Wet Tropics Management Authority

Annual Report 2024–25



WET TROPICS
MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY

Purpose of the report

This annual report details the financial and non-financial performance of the Wet Tropics Management Authority (the Authority) from 1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025. It describes the achievements, performance, outlook and financial position of the Authority, and satisfies the requirements of the *Financial Accountability Act 2009*, Financial and Performance Management Standard 2009, the detailed requirements set out in the annual report requirements for Queensland Government agencies, Queensland's *Wet Tropics World Heritage Protection and Management Act 1993* and the Commonwealth's *Wet Tropics of Queensland World Heritage Area Conservation Act 1994*.

Feedback

This annual report is an important document representing communication and accountability. The Authority values comments and welcomes feedback via email to wettropics@wtma.qld.gov.au.

Public availability

This annual report can be accessed and downloaded from www.wettropics.gov.au/annual-reports. Alternatively, hard copies of this document can be obtained by emailing wettropics@wtma.qld.gov.au.

Interpreter service statement

The Authority is committed to providing accessible services to people from all culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. If you have difficulty in understanding this annual report and need to access this document in a language other than English, please call the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS National) on 131 450 and ask them to telephone the Authority on +61 7 4241 0500.



Copyright

© Wet Tropics Management Authority 2025.

Information Licence

This annual report is licenced by the Wet Tropics Management Authority under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International (CC BY 4.0) licence.



CC BY Licence Summary Statement

In essence, you are free to copy, communicate and adapt this annual report, as long as you attribute the work to the Authority as the source of the publication.

Attribution

Content from this annual report should be attributed as: Wet Tropics Management Authority Annual Report 2024–25.

Disclaimer

This annual report has been prepared with all due diligence and care, based on the best available information at the time of publication. The Authority holds no responsibility for any errors or omissions within this document. Any decisions made by other parties based on this document are solely the responsibility of those parties.

Further information

Wet Tropics Management Authority
Ground Floor
Ports North building
Cnr Grafton and Hartley Streets, Cairns
PO Box 2050, Cairns QLD 4870
Ph: 07 4241 0500
wettropics@wtma.qld.gov.au

WET TROPICS MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY

ISSN 2653-584X (Print)
ISSN 2653-5858 (Online)

Contents

Message from the Chair 6
About the Wet Tropics 8
Our organisation 10
Our performance 13
Attachment 1—Wet Tropics Management Authority Board of Directors 40
Attachment 2—Compliance checklist 43
Glossary 45

The Wet Tropics Management Authority acknowledges the spirit of Country of the Wet Tropics and recognises Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples as carrying custodial responsibility. We pay our respects to their ancestors and traditions.

Cover photo: Bloomfield River at Wujal Wujal, Eastern Kuku Yalanji Country—Wet Tropics Images

30 September 2025

The Hon Andrew Powell MP
Minister for the Environment and Tourism,
Minister for Science and Innovation
GPO Box 5078
Brisbane QLD 4001

Dear Minister

I am pleased to submit for presentation to the Parliament the Annual Report 2024–25 and financial statements for the Wet Tropics Management Authority.

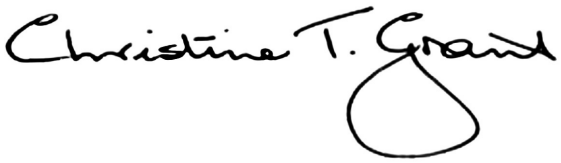
I certify this annual report complies with:

- the prescribed requirements of the *Financial Accountability Act 2009* and the Financial and Performance Management Standard 2019
- the detailed requirements set out in the Annual report requirements for Queensland Government agencies
- the *Wet Tropics World Heritage Protection and Management Act 1993* (Qld)
- the *Wet Tropics of Queensland World Heritage Area Conservation Act 1994* (Cwlth)

Section 53 (2) of the *Wet Tropics World Heritage Protection and Management Act 1993 (Qld)*, requires that the State Minister must lay a copy of the report before the Legislative Assembly within 14 sitting days after its receipt by the Minister.

A checklist outlining the annual reporting requirements is provided at page 43.

Yours sincerely



Ms Christine Grant
Chair, Wet Tropics Management Authority Board

30 September 2025

Senator the Hon Murray Watt
Minister for the Environment and Water
PO Box 6022
House of Representatives
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Minister

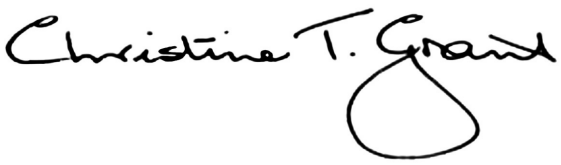
I am pleased to present the Annual Report 2024–25 for the Wet Tropics Management Authority.

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

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

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

Yours sincerely



Ms Christine Grant
Chair, Wet Tropics Management Authority Board

Message from the Chair

The Wet Tropics Management Authority (the Authority) is responsible for safeguarding, conserving, restoring, promoting and sharing the unique values of the Wet Tropics of Queensland World Heritage Area (the Area). This comes with increasing and significant challenges, none more pressing than the emerging impacts of climate change.

The Area is internationally recognised as a fragile haven of breathtaking beauty with timeless natural processes that showcase Earth's evolution. It protects some of the oldest continuously surviving tropical rainforests on Earth, and is home to one of the world's oldest living and evolving cultures. For many thousands of years, Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples have sustainably cared for this Country, shaping its intricate landscapes and rich biodiversity. This is a dynamic, living biocultural landscape.

In recent years, the growing threats to the Area's natural and cultural values have been highlighted by extreme weather events, including the significant rainfall that followed Tropical Cyclone Jasper in December 2023 and the flooding brought by the North and Far North Tropical Low in February 2025. In response to these events, the Authority worked closely with partners to assess immediate and longer-term impacts, prioritise recovery efforts, build environmental and community resilience, and plan for such events in the future. This saw the Authority—while continuing to effectively balance protection of the Area with its sustainable use—involved in numerous collaborations to restore damaged road networks and essential community infrastructure throughout 2024–25.

The Authority's ongoing commitment to supporting Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples was further demonstrated through collaborations like our Indigenous Advisory Committee—established in 2024 in partnership with Terrain NRM—which provided strategic advice and enhanced connections across the Wet Tropics. Our Bama Country and Culture project culminated in the delivery of the Rainforest People Country Culture map—an online, interactive story map featuring videos by Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples, fostering a deeper understanding of their enduring connection to Country. We also progressed the Eastern Kuku Yalanji Return to Country project with Jabalbina Yalanji Aboriginal Corporation RNTBC.

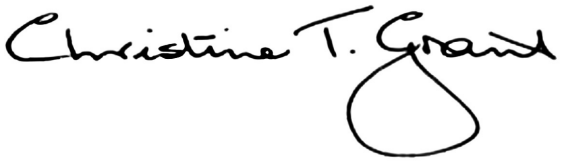
The Wet Tropics World Heritage Guides (Phase 1)—a key project to enhance promotion of the Area's natural and cultural values was completed for a 1 July 2025 launch. Subject matter experts and targeted stakeholder engagement informed the development of online training packages that will set a new standard in World Heritage presentation.

For the second consecutive year, the Authority reached a historic milestone in its Yellow Crazy Ant Eradication Program, completing the largest eradication of this invasive species globally. The success of the program is a world-leading example of pest eradication, and the Authority shares its expertise nationally and internationally.

Efforts to enhance habitat connectivity, strengthen the resilience of Wet Tropics ecosystems and address climate change continue to build. The Wet Tropics Restoration Alliance hosted well-attended field days, laying the groundwork for transformative partnerships that will enable the scaling up of restoration activities. The Authority facilitated a two-day workshop to identify and prioritise management actions for highland rainforests of the Wet Tropics, and supported their nomination as a nationally-listed threatened ecological community.

The tireless work of organisations and individuals to conserve, protect and raise awareness of the Wet Tropics was recognised at the 20th Cassowary Awards—a prestigious celebration that the Authority was incredibly proud to host. The longevity of the Cassowary Awards—the only awards program in Australia, and one of the few globally, to recognise community contributions to World Heritage management—is a testament to the widespread, enduring commitment across the Wet Tropics to ensure the protection of this incredibly special place.

This annual report highlights the Authority's dedication to collaborative management as well as the breadth of our achievements over the 2024–25 financial year. We remain committed to upholding the exceptional standard of care that this globally significant Area demands and deserves, but the strain on already stretched resources is rapidly increasing.



Ms Christine Grant
Chair, Wet Tropics Management Authority Board

About the Wet Tropics

The Wet Tropics of Queensland World Heritage Area

World Heritage listing signifies international recognition by the UNESCO World Heritage Committee, on behalf of the global community, that a site's natural and/or cultural significance is so exceptional that its preservation is of value to all humanity. These sites are said to be of Outstanding Universal Value. Currently, the World Heritage List includes 1,248 properties deemed to have Outstanding Universal Value, with 21 of these located in Australia—five of which are in Queensland.

The Wet Tropics of Queensland World Heritage Area (the Area) was inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1988 for its exceptional natural values, meeting all four natural criteria for World Heritage listing and satisfying the required conditions of integrity. In 2007, the Area was also added to Australia's National Heritage List for its natural values.

For Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples, the Area represents a vibrant, living cultural landscape, reflecting their continuous connection to the rainforest environment over many thousands of years. It is the only site in Australia where Aboriginal Peoples have permanently inhabited a tropical rainforest. While the World Heritage listing does not currently recognise the Area's Indigenous cultural values, these were formally acknowledged in 2012 when the National Heritage listing was expanded to include them.

The challenge

The 2023–24 State of Wet Tropics report brought into clear focus the deteriorating state of some key World Heritage values that underpin the global significance of the Area, with a sobering assessment of the current threats. The most critical of these threats is climate change and its associated extreme weather events. Subsequently, this year's 2024–25 State of Wet Tropics report takes a closer look at recent extreme rainfall events—specifically, following Tropical Cyclone Jasper in December 2023 (in the north of the Area), and the North and Far North Tropical Low in early 2025 (in the south of the Area). The report provides a preliminary assessment of impacts, describes recovery and research responses, looks at Traditional Owner perspectives, and offers priorities for future actions to help reduce or mitigate impacts and support the resilience of the Area. The economic costs are considered, along with the value of tourism in the Wet Tropics.

These two State of Wet Tropics reports, read in conjunction, clearly outline the increasing pressure on this unique and iconic landscape, which is a vital economic resource for the broader region: extreme rainfall events driven by climate change have significant adverse effects on the Area's natural and cultural values and leave communities with the cost of rebuilding essential infrastructure and industry. The likelihood of severe impacts from unavoidable events like future tropical cyclones in this now very fragile landscape is high unless effective mitigation actions are taken.

The Wet Tropics faces mounting pressures and concern for its World Heritage values is not new: the Area's conservation outlook has been rated as of 'significant concern'[1] by the IUCN in all three of its World Heritage Outlook reports (2014, 2017 and 2020[2]). This rating is just one step away from 'critical'.

As the threats to the Area increase, so too do the management challenges in meeting the obligations of the Wet Tropics Management Authority (the Authority) under the World Heritage Convention. The Authority remains committed to protecting, conserving, rehabilitating and presenting the Area, and safeguarding it for future generations—evidenced by key initiatives such as the Yellow Crazy Ant Eradication Program (see page 15), the Wet Tropics Restoration Program (see page 14), and the Wet Tropics World Heritage Guides

1 https://www.iucn.org/our-work/topic/world-heritage/our-work/iucn-world-heritage-outlook
2 The Next IUCN World Heritage Outlook Report will be launched in October 2025

(see page 24). However, without a significant boost to resources, the future of this globally significant place remains at serious risk.

