

ANNUAL REPORT 2018-2019





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Purpose of the report

This annual report details the financial and non-financial performance of the Wet Tropics Management Authority from 1 July 2018 to 30 June 2019. It highlights the work, achievements, activities and strategic initiatives of the Authority, and satisfies the requirements of Queensland's *Wet Tropics World Heritage Protection and Management Act 1993* and *Financial Accountability Act 2009*; and the Commonwealth's *Wet Tropics of Queensland World Heritage Conservation Act 1994*.

Feedback

The annual report is an important document representing communication and accountability. The Authority values comments and welcomes feedback from readers.

Public availability

This publication can be accessed from our website at www.wettropics.gov.au. Alternatively, hard copies can be obtained by emailing wettropics@wtma.qld.gov.au.

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Further information



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30 September 2019

The Hon Sussan Ley MP
Minister for the Environment
PO Box 6022
House of Representatives
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Minister

I am pleased to present the Annual Report 2018-2019 for the Wet Tropics Management Authority.

Under the *Wet Tropics World Heritage Conservation Act 1994*, section 10 (1) 'annual report' means a report given to the Australian Government under section 63 of the *Wet Tropics World Heritage Protection and Management Act 1993* (Qld).

Section 10 (2) requires you, as the Minister, to cause a copy of the annual report to be laid before each House of Parliament within 15 sitting days after the report is given to the Australian Government.

In submitting this report to you today the Authority is fulfilling its responsibilities under Australian Government legislation.

Yours sincerely



Leslie Shirreffs PSM
Chair
Wet Tropics Management Authority

Message from the chair



December 2018 marked 30 years of the inscription of the Wet Tropics of Queensland on the World Heritage List with more than 25,000 people engaging with the Wet Tropics Management Authority's (the Authority) commemorations.

Only the seventh World Heritage Area to be declared in Australia by 1988, the Wet Tropics of Queensland World Heritage Area (the Area) comprises the world's oldest living rainforests and is one of an exclusive group of World Heritage properties listed for all four natural criteria. Although it accounts for less than 0.2% of the Australian continent the Wet Tropics boasts some staggering statistics. Remarkably, the Area is home to some 32% of Australia's terrestrial fauna species, 65% of the country's ferns and 700 vascular species of plants found nowhere else in the world.

The Wet Tropics rainforests are also of deep and continuing significance to some 20 unique Rainforest Aboriginal tribal groups (see Appendix 1), comprising 120 clan and family groups, who maintain their connection to the Area for spiritual, cultural, socio-economic and familial identity and wellbeing. As

the original managers of Wet Tropics rainforest for thousands of generations, Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples today continue to be integral to the Area, bringing particular perspectives, skills and experiences to contemporary management of the Wet Tropics.

The enormous global and local significance and irreplaceability of the Area places great responsibility on managers, users and the community to ensure that its uniqueness is maintained, while the environmental, recreational, economic, social and tourism needs of a growing region are met. The Authority takes its obligation to protect, conserve, present, rehabilitate and transmit the Area to future generations very seriously and continually considers and assesses this goal in terms of the sometimes competing uses of the Area.

2018-19 has been an exceptionally busy year with many positive outcomes achieved through effective collaboration with our partners in the tourism sector, conservation organisations, all levels of government, Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples and other industries. We have had our strong board of directors setting strategic direction and the active participation of community, scientific and yellow crazy ant committees providing effective guidance and advice.

During 2018-19 the Authority implemented a 5-year Wet Tropics Business Strategy setting five high level strategic themes for the organisation: climate change and other threats; support for Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples; involving the community; tourism and recreation and minimising impacts on the Area. These themes reflect contemporary pressures, opportunities, obligations and aspirations of the Authority, its partners and stakeholders in the management of the Area.

These themes are reflected in the Authority's 2018-19 achievements including:

- completion of a draft Wet Tropics Climate Adaptation Plan and the release of a 10-point plan for climate action
- the Australian Government's renewed commitment of \$2.7M per year to the Authority for a further 5 years under the 2018-2023 National Partnership Agreement
- the Australian and Queensland governments' confirmation of \$18M funding over three years to continue the eradication of yellow crazy ants

- significant and targeted support provided to Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples and the achievement of their aspirations through collaboration, provision of resources, and support to Traditional Owner Leadership Group for the refresh of the Wet Tropics of Queensland Regional Agreement
- successfully hosting the 2019 Cassowary Awards, attended by around 230 guests with 10 outstanding Award recipients
- producing the World Heritage family animation product 'The Wet Tropics World Heritage Area—nature's greatest survival story'
- significant progress in the 10-year review of the Wet Tropics Management Plan 1998, including comprehensive engagement with Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples, government and the tourism and conservation sectors

I want to thank my fellow directors for their passion and support and I note the reappointment of three of the current board of directors for a period of 18

months and the remaining three directors for three years until November 2021. These reappointments reflect the continuing stability and effectiveness of the board, and provide the opportunity to stagger replacements to ensure continuity in decision-making and advice.

Finally a big acknowledgement and thank you to Executive Director, Scott Buchanan and his hard-working, dedicated staff. Our successes over the past year surely reflect the commitment and quality of our directors, staff and partners.



Leslie Shirreffs PSM
Chair
Wet Tropics Management Authority



Babinda Boulders - Photo: Wet Tropics Images/Charlotte Hellings

2018-19 at a glance



PHASE 2 - MANAGEMENT
PLAN REVIEW: **COMPLETED**

49

INDIVIDUAL
SUBMISSIONS

Extensive
community
consultation

Facilitated development of a
**WET TROPICS
CLIMATE
ADAPTATION
PLAN**

3

WORKSHOPS

INPUT FROM

90+

PARTICIPANTS

Reduction of
Yellow crazy ants



Only **35%** of area under broadscale treatment

Strong partnership with sugar industry
and other community stakeholders

HOSTED THE



2019 *Cassowary Awards*

10

AWARD RECIPIENTS

49

NOMINEES

9

CATEGORIES

230

GUESTS

Collaborative partnerships

with industry, community and Rainforest
Aboriginal groups FOR..

research

climate
action

eradicating
threatening
pests

Aboriginal cultural
values protection

on-ground
management

presentation of
World Heritage
values

improving plans,
policies and
protocols

Renewal
of **18**

**MAINTENANCE
PERMITS**

for community services infrastructure

Production of 12 minute animated documentary,
"Nature's greatest survival story"

Produced
3 EDITIONS
 of the Rainforest Aboriginal
 News with Terrain NRM
6,000 copies



HOSTED
2
 MULTI-DAY

Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples
 regional workshops



ATTENDED BY

150+

RECOGNISED ABORIGINAL LEADERS
 AND WET TROPICS PARTNERS

INVESTED
\$30,000
INTO ABORIGINAL
ORGANISATIONS
 to support traditional and
 cultural land management.



WET
TROPICS
 MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY



RESPECT
 PAST · PRESENT · FUTURE

Supported Wet Tropics research programs
 by investing almost
\$40,000

to 8

Wet Tropics
 postgraduate
 students



About the Wet Tropics

The Wet Tropics World Heritage Area

World Heritage listing of a site is recognition by the international community that the place is such an outstanding example of the world's natural and/or cultural heritage that its conservation is of value to all people. The World Heritage List includes 1,121 properties which the World Heritage Committee considers to have outstanding universal value—this includes 20 Australian properties.

The Wet Tropics of Queensland World Heritage Area (the Area) was inscribed onto the World Heritage list in 1988 for its natural values, meeting all four natural criteria for World Heritage listing and fulfilling the necessary conditions of integrity¹. The Area was also listed on Australia's National Heritage List in 2007 for its natural values², and in 2012 for its Indigenous cultural values.

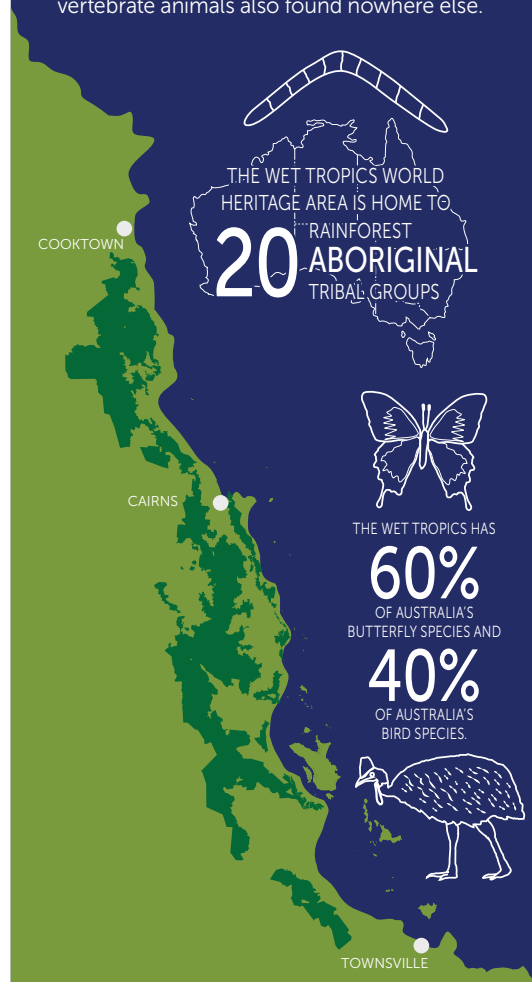
The Area is a rich, living cultural landscape for Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples, who have lived continuously in the rainforest environment for thousands of years. Indeed, it is the only Australian site where Aboriginal people have permanently inhabited a tropical rainforest environment.

