoring and reporting

The Authority is keen to establish the Area as a benchmark for the early detection of the impacts of climate change on tropical forests generally. This is being achieved through partnership arrangements with CSIRO and JCU in monitoring climate change impacts in the Area, through the establishment and regular measurement of a comprehensive network of biodiversity and climate monitoring plots.

The Authority entered into an agreement with James Cook University's Centre for Tropical Biodiversity and Climate Change to instigate a monitoring program on Mt Lewis targeting, in particular, the lemuroid ringtail possum. In the 1980's, lemuroid ringtail possums were commonly seen above 1000 metres on Mt Lewis. Within the space of a few kilometres, it was not uncommon to see over 40 individual animals, with mean numbers observed varying between 5-15 individuals per kilometre.

In recent years, numbers have been decreasing. No individual possums had been sighted on CTBCC's main monitoring transect at Mt Lewis since an extreme summer heatwave in 2005. Recent searches beyond the main Mt Lewis track have revealed a few records of this species indicating that some possums still live in refuge areas on Mt Lewis. It is important that monitoring of this declining population is continued and that the knowledge gained is used to help inform future management options. Some individuals have survived and this provides an opportunity to learn why and determine if management actions can be implemented to minimise future impacts.

Smart State co-sponsor

For the last four years, the Authority has been a Smart State co-sponsor of the JCU Centre for Tropical Biodiversity and Climate Change. The aims of CTBCC and its partnership with the Authority are to:

- increase understanding of climate change impacts and develop predictions of impacts and extinction risk of species
- determine the adaptive potential of rainforest species in the Wet Tropics
- identify refugial habitats and locations for species under future climate conditions
- monitor changes in species distributions, habitat and microclimate.

Through this partnership, the Authority aims to achieve a better understanding of exactly which species, habitats and geographic areas are most vulnerable to climate change which will assist in better allocating resources to where they are most needed. The outcomes of this research will help to maximise the resilience of Wet Tropics' species and habitats to climate change.

Climate change regional partnerships

In a joint agreement with the Far North Queensland Regional Organisation of Councils, Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority and Terrain NRM, the Authority contributed funding to assist local governments to implement their Cities for Climate Protection programs, and to report on their land management activities which contribute to adaptation to climate change impacts as part of the Reef Guardian Councils program.

Wet Tropics Management Plan Review

The *Wet Tropics Management Plan 1998* regulates activities which might impact on the integrity of the Area or on its World Heritage values. The Plan must be reviewed every ten years through a process that involves two phases of formal consultation. The first phase involved providing public notice that a review of the Plan is about to commence and consultation about the types of amendments being considered by the Authority.

Public submissions received during this first phase were then considered in preparing the *Wet Tropics Amendment Plan 2009 – Consultation Draft*. The second phase of consultation was undertaken in 2009 with the release of the Consultation Draft for public comment. The Consultation Draft proposed a number of amendments to the current Plan related to, inter alia, management zones, motor vehicle access, community services

infrastructure, undesirable plants and animals, restricted activity areas and mining.

In accordance with the requirements of the *Wet Tropics World Heritage Protection and Management Act 1993* (Wet Tropics Act), the public was notified of the preparation of the Consultation Draft via newspaper notices and mailings to over 700 individuals and organisations. A public information package was also prepared to highlight and explain the reasons for the proposed amendments to the Plan. A total of 39 written submissions were received regarding the Consultation Draft.

During 2009-2010, the Authority undertook follow-up consultation to further investigate a number of the concerns raised in submissions received. The Authority is now in the process of preparing a final *Wet Tropics Amendment Plan 2010* following consideration of all submissions made. The next stage is for the Authority to give the final Amendment Plan, together with a report on submissions made in relation to the Consultation Draft, to the Wet Tropics Ministerial Council for its consideration. Under the Wet Tropics Act, approval of the final Amendment Plan by Governor in Council may be made only on the recommendation of the Ministerial Council.



(Photo: Mike Trenery)

Lemuroid ringtail possum

Communities and Partnerships Program

The Communities and Partnerships Program comprises staff with professional skills in community engagement, indigenous partnerships, communications, tourism and visitor services and the development and maintenance of organisational partnerships. The program includes three main projects:

- Indigenous Partnerships Project
- Community Engagement Project
- Tourism and Recreation Project

Through the Communities and Partnerships Program, the Wet Tropics Management Authority works to ensure that the Area is relevant in the life of the community and that, in turn, the community has a say in the management of the Area and has opportunities to contribute towards its protection and management.

Indigenous Partnerships Project

This project is responsible for Aboriginal community liaison, policy, protocol development, cultural heritage management, native title issues, the Rainforest Aboriginal Advisory Committee (RAAC) and the implementation of the Wet Tropics Regional Agreement. Members of the project team work closely with Rainforest Aboriginal people, native title representative bodies, regional Aboriginal organisations, government agencies, NGOs and reference groups.

Successful engagement of Rainforest Aboriginal people in management of the Area yields social and economic dividends for the community, as well as environmental and cultural benefits. This is consistent with key deliverables of the Australian and Queensland Governments to sustain cultures and improve socio-economic well-being by engaging with, and supporting the capacity of, Indigenous communities, organisations and individuals. Appropriate recognition and support provides a platform for improved leadership, governance and operational competencies through capacity growth, education, equitable participation in decision-making, enterprise development and employment.

Positive working relationships and partnerships with Rainforest Aboriginal people

Community consultation

Community consultations were structured around discrete projects and activities such as the review of the Rainforest Aboriginal Advisory

Committee, the development and delivery of Indigenous Tourism Business training workshops, the North Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Tourism Alliance, and the development of applications for Caring for Our Country grants. Consultation activities provided timely and informed advice and information exchange that benefited both Rainforest Aboriginal people and the Authority.

Public information

The Authority promoted its work with Rainforest Aboriginal people through school and university presentations and stalls at the Cairns Regional Show and the 2009 National Aboriginal and Islander Day Observance Committee (NAIDOC) celebrations in Cairns. Rainforest Aboriginal people were consulted in the development of an internet based information/networking portal for Indigenous tourism operators in the Wet Tropics region. The Authority also hosted delegations from World Heritage Areas in New Caledonia and Papua New Guinea providing information on Rainforest Aboriginal people's involvement in the management of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area.

Wet Tropics Regional Agreement

The Authority continued to implement its obligations under the Wet Tropics Regional Agreement, including facilitation of the Rainforest Aboriginal Advisory Committee (RAAC), applying consultation protocols with local Traditional Owners on all aspects of the Authority's business and working with QPWS to establish operational working groups.

Native Title, ILUAs and other agreements

The Authority participated in the negotiation and implementation of a variety of Native Title determinations and associated Indigenous Land Use Agreements (ILUAs) and Cooperative Management Agreements. In this task the Authority seeks to reconcile its responsibility to manage the Area with the Native Title rights of Rainforest Aboriginal people, their cultural obligations to protect and manage lands, and their aspirations for land use, community development and socioeconomic recovery.

The Authority:

- Engaged in ILUA negotiations with Dulabed/Malanbarra Yidinji (complete) Jirrbal, MaMu, Djiru and Yarrabah people for tenure and management arrangements over National Parks, State Forest, Deed of Grant in Trust and Unallocated State Land in their respective areas.
- Participated in ILUA implementation with cross-agency teams that coordinated planning and on-ground projects in partnership with Traditional Owner organisations, including Mandingalbay Yidinji, Djabugay and Ngadjon-Jii.

Indigenous Protected Areas (IPAs)

Girringun Region Traditional Owners, Mandingalbay Yidinji people and Eastern Kuku Yalanji people all began initial consultations with the Authority, DERM and other key stakeholders to investigate the feasibility of declaring an Indigenous Protected Area (IPA) over their traditional country.

Kuku Yalanji ILUA implementation

A total of 15 ILUAs between Kuku Yalanji people and the State, local governments, grazing and mining leaseholders, Telstra, Ergon and the Authority cover some 230,000 hectares, most of which is within the northern sector of the WTWHA.

The Authority has worked in collaboration with Jabalbina Yalanji Aboriginal Corporation (Jabalbina - the registered native title body corporate and land trust of the Eastern Kuku Yalanji peoples) and other Yalanji organisations, the Department of Environment and Resource Management and other agencies, Terrain NRM Ltd and local governments to implement the ILUAs. Coordination is effected through steering and operational committees with specific engagement of other parties as required. The Authority appointed project staff and supported the institutional development of Jabalbina and contributed to its operational capacity.

The Authority in partnership with Jabalbina have progressed the development of community development plans (CDPs) for agreed Yalanji owned lands that will provide for their socio-economic aspirations to be realised. Community meetings conducted with the five main Clan groups provided updates on the ILUA implementation and received community views on developing the CDPs. This included the establishment of Jabalbina's pan-Yalanji steering committee connected to clan based working groups. A whole-of-government response to implementation was initiated by the Authority to achieve a networked approach to planning and development.

Conservation terms for an agreed cattle grazing lease were developed in collaboration with DERM and the leaseholder enabling conditional continuation of an economic use that is otherwise deemed undesirable in the WTWHA. The Authority also worked with DERM and Jabalbina to develop activity guidelines for national parks and nature refuges on Yalanji lands.

National Heritage listing

The Authority continued its commitment to the process of nominating the Area for cultural heritage values on the National Heritage List. In November 2009 the Authority collaborated with the Australian Government to conduct a series of consultation rounds with Traditional

Owners seeking additional supporting information for the nomination. It is expected that a decision will be made in 2010-11. The Authority regularly sought the advice of the RAAC, other key Aboriginal people and the Girringun Aboriginal Corporation.

Partnerships

The Authority provided on-going support to Rainforest Aboriginal people in their aspirations to establish an independent Traditional Owner partner entity providing greater efficiencies in service delivery and more effective streamlined governance to matters that require a strategic regional voice in the Wet Tropics. The Authority assisted preparations and participated in whole of government round table discussions facilitated by the Queensland Department of Communities regarding future regional arrangements.

The Authority participated on the Mandingalbay Yidinji Strategic Plan Implementation Committee (MYSPIC) and contributed to the implementation of the strategic plan for country through working with and providing resources to the Djunbunji Aboriginal Corporation and rangers and Mandingalbay Yidinji people.

Engagement in the governance of the Area

Rainforest Aboriginal Advisory Committee (RAAC)

The RAAC advised the Board on many issues including:

- representatives to the Australian World Heritage Indigenous Network and the Australian World Heritage Advisory Committee
- a framework of processes and actions to advance coordinated support for Rainforest Aboriginal peoples involvement in World Heritage management
- the benefits of a regional Rainforest Aboriginal cultural and natural resource management entity for strategic advisory and engagement services
- grant and funding applications
- policy planning and strategy development
- Rainforest Aboriginal Leadership Group / Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples Alliance
- Indigenous tourism development
- National Heritage Listing / cultural heritage mapping and traditional ecological knowledge projects

Australian World Heritage Indigenous Network (AWHIN)

The Authority facilitated the involvement of Rainforest Aboriginal people in the Australian World Heritage Indigenous Network (AWHIN) enabling Wet Tropics Traditional Owners to meet with and develop strategies and ideas with Traditional Owners from other Australian World Heritage Areas. Two Traditional Owner delegates, Ms Allison Halliday and Mr Troy Wyles-Whelan, and two Traditional Owner proxies, Ms Joann Schmider and Mr Ernie Raymont, were nominated to represent the Area on AWHIN.

Australian World Heritage Advisory Committee (AWHAC)

Ms Margaret Freeman, resigned her position as the female AWHIN representative to the Australian World Heritage Advisory Council (AWHAC), and in June 2010 Ms Allison Halliday was nominated by AWHIN to fill the female Aboriginal position on the council.

Community Engagement Project

The Community Engagement Project aims to inspire the community to actively engage and participate in conservation of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area and to educate the community to appreciate the diverse environmental and socioeconomic benefits of the Area. The project also aims to promote the role of the Authority and its partners in managing the World Heritage Area.

The project generates and supports a broad range of products and activities to engage and educate the community, including advisory and liaison groups, educational materials, the Wet Tropics Management Authority website, brochures, books and DVDs, local media stories, regional displays, art exhibitions, and the annual Cassowary Awards.

Working with the Wet Tropics community

Advisory committees and liaison groups

The Authority continued to provide executive support for the Community Consultative Committee and the Conservation Sector Liaison Group. Both groups meet quarterly and provide advice to the Authority's Board. Major issues discussed for the 2009–2010 year included:

- Wet Tropics Plan review
- Urban and coastal development issues
- Grant and funding submissions
- Vegetation Management Act
- Wet Tropics draft Water Resources Plan

- Research strategy
- Wet Tropics Management Plan review
- Cassowary Summit and festival

Cassowary Awards and Young Cassowary Awards

The eleventh annual Cassowary Awards were held at Tjapukai Aboriginal Cultural Park at Smithfield on 7 November 2009. The Awards were presented by Senator Jan McLucas, representing the Australian Government, and Mr Steve Wettenhall, Member for Barron River, representing the Queensland Premier, the Hon Anna Bligh. Also held on the evening were the Young Cassowary Awards, now in their fourth year. These awards recognise the work of students and school classes in helping to conserve the Wet Tropics. Eleven Cassowary Award winners were honoured, including two Young Cassowary Awards.

Art exhibitions

The Authority launched its Keep it Cool poster competition in March 2009, as part of the Festival of Cairns event. The competition was held in conjunction with GBRMPA, Skyrail, Big Cat Green Island Cruises and the Cairns Regional Gallery. Many excellent entries were received highlighting the perceptions of young artists of the rainforest and reef around the Wet Tropics. Winners received prizes donated by Skyrail and Big Cat were exhibited at the Cairns Regional Gallery. The winners artwork was also made into a calendar for 2010.