As identified in the 2023–24 State of Wet Tropics report, improved management of the Area can be achieved with appropriate investment in critical areas: a concerted and collaborative response to climate change and biosecurity impacts; increased First Nations-led management; the upscaling of rehabilitation and restoration of degraded landscapes; and planning and support to address the pressures on species dependent on cool upland habitats.

The need for action is immediate. Without urgent intervention, we will witness the irreversible loss of species that are integral to the Outstanding Universal Value of the Area.

Relevant legislation

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

The Queensland Act established the Wet Tropics Management Authority and is the legal basis for the statutory Wet Tropics Management Plan 1998, which regulates land use activities in the Area through a zoning and permit system. The Management Scheme Intergovernmental Agreement for the Wet Tropics of Queensland World Heritage Area is an agreement between the Queensland and Australian governments, originally signed by the Premier of Queensland and the Prime Minister of Australia in 1990.

Our organisation

Our vision

To protect the values of the Wet Tropics through collaboration, culture, knowledge and passion.

Our mission

To lead, inspire, advise and support the Australian and global community to protect and share the Wet Tropics World Heritage area in perpetuity.

Who we are

The Wet Tropics Management Authority (the Authority) was established to ensure Australia's obligation under the World Heritage Convention is met, in relation to the Wet Tropics of Queensland World Heritage Area (the Area).

The Authority is a body corporate, with statutory powers defined under the *Wet Tropics World Heritage Protection and Management Act 1993* (the Queensland Act). The Authority's functions are fully defined under section 10 of the Queensland Act, but include to:

- develop and implement policies, plans and programs for management of the Area
- formulate performance indicators for the implementation of approved policies and programs
- advise, make recommendations and report to the relevant ministers on the state of the Area
- facilitate and enter into cooperative management agreements
- rehabilitate and restore the Area
- gather, research, analyse and disseminate information on the Area
- develop public and community education programs
- promote the Area locally, nationally and internationally
- monitor the state of the Area.

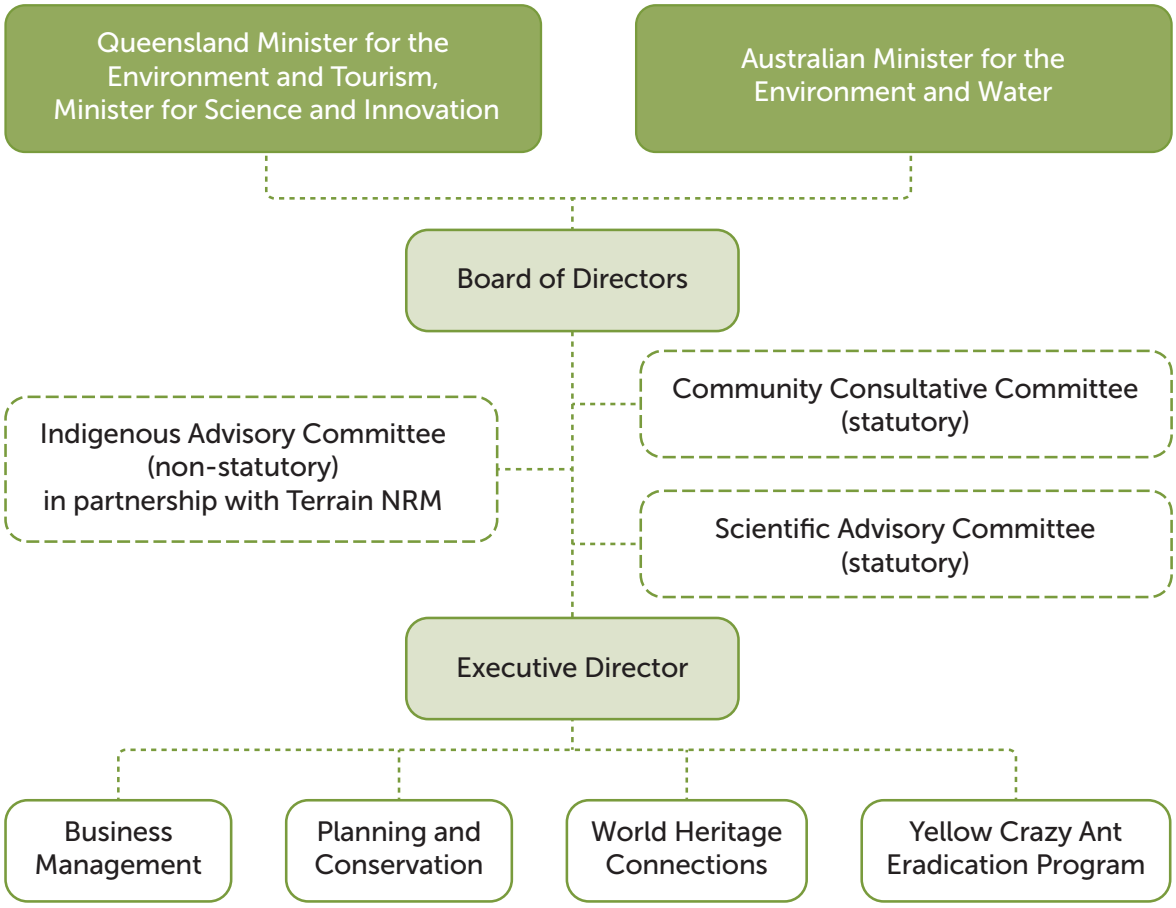
The Authority performs its functions in a way that protects the Area's natural heritage values and is consistent with the World Heritage Convention and relevant legislation. The Authority recognises the significant role of Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples in the management of the Area, acknowledging their traditional connection to the land and waters. The Authority receives funding from the Australian and Queensland governments.

Our structure

As a body corporate operating under the requirements of Queensland and Australian legislation, the Authority's structure enshrines its partnership and engagement with both governments, and a range of industry and community stakeholders and Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples throughout the Wet Tropics region.

The Authority operates as an administrative unit within the Queensland Government's Department of the Environment, Tourism, Science and Innovation (DETSI) and is subject to Queensland public sector legislation, regulations, standards and guidelines governing administrative functions and arrangements. The Director-General of DETSI is the accountable officer for the Authority under the Financial and Performance Management Standard 2019. The Authority is responsible to the Director-General regarding compliance with Queensland Government administrative and financial standards.

Wet Tropics Management Authority reporting structure



Relevant ministers

The Management Scheme Intergovernmental Agreement for the Wet Tropics of Queensland World Heritage Area and the Queensland Act recognise that both the Australian and Queensland governments have joint interests in and responsibilities for the Area. The Authority's Board of Directors reports to two ministers:

- The Hon Andrew Powell MP, Queensland Minister for the Environment and Tourism, Minister for Science and Innovation
- Senator the Hon Murray Watt, Australian Minister for the Environment and Water.

Board of Directors

The Authority's Board of Directors (the Board) is established under the Queensland Act. The Board's key function is to implement programs to meet Australia's international obligation for the Area under the World Heritage Convention.

The Board consists of seven directors, six of whom are voting members and serve in a part-time capacity. The Authority's Executive Director is the seventh and non-voting director.

The Australian and Queensland governments nominate two directors each—Commonwealth legislation requires that at least one Australian Government nominee is an Aboriginal person. The relevant ministers also jointly nominate a Chair and an Aboriginal director. The requirements for at least two Aboriginal directors

reflects the Wet Tropics of Queensland World Heritage Area Regional Agreement[3] and the aspiration of Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples to participate in decision making for the management of the Area.

Statutory and non-statutory committees

The Authority has two statutory advisory committees appointed by the Board under section 40 (1) of the Queensland Act—the Community Consultative Committee (CCC) and the Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC). A non-statutory advisory committee, the Indigenous Advisory Committee (IAC), jointly appointed by the Authority's Board with the Board of Terrain NRM, provides advice on strategic and operational priorities across the Wet Tropics Biocultural Region. The committees, which each meet prior to Board meetings, advise the Board on programs and research relevant to the management of the Area. To ensure consistency and awareness, a joint meeting of all three committees is held annually. Each committee is usually chaired by one of the Board's directors, providing a direct line of communication between the committees and the Board. The Board has invited Professor Stephen Williams, who served as a Board director from 9 December 2021 until 8 December 2024 to continue to chair the SAC in recognition of his scientific expertise.

Our contribution to government objectives

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

The Authority implements programs under the Federation Funding Agreement between the Commonwealth of Australia and the State of Queensland for initiatives in the environment sector, namely the delivery of effective management of the Wet Tropics of Queensland World Heritage Area in accordance with the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* and Australia's obligation under the World Heritage Convention.

The Authority's direction and service delivery contribute to the Queensland Government's objectives for the community[4] by:

- supporting regional economic growth by fostering secure jobs in tourism, Indigenous enterprises, and natural resource management sectors
- investing in skills development through the revitalisation of our tour guide training program and partnerships with universities, contributing to workforce readiness in key industries
- protecting Queensland's iconic natural landscapes, ensuring the long-term sustainability of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area to support nature-based tourism and regional economic opportunities
- driving regional investment in science, education, and Indigenous and nature-based tourism to stimulate economic growth and create opportunities for small and family businesses.

Reporting

As required under section 63 (1) of the Queensland Act and section 10 of the *Wet Tropics of Queensland World Heritage Area Conservation Act 1994* (the Commonwealth Act), the Authority prepares an annual report (this report) which includes the financial statements and administration of the Acts. The Authority also prepares a State of Wet Tropics report each year.

3 The Wet Tropics of Queensland World Heritage Area Regional Agreement is a historical agreement signed in 2005 between 18 Rainforest Aboriginal tribal groups and the Australian and Queensland governments to cooperatively manage the Wet Tropics area.

4 https://www.qld.gov.au/about/how-government-works/our-priorities/governments-objectives-for-the-community The Authority's direction is best aligned with 'A better lifestyle through a stronger economy' and 'A plan for Queensland's future'.

As the Authority is specified as a statutory authority, and not a statutory body under the *Financial Accountability Act 2009*, the annual report requirements for Queensland Government agencies (ARRs) do not strictly apply to the Authority's reporting process. However, as the Authority is reported on under the ARRs through DETSI, this report will closely follow the ARRs in terms of required content, and financial reporting process.

Our performance

The Wet Tropics Strategic Plan 2020–2030 (the Strategic Plan) outlines how the Wet Tropics Management Authority (the Authority) will work with partners and the community to effectively manage and protect the Outstanding Universal Value of the Wet Tropics of Queensland World Heritage Area (the Area), and ensure cooperative management with Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples.

This annual report outlines the Authority's progress against the five high-level strategies identified in the Strategic Plan, plus a sixth strategy added to ensure corporate governance appropriately supports and enhances the achievement of the Authority's goals. Achievements for the 2024–25 year are detailed for each of these strategies:

- Strategy 1—Climate change and other threats (see page 14)
- Strategy 2—Support Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples (see page 18)
- Strategy 3—Involve the community (see page 21)
- Strategy 4—World-class tourism and recreation (see page 24)
- Strategy 5—Minimise impacts (see page 26)
- Strategy 6—A healthy organisation (see page 28)

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

Disaster recovery

As outlined in the Wet Tropics Management Authority's (the Authority) previous annual report, following Tropical Cyclone Jasper crossing the coast near Wujal Wujal on 13 December 2023, persistent heavy rainfall caused widespread flooding and damage in the northern part of the Wet Tropics of Queensland World Heritage Area (the Area). From 27 January to 5 February 2025 another event, the North and Far North Tropical Low brought heavy rainfall to Queensland's northeast tropical coast, predominantly affecting the southern half of the Area—some sites recorded their highest daily or multi-day rainfall totals on record.