Relevant legislation

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

The Queensland Act establishes the Wet Tropics Management Authority and provides the legal basis for the Wet Tropics Management Plan 1998, which 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.

- Spread along 450 kilometres of rugged Tropical North Queensland coastline between Cooktown and Townsville, the Area is home to ancient remnants of the Gondwanan forest that once covered the Australian continent.
- While mostly rainforest, this stunning landscape features diverse habitats including open forests, woodlands, wetlands and mangroves.
- We are still discovering new species within the World Heritage Area today. At last count, more than 3,300 species of plants and over 700 species of vertebrate animals call the Area home. This includes more than 700 species of endemic plants and at least 88 species of vertebrate animals also found nowhere else.



¹ <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/486>

² <http://www.environment.gov.au/heritage/places/world/wet-tropics>

Our organisation

Who we are

The Wet Tropics Management Authority (the Authority) was established to ensure Australia's obligation under the World Heritage Convention is met, in relation to the Wet Tropics of Queensland World Heritage Area (the Area). The Authority is a body corporate, with statutory powers defined under the Queensland Act. The Authority's functions are fully defined under section 10 of the Queensland Act, but include to:

- develop and implement policies, plans and programs for management of the Area
- formulate performance indicators for the implementation of approved policies and programs
- advise, make recommendations and report to the Minister and the Ministerial Forum on the state of the Area

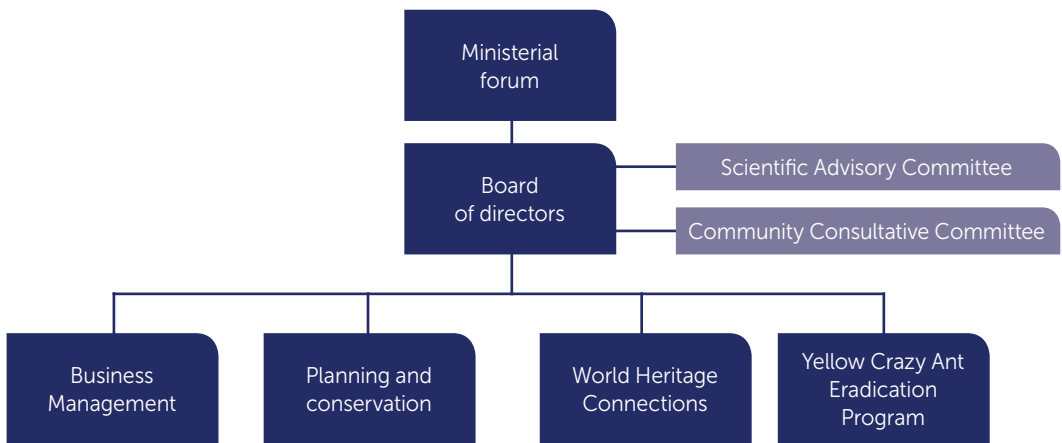
- facilitate and enter into cooperative management agreements
- rehabilitate and restore the Area
- gather, research, analyse and disseminate information on the Area
- develop public and community education programs
- promote the Area locally, nationally and internationally
- monitor the state of the Area.

The Authority performs its functions in a way that is conducive to the protection of the Area's natural heritage values and consistent with the World Heritage Convention and relevant legislation.

Our structure

As a body corporate operating under the requirements of both the Queensland and Commonwealth acts, the Wet Tropics Management Authority structure enshrines its engagement with the State and Commonwealth governments and a range of industry and community stakeholders throughout the Wet Tropics region.

The Authority operates as an administrative unit within the Queensland Government's Department of Environment and Science (DES) and is subject to Queensland public sector legislation, regulations, standards and guidelines governing administrative functions and arrangements. The Director-General of DES is the accountable officer for the Authority under the *Financial and Performance Management Standard 2009*. The Authority is responsible to the Director-General regarding compliance with Queensland Government administrative and financial standards.



Relevant Ministers

The Intergovernmental Agreement recognises that both the Australian Government and Queensland Government have joint interests in and responsibilities for the World Heritage Area. The board of the Authority reports to two Ministers:

- The Hon. Leeanne Enoch MP, Queensland Minister for Environment and the Great Barrier Reef, Minister for Science and Minister for the Arts
- The Hon. Sussan Ley MP, Australian Minister for the Environment.

Board of directors

A board of directors is established under the Queensland Act and consists of seven directors, six of whom serve in a part-time capacity. The Australian Government and the Queensland Government nominate two directors each. The relevant ministers nominate a chair and a designated Aboriginal director. 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.

In November 2018, relevant Australian and Queensland Ministers, approved reappointment of three of the Authority's board of directors for a further 18 months until May 2020, and the remaining three directors, including the chair, for three years until November 2021. This staggered approach will provide continuity of decision-making and enable stronger institutional governance, better succession planning and retention of leadership memory within the organisation.

Details on the operations of the board and their achievements in 2018–19 are at [Appendix 2](#).

Statutory committees

The Authority has two statutory advisory committees appointed by its board under section 40 (1) of the Queensland Act—the Community Consultative Committee and the Scientific Advisory Committee. These committees meet prior to board meetings and advise the Authority on programs and research for the management of the Area. A board member chairs each committee, providing a direct line of communication between the committees and the board.

Additional details about the committees can be found at [Appendix 3](#).

Our contribution to government objectives

The vision of the Authority is: 'to protect the values of the Wet Tropics through collaboration, culture, knowledge and passion'.

Consistent with its legislative roles and functions, the Authority endeavours to ensure that its service delivery initiatives contribute to Australian and Queensland government objectives for the Wet Tropics community.

Statutory reporting obligations

Each year the Authority prepares a report on the financial statements and administration of the Acts, 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.

Australian World Heritage Advisory Committee

The Authority collaborates with other Australian World Heritage property managers through the Australian World Heritage Advisory Committee (AWHAC), which advises the Australian Minister for the Environment on policies and programs which benefit World Heritage properties on national or crosscutting issues. During 2018–19, the Authority's chair and executive director attended quarterly forums where national World Heritage policy programs and initiatives were discussed. The Authority's chair participated in a new AWHAC climate change working group that developed messaging to advise the Australian and Queensland governments about the threats of climate change impacts to World Heritage values and integrity.

Our performance

This annual report details the Wet Tropics Management Authority's (the Authority) progress against the Wet Tropics Management Authority Business Strategy 2018–23, which sets out how the organisation will effectively manage and protect the World Heritage values of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area (the Area), and ensure cooperative management of the Area with Rainforest Aboriginal people.

Five high-level strategies were identified in the business strategy. The Authority's achievements in 2018–19 are detailed in accordance with these five strategies:

Strategy 1—Climate change and other threats.

[See below](#)

Strategy 2—Support Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples.

[See page 18](#)

Strategy 3—Involve the community.

[See page 20](#)

Strategy 4—World-class tourism and recreation.

[See page 22](#)

Strategy 5—Minimise impacts.

[See page 24](#)

Additionally, all work undertaken by the Authority is underpinned by its commitment to delivering high standards of corporate governance, prioritising workplace health and safety and ensuring that financial management demonstrates transparency and accountability. See page 26

Strategy 1—Climate change and other threats: respond to the impacts of climate change and priority cross-tenure threats to the Area

Climate change is one of the most significant threats to the Area and is likely to result in widespread and substantial ecological change. This change will impact the biodiversity values underpinning the World Heritage listing of the Area and has the potential to affect the region's economy.

Biosecurity threats to the Area (including tropical weeds, yellow crazy ants, and other pest animals) negatively impact on World Heritage values and place further pressure on already threatened species and ecosystems. On the ground, management of the Area is undertaken by a number of partners across a range of tenures, including the Department of Environment and Science (DES) through the Queensland Parks

and Wildlife Service (QPWS) who are responsible for managing 85% of the Area.

The Authority is collaborating with partners such as QPWS, Biosecurity Queensland, Terrain NRM, and Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples to address threats to the Area and encourage recovery and rehabilitation of species and ecosystems.

Highlights from 2018–19 include:

- completion of a draft Wet Tropics Climate Adaptation Plan for the Area
- confirmation of \$18M in funding from the Australian and Queensland governments to continue the eradication of yellow crazy ants for the three years until 2022
- completion of a draft biodiversity planning assessment report.

Climate adaptation planning and action

The Authority drafted a 10-year Wet Tropics Climate Adaptation Plan (the Adaptation Plan), which is to be launched in late 2019. The Adaptation Plan outlines a strategic response to unavoidable changes to natural systems and associated World Heritage values, as well as a range of actions to support our natural systems and people to transition to management practices that minimise negative change.

To develop the Adaptation Plan, the Authority undertook a series of consultation workshops and meetings, integrating the input from experts and community alike.