Promotion of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area

Celebrating the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area

The Authority launched a book named *From the Heart* on 14 August 2009. This was published and distributed by the Authority in celebration of the 20th Anniversary of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area. The book highlights the fight for World Heritage listing and traces the journey through to today's tree planting activities, environmental education and tourism. It reflects the passion and dedication of the community in the Wet Tropics.

Wet Tropics website

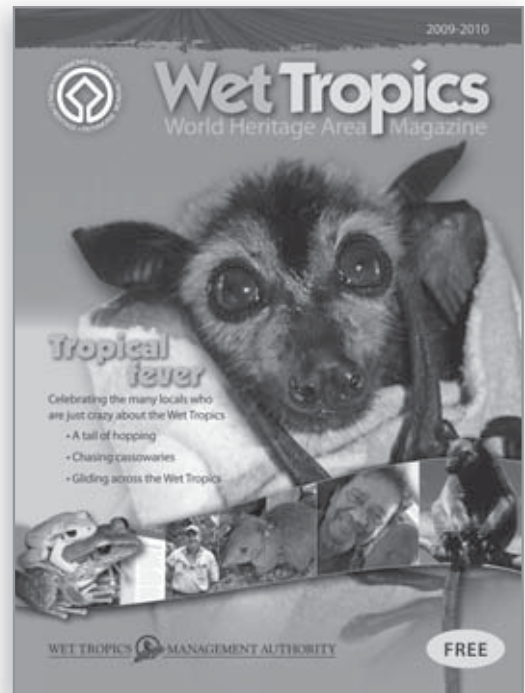
The Authority continued to maintain and expand its extensive website of over 500 pages. Website statistics showed between 45,000 and 57,000 visits to the website each month. The most popular features were Wet Tropics walks, the Rainforest Explorer primary school educational activities and images, the news and issues section, and plants and animals pages.

Media relations

The Authority continued to promote World Heritage issues in the media and the wider community. Articles in the media publicised the Cassowary Summit, partnerships with other World Heritage Areas, the From the Heart book launch, the Cassowary Awards and the Authority's poster and art exhibitions.

E-newsletter

Publication of the Authority's quarterly e-newsletter continued during the year, with the objective of ensuring the Wet Tropics community is well informed about the World Heritage Area and the work of the Authority and its partners.



Education

Newspapers in Education

The Authority sponsored the Newspapers in Education (NiE) section of The Cairns Post and The Townsville Bulletin newspapers for the sixth year. As part of its sponsorship the Authority provided four pages of stories and activities in each newspaper throughout the year. This year's NiE articles promoted the Young Cassowary Awards and the Wet Tropics and Keep It Wild art competitions.

Presentations

Authority staff delivered more than 20 presentations about the Wet Tropics and World Heritage management to universities, schools, TAFE, overseas students and visiting overseas dignitaries during the year. The Authority also participated in public events including a stall at the Cairns Regional Show in July 2009.

Tourism and Visitor Services Project

This project focuses on liaison and support for the tourism industry and visitor information centres as the important points of connection with tourists visiting the Area. Tourism provides a very important conduit to present the Area's values to the wider public. The project seeks to support and raise professional standards and access to quality information and is supported by our production of the Wet Tropics magazine, liaison with tour operators and the tourism industry and our support to visitor information centres.

Tourism is an important focus for the Authority. It has the potential to provide local communities with economic and social benefits, as well as benefit the wider Australian economy. It is also one of the key methods of presenting the Area as set out in the World Heritage Convention. Cooperation between the tourism industry, management agencies and the community is essential for the long-term success of tourism. The Authority's Nature Based Tourism Strategy provides the basis for tourism management in the World Heritage Area. The overall aim is to encourage a dynamic, sustainable and professional nature-based tourism industry in the Wet Tropics. In 2008–2009 the Authority continued to foster cooperative partnerships between the tourism industry, managing agencies, Indigenous people, conservation groups and the wider community in relation to tourism issues.

Tourism Industry Liaison Group

The Authority provides support to the Wet Tropics Tourism Industry Liaison Group, which represents industry views to the Board. During 2008–2009, the effects of the global economic downturn on the tourism sector were a common theme for discussions.

Major issues discussed in 2008–2009 were:

- Walking tracks maintenance and use
- The Wet Tropics Management Plan review
- Research strategy
- Eco tourism accreditation

Publications and tourism resources

Signage

The Authority has continued to cooperate with the Department of Transport and Main Roads (DTMR) to erect road signs in the Wet Tropics region with the World Heritage emblem. DTMR will continue to erect more signage throughout the region.

Visitor centres

Wet Tropics staff attended visitor centre meetings to familiarise staff and volunteers with the Wet Tropics WHA and as a valuable source of advice about visitor information needs.

Wet Tropics magazine

The 2009/2010 Wet Tropics magazine was published and distributed. This issue celebrated the passion in the community for protecting the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area. Visitor centres are an important means of distributing information including the Wet Tropics magazine to visitors to the Area.

Indigenous Tourism

The Wet Tropics Management Authority delivered two business development workshops to support Indigenous tourism enterprises. This resulted in the formation of the North Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Tourism Alliance which directs Australian Government support for Indigenous tourism development in the region.

WTMA identifies Indigenous tourism as a key priority area within the broader context of Wet Tropics World heritage tourism. This reflects the aspirations of many Rainforest Aboriginal people to develop tourism enterprises as an important economic pathway for sustaining the cultural heritage values associated with the Wet Tropics cultural landscape.

WTMA is also committed to promote socio-economic opportunities for Indigenous people in the region and so helps address the barriers to successful Indigenous involvement in tourism.

Eco tourism accreditation

The Department of Tourism, Energy and Tourism supported WTMA to review the feasibility of a World Heritage tourism accreditation scheme. WTMA developed a proposal to employ a consultant to investigate the feasibility of tour operator accreditation in the Wet Tropics in a report completed in August 2009.

Business Management Program

This Program principally supports the Authority's strategic plan goal that the *Wet Tropics Management Authority demonstrates excellence in corporate governance and management*. This is delivered by improvement of the Authority's contribution to investors, stakeholders and the community by continued development of the Authority's capability, effectiveness and accountability. There are two projects within this program: Corporate Development and Business Administration.

Corporate Development

The Corporate Development project aims to ensure the Authority maintains and develops its own capacity and continues to adapt to the changing needs of the Australian and Queensland Governments and the Wet Tropics community.

Business Planning

The Authority was very pleased to receive advice from the Hon Peter Garrett AM MP Minister for Environmental Protection, Heritage and the Arts of a four year funding commitment from the Caring for Our Country Program to extend over 2009/10 to 2012/13. The Authority has given a high priority to developing a business plan in response to this funding security that will ensure it creates the highest possible value for the Wet Tropics community and stakeholders over this period.

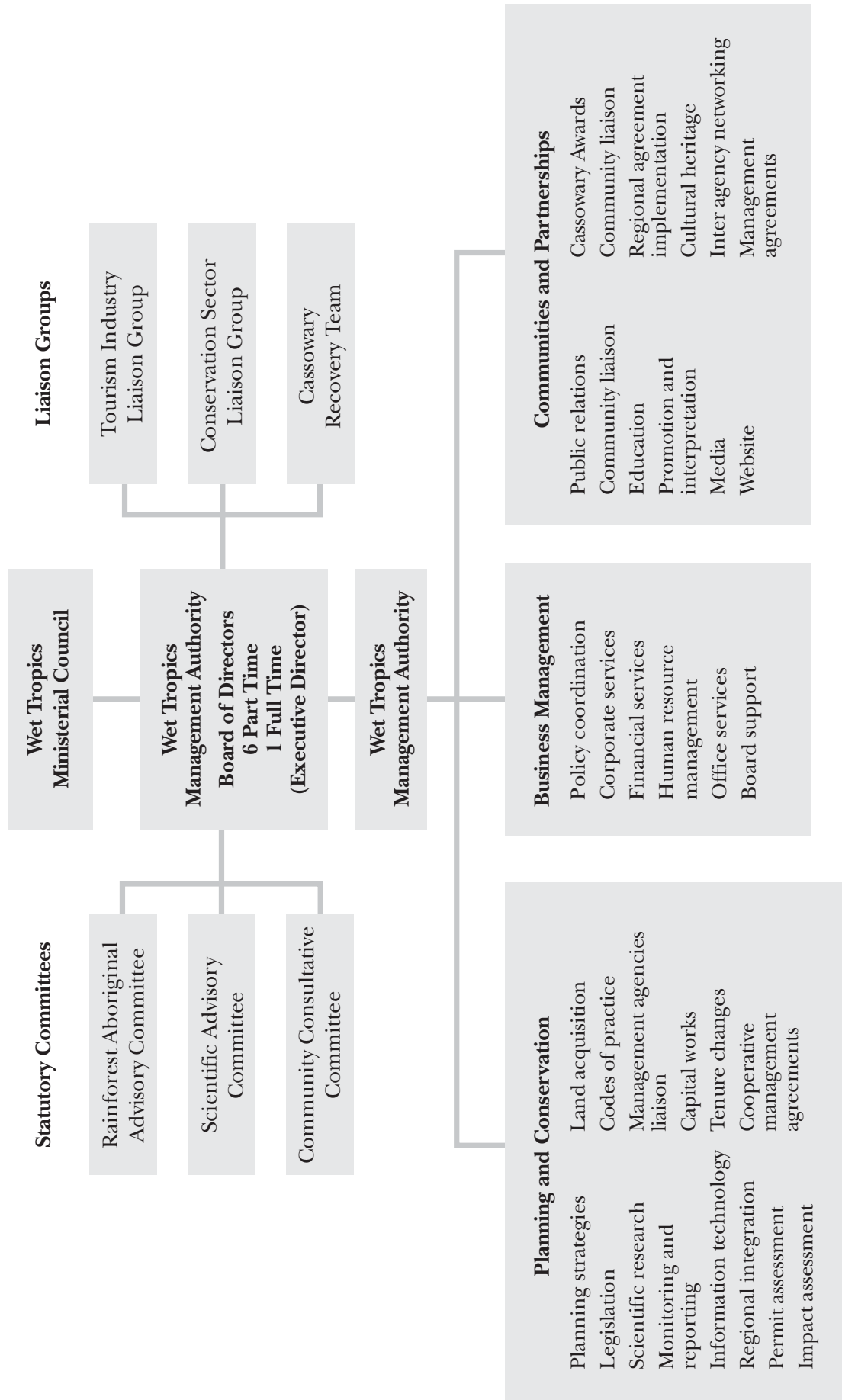
Partnerships

The Authority regards partnerships with other agencies with roles in environmental management as central to its success in managing the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area. Of particular importance is the Authority's relationship with the Department of Environment and Resource Management, primarily through the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS). The Authority manages its formal relationship with QPWS through an annual agreement. QPWS and the Authority continue to develop the relationship, looking for ways to ensure programs in the two organisations are complementary and accountable.

Other important partnerships for the Authority include those with:

- Terrain NRM which has worked with the Authority in Indigenous partnerships projects, joint development of funding applications and in community engagement.
- The Reef and Rainforest Research Centre which administers the Marine and Tropical Sciences Research Facility funding much of the rainforest research in the region.

Table 1. Wet Tropics management structure



- The Department of Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts which, in addition to its heritage policy roles in support of the Authority, coordinates the assessment and issue of permits under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* with the work of the Authority.
- Tourism Queensland which, along with Tropical Tourism North Queensland, the Queensland Tourism Industry Council, the Commonwealth Department of Resources Energy and Tourism and many regional tourism businesses, assists the Authority in ensuring the World Heritage Area is appropriately presented to visitors.

The Authority understands the importance of coordinating its work with other State and Commonwealth agencies to facilitate efficient and effective service delivery to the Wet Tropics community. The Authority's active participation in the Far North Queensland Regional Managers Coordination Network is an important means of achieving this.

The Authority also maintains linkages with other protected area and environmental managers through membership of the IUCN and through membership of the Parks Forum, a national leadership body for protected area management.

International Links

The Authority remains interested in developing its role in support of heritage managers in the Asia Pacific region. This objective is consistent with intentions of the World Heritage Convention and aligns well with the Queensland Government's tropical knowledge policy agenda.

The Authority continues to work with the Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts to secure a partnership with the managers of the East Rennell World Heritage Area in the Solomon Islands. This would build on the successful Cairns Training Workshop, held in early 2009.

Officials from Papua New Guinea, supported by Australian officials from the Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts visited the Authority in June to discuss management approaches for the Wet Tropics that may be relevant to the management of the Kokoda Trail. The geographic proximity of Cairns and Port Moresby and the strategic significance of Papua New Guinea at a regional, state and national scale establishes a strong logic for such a relationship.

In April, Authority staff hosted a visit to the Wet Tropics by His Excellency, Mr Augustine Mahiga, the newly appointed Permanent Representative to the United Nations for the United Republic of Tanzania. Mr Mahiga's visit provided an opportunity to discuss the comparative challenges of protected area management in Australia and Tanzania.