These events underscore the urgent need to address and mitigate the impacts of climate change. Flooding caused extensive destruction of critical habitats through landslides, creek scouring, and inundation, impacting the Outstanding Universal Value of the Area. Built infrastructure and scenic amenity suffered severe damage, with restoration efforts expected to take years. The full extent of the impacts on World Heritage values remains under assessment, with concerns that these will exacerbate existing threats including invasive species, habitat fragmentation and altered fire regimes.

The Authority continued to work closely with a variety of stakeholders, including local and state government bodies and Traditional Owners, to support disaster recovery efforts while ensuring protection of the Area. The importance of integrating cultural knowledge, environmental sensitivity and community resilience into disaster recovery planning and actions was highlighted. Some notable actions included:

- assessing and approving permits to re-establish roads (e.g. Bloomfield Track, Barron Gorge Road, Palmerston Highway) and the Bloomfield River boat ramp and pontoon
- reviewing and updating the Department of Transport and Main Roads' Road Maintenance Code of Practice to include actions and protocols to protect environmental and cultural values during disaster recovery actions
- reviewing and updating environmental management plans for the Tablelands Regional Council and Douglas Shire Council, including actions and protocols to protect environmental and cultural values during disaster recovery actions.

Climate change adaptation and restoration work

In December 2024, funding from the Department of the Environment, Tourism, Science and Innovation (DETSI) for phase 2 of the Wet Tropics Restoration Program was secured, supporting an additional two years working with partners on scaling up restoration in the Daintree lowlands and the southern Atherton Tableland. Key actions of phase 2 that have commenced include: consultation with key stakeholders (including community infrastructure service providers and other stakeholders interested in participating in natural capital projects), establishing relationships with responsible investment advisory firms, and developing contemporary guidance regarding restoration approaches, associated costs and resource requirements. Ongoing work includes supporting Jabalbina Yalanji Aboriginal Corporation RNTBC in finalising their 'Green Economy' Strategy for Eastern Kuku Yalanji People's Native Title lands in the Daintree. The strategy (expected to be finalised in the second half of 2025) aims to integrate sustainable economic opportunities with cultural and environmental stewardship.

The Authority supported the Wet Tropics Restoration Alliance, with additional assistance from DETSI, to continue building momentum and fostering collaboration within the restoration practitioner community. This in-kind and financial support included assisting the transition to a member-based Steering Group to oversee development and implementation of the Alliance's annual work plan, coordination of the Alliance's annual event in December 2024 (attended by over 50 people from across the region), and member training workshops and field days. Ongoing administrative support by the Authority saw the development of a restoration database and toolkit, and regular communications to members (e.g. the quarterly New

Leaf eNewsletter). These initiatives enabled local community buy-in and identified barriers to scaling up adaptation and restoration effort in the Wet Tropics.

Under the Queensland Government Reef Assist program, the Authority commenced the second phase of the Atherton Tableland Riparian Revegetation Project in Malanda, Ngadjon-Jii Country—a new engagement with Choorechillum Prescribed Body Corporate. Through this project, the Noongyanbudda Rangers are conducting stream bank restoration on the Johnstone River and at Malanda Falls, to significantly reduce sediment flow to the Great Barrier Reef lagoon and improve biodiversity outcomes.



Wet Tropics Restoration Alliance member field day, Ngadjon-Jii Country—Wet Tropics Images

Yellow crazy ant eradication

The Authority continued to successfully deliver the Yellow Crazy Ant Eradication Program, funded by the Australian and Queensland governments under a Federal Funding Agreement 2018–2028, with funding committed to June 2026.

The Yellow Crazy Ant Eradication Program is nationally recognised as an exemplar in biosecurity management and has achieved the largest eradication of yellow crazy ants in the world to date—in 2024–25 the total area eradicated rose to 1,076.2ha (comprising rainforest, farmland and suburban areas south of Cairns). This included 354ha of forest (63.4 ha inside the Area and immediately adjacent to the Area), 377.2ha of sugarcane, and the greatest number of residential properties to be declared eradicated so far—approximately 1,665 properties covering 263.4ha.

The area under management is 2,111.5ha—half under broadscale treatment and half under transition surveys. The area under broadscale treatment includes 424.4 ha of new detections made in the 2024–25 reporting period in areas south of Cairns, some within the Area.

The Authority continued to share knowledge and expertise with other ant eradication and management teams across Queensland. The Authority maintains a data-sharing agreement with Townsville City Council for enhanced management of yellow crazy ant infestations, and is a member of the Townsville Yellow Crazy Ant Management Program (TYCAMP) Steering Committee. In June, the Authority hosted representatives of TYCAMP to share information and learnings.

Cross-agency collaboration to advance yellow crazy ant eradication efforts was achieved through the Whitsundays Taskforce, a multi-day event conducted in partnership with the Whitsundays Regional Council. Innovative technologies and research, including the use of drones to enhance the effectiveness of yellow crazy ant treatments and eDNA research, were showcased in an online presentation to the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry's Hitchhiker Pest Program.

The Authority supported five ranger training sessions with yellow crazy ant workshops, including the North Australian Indigenous Land and Sea Management Alliance Ltd, Gunggandji-Mandingalbay Yidinji Rangers, and Eastern Kuku Yalanji Rangers.

Community outreach remained a core focus. Awareness was increased and partnerships created through events such as visits to local schools and industry engagements. Contract negotiations and extensions ensured ongoing arrangements with Kuranda Envirocare, North Queensland Land Management Services, as well as odour-detection support through Credible Canines. The research partnership with James Cook University continued, providing valuable data through experiments and supporting ongoing research including eDNA, ecosystem recovery and ecological process trials.



The Authority's Yellow Crazy Ant Eradication Program team working in the field in Goldsborough Valley, Wooroonooran National Park, Dulabed Country—Wet Tropics Images

In June 2025, an independent review of the Yellow Crazy Ant Eradication Program concluded that eradication of yellow crazy ants within and adjacent to the Area in the Cairns region remains technically feasible and in the national interest. The review found that eradication will be achieved subject to ongoing funding and resourcing capability, albeit taking longer and requiring additional funding due to recent detections south of Cairns. The review panel cited evidence indicating significant progress towards eradication of yellow crazy ants within and adjacent to the Area.

Threatened species recovery

The Authority's 2023–24 State of Wet Tropics report highlighted the escalating threats to the Area, particularly from climate change, invasive species, and habitat degradation. The report emphasised the urgent need for increased resources, targeted management interventions, and strategic collaborative efforts to safeguard the Area's World Heritage values. It also called for enhanced monitoring of endangered species and habitats, as well as immediate action to address pressures on upland rainforest ecosystems and other critical refugia.

The Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water's (DCCEEW) Threatened Species Action Plan 2022–2032 identifies the approximately 105,000 km^2 Eastern Forests of Far North Queensland (which the Area is central to) as a priority place for threatened species and ecological community recovery. In 2023–24, an expert workshop of key scientists and land managers recognised rainforest highlands (above 800m) as the ecological community with the greatest conservation significance and identified its key threats. Wet sclerophyll and freshwater ecosystems were also recognised as high-priority ecosystems. Building on this, the Authority facilitated online workshops to identify threats to wet sclerophyll and freshwater ecosystems (July 2024), and an in-person workshop to prioritise management responses for wet sclerophyll (October 2024). In March 2025, the Authority facilitated an online workshop to prioritise management responses for the rainforest highlands. Outputs from this workshop supported the formal nomination (by the South Endeavour Trust, supported by the Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) and other stakeholders and experts) of the highland rainforests of the Wet Tropics as a Threatened Ecological Community under the *Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act)—a major step toward recognition and protection. If accepted, this will recognise that the community as a whole, not just some species, is threatened and should be considered for assessment and conservation measures. In supporting the priority place approach and identifying threats and management priorities, the Authority and its SAC work with a wide range of experts and partners including from James Cook University, Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service and Partnerships (QPWS&P), the Australian Tropical Herbarium, South Endeavour Trust and other institutions, alongside regional natural resource management organisations (Terrain NRM, Cape York NRM, Gulf Savannah NRM, and NQ Dry Tropics).

Threatened species recovery teams prioritise and coordinate actions to support threatened species, an initiative supported by DCCEEW. The Authority participated in meetings for the northern bettong (three meetings), mahogany glider (two meetings) and spectacled flying-fox (five meetings) recovery teams and, as secretariat, hosted three meetings for the Southern Cassowary Recovery Team. Authority staff supported the recruitment process of a paid coordinator for the Spectacled Flying-fox Recovery Team and contributed to the Northern Bettong Recovery Team by facilitating communication with DCCEEW on critical issues.

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

Embedding an Indigenous rights-based approach

The Wet Tropics Management Authority (the Authority) continued to embed a rights-based approach across all aspects of our work, ensuring the rights and interests of Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples are at the forefront of our programs and activities. Building on last year's all-staff workshop, which explored the principles of a rights-based approach and its practical application, we continued to strengthen cultural competency across the organisation, for example, by engaging early and more frequently with groups impacted by proposed activities. This enabled staff to embed these principles into their daily work and decision-making processes.

The Authority's governance arrangements reflect this commitment, with Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples appointed to our Board and our advisory committees. Our Indigenous Advisory Committee (IAC) (established in partnership with Terrain NRM) plays a pivotal role in ensuring the meaningful involvement of Traditional Owners in relevant projects and initiatives. This has been achieved through a range of actions, including establishing working groups to provide cultural oversight and direction on specific projects, engaging cultural advisors to review content, undertaking face-to-face engagement, implementing project co-design processes, and providing opportunities for input into key publications such as the State of Wet Tropics report. Through its work, the IAC plays a vital role in embedding Indigenous leadership and knowledge into the region's management.

These efforts underscore the Authority's dedication to ensuring Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples' voices are heard and respected in all that we do.

Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples' Regional Forum

The Authority facilitated the 2025 Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples' Regional Forum (the Regional Forum) from 10–12 June on Eastern Kuku Yalanji and Djabugay Nation Country in Port Douglas. The Regional Forum brought together over 50 Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples and 50 government representatives, stakeholders, and partners to reflect on 20 years of progress since the signing of the Wet Tropics of Queensland Regional Agreement (the Regional Agreement) and to identify future priorities.

Key themes included:

- Caring for Country and people—discussions highlighted the growth of Indigenous Ranger programs, cultural heritage management, and restoration projects, emphasising the integration of traditional knowledge with scientific research.
- Future tourism and economic development—successful Indigenous-led tourism ventures were showcased, highlighting opportunities for economic growth while maintaining cultural integrity.
- Strengthening partnerships—updates on agreement-making frameworks and culturally responsive planning underscored the need for stronger partnerships and recognition of Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples' leadership.
- Empowering future leaders—capacity-building initiatives, such as governance support and language revival, were identified as critical for self-sufficiency and cultural preservation.

The Regional Forum celebrated achievements including increased involvement of Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples in decision-making for the Wet Tropics, such as through positions on the Boards of both the Authority and Terrain NRM. Challenges such as infrastructure gaps, equitable resource access, and government failure to deliver on agreed commitments were acknowledged.

The Regional Forum reaffirmed the enduring significance of the Regional Agreement and concluded with a collective commitment to build on past progress while addressing future challenges to realise Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples aspirations for Country and community.

