

ANNUAL REPORT 2017-2018





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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 2017 to 30 June 2018. 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.

Interpreter service statement

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Further information



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THIS REPORT IS PRINTED ON AUSTRALIAN MADE PAPER THAT HAS BEEN CERTIFIED UNDER THE NATIONAL CARBON OFFSET STANDARD.

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30 September 2018

The Hon Melissa Price MP
Minister for the Environment
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Minister

I am pleased to present the Annual Report 2017-2018 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.

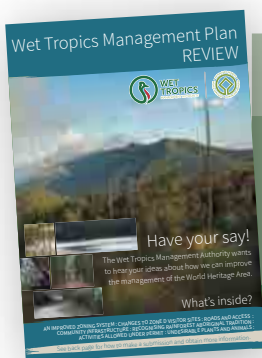
I would like to thank the Australian Government for its support of the Authority in delivering the achievements outlined in this report.

Yours sincerely



Leslie Shirreffs, PSM
Chair
Wet Tropics Management Authority

2017-18 at a glance



PHASE 1 - MANAGEMENT
PLAN REVIEW : **COMPLETED**

2500

INVITATIONS
TO SUBMIT

30

WORKSHOPS

PHASE 2 TO CONTINUE IN 2019

Supported development of a
**BIODIVERSITY
PLANNING**
assessment tool
for Wet Tropics bioregion.

6

DAYS OF
WORKSHOPS

40+

EXPERT
CONTRIBUTIONS

The Weekend Post, 16 Dec 2017

2 LOCAL ERADICATIONS
OF **YELLOW CRAZY ANT**
INFESTATIONS DECLARED



Crazy ant colony is wiped out

A YELLOW crazy ant infestation that was first discovered three years ago south of Cairns has been successfully eradicated.

The Wet Tropics Management Authority has announced the first successful eradication of an infestation of the invasive ants, south of Bentley Park.

The 10ha infestation of a development site near Wiseman Road West was sparked by the illegal dumping of garden waste, discovered in February 2014.

It took four helicopter baiting treatments by WTMA's yellow crazy ant eradication program, as well as the inspection and hand installation of lures at almost 14,000 points across the area, before eradication was confirmed earlier this week.

To confirm yellow crazy ants have been eradicated from a site after treatment, four surveys are undertaken at least six months apart. All of these surveys must show there is no yellow crazy ant activity at the site.

The authority's executive director, Scott Buchanan, said it was the first successful eradication in what is expected to be a 10-year path to complete eradication of the pest from the Wet Tropics region.

HOSTED THE



11

AWARD RECIPIENTS

47

NOMINEES

9

CATEGORIES

250

GUESTS



Wet Tropics'
30th anniversary
celebrations
@ ECOfiesta

Joined by

9

partner
agencies and
community
groups

15,000
VISITORS

300
TREES

provided free to
the community



Produced

3 EDITIONS

of the Rainforest Aboriginal News with Terrain NRM

6,000 copies



PUBLIC EDUCATION EVENTS

Sharing the natural and cultural values of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area with the regional community.

MORE THAN
50,000
AUDIENCE

INVESTED \$40,000


IN ABORIGINAL ORGANISATIONS to support traditional and cultural land management.



HOSTED A 2 DAY

Rainforest Aboriginal people's regional workshop

to discuss the review of the statutory Wet Tropics Management Plan 1998 and the Wet Tropics of Queensland Regional Agreement.



ATTENDED BY **>40** RECOGNISED LEADERS

Supported Wet Tropics research programs by investing over

\$30,000



to 10 Wet Tropics postgraduate students

Photo: northern bettong (Stephanie Todd)

\$1.8 million



in funds provided to Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service for on-ground park management.

Photo: Qld Government

Message from the chair

The Wet Tropics rainforests comprise diverse and remarkable ecosystems that are home to an incredible range of rare and endemic plants, animals and habitats. This landscape's biological significance is such that it was inscribed on the World Heritage List on 9 December 1988 as the Wet Tropics of Queensland World Heritage Area.

Rainforest Aboriginal people—some 20 Traditional Owner groups—have been connected to and managed the Wet Tropics country for many thousands of years.

This irreplaceable natural and biocultural wonder boasts breathtaking scenery and striking landscapes, abundant with fast-flowing rivers, prodigious gorges and spectacular waterfalls. Mountain summits provide extensive vistas of the world's oldest continually persisting tropical rainforest. Presenting these remarkable values to the world through tourism and recreation is an important and positive part of the Authority's World Heritage commitment. Indeed, together with the neighbouring Great Barrier Reef, we are uniquely positioned to present two World Heritage Areas, from the rainforest to the reef, as an internationally renowned tourism hotspot.

As manager of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area, the Wet Tropics Management Authority has an obligation to 'protect, conserve, present, rehabilitate and transmit the Wet Tropics of Queensland World Heritage Area to future generations.' We are responsible to both the Australian and Queensland governments, and work together with the Traditional Owners of the land, our many partners and communities who live and work in the Wet Tropics region.

We actively work with these communities to ensure protection of the Area's outstanding universal value whilst enabling appropriate community and visitor infrastructure; involving Rainforest Aboriginal people in management and supporting aspirations to live and work on country; and facilitating commercial and non-commercial land uses and activities within the Area.

The Authority achieved and progressed many positive outcomes during 2017-18. This annual report provides a number of rich examples of such progress, including:

- completed the first phase of a comprehensive review of the Wet Tropics Management Plan 1998, involving extensive engagement and collaboration with Rainforest Aboriginal people, industry, government and community sectors
- improved engagement with Rainforest Aboriginal people to support self-determination including hosting a two-day regional workshop towards refreshing the historic 2005 Wet Tropics of Queensland Regional Agreement and investing \$40,000 in grants to support traditional and cultural land management
- commenced implementation of 'Share, Connect, Protect – best practice World Heritage Presentation in the Wet Tropics', a comprehensive presentation strategy and work plan to enhance appreciation and enjoyment of the Area's values
- hosted the 16th Cassowary Awards at Tjapukai Aboriginal Cultural Park, which was attended by 250 guests and recognised 11 worthy recipients for their outstanding contributions to protecting and presenting the World Heritage Area
- continued the fight to eradicate the highly invasive yellow crazy ant from and adjacent to the World Heritage Area, achieving two areas of total eradication made possible from the generous support of the Queensland and Australian governments and a highly active community.

Many of these activities stand the Authority in good stead for the coming year and the challenges ahead.

Since the Wet Tropics was inscribed on the World Heritage List almost 30 years ago, the number of people living and working in the region has increased markedly. By 2031, the resident population is predicted to surpass 700,000 people. Domestic and international tourism has also increased at least fourfold over the past 20 years, placing expectations of increased access to the Area and pressure on popular visitor sites.

Despite its protection, long-term monitoring indicates the biodiversity of the World Heritage Area is declining, with many species reduced in both distribution and population size. This has been caused by habitat fragmentation—often outside the boundaries of the Area—and invasive pests such as diseases, plants and animals, which are more prevalent and pervasive now than 30 years ago.

The most serious risk to the outstanding universal value of the rainforest, however, is posed by current trends in global warming, which is already impacting on higher altitude species in particular. Whilst the Authority cannot address the overall issue of global climate change by itself, it can take steps to improve the resilience of the Area's World Heritage values through a range of actions and collaborations with other organisations. To this end, the Authority has been working towards an integrated resilience plan. In the next year we aim to develop a 'compact' with regional organisations to focus collaborative efforts on resilience actions like improving connectivity, feral plant and animal control and identifying transition pathways for species.

Yellow crazy ant eradication will continue to be a top priority for the next seven years, when total eradication targets are expected to be met. This will address the potential horrific impact this invasive pest would have on World Heritage values, but will also go a long way towards supporting a resilient landscape. The current yellow crazy ant funding agreement comes to an end in 2019 and, at the time of writing, discussions are underway for the next round of ongoing funding to support this highly successful program.

As a board we will continue to push for adequate funding for World Heritage management, based on the recognition that the Area is not only a world-class conservation asset of outstanding importance, but also an economic asset to the regional community.

This year saw the conclusion of the five-year funding agreement with the Australian Government. We were very pleased that a further five-year commitment for 2018-2023 was made during the year to continue the good work of the Authority.

We cannot succeed without supportive partnerships, so I take this opportunity to collectively thank the many, many people and organisations that assisted in the conservation and management of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area during 2017-18. Prominent among these are the members of our Community Consultative Committee, Scientific Advisory Committee, and Yellow Crazy Ant Steering and Reference committees; Rainforest Aboriginal people and organisations working to preserve and pass on their cultural heritage and traditional knowledge; the many hundreds of volunteers in community conservation organisations; the tourism industry; the guides who present the Area to thousands of visitors each year; and researchers building knowledge.

The Authority is also grateful for the support and guidance of its partners in the Australian, Queensland and local government agencies, in particular, the Commonwealth Department of Environment and Energy, the Queensland Department of Environment and Science and the hard-working rangers on the ground who manage the Area on a day-to-day basis.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge and thank my fellow board directors, executive director Scott Buchanan and Authority staff for another year of dedicated service, all of whom go above and beyond to achieve the highest standards of management and enthusiastic collaboration with all of our communities, as is appropriate for the second-most irreplaceable World Heritage Area on Earth.