Table 2. Wet Tropics Management Authority operating statement

Controlled Revenue and Expenses	Notes	2009-10	2008-09
REVENUE		\$'000	\$'000
Revenue from Government			
Payments for Outputs	1	1,983	1,812
Asset Assumed/Liabilities transferred		0	0
Sub-total Government Revenue		1,983	1,812
Own Source Revenue			
User Charges		19	1
Grants and Other Contributions		2,760	2,918
Taxes fees and fines		11	74
Gain on disposal of fixed assets		0	0
Other Revenue		2	7
Interest		0	0
Sub-total Own Source Revenue		2,792	3,000
TOTAL REVENUE		4,775	4,812
EXPENSES		\$'000	\$'000
Operating Expenses			
Program			
Business Management		2,884	2,838
Communities & Partnerships		984	894
Planning & Conservation		870	1,072
Sub-total Operating Expenses		4,739	4,804
Non-Operating Expenses			
Depreciation		7	11
Asset Writedowns/Loss on disposal		2	0
Sub-total Non-Operating Expenses		9	11
TOTAL EXPENSES		4,748	4,815
OPERATING RESULT	2	27	-3

Notes:

- The 2008-09 Payment for Outputs amount has been recast to be calculated on the same basis as the 2009-10 figure. The Payment for Outputs amount reflects the actual expenses funded from Queensland Government appropriation in that year. Previously the amount reflected the transfer of a budgeted revenue amount and included unspent funding in that year and prior years.
- As the actual revenue identified does not equate to the budget allocated to the Authority, the operating result does not reflect performance against budget or the remaining available funds.

Business Administration

The Business Administration project delivers the activities of financial management, workforce management, general administration, office services and secretariat support for the Authority's Board and the Wet Tropics Ministerial Council. The project's primary objective is to develop and maintain appropriate management information and financial systems for the Authority and to improve its efficiency and effectiveness.

Financial management

Funding

As the Authority is a Statutory Authority, its general-purpose financial statements details for 2009-2010 are incorporated in the overall Department of Environment and Resource Management financial statements. Total funding of \$4.7 million for 2009-2010 was provided to the Authority by the Australian and Queensland Governments. The Authority realised an operating loss of \$45,000. A summary of the Authority's operating statement for 2009-2010 is provided in Table 2.

The Australian Government's base allocation to the Authority for 2009-2010 was \$2.7 million. These funds were allocated among the Authority's programs. The Queensland Government contributed \$1.8 million to the Authority. Under the annual Partnership Agreement with Queensland Parks and Wildlife Services, these funds were then transferred to Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service for on-ground World Heritage management services. A further \$6 million of State funds were provided to support the Kuku Yalanji community development planning project.

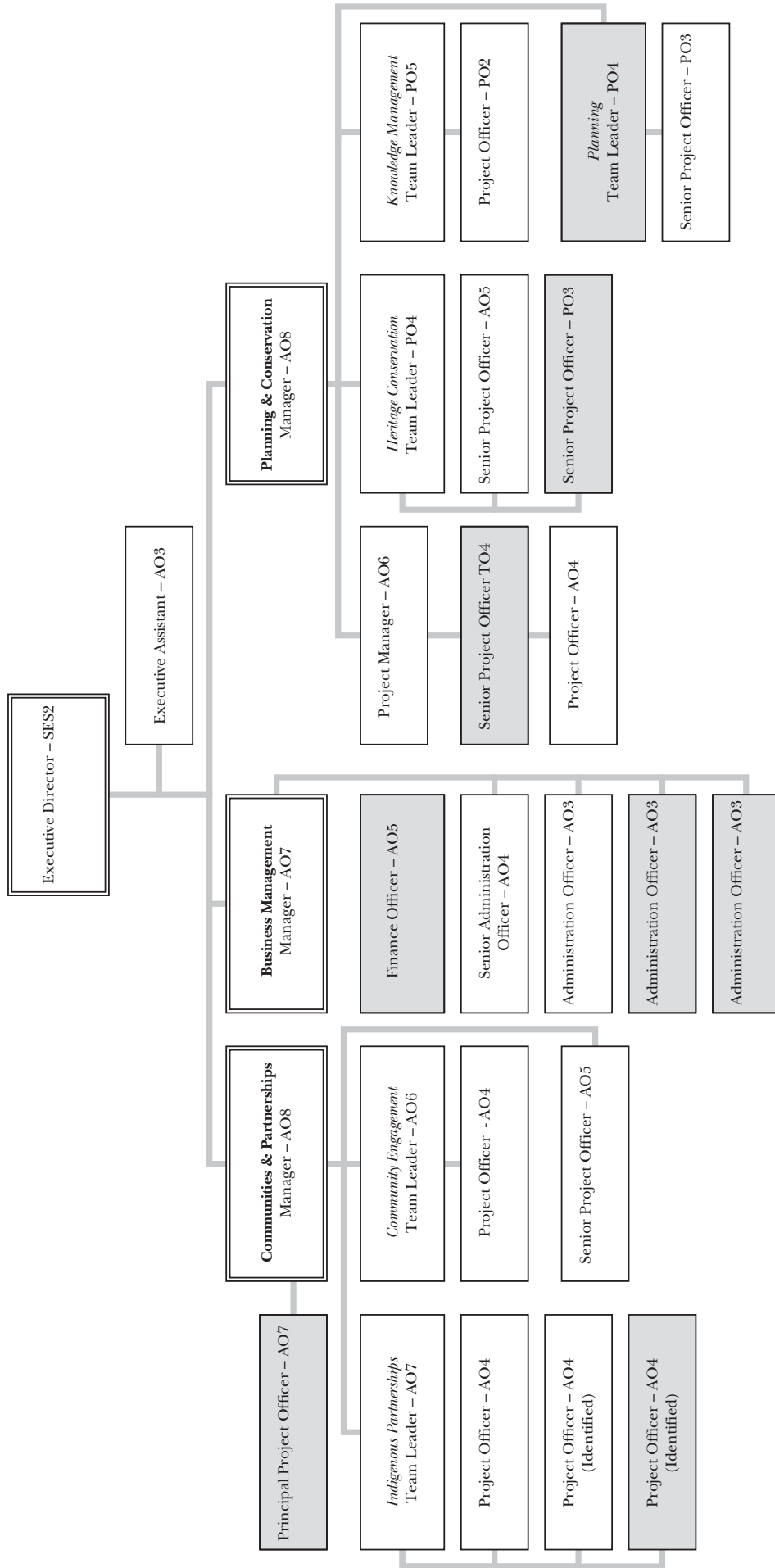
Audits

No operational audits were conducted in 2009-2010.



Trinity Anglican School performing a play Plight of the Cassowary at the Cassowary Summit

Table 3. WTMA staffing structure, 30 June 2010



Vacant Position

Staffing and contractors

Staffing

At 30 June 2010 the approved staff establishment of the Authority totalled 28 permanent positions, eight of which were vacant. An overview of the Wet Tropics management structure is provided in **Table 1**. Details of the Authority's staffing structure are shown in **Table 3**.

Contractors

Contract staff supplemented staff resources during the year to provide a range of services. These services included consultation and liaison with Rainforest Aboriginal people; Geographic Information Systems services, graphic designers, financial and workforce management; conservation and tourism activities and administrative support. **Table 4** shows expenditure on consultancies and contracts for 2009-2010 compared to the previous financial year.

Table 4. Expenditure on contracts

	Expenditure (\$)	
	2009-2010	2008-2009
Consultancies by Category *		
Management	0	6,000
TOTAL	0	6,000
Contract Staff by Program*		
Business Management	28,948	25,850
Communities and Partnerships	46,355	21,638
Planning and Conservation	16,007	90,701
TOTAL	91,310	138,189

* Excludes QPWS expenses incurred against the Service Agreement.

Workplace health and safety

Monthly workplace health and safety inspections were conducted with no significant issues arising. One workplace incident was reported during this financial year (with no medical expenses) and no lost time incidents were recorded. Staff training for workplace health and safety is described above.

Equal Employment Opportunity

All selection recommendations are monitored and reviewed to ensure compliance with recruitment and selection directives. All appointments complied with directives and no EEO complaints were received. At 30 June 2010 the Authority had ten females and ten males on staff and eight positions vacant. **Table 5** gives a profile of the Authority's staff.

Table 5. Employment by gender, occupational stream and salary

Employment by gender and occupational stream as at 30 June 2010		
Stream	Female (%)	Male (%)
Administration and Senior Executive Service	8 (40)	6 (30)
Professional	2 (10)	3 (15)
Technical	0	1 (5)
Operational	0	0
Total	10 (50)	10 (50)
Employment by gender and salary level as at 30 June 2010 (based on substantive positions)		
Salary Range	Female (%)	Male (%)
\$102,671+		1 (5)
\$93,945 - \$99,361		2 (10)
\$84,793 - \$90,921		3 (15)
\$75,779 - \$81,075		4 (20)
\$66,045 - \$71,785	3 (15)	
\$56,989 - \$63,830	5 (25)	
\$48,197 - \$54,863	2 (10)	
\$37,730 - \$46,183		
Total	10 (50)	10 (50)

Overseas travel

There were no overseas trips by Authority staff during 2009-2010.

Terms and abbreviations

Bioregion	Wet Tropics of Queensland biogeographic region
CRT	Cassowary Recovery Team
CCC	Community Consultative Committee
CDP	Community Development Plan
CMA	Cooperative Management Agreement
Commonwealth Act	<i>Wet Tropics of Queensland World Heritage Area Conservation Act 1994</i>
CREB	Cairns Regional Electricity Board
CSIRO	Commonwealth Scientific, Industry and Research Organisation
CSLG	Conservation Sector Liaison Group
DEHWA	Department of the Environment, Heritage, Water and the Arts
DERM	Department of Environment and Resource Management
DTMR	Department of Transport and Main Roads
EEO	Equal Employment Opportunity
EPBC Act	<i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i>
EPHC	Environment Protection and Heritage Commission
FNQ	Far North Queensland
FNQ ROC	Far North Queensland Regional Organisation of Councils
FNQ 2031	Far North Queensland 2031 Statutory Regional Plan
ICC	Indigenous Coordination Centre
ILUA	Indigenous Land Use Agreement
JCU	James Cook University
JYAC	Jabalbina Yalanji Aboriginal Corporation
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MTSRF	Marine and Tropical Science Research Facility
NAIDOC	National Aboriginal and Islander Day of Commemoration

NQATSTA	North Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Tourism Alliance
QPWS	Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service
Queensland Act	<i>Wet Tropics World Heritage Protection and Management Act 1993</i>
RAAC	Rainforest Aboriginal Advisory Committee
RAN	Rainforest Aboriginal News
RRRC	Reef and Rainforest Research Centre
SAC	Scientific Advisory Committee
Terrain NRM	Terrain Natural Resource Management
The Area	Wet Tropics of Queensland World Heritage Area
The Authority	Wet Tropics Management Authority
The Plan	<i>Wet Tropics Management Plan 1998</i>
TILG	Tourism Industry Liaison Group
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation
USL	Unallocated State Land
WTMA	Wet Tropics Management Authority
WTQWHA	Wet Tropics of Queensland World Heritage Area
WTWHA	Wet Tropics World Heritage Area

**State of the
Wet Tropics Report
2009–2010**

Table of Contents

Summary	55
Introduction and history	60
1. Managing tourism in the Wet Tropics	64
Policy framework	64
UNESCO framework for joint cooperation	65
Wet Tropics Management Plan and amendments	67
Wet Tropics Nature Based Tourism Strategy 2000	68
Wet Tropics Walking Strategy 2001	69
Commercial Activity Permits	69
2. Visitors to the Wet Tropics	70
Visitor numbers	70
Opportunities	73
3. The value of tourism in the Wet Tropics	79
4. Research	82
5. Indigenous and cultural and heritage tourism	83
Cultural landscapes	83
6. Investment and infrastructure	87
7. A sustainable future for tourism in the Wet Tropics	89
Eco tourism accreditation	89
Wet Tropics tour guide accreditation	89
Business accreditation	90
Supporting Indigenous tourism	90
National Landscapes	91
World Heritage gateway	91
Research	91
Terms and abbreviations	93
References	94

Summary

The spectacular scenery, lush rainforests, sparkling lakes and unique wildlife of the Wet Tropics have been part of the cultural landscape of the Rainforest Aboriginal people for thousands of years. Today they attract over two million tourists from Australia and around the world to the Wet Tropics of Queensland World Heritage Area, with an input of \$2.6 billion to the regional economy.

History

The history of tourism in the Wet Tropics dates back to the early settlement of the region by non-Indigenous people in the mid-1800s. This was associated with the mining and logging industries when local families enjoyed waterside picnics and visitors travelled by ship, train and horse-drawn carriages to reach rainforest sites.

The documentation of the unique values of the Wet Tropics led to the World Heritage Listing in 1988 which brought about the end of logging and a growth in tourism. Worldwide and national interest in this World Heritage Area as a destination for nature-based tourism was further enhanced by its connection to the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area (listed in 1981).

Policy framework

Since its establishment in 1993, The Wet Tropics Management Authority (WTMA), which reports to both the Queensland and Australian Governments, has developed a number of strategies to meet its obligations under the World Heritage Convention, “*to protect, conserve, present and transmit to future generations and rehabilitate the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area*”.

Building on the 1997 policy framework *Protection through Partnerships*, and in consultation with stakeholders, WTMA has prepared and implemented a number of strategies and policies for tourism and visitor management that acknowledge and accommodate the important role of the tourism industry in presenting the Area to visitors. The Wet Tropics Management Plan 1998, Wet Tropics Nature Based Tourism Strategy 2000 and Wet Tropics Walking Strategy 2001 provide for a diversity of sustainable tourism activities, including opportunities for Aboriginal communities to develop Indigenous tourism within their cultural landscapes.

Since its establishment the Authority has benefited from its relationship with the tourism industry and the Alliance for Sustainable Tourism and their input to planning and policy development. The Authority receives advice on tourism and other issues from its Tourism Industry

Liaison Group and the more broadly focussed Community Consultative Committee.