Positive wellbeing and livelihood outcomes

The Authority remains committed to fostering positive wellbeing and livelihood outcomes for Indigenous communities through ongoing support for Rainforest Aboriginal groups and their priorities. This commitment was demonstrated through participation in initiatives such as the Queensland Tourism Industry Council's Destination IQ conference, which focused on advancing Indigenous tourism opportunities.

The Authority prioritises collaborative approaches that empower Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples and promote sustainable management of Country. In collaboration with Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service and Partnerships (QPWS&P) and various Aboriginal corporations, the Authority supported the start of discussions led by QPWS&P to determine pathways to enable Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples to care for Country within the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area (the Area). These discussions aim to strengthen partnerships and ensure culturally informed management practices that respect and incorporate Traditional Owner knowledge and aspirations.

The Authority is proud to partner with projects that empower Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples, celebrate their cultural heritage, and contribute to sustainable livelihoods. A significant milestone was achieved in November 2024 with the launch of the Rainforest People Country Culture interactive story map. This innovative project, developed in partnership with SharingStories Foundation and Traditional Owners from nine Rainforest Aboriginal groups, celebrates the National Heritage-listed Indigenous cultural values of the Area through storytelling. Featuring 10 powerful videos, this informative and engaging map highlights the deep connections Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples have to Country. It provides a resource for Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples, the local community, the tourism industry and visitors to better appreciate these connections.



Tammy Choolburra in the Coming to our Country video featured on the Rainforest People Country Culture story map, Warrgamay Country—Wet Tropics Images

A steering committee guided the project to ensure cultural safety and the protection of Indigenous cultural and intellectual property. The Authority acknowledges the invaluable contributions of the committee members and honours the legacies of the late Gudju Gudju and Aunty Betty Cashmere, whose voices and stories continue to inspire.

Supported by Australian Government funding, the interactive story map incorporates the 'Ancient Guardians' artwork by Beau Pennefather Motlop, which is central to the visual identity of the map as well as the new Wet Tropics Visual Identity Style Guide.

Research protocols for work on Country

The Application for Research Endorsement (ARE) process, developed by the Authority in collaboration with QPWS&P, is a critical mechanism to ensure that researchers seek free prior and informed consent from the appropriate Traditional Owners before undertaking research on QPWS&P-managed estate within the Area. Designed to facilitate early and effective engagement, the ARE process aims to ensure research activities align with the cultural values, priorities and protocols of Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples.

The ARE process remains a work in progress with ongoing efforts to strengthen its integration into management frameworks and agreements, ensuring that Traditional Owners are not only consulted but are active participants in decisions about research on their Country. The Authority, QPWS&P and Rainforest

Aboriginal groups work together to broaden understanding of the process and refine its application. This collaborative approach ensures research activities on Country respect cultural heritage, support Traditional Owner aspirations, and contribute to the sustainable management of the Wet Tropics. At the Regional Forum, QPWS&P provided an update on the ongoing implementation of the ARE process.

Uphold and strengthen custodial relationships

The Authority's ongoing commitment to cultural stewardship, sustainable management, and the reconnection of Traditional Owners with their lands and waters was demonstrated through a number of collaborations and project deliveries.

The Eastern Kuku Yalanji (EKY) Return to Country project—funded by the Queensland Government and delivered through a partnership between the Authority and Jabalbina Yalanji Aboriginal Corporation RNTBC—made significant progress, with the production of a Community Development Plan (CDP) underway (to be finalised by 30 June 2026). The CDP will provide a clear and practical road map for EKY community members to return safely to live on, work on and care for Country. The project—which covers a study area twice the size of Hong Kong—models best practice in establishing a culturally-led participatory planning framework. It continues to break ground in delivering planning solutions to resolve the intersection of Australian, state and local government legal frameworks, and in contributing to achieving EKY return to Country aspirations while protecting the Outstanding Universal Value of the Area. The project supports the reactivation of cultural stewardship activities and has championed the establishment of cultural governance frameworks to enable exclusive use lease arrangements to be issued over communal native lands for home ownership. The Department of the Environment, Tourism, Science and Innovation made a further contribution of $680,000, for the 2025-26 financial year, for ongoing work to finalise the CDP and to facilitate precinct planning for fast-track housing delivery across Cook, Douglas and Wujal Wujal shires.

The Authority supported cultural and ecological burns in EKY Country, including areas around George's Yard in the Daintree, and facilitated the recruitment of rangers under the Choorechillum Prescribed Body Corporate agreement.

The Authority collaborated with the Australian World Heritage Advisory Committee's Cultural Values Working Group, contributing to the development of frameworks to strengthen the recognition of cultural values in World Heritage management.



Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples' Regional Forum 2025, Eastern Kuku Yalanji and Djabugay Nation Country—Wet Tropics Images

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

Awareness and engagement

The Wet Tropics Management Authority's (the Authority) biennial Cassowary Awards—the only awards program in Australia dedicated to recognising community contributions to World Heritage management—celebrated its 20th edition in September 2024. Nine awards were presented to individuals and organisations who have contributed to conserving, protecting and raising awareness of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area (the Area). This milestone event included new branding, refreshed award categories and an expanded promotional campaign, resulting in increased award nominations.

The Authority actively engaged with the Wet Tropics community through participation in key regional events, including Ecofiesta (Queensland's premier sustainability festival), Carnival on Collins (part of Cairns Festival), Rotary FNQ Field Days (the largest agricultural field days in Northern Australia), NAIDOC in the Park (a gathering showcasing the richness of First Nations culture), and the Malanda BioBlitz (an all-day biological study along the North Johnstone River).

Targeted youth engagement efforts included ongoing support for the Global Gifted Green program, which focuses on enhancing Year 5 students' skills and competencies using the United Nations Global Goals for Sustainable Development as a framework. Authority staff delivered presentations to primary and high schools, and participated in educational opportunities to raise awareness about the Area and the threat yellow crazy ants pose to it. To further engage young audiences, the Authority developed The Amazing Ants of the Wet Tropics Field Guide—a fun and free resource for children, which was featured in book readings at three libraries across the Cairns region.

The Authority attended the opening of Naturopolis (an outdoor learning space with cultural and scientific information displays at Whitfield State School), joined with teachers inspiring the next generation of conservationists at the end-of-year celebrations at Holloways Beach Environmental Education Centre, and celebrated the graduation of the Gunggandji-Mandingalbay Yindinji junior rangers (grade 10) in Yarrabah. The Authority also promoted and participated in the launch events of two books exploring the legacy of two passionate conservationists who helped protect the World Heritage Area (Peter Hitchcock and John Busst).

Supporting Rainforest Aboriginal groups with digital storytelling saw Authority staff sharing their skills with Gunggandji-Mandingalbay Yindinji Rangers, Jabalbina Yalanji Aboriginal Corporation, and Noongyanbudda Ngadjon Rangers. The Authority's one-day workshop focuses on media training, discusses the importance of being a role model and key messaging, outlines equipment, and shares best practices, tips and tricks for taking good photos and creating engaging content. This opportunity was promoted at the Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples' Regional Forum as well as the Queensland Indigenous Land and Sea Junior Ranger Coordinator workshop in Cairns.

Community engagement activities undertaken by the Authority's Yellow Crazy Ant Eradication Program included participation in the 3rd Australian Biosecurity Symposium, delivering updates on the detection-to-eradication process for yellow crazy ants. Additionally, a speed talk on eDNA research conducted in collaboration with James Cook University was presented at the 2024 Australian Entomological Society Scientific Conference. The Authority's Eradication Program also engaged with the next generation of scientists by delivering three lectures and workshops to University of Queensland students.

A range of media releases were distributed throughout the year to raise the profile of the Area and the Authority's work, generating positive coverage across TV, radio, print and online media outlets, with interviews featuring Authority representatives. These included the launch of resources such as the Rainforest People Country Culture story map, The Amazing Ants of the Wet Tropics Field Guide, and the State of Wet Tropics report 2023–24. Other notable announcements included the appointment of new

Board Directors Michael Nelson and Natassia Wheeler, the eradication of yellow crazy ants from Bentley Park, Reef Assist partnerships, and the 20th Cassowary Awards.

The Authority also maintained a strong social media presence, engaging with over 15,000 followers across Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and YouTube. Additionally, quarterly editions of the Wet Tropics eNewsletter were distributed to more than 1,000 subscribers, achieving open and click rates well above industry averages.



Media training with the Gunggandji-Mandingalbay Yindinji Rangers, Gunggandji Country—Wet Tropics Images

Our statutory and non-statutory committees

The Authority continued to engage with its advisory committees who play a critical role in providing diverse perspectives and expertise to guide the Authority's work in protecting and managing the Area.

The Community Consultative Committee (CCC) welcomed eight new members during a mid-term intake in June. They represent sectors such as restoration, local government, conservation, education, cultural heritage, land management, traditional ecological practices and tourism, and include two Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples.

The CCC met three times in this reporting period—meetings focussed on fire management within the Area (involving participation by Queensland Fire and Emergency Services and Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service and Partnerships), input to inform more effective public consultation processes for visitor infrastructure projects within the Area, community perspectives on the implementation of adaptive management measures, and how the Authority can better engage with the Wet Tropics community through different forms of educational content and collateral. Members highlighted priority areas to guide future meetings including ecological impacts of natural disasters, invasive species management, tourism and ecotourism, climate change and advocacy, community engagement and education, and their key areas of interest. Members gained insight into the Scientific Advisory Committee's (SAC) critical work regarding landscape resilience and recovery of the Eastern Forests of Far North Queensland priority place, with the aim of contributing community views to the prioritisation process.

The SAC also met three times, including for workshops related to the Eastern Forests of Far North Queensland priority place. These were attended by external experts and focused on identifying threats and management response priorities for high-priority ecosystems to make them more resilient to climate change. The SAC also focussed on the Tropical Cyclone Jasper recovery.

The SAC also supported South Endeavour Trust's nomination of highland rainforests (above 800m) of the Wet Tropics as a Threatened Ecological Community under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act). Due to the age of the rainforest and natural climate fluctuations over millennia, highland rainforests have acted as natural climate refugia for many unique species. Data from more than 30 years of research indicates a decline in these species, prompting scientists to rank the highland rainforests as the most threatened ecological community in the Wet Tropics, making it a high priority for listing. The Authority held initial discussions with the Indigenous Advisory Committee (IAC) and Traditional Owner groups regarding the nomination.

In partnership with Terrain NRM, the Authority worked with the IAC to ensure the rights, interests, and priorities of Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples were embedded in plans, policies, and programs. Rainforest Aboriginal People's Country extends across the World Heritage Area and beyond into adjacent landscapes, and consistent culturally informed advice is critical for consistent sustainable outcomes for the biocultural region. The IAC convened three times this year, providing strategic advice on key initiatives, including resources on free prior and informed consent, data-sharing agreements, and access and benefit-sharing for Indigenous peoples. Out-of-session advice was also sought on additional matters.

The IAC provided feedback to inform activities under the Partnership Agreement (2024–2029) between the Authority and the Department of Environment, Tourism, Science and Innovation (DETSI) and guided planning for the 2025 Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples' Regional Forum. Ensuring meaningful involvement of Traditional Owners remained a core priority, with the IAC providing input into the Wet Tropics Planned Burn Guidelines, the DETSI Environmental Recovery Program, and projects such as Forest Resilience and the Spectacled Flying-fox. The committee also emphasised ethical standards and intellectual property protection when working with Traditional Owners.

Through its work, the IAC continues to foster partnerships, support Traditional Owners, and ensure Indigenous leadership in the sustainable management of the Wet Tropics of Queensland World Heritage Area.