Leslie Shirreffs, PSM
Chair
Wet Tropics Management Authority

About the Wet Tropics

The Wet Tropics World Heritage Area

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 World Heritage List includes 1,092 properties which the World Heritage Committee considers to have outstanding universal value—this includes 19 Australian properties.

The Wet Tropics of Queensland World Heritage 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.

In addition to its outstanding natural values, the Area is a rich cultural landscape for Rainforest Aboriginal people, 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.

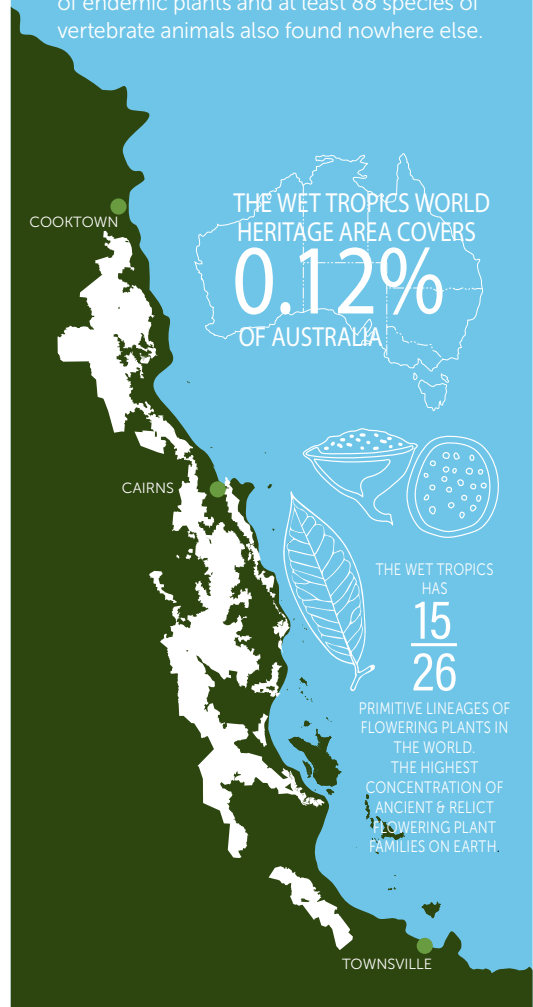
The Area's Indigenous heritage values were included in its National Heritage listing in 2012.

Relevant legislation

The Wet Tropics of Queensland World Heritage Area (the 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 (the Authority) and provides the legal basis for the *Wet Tropics Management Plan 1998* (the Plan), 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. The agreement is incorporated as Schedule 1 to the Queensland Act and given effect by section 3 of the Commonwealth Act. An amended version of this intergovernmental agreement was adopted in 2011.

- 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 Authority is a body corporate, with statutory powers defined under the Queensland Act. The Authority's functions (fully defined under section 10 of the Queensland Act) are to:

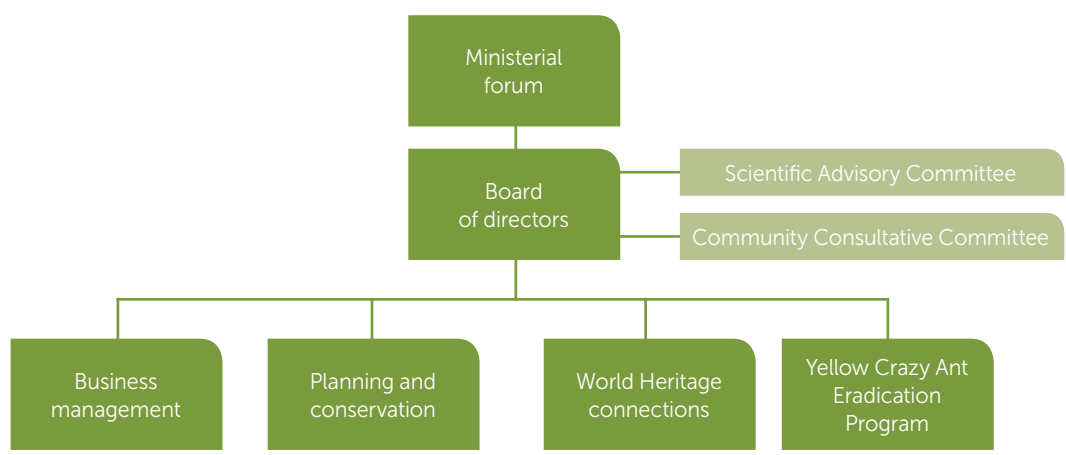
- develop and implement policies and programs for management of the Area
- formulate performance indicators for the implementation of approved policies and programs
- advise and make recommendations to the Minister and the Ministerial Forum
- prepare and implement management plans for the Area
- administer 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 State and Commonwealth governments, agencies and international organisations
- monitor the state of the Area
- advise and report to the Minister and the Ministerial Forum on the state of the Area.

The Authority performs its functions in a way which 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. As part of the Queensland public sector, the Authority is subject to public sector legislation, regulations, standards and guidelines governing administrative functions and arrangements. The Director-General of the Department of Environment and Science 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 State Government administrative and financial standards.



Wet Tropics Ministerial Forum

The Wet Tropics Ministerial Forum consists of relevant Commonwealth and State Ministers with environment portfolio responsibilities. The agreement recognises that both the Australian Government and Queensland Government have joint interests in and responsibilities for the Wet Tropics of Queensland World Heritage Area.

The Forum meets annually to provide oversight to the strategic operations of the Authority, approve annual budgets and consider future directions for meeting the property's World Heritage obligations. As at 30 June 2018, it comprised:

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

The Forum met on 7 July 2017. At that time, and prior to the Queensland State election in October 2017, the Hon Dr Steven Miles was Chair of the Wet Tropics Ministerial Forum in his capacity as Minister for the Environment and Heritage Protection.

Board of directors

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 Forum. 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. Details on the operations of the board and their achievements are at *Appendix 1*.

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 before board meetings and advise the Authority on programs and research for the management of the Area. The board has appointed a director to chair each committee, providing a direct line of communication between the committees and the Authority. Additional details can be found at *Appendix 2*.

Our contribution to government objectives

The Authority's mission is to 'lead, inspire, advise and support the Australian and global community to protect and share the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area in perpetuity'.

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

Statutory reporting obligations

Each year the Wet Tropics Management 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.

Our performance

The Wet Tropics Management Authority Strategic Plan set out the Authority's directions from 2013-2018, outlining how the Authority will achieve goals including protection of heritage values, community appreciation of the World Heritage Area, active participation of Rainforest Aboriginal people and a positive working relationship with the Queensland and Australian governments.

The Wet Tropics Management Authority's performance is measured against its seven strategic goals.

1. The outstanding universal value of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area is protected and maintained consistent with Australia's obligation under the World Heritage Convention. [See page 15.](#)
2. Communities derive benefit and value from the World Heritage Area, are effectively involved in planning and management, and their stewardship of the World Heritage Area is recognised and supported. [See page 18.](#)
3. Rainforest Aboriginal people are supported in expressing their knowledge, culture and management practices on country. [See page 20.](#)
4. The Wet Tropics World Heritage Area is used, enjoyed and celebrated as the world's finest learning landscape for tropical rainforest and its sustainable management. [See page 22.](#)
5. World Heritage Area values are supported and presented through sustainable tourism. [See page 24.](#)
6. Enduring partnerships enhance the integrity of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area, its presentation and its function in the life of the community. [See page 26.](#)
7. The Wet Tropics Management Authority is an accountable and capable organisation. [See page 28.](#)

Following completion of the first review phase of the Wet Tropics Management Plan in early 2018, the Authority's board approved preparation of a new Wet Tropics World Heritage Plan in two parts, the first of which will inform the Authority's strategic goals for the next 10 years.

1. The outstanding universal value of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area is protected and maintained consistent with Australia's obligation under the World Heritage Convention

Protecting and managing the outstanding universal value of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area lies at the heart of the Wet Tropics Management Authority's governance and management regime.

2017-18 highlights:

- Phase one of Wet Tropics Management Plan review completed.
- Supported development of a biodiversity planning assessment tool for Wet Tropics bioregion.
- Two local eradications of yellow crazy ant infestations declared.

Administration of the Wet Tropics Management Plan

The Wet Tropics Management Plan 1998 (the Plan) regulates land use activities in the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area (the Area) that have the potential to impact on its integrity. The Plan 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 often 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 2017-18. Officers provided pre-lodgement advice on over 20 different matters, and assessed and issued three new permits under the Plan. Authority staff regularly liaise with contractors and officers responsible for the planning, building and maintenance of community services infrastructure inside and adjoining the World Heritage Area. They advise on avoiding or mitigating impacts on the Area and training local councils on infrastructure maintenance.

More details on the Authority's Plan administration activities can be found at [Appendix 3](#).

Review of the operation of the Wet Tropics Management Plan

Under section 53 of the *Wet Tropics World Heritage Protection and Management Act 1993*, the Authority is required to review the operation of the Plan every 10 years. The review is undertaken over two phases, both of which require public notification.