When new evidence revealed the accelerated decline of unique, endemic Wet Tropics animals such as the lemuroid ringtail possum, indicating that they may be at imminent risk of extinction, the Authority's board responded by releasing a climate impact statement and a 10-point plan. The board's call is for urgent action and investment to improve resilience and protection to give the Area the best chance of withstanding extreme events and climate impacts, pending a reduction in global emissions. The 10-point plan provides direction on critical first actions which have now been incorporated, along with other longer-term climate actions, into the Adaptation Plan.

The Authority has already commenced collaborative climate action with the Australian Tropical Herbarium to collect and record mountain top plant species at risk from climate change. The project is funded by the Ian Potter Foundation and the Authority.

Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service partnership

Around 85% of the Area is protected area estate (national parks, conservation reserves and other areas of public land) managed by QPWS who are responsible for day-to-day activities such as infrastructure maintenance, fire, pest and weed control. In 2015, the Authority and QPWS entered into a 3-year partnership agreement to prioritise and coordinate management activities in the protected area estate within the Area. The agreement outlined products and services to be delivered by QPWS under funding provided by the Queensland Government for World Heritage management. The agreement was successfully completed as of 30 June 2018. The partnership agreement has led to increased collaboration between the Authority and QPWS on important issues such as:

- Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples engagement in management decisions;
- fire and pest management
- infrastructure maintenance and upgrades
- presentation and interpretation materials.

The Authority is currently negotiating a new multi-year partnership agreement with QPWS.

Eradicate yellow crazy ants from the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area

The Australian Government, through their National Landcare Program and the Queensland Government jointly funded the Authority's Yellow Crazy Ant Eradication Program for three years to June 2019.

The Authority's effort to eradicate yellow crazy ants intensified over 2018–19, with demonstrable reductions in overall ant numbers. The successful broadscale treatment continued, with three rounds in September and December 2018 and May 2019. Much of the treatment area has seen the reduction of yellow crazy ants and by the end of the year, areas under broadscale treatment covered only 615ha of the 1748ha treatment area. The remainder of the treatment area has transitioned to surveillance and spot treatment. Over 39ha has been confirmed eradicated. The program has detected a further 11 infestations (113ha) over the past year. The majority of these detections are the result of successful collaboration with the sugar industry south of Cairns tracing potential movement pathways for yellow crazy ants by harvesters, cane trains and other machinery. This close alliance has also been critical to prevent further spread of yellow crazy

ants in sugar cane areas, identified as a key risk to eradication.

The Authority remains confident that eradication is achievable with the commitment of \$18 million over three years to 2022 from the Australian and Queensland governments. An independent review of the Yellow Crazy Ant Eradication Program was undertaken by the Centre of Excellence for Biosecurity Risk Analysis (CEBRA) at Melbourne University and stated that eradication of yellow crazy ants in and adjacent to the Area remains feasible. CEBRA calculated that the environmental and socioeconomic benefits of yellow crazy ant eradication would be \$6.1 billion dollars over the next 30 years.

The success of the eradication program continues to rely on a cooperative research partnership with James Cook University (JCU) and liaison with other yellow crazy eradication programs in Australia and overseas. Recent research has focused on the effectiveness of survey techniques for detecting yellow crazy ants and off-target impacts of treatment. The lessons learned in the Wet Tropics have the potential to be applied in numerous other infestations within Australia and throughout the world.

The Authority also continues to work closely with local Traditional Owner groups, Gimuy Walubara Yidinji and Djabugay, on the eradication program and to ensure that Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples actively participate in operational contracts and training programs.

Recovering threatened species

The Authority continues to support threatened species recovery teams in the Area, chairing and providing secretariat support to the Cassowary Recovery Team (CRT) and Northern Bettong Recovery Team (NBRT) meetings.

The CRT met three times in 2018–19 with the most significant work relating to the review of the Cassowary Recovery Plan, strengthening connectivity around essential cassowary habitat and environmentally significant corridors in the Mission Beach/Tully area at Smith's Gap, Eubenangee Swamp National Park and Mission Beach. Developing strategies to involve Traditional Owners in the review of the Cassowary Recovery Plan has been a high priority this year.

The CRT continues to work with the Queensland Department of Transport and Main Roads to reduce

cassowary mortality and develop automated sensing equipment at 'hot spots' to alert motorists to the presence of cassowaries.

The NBRT met twice in 2018–19 with the discussion focussed on the ongoing fieldwork by QPWS, Australian Wildlife Conservancy and JCU at the recently rediscovered Mount Spurgeon bettong population. The NBRT undertook planning and support for the University of Queensland's PhD project, through the National Environmental Science Programme, 'Saving an endangered bettong by fire' in the Lamb Range.

Wet Tropics biodiversity planning assessment

The Authority collaborated with DES in 2018–19 to facilitate a biodiversity planning assessment for the Wet Tropics bioregion. The assessment will inform the administration of both the Wet Tropics Climate Adaptation Plan and the Wet Tropics World Heritage Plan. The assessment was completed using the DES Biodiversity Assessment and Mapping Methodology, and incorporated local expert knowledge³ through workshops convened by the Authority.

The draft assessment report was released for comment in November 2018 and focussed on corridor mapping, priority taxa, threatening processes, threatened species habitat and landscape scale data.

The final assessment report is due for completion in September 2019.

Supporting post-graduate research

The Authority's Student Research Grant Scheme encourages and supports post-graduate research in the Area. The grant funding is directed to research which can better inform the Authority about key areas such as threatened species, climate change, tourism and cultural and natural values of the World Heritage Area.

The Authority funds up to \$4,000 for PhD and masters research projects and up to \$1,500 for honours projects. These 12-month grants support postgraduate student's costs associated with fieldwork, purchase of equipment, field data collection, laboratory research and analysis of data.

In 2018–19, the Authority funded eight post-graduate students from four Australian Universities. The successful students were:

- **Thomas Bruce**, PhD candidate James Cook University—'*Feral cats in the North Queensland Wet Tropics region: understanding the behavioural and ecological interactions that affect conservation outcomes.*'
- **Anna Genge**, Honours student James Cook University—'*Are stingless bees defenceless against introduced gut parasite?*'
- **Lily Leahy**, PhD candidate James Cook University—'*Thermal ecology of rainforest ants in the Australian Wet Tropics: implications for managing climate change vulnerable species.*'
- **Arun Singh Ramesh**, PhD candidate James Cook University—'*Understanding plant functional and physiological responses of tropical mountaintop endemics: Thermal adaptation and acclimation to climate change.*'
- **Christopher Pocknee**, PhD candidate University of Queensland—'*Saving an endangered bettong by fire.*'
- **Adriana Vega Grau**, PhD candidate University of Queensland—'*Tropical tree water use, functional traits and the soil-to-xylem water isotope path.*'
- **Joann Schmider**, PhD candidate Central Queensland University—'*Collecting, cognitioning and capitalising local cultural knowledge for tourism: Wet Tropics of Queensland World Heritage Area rainforest Aboriginal peoples.*'
- **Anthony Waddle**, PhD candidate University of Melbourne—'*Fighting amphibians extinctions caused by disease and assisted evolution.*'

³ Including utilising 'A Spatial Representation of Selected Natural Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area' by Dr Steve Goosem.

Strategy 2—Support Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples: promote and incorporate the rights, interests and aspirations of Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples in the management of the Area

Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples have been integral to the care and management of Wet Tropics landscapes for thousands of years. As traditional custodians, Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples bring unique connections, knowledge and skills to the contemporary management of the Area. The Authority values the critical role of Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples and recognises that the active incorporation and promotion of Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples rights, interests and aspirations is essential to successful collaborative management.

In 2018–19 the Authority:

- partnered with North Queensland Land Council (NQLC) and Terrain NRM to support the Traditional Owner Leadership Group (TOLG) to develop a draft Implementation Agreement for refreshing the Wet Tropics of Queensland World Heritage Area Regional Agreement
- coordinated and convened two Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples' regional forums in October 2018 and June 2019 to enable the TOLG to report on the progress of the Regional Agreement refresh and the review of the Authority's Wet Tropics Management Plan 1998
- developed a draft research protocol in collaboration with QPWS, TOLG and researchers, to improve Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples' involvement in scientific permitting
- invested \$30,000 in three Rainforest Aboriginal organisations to support traditional and cultural land management
- produced the 2019 People Country Culture calendar in collaboration with Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples and Terrain NRM, showcasing stories shared by Rainforest Aboriginal groups and Traditional Owners about creation, lore and warnings set against the backdrop of their country

The Wet Tropics of Queensland World Heritage Area Regional Agreement

In 2018–19 the Authority, in partnership with the NQLC and Terrain NRM, continued to support the TOLG in their endeavour to refresh the Wet Tropics of Queensland World Heritage Area Regional Agreement (the Regional Agreement)—a historically significant document for Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples signed in 2005. The Regional Agreement provides a framework for the meaningful involvement of Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples in World Heritage Area management. The TOLG have been entrusted with a duty of care to ensure that the Regional Agreement becomes a living agreement that removes obstacles currently prohibiting Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples from achieving positive outcomes and gaining stability through economic development in the Area.