The CCC, IAC and SAC held their first joint meeting and engaged in detailed deliberations to develop advice for the Authority's Board, and guide committee actions that harmonise with the community, cultural and environmental needs in the Wet Tropics. All three committees provided useful feedback on the State of Wet Tropics report and suggested communication strategies to promote this key information.



Celebrating the Young Cassowary Award nominees at the 20th Cassowary Awards, Djabugay Country—Wet Tropics Images

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

Presenting the Wet Tropics

Presenting the values of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area (the Area) is a key obligation for the Wet Tropics Management Authority (the Authority) under the World Heritage Convention and a deliverable of the Wet Tropics Sustainable Tourism Plan 2021–31 (WTST Plan). This year, on-ground presentation was a focus.

In collaboration with Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service and Partnerships, the Authority supported capital works projects for new and existing visitor facilities, ensuring interpretative products reflected the Area's unique natural and cultural values. Key activities included:

- **Wangetti Trail signage**—featuring World Heritage interpretation, key messages, and regulatory notices.
- **Welcome and orientation signage**—installed at Mossman Gorge, Jindalba boardwalk, and Kulki (Cape Tribulation) as part of the Daintree National Park (CYPAL) interpretative framework.
- **Lake Eacham interpretative framework**—highlighting the site's natural and cultural values.

The finalisation of the Wet Tropics of Queensland World Heritage Area Visual Identity Style Guide (VISG) was a significant milestone. This guide ensures consistent messaging across the Area, strengthening its identity and elevating its World Heritage status locally, nationally, and internationally.

Informed by the VISG, a new Wet Tropics World Heritage Area identity column was designed for phased installation at key visitor sites as part of the Department of the Environment, Tourism, Science and Innovation's (DETSI) World Heritage Enhanced Interpretation and Signage Project. Planning progressed to identify priority locations at key visitor sites, with consultation underway with Rainforest Aboriginal groups to secure cultural endorsement.

These initiatives demonstrate the Authority's commitment to its World Heritage obligations and the WTST Plan, enhancing the Area's presentation and fostering appreciation of its universal value.

Wet Tropics World Heritage Guides

In partnership with DETSI, and Tourism and Events Queensland (TEQ), the Authority advanced development of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Guides (WTWHG)—a free, self-paced online course designed for people passionate about sharing the unique natural and cultural values of the Area. The program aims to enhance the professionalism and capability of guides at all levels of the tourism industry, ensuring visitors leave with a deeper appreciation of this globally significant landscape.

WET TROPICS
WORLD HERITAGE GUIDES
A QUEENSLAND GUIDE PROGRAM

Wet Tropics World Heritage Guides logo

Recognising the wide variety of roles contributing to the visitor experience, the WTWHG includes three levels of attainment—Guardian, Defender and Champion. The WTWHG adopts a staged implementation approach, with the first five online learning modules covering the Guardian and Defender courses already completed, the remaining Champion-level training, in development, will include additional online modules and a practical assessment, complemented by professional development opportunities such as face-to-face learning.

Subject matter experts and targeted stakeholder engagement informed development of the WTWHG. Rainforest Aboriginal advisors provided cultural oversight of the Respect Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples, Country and culture learning module, ensuring content was appropriate, respectful and accurate.

Coordinated communications were enacted across all partner and stakeholder channels to support a 1 July 2025 launch, including an industry activation at Tourism Tropical North Queensland's (TTNQ) My Queensland TNQ Tourism Conference on 4 June.

Industry engagement

To advance the implementation of the WTST Plan, the Authority promoted key priorities, enhanced its profile, and strengthened relationships with the tourism industry and other stakeholders. This was achieved through engagement in various high-profile advisory initiatives, workshops, events, and activities. Highlights include representation on the Tropical North Queensland (TNQ) Indigenous Experiences Cluster Group committee and progressing relevant actions under the TNQ First Nations Tourism Action Plan, supporting Cassowary Coast's successful submission to become an Eco-certified Destination, contributing to the Queensland Government's 20-year tourism plan (Destination 2045), participating in a TEQ workshop exploring the establishment of a tour guide community of practice, and attending TTNQ member networking functions and major tourism industry events including TEQ's Global Market Briefing and the My Queensland TNQ Tourism Conference.



Lake Eacham—Tourism and Events Queensland

The Authority continued to participate in expert state and national working groups focused on tourism in protected areas and World Heritage presentation. This participation extends to Australia's Tourism and Parks Agencies Forum—a national collaboration aimed at enhancing environmental, social, and economic benefits for the community, industry, and government.

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

Community Services Infrastructure and activities

The Wet Tropics Management Authority (the Authority) is responsible for minimising impacts on the Wet Tropics of Queensland World Heritage Area (the Area) under the *Wet Tropics World Heritage Management and Protection Act 1993*. The Authority collaborates with Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples, landowners, tourism operators, government departments, and other stakeholders to balance the protection of the Area's Outstanding Universal Value with the need for suitable development and infrastructure. The Authority also supports appropriate private land use and Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples' aspirations to live and work on Country.

During this reporting period, 15 permits were issued, comprising five maintenance permits and 10 project permits. Maintenance permits were granted to Charters Towers Regional Council, Douglas Shire Council, Hinchinbrook Shire Council, Miles Electronics and Queensland Police Service. The project permits included works such as road rebuilds and widening by Douglas Shire Council, fish stocking at Koombooloomba Dam, Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements road remediation by the Department of Transport and Main Roads (TMR), Phase B works for the Kuranda Weir rebuild by CleanCo, road stabilisation by Cairns Regional Council, decommissioning of a 66kV line by Ergon Energy, and several infrastructure works by Cook Shire Council and TMR.

Pre-lodgement meetings were held for all approved project permits, as well as for proposed works including CleanCo's Phase C project, Mount Spec Road works (TMR), Powerlink's tower decommissioning on Lake Morris Road, and the Noah Creek Bridge project. To ensure environmental obligations were being met by the various organisations conducting works, regular site audits were conducted and project and maintenance Environmental Management Plans were reviewed.

Tropical Cyclone Jasper and the North and Far North Tropical Low flooding events caused widespread damage to infrastructure across the Area. More details on the permitting actions undertaken to support this response are outlined in Strategy 1.



Inspecting landslide stabilisation works on the Kuranda Railway following extreme rainfall events, Djabugay Country— Wet Tropics Images

Guidelines, zoning, planning and policies

The Wet Tropics Zoning Map under the Wet Tropics Management Plan 1998, was maintained and refreshed. Administrative changes were made to the zoning map to correct errors and better reflect existing infrastructure.

A guideline was finalised to inform decision-making under the Wet Tropics Management Plan regarding limited and developed visitor infrastructure. This guideline will ensure that activities align with the protection of World Heritage values.

The Authority provided input into Australian, state and local government legislation, policy, statutory planning documents and strategies to ensure alignment with the values and legislative requirements of the Area. This included advocating for the protection of the Area's Outstanding Universal Value in the context of these broader legislative and policy frameworks.

The Authority continues to connect with the government, legal and planning communities to raise awareness of the values of the Area and the international obligation to manage them.



Landslide on Mount Spec Road, Nywaigi Country—
Supplied: Department of Transport and Main Roads

Strategy 6 — A healthy organisation

People, planning and partnerships

The Wet Tropics Management Authority (the Authority) demonstrated its commitment to a healthy organisation through support to our staff, robust planning processes, effective implementation, and comprehensive reporting. A focus on capacity building was evident through the support to staff performance and development plans (PDPs) to support growth and professional development, alongside improvements to the induction process for new staff, including updated materials and streamlined onboarding systems.

The Authority upheld high standards across our organisation and functions with a continued focus on Work Health and Safety (WH&S) and ensuring alignment of all the Authority's work with Human Rights obligations and Federation Funding Agreement commitments. WH&S reviews were conducted to maintain a safe and supportive work environment. Collaboration with key external partners remained central, with the finalisation of the 2024–2029 Partnership Agreement with the Department of the Environment, Tourism, Science and Innovation (DETSI) to strengthen joint efforts on shared priorities. Staff engagement was also prioritised, with responses to the Working for Queensland survey addressing areas for improvement and celebrating positive outcomes to foster a motivated workforce.



Part of the Wet Tropics Management Authority team, Gimuy Walubara Yidinji and Yirrganydji Country—Wet Tropics Images

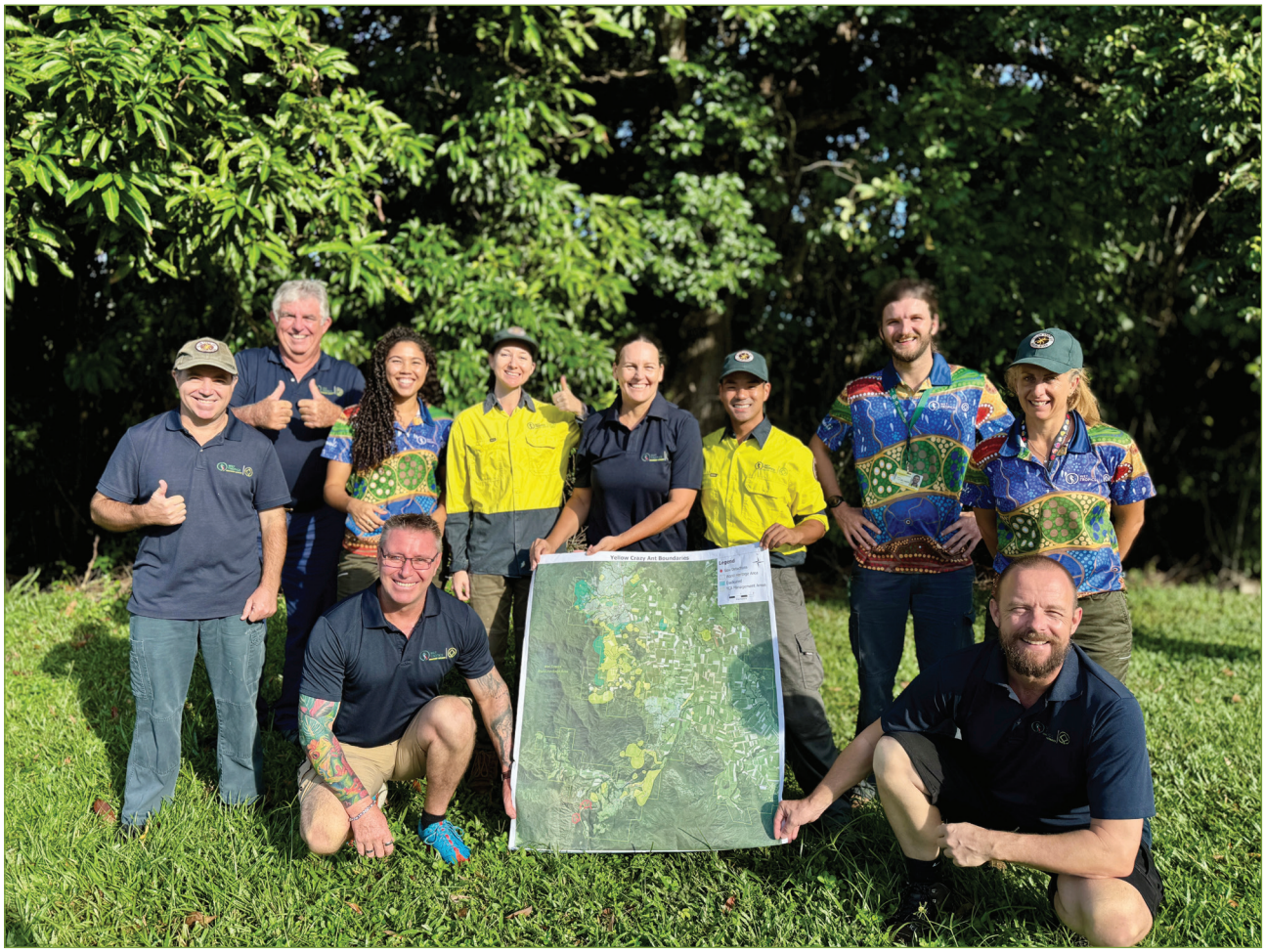
Focus on culture: continuing to grow a respectful workplace

Authority staff further refined the principles they see as central to workplace culture, developing a new values statement:

Our values (RICE)

- **Respect**—we treat everyone with fairness, dignity, and kindness, fostering a safe, inclusive, and supportive environment that values diversity.
- **Integrity**—we act with honesty, transparency, and responsibility, consistently honouring our commitments and building trust through our actions.
- **Collaboration and empowerment**—we work together to achieve shared goals, supporting and valuing each other's contributions, encouraging growth, and celebrating success.