WTMA has also built wider relationships and networks with tourism operators, researchers, partner agencies and representative groups to promote cooperative approaches to tourism development. Recent examples include eco accreditation and the presentation of World Heritage values, visitor monitoring and surveys, the development of a Wet Tropics National Landscape proposal for listing and exploration of a proposal for a World Heritage Gateway centre in Cairns.

Tourism growth

In the past 20 years tourism in the Wet Tropics region has increased at least fourfold, placing pressure on popular sites which increases demand for infrastructure and presents management challenges. In 2010 over two million visitors came to tropical north Queensland to visit the Great Barrier Reef and the Wet Tropics, 70% domestic visitors and 30% from overseas. The tourism industry is dynamic, in response to global, national and regional influences, and fluctuates accordingly, particularly the overseas component. The 1990s saw massive tourism growth to north Queensland. Domestic visitation continues to climb while overseas visitation has declined in the past five years. WTMA and the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS) have worked closely with the tourism industry to maintain a diversity of visitor opportunities for commercial tour operators and self-drive travellers and to encourage the high standard of tourism operations in the region. Tourism is a competitive industry and operators are exploring new niche markets to stay ahead.

The majority of commercial tourism in the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area occurs in national parks (over 70% of the World Heritage Area) under Commercial Activity Permits administered by QPWS. Most of the current 138 permits allow for guided tours, camping and wildlife viewing in the national parks. Popular destinations are Daintree, Mossman Gorge, Kuranda and Barron Gorge National Parks and the Atherton Tablelands, Palmerston and Mission Beach areas.

Nature-based activities

Visitor surveys suggest that while a prime motive for visiting north Queensland is to see the Great Barrier Reef, visitors make more trips to the Wet Tropics during their stay. Visitors to the Wet Tropics are looking for nature-based experiences and wildlife interactions. Walking is the most popular visitor activity, generally short walks to attractive features. New opportunities for longer walks in the Wet Tropics, developed by the Queensland Government, are the Misty Mountains Wilderness Walks and the Wet Tropics Great Walk. The various built attractions, wildlife parks and rainforest experiences located outside the Area contribute significantly to the regional economy and to visitor understanding of

the World Heritage values. Tourism operators in the Wet Tropics are amongst the leaders in sustainable eco tourism, with 159 products accredited by Ecotourism Australia that operate in north Queensland, 12 of them for over 10 years or more. Of all eco-certified products in Australia 17% are based in north Queensland.

There is a clear linkage between developing new walkways, quality experiences, conservation and educational opportunities in the Wet Tropics and the potential for local industry to cater to the emerging and dynamic niche markets in sustainable and experience-based tourism.

The value of tourism

Tourism based around the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area is a \$2 billion industry. In a national analysis of the economic value of Australia's 17 World Heritage properties the Wet Tropics of Queensland was one of the highest contributors to the regional, state and national economies. It is the largest World Heritage contributor of economic activity to the Queensland economy.

Promotion and branding by Tourism Queensland and Tourism Tropical North Queensland highlight the World Heritage values (*two World Heritage Areas – where rainforest meets the reef*) and opportunities for nature-based tourism. WTMA also developed distinctive cassowary logos for tour operators and visitor centres based in the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area.

Indigenous tourism

The cultural landscapes of the Wet Tropics provide a basis for a developing Indigenous tourism industry sought after by international tourists. Aboriginal aspirations for involvement in tourism were documented in the Wet Tropics Aboriginal Plan in 2005, but many of these have not yet been realised.

Critical success factors for cultural tourism include a sound business plan, financial management, a reliable product and skilled tour guiding. WTMA, QPWS and JCU researchers have worked with Aboriginal people in the Wet Tropics to train guides and to help market products. WTMA facilitated two Indigenous tourism workshops in 2009 for 30 participants from throughout the Wet Tropics. Indigenous business operators who participated have now established the *North Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Tourism Alliance* to work with WTMA and regional tourism bodies, to help place north Queensland on the map as a destination for Indigenous tourism.

Heritage tourism

The legacy of early mining, logging and settlement in the Wet Tropics, with associated infrastructure, contributes to today's heritage tourism

industry. Many of the roads and tracks used by local communities and visitors to the Wet Tropics followed mining and logging tracks which in turn were based on ancient Aboriginal walking tracks. Such heritage values add an extra layer to the natural and cultural landscapes providing opportunities for new tourist 'experience-scapes' in the Wet Tropics. Road management and maintenance is a constant and costly challenge for managers and a concern to the tourism industry. WTMA has taken the lead in facilitating a collective response to resolving issues on selected presentation roads in the Area.

Investing in tourism infrastructure

Millions of public and private dollars have been invested in specific tourism projects in the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area since its listing in 1988, starting with the Australian Government Structural Adjustment Package of \$75.3 million towards job creation and business compensation. The State Government investment includes funding for the Queensland Heritage Trails Network, Wet Tropics Great Walks and Mamu Rainforest Canopy Walkway. Walking tracks, toilet facilities, interpretive signs, boardwalks and road maintenance are significant regular components of the annual QPWS capital works program. Private investors have made huge financial commitments towards development of tourism attractions and tour operations. There is a continuing need for new investments to maintain and strengthen the value of the Wet Tropics as a major tourist destination.

The way forward

The future for WTMA and the joint management of tourism in the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area will focus on:

- strengthening and building partnerships based on existing relationships with the tourism industry, conservation groups and management agencies, in particular QPWS
- opportunities to partner with the Rainforest Aboriginal people and the local community to promote rich experiences in nature-based and Indigenous and related settings
- sustaining the high standard of tourism operations in the World Heritage Area, through a Wet Tropics based accreditation program developed in partnership with the industry and QPWS
- working with Traditional Owners to support existing Indigenous tourism programs and to facilitate development of new cultural tourism activities and staff training
- addition of the Wet Tropics region to Tourism Australia's National Landscapes program, with potential benefits for the Wet Tropics tourism industry if successful

- establishing a World Heritage Gateway in partnership with other World Heritage managers, the tourism industry, state and local governments and the regional communities
- facilitating and supporting research to answer priority questions to guide and support tourism development in the Wet Tropics.



Cape Tribulation

Introduction and history

The Wet Tropics World Heritage Area and the adjacent Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area are the prime drawcards in tourism industry promotions of north Queensland to domestic and international visitors. The Wet Tropics, stretching between Townsville in the south and Cooktown in the north, is renowned for its sweeping rainforest panoramas, river gorges, cascading waterfalls, crystal-clear swimming holes, giant trees and ferns and huge diversity of animal and plant life.

In 1988, when the Wet Tropics was inscribed on the World Heritage list, it was one of the few natural World Heritage Areas worldwide that fulfilled all four natural criteria for listing. The Area's natural values, including its exceptional natural beauty and aesthetic importance, biological diversity, ancient plants and animals (many rare and endangered) and unique geology and geomorphology are the features which attracted over two million domestic and international tourists to the area in 2009, contributing \$2.6 billion to the regional economy (Tourism Queensland 2010a, Tourism Research Australia, unpublished data 2010).

The Wet Tropics has a rich cultural history. At least 18 Aboriginal groups have a connection to the land in and around the Area. Natural features of the Area are interwoven with the Rainforest Aboriginal people's spiritual beliefs, economic use and diverse societies to form complex cultural landscapes of the Area. The network of Indigenous walking tracks defined much of today's access to the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area. The Indigenous cultural values of the Wet Tropics were not one of the values for which the property is listed as World Heritage. However, the Australian Government is currently assessing the cultural values of the Area for inclusion in the National Heritage list, a precursor to possible future World Heritage listing.

European occupation of the Wet Tropics from the late 1800s, by miners, timber cutters and early settlers, strengthened the significance of the early Aboriginal tracks, and carved new logging roads through the forest. The new layers of cultural heritage on the landscape further enriched the Area as a tourist destination.

Nature-based and heritage tourism is important to local and regional economies and social settings in the Wet Tropics. Tourism plays a key role in presenting the Area's natural and cultural values to millions of visitors each year, helping Australia to fulfil its international duty "*to protect, conserve, present, rehabilitate and transmit to future generations*" the Area, under the World Heritage Convention.

Of an estimated 4.4 million visits to the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area each year, 40% are made by residents of local communities

adjacent to the 3,125km boundary of the Area (Bentrupperbäumer *et al.* 2004). The Area is an important part of the life and wellbeing of the local community who use it for recreation. With appropriate education and information about the World Heritage values, local residents can contribute to the presentation of the Area.

WTMA manages tourism and recreation in the Wet Tropics within the broader context of protection, conservation and rehabilitation of the World Heritage Area, through national, state, regional and organisational policies. At the outset the Authority made a commitment to working in partnership with other managers, primarily QPWS as well as the tourism industry, Traditional Owners and community groups, to ensure that tourism and recreation in the Area is ecologically sustainable.

History of tourism in the Wet Tropics

Since the Wet Tropics was settled by Europeans in the mid-1800s the natural attributes have provided a focus for recreational use by local communities and have attracted increasing numbers of visitors from further afield as the Area has become more accessible. Roads and infrastructure associated with early industries defined the development of tourism in the Area.

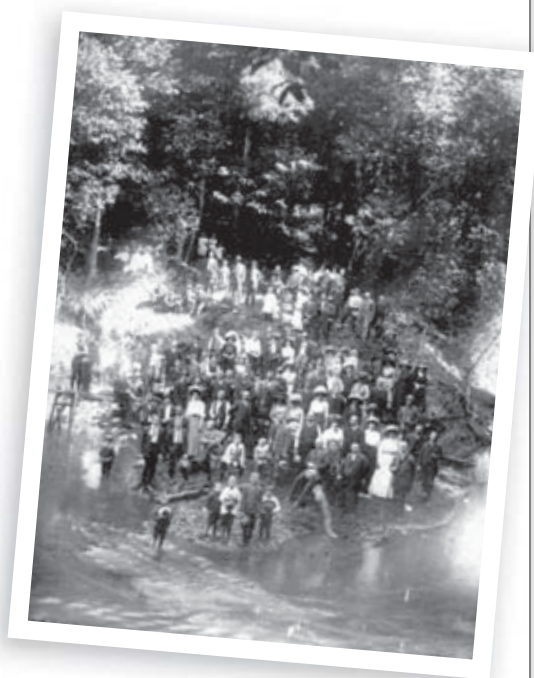
The birth and growth of tourism in the Wet Tropics hinges on the early mining and logging industries, as well as events in the history of Cairns that opened up the area to European settlers, and attracted visitors from the region and beyond. Significant events recorded in the Cairns Post and NQ Register over the years include:

- construction of the Cairns to Herberton railway line (starting in 1886) opening up the lowlands and Tablelands for farming and visitors
- gazettal of Barron Falls National Park (30 square kilometres) in 1900
- extension of the Tablelands railway line from Tolga to Millaa Millaa in 1910
- completion of the Kuranda Range Road in 1942
- introduction of a weekly tourist train, The Sunlander, from Brisbane in June 1953
- construction of the Bloomfield Track through Cape Tribulation in 1983
- opening of the Cairns international airport in 1984
- listing of the Wet Tropics of Queensland World Heritage Area in 1988.

Tablelands snapshot

Local history writings on the Atherton Tablelands illustrate the style of recreation and tourism in the Wet Tropics in the early 1900s. Local families enjoyed regular picnics by the crater lakes, Eacham and Barrine, and small groups of tourists travelled to the same sites from Yungaburra in horse-drawn buckboards. The early settlers regarded the rainforest as “mongrel scrub”, only fit for clearing, but the lakes, waterfalls and creeks were always popular settings for tourism and recreation (Kehoe et al. 2001).

In 1910 the new Tolga to Millaa Millaa railway opened up the Tablelands, transferring settlers in and timber out. By the 1930s the railway was carrying less timber and more tourists, including interstate visitors travelling by passenger ship from Melbourne to Cairns.



*Tablelands family picnic
(used with permission of Pat Williams)*

Contemporary approaches to ecotourism

“Ecotourism is ecologically sustainable tourism with a primary focus on experiencing natural areas that fosters environmental and cultural understanding, appreciation and conservation”.

(www.ecotourism.org.au)

Events since 1980 highlight the shift from extractive industries to tourism as a key sector of the economy of the region. The World Heritage listing of the rainforest and the opening of the Cairns international airport in 1984 coincided with the growing international interest in nature-based tourism. The Great Barrier Reef was the main attraction at the time and the true value of rainforests was beginning to be recognised and appreciated. From modest start, a small tourism industry operating out of Cairns used the network of forestry tracks in the Wet Tropics to access sites within easy reach of the coast, such as the crater lakes and dams on the Atherton Tablelands. One such popular Cairns-based operation

regularly took small groups in four-wheel drive vehicles along scenic routes to the Atherton Tablelands and Tinaroo Dam.

The vision for Daintree as a prime destination for rainforest tourism in Australia was flagged in the Daintree Futures Study, which predicted that a sustainable tourism industry with a peak of 550,000 visitors a year would underpin the Daintree/Port Douglas economies.

“Each year, an increasing number of tourists will stay for several nights and have improved experiences of the rainforest. Repeat visitation will also increase. Landowners will be involved in creating forest stay and nature-based tourism experiences on their land to cater for this increase. Public agencies will monitor the impacts of visitation to ensure that it is maintained within sustainable levels.”