Phase one of the review (May 2017–February 2018) invited public comment on issues such as zoning, visitor sites and facilities, roads and access, recognition of Rainforest Aboriginal tradition and activities allowed under a permit.

The consultation included more than 2,500 letters to landowners, neighbours and stakeholders inviting submissions, as well as stakeholder workshops, meetings and media promotions.

Thirty workshops, numerous face-to-face meetings and information sessions were held with Rainforest Aboriginal registered native title bodies corporate, prescribed bodies corporate, boards and communities. The Authority invited Rainforest Aboriginal representatives to a regional workshop in October 2017 to discuss the Plan review, ensuring that native title representative groups were informed and engaged in developing the amended Plan. Aboriginal leaders from the 20 tribal groups of the Wet Tropics Area as well as Queensland and Australian government officials, the North Queensland Land Council and Terrain NRM participated.

Mapping products prepared for the review were critical to communicate proposed changes to zones and roads. An interactive mapping application was produced in partnership with Terrain NRM to allow the public to explore proposed changes. The boundary was aligned with the State of Queensland Digital Cadastre Database, and this work continues into 2018-19 to ensure current and future community needs are reflected in the management zones.

In January 2018, the Authority considered all properly made submissions from the phase one consultation and released a consultation report. Following consideration of the report, the board approved preparation of a Wet Tropics World Heritage Plan in two parts:

- Part A: to outline the strategic and broader management functions of the Wet Tropics Management Authority
- Part B: to form the amended statutory plan

A second formal consultation phase will commence in January 2019.

Wet Tropics biodiversity planning assessment

In April 2018 the Authority supported the Queensland Department of Environment and Science to complete a biodiversity planning assessment for the Wet Tropics bioregion using the Department's biodiversity assessment and mapping methodology.

The Authority organised six days of expert workshops covering flora, fauna and landscape ecology. More than 40 experts were involved in the workshops from a wide range of government and non-government organisations including the Authority, CSIRO, James Cook University, Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service, Queensland Herbarium, Australian Tropical Herbarium, Australian Wildlife Conservancy, BirdLife Australia and private individuals.

The information gathered is being processed and will be publically available in the form of datasets and mapping layers in 2019. This information will help inform administration of the Plan, particularly in the consideration of any actions that may impact upon the values of the Area.

Wildlife recovery teams

The Authority continues to support threatened species recovery teams in the World Heritage Area, chairing and providing secretariat support to the Cassowary Recovery Team and attending Northern Bettong Recovery Team meetings.

With assistance from key partner Terrain NRM, the Cassowary Recovery Team is developing car strike mitigation measures, liaising with Transport and Main Roads and working with CSIRO to develop technologies that can alert drivers at cassowary crossing hot spots. Landscape connectivity continues to be progressed in the coastal lowlands south of Cairns and in the Atherton Tablelands.

The Authority co-facilitated with Terrain NRM a workshop for recovery teams focussed on threatened species including the cassowary, northern bettong, Kuranda treefrog, spotted-tailed quoll, mahogany glider and a threatened ecological community: Mabi Forest. One of the outcomes of the workshop was a grant from Terrain NRM to develop a short film and fact sheets on the plight of endangered species—and the hard work of these recovery teams—in the Wet Tropics.

Wildlife connectivity

Mount Lewis National Park is one of seven vital upland refugia in the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area, containing very high levels of endemic plants and animals, most with ancient and relict lineages. Recently the Authority worked with Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service to install two rope bridges across the thirty-two kilometre Mount Lewis Road, to assist the dispersal of endemic lemuroid ringtail possums. This species spends its entire life in trees and is unable to cross gaps in the forests created by roads.

Camera traps were installed on these bridges to monitor their use. An interpretive sign was also developed and installed at the beginning of the road, to highlight the importance of the area and the high biodiversity values of Mount Lewis National Park.

Climate resilience planning

Climate change poses one of the most significant threats to the Wet Tropics region, and will likely result in widespread, unavoidable and substantial ecological change. Climate change threatens the outstanding universal value and integrity that underpins the World Heritage Area, as well as the natural assets that are critical to the region's tourism industry that provide direct and indirect economic benefits worth more than \$5.2 billion annually.

As such, the Authority commenced work on a climate change adaptation plan in collaboration with key stakeholders for release by June 2019.

Yellow Crazy Ant Eradication Program

The Authority's Yellow Crazy Ant Eradication Program is funded by the Australian Government's National Landcare Program and the Queensland Department of Environment and Science.

The Program's effort to eradicate yellow crazy ants intensified over the past year to provide full-time employment for 26 staff and operational contract work for another 36 field workers. Local Traditional Owner groups, Gimuy Walubara Yindinji and Djabugay, are actively participating in operational contracts and training programs.

The eradication program undertook three further successful rounds of treatment in July and December 2017 and June 2018, with research and monitoring indicating dramatic reductions in yellow crazy ant numbers across the majority of the infestation areas. Eradication was declared at two infestation sites and a third is due in the second half of 2018. 160ha of the 344ha Bentley Park infestation (adjacent to the World Heritage Area and Copperlode Dam) has transitioned from full broadcast treatment to intensive surveys and spot treatments as required.

The program has worked closely with the sugar industry to identify additional infestations and vectors for movement of yellow crazy ants in adjacent areas south of Cairns. The total infestation area currently covers about 1,600ha (93ha within the World Heritage Area), but the Authority is confident that eradication can be achieved with sufficient resources for treatments and research. An independent review and a cost-benefit analysis of the eradication program have been commissioned to recommend strategies for feasible eradication and to evaluate the cost of the program against the environmental and socioeconomic impacts of yellow crazy ants.

The success of the eradication program to date has relied heavily on a cooperative research partnership with James Cook University and liaison with other yellow crazy ant eradication programs in Australia and overseas. Research has focused on treatment techniques and effectiveness and the biology and life cycles of the ants. The lessons learned in the Wet Tropics have the potential to be applied in numerous other infestations throughout the world.

2. Communities derive benefit and value from the World Heritage Area, are effectively involved in planning and management, and their stewardship of the World Heritage Area is recognised and supported

The Authority maintains strong community networks and collaborates with land managers including Rainforest Aboriginal people and the conservation, research, tourism and community sectors. These partners play an important role in monitoring threats and helping to protect this special place for future generations.

2017-18 highlights:

- Hosted the 16th Cassowary Awards, attended by 250 guests with 11 Award recipients.
- E-newsletter distributed to more than 700 email subscribers supported by web page and social media promotion.
- 2018 ECOfiesta, sponsored by the Authority, launched the start of the 30th anniversary celebrations to approximately 15,000 visitors.

Working with the Wet Tropics community

The Authority is committed to developing and strengthening partnerships and encouraging meaningful community participation in World Heritage Area protection, conservation and enjoyment by raising awareness, educating and facilitating experiential learning.

The Authority embraces opportunities to share information and promote joint activities and projects undertaken across the Wet Tropics. The Authority communicates freely through distribution of e-newsletters, media releases, participation in community events and the dissemination of communiqués and minutes from each quarterly board meeting and Ministerial Forum to over 300 stakeholders.

Community Consultative Committee

The Authority's commitment to community engagement is embedded within its structure and governance, with the Community Consultative Committee (CCC) providing advice on a range of issues direct to the board to ensure the community's views are considered in the Authority's policies and programs.

During 2017-18, the CCC met four times, providing feedback and advice on a range of issues including the Cassowary Awards, the Area's 30th anniversary celebrations and several strategic documents. Further details on the CCC's work are available in *Appendix 2*.

Cassowary Awards

The Cassowary Awards are the premier engagement event on the Authority's calendar, bringing together members of the community, industry as well as local, state and federal government representatives to celebrate the strong camaraderie and numerous achievements within the Wet Tropics community.

The 16th Cassowary Awards ceremony in March 2018 hosted more than 250 people, with addresses by Queensland Environment Minister Hon Leeanne Enoch and Federal Member for Leichhardt Hon Warren Entsch, as well as a special video presentation featuring David Attenborough, in honour of the late wildlife illustrator Bill Cooper.

Cassowary Award recipients were honoured across nine categories, including the special Chair's Award, presented to community organisation Trees for the Evelyn and Atherton Tablelands (TREAT), for its work over 35 years to conserving and improving the integrity of the Wet Tropics environment.

Award recipients were:

- **Asha Mayberry** – Young Cassowary
- **Rainforest Rescue and Dr Karen Coombes** – Thorsborne Award for Community Conservation & Rehabilitation
- **Cairns Regional Council's Sustainability Team** – Local Government & Industry Initiatives
- **Small World Journeys** – Tourism and Presentation
- **Gavin Singleton and Liz Gallie** – Community Champions
- **Distinguished Professor William F Laurance** – Innovation
- **Djunbunji Land & Sea Program** – People. Country. Culture
- **Holloways Beach Environmental Education Centre & Tinaroo Environmental Education Centre** – Education
- **Trees for the Evelyn and Atherton Tablelands (TREAT)** – Chair's Award.

The Cassowary Awards were leveraged as an opportunity to provide members of the Wet Tropics community throughout the Area with media opportunities, resulting in 28 separate media stories across local print, television and radio.

30th anniversary celebrations

The Authority contributed to Cairns Regional Council's 2018 Cairns ECOfiesta on 3 June, leveraging the event to launch the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area's 30th anniversary celebrations to more than 15,000 attendees.