These values will be embedded into daily activities and practices through a set of behaviours. For example, these values will make up part of staff inductions, form the basis of formal and informal staff interactions such as meetings and planning days, be integrated into PDPs and terms of reference for internal working groups and teams.



The Authority's Yellow Crazy Ant Eradication Program celebrate eradications from rainforest, farmland and suburban areas south of Cairns—Wet Tropics Images

Financial overview 2024–25

The Authority recorded a deficit of $61,000 for the 2024–25 reporting period which represents an improvement on previous year's results by $37,000.

Wet Tropics Management Authority finances

Total expenditure $12.529 million was marginally greater than revenue received $12.468 million due to externally funded projects revenue being received in prior years with expenditure occurring in 2024–25.

Underlying revenue

The Authority recognised a decrease of $666,000 in revenue stream primarily due to unspent 2022–23 funds being carried forward to 2023–24. Refer to Table 1 for breakdown of sources.

Table 1: Wet Tropics Management Authority operating statement

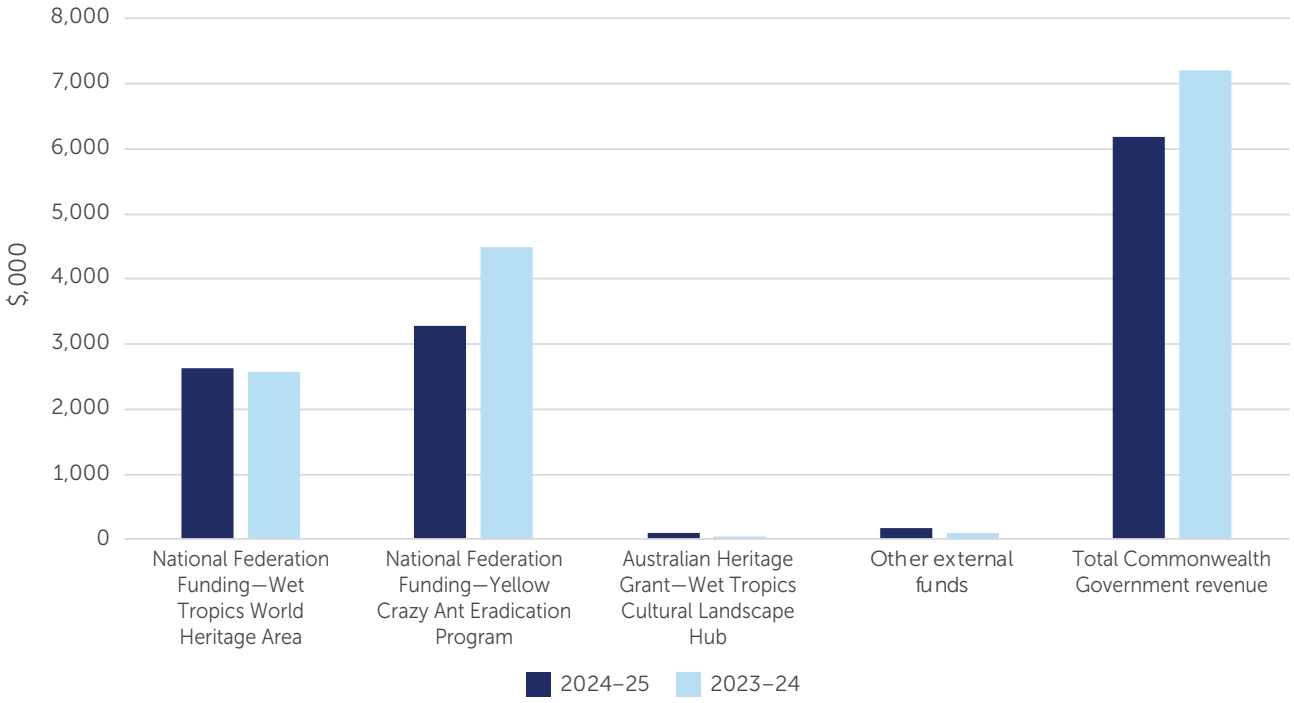
Controlled revenue and expenses	2024–25	2023–24
Revenue	**$,000**	**$,000**
Revenue from government		
Payments for outputs	6,286	5,927
Subtotal government revenue	**6,286**	**5,927**
Own source revenue		
Grants and other contributions*	6,002	7,109
Other revenue	180	98
Subtotal own source revenue	**6,182**	**7,207**
Total revenue	**12,468**	**13,134**
Expenses	**$,000**	**$,000**
Operating expenses		
Wet Tropics Management Authority	12,505	13,194
Subtotal operating expenses	**12,505**	**13,194**
Non-operating expenses		
Depreciation	24	14
Asset write-downs/loss on disposal		24
Subtotal non-operating expenses	**24**	**38**
Total expenses	**12,529**	**13,232**
Operating result	**-61^**	**-98**

* Commonwealth funding provided to the Authority is recorded as Commonwealth Appropriation paid via Queensland Treasury. For transparency purposes, these payments are reflected as "own source revenue". Any funding unspent at the end of the financial year is returned to the Authority in the next financial year for allocation to expenditure.

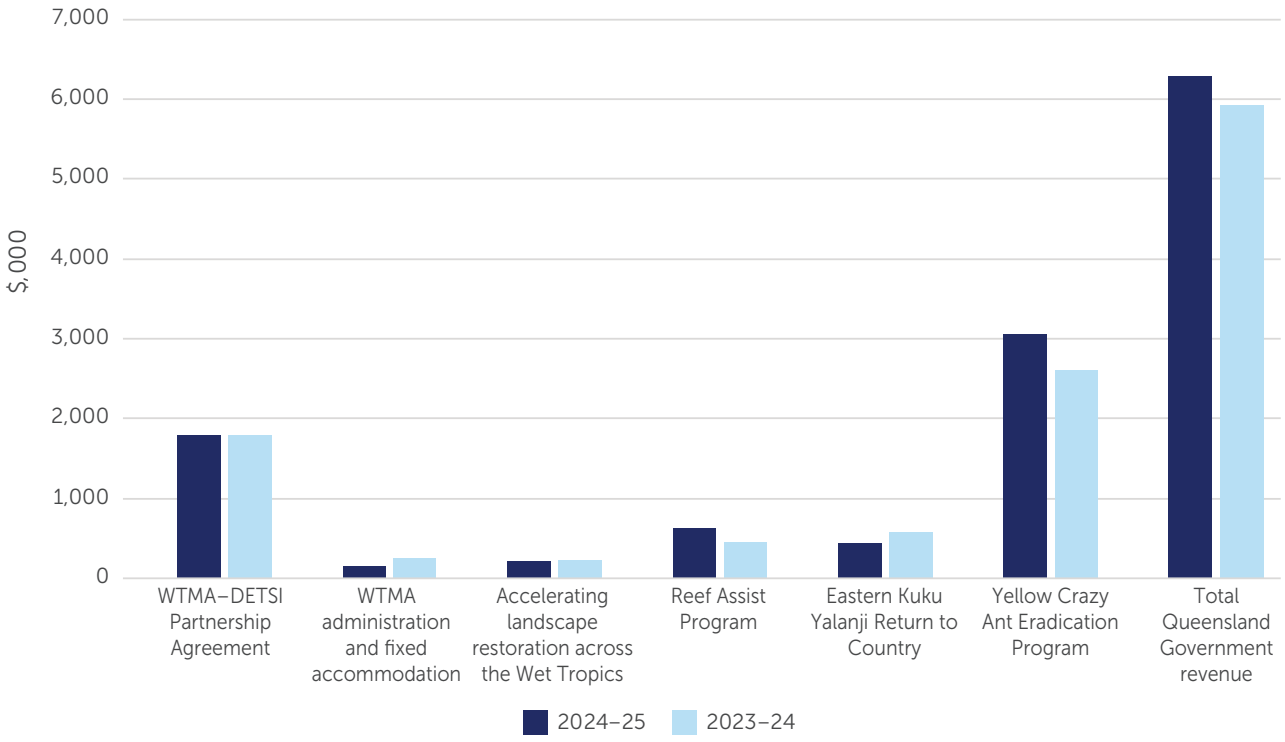
^ Reported deficit is a result of actual expenditure against Commonwealth and external funding (own source) exceeding total revenue for the reportable financial year. Unspent Commonwealth and external funds from the previous financial year are reallocated to the Authority for the following year expenditure.

Figure 1: Commonwealth and Queensland government revenue streams

Commonwealth Government revenue



Queensland Government revenue



The total Queensland Government contribution to the WTMA–DETSI Partnership Agreement is provided to Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service and Partnerships (QPWS&P) through DETSI in accordance with the Partnership Agreement.

Table 2: Wet Tropics Management Authority capital spend

Capital budget

Capital budget	2024–25	2023–24
Funding	**$,000**	**$,000**
Funding from government	–	12
Grants and other contributions*	62	31
Total funding	**62**	**43**
Capital acquisitions	**$,000**	**$,000**
Total expenditure	**62**	**43**

* Commonwealth funding provided to the Authority.

As a result of property damage caused by Tropical Cyclone Jasper, the Authority needed to replace a capital asset—a customised canopy and tray unit designed for transporting the Yellow Crazy Ant Eradication Program's odour-detection dogs.

Expenses

The Authority reported an operating expenditure of $12.529 million for the 2024–25 reporting period. Half (50%) of the total expenditure was allocated to employee-related expenses, including salaries, allowances, travel, training and development, and associated network/IT costs.

The second largest single expenditure, after employee related expenses, is the funds acquitted to QPWS&P for the delivery of the WTMA–QPWS Partnership Agreement, which equates to 14% of the total expenses. The 'other expenses' category represented 9.7% of the total expenditure, covering costs such as aircraft hire, analytical expertise provided by James Cook University for the Yellow Crazy Ant Eradication Program, and services from external providers for the delivery of the Landscapes Restoration Program.

Future risks to the Authority's budget are expected to intensify as employee-related expenses continue to grow under the enterprise bargaining agreement, with projected increases of approximately 2.5% to 3% per annum. This will significantly strain the budget, leaving minimal capacity for essential corporate overheads (such as board remunerations, statutory committee meetings, regional forums, Yellow Crazy Ant Eradication Program operational costs) with any remaining funds tightly allocated to project deliverables.