(Rainforest CRC *et al* 2000)

World Heritage listing

By 1986 the growing body of accessible scientific information improved understanding of the values of the Wet Tropics and influenced community and visitor attitudes to our rainforests. A report by the Rainforest Conservation Society of Queensland (1986) set the course for nomination (1987) and listing (1988) of the Wet Tropics of Queensland World Heritage Area for its outstanding natural values, amidst opposition from logging communities and the Queensland Government (WTMA 2004).



Echo Creek ‘Spirit of the Rainforest Tour’

1. Managing tourism in the Wet Tropics

With conservation as the underlying principle, management of the Wet Tropics of Queensland World Heritage Area provides for ecologically sustainable use of the Area. The Wet Tropics Management Authority manages the World Heritage Area in partnership with stakeholders. The tourism industry plays a major part in presenting the Area to visitors. Strategic policies have been developed with the tourism industry to support this role, and to ensure the sustainability of visitor activities.

“From its early days the Authority has had to tread a careful path, beholden to State and Federal Governments. It has brought a rigorously professional approach to the management of north Queensland’s remarkable biodiversity, characterised by the quality and abundance of stakeholder input. Sectors such as tourism and recreation, scientific research, conservation, Indigenous people, neighbours and local government all retain a voice and are often canvassed about policy management.”

(From the Heart, WTMA 2009).

Policy framework

In 1990 the Commonwealth and Queensland Governments agreed on a Wet Tropics Management Scheme to manage the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area. The Wet Tropics Management Authority was established under the *Wet Tropics World Heritage Protection and Management Act 1993* (the Wet Tropics Act) to manage the Area, to meet the Australian Government’s obligations under the World Heritage Convention, “to protect, conserve, present, transmit to future generations and rehabilitate the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area”.

Tourism management in the Area is now subject to the following legislation and strategies, including:

- Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*; *Native Title Act 1993*
- Queensland *Wet Tropics World Heritage Protection and Management Act 1993*; *Nature Conservation Act 1992*; *Forestry Act 1959*
- strategic plans, government and industry policies that guide (or have guided) tourism management in the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area include:
 - National Ecotourism Strategy 1994

- Tourism Queensland Indigenous Tourism Strategy 2004
- Queensland Tourism Strategy 2006
- Queensland Ecotourism Plan 2003-2008
- Far North Queensland Regional Plan 2009-2031.

UNESCO framework for joint cooperation on nature conservation and sustainable tourism at World Heritage sites

“The cultural and natural heritage of the Area should have a function in the life of the community and the local community should be involved in management of the Area... visitors are welcome to interact with and appreciate the majesty of the wet tropical forests without damaging the special values they came to admire”.

(WTMA 1997)

Tourism is recognised by the World Heritage Centre as an important cross cutting issue at most World Heritage sites. Its World Heritage tourism program aims to engage with industry to establish how the tourism industry may contribute to safeguard World Heritage values and resources. This approach sets a framework for WTMA to help realise an approach to tourism that can benefit the Area as well as providing employment and related benefits for local residents. Other benefits can result through raising awareness and pride in the World Heritage site, provision of education and raising awareness about the values, issues and threats in the Area. The involvement of tourism in the Area can also provide access to tourism generated funds to help conserve and protect World Heritage values.

The Authority supports the World Heritage tourism programme and its encouragement of sustainable tourism actions at World Heritage sites, aimed at preserving the site and using tourism to contribute to environmental protection, limiting negative socio-economic impacts and benefitting local people economically and socially. Developing partnerships between WTMA and the tourism industry is putting in motion an important series of actions to mobilise resources for the Area and local communities as well as pioneering innovative practice on public-private initiatives in areas of site protection, conservation and presentation.

Community involvement in tourism and related endeavours is guided by community engagement principles that promote partnerships and shared responsibility, respect for Traditional Owners and traditional knowledge and equitable access and use of the Area.

Wet Tropics Alliance for Sustainable Tourism

Following listing of the WHA and the establishment of WTMA, the peak tourism industry bodies in the Wet Tropics formalised their relationship with the Authority by establishing the Alliance for Sustainable Tourism (AST). The AST members are Tourism Tropical North Queensland (TTNQ), the Association of Marine Park Tourist Operators (AMPTO), The Savannah Guides, Ecotourism Association of Australia, Queensland Tourist Industry Council (QTIC) and the Far North Queensland Tour Operators Association.

The AST functions as a collective peak body for nature-based tourism interests in the Wet Tropics which supports management of the Area and the need for sustainable tourism. The Authority has maintained a good working relationship with the Alliance through negotiations on planning and management issues over the years, including development of the Wet Tropics Management Plan, road closures and access to remote sites (some outside the World Heritage Area). The AST remains an important point of contact for WTMA on tourism issues.

Tourism Industry Liaison Group

Protection through Partnerships identified the tourism industry as “an ambassador for the Area and a major presenter of its attributes” (WTMA 1997). To formalise this relationship, the Authority established the Tourism Industry Liaison Group (TILG) in 1998 to encourage ongoing liaison between the Authority, tourism operators and land managers. Many of the first TILG members had negotiated with WTMA on the Wet Tropics Management Plan as members of the Alliance for Sustainable Tourism. Today, 12 years later, the TILG has 19 members, appointed by the WTMA Board to represent tourism operators and industry associations with interests in the Wet Tropics. Members include representatives from regional tourism operations and attractions, Far North Queensland Tourism Operators Association, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Tourism Alliance, Daintree Tourism Association, Tourism Tropical North Queensland, Tourism Queensland, Tableland Promotion Bureau, Townsville Enterprise, Australian Tourism Export Council, Queensland Tourism Industry Corporation and Port Douglas and Pacific Asia Travel Association.

The TILG advises on a range of tourism issues that affect the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area and surrounds, including tourism sites, marketing, permits, accreditation, road access and World Heritage governance. The TILG provides a sounding board for WTMA on tourism management issues and policies and an avenue for education to support the tourism industry. The group is in a position to strengthen relationships between WTMA and the tourism industry through the promotion of new initiatives.

Community Consultative Committee

A formal avenue for community engagement by the Authority is through the Community Consultative Committee (CCC), established under the Wet Tropics Act. The function of the CCC, currently with 23 members representing a diversity of community interests, is to advise the Authority on community views on policies and programs in relation to the World Heritage Area. Over the years the CCC has provided advice to WTMA on planning processes and tourism industry concerns, road access issues, tourism accreditation and community engagement. The CCC enables tourism industry issues to be viewed within a broader context of other community interests.

Wet Tropics Management Plan and amendments

The Wet Tropics Management Plan, prepared in 1998 after much public consultation, regulates activities in the Area that may damage World Heritage values while providing for community enjoyment and appreciation of these values. The Plan achieves this through zoning and permit provisions. The Area is divided into four management zones (A, B, C and D), according to ecological integrity, remoteness from disturbance, intended physical and social settings and management intent. The zones accommodate different types of visitor activity. Zone D allows for the most intensive tourism activities and contains land where well developed visitor facilities, such as picnic shelters, barbecues, interpretive facilities, signage and car parks are, or may be, established. Visitors to Zone D can expect to enjoy nature with minimal effort, some comfort and social interaction. The most remote visitor experiences can be found in Zone A, free of infrastructure and visible management presence (WTMA 1998).

The Wet Tropics Management Plan is currently under review. Proposals under consideration include simplification of regulations concerning road access, rationalisation of Zone D visitor sites to better reflect current needs and revision of the zoning scheme in recognition of the progress made in rehabilitating the Area.

Roads

The Management Plan classifies the (approximate) 1068 kms of roads in the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area in five categories:

- *State-controlled road*: roads which form part of the State's road network
- *Community access road*: significant roads for local community transport
- *Presentation road*: roads which provide opportunities for presentation of the World Heritage Area

- *Presentation (restricted) road*: presentation roads where a permit is required for use of a motor vehicle
- *Management road*: roads to provide access for management and research purposes. Other access is by permit.

Most tourism access to the Area is by State-controlled and Presentation roads.

Recognising the issues associated with roads and other linear structures through the Area, WTMA has worked with relevant agencies, engineers and work crews to produce codes of practice for their maintenance. The Road Maintenance Code of Practice, produced by Queensland Department of Main Roads in 2002, outlines requirements necessary to achieve best practice road maintenance that minimises negative environmental impacts on the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area. More recently the Roads in Rainforest: Best Practice Guidelines for planning, design and management, was produced by the Department of Transport and Main Roads and the Marine and Tropical Sciences Research Facility. This contains updated information that supplements the 1997 Roads in the Wet Tropics manual.

Wet Tropics Nature Based Tourism Strategy 2000

The *Nature Based Tourism Strategy* provides the basis for tourism management in the Area. The Strategy divides the World Heritage Area into twelve tourism precincts according to their distinctive features and tourism focus, and maps 200 visitor sites. The overall aim is to encourage a dynamic, culturally aware, sustainable and professional nature-based tourism industry in the Wet Tropics.

The Strategy details policies to encourage cooperative partnerships between the tourism industry, land managers, Indigenous people, conservation groups and the community. A range of policies to facilitate and support nature based tourism in the Wet Tropics address issues such as:

- Rainforest Aboriginal peoples rights and interests
- permits and tour operations
- Wet Tropics presentation and tourism marketing
- accreditation and training
- cost recovery and user pays
- research and information management
- monitoring and response
- maintaining tourism infrastructure.

Although the Strategy was prepared 10 years ago, much of its content remains relevant to current needs and issues. Implementation relies on the continuing policy and financial commitment of implementation partners.

Wet Tropics Walking Strategy 2001

Protection through Partnerships (1997) identified that the many existing tracks were developed in an ad hoc manner and use was highly concentrated on just a few short graded tracks. “About 95% of the 1.5 million annual walks in the area take place on just 25 tracks which total 40km” (WTMA 1997). At the time there were few opportunities for people to experience long distance walking and remote area camping in the Area. The Authority recognised the social, recreational and educational benefits of walking in the Wet Tropics and the opportunities for tourism and recreation.

With community input, the 2001 Wet Tropics Walking Strategy (linked to the Nature Based Tourism Strategy) was developed as a guide for cooperative development, maintenance and management of walks throughout the Wet Tropics region. The Strategy aims to provide a network of high quality, classified and graded, walking tracks for use by visitors and local community, with a diversity of recreational and educational opportunities. Walkers in the Wet Tropics can choose between over 148 managed walks in the Wet Tropics region that cater for a range of abilities and expectations. Mostly managed by Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service or local governments, the majority are short walks.

Commercial Activity Permits

Commercial tours and activities in the national parks and state forests of the Wet Tropics (over 70% of the Area) are managed by QPWS under the *Nature Conservation Act 1992*, the *Forestry Act 1959* and the *Recreation Areas Management Act 2006*, through Commercial Activity Permits. QPWS assesses permit applications for potential issues, impacts, and visitor safety, against current policy and national park management plans. If within acceptable limits a three year permit is issued.

Commercial operators may need an additional Wet Tropics permit, for activities in the World Heritage area such as: scenic flights under 1000 feet, photography and filming, use of some roads that pass through environmentally sensitive sites and classified as Presentation (restricted) roads.

2. Visitors to the Wet Tropics

In the past 20 years tourism to the Wet Tropics region has increased significantly, with visitors attracted to the unique values of the two adjacent World Heritage Areas – the Wet Tropics and Great Barrier Reef. Tropical north Queensland is the highest ranked non-metropolitan destination for international tourism expenditure in Australia. The tourism industry is dynamic, responding to global, national and regional influences. WTMA and day-to-day managers QPWS have worked closely with the tourism industry to maintain a diversity of visitor opportunities and to sustain the high standard of tourism operations in the region.

Visitor numbers

The opportunity to experience the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area along with the Great Barrier Reef makes tropical north Queensland one of Australia's premier tourist destinations. Expressed in terms of visitor expenditure, tropical north Queensland is Australia's eighth ranked tourism region overall and ranks first among non metropolitan regions (DRET 2009).

Visitor numbers to tropical north Queensland grew significantly after the opening of the Cairns International Airport in 1984. Passenger movements through Cairns airport provide an indication of visitors to the region, with 87% of interstate visitors and 65% of international visitors flying into Cairns. The region has seen significant increases in annual domestic passenger movements, from under 500,000 in 1981, to over three million in 2009 (TTNQ 2010).

Domestic tourism to tropical north Queensland represents over 1.5 million visitors and is spread between intrastate (Queensland), intra-regional, and interstate (all other States and Territories). Tropical north Queensland was one of the only regions in Australia to experience domestic visitor growth in 2009, and it is only forecast to be around two percent over the next four years (TTNQ 2010). International visitor numbers peaked in 2005 above one million, but have dropped significantly since, largely due to temporary loss of flights from Japan, fallout from the global financial crisis, and swine flu in China (TTNQ 2010).

In the year ended March 2010, over 1.5 million domestic visitors spent a total of 7.9 nights in tropical north Queensland, with an average length of stay of 5.2 nights. Over half the visitors were on holiday, while a quarter were visiting friends and relatives, and others were on business

(Table 3). The region also attracted almost two million domestic day trip visitors (intra- and interstate) (Tourism Queensland 2010a). In the same year, 600,000 international visitors (a drop from 702,496 the previous year) stayed over four million nights, staying an average 7.5 nights in the region (Table 4).

The breakdown of visitors to tropical north Queensland in the year ended March 2010: 44% Intrastate; 25% Interstate; 31% International.