Nine partner agencies and community groups joined a Wet Tropics-themed outdoor space. A series of public conversations on the main stage in conjunction with a formal launch to the 30th anniversary by the chair, Leslie Shirreffs, set the scene for a larger planned schedule of activities and promotions up to and including the 9 December 30th anniversary date.

Other community events

The Authority's presence at festivals and events around the Wet Tropics region is a high priority, ensuring meaningful engagement with the broader community throughout the Wet Tropics. During the 2017-18 period, the Authority attended six events, showcasing the Area and supporting partner activities to an audience of more than 50,000 people across the region.

Snap the Tropics

The Snap the Tropics photographic competition was initiated to provide an avenue for the public to share their experiences in the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area, attracting more than 150 entries from local photographers across the Wet Tropics region. Winners were announced at a local event and several of the submitted photographs have subsequently been utilised in Authority publications.

Website

Following a major refurbishment in June/July 2017, the Authority's website (www.wettropics.gov.au) continues to provide a contemporary and engaging platform for 100,000 users per annum to delve into information about the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area, the Authority's work programs and priorities, as well as emerging news and events from around the Wet Tropics.

News and media

The Wet Tropics Management Authority engages in media liaison activities to ensure it maintains a public profile to promote the Area's outstanding universal value and advocate for its management and protection.

The Authority maintains close working relationships with key members of local media, ensuring the Authority's events and milestones are communicated to the general public while news media regularly consult the Authority on key issues around the Wet Tropics.

In addition to significant coverage of the 16th Cassowary Awards, key media events to attract coverage in 2017-18 included the first local yellow crazy ant eradication announcement, commencement of 30th anniversary celebrations of the Area's World Heritage listing and regular updates on the Yellow Crazy Ant Eradication Program.

The quarterly Wet Tropics eNews remained a valuable source of stakeholder engagement, providing detailed updates on the Authority's work to a core, engaged stakeholder contingent of more than 700 contacts in the Wet Tropics community.

Social media

The Authority's social media presence on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram continues to grow, with Facebook (@WetTropicsWorldHeritageArea) remaining its primary platform. For the year ending 30 June 2018, this Facebook page grew to 2,822 'likes' (+23%), while expanding its organic reach per post by more than 20%. In addition, the Yellow Crazy Ant Eradication Program's Facebook group (with 255 members) provides a platform for the team to answer questions from landholders, staff and the general community. The Wet Tropics Tour Guide Program also hosts a sister page sharing current and relevant information on Wet Tropics World Heritage Area biodiversity values and major environmental issues within Australia. Membership of this page is made up of predominantly accredited nature-based tour guides who have undertaken the Wet Tropics Tour Guide Program.

Across all its social media platforms, the Authority's followers are predominantly Australian (from Queensland), with the United States and United Kingdom leading its international following.

Corporate branding and products

In 2018 the Authority developed a new corporate style guide, ensuring the Authority and its partners have the tools to engage in consistent use of its various brand elements to support its communications activities. Following the completion of the style guide, the Authority continues to refresh its communications products to achieve a consistent and contemporary brand which connects with the community.

3. Rainforest Aboriginal people are supported in expressing their knowledge, culture and management practices on country

Empowering Rainforest Aboriginal people as the traditional custodians of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area—primarily via meaningful engagement in management—is vital for protecting and promoting the Area's natural and cultural values.

2017-18 highlights:

- Produced three editions of the Rainforest Aboriginal News and the 2018 People Country Culture Calendar in collaboration with Rainforest Aboriginal people and Terrain NRM.
- Hosted a two-day Rainforest Aboriginal people's regional workshop to discuss review of the statutory Wet Tropics Management Plan 1998 and the Wet Tropics of Queensland Regional Agreement.
- Supported a Traditional Owner Leadership Group to refresh the Regional Agreement.
- Invested \$40,000 in Aboriginal organisations to support traditional and cultural land management.
- Increased employment opportunities with the Authority for Aboriginal people, from one person to six people since 2016, and awarding two contracts to Aboriginal organisations to assist in the eradication of yellow crazy ants.

Rainforest Aboriginal engagement

The Authority is focused on ensuring that Rainforest Aboriginal people are empowered to participate in the management of the Area. The Authority's board, Community Consultative Committee and Scientific Advisory Committee each have two Rainforest Aboriginal people as members. The Indigenous members from the board and committees are supported to meet to discuss Rainforest Aboriginal people's aspirations and engagement in the management of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area. These Indigenous Advisory Members provide advice and direction to the Authority to improve strategic engagement and Rainforest Aboriginal governance matters.

In collaboration with Rainforest Aboriginal people and Terrain NRM, three issues of Rainforest Aboriginal News (RAN) were published and distributed across the region to Aboriginal and other organisations in July 2017, March 2018 and June 2018. The RAN is a tool to disseminate relevant and interesting information

to Rainforest Aboriginal people and to tell the good news stories highlighting their many achievements. The June issue celebrated Rainforest Aboriginal women aligning with the NAIDOC theme 'Because of her, we can'.

A 2018 'People Country Culture' Calendar was also published and distributed to promote Rainforest Aboriginal people and highlight their application of traditional knowledge and cultural practices in the management of the Wet Tropics.

In 2017-18, the Authority also supported and/or participated in nine Traditional Owner-led public events.

Involvement in World Heritage Area management

The Authority has utilised a *free, prior and informed consent approach*³ for engaging Rainforest Aboriginal people in the review of the Wet Tropics Management Plan 1998 (the Plan), to improve the recognition of, and develop management actions in support of, Rainforest Aboriginal tradition.

The Authority's Rainforest Aboriginal people's regional workshop was held to discuss not only a particular need to provide greater recognition of Aboriginal tradition in the Plan review, but a desire to refresh the Regional Agreement (2005) to reflect the contemporary environment and a more comprehensive involvement of Aboriginal people in World Heritage Area management.

In addition to ensuring involvement in the Plan review, the Authority has proactively increased employment opportunities for Aboriginal people, from just one person in 2016 to six in 2018. Two Aboriginal organisations have also been contracted to assist in the eradication of yellow crazy ants.

The Authority has worked closely with community service infrastructure providers and Traditional Owner groups to provide advance notice regarding upcoming permit renewals. This provides ample opportunity for Rainforest Aboriginal people to consider the permits in advance of formal notification.

Land tenure resolution negotiation processes have commenced between Eastern Kuku Yalanji Traditional Owners, the Queensland Government and the Authority. This will result in the transfer of national park ownership to Aboriginal freehold and jointly managed national parks in the future. The Authority will continue to attend negotiation meetings and support this process.

³ 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>

Traditional Owner Leadership Group

The regional workshop passed a resolution establishing a Traditional Owner Leadership Group (TOLG) to lead the process of refreshing the Regional Agreement with relevant partners. The Authority, North Queensland Land Council and Terrain NRM have supported the formation of the TOLG and facilitated its deliberations. The group provided a statement for the Authority and the Queensland and Australian governments to use in internal briefings, reaffirming commitment to the Regional Agreement and the ongoing involvement of Rainforest Aboriginal people in the management of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area.

Following the regional workshop, the Authority liaised with Australian and Queensland government agencies to undertake an internal review of the Regional Agreement. The Authority is working with the Rainforest Aboriginal leaders, the North Queensland Land Council and other partners to identify priority outstanding actions from the Regional Agreement and the 1998 report "Which Way Our Cultural Survival".

Collaborative projects

In 2017-18, the Authority invested \$40,000 of Rainforest Aboriginal Grants into four Aboriginal organisations in support of the following projects:

- Western Yalanji Aboriginal Corporation RNTBC – Cooperative Management of Mt Windsor Area
- Bana Yarralji Bubu Bayan Kabanji Inc – Ngananga Ngamunka – Kuku Nyungkal ecological language project
- Djunbunji Ltd – Hosting Wet Tropics Tour Guide School
- Mandingalbay Yidinji Aboriginal Corporation PBC – Interpretative Signage Project.

The Authority and Department of Environment and Science – Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service provided financial and other support to the Girringun Aboriginal Corporation to replace Edmund Kennedy National Park signage with Girramay National Park signs.

4. The Wet Tropics World Heritage Area is used, enjoyed and celebrated as the world's finest learning landscape for tropical rainforest and its sustainable management

Scientific research is critical to informed, evidence-based decision-making and community appreciation of the World Heritage Area's global significance. The Authority seeks to support continued research, build on the legacy of past research investment, and ensure knowledge generated in the Wet Tropics is accessible to rainforest and protected area managers elsewhere.

The outstanding universal value of the Area, together with the favourable research environment found within the region, provides great opportunities for collaborative research across a range of disciplines such as ecology, climatology, tourism, sociology and economics based on tropical ecosystems.

2017-18 highlights:

- More than \$30,000 in grants provided to ten Wet Tropics postgraduate students.
- Partnered with Australian Tropical Herbarium to deliver three plant identification workshops.
- Developed a protocol for engagement between researchers and Rainforest Aboriginal people.

