



BOARD COMMUNIQUE 120

The Wet Tropics Management Authority (the Authority) is a statutory body overseen by an independent Board of Directors. The current Board of Directors includes Ms Chrissy Grant (Chair), Ms Ailsa Lively, Dr Sally Driml, Professor Stephen Williams, Ms Robin Clark and Mr Scott Buchanan (Executive Director). The Authority's role is to ensure Australia's obligation to the World Heritage Convention is met in relation to the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area.

The Authority's Board of Directors met online on 25 and 26 August 2022. Key items discussed included:

- **Landscape restoration program**
- **Youth Involvement**
- **Yellow Crazy Ant Eradication Program update**
- **19th Cassowary Awards**
- **Regional Rainforest Aboriginal Forum**
- **Eastern Kuku Yalanji return to Country**

Landscape restoration program – establishing the Wet Tropics Restoration Alliance

The Authority continues to engage with key stakeholders and strengthen relationships with critical sectors to establish a Wet Tropics Restoration Alliance (the Alliance). The Board were advised that key steering members include Terrain NRM, James Cook University and the Authority are bringing interested organisations together on 16 September 2022 to formally commit to the establishment of the Alliance. The purpose of the Alliance is to collectively support the many organisations undertaking restoration work in our region and scale up existing efforts to combat the accelerating threats to our biodiversity and ecosystems.

Yellow Crazy Ant Eradication Program

The Board noted the progress of the Yellow Crazy Ant Eradication Program, which includes a significant reduction of the overall density of ant populations. However, there is a new infestation in the World Heritage Area near Gordonvale which is currently being surveyed for treatment. The Authority's staff are assisting Townsville City Council as they prepare to treat the infestations in the Townsville region. The Board were impressed with the significant increase in effort and the success over the past 18 months thanks to the continued support of the Australian and Queensland governments.

Regional Rainforest Aboriginal Forum

The Regional Rainforest Aboriginal Forum will be held 28-30 October 2022 in Cairns. The Forum brings together Rainforest Aboriginal groups and partners from across the region to share knowledge and experience in managing the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area. The Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples' Think Tank has been assisting in developing the program, which will reflect the principles of the Wet Tropics Regional Agreement 2005. The Forum was postponed from July to enable greater involvement from Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples in developing the program.

Eastern Kuku Yalanji return to Country

The Authority is working in partnership with Jabalbina, Cook Shire Council, Douglas Shire Council, and the Department of State Development to support Eastern Kuku Yalanji return to Country aspirations. The Board is pleased with progress on this complex matter and recognise the importance of commitment of partners and new funding to make this successful. There is potential for this return to Country planning approach to be transferrable to other Aboriginal Peoples.

Youth Involvement

The Board enjoyed an excellent presentation from two young professionals on youth involvement in the natural capital world. The presentation summarised the recommendations in the draft report from April's Youth Roundtable meeting, which engaged young people involved in the Reef Assist Program and others interested in conservation and land management issues. The Authority had sought more targeted feedback through follow up consultations with participants from the Roundtable meeting to provide more focussed recommendations to champion to the Queensland Government. The Board was pleased to see the recommendations align with the Wet Tropics Strategic Plan 2020 - 2030 as well as the Board's priorities on youth involvement.

19th Cassowary Awards

The prestigious Cassowary Awards will be held on 8 October 2022 in Cairns. The Board received more than 40 nominations and were impressed with the calibre of nominees, which made it difficult to select award recipients. The Board are looking forward to the awards ceremony which is an important event to recognise the amazing contributions of the Wet Tropics community.

Board meeting 121 will be held in Cairns on 6 and 7 October 2022.

For more information, please phone 07 4241 0500 or email wettropics@wtma.qld.gov.au