Table 3: Domestic visitors to TNQ – year ended March 2010 (Tourism Queensland 2010a)

<i>All Domestic</i>	<i>Visitors</i>	<i>Nights</i>	<i>Length of stay</i>
<i>Holiday</i>	813,000	4,658,000	5.7
<i>VFR</i>	354,000	1,664,000	4.7
<i>Business</i>	278,000	1,120,000	4.0
<i>Total</i>	1,521,000	7,868,000	5.2
INTRASTATE			
<i>Holiday</i>	410,000	1,614,000	3.9
<i>VFR</i>	269,000	1,085,000	4.0
<i>Business</i>	222,000	801,000	3.6
<i>Total</i>	956,000	3,959,000	4.1
INTERSTATE			
<i>Holiday</i>	403,000	3,045,000	7.6
<i>VFR</i>	85,000	579,000	6.8
<i>Business</i>	57,000	319,000	5.6
<i>Total</i>	544,000	4,071,000	7.5

VFR = visiting friends and relatives

Table 4: International visitors to tropical north Queensland (Tourism Queensland 2010a)

	<i>Visitors</i>	<i>Nights</i>	<i>Length of stay</i>
<i>Holiday</i>	590,000	4,636,000	7.9
<i>VFR</i>	32,000	437,000	13.6
<i>Business</i>	16,000	90,000	5.7
<i>Total</i>	651,000	6,236,000	9.6

Tropical north Queensland visitor summary:

- There were 2,158,000 total overnight visitors to tropical north Queensland in the year ended March 2010, which remained steady on the previous year, 1,521,000 were domestic visitors and 651, 000 from overseas
- Total expenditure in the year ended March 2010 was \$2,607m (\$1,791m domestic + \$816m international), an increase of 13% from the previous year
- An upswing in the domestic visitation was due an increase in interstate holidaymakers from Melbourne and a rise in business visitors from the previous year
- A decline in international visitation (down 16% from the previous year) was largely due to the global financial crisis and a decline in Japanese visitors, but partly offset by an increase in visitors from China
- Changes in Europeans visiting the region, with an increase in younger holidaymakers and a decline in the over-55s from Europe (Tourism Queensland 2010a).

Visitor numbers in the Daintree

The Daintree district, probably the most important tropical rainforest tourism destination in Australia, saw rapid expansion in tourism numbers during the 1990s. Estimates of visitor numbers to the Daintree almost doubled, from 223,100 visitors in 1991 to 426,369 in 1999, with an increase in the proportion of overnight visitors. The majority of visitors were from overseas (mostly Europe), with domestic tourists comprising only 39% of visitors. By 2000 visitor numbers had exceeded the 550,000 annual visitation level considered to be sustainable, largely due to a rapid increase in self-drive day visitors since the sealing of the Cape Tribulation road (Rainforest CRC 2000).

By 2000 there was a shift towards self-drive travel to the Daintree, and visitor numbers on commercial tours were dropping, thought to be a result of competition from other rainforest attractions such as Skyrail, and low satisfaction with the Daintree due to crowding.

Rainforest CRC et al. 2000



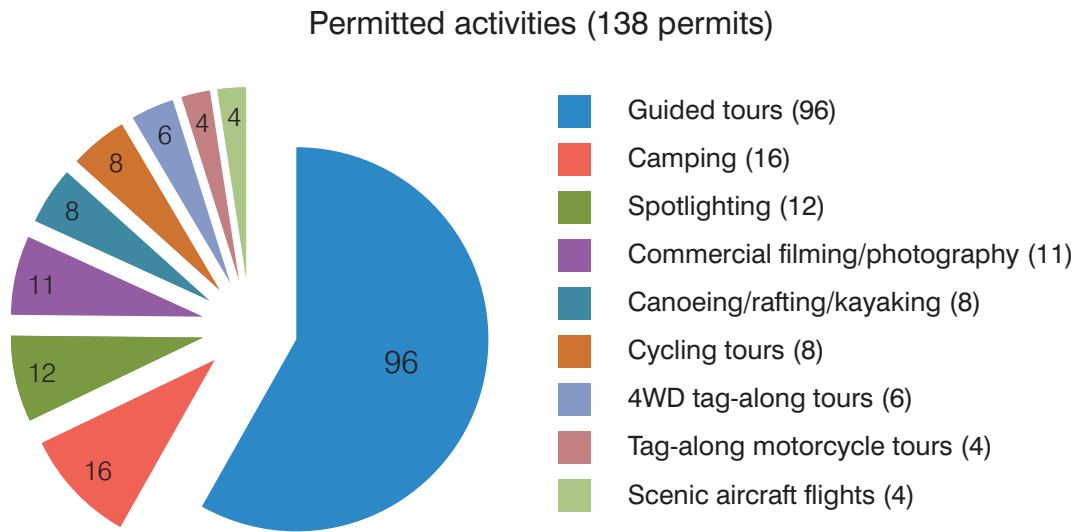
The award-winning Daintree Discovery Centre celebrated 21 years of ecotourism and interpretation in 2010. The Centre has informed more than one million visitors about the special values of the Daintree rainforests.

Destinations and activities

Opportunities

The Wet Tropics World Heritage Area has in order of 180 visitor sites, at least 94 of which have infrastructure (Bentrupperbäumer *et al.* 2004), and a number of commercial tourist attractions situated in close proximity to the Area for example: Daintree Discovery Centre, Skyrail Rainforest Cableway, and Mamu Rainforest Canopy Walkway. Estimates of visitation in 2001-2002 in the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area indicate that over 4.65 million visits were made to the area, with 75% of visits occurring at 15 locations, particularly Daintree, Mossman Gorge, Kuranda and Barron Gorge National Park, the Atherton Tableland, Palmerston and Mission Beach areas (Bentrupperbäumer *et al.* 2004). The nature-based attractions and activities available within the Area include interpretive tours, walking tracks, swimming, bird watching, camping and day and overnight tours offered by various tour operators (Prideaux, B. and Falco-Mammone, F. 2007a).

Figure 1: Current Commercial Activity Permits and permitted tourism activities in national parks in the Wet Tropics (from DERM 2010)



In July 2010 there are 138 current Commercial Activity Permits, held by tourism operators that allow a range of tourism activities in the protected areas of the Wet Tropics (DERM 2010). Some operators offer multiple activities. The most common tourism activity (96 permits) in the Wet Tropics is the small group guided tour, generally by small bus or four-wheel drive vehicle. Tours may include short or multi-day walks, nature/wildlife appreciation and picnicking, usually with an interpretive component (Figure 1). Three guided tour permits that focus on traditional cultural and environmental practices are held by Indigenous companies (DERM 2010).

All commercial tourism activities based on national parks have a focus on the natural environment. Local cultural and heritage values are also attractions promoted by the tourism industry.



Mamu Rainforest Canopy walk

Great walks in the Wet Tropics

Two walking opportunities, developed in conjunction with the Walking Strategy:

Misty Mountains Wilderness Walks, a 130km network of short and long distance walking tracks in the high-altitude rainforests of the central Wet Tropics World Heritage Area, part of the Queensland Heritage Trails Network to commemorate the Centenary of Federation (1901-2001). Developed as a joint initiative of the Queensland and Australian Governments, under a partnership between the QPWS, local councils, Traditional Owners and Conservation Volunteers Australia. The tracks cross the scenic Walter Hill Range and the Cardwell Range, from the coastal plain to the tablelands.

The Wet Tropics Great Walk, opened in 2009 and managed by QPWS, is the longest of Queensland's Great Walks. It traverses 108km of rugged landscapes in Girringun National Park, and links Wallaman Falls and Blencoe Falls, in two sections – Juwun (Blencoe Falls and Herbert River Gorge, 51km) and Jagany (Wallaman Falls to Henrietta Gate, 57km).

Favourite spots

The most popular protected area destinations for commercial tour operators are:

- Daintree National Park – Mossman Gorge, Marrdja Botanical Boardwalk, Kulki Boardwalk and Alexandra Range Lookout
- Barron Gorge National Park – falls viewing platform and walking trail plus the trail network in the bottom section of the gorge
- Mowbray National Park – walking and cycling the Bump Track and Black Mountain Road
- Crater Lakes National Park – Lake Eacham for short walks, Lake Barrine for walks and a boat trip
- Curtain Fig National Park – short walks to view the fig tree
- Mt Hypipamee National Park – short walk to the crater lake
- Danbulla National Park and State Forest – Cathedral Fig Tree and Lake Tinaroo sites
- Davies Creek National Park – campground and day use area
- Dinden National Park – Clohesy River Road
- Wooroonooran National Park – Mamu Rainforest Canopy Walkway, Palmerston, Josephine Falls

- Tully Gorge National Park – white water rafting and kayaking on the Tully River
- Girringun National Park – Wallaman Falls and Blencoe Falls, short and long walks
- Paluma Range National Park – Jourama Falls, Big and Little Crystal Creeks, McClelland’s Lookout.

(Information from DERM Commercial Activity Permits 2010)

Market research has highlighted a growth in visitor interest in quality nature-based tourism experience with increasing interests in authentic and nature-based and cultural tourism (TTNQ 2010).

Tropical north Queensland tourism statistics

Data from James Cook University surveys of over 1400 domestic and international visitors at the Cairns domestic airport during 2007 revealed that 77.6% of visitors to tropical north Queensland visited the Wet Tropics rainforest, compared with 70.9% who visited the Great Barrier Reef. The main motivation for travel to the region was to visit the Reef, with visits to the rainforest a close second. Visitors to the rainforest were most interested in taking a short walk in the rainforest.

Reef and Rainforest Research Centre 2007

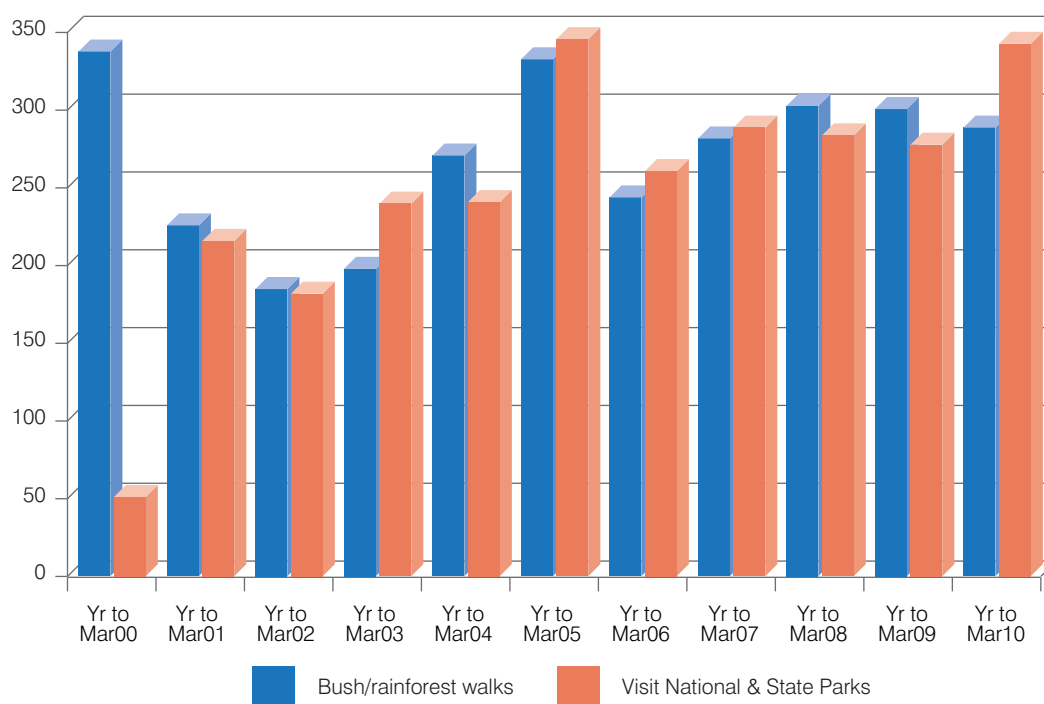
In 2010 walking is one of the most popular activities in the Wet Tropics due to the choice of locations and the ready accessibility of well-maintained tracks and longer trails (Figure 2). Short walks are a regular component of most commercial guided tours to national parks in the Wet Tropics (70% of all commercial activity permits issued by QPWS). Many short walks provide access to attractions such as waterfalls, swimming holes, giant rainforest trees and scenic views. Popular short walks are:

- Marrdja Boardwalk in the Daintree
- Curtain Fig and Lake Eacham walks in the Tablelands
- Barron Falls Lookout, Kuranda.

The longer walking tracks attract independent walkers (local residents and self-drive visitors) and small groups from recreational clubs. A few commercial operators are now promoting multi-day longer distance guided walks and overnight camping, with opportunities for recreation, adventure, education and solitude. The Mount Bartle Frere, Misty Mountains and Blencoe Falls Walks are popular with experienced bushwalkers.

Tourism Research Australia surveys demonstrate that visitors to TNQ are more than twice as likely to visit a national or state park, or go on a bush/rainforest walk than visitors to Queensland (Tourism Research Australia March 2010).

Figure 2: Domestic tourist visits to Wet Tropics (April 1999 – March 2010), and walking activities (year 2000 onwards). Tourism Research Australia, National Visitor Surveys 2000 – 2010



Tropical Tablelands visitor survey

The majority (87%) of the 208 visitors to the Atherton Tableland surveyed in 2007 through Tourism Research Australia’s *Destination Visitor Survey Program (DVS)* (Department of Resources, Energy and Tourism) were there for leisure purposes. Most (96%) respondents expected to explore the area for nature-based experiences (89%) and wildlife interactions (77%) and to discover and learn something new (76%). Bush walks and visits to national parks, lakes and waterfalls were high on the list of activities undertaken by these holidaymakers. (*Tourism Queensland 2010b*)

Built attractions

A variety of built tourist attractions with a focus on nature, wildlife and culture have been developed or expanded with private funding (some also with government funding) in the past 20 years within the Wet Tropics region, mostly outside the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area, to cater for a range of interests and visitor group sizes. Examples (north to south) include:

- Daintree Discovery Centre
- Wildlife Habitat Wildlife Sanctuary
- Hartley's Creek Crocodile Adventures
- Mareeba Wetlands Reserve
- Skyrail Rainforest Cableway
- Tjapukai Aboriginal Cultural Park
- Mamu Rainforest Canopy Walkway
- Tyto Wetlands and Interpretive Centre.