Scientific Advisory Committee

The Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) advises the Authority's board on scientific research and developments that will contribute to the protection and conservation of the Area. In 2017-18, the SAC's work included input into climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies for the Area and drafted research protocols for engagement with Rainforest Aboriginal people. More details on the SAC's achievements are in *Appendix 2*.

World Heritage Family project

The Authority has developed a collection of stories detailing the common evolutionary lineages of Queensland and some other states' World Heritage properties, collectively known as the World Heritage Family.

Despite their many differences, these sites share a common heritage—including geological and evolutionary history—which underlies their outstanding universal value. The 'Family' concept strategy highlights these links and gives the Authority a new and interesting way of telling stories highlighting and enriching the Wet Tropics' outstanding universal value message.

Early interest from other World Heritage property managers and industry is strong and, with the use of an animation currently under development, will provide another platform to share the value of these sites. In particular, the story has inspired the tourism industry to learn more about the Area and support the Authority's efforts to spread this message to the world.

Student Research Grant Scheme

The Authority's Student Research Grant Scheme encourages and supports post-graduate research in the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area, which is then used to directly inform management of the World Heritage site and awareness of the Area's values.

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 students' costs associated with field work, purchase of equipment, field data collection, laboratory research and analysis of data.

In 2017-18 the Authority funded ten post-graduate students from three Australian universities:

- **Jennifer Cocciardi**, PhD candidate James Cook University (JCU) - Can species interactions cause rapid niche adaptation?
- **Alison Hoeger**, PhD candidate University of Queensland - Australian Bat Lyssavirus in Flying Foxes in Far North Queensland, 2017-2019
- **Elizabeth Joyce**, PhD candidate JCU - Origins of the northern Australian flora: role of the Sunda-Sahul floristic exchange
- **Lily Leahy**, PhD candidate JCU - Life in the canopy in a changing climate: The spatio-temporal distribution of rainforest ants along climate gradients in the Australian Wet Tropics
- **Donald McKnight**, PhD candidate JCU - Surviving disease outbreaks: Population genetics of a rainforest frog following a chytridiomycosis outbreak
- **James Milner**, Honours student JCU - Predicting drought response in lowland tropical rainforest: two models at two sites

- **Jesse Rowland**, Masters student University of Sunshine Coast - Distribution, abundance and demographics of the northern spotted-tail quoll (*Dasyurus maculatus gracilis*)
- **Stephanie Todd**, PhD candidate JCU - Connectivity, landscape genetics and genetic diversity of the endangered northern bettong (*Bettongia tropica*)
- **Nara Vogado**, PhD candidate JCU - The effects of drought on the phenology and eco-physiology of tree species in a tropical rainforest
- **Stuart Biggs**, Honours student JCU - Understanding yellow crazy ant/mammal interactions in Queensland's Wet Tropics.

Tropical rainforest plant identification

In a partnership with the Australian Tropical Herbarium, the Authority delivered three plant identification workshops that provide hands-on training for land managers and the public, to teach and develop skills in identifying the flora of the Wet Tropics. The workshops taught the use of interactive plant identification keys and improved participants' understanding of identification, distribution, and ecology of Wet Tropics native and invasive plant species.

The workshops were based on the Australian Tropical Rainforest Plants Key, the largest interactive key in the world covering 10% of the Australian vascular flora (over 2,530 species).

CASE STUDY

The Wet Tropics – a learning landscape

2017-18 is the seventh year that the Authority has offered competitive small grants to Australian post-graduate students.

The Authority funded ten students in 2018 including Elizabeth Joyce, a PhD candidate at the Australian Tropical Herbarium at James Cook University, Cairns, who is investigating the exchange of flora between Australia and Southeast Asia.

This exchange represents a key process which has shaped the evolution of Australia's Wet Tropics. Such research helps to set conservation strategies and priorities for managing Wet Tropics flora.

The floristic exchange began as the Sahul Shelf (a continental shelf extending from modern day Australia to New Guinea) moved closer to, and finally collided with, the Sunda Shelf (modern day Peninsular Malaysia, Borneo and other parts of the Indonesian archipelago) in the Cenozoic era about 15-30 million years ago.

The patterns and dynamics of the floristic exchange between Southeast Asia and Australia through time remain poorly understood.

The Authority's research grant will support the field work necessary to collect and sequence the Australian species of the 25 plant genera targeted for this study.

Understanding whether Australian wet tropical plants have transitioned into the savannah of Sunda regularly throughout history may give an indication of Wet Tropics flora's adaptability to a warming and drying climate.



Australian Tropical Herbarium JCU PhD candidate Elizabeth Joyce collecting plant material for her study at Nandroya Falls in the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area. Photo: Elizabeth Joyce / Australian Tropical Herbarium

5. World Heritage Area values are supported and presented through sustainable tourism

The Wet Tropics World Heritage Area—identified by the IUCN as the second-most irreplaceable natural World Heritage site in the world—warrants concerted efforts to provide the highest quality standards in presentation. Tourism Tropical North Queensland (TTNQ) markets the wider region as the world's best destination to experience nature, and although the Wet Tropics rainforests' profile is not as established as other global rainforest destinations, industry research lists rainforest experiences as a major drawcard for visitors to the region.

The Authority is taking a leading role, working with our partners in government, tourism agencies, local businesses and Traditional Owners to achieve excellence in World Heritage presentation. This includes a focus on education, information, interpretation and story-telling and World Heritage branding and messaging. Target audiences include local residents, visitors, schools and national and international communities and stakeholders.

2017-18 highlights:

- Finalised the Authority's presentation strategy.
- Progressed World Heritage Family animation product.
- Delivered two Wet Tropics Tour Guide Schools, one in partnership with the Malingalbay Yidinji people and Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service.

Presentation strategy

In August 2017, the board endorsed the Authority's presentation strategy: 'Share, Connect, Protect – best practice World Heritage Presentation in the Wet Tropics'.

The strategy was developed in consultation with the Queensland Government, the tourism industry, local councils, visitor information centres and the Authority's Community Consultative Committee. This collaborative approach will assist to:

- identify new ways to ensure that people have the opportunity to better appreciate and understand the special values and attributes of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area
- motivate and inspire people and agencies to make a deeper connection with the Area and take an ongoing interest in its care and protection

- create pathways for Rainforest Aboriginal people to participate more in tourism and presentation activities in the Area.

Key actions from these goals have been identified and are under implementation.

World Heritage Area brand

The Authority identified a need to generate awareness of the varied landscapes and special areas across the Wet Tropics. Following indications of support from the industry, the Authority partnered with TTNQ to develop a region-wide approach to brand development for the Wet Tropics based on its World Heritage values and attributes.

TTNQ has subsequently facilitated a number of workshops with the wider tourism industry to solicit input and support for a new rainforest brand.

Tourism partnerships

Working closely with the Department of Environment and Science – Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Transport and Main Roads and local governments, the Authority has undertaken an audit of signage and presentation issues in the World Heritage Area to identify new signage opportunities and constraints.

A preliminary report recommended further work to consult with Rainforest Aboriginal people and explore options to standardise application of the World Heritage brand; this continues into 2018-19.

The Authority has continued to investigate opportunities to strengthen the Wet Tropics Tour Guide Program through accreditation, in order to re-establish the program as fully certified and to strengthen industry engagement and support. A Partnership with Queensland Tourism Industry Council will assist in this endeavour and support Traditional Owner participation and career pathways in tourism.

New partnerships have been developed with Arts Nexus, Queensland Water and Land Carers and the Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships to support emerging eco-cultural tourism products and networking. Following consultations, Arts Nexus with the Authority's support held an Eco-Cultural Tourism workshop in October 2017 with Aboriginal participants.

Interpretive resources

An animation collaboration with the Department of Environment and Science is under development

to tell the World Heritage Family story in a creative and engaging way. The animation will incorporate key evolutionary and geological components that connect the five World Heritage Areas in Queensland, and will be available to other World Heritage sites to assist in their presentation activities.

The Authority also updated its World Heritage Area brochure, the primary promotional tool used to support the Wet Tropics Management Authority's activities, including attendance at community events, school visits and information packs. The new brochure features updated editorial and contemporary design, and features a taste of the many aspects of what makes the Area important, encouraging further investigation and exploration.

Following the brochure update, a series of bookmarks focussed on the Area's World Heritage values and Rainforest Aboriginal culture were published for distribution at community events.

Supporting visitor information centres

The Authority has been working closely with Skyrail Rainforest Cableway, Jungle Surfing Canopy Tours, Daintree Discovery Centre and Tablelands Regional Council (Malanda Visitor Information Centre) to help strengthen rainforest interpretation. Assistance provided includes input into visitor guide books, site-based presentations as well the delivery of information sessions on the World Heritage Family project.

In collaboration with TTNQ and Tourism and Events Queensland, the Authority has developed a World Heritage Gateway prospectus for potential investors in the Cairns Global Tourism Hub project. The concept promotes a world-class centre in the proposed hub that will celebrate Aboriginal culture, World Heritage and the reef and rainforest World Heritage areas at our doorstep.

Tour guides and hosts

The Authority partnered with professional tour guide body Savannah Guides to deliver two Wet Tropics Tour Guide Schools in 2017-18, including workshops and an on-country field school in partnership with Mandingalbay Yidinji with the support of the Department of Environment and Science – Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service. The workshop component of the second school will be delivered in the next financial year.