Table 3: Wet Tropics Management Authority expenditure

Expenses

Expenses			2024–25
Category	**Description**	**Total $,000**	**Percentage**
Employee related expenses	Employee related expenses	5,881	50%
	Travel	120	
	Training and development	69	
	Network and computer	222	
Corporate costs	Motor vehicles and vessels	275	7%
	Telephone and fax	21	
	Accommodation and related	528	
	Repairs and maintenance	20	

Expenses			2024–25
Operational costs	Consumables	82	43%
	Contingent labour	–	
	Grants and subsidies	681	
	Legal expenses	10	
	Low value assets	30	
	Other expenses	1,218	
	WTMA–QPWS Partnership Agreement	1,800	
	Outsourced service delivery	1,548	
Depreciation and write offs	Depreciation and amortisation	24	0%
	Write offs	–	
	Total expenses	**12,529**	**100%**

Financial management and information systems

As a statutory body, the Authority's overall fiscal transactions are incorporated into the Department of the Environment, Tourism, Science and Innovation (DETSI) financial statement for 2024–25. The full-time equivalent (FTE) data of Authority staff is included in the financial statements for DETSI employee expenses.

Internal and external audit

Internal audit is a key component of the Authority's corporate governance. The Authority adopts a systematic and disciplined approach to evaluate and improve the effectiveness of risk management, internal controls, and governance. This approach safeguards the Director-General of DETSI in discharging their responsibilities as set out in section 78 (1) of the *Financial Accountability Act 2009*.

The Authority must be compliant and meet its obligations by ensuring the operations of its business group are carried out efficiently, effectively, and economically. The Authority is subject to DETSI's controlled self-assessment process and internal audits, in conjunction with external requests from the Queensland Audit Office.

Information systems and record keeping

Information is a critical asset enabling the Authority to deliver its services effectively, efficiently, and consistently. Data integrity, management and security through proprietary systems support all aspects of the Authority's operations. The Authority complies with the *Public Records Act 2023*, *Public Sector Act 2022*, and the Queensland State Archives Records Governance Policy 2019, and keeps complete and accurate records of its activities.

The Authority abides by the DETSI suite of records management and governance policies which define the expectations of staff in the day-to-day management of its records by:

- documenting decision-making and actions
- mitigating exposure to risk
- safeguarding the Authority's history and knowledge.

The Authority maintains additional critical information systems to support its services, including:

- administrative records are retained securely and disposed of appropriately, in accordance with the Queensland Government's General records and disposal schedule
- an online mapping system to define the statutory zoning map for the Wet Tropics Management Plan 1998 (the Management Plan). The system also supports interpretive information that assists Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples to understand this zoning in relation to their own Native Title interests. It allows boundary maintenance of the Area in Queensland Globe to ensure that these resources are available to the public and can be used with other state and local government mapping

- a comprehensive database to maintain accurate records of permit applications assessed and granted under the Management Plan
- the whole-of-government SAP (systems, applications and processes) data management tool for financial performance management and Aurion for human resource management.

The Authority collects a great deal of information while undertaking surveys, research, and treatment activities for the Yellow Crazy Ant Eradication Program. This data is used—along with data from other sources such as Queensland Spatial Catalogue and industry partners including MSF Sugar—to evaluate the effectiveness of program activities, to guide decision-making, and to create visual products like digital and paper maps.

The functionality of the field data collection system is configured on ESRI's ArcGIS Online and ArcGIS Pro systems, aligning with DETSI, Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, Department of Resources, and others. This facilitates collaboration with other government agencies and program partners.

As a statutory body, the Authority complies with DETSI information security requirements and is incorporated into the department's preparation and lodgement of the Information Security Annual Return.

Integrated services through robust governance practices

Public sector ethics

The Authority's staff are public sector employees and are bound by the *Public Sector Act 2022*, the *Public Sector Ethics Act 1994*, and the Code of Conduct for the Queensland Public Service (the code of conduct).

The code of conduct requires Authority staff to:

- act with integrity and impartiality by being honest, fair, and respectful, and ensuring decisions are unprejudiced, unbiased, and just
- promote the public good when delivering the programs and services that benefit the people of Queensland
- commit to the system of government with respect for government and its institutions and by upholding the law
- be accountable and transparent when taking responsible action and making decisions that can be explained and easily understood.

The DETSI Workforce Relations and Integrity team provides general advice to the Authority on a variety of issues including the code of conduct, ethical dilemmas, conflict of interest and other employment issues. Its objective is to support and promote a culture of integrity and accountability. This team also investigates and reports misconduct and corruption, liaises with the Crime and Corruption Commission Queensland and leads public interest disclosure protection.

The DETSI Workforce Strategy and Capability team supports the Authority through their oversight of the department's integrity framework and their focus on fraud and corruption prevention.

Education and training

The Authority continues to build a strong and accountable workforce by ensuring high ethical standards and values, and adherence to the code of conduct. Every new employee completes the DETSI Corporate Induction Program as well as the Authority's induction training. Ongoing staff undertake mandatory annual refreshers in the code of conduct as well as emergency safety, fraud and corruption awareness, and information security and privacy awareness.

The Yellow Crazy Ant Eradication Program is delivered in a higher-risk environment which includes extensive field work in rugged terrain, handling of chemicals, flying drones and managing working dogs. This environment has a breadth and diversity of risks that the Authority mitigates through consistent, focused, high-quality training of public sector employees and seasonal labour hire workers. Additionally, thorough review and updates to their safety documentation is completed annually and regular workplace safety inspections are carried out to ensure the highest safety standard for staff.

In 2024–25, Authority staff undertook a wide range of training including cultural awareness, unconscious bias, Indigenous rights-based approach, procurement, disability awareness, and domestic and family violence. First

aid training (standard and CPR) form part of the regular annual skills updates. The Authority also invested in specialist capability development such as safety skills for working in remote areas with difficult access and lack of communications, and Certificate IV in Training and Assessment WH&S.

Procedures and practices

Under subdivision 4 of the *Public Sector Ethics Act 1994* and DETSI administrative procedures and management practices, the Authority must have proper regard to the values and principles of this Act. These are reflected in and implemented through the:

- human resource management policies, practices, and procedures
- organisational culture which includes a growth mindset, and policies addressing diversity and inclusion, commitment to end domestic and family violence, the *Human Rights Act 2019*, and respectful workplaces
- performance and capability including performance and development planning, reward and recognition, leadership capability and competencies framework.

Human rights

The Authority continues to build a workplace culture that clearly demonstrates its ongoing commitment to protect, respect and promote human rights. All new and reviewed policies, operational procedures, and decision-making frameworks of the Authority are checked to ensure that they reflect the principles and intent of Queensland's *Human Rights Act 2019* (the Human Rights Act) as a matter of practice.

In everyday practices across the Authority, and in the decisions of the Authority's Board of Directors (the Board), consideration is given to the impact of these actions on human rights. Over the course of the year, the Board makes many decisions that require assurance that the impact on human rights and the observation of the principles and intent of the Human Rights Act have been assessed and applied. The Board induction and annual governance training includes the Human Rights Act and discussion of its practical implications for the business of the Authority.

Since commencement of the Human Rights Act, the Authority has not received any human rights complaints and therefore has not needed to engage in complaints reporting under section 97(2)(b) of this Act.

Charter of Victims' Rights

In accordance with section 59 of the *Victims' Commissioner and Sexual Violence Review Board Act 2024*, government entities must disclose the total number of Charter of Victims' Rights complaints received by the government entity in the financial year. The Authority has received nil complaints.

An Indigenous rights-based approach

The Authority continues to be an organisation that supports employees and engages with partners and stakeholders with integrity, building trust. A key component is building understanding of what a rights-based approach looks like regarding the Authority's engagement and partnerships with Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples for the management of the World Heritage Area.

The Authority acknowledges Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples' distinctive and diverse spiritual, material and economic relationship with their traditional lands, waters, and other natural resources. The Authority works closely with Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples, applying a rights-based approach in the delivery of all its programs to ensure the rights and interests of Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples are reflected.

The Authority's induction process and ongoing training ensures staff are aware of obligations under the Human Rights Act, and the rights of Aboriginal Peoples and Torres Strait Islander Peoples as Australia's first peoples. Further opportunities for cultural capacity building are provided.

The Authority consults and cooperates in good faith with Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples, through their own representative bodies, to obtain their free, prior, and informed consent before adopting and implementing legislative or administrative measures that may affect them. This includes when undertaking projects that affect Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples' rights to land and resources, including access and benefit sharing and the utilisation of natural resources, and their Native Title rights as described in the *Native Title Act 1993* (Cwlth).

Governance—Human resources

Workforce profile

As of 27 June 2025, the Authority employed 50 staff members in both full-time and part-time roles resulting in a total of 48.1 full-time equivalent (FTE) positions. The following is a snapshot of the Authority's workforce profile based on DETSI's minimum obligatory human resource information (MOHRI) at that point in time.

Table 4: Occupation types by FTE

Occupation type	FTE	Percentage of total workforce
Corporate	9.0	18.7%
Frontline and frontline support	39.1	81.3%
Total	48.1	100.0%

Table 5: Appointment types by FTE

Appointment type	FTE	Percentage of total workforce
Permanent	39.1	81.3%
Temporary	8.0	16.6%
Contract	1.0	2.1%
Casual	0	0%
Total	48.1	100%

Table 6: Employment status by headcount

Employment status	Headcount	Percentage of total workforce
Full-time	44	88%
Part-time	6	12%
Casual	0	0%
Total	50	100%

Diversity, gender and women in senior leadership roles

The Authority supports inclusive and respectful workforces and aims for diversity in its workforce. The gender of the staff reflects this diversity, including people who identify as women, men and non-binary. As well as respecting diversity we also respect privacy as an important consideration in a small organisation.

The Authority has no Senior Officer roles in the Authority's structure, only one Senior Executive, and no Chief Executive roles. The Senior Executive is male, noting that 67% of manager level roles in the Authority are held by women.

The Authority's workforce data profile, including diversity and gender are reported in the DETSI Annual Report.

Strategic workforce planning and performance

April 2025 saw the first review and reporting on the Authority's 2024–28 Workforce Management Plan. On target were the annual review mechanisms, and initiatives towards building cultural competence, establishing of a staff development framework, and researching opportunities to build business capacity and agility.

The plan identifies a broad range of strategies and initiatives to be implemented over four years. They outline practical process reviews, digital development in collaboration and communication techniques

that strengthen an organisational culture in an online environment, and recruitment strategies that build a professional and diverse organisation reflecting the work of the Authority.

Over the past year, temporary backfilling (including of the Executive Director, Principal Advisor, Manager World Heritage Connections and Business Manager roles), required recruitment from as far away as Brisbane, with some operating remotely from the Cairns office locations. These placements varied from a few weeks to 12 months and have brought many new skills and ideas, and the connections made continue to deliver benefits through the expansion of networks across the department.

Leadership and management development

The Authority's managers and leaders have a vital role in delivering business outcomes and building the capabilities of staff. The development needs of managers focused on opportunities related to leadership skills in communication and their program specialisation. These were aligned to the whole-of-organisation commitment to implementing the professional development focus in their performance development plans. Professional development undertaken across the organisation over the past year has included plant recognition taxonomy through James Cook University, fire hazard mapping with Litoria Consulting and professional writing courses.

Maintaining up-to-date knowledge to support specialist expertise was also targeted through conference attendance, presentations, and workshops across key areas. Themes included approaches to conserving threatened species, climate change, national and global eco-tourism, and emerging environmental markets and economics.

Working for Queensland survey

The annual Working for Queensland survey is designed to explore employee perceptions of the workplace climate in areas such as employee engagement, job satisfaction and leadership in the public sector. The survey (undertaken in September with results provided in November) informs team discussions and management actions to acknowledge strengths and improve in the areas that need change.