These and other attractions contribute significantly to visitor understanding of the values of the adjacent or surrounding World Heritage Area, through various presentation activities. WTMA supports these and other rainforest related attractions with advice and interpretive information. The attractions contribute significantly to the regional and local economies. Most of the attractions listed above are accredited by Ecotourism Australia (Ecotourism Australia 2010).



Since its opening in 2009 the Mamu Rainforest Canopy walk has attracted over 68,000 visitors to date, averaging about 110 per day

Trail blazers in responsible travel

In the Year of Responsible, Ethical and Sustainable Tourism, 43 tourism operators who have been ECO certified for 10 years or more were recognised by Ecotourism Australia as Green Travel Leaders in March 2010. Queensland leads the way in sustainable tourism, with 12 operators from the Wet Tropics on the list (www.greentravelleaders.com.au).

3. The value of tourism in the Wet Tropics

Tourism based on the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area is a two billion dollar industry. There are powerful synergies between the Wet Tropics and adjacent Great Barrier Reef, making tropical north Queensland one of Australia's premier international and domestic tourist attractions. As a major engine of the north Queensland economy promoting, presenting and sustaining the values of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area are vital contributions to the prosperity of the region.

In a national analysis of the economic value of Australia's terrestrial World Heritage properties, based on expenditure associated with management of the sites as well as expenditure of visitors to the sites, the Wet Tropics of Queensland World Heritage Area was one of the highest contributors to the regional, state and national economies (Gillespie Economics and BDA Group 2008).

Management of the Area contributes:

- \$23.5 million in annual direct and indirect output or business turnover
- 240 direct and indirect jobs.

Visitation to the Wet Tropics contributes:

- \$2058 million in annual direct and indirect output or business turnover
- 13,351 direct and indirect jobs.

The Wet Tropics was the largest contributor of economic activity to the Queensland economy (ahead of Fraser Island, Gondwana and Riversleigh) (Gillespie Economics and BDA Group 2008) and ranked second only to the Sydney Opera House among the list of Australian terrestrial properties studied.

The Gillespie Economics and BDA Group study is the most recent of a series of economic analyses that consistently demonstrate the very significant economic value of the Wet Tropics to the regional, State and national economy. For example, Driml (1996) found that regional economic contributions from tourism to the Wet Tropics were estimated at \$753 million. An updated analysis published in 2007 found that total

annual visitor expenditure for travel to, and while in, the region was estimated to be \$2 billion (Prideaux and Falco-Mammone 2007).

While demonstrating the very large contribution of the Area to the economy, the Gillespie Economics and BDA Group report also demonstrated the comparatively low level of public sector investment in management of the Area. Whether expressed in terms of area or visitor numbers or in comparison to economic output, public funding for the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area is lower than for most other World Heritage properties in Australia.

Sustaining and growing World Heritage-based economic activity in the Wet Tropics depends on protecting the environmental and cultural values of the Wet Tropics rainforest asset, maintaining and protecting the value and reputation of the Wet Tropics World Heritage brand in key markets, and identifying key domestic and international tourism markets and tailoring experiences and opportunities to suit their needs. Success depends on collaboration between the industry, government and community.

The Authority and the regional tourism industry, through Tourism Tropical North Queensland (TTNQ) have collaborated to market branding for the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area, to value-add to the industry's destination marketing and improve the quality and accuracy of World Heritage promotional material. At the state level, Tourism Queensland also uses the World Heritage values as a drawcard for its promotion of tropical north Queensland.

TTNQ introduced a branding campaign for Tropical North Queensland in 1998, with the attraction of "*Two World Heritage Areas – where rainforest meets the reef*". The TTNQ Destination Management Plan (DMP) 2007-2010 outlines strategies for refreshing the Tropical North Queensland brand through promotion and marketing of sustainable tourism in the two adjacent World Heritage Areas, and assistance for Indigenous participation in the tourism industry.

A TTNQ 2009 review of the Tropical North Queensland brand has highlighted opportunities to incorporate reef and rainforest in niche marketing campaigns. Amongst the distinct target segments identified by TTNQ for the domestic holiday market in 2010-2011 are the Active Explorers, 11% of the interstate visitors who like to challenge themselves through physical activity and exploring the extremes of their physical environment. Such people would enjoy a hike in the Wet Tropics.

Tour operators who hold permits to operate in the Area have previously been supplied with World Heritage Tour Operator logos created by WTMA. A similar logo represents Wet Tropics Visitor Centres. The Authority has also produced a CD of high resolution images for use by tourism operators and others to promote visitation to the Area.



WTMA has contributed to the series of visitor information centres throughout the Wet Tropics, by providing information, newsletters, posters and display materials to promote the Area.

Self-drive visitors between Townsville and Cairns travel The Great Green Way that promotes *“an area of outstanding natural beauty, including two World Heritage listings of the Wet Tropics Rainforests and the Great Barrier Reef.”*

Great Green Way Tourism is based at the award-winning Cardwell Rainforest and Reef Visitor Information Centre which directed over 40,000 domestic and overseas visitors in 2009 (www.greatgreenway.com).



Lake Barrine

4. Research

Research, supported by WTMA and guided by the Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC), helps to build on the existing knowledge base and understanding of the values, threats, tourism dynamics, community attitudes and guides management of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area.

Research makes a vital contribution to the management and development of tourism in the Wet Tropics. Research conducted in the region assists in understanding matters such as:

- needs and interests of visitors from various markets
- quality of and attitudes towards visitor sites and experiences
- methods for managing the impacts of tourism on natural and cultural values
- priorities for developing new experiences
- new approaches to marketing.

The Wet Tropics has benefited from focussed research projects through the Marine and Tropical Science Research Facility (MTSRF) investment and previously the Rainforest CRC. This rainforest focussed research has placed a high priority on end user engagement, ensuring rapid take up of research findings into the management programs of private and public sector managers. MTSRF and Rainforest CRC research in the Wet Tropics has been supplemented by the research conducted by the Tourism CRC.

During 2010, the Commonwealth Government announced changes to rainforest research investment. A new National Environmental Research Program is to be established as a successor to the MTSRF. The investment guidelines for the new program provide only limited scope for investment in rainforest tourism research, creating grave concern about the future of current research and visitor monitoring programs.

5. Indigenous and cultural and heritage tourism

Tourism provides important opportunities for Traditional Owners to derive economic and social benefits from their cultural heritage. The Authority is supporting Wet Tropics Aboriginal communities in development of cultural tourism programs and activities, to present the cultural values of the World Heritage Area to visitors and to benefit the communities. Development of Indigenous cultural heritage tourism in the Wet Tropics must be done in a way that takes particular care to respect the rights and interests of Traditional Owners and which includes and does not marginalise Aboriginal people's participation.

Cultural landscapes

To Rainforest Aboriginal peoples, the Wet Tropics is a series of complex living cultural landscapes, where natural features, spiritual beliefs and traditional uses are interwoven. These cultural values provide the basis for a developing cultural tourism industry in the Wet Tropics that, with supportive management, will benefit Traditional Owners, local communities and the tourism industry. As Indigenous communities have increased recognition and participation in the management of land in the Wet Tropics there are new opportunities from tourism.

In comparison to other Australian destinations, such as Kakadu National Park, Indigenous cultural tourism has not been strongly marketed in the Wet Tropics. Nevertheless a very strong Rainforest Aboriginal culture provides diverse opportunities more than equal to any other Australian destination.

Research by the Rainforest CRC (in partnership with WTMA) identified a range of cultural tourism opportunities prior to 2001, including the Tjapukai Aboriginal Cultural Park, which opened in 1996 to promote education and understanding of Aboriginal culture in the region (Ignjic 2001). Other Indigenous tourism ventures at this time included guided cultural and rainforest walks and tours, cultural parks and museums, cultural centres, art and craft workshops and Dreamtime stories.

Subsequent research in 2004 found that there was a strong demand from international tourists for Indigenous tourism (encompassing all tourism activities that involve Australian Indigenous peoples) with relatively limited domestic interest in Indigenous experiences. As the domestic

market dominated tourism in tropical north Queensland the route to sustainability for Indigenous tourism was identified in this market (Tourism Queensland 2004). Fluctuations in volume and demand following the recent world financial crisis in 2008-2009 have led to north Queensland's marketing also being focussed onto niche international visitor markets.

The Wet Tropics Aboriginal Plan documented aspirations for development of an Aboriginal and Regional Tourism Strategy for the Wet Tropics. The Rainforest Aboriginal people also seek support to negotiate tourism permits for Traditional Owners in the Area and would like to see focussed research on tourism use of the area, and the impacts of tourism on local cultural and environmental values (Wet Tropics Aboriginal Plan Project Team 2005).

Working together for cultural tourism

In the review of cultural tourism in the Wet Tropics, Ignjic (2001) identified some critical success factors for cultural tourism development, including a sound business plan and financial management, a consistent and reliable product, and skilled tour guiding and delivery of interpretive information. To enable these to be achieved, Indigenous tourism ventures need:

- support for business planning
- capital for enterprise development
- marketing and promotion of cultural tourism products and destinations
- training and skills development (Ignjic 2001).

Since 2002 there has been a steady increase in Indigenous tourism ventures, with support from WTMA, QPWS, TTNQ, Tourism Queensland and JCU researchers. In 2007, leading up to the second Indigenous Land and Sea Management Conference in Cardwell, Rainforest Aboriginal peoples participated in ground-breaking tourism training involving Traditional Owners, JCU researchers, a professional trainer and Indigenous Rangers from QPWS. Conference delegates enjoyed the resulting cultural ecotourism activities offered by Mungalla Aboriginal Tours, Echo Creek Adventures and Cultural Camp, Jumbun Aboriginal Tours and the Banjin Saltwater Tour.

The Authority is now working with Rainforest Aboriginal peoples to build the necessary business skills for participation in the tourism industry and to provide information on the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area and its management:

- The Authority, with funding support from the Commonwealth, facilitated two Indigenous tourism workshops in October 2009, held at Echo Creek in Tully and at Mossman Gorge, each with 15 Indigenous participants from throughout the Wet Tropics. The workshops provided information and activities on all aspects of developing a tourism operation in the Area.
- Participants at the workshops established the North Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Tourism Alliance and have since attended meetings to develop the concept. The Alliance now comprises 25 Indigenous business operators who are currently working with the Authority, Townsville Enterprise, Tourism Queensland, Tourism Tropical North Queensland, and the Commonwealth Department of Resources, Energy and Tourism to place north Queensland on the map as a destination for cultural tourism.
- The Authority supported the development of interpretive signage at Wangetti Beach with support from the Australian Government's NHT funding. This was developed in cooperation with the Yirrganydji people, Cairns Regional Council, Department of Transport and Main Roads, Wangetti Recovery Group and Conservation Volunteers Australia.



The Echo Creek 'Spirit of the Rainforest Tour' was awarded the TTNQ Cultural Tourism Award in 2010

European heritage

European settlement in the Wet Tropics followed the pattern of the mining, forestry and agricultural industries during the early 1900s, with dramatic impacts on the tropical rainforests and Traditional Owners. Nonetheless, the industries paved the way for visitors. The legacy of modified landscapes and built infrastructure (towns, roads, railways, powerlines, bridges, dams, machinery), now contribute to today's thriving heritage tourism industry.

Access to remote locations in the Wet Tropics is primarily by former logging and mining tracks, many of them following existing walking tracks used by Traditional Owners. The Queensland Heritage Trails Network project put many of the regional heritage sites on the map, making it easier for visitors to discover more of the region's unique history, culture and natural wonders.



Skyrail's Red Peak Station rainforest boardwalk

6. Investment and infrastructure

Public and private sector investment into tourism infrastructure over the past 20 years has improved the capacity of the region to host visitors, added to visitor awareness and enjoyment, and contributed to the regional economy. There is a continuing need for investment to ensure high standards can be maintained and to renew and refresh experiences in the Wet Tropics in response to the changing demands of tourism markets.

Key tourism investments in the Wet Tropics have done much to ensure the region's status as a premier tourist destination, these include:

- Structural Adjustment Package (1988). The Commonwealth Government allocated \$75.3 million to be spent on job creation and business compensation following listing of the Area and the end of logging. This package also provided for investment into tourism infrastructure such as construction of boardwalks, sealing of key access roads and provision of interpretation facilities.
- Tjapukai Aboriginal Cultural Park, which cost \$8.8 million, opened in July 1996 and has helped promote education and understanding of Rainforest Aboriginal culture in the Area.
- WTMA coordinated the \$23 million Daintree Rescue Program in the 1990s and produced the Rainforest CRC Daintree Futures Study 2000 (Rainforest CRC et al. 2000) which made an important contribution towards maintaining the natural attractions of the Daintree, which were otherwise threatened by poorly controlled development.
- The Queensland Heritage Trails Network received \$110 million funded through the Queensland and Commonwealth Governments in partnership with local government authorities and local communities. The Queensland Heritage Trails Network (most completed by 2002) links together 43 authentic heritage experiences, such as the Misty Mountains Trail, the Echo Creek Walking Trail and the Nganyaji Interpretive Centre at Ravenshoe.
- Douglas Shire Council introduced a \$4 conservation and infrastructure management fee in July 2003 for vehicles crossing Daintree River, to be spent on property acquisition (75%) and infrastructure (25%). This levy has since been discontinued.
- Private investment in tourism attractions worth millions of dollars (e.g. Daintree Discovery Centre, Skyrail Rainforest Cableway, Wildlife Habitat).