The Authority coordinated and convened two separate Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples' Regional Forums—October 2018 at Mission Beach and June 2019 on the Atherton Tablelands. The forums enabled the TOLG to report to the broader Rainforest Aboriginal community and partners on the progress of the Regional Agreement refresh and the review of the Authority's Wet Tropics Management Plan 1998. At the forums the TOLG provided an update on work progressed and tabled the following documents for discussion with and feedback from participants:

- terms of reference and operational guideline for the TOLG
- TOLG workplan
- list of highly-resistant problems for the TOLG to progress in 2019–20
- draft implementation agreement for refresh of the Regional Agreement.

In support of the refresh of the Regional Agreement, DES contributed \$200,000 in 2018–19. The Australian Government also continued to recognise the significance of the Regional Agreement by including an allocation in its 5-year funding agreement with the Authority for the refresh of the Regional Agreement.

The Authority, NQLC and Terrain NRM will continue to collaborate for the purpose of supporting Traditional Owner-led governance and sharing resources to refresh the Regional Agreement. The TOLG's work continues into 2019–20.

Support for Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples' cultural traditions and livelihoods

The Authority has maintained and strengthened partnerships with Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples and their organisations and continue to support Traditional Owner-led activities such as the maintenance of traditional knowledge and practices, presentation and management of cultural values, return to country through cooperative agreements, and enhanced livelihood and wellbeing through collaborative partnerships.

In 2018–19 the Authority granted \$30,000 to three Aboriginal organisations for projects that present and manage cultural values in the World Heritage Area:

- Western Yalanji Aboriginal Corporation for cultural management of the dendroglyph (carved tree) at Mount Windsor, in partnership with Queensland Museum and National Geographic.
- Girringun Aboriginal Corporation to support Jirrbal and Gulgnay Traditional Owner involvement in the World Rafting Championships at Tully Gorge.

- AbriCulture Inc for Gimuy Walubara Yidinji Elders to fulfil important cultural responsibilities and traditional management practice in partnership with the Australian Government, State Library, Griffith University and Queensland Museum.

In collaboration with QPWS, TOLG and researchers, the Authority developed a draft scientific researcher protocol and Application for Research Endorsement form which will be piloted by QPWS for 12 months. The protocol seeks to improve Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples' involvement in scientific research in the Area.

The Authority also contributed to the development of QPWS Guidelines for Traditional Owner Services remuneration and supported a Queensland Women's Ranger Network project, National Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC activities, and QPWS Indigenous Ranger Network events.



Traditional Owner Leadership Group (TOLG) and Elder Paul Turpin at the May 2019 Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples Forum

Strategy 3—Involve the community: optimise community participation and connection with the Area through innovative interpretation, with a focus on education, volunteering and social inclusion

The World Heritage Area is a key feature of the north Queensland landscape. The Authority works with a diverse range of partners and stakeholders and recognises the valuable role government land management agencies, landholders, Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples, the private sector, voluntary conservation groups and the wider community have in managing the Area.

Highlights for 2018–19 include:

- celebrating the 30-year anniversary of the listing of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area with more than 25,000 people participating in related events between June and December 2018
- hosting the prestigious 2019 Cassowary Awards, attended by around 230 guests with 10 Award recipients
- distributing three editions of eNews and two editions of the Rainforest Aboriginal News to 850 email subscribers
- close collaboration with the sugar industry, including famers, harvesting contractors and MSF Sugar has increased awareness to prevent further spread and led to increased detections of yellow crazy ants.

Celebrating 30 years of the Wet Tropics of Queensland World Heritage Area

The Authority celebrated the 30-year anniversary of the inclusion of the Wet Tropics of Queensland on the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization's (UNESCO) World Heritage List. The Wet Tropics of Queensland World Heritage Area was declared on 9 December 1988. The community-focused celebrations were launched at a special Wet Tropics themed Ecofiesta in June 2018.

Between June and December 2018 more than 25,000 people participated in events or engaged with communication materials featuring the 30-year celebrations including Ecofiesta, Science in the Pub, Pecha Kucha and JCU seminars, Cairns Botanic Gardens displays, and the 2017–18 State of the Wet Tropics Report.

On 9 December 2018 a final, intimate event was held at the Cairns Botanic Gardens where the Queensland Minister for Environment and the Great Barrier Reef,

Minister for Science and Minister for the Arts, the Honourable Leeanne Enoch joined with the Authority, industry and historical leaders to commemorate the listing. The Authority's chair and directors planted an endangered Daintree gardenia (*Gardenia actinocarpa*) in the Cairns Botanic Gardens' Gondwanan Evolution Garden to mark the milestone.

Engaging the Wet Tropics community

Ensuring the participation of a wide variety of community members requires effective use of a variety of engagement tools and techniques. The Authority utilises media, social media, its website, workshops, public events, communication materials and committees to engage with, educate and include the community.

The Authority engages in media activities to maintain a public profile, promote the Area's bio-cultural values and integrity and to advocate for its conservation and management. Key events attracting media coverage in 2018–19 included public consultation for the draft Wet Tropics Strategic Plan 2020–2030, the release of the Authority's climate statement and 10-point plan, progress of the Yellow Crazy Ant Eradication Program and the Cassowary Awards.

In addition to the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area Facebook page, the Authority manages two other Facebook groups: the Yellow Crazy Ant Eradication Program (with 259 members) and the Wet Tropics Tour Guides Network (with 208 members). The Authority's social media presence on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram continued to grow throughout 2018–19.

Key social media and website statistics for 2018–19 include:

- Wet Tropics World Heritage Area Facebook page 'likes' grew from 2,800 to 3,700
- two of 35 Cassowary Awards facebook posts reached up to 4,000 people
- video of a male cassowary and chicks in a Wet Tropics creek reached 214,000 people through likes, shares and comments
- visits to the Authority's website www.wettropics.gov.au increased by 30% to 130,000 users.

The Wet Tropics eNews remains a valuable tool for community and partner engagement, providing detailed updates on the Authority's work to a growing community of more than 850 contacts. Three editions were distributed in 2018–19.

During 2018–19, the Community Consultative Committee (CCC) met on three occasions to provide feedback and advice to the Authority's board through cross-sectoral discussion and collaboration. The CCC contributed to innovative solutions to complex management challenges in education and climate change response

Similarly, the Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) met four times and provided input to the review of the Wet Tropics Management Plan 1998, advice on climate change adaption and mitigation strategies, and guidance in the development of research protocols for engagement between Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples and researchers. More details on the CCC and SAC's achievements are in **Appendix 3**.

The Authority has actively participated in both the Cairns and Tablelands Schools Science and Environmental Sustainability Enrichment Program. This program targets gifted Grade 5 students, supporting them to each develop and implement localised science and sustainability based projects. In 2018–19, the Authority played a key role in the students' intensive field days and provided advice on students' projects through industry forums and presentation sessions.

Recognising community contribution to World Heritage management

The Cassowary Awards are the premier engagement event on the Authority's calendar, bringing together community, industry, government and dignitaries to celebrate outstanding achievements in conservation across the Area.

The 17th Cassowary Awards were held on 15 June 2019 at the Tjapukai Aboriginal Cultural Park. The event hosted around 230 guests and included an address from Queensland Minister for Environment, the Honourable Leeanne Enoch, and moving tributes for the late Margaret Thorsborne OAM and the late Peter Hitchcock AM. This year's awards included a new Climate Change Leadership award for recognition of exceptional leadership in climate change response.

In addition to the sponsors listed in the table below, the Authority secured generous sponsorship from Tjapukai Aboriginal Cultural Park and Shonart (gold sponsors), plus Cairns Regional Council and the Queensland Government Department of Innovation, Tourism Industry Development and the Commonwealth Games (silver sponsors).

THE 2019 CASSOWARY AWARD RECIPIENTS

Recipient	Award	Sponsor
Bonadio Partnership	Thorsborne Award for Community Conservation and Rehabilitation	Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service
Mandingalbay Ancient Indigenous Tours	Tourism and Presentation	Skyrail Rainforest Cableway
Dr David Westcott	Innovation	Stanwell Corporation
Children for Change	Education	Terrain NRM
Elizabeth 'Betty' Cashmere	People Country Culture	North Queensland Land Council
Phil Staley	Community Champions	Queensland Water and Land Carers
Gillies Range Road Litter and Illegal Dumping Prevention Project Collaboration Team	Local Government and Industry Initiatives	Powerlink Queensland
Jaragun Natural Resource Management	Climate Change Leadership	Central Queensland University Centre for Tourism and Regional Opportunities
Malanda Primary School	Young Cassowary Award	Daintree Discovery Centre
Allison Halliday	Chair's Award— for extensive contributions and successfully negotiated outcomes for Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples and the Area	Wet Tropics Management Authority

Strategy 4 - World class tourism and recreation: enhance World Heritage presentation and support opportunities for natural and cultural tourism and recreation

The World Heritage Area is an exceptional landscape that warrants concerted efforts to provide the highest quality standards in presentation. To realise this potential, the Authority must take a leading role and collaborate with partners in government, tourism agencies, local business and Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples.