The Authority has supported other World Heritage sites to develop their own tour guide training programs, hosting Peter Cochrane, chair of Blue Mountains Institute, to discuss possible collaboration and alignment of respective tour guide programs.

Savannah Guides was successful in a funding submission to the Australian Government's Community Heritage Icons Grants to develop the Tourism Hosts Program (now called the Ambassador Program). The Authority will assist Savannah Guides with the delivery of training and support to volunteers and visitor information staff to tell the World Heritage story.

6. Enduring partnerships enhance the integrity of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area, its presentation and its function in the life of the community

The Authority recognises the need to actively engage local businesses, Aboriginal organisations and communities, tourism operators, community groups, landholders and industry for the development and implementation of its programs.

The Authority reaches out to stakeholders through many means, including its statutory advisory committees, public forums, community events, working groups, strategic alliances and exchanges.

2017-18 highlights:

- Established partnerships with the sugarcane industry to help with the Yellow Crazy Ant Eradication Program to find infestations and develop industry protocols.
- \$1.8 million in funds provided to Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service for on-ground park management.

The Authority's partnerships are evident in almost all elements of its work so feature in other parts of this annual report. Partnership activities that are not otherwise reported are summarised below.

Regional Managers Coordination Network

The Authority is an active participant in the Far North Queensland Regional Managers Coordination Network. This network, comprising senior public sector leaders in Commonwealth, State and local governments in the region plays an important role in supporting collaboration between government agencies by sharing information relevant to implementation of government programs. A major deliverable for 2017-18 was the development of a new engagement plan to encourage government champions to engage and work with the group.

Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service

Around 85% of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area is protected area estate (national parks, conservation reserves and other areas of public land) which is managed by the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS). Day-to-day activities such as infrastructure maintenance, fire, pest and weed control are their responsibility. A partnership agreement has been developed between the Authority and QPWS to prioritise and coordinate management activities in the protected area estate

within the World Heritage Area. This partnership agreement outlines products and services to be delivered by QPWS under funding provided by the Queensland Government for World Heritage management.

In 2017-18, the Authority provided QPWS with \$1.8M of Queensland State Government funding to enhance World Heritage management on national parks. This arrangement provides capacity for QPWS to address priorities of the Authority in relation to the World Heritage status of the Wet Tropics landscape.

Australian World Heritage Advisory Committee

The Authority collaborated with other Australian World Heritage property managers through the Australian World Heritage Advisory Committee, which advises the Commonwealth Minister for the Environment on policies and programs which benefit World Heritage properties on national or crosscutting issues. During 2017-18, the Authority contributed on a subcommittee working group to develop a draft national policy discussion paper on World Heritage cultural values and engagement. These will be progressed during 2018-19, along with case studies that provide examples of meaningful involvement of Indigenous communities in World Heritage management.



CASE STUDY

Yellow crazy ant eradication via partnerships

The Authority's Yellow Crazy Ant Eradication Program demonstrates the benefits of effective partnerships with a wide range of landholders, Traditional Owners, community groups, researchers, local industries, and state and local government agencies.

The partnerships formed through the Yellow Crazy Ant Eradication Program have raised the profile and broadened the community engagement of the Wet Tropics Management Authority. It has enabled the Authority to play an active on-ground conservation role, bringing together a diverse mix of stakeholders who might otherwise have little in common.

The success of the annual Yellow Crazy Ant Taskforce embodies this spirit of partnerships. In July 2017, more than 50 participants from local councils, natural resource management groups and traditional owners collaborated to hand-

treat 125 hectares along creeks and residential areas in Cairns' southern suburbs over just one week.

The Authority has also developed strong partnerships within the sugarcane industry, working closely with sugarcane farmers, contractors and mills to develop machinery movement protocols and providing field training sessions to assist farmers to identify and report the pest, and share techniques to prevent its spread.

The program will continue its work with local industries to identify further infestations and vectors for movement of yellow crazy ants south of Cairns, engaging community groups, landholders, local industries, schools and state and local governments to assist with community education and behaviour change.



Photos: **Top:** Yellow crazy ant nest. (Wet Tropics Images / Biosecurity QLD)
Inset: Yellow crazy ants milking aphids for honeydew. (Wet Tropics Images/ Rhys Sharpy) **Bottom:** Operations team examining cane for evidence of white fly. (Wet Tropics Images/Rhys Sharpy)

7. The Wet Tropics Management Authority is an accountable and capable organisation

The Wet Tropics Management 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.

2017-18 highlights:

- Leadership and governance training provide to board directors and senior management.
- Increased investment into strategic workforce capability, including staff attendance at 38 training programs covering technical, leadership and management modules.

Financial management

As a statutory authority, general-purpose financial statements and details for 2017-2018 are incorporated in the overall Department of Environment and Science financial statements. Total funding of \$8.2 million for 2017-2018 was provided to the Authority principally by the Australian and Queensland governments, and supplemented by other forms of income.

A summary of the Authority's operating statement for 2017-2018 is shown in Table 1. The Authority realised an operating deficit of \$527,000 (refer to note 1 below).

The Australian Government's allocation to the Authority for 2017-18 was \$5.8 million; these funds were allocated to the Authority's programs. The Queensland Government, through the Department of Environment and Science, contributed \$2.8 million

TABLE 1. WET TROPICS MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY OPERATING STATEMENT

CONTROLLED REVENUE AND EXPENSES	Notes	2017-2018	2016-2017
REVENUE		\$'000	\$'000
Revenue from government			
Payments for outputs		2,360	2,826
Asset assumed/liabilities transferred			
SUB-TOTAL GOVERNMENT REVENUE		2,360	2,826
Own source revenue			
User charges			
Grants and other contributions		5,801	4,747
Taxes fees and fines			
Gain on disposal of fixed assets			
Other revenue		57	34
Interest			
SUB-TOTAL OWN SOURCE REVENUE		5,858	4,781
TOTAL REVENUE		8,218	7,607
EXPENSES		\$'000	\$'000
Operating expenses			
Org. unit			
BBA WTMA		8,740	6,269
SUB-TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES		8,740	6,269
Non-operating expenses			
Depreciation		5	5
Asset write-downs/loss on disposal			
SUB-TOTAL NON-OPERATING EXPENSES		5	5
TOTAL EXPENSES		8,745	6,275
OPERATING RESULT	1	-527	1,332

Notes:

1. 2017-18 reported operating deficit is due to utilisation of unspent Commonwealth grant funding carried forward from prior years.

to the Authority to support management of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area.

The Authority allocated \$1.8 million of these funds to Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service for on-ground and field management services. Further, protracted procurement and contract management timelines for the Yellow Crazy Ant Eradication Program required a deferral of \$452,000; the carryover is reflected in the 2018-19 budget.

Audits

Three operational audits were conducted by PGL Financial Services in 2017–2018 for Commonwealth grants received.

Overseas travel

No overseas travel was undertaken by Authority staff in 2017-18.

Engaging contractors

The Authority expended \$3.019 million on contractors to provide specific services during 2017-18, including Traditional Owners services, information technology support, invasive species treatment, business administration support and protection and conservation activities. Table 2 shows expenditure on contractors for 2017-2018 compared to the previous financial year.

Workplace health and safety

Employees who suffer from a work-related injury or illness are entitled to apply for workers compensation. The Wet Tropics Management Authority is committed to ensuring that all workers compensation claims are appropriately managed. In 2017-18, the total number of accepted claims increased by two from the previous reporting period. The average amount paid was \$16,988 per claim.

The Authority adheres to the Queensland Government's health and safety management systems and procedures for all employees, contractors and volunteers. The Authority recorded 37 workplace incidents for 2017-18. All were minor, and none resulted in lost work days. Around 50% of the reported incidents were tick bites, three were brushes with stinging trees and eight were slips, falls or strains. 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 are conducted with no significant issues arising.

Permanent separation rate

As at 30 June 2018, the Authority's permanent separation rate was zero.

TABLE 2. EXPENDITURE FOR CONTRACTORS

	2017-2018	2016-2017
EXPENDITURE	\$'000	\$'000
Contractors by program		
WTMA Base	1,800	1,800
Business Management	78	42
World Heritage Connections	53	22
Planning and Conservation	14	13
Yellow Crazy Ant Eradication Program	1,074	222
TOTAL	3,019	2,099

Workforce planning and performance

The Authority is committed to developing the capability of its employees and recognises that training and development is critical for meeting government objectives. In 2017-18, expenditure for delivering planned training and development was \$49,800. All training needs were identified through individual performance and development plans.

In 2017-18, the Authority engaged in workforce capability planning in conjunction with the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection, 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. During the year, board directors and senior officers within the Authority were provided with Australian Institute of Community Director training to ensure the leadership team has a clear understanding of its governance roles and responsibilities and practical applications.

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 2017-2018 complied with directives and no equal employment opportunity complaints were received.

At 30 June 2018, the Authority employed 18 females and 30 males, a skew caused by a field of predominantly male applicants for field officer positions in the Yellow Crazy Ant Eradication Program.