- Mamu Rainforest Canopy Walkway built by the Queensland Government cost \$10 million and opened in 2008.
- Great Walks initiative, first round of funding for the Queensland Government invested \$10 million to create six world class tracks in Queensland, including the Wet Tropics Great Walks in Girringun National Park, opened in 2009.

During 2009-2010, the Queensland Government identified seven new nature-based tourism opportunities and has commenced a process of recruiting private sector investment based on tight sustainability guidelines. Two of these sites, Ninney Rise at Bingil Bay and Wallaman Falls are in the Wet Tropics. The Ninney Rise site lies outside of the World Heritage Area. The Wallaman Falls site lies within the Area and will require careful planning to ensure any future facility appropriately balances the benefit of increased opportunities for presentation of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area with maintenance of natural and cultural values.

The Queensland Government's 2010 – 2020 Tourism Opportunity Plan for tropical north Queensland recognised the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area as a key asset for regional tourism. Of particular interest is a proposal for development of an Australian World Heritage gateway centre for Cairns that would enhance the experience of visitors to the Wet Tropics and Great Barrier Reef through orientation and interpretation. It would also orient visitors to the other World Heritage properties in Australia, capitalising on Cairns' status as an international gateway.



Wildlife Habitat celebrates their 21st birthday and launch of their new logo

7. A sustainable future for tourism in the Wet Tropics

The way forward for WTMA's interests in tourism in the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area will focus on:

- strengthening communications by building on existing relationships with partners and stakeholders, in particular QPWS, the tourism industry, the conservation sector, Rainforest Aboriginal peoples and the local communities to promote rich experiences in nature-based and Indigenous tourism
- sustaining the high standard of tourism operations in the Area, through a Wet Tropics based eco accreditation program developed in partnership with the industry, Ecotourism Australia and QPWS complimenting the Tourism in Protected Areas scheme
- working with Traditional Owners to support existing Indigenous tourism programs and to facilitate development of new cultural tourism activities and staff training
- addition of the Wet Tropics region to Tourism Australia's National Landscapes program, with potential benefits for the Wet Tropics tourism industry if successful
- establishing a World Heritage gateway centre in partnership with other World Heritage managers, the tourism industry, state and local governments and the regional communities
- facilitating and supporting research to answer priority questions relevant to Wet Tropics tourism.

These goals are detailed further below.

Eco tourism accreditation

Ecotourism Australia's Green Travel Guide Australia 2009-2010, lists 37 accredited ecotourism operations in the Wet Tropics, 11 Eco Certified, 23 Advanced Ecotourism, and three Nature Tourism (www.ecotourism.org.au). WTMA is working with the tourism industry to develop an eco accreditation system in cooperation with businesses and tour guides in the Wet Tropics that builds on and complements the Ecotourism Australia system.

Wet Tropics tour guide accreditation

WTMA proposes to develop a Wet Tropics module as an addition to the nationally recognised Certificate III in Tourism (Guiding), delivered through TAFE colleges and Registered Training Organisations (RTOs).

The Wet Tropics module will be tailored for tourism destinations in the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area. The training will:

- develop communication and presentation techniques
- enhance knowledge of the natural and cultural values of the Wet Tropics, and of visitor profiles.

WTMA will explore potential marketing and promotional benefits with the tourism industry.

Business accreditation

The Authority will encourage tour operators in the Wet Tropics to become accredited through Ecotourism Australia, if not already accredited. WTMA will then offer the additional Wet Tropics Tour Operator branding logo to empower consumer choice and identify environmentally friendly businesses endorsed by the Authority. It is envisaged that business eco accreditation will ultimately be linked to the QPWS commercial activity permit. QPWS proposes to implement a scheme for Tourism in Protected Areas (TIPA) in the Wet Tropics which will provide a framework for a more efficient, effective and equitable system of sustainable tourism management in protected areas. This also provides an opportunity to link commercial activity permits to eco accreditation.

Expected benefits of the proposed accreditation scheme include:

- improved staff skills with enhanced career prospects for guides
- raised/sustained standard of tourism operation in the Wet Tropics
- marketing opportunities for the industry in domestic and international markets
- reduced footprint of tourism operations through best-practice operations
- management support for WTMA and QPWS from an informed tourism industry.

Supporting Indigenous tourism

Following the successful delivery of Indigenous business training workshops in October 2009, to 30 Wet Tropics Traditional Owners, and the establishment of the North Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Tourism Alliance, WTMA will continue to play a facilitator role to support the Indigenous business operators and other potential participants in cultural tourism. Two key steps in achieving this are supporting the development of good governance arrangements for the North Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Tourism Alliance and

ensuring that Indigenous interests and cultural experiences are well defined and supported within the National Landscape process for the Wet Tropics. Other activities are to support training, development of relevant communications and interpretive materials, and promotion of cultural tourism opportunities through WTMA communications channels.

National Landscapes

The Wet Tropics region has been invited to express an interest in being considered for Tourism Australia's National Landscapes program. The proposal, coordinated by WTMA, is being developed in consultation with the state and regional tourism industry representatives, QPWS, the conservation sector and local councils. Coordinated by Tourism Australia, the National Landscapes Program is a marketing strategy promoting world-class landscapes distinctive to Australia "where you can experience the best of our natural, cultural and spiritual wonders - our Experience-scapes". As a landscape rich with diverse, unique and immersive experiences the Wet Tropics would appear to fit the criteria for a National Landscape.

World Heritage gateway

WTMA is taking the lead in promoting the concept of a World Heritage gateway centre in Cairns as an information hub for tourists and locals on World Heritage properties in Australia. This proposal has been given specific focus in Tourism Queensland's Tourism Opportunity Plan (TOP) for tropical north Queensland. This would provide a context and entry point to the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area and the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area but also provide a national centre to showcase Australia's network of World Heritage listed properties. The centre would be a world class tourist interpretive and education facility that would also house research and management bodies that will support promoting World Heritage values and support excellence in interpretation. The Authority is discussing the concept with potential partners, including QPWS, local government and the tourism industry.

Research

The Consultation draft of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area Research Strategy 2010 – 2014 identifies the Wet Tropics as a learning landscape that provides outstanding opportunities for collaborative research across disciplines (including tourism), to support sustainable use and management of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area (WTMA 2010).

This Research Strategy identifies key research topics and tasks and encourages research collaboration and partnerships to foster the transfer

of knowledge to end-users. A number of research tasks relate specifically to tourism, the top priority question being:

How can business (particularly the tourism industry), community and Traditional Owner partners be engaged, benefit from and contribute to the knowledge and management that is integral to WTWHA protection and management?

A variety of other questions relating to World Heritage presentation, recreation and tourism, the Authority's role in the life of the community, and socio-economic and environmental benefits will be addressed in future work by research partners. In the future, the Authority plans to strengthen its existing role in knowledge-transfer and communication of research outcomes to potential end-users, such as the tourism industry and community members, to enhance their role in the conservation and presentation of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area.

Terms and abbreviations

AMPTO	Association of Marine Park Tourism Operators
AST	Alliance for Sustainable Tourism
CCC	Community Consultative Committee
CRC	Cooperative Research Centre
DERM	Department of Environment and Resource Management
GBRWHA	Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area
GBRMPA	Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority
JCU	James Cook University
MTSRF	Marine and Tropical Sciences Research Facility
QPWS	Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service
QTIC	Queensland Tourism Industry Corporation
RRRC	Reef and Rainforest Research Centre
RTO	Registered Training Organisation
SAC	Scientific Advisory Committee
Area	Wet Tropics World Heritage Area
TIPA	Tourism in protected Areas
TNQ	Tropical North Queensland
TTNQ	Tourism Tropical North Queensland
VMS	Visitor Monitoring System
WTMA	Wet Tropics Management Authority
WTWHA	Wet Tropics World Heritage Area
WTQWHA	Wet Tropics of Queensland World Heritage Area

References

- Bentrupperbäumer J. M. and Reser J.P. (2006) *The Role of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area in the Life of the Community: A survey of the north Queensland community*, Revised Edition.
- Bentrupperbäumer J. M., O'Farrell S.-E. and Reser J.P. (2004). *Visitor Monitoring System for the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area: Volume 2 Visitor Monitoring Process – from Pre-Destination to Post-Destination*. Cooperative Research Centre for Tropical Rainforest Ecology and Management. Rainforest CRC Cairns. (88pp.)
- Carmody J. and Prideaux B. (2008). *Community Attitudes, Knowledge, Perceptions and Use of the Wet Tropics of Queensland World Heritage Area in 2007*. Report to the Marine and Tropical Sciences Research Facility. Reef and Rainforest Research Centre, Cairns (120pp)
- DRET (2009). *Tourism Industry Facts and Figures*, Department of Resources, Energy and Tourism. Canberra.
- Driml S. (1997). *Towards sustainable tourism in the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area*. Report to the Wet Tropics Management Authority.
- Ecotourism Australia (2010). *The Green Travel Guide, Australia 2009/10*. Available at: www.ecotourism.org.au July 2010
- Ignjic S. (2001). *Cultural Tourism in the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area: A Strategic Overview for Rainforest Bama*. Report to the Cooperative Research Centre for Tropical Rainforest Ecology and Management (Rainforest CRC). December 2001
- Gillespie Economics and BDA Group (2008). *Economic Activity of Australia's World Heritage Areas*. Report to the Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts. 201pp.
- Kehoe K., Williams P. and Delaney C. (2000) *Right back where we started from*. The Williams family history. Unpublished.
- Prideaux B. and Falco-Mammone F. (2007a). *Economic values of tourism in the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area*. Cooperative Research Centre for Tropical Rainforest Ecology and Management, James Cook University, Cairns. 64pp.
- Prideaux, B. and Falco-Mammone, F. (2007b) *Rainforest Tourism: Establishment of a Visitor Monitoring Structure*. Unpublished report to the Marine and Tropical Sciences Research Facility. Reef and Rainforest Research Centre Limited, Cairns. 17pp.

- Rainforest Conservation Society (1986). *Tropical rainforests of North Queensland: their conservation significance*. A Report to the Australian Heritage Commission.
- Rainforest CRC, GHD and Far North Strategies (2000). *Daintree Futures Study*, Final Report to the Wet Tropics Ministerial Council, Rainforest CRC Cairns with Gutteridge Haskins and Davey and Far North Strategies.
- Reef and Rainforest Research Centre (2007). *TNQ Tourism Fact Sheet 2. Visitors who visited the Wet Tropics rainforest Jan-Dec*.
- Tourism Queensland (2004). *Indigenous Tourism Strategy – including Indigenous people in tourism*. www.tq.com.au
- Tourism Queensland (2010a). *Tropical North Queensland Regional Snapshot: Year ended March 2010*. www.tq.com.au/research
- Tourism Queensland (2010b). *Tropical Tablelands Visitor Profile and Satisfaction Report April 2010*. Australian Government Department of Resources, Energy and Tourism.
- Tourism Queensland (2010c). *Domestic Tourism Snapshot: Year ended March 2010*. www.tq.com.au/research
- Tourism Research Australia (n.d.) www.ret.gov.au/tourism/tra/snapshots/Pages/default.aspx
- Tourism Tropical North Queensland (2010). *Tourism Tropical North Queensland 2010/2011 Strategic Plan*.
- Wet Tropics Aboriginal Plan Project Team (2005). *Caring for Country and Culture*. The Wet Tropics Aboriginal Cultural and Natural Resource Management Plan. Rainforest CRC and FNQ NRM Ltd.
- Wet Tropics Management Authority (1997). *Protection through Partnerships*. Policies for the implementation of the Wet Tropics Plan.
- Wet Tropics Management Authority (1998). *The Wet Tropics Management Plan*
- Wet Tropics Management Authority (2000). *Wet Tropics Nature Based Tourism Strategy: A Strategy for the development and management of nature based tourism*. 74pp.
- Wet Tropics Management Authority (2001). *Wet Tropics Walking Strategy*. 80pp.
- Wet Tropics Management Authority (2004). *Wet Tropics Conservation Strategy: the conservation, rehabilitation and transmission to future generations of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area*.
- Wet Tropics Management Authority (2009). *From the Heart: Celebrating 20 years of the Wet Tropics of Queensland World Heritage Area*.

Wet Tropics Management Authority (2010). *Wet Tropics of Queensland World Heritage Area Research Strategy 2010 – 2014 Consultation draft: Improving management by building and communicating knowledge through collaboration* 44pp.

Wilson R.F., Turton S.M. Bentrupperbäumer J.M. and Reser J.P. (2004a). *Visitor Monitoring System for the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area: Volume 1 Procedural Manual*. Cooperative Research Centre for Tropical Rainforest Ecology and Management. Rainforest CRC Cairns. 96pp.

Wilson R.F., Turton S.M. Bentrupperbäumer J.M. and Reser J.P. (2004b). *Visitor Monitoring System for the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area: Volume 3 Case Studies – Biophysical Assessment*. Cooperative Research Centre for Tropical Rainforest Ecology and Management. Rainforest CRC Cairns. 150pp.



**WET TROPICS
MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY**

PO Box 2050
Cairns, Qld 4870

Tel: 07 4052 0555
Fax: 07 4031 1364

Email: wtma.records@derm.qld.gov.au
Website: www.wettropics.gov.au