Highlights for 2018–19 include:

- finalising, launching and distributing the World Heritage Family animation product 'The Wet Tropics World Heritage Area—nature's greatest survival story'
- delivering two Wet Tropics tour guide schools, at Mission Beach and in the Daintree
- securing funding from the Commonwealth Government's Australian Heritage Grants to develop a Tourism Destination Plan for the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area
- collaborating with Arts Nexus to deliver a series of information sessions and workshops across the Wet Tropics seeking community contributions to an authentic experiences strategy.

Developing valuable visitor information and experiences

The Authority and DES finalised a collaboration in 2018–19 to tell part of the World Heritage Family story through an animated video, which was launched by the Honourable Leeanne Enoch, Minister for Environment and the Great Barrier Reef, Minister for Science and Minister for the Arts in December 2018. 'The Wet Tropics World Heritage Area—nature's greatest survival story' highlights the key evolutionary and geological components that connect the five world heritage areas in Queensland—the Wet Tropics, the Great Barrier Reef, Fraser Island, Gondwana Rainforests and Riversleigh Fossil Site. The animation is popular and continues to be distributed widely.

The Authority has successfully secured funding through the Australian Heritage Grants Program to develop a Wet Tropics Tourism Destination Plan in collaboration with partners in 2019–20. The Tourism Destination Plan is intended to guide tourism infrastructure and activities within the World Heritage Area.

A draft Authentic Experiences Strategy has also been prepared through a partnership between the Authority, Arts Nexus and Queensland Water and Land Carers. The strategy aims to support emerging eco-cultural tourism products and networking through the development of an authentic experiences information portal. The strategy will be launched in 2019–20.

In 2018–19, the Authority produced a Wet Tropics World Heritage Area map banner to promote and illustrate the scale of the Area and its proximity to local landmarks. The banner includes names of Rainforest Aboriginal tribal groups to increase knowledge and understanding of the Area as a diverse cultural landscape.

Promoting and presenting the Wet Tropics

During 2018–19 the Authority collaborated with Tourism Tropical North Queensland (TTNQ) providing input into their Rainforest and Timeless Experience brand stories for the region. The Authority has also provided advice to the development of Tourism Events Queensland's (TEQ) Wet Tropics project—their focus is to create new and engaging content (video and still imagery) related to key tourism experiences that can be used both by TEQ and tourism operators to promote the Area.

As an outcome of a successful partnership between the Authority, QPWS, Queensland Department of Transport and Main Roads (DTMR) and local councils to review directional and welcome signage across the Area, QPWS have upgraded signage in the Daintree area in 2018–19. Additionally, with support from the Authority, Edmund Kennedy National Park signs have been replaced with Girramay National Park signage to reflect the national park name change.

The Authority also collaborated with QPWS, DTMR and local governments to provide support for an illegal dumping and litter project and signage on the Gillies Range Road within the Area.

Capacity building for Wet Tropics champions

The Authority partnered with Savannah Guides to deliver two Wet Tropics Tour Guide Schools in 2018–19: one at Mission Beach and the other in the Daintree. The Mission Beach field school, held on 2–3 November 2018, attracted 45 participants and was hosted by the Community for Coastal and Cassowary Conservation (C4). Participants visited several sites and explored tourism and conservation ideas and development opportunities in the Cassowary Coast area.

The 13th Wet Tropics Tour Guide Program workshop and field school in the Daintree on 19–21 June 2019 had 24 participants including guides and Djabugay Aboriginal Corporation rangers. Exploring the theme

‘People of the Daintree’, the program engaged with a variety of locals from QPWS, Jabalbina Aboriginal Corporation, Daintree Tea Company and Mossman Sugar Mill, Lawrence Mason, Daintree River Cruise Centre and Hook-a-Barra.

The Authority’s partnership with Savannah Guides also led to the development and delivery of the Wet Tropics Ambassador Program. This program comprises an informative and engaging three-hour workshop aimed at increasing World Heritage Area awareness amongst tourism sector public contact staff (bus drivers, receptionist, tour desk staff, concierges, etc). Savannah Guides, in partnership with TTNQ, then delivered the program to 181 participants over nine separate workshops.



Wet Tropics Tour Guide Field School in the Daintree, June 2019

Strategy 5—Minimise impacts: appropriately manage activities that may have an impact on the World Heritage Area's values through a regulated permit and zoning system

The Authority works closely with partners and stakeholders to get the balance right between protection of the Area's outstanding universal value and allowing appropriate development for essential community and visitor infrastructure (including for tourism and recreation). It also actively supports Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples to achieve aspirations to live and work on country, and other commercial and non-commercial land uses by private landholders within the Area.

2018–19 highlights include:

- completion of phase 2 consultations for the review of the Wet Tropics Management Plan
- renewal of 18 maintenance permits for community service infrastructure.

Review of the operation of the Wet Tropics Management Plan 1998

Under section 53 of the *Wet Tropics World Heritage Protection and Management Act 1993*, the Authority is required to review the operation of the Wet Tropics Management Plan 1998 (the Plan) every 10 years. The review is undertaken over two phases, both requiring public notification. Phase 1 consultation was completed in 2017–18.

During phase 2 the Authority sought feedback on a consultation version of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Plan which is comprised of two parts—the Wet Tropics Management Plan 1998, and the Wet Tropics Strategic Plan 2020–2030. The official consultation period extended for 48 days during which time the Authority undertook the following consultation activities:

- public notices in the Cairns Post, Townsville Bulletin and Courier Mail
- letters to landholders, previous submitters and councils, and notification to all advisory committees including the Community Consultative Committee, Scientific Advisory Committee and Interdepartmental Committee
- notification of phase 2 consultation included pre-advice to Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples regarding proposed changes to the Plan and the issuing of formal Future Act Notices

- detailed consultation with the Traditional Owner Leadership Group (TOLG) and North Queensland Land Council including at both Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples' Regional Forums
- four open workshops for Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples were held in Cardwell, Atherton, Cairns and Mossman. A free, prior and informed consent approach⁴ was adopted for engaging Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples in the review of the Plan to develop management actions in support of Rainforest Aboriginal tradition
- two targeted meetings with the tourism sector in Cairns and Port Douglas and attendance at ad hoc meetings and discussions at the request of a number of tourism industry stakeholders
- ongoing discussions with local governments and the Far North Queensland Regional Organisation of Councils with a particular focus on community service infrastructure and roads
- broad consultation with other state and Commonwealth agencies regarding proposed amendments with a view to reducing duplication in regulation.

The Authority received a total of 49 formal submissions during the phase 2 consultation period. Submissions were analysed to inform the final amendments to the Plan and a comprehensive report is due for public release in the 2019–2020 financial year.

Administration of the Wet Tropics Management Plan

The Plan regulates land use activities that have the potential to impact on the Area's values and integrity. It includes criteria to assess permit applications for construction and maintenance of roads, electricity transmission lines, water supplies and communication facilities. The Authority also develops policies and guidelines about how best to manage the use of the Area. Codes of practice and environmental management plans are included as part of permit conditions.

The Authority continued to strengthen its partnerships with community service infrastructure providers and local, state and Commonwealth agencies throughout 2018–19. Officers provided pre-lodgement advice on over ten separate matters, assessed and issued one new permit under the Plan

⁴ United Nations Free, Prior and Informed Consent – An indigenous right and a good practice for local communities
<http://www.fao.org/3/a-i6190e.pdf>

and renewed 18 maintenance permits for community service infrastructure providers.

The Authority provided advice on how to avoid or mitigate impacts on the Area and training to local councils on infrastructure maintenance, as well

as liaising with those responsible for the planning, building and maintenance of community services infrastructure both inside and adjoining the Area.

More detail on the Authority's Plan administration activities can be found at **Appendix 4**.



Behana Gorge - Photo: Wet Tropics Images/Campbell Clarke

High quality executive, partnership and governance work to ensure the Authority remains an accountable and capable organisation

The Authority is committed to excellence in corporate governance and management. It continues to pursue high standards of business planning to ensure adequate resources are allocated to achieving its strategic goals, while regularly monitoring progress and outcomes.

2018–19 highlights include:

- employment of several new staff and increased opportunities for higher duties or acting-at-level arrangements for staff
- staff absenteeism reduced from 8.25% in 2017–18 to 5.82% in 2018–19

Financial management

As a statutory body, the Authority's general-purpose financial statements and details for 2018–19 are incorporated into DES financial statements.

The Australian and Queensland governments provided a total of \$9M funding to the Authority for 2018–19, which was also supplemented by other forms of income.

A summary of the Authority's operating statement for 2018–19 is shown in Table 1. The operating statement does not account for funds that were carried over from the previous financial year (refer to note 1 below).

The Australian Government's allocation to the Authority for 2017–18 was \$5.7M which was allocated to the Authority's programs. The Queensland Government, through DES, contributed \$3.1M to the Authority to support management of the Area. The Authority allocated \$1.8M of the Queensland Government's funds to QPWS for on-ground and field management services.

The Authority deferred \$365,000 from the 2018–19 budget for the Yellow Crazy Ant Eradication Program as a contingency to ensure effective wind-down activities, in the event that further funding was not provided to continue eradication. The deferred amount has been carried forward into 2019–20 financial year.