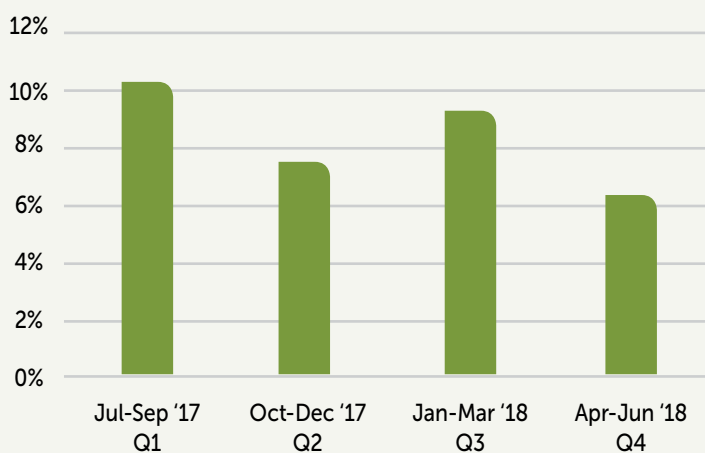
Employee opinion survey

Since 2013 the Authority has been measured annually in the state government-wide *Working for Queensland* survey. The 2017 report highlighted a number of positive changes within the organisation, including a 25% improvement in leadership behaviour and engagement and a 30% increase in performance and development opportunities. In January 2018, an all staff workshop was held to discuss the survey results and to develop a staff-led action plan to maintain the positive momentum in the organisation's overall position.

Absenteeism

The following graph shows the quarterly rates for unscheduled absences as at 30 June 2018. Unscheduled absences include sick, carers' and special leave as well as leave for workers' compensation. The average quarterly unscheduled absence rate for 2017-2018 was 8.25%.

QUARTERLY UNSCHEDULED ABSENCE RATE



Workforce profile

As at 30 June 2018, the Authority employed 46.3 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, especially the Yellow Crazy Ant Eradication Program, for which funding is due to cease on 30th June 2019.

At 30 June 2018, the staff establishment of the Authority totalled 61 positions of which 11 were vacant.

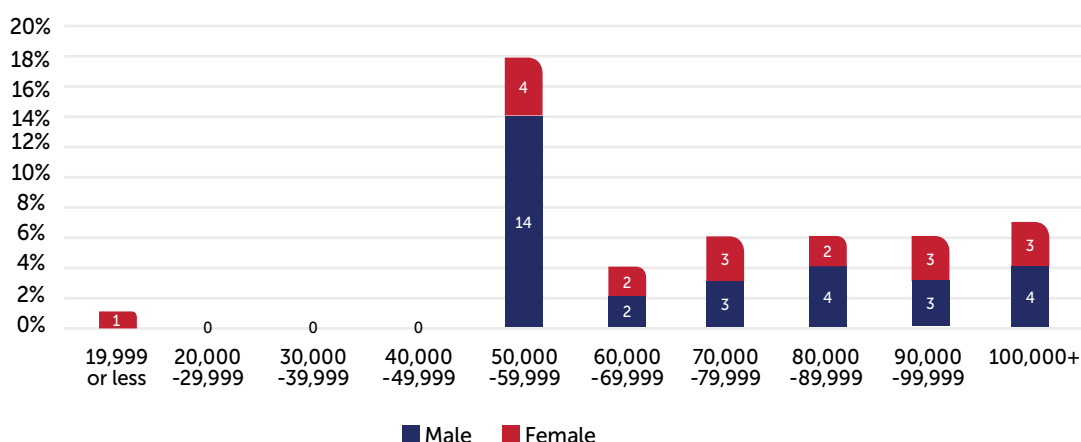
STAFFING FULL-TIME EQUIVALENT (FTE) BY OCCUPATION TYPE AND GENDER (AS AT 30 JUNE 2018)

Occupational stream	Female	Male	Total
Administration	11.2	6.8	18
Operational	3	15.9	18.9
Professional	2.6	4.8	7.4
Technical		1	1
Senior Executive Service		1	1
TOTAL	16.8	29.5	46.3

STAFFING FULL-TIME EQUIVALENT (FTE) BY EMPLOYMENT TYPE AND GENDER (AS AT 30 JUNE 2018)

Employment type	FTE		FTE		Total FTE	Total FTE%
	Female	Male	Female	Male		
Permanent	8.2	5	62.12%	37.88%	13.2	28.51%
Temporary	8.6	24.5	25.98%	74.02%	33.1	71.49%
TOTAL	16.8	29.5	36.29%	63.71%	46.3	100.00%

ANNUAL EARNINGS BY GENDER



Volunteers and internships

The Authority recognises that volunteers make a valuable contribution to the organisation, and is committed to planned, supported and appropriately managed volunteer arrangements. During 2017-18 the Authority hosted four graduate placements via formal arrangements through the Aurora (Native Title Internship) Program and the Department of Environment and Science.

Appendix 1. 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 in relation to the management of the Wet Tropics 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 in relation to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – the management of the Wet Tropics area – Australia's obligation under the World Heritage Convention in relation to the Wet Tropics area • prepare, and ensure the implementation of, management plans for the Wet Tropics area • administer funding arrangements in relation to the Wet Tropics 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 Wet Tropics area and other people • enter into arrangements for the provision of rehabilitation and restoration works in relation to any land in the Wet Tropics area • gather, research, analyse and disseminate information on the Wet Tropics area • develop public and community education programs in relation to the Wet Tropics area • promote the Wet Tropics 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 Wet Tropics World Heritage area • advise and report to the Minister and the Ministerial Forum.
Achievements	<p>In 2017–18, the board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • analysed the full range of issues raised during phase one consultation of the statutory Wet Tropics Management Plan review. As a result, the board provided direction on the Plan review process and proposed that a revised plan include an additional section to detail the vision and policy directions of the Authority to meet its World Heritage obligations • undertook a successful Wet Tropics Rainforest Aboriginal peoples workshop, which was attended by some 60 representatives of native title bodies, senior government officials, the North Queensland Land Council and Terrain Natural Resource Management. This regional gathering of Traditional Owners discussed issues relating to Aboriginal land and cultural management in the Wet Tropics. As a result, the board has resolved to refresh the regional agreement signed by state and Commonwealth governments and Rainforest Aboriginal Elders in 2005 • held the Wet Tropics Ministerial Forum on 28 July 2017. The forum, comprising Australian and Queensland Environment Ministers, meets annually to provide oversight to the strategic operation of the Wet Tropics Management Authority, approve annual budgets and consider future directions for meeting the property's World Heritage obligations • tabled the Authority's 2017–18 <i>State of Wet Tropics Report</i> in the Queensland and Australian parliaments • hosted the Cassowary Awards on 10 March 2018. This event celebrated the contributions made by the wider community into the protection and presentation of the World Heritage Area • approved scientific research protocols which will facilitate management of natural resources and bio-cultural collaborative exchange between traditional landowners and researchers who are performing low impact research in the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area • approved the <i>Wet Tropics Presentation Strategy</i>, which aims to focus Authority efforts to present the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area and canvass options for new private and public contributions to achieve higher standards of interpretation.

Wet Tropics Management Authority board (cont.)

Financial reporting	The Authority provides audited financial statements as required by the <i>Financial Accountability Regulation 2009</i> .				
REMUNERATION					
Position	Name	Meetings/sessions attendance	Approved annual, sessional or daily fee	Approved sub-committee fees if applicable	Actual fees received
Chair	Leslie Shirreffs	4	\$520 daily fee		\$5,460 \$16,120*
Member	John Courtenay	4	\$400 daily fee		\$4,200
Member	Anne Clarke	4	\$400 daily fee	\$400 daily fee (Chair Wet Tropics Community Consultative Committee)	\$4,800
Member	Iain Gordon	3	\$400 daily fee	\$400 daily fee (Chair Wet Tropics Scientific Advisory Committee)	\$2,400
Member	Leah Talbot	2	\$400 daily fee		\$1,600
Member	Phillip Rist	4	\$400 daily fee		\$3,200
Executive director	Scott Buchanan	4	N/A	N/A	N/A
No. scheduled meetings/sessions	The board met four times in 2017-18: 17 -18 August 2017, 15 January 2018, 8-9 March 2018 and 21-22 June 2018.				
Total out of pocket expenses	The board cost \$88,454 to operate, mostly for sitting fees, reimbursement of out of pocket expenses, travel expenses, governance training, ITC support, site inspections and catering. The board is 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.