Audits (see Table 1 on page 27)

PGL Financial Services conducted two operational audits in 2018–19 for Commonwealth grants received.

Engaging contractors (see Table 2 on page 27)

The Authority expended \$3.669M on contractors for the provision of specific services during 2018–19, including Traditional Owner services, information technology support, invasive species treatment, business administration support and protection and conservation activities. Table 2 shows expenditure on contractors for 2018–19 in comparison to 2017–18.

Overseas travel

One senior staff member travelled to New Zealand to present to the Society for Conservation Biology Oceania's 2018 Conference held in Wellington from 3–6 July 2018.

Workplace health and safety

Employees who suffer from a work-related injury or illness are entitled to apply for workers compensation. The Authority is committed to ensuring that all workers compensation claims are appropriately managed. In 2018–19, the Authority can report zero claims.

The Authority adheres to the Queensland Government's health and safety management systems and procedures for all employees, contractors and volunteers.

The Authority recorded 26 workplace incidents for 2018–19. One bicycle accident resulted in five lost work days and a minor vehicle accident resulted in one lost day, totalling six lost work days. A majority of the reported incidents were minor including tick bites, abrasions and wasp stings. Five reportable incidents were vehicle related and three were slips/falls. Each of the reported incidents were reviewed to ensure all procedures were adhered to. As required, officers attended regular education, awareness and training sessions to ensure accreditations are maintained and current.

Regular workplace health and safety inspections were conducted with no significant issues arising.

Permanent separation rate

As at 30 June 2019, the Authority's permanent staff separation rate was four.

TABLE 1. WET TROPICS MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY OPERATING STATEMENT

CONTROLLED REVENUE AND EXPENSES	Notes	2018-2019	2017-2018
REVENUE		\$'000	\$'000
Revenue from government			
Payments for outputs		3,165	2,360
Asset assumed/liabilities transferred			
SUB-TOTAL GOVERNMENT REVENUE		3,165	2,360
Own source revenue			
User charges			
Grants and other contributions		5,700	5,801
Taxes fees and fines			
Gain on disposal of fixed assets			
Other revenue		202	57
Interest			
SUB-TOTAL OWN SOURCE REVENUE		5,902	5,858
TOTAL REVENUE		8,218	8,218
EXPENSES		\$'000	\$'000
Operating expenses			
Org. unit			
BBA WTMA		9,824	8,740
SUB-TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES		9,824	8,740
Non-operating expenses			
Depreciation		6	5
Asset write-downs/loss on disposal			
SUB-TOTAL NON-OPERATING EXPENSES		6	5
TOTAL EXPENSES		9,830	8,745
OPERATING RESULT	1	-763	-527

Notes:

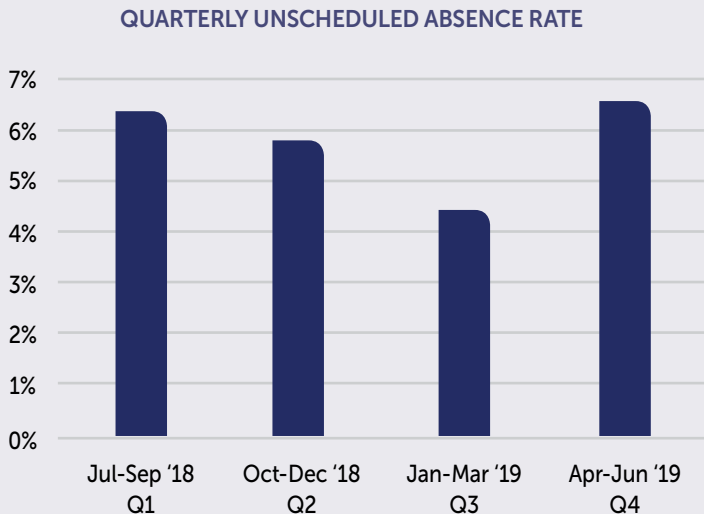
1. 2018-19 reported operating deficit does not include unspent funds carried forward from previous financial year. Positive opening carried forward balances were predominantly derived from a Commonwealth grant to the Authority for the eradication of yellow crazy ants.

TABLE 2. EXPENDITURE FOR CONTRACTORS

	2018-2019	2017-2018
EXPENDITURE	\$'000	\$'000
Contractors by program		
Base funding	1,800	1,800
Business Management	10	78
World Heritage Connections	115	53
Planning and Conservation	37	14
Yellow Crazy Ant Eradication Program	1,706	1,074
TOTAL	3,669	3,019

Absenteeism

The average quarterly unscheduled absence rate for 2018–19 was 5.82% indicating a 2.43% reduction in absenteeism compared to 2017–18. Unscheduled absences include sick, carers' and special leave as well as leave for workers' compensation. Graph 1 below shows quarterly rates for unscheduled absences as at 30 June 2019.



Workforce planning, training and performance

The Authority is committed to the development of its employees and recognises that training and development is critical for meeting government objectives. In 2018–19, expenditure for delivering planned training and development was \$28,315. Staff undertook training and development across a broad range of subjects including first aid and CPR, leadership and mentoring, 4WD operation, plant identification, recruitment and finance. All training needs were identified through individual performance and development plans.

In 2018–19, the Authority engaged in workforce capability planning in conjunction with DES, ensuring the Authority remains competitive when it comes to workforce attraction and retention. Implementation of the strategic workforce plan enables the Authority to build an overall workforce strategy, tailor strategies for particular roles of interest and identify and fill skills gaps.

Equal employment opportunity

All recruitment and selection recommendations are monitored and reviewed to ensure compliance with Queensland Government policies and procedures, including current human resources directives. All appointments during 2018–2019 complied with directives and no equal employment opportunity complaints were received.

At 30 June 2019, the Authority employed 18 females and 33 males.

Volunteers and internships

The Authority recognises that volunteers make a valuable contribution and is committed to planned, supported and appropriately managed volunteer arrangements. During 2018–19 the Authority hosted two volunteers.

Workforce profile

As at 30 June 2019, the Authority employed 49 full-time equivalent (FTE) employees, of which 29% were employed on a permanent basis. The Authority employs a higher proportion of temporary staff due to the nature of funding cycles.

Staff establishment of the Authority, as at 30 June 2019, totalled 57 positions of which 8 were vacant.

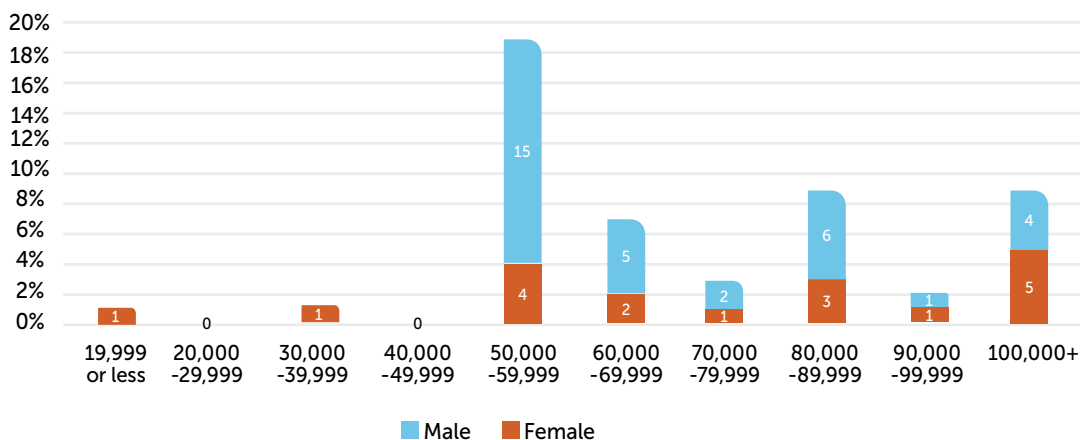
STAFFING FULL-TIME EQUIVALENT BY OCCUPATION TYPE AND GENDER (AS AT 30 JUNE 2019)

Occupational stream	Female	Male	Total
Administration	10.4	8.8	19.2
Operational	3	18	21
Professional	3	2.8	5.8
Technical		2	2
Senior Executive Service		1	1
TOTAL	16.4	32.6	49

STAFFING FULL-TIME EQUIVALENT BY EMPLOYMENT TYPE AND GENDER (AS AT 30 JUNE 2019)

Employment type	FTE		FTE		Total FTE	Total FTE%
	Female	Male	Female	Male		
Permanent	8	6	48.78%	18.40%	14	28.57%
Temporary	8.4	26.6	51.22%	81.60%	35	71.43%
TOTAL	16.4	32.6	33.47%	66.53%	49	100.00%

ANNUAL EARNINGS BY GENDER



Appendix 1. Rainforest Aboriginal tribal groups⁵ in the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area

There are at least 20 Rainforest Aboriginal tribal groups, 120 clans and 8 language groups—currently over 20,000 people, with ongoing traditional connections to land in the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area. Each group has customary obligations for management of their country under Aboriginal lore.

Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples have been living in the rainforests of the region for many thousands of years. Before European settlement, the Wet Tropics rainforests were one of the most populated areas of Australia, and the only area where Australian Aboriginal Peoples lived permanently in the rainforest. Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples have adapted to a range of climatic, environmental and social changes and their environment provided everything: spirituality, identity, social order, shelter, food and medicine. They had an economic system in place that involved the bartering of resources amongst different tribal groups.

Today the sharing of stories, the use of language, and the performance of songs and dances are still very important and maintain Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples' unique evolving cultural identity and connection to country.

Rainforest Aboriginal tribal groups:

- Eastern Kuku Yalanji
- Western Yalanji
- Yirrganydji
- Koko Muluridji
- Djabugay
- Yidinji
- Bar-Barrum
- Gunggandji
- Ngadjon-ji
- Mamu
- Jirrbal
- Gulgnay
- Djiru
- Girramay
- Warungnu
- Gugu Badhun
- Bandjin
- Warrgamay
- Nywaigi
- Wulgurukaba



Young Jirrbal man

⁵ Throughout this document the term Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples is used by the Authority to refer specifically to Traditional Owners/Custodians of the Area. However, the Authority recognises that Traditional Owners/Custodians of the World Heritage Area may identify themselves at a local, state, national and international scale using a diversity of terms. These include, but are not limited to; clan groups (at least 120), tribal groups (at least 20), language groups (at least 8), 'Bama', 'Traditional Owners', 'Custodians', 'First Nations Peoples', 'First Peoples', 'native title holders' and 'common law holders'.

Appendix 2. Wet Tropics Management Authority board of directors

Wet Tropics Management Authority board	
Act or instrument	<i>Wet Tropics World Heritage Protection and Management Act 1993</i>
Functions	<p>Under section 10(1) <i>Wet Tropics World Heritage Protection and Management Act 1993</i> (the Act), the functions of the Wet Tropics Management Authority board are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • develop and implement policies and programs relating to the management of the Area • formulate performance indicators for the implementation of policies and programs approved by the Ministerial Forum • advise and make recommendations to the Minister and the Ministerial Forum regarding: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – the management of the Area – Australia's obligation under the World Heritage Convention in relation to the Area • prepare, and ensure the implementation of, management plans for the Area • administer funding arrangements for the Area • enter into, and facilitate the entering into of, cooperative management agreements (including joint management agreements) with landholders, Aboriginal people particularly concerned with land in the Area and other people • enter into arrangements for the provision of rehabilitation and restoration works relating to any land in the Area • gather, research, analyse and disseminate information on the Area • develop public and community education programs regarding the Area • promote the Area locally, nationally and internationally • liaise with the governments and authorities of the state, the Commonwealth, other states and the territories, and international and foreign organisations and agencies • monitor the state of the Area • advise and report to the Minister and the Ministerial Forum.
Achievements	<p>In 2018–19, the board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • had their Ministerial (re)appointments agreed by the Hon Leeanne Enoch, and by the former Federal Minister for the Environment and Energy, The Hon. Josh Frydenberg MP • secured five years of funding from the Commonwealth government (\$2.7M/year) to continue to operate the Authority and \$9M over three years for the Yellow Crazy Ant Eradication Program • secured a further three years of funding from the Queensland government (\$9M) to continue the Yellow Crazy Ant Eradication Program • approved a five-year business strategy (2018–23) that sets out five high-level strategy areas that aim to improve Wet Tropics World Heritage Area management • finalised phase 2 of public consultation of the review of the statutory Wet Tropics Management Plan review • tabled the Authority's 2018–19 State of Wet Tropics Report in the Queensland and Australian parliaments that reflected on the 30 years of World Heritage listing • continued the work program to implement the refresh of the 2005 Wet Tropics Regional Agreement • Hosted the Cassowary Awards on 15 June 2019

Wet Tropics Management Authority board (cont.)

Financial reporting	The Authority provides audited financial statements as required by the <i>Financial Accountability Regulation 2009</i> .
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REMUNERATION

Position	Name	Meetings/sessions attendance	Approved annual, sessional or daily fee	Approved sub-committee fees if applicable	Actual fees received
Chair	Leslie Shirreffs	6	\$520 daily fee		\$7,540* (9 sitting days) \$20,280*
Member	John Courtenay	6	\$400 daily fee		\$3,200* (8 sitting days)
Member	Anne Clarke	6	\$400 daily fee	\$400 daily fee (Chair Wet Tropics Community Consultative Committee****)	\$4,200* (9 sitting days)
Member	Iain Gordon	5	\$400 daily fee	\$400 daily fee (Chair Wet Tropics Scientific Advisory Committee****)	\$1,800** (8 sitting days)
Member	Leah Talbot	5	\$400 daily fee		\$0***
Member	Phillip Rist	6	\$400 daily fee		\$4,800* (5 sitting days)
Executive director	Scott Buchanan	4	N/A	N/A	N/A
No. scheduled meetings/sessions	The board met on seven separate occasions in 2018–19 including out-of-session (OOS) meetings: 13–14 September 2018: 2 days (meeting #105) 14 December 2018: 1 day (meeting #106) 4–5 March 2019: 2 days (meeting #107) 28 March 2019: ½ day (OOS #432) 12 April 2019: 1 day (OOS #433) 30–31 May 2019: 2 days (meeting #108A) 15 June 2019: ½ day (meeting #108B)				
Total out of pocket expenses	The board cost \$74,123 to operate, mostly for sitting fees, reimbursement of out-of-pocket expenses, travel expenses, governance training, ITC support, site inspections and catering. This includes some costs from the board meeting 104 held June 21–22, 2018. The board is fully funded by the Australian Government—the Queensland Government does not contribute to its operational cost.				

* In addition to sitting fees for board meetings, directors are entitled to be remunerated for the additional work time required to carry out the role, as specified in Remuneration Procedures for Part-time Chairs and Members of Queensland Government Bodies (the Remuneration Procedures). Refer category – Regulation, Administration and Advice Level 2. This may include attendance at strategic meetings and workshops, document development, meetings with key partners including ministers, correspondence, preparation and travel time.

** Tax invoices for meetings still outstanding

*** Board director is employed by the Commonwealth government and is unable to accept sitting fees

**** Remuneration for chair duties of the Community Consultative Committee and / or the Scientific Advisory Committee are shown elsewhere

Appendix 3. Statutory committees

Wet Tropics Community Consultative Committee					
Act or instrument	Wet Tropics World Heritage Protection and Management Act 1993				
Functions	The Wet Tropics Community Consultative Committee (the CCC) has the function of advising the Wet Tropics Management Authority (the Authority) on the views of the community on the Authority’s policies and programs in relation to the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area.				
Achievements	In 2018–19, the CCC: <ul style="list-style-type: none">provided advice and direction on a number of strategic documents, including the review of the statutory Wet Tropics Management Planprovided advice and support on the Wet Tropics Climate Adaptation Plancontributed to the development of a framework for an education program to increase youth participation in protected area managementparticipated in activities in celebrating 30 years of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Areaprovided advice on best practice collaborative governance and community engagementprovided input into the review of the Wet Tropics Tour Guide Program and associated field schoolssupported members to play a leadership role in the development of the Gillies Range illegal dumping clean-up project (with the Department of Environment and Science and regional councils).				
Financial reporting	The Authority provides audited financial statements as required by the <i>Financial Accountability Act 2009</i> .				
REMUNERATION					
Position	Name	Meetings/sessions attendance	Approved annual, sessional or daily fee	Approved sub-committee fees if applicable	Actual fees received
Chair	Anne Clarke	3	\$400 daily fee	N/A	\$2,400*
Member	Dennis Ah-Kee	2	N/A	N/A	N/A
Member	Ellie Bock	2	N/A	N/A	N/A
Member	Allan Gillanders	1	N/A	N/A	N/A
Member	Sigrid Heise-Pavlov	2	N/A	N/A	N/A
Member	Bess Murphy	1	N/A	N/A	N/A
Member	Craig Pocock	3	N/A	N/A	N/A
Member	Gerard Puglisi	2	N/A	N/A	N/A
Member	Peter Rowles	2	N/A	N/A	N/A
Member	Angela Toppin	1	N/A	N/A	N/A
Member	Linda Venn	2	N/A	N/A	N/A
Ex-Member	Seraeah Wyles	2	N/A	N/A	N/A
No. scheduled meetings/sessions	The CCC met three times in 2018–19: 24 August 2019, 1 November 2019, 2 May 2019.				
Total out of pocket expenses	The CCC cost \$4,321.92 to operate, mostly for sitting fees (chair), advertising, reimbursement of out-of-pocket expenses, travel expenses and catering. Members do not receive sitting fees. The CCC is fully funded by the Australian Government—the Queensland Government does not contribute to its operational cost.				

* In addition to sitting fees for board meetings, directors are entitled to be remunerated for the additional work time required to carry out the role, as specified in *Remuneration Procedures for Part-time Chairs and Members of Queensland Government Bodies* (the Remuneration Procedures). Refer category – Regulation, Administration and Advice Level 2. Directors may also chair other Authority committees, and figures shown may cover attendance at related strategic meetings and workshops, document development and review and preparation time.

Wet Tropics Scientific Advisory Committee

Act or instrument	<i>Wet Tropics World Heritage Protection and Management Act 1993</i>
Functions	<p>The Wet Tropics Scientific Advisory Committee (the SAC) has the function of advising the Wet Tropics Management Authority (the Authority) on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • scientific research that will contribute to the protection and conservation of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area • scientific developments relevant to the protection or conservation of the Area.
Achievements	<p>In 2018–19, the SAC:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provided advice to the Authority's board regarding: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - issues specific to the review of the Wet Tropics Management Plan - developing climate change adaption and mitigation strategies to protect World Heritage values - a guideline to formalise research protocols for engagement between Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples and researchers. This document has gone through an extensive process of stakeholder engagement with Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples.
Financial reporting	The Authority provides audited financial statements as required by the <i>Financial Accountability Act 2009</i> .

REMUNERATION

Position	Name	Meetings/sessions attendance	Approved annual, sessional or daily fee	Approved sub-committee fees if applicable	Actual fees received
Member	Professor Iain Gordon	4	\$400 daily fee	N/A	\$1,600
Member	Professor John Herbohn	1	N/A	N/A	
Member	Mr John Locke	4	N/A	N/A	
Member	Associate Professor Susan Laurance	3	N/A	N/A	
Member	Dr Suzanne Long	1	N/A	N/A	
Member	Professor Bruce Richard Prideaux	1	N/A	N/A	
Member	Dr Lea Scherl	2	N/A	N/A	
Member	Mrs Joann Schmider	2	N/A	N/A	
Member	Dr David Westcott	3	N/A	N/A	
No. scheduled meetings/sessions	The SAC met four (4) times in 2018-19: 5 July 2018, 24 August 2018, 26 October 2018 and 2 May 2019.				
Total out of pocket expenses	<p>The SAC cost \$8,212.00 to operate, mostly for sitting fees (chair), advertising, reimbursement of out-of-pocket expenses, travel expenses and catering. Members do not receive sitting fees.</p> <p>The SAC is fully funded by the Australian Government—the Queensland Government does not contribute to its operational cost.</p>				

Appendix 4. Annual report on the administration of the Wet Tropics Management Plan 1998

The Wet Tropics Management Plan 1998 (the Plan) regulates land use activities inside the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area (the Area) that have the potential to impact on the integrity of the Area. In 2018-19, Authority staff audited and advised a number of agencies or organisations undertaking activities in the World Heritage Area under existing permits.

Authority staff issued a permit to Tablelands Regional Council to construct a new raw water pipeline from Wild River Dam to Herberton; and an application was received from Cassowary Coast Regional Council for a rezoning and permit to enable construction of a clean water reservoir at Bulgun Creek.

Authority staff assessed and renewed eighteen community service infrastructure maintenance permits under the Plan:

- Hinchinbrook Shire Council
- Energy Queensland (formerly Ergon)
- Charters Towers Regional Council

- Southedge Daintree Pastoral Company Pty Ltd
- Cassowary Coast Regional Council
- Queensland Rail
- Skyrail Pty Ltd
- Public Safety Business Agency
- Mareeba Shire Council
- Powerlink Queensland
- Department of Transport and Main Roads
- Miles Electronics
- Broadcast Australia
- Townsville City Council
- Stanwell Corporation Limited
- Cook Shire Council
- Tablelands Regional Council
- Department of Defence

PRE-LODGEMENT ADVICE ON PERMIT APPLICATIONS PROVIDED IN 2018-19

Organisation	Subject of advice
Douglas Shire Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• design and construction of the proposed Noah Creek bridge• repair of land slips on the Bloomfield Track
Department of Defence	firebreak at Cowley Beach training area
Powerlink Queensland	remediation of tower foundations
Stanwell Corporation	repair of landslips at Kuranda
Mareeba Shire Council	construction of Barron Falls walking trail at Kuranda
Telstra	works at Speewah
Department of Innovation, Tourism Industry Development and the Commonwealth Games	development of the Wangetti Trail within the Area
Queensland Rail	potential platform extension at Barron Falls Station
Cassowary Coast Regional Council	repair of land slips on the Tully Gorge Road

In accordance with section 28 of the Plan, staff assessed a number of proposals as having only minor and inconsequential impacts on the World Heritage Area. In 2018–2019 proposals were:

Organisation	Subject of proposal
Department of Transport and Main Roads	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> road repair on the Palmerston Highway refurbishment of roadside rest areas on the Bruce Highway
Stanwell Corporation	repair of landslips at Kuranda
Tablelands Regional Council	installation of a sensor at the Upper Barron River water intake
Telstra	placement of communications infrastructure at the Copperlode Dam Visitor Centre
Cairns Regional Council	geotechnical testing of the Majuba Creek water intake weir
Cassowary Coast Regional Council	Hosting the World Rafting Championships on the Tully River
Spencer Civil	demolition and construction works at the Jabalbina Ayton Ranger Base
Townsville City Council	repair of land slips on Paluma Dam Road
Ergon Energy	establishment of a temporary weed washdown facility to manage weed hygiene on the Bridle Creek Track

Authority staff also provided advice to:

- Department of Transport and Main Roads regarding the disposal of spoil from landslips at Mount Spec Road
- Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service regarding the removal of trees for the Mossman Gorge walking tracks refurbishment, and regarding the clearing of existing trails to tackle the weed miconia at Wooroonooran National Park
- Cairns Regional Council regarding protection of the water supply pipeline at Russell Heads, and regarding the use of Bio-Shield for cleaning infrastructure within the Area
- Spotless regarding the demolition and construction of new buildings at the Department of Defence's Wangetti Rifle Range facility
- Cassowary Coast Regional Council regarding pipeline easement vegetation clearing for maintenance
- Skyrail regarding:
 - the repair of a boardwalk at Red Peak Station and waterblasting of cablecar towers
 - proposed multiple helicopter delivery flights
 - potential erosion and sediment controls at Red Peak Station
 - the construction of the Barron Falls lookout
- Crocodile Trophy organisers regarding the use of Southedge Road
- Department of Defence regarding the removal of trees to minimise risk of damage to infrastructure at the Paluma lease
- Department of Transport and Main Roads regarding the removal of trees at a culvert on the Captain Cook Highway to enhance stormwater flows
- RoadTek regarding the taking of water from Henrietta Creek for road construction purposes
- Stanwell regarding the removal and disposal of landslip material from the Barron Gorge power station
- Terrain NRM regarding fencing and a potential revegetation site at Smith's Gap
- Numerous private landholders regarding vegetation or fauna issues.

Ecological constraint analyses were produced for the proposed Wangetti Trail and Daintree Power Projects, which will be used to manage design and impacts within the Area should these projects proceed.

Staff reviewed maintenance environmental management plans (EMPs) provided by Mareeba Shire Council, Cairns Regional Council, Stanwell Corporation, Tablelands Regional Council, Department of Defence, Hinchinbrook Shire Council, Cook Shire Council, Townsville City Council, Miles Electronics, Department of Transport and Main Roads, Public Safety Business Agency, Queensland Rail, Cassowary Coast Regional Council and Southedge Daintree Pastoral Company. The outstanding EMPs are to be provided to the Authority within a year of permit date.

Authority staff actively participated in discussion relating to weed issues within and adjacent to the Area, including attendance at the Tablelands Pest Management Advisory Committee meetings and involvement in field days such as at the foothills of Bellenden Ker where the focus was on *Miconia calvenscens* and *Mikania micrantha*. The Authority also responded to issues such as landholder concern regarding coffee plantations (an identified undesirable plant species in the Wet Tropics Management Plan) adjacent to the Area.

Investigation and enforcement

Staff investigated a number of potential compliance issues including:

- alleged clearing of vegetation at Julatten
- clearing at Murray Upper (in partnership with QPWS)
- damage to vegetation surrounding the Old Cairns Track on the western side of Wooroonooran National Park
- dumping of material at Mount Bellenden Ker
- ecological and aesthetic issues associated with the Burungu dump
- alleged illegal clearing at Cow Bay
- erroneous placement of a raw water pipeline by Tablelands Regional Council
- potential illegal dumping of rubbish on private property near Josephine Falls.

Authority staff also continued an ecological monitoring program looking at the impacts of cattle at the 10 Mile property lease.

Land dealings

The Authority continued to liaise with a leaseholder at Russell Heads regarding conversion to freehold. Negotiations with DES, the Queensland Department of Natural Resources Mines and Energy and a landholder at Shipwreck Bay regarding freeholding continue. An enquiry was made regarding the potential for redevelopment of the carpark on the northern side of the Daintree River.

Abbreviations

AWHAC	Australian World Heritage Advisory Committee
CCC	Community Consultative Committee
Commonwealth Act	<i>Wet Tropics of Queensland World Heritage Area Conservation Act 1994</i>
DES	Queensland Department of Environment and Science
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
Plan (the)	Wet Tropics Management Plan 1998
QPWS	Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service
Queensland Act	<i>Wet Tropics World Heritage Protection and Management Act 1993</i>
SAC	Scientific Advisory Committee
TOLG	Traditional Owner Leadership Group
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation



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FRONT COVER IMAGE: Copperlode Dam (Wet Tropics Images/Charlotte Hellings)