Appendix 2. 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 Committee) advises the Wet Tropics Management Authority (the Authority) about community views on its policies and programs in relation to the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area.				
Achievements	<p>In 2017–18, the Committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">provided advice and direction on a number of strategic documents, including the Authority’s World Heritage Presentation Strategy, the review of the Wet Tropics Management Plan, and the 2016 Australia State of the Environment Reportprovided advice and support on the planning for the Authority’s 2017 Cassowary Awards and the 2018 Climate Change Workshopparticipated in a workshop to provide a series of potential themes, activities and products to assist in celebrating 30 years of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Areaprovided advice on the Authority’s engagement, strategies and brandingprovided input into the review of the Wet Tropics Tour Guide School and programsupported 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
Member	Anne Clarke	4	\$400 daily fee	N/A	\$2,400
Member	Dennis Ah-Kee	1	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	3	N/A	N/A	N/A
Member	Bess Murphy	2	N/A	N/A	N/A
Member	Craig Pocock	4	N/A	N/A	N/A
Member	Gerard Puglisi	1	N/A	N/A	N/A
Member	Peter Rowles	4	N/A	N/A	N/A
Member	Angela Toppin	3	N/A	N/A	N/A
Member	Linda Venn	3	N/A	N/A	N/A
Ex-Member	Seraeah Wyles	2	N/A	N/A	N/A
Executive director	Scott Buchanan	0	N/A	N/A	N/A
No. scheduled meetings/sessions	The Committee met four times in 2017-18: 27 July 2017, 2 November 2017, 1 March 2018 and 7 June 2018				
Total out of pocket expenses	<p>The Committee cost \$7,476 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 Committee is funded by the Australian Government—the Queensland Government does not contribute to its operational cost.</p>				

Wet Tropics Scientific Advisory Committee

Act or instrument	Wet Tropics World Heritage Protection and Management Act 1993				
Functions	The Wet Tropics Scientific Advisory Committee (the Committee) advises the Wet Tropics Management Authority on: <ul style="list-style-type: none">scientific research that will contribute to the protection and conservation of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Areascientific developments relevant to the protection or conservation of the area.				
Achievements	The Committee met three times during 2017–18 and provided advice to the Authority board regarding: <ul style="list-style-type: none">issues specific to the Wet Tropics Management Plan reviewdeveloping climate change adaption and mitigation strategies to protect World Heritage values. A climate change working group of the Committee was established to progress an initial multidisciplinary workshop to identify priority adaption and mitigation adaption actionsa draft guideline to formalise research protocols for engagement between Rainforest Aboriginal people and researchers. This document has gone through an extensive process of stakeholder engagement with Rainforest Aboriginal peopleattributes and ecological function of Wet Tropics species, including the spectacled flying-fox and the southern cassowary.				
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	3	\$400 daily fee	N/A	\$2,400
Member	Professor John Herbohn	1	N/A	N/A	N/A
Member	Mr John Locke	3	N/A	N/A	N/A
Member	Associate Professor Susan Laurance	3	N/A	N/A	N/A
Member	Dr Suzanne Long	2	N/A	N/A	N/A
Member	Professor Bruce Richard Prideaux	3	N/A	N/A	N/A
Member	Dr Lea Scherl	3	N/A	N/A	N/A
Member	Mrs Joann Schmider	3	N/A	N/A	N/A
Member	Dr David Westcott	1	N/A	N/A	N/A
No. scheduled meetings/sessions	The Committee met three times in 2017-18: 25 July 2017, 23 October 2017 and 1 May 2018.				
Total out of pocket expenses	The Committee cost \$11,421 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 Committee is funded by the Australian Government—the Queensland Government does not contribute to its operational cost.				

Appendix 3. 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 2017-18, Authority staff audited and advised a number of agencies or organisations undertaking activities in the World Heritage Area under existing permits.

Authority staff assessed a permit application by Tablelands Regional Council to undertake slip stabilisation works on the access track to the Upper Barron water intake. To streamline this process, the Authority collaborated with Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS) enabling the issue of a letter of authority for these works to proceed within Mount Hypipamee National Park which was also deemed a permit in accordance with the Plan. Staff also provided input to the assessment of a permit application to QPWS to allow helicopter flights for filming at Wallaman Falls.

Authority staff assessed and issued two other permits under the Plan to:

- Department of Transport and Main Roads for curve widening on the Kuranda Range section of the Kennedy Highway
- Douglas Shire Council for road works at the intersection and access to Kulki at Cape Tribulation

Pre-lodgement advice on permit applications was provided to:

- Queensland Rail to construct new rock netting in Barron Gorge
- Tableland Regional Council for the construction of a new raw water pipeline from Herberton Dam to Herberton
- Cassowary Coast Regional Council regarding the urgent re-establishment of a section of the Tully Gorge Road
- Cairns Regional Council regarding the re-establishment of Lake Morris Road
- Powerlink regarding proposed refurbishment of tower footings in the Barron Falls National Park.

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, including:

- upgrading raw water pipelines at Rex Creek by Douglas Shire Council
- flying a drone to film a mass evacuation exercise in Tully Gorge involving QPWS, the SES and Raging Thunder
- flying helicopters to Skyrail Rainforest Cableway facilities for construction and maintenance purposes
- drilling for geotechnical analysis by the Department of Transport and Main Roads
- drainage works by Cook Shire Council on the Bloomfield to Rossville Road
- tree removal to facilitate bridge works on Black Mountain Road by Mareeba Shire Council
- re-aligning an Ergon electricity power line adjacent to Tully Gorge Road
- re-construction of bridges on the Tully Falls Road by Tablelands Regional Council
- installing a pedestrian bridge to span the railway line near Stoney Creek by Queensland Rail.

Authority staff consulted with registered native title bodies corporate regarding their views on assessment of Wet Tropics permit renewals by community services infrastructure providers for ongoing maintenance of their infrastructure inside the Area. Staff advised several community service providers of extensions to permits authorising the maintenance of their infrastructure including Stanwell Corporation, Ergon, Department of Transport and Main Roads, Skyrail Rainforest Cableway and Townsville Water to allow further time to consult with relevant Aboriginal People regarding the issuing of new maintenance permits.

Authority staff also provided advice to:

- Telstra, regarding on track maintenance at telecommunication facilities at Mt Misery and Wangetti
- Department of Transport and Main Roads, regarding landscaping at the Henry Ross lookout
- Ergon, regarding the upgrade of access tracks associated with a power line at Wangetti
- Department of Defence, regarding bridge construction and track maintenance at Tully Training Area
- Broadcast Australia, regarding the refurbishment of infrastructure and the construction of erosion control structures at their Bellenden Ker telecommunication facility
- Stanwell Corporation, regarding the removal and rehabilitation of a disused telecommunications site near Tully Falls
- Stanwell Corporation, regarding potential helicopter evacuation from a remote saddle dam at Koombooloomba.
- Consultants, regarding a proposed wind farm south of Ravenshoe
- Douglas Shire Council, on the likely cause of on-going siltation from Turpentine Road, Diwan.

Staff reviewed environmental management plans (EMPs) for the roads managed by the Department of Transport and Main Roads within the Area. Staff also reviewed the Stanwell Corporation EMP.

The Authority provided training to Tablelands Regional Council on community services infrastructure maintenance as it relates to permit conditions under the Plan.

Staff provided advice on the Draft Threat abatement plan for disease in natural ecosystems caused by *Phytophthora cinnamomi* (Commonwealth of Australia, 2017) and facilitated the eradication of invasive weeds at several locations within and adjacent to the World Heritage Area. In conjunction with Department of Transport and Main Roads and the Douglas Shire Council, the Authority facilitated closures of unauthorised tracks at Wangetti Reserve.

Investigation and enforcement

Staff investigated the removal of a red cedar (*Toona ciliata*) from a property near Shiptons Flat. The land owners were cautioned and no prosecution was pursued as the matter involved a single tree that had died and fallen naturally within a cleared paddock and the activity could be considered as having no more than minor and inconsequential impacts on World Heritage values.

Staff investigated a report of the destruction of a number of rare and threatened native plants by surveyors undertaking a boundary survey at Cooper Creek. Following a review of the matter it was agreed the methodology employed resulted in minimal destruction of vegetation and it was agreed the surveyors would seek input from qualified botanists before undertaking any further work in the vicinity.

Land dealings

The Authority advised on seven enquiries regarding development proposals, including those outside the Area that may affect World Heritage values. Advice was also provided to the Department of Natural Resources and Mines regarding proposed road closures, a proposed conversion of a lease to freehold, potential development sites near Shiptons Flat, the inclusion of a former lease into the adjoining national park and the potential acquisition of properties adjoining national parks at Cow Bay and Mount Lewis.

Staff provided information to various persons on the location of the boundary of the World Heritage Area and the effect of the Plan on properties within the Area. Advice was provided to landholders on the potential for future development at properties within the Area at Home Rule and Bramston Beach. Staff inspected the state of a freehold property at Woopen Creek that was for sale to ascertain what activities may be able to be carried out by any potential new owner.

Staff also provided advice to a new landholder about their obligations under a cooperative management agreement in regard to their property. Letters of support were provided to the South Endeavour Trust supporting the purchase of two properties important to enhancing the ecological connectivity of upland rainforests.

Abbreviations

CCC	Community Consultative Committee
Commonwealth Act	<i>Wet Tropics of Queensland World Heritage Area Conservation Act 1994</i>
CSIRO	Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation
EMP	Environmental management plan
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
JCU	James Cook University
OUV	Outstanding universal value
QPWS	Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service
Queensland Act	<i>Wet Tropics World Heritage Protection and Management Act 1993</i>
The Area	Wet Tropics of Queensland World Heritage Area
The Authority	Wet Tropics Management Authority
The Plan	Wet Tropics Management Plan 1998
RCMN	Regional Managers Coordination Network
SAC	Scientific Advisory Committee
TOLG	Traditional Owner Leadership Group
TTNQ	Tourism Tropical North Queensland
WTMA	Wet Tropics Management Authority



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FRONT COVER IMAGE: Stoney Creek (Wet Tropics Images / Charlotte Hellings)