The 2024 Working for Queensland survey results for the Authority highlight significant improvements in employee engagement and workplace culture. With a 69% response rate, key drivers of engagement included senior managers fostering an environment where employees feel heard (61% positive) and providing clear organisational direction (52% positive).

Our strengths

Notably, 88% of staff understand job expectations, and 70% would recommend the Authority as a great place to work. Psychological safety saw remarkable progress, with 83% of staff feeling comfortable sharing ideas and taking risks, while workgroup collaboration and support scored highly, with 94% of staff working together to manage workloads. Additionally, 94% of employees understand how their work contributes to the Authority's strategic objectives, and 93% value the organisation's flexible work culture.

Improvement focus for 2025

Professional development, while improved, still requires attention, with 42% of staff feeling positive about opportunities for growth. Similarly, discussions around mental health and wellbeing need strengthening, with 40% of staff reporting proactive conversations in their workgroups. Fair and equitable treatment also emerged as a focus area, with 53% of staff perceiving promotion decisions as transparent. To build on these results, the Authority aims to enhance professional development pathways, foster open dialogues on mental health and cultural safety, and ensure consistent recognition of employee contributions. These efforts will further solidify the Authority's commitment to a supportive, inclusive, and high-performing workplace.

Reward and recognition

Recognition of achievements is embedded in the Authority's organisational culture. Weekly staff meetings, team meetings, emails of acknowledgement from the Executive Director and staff across the Authority recognise personal and professional achievements within the organisation. PDP conversations ensure a

regular opportunity for supervisors and managers to recognise the achievements and contributions of their staff. Staff achievements are also shared on the DETSI intranet.

The Director-General (DG) of DETSI recognised the outstanding contributions by four of the Authority's staff for embedding safe and positive behaviours in everyday work practices, and the work done towards conserving Queensland's natural and cultural values.

- Jonathan Roth and Phillip Polden received a high commendation in the 2025 DG Safety Behaviour Awards in the category of Safety First. The DG recognised the digital take five risk assessment tool that has enhanced real time risk discussions and improved site safety ensuring field teams operate with greater efficiency and security.
- Alicia Haines and Kieren Sellars won a DETSI Excellence Award in 2024 for their work on the Rainforest People Country Culture story map.

The Authority celebrated the long-term service and commitment to the Queensland community and the conservation of the natural environment by five of their colleagues. Each had dedicated more than 25 years, and between them 137 years, in the Queensland public sector.

These practices build appreciation amongst colleagues and inform a respectful culture.

Employee health and wellbeing

The Authority is dedicated to cultivating a supportive workplace and demonstrates a strong commitment to staff health, safety and wellbeing—these are standing agenda items at fortnightly Management Forum meetings. With a focus on staff wellbeing, flexible working arrangements are encouraged and developed in consultation with managers. Practical in-office support for wellbeing and productivity includes the use of stand-up desks, multiple monitors and ergonomic workstations.

The Authority utilises risk management techniques and approaches, follows and adapts DETSI procedures, and engages in processes to identify, manage, and reduce risk, hazards, and work-related incidents. The SHINE (System for Hazard and Incident Notification and Evaluation) management system is a valued part of the safety culture and an effective monitoring and recording tool that provides comprehensive fortnightly reports for the Management Forum's review.

Annually in October, the Authority's natural disaster policy and procedures are reviewed and updated to ensure that staff are prepared, the offices and equipment are cyclone-ready, and communications are in place in case of any severe weather events. The cyclone season officially commences on 1 November each year.

Flexible working arrangements

Under the *Industrial Relations Act 2016*, employees may be able to access a range of flexible work arrangements. However, this is not an automatic right—many considerations need to be made.

Commonly implemented arrangements across the Authority include working part-time, working from an alternative office, working split hours to accommodate school pick-up arrangements, and working from home up to 50% of the agreed fortnightly hours.

The Authority has two main worksites: an office-based site, and an operations-based site. Flexible working arrangements are managed within teams and coordinated by site and vary according to work requirements. The Microsoft Teams environment, SharePoint collaboration features, whole-of-Authority email distribution lists and hot desks support communication and connectivity.

Industrial and employee relations framework

The Authority operates within the tenets of the DETSI industrial and employee relations frameworks under the *Industrial Relations Act 2016*. This Act provides a framework for fair, balanced, and co-operative industrial relations that includes a set of minimum employment conditions and standards, collective bargaining for setting wages, and individual rights to fair treatment. In addition, the *Public Sector Act 2022*, the Queensland Public Service Officers and Other Employees Award—State 2015, and the State

Government Entities Certified Agreement 2023 prescribe the arrangements and responsibilities specific to public sector employees.

Early retirement, redundance and retrenchment

No redundancy, early retirement, or retrenchment packages were paid during the reporting period.

Attachment 1—Wet Tropics Management Authority Board of Directors

Wet Tropics Management Authority Board of Directors	
Act or instrument	The Board's authority is prescribed in the *Wet Tropics World Heritage Protection and Management Act 1993* (the Queensland Act) and the Wet Tropics Management Plan 1998.
Functions	The Wet Tropics Management Authority (the Authority) was established to ensure Australia's obligation to the World Heritage Convention is met in relation to the Wet Tropics of Queensland World Heritage Area (the Area). The specific functions of the Authority are detailed in section 10 (1) of the Queensland Act. The Authority has a Board of Directors (the Board) that is responsible for the way in which the Authority performs its functions and exercises its powers. The specifics of the Board are detailed in divisions 2–5 of the Queensland Act.
Achievements	• Celebrated the 20th Cassowary Awards and recognised 9 deserving recipients of this prestigious award. • Worked with the Authority's Scientific Advisory Committee to hold workshops to prioritise values and management responses to help inform the management of the Eastern Forests of Far North Queensland Priority Place. • Approved the section 62 guideline on Limited and Developed Visitor Infrastructure, which provides guidance for the consideration of visitor infrastructure proposals under the Wet Tropics Management Plan 1998. • Appointed 8 new members to the Authority's Community Consultative Committee, including expertise across traditional ecological knowledge, on-ground management, cultural heritage, restoration, tourism, conservation, local government, and youth and education, which complement the existing 3 members. • Actively engaged in discussions on, and made a submission to, the new 20-year tourism plan, Destination 2045: Queensland's Tourism Future. Board members participated in regional workshops held in Cairns and Townsville and the Ecotourism Deep-dive held in Brisbane. • Farewelled two Board Directors, Professor Stephen Williams and Ms Robin Clark, who were thanked for their dedicated service and valuable contribution over a number of years. • Welcomed new Board Directors Michael Nelson and Natassia Wheeler. Ms Wheeler is CEO of Queensland Tourism Industry Council, the state's peak tourism body, and has strong tourism, leadership and governance experience. Mr Nelson is the Managing Director Pinnacle Tourism Marketing and has 30 years' local tourism experience in the Wet Tropics. • Advised and provided expert direction to inform the State of Wet Tropics report 2024–25 incorporating feedback from the Community Consultative Committee, Scientific Advisory Committee and Indigenous Advisory Committee meeting held on 10 February 2025. • Approved the Authority's Communications Strategy, which establishes a framework for more effective communication and engagement of our partners. • Continued to support the Authority's response to the impacts of the significant flooding event post-Tropical Cyclone Jasper in December 2023 and the severe weather event in early 2025. This included advice on agency engagement and appropriate cultural considerations for ongoing scientific investigations and responses to impacts on ecological values. • Continued its oversight of the Authority's Yellow Crazy Ant Eradication Program which celebrated a total eradication area of over 1,076 hectares including more than 1,500 residential properties.

Wet Tropics Management Authority Board of Directors	
Achievements	• Provided advice on the delivery of the Eastern Kuku Yalanji (EKY) Return to Country project. The project is focussing efforts on working with EKY Peoples to identify pathways for living on Country in the future. • Celebrated the roll out of the Rainforest People Country Culture interactive story map in partnership with SharingStories Foundation. The Board also provided considered direction on addressing and protecting Indigenous cultural and intellectual property as part of the program. • Continued to actively participate in the Wet Tropics Restoration Alliance's activities.
Financial reporting	The Authority provides audited financial statements as required under the Financial Accounting Regulation 2009.

Remuneration

Position	Name	Meeting attendance	Approved annual, sessional or daily fee	Approved sub-committee fees if applicable	Actual fees received ^
Chair	Christine Grant	Number of meetings attended: 4	$520 daily	N/A	$9,100 Co-Chairs the Indigenous Advisory Committee
Director	Dr Sally Driml	Number of meetings attended: 4	$400 daily	N/A	$2,800 Chairs the Community Consultative Committee
Director	Ailsa Lively	Number of meetings attended: 4	$400 daily	N/A	$2,800
Director	Robin Clark Term expired 08/12/2024	Number of meetings attended: 2	$400 daily	N/A	$2,200
Director	Professor Stephen Williams Term expired 08/12/2024	Number of meetings attended: 2	$400 daily	N/A	$2,800 Chairs the Scientific Advisory Committee
Director	William Enoch-Tranby	Number of meetings Attended: 2	$400 daily	N/A	$1,000
Director	Natassia Wheeler Term commenced 17/04/2025	Number of meetings attended: 1	$400 daily	N/A	$–
Director	Michael Nelson Term commenced 17/04/2025	Number of meetings attended: 0	$400 daily	N/A	$–

No. scheduled meetings/ sessions	**The Board met on 4 occasions for Board meetings in 2024–25:** • 5 September 2024 (meeting #128): 1-day meeting in Cairns and online • 14 November 2024 (meeting #129): 1-day meeting in Cairns and online • 7 March 2025 (meeting #130): 1-day meeting in Cairns and online • 27 June 2025 (meeting #131): 1-day meeting in Innisfail (Mamu Country) **Other activities:** • 19 May 2025: Board Director induction/refresher training • 26 June 2025: Board Cassowary Coast field trip • In addition to Board meetings, the Board Directors chairing advisory committees conducted a collective total of 14 full day meetings and expert workshops
Out of pocket expenses	The Chair and Board Directors were reimbursed a combined total of $195 out-of-pocket expenses including taxi fares, and travel allowances.
Remuneration Procedures for Part-time Chairs and Members of Queensland Government Bodies—Regulation, Administration and Advice Level 2 (Daily)	The Board is fully funded by the Australian Government. The Queensland Government does not contribute to the operational costs of the Board.

^ In addition to daily fees to attend Board meetings, the Chair and Board Directors are eligible to be remunerated for additional work time required to carry out their role (i.e. to prepare for meetings, write reports or correspondence, undertake consultation, represent the Authority and/or to provide specific strategic advice). This may include chairing the Authority's Advisory Committees. Chairs and members may also be compensated for their travel time to attend the Authority's meetings and/or other strategic events on behalf of the Authority.

Attachment 2—Compliance checklist

Summary of requirement	Basis for requirement*	Annual report reference
Letter of compliance		
A letter of compliance from the accountable officer or statutory body to the relevant Minister/s	ARRs—section 7	Page 4 & 5
Accessibility		
Table of contents	ARRs—section 9.1	Page 3
Glossary		Page 45
Public availability	ARRs—section 9.2	Page 2
Interpreter service statement	Queensland Government Language Services Policy ARRs—section 9.3	Page 2
Copyright notice	Copyright Act 1968 ARRs—section 9.4	Page 2
Information licensing	Queensland Government Enterprise Architecture Information Licensing ARRs—section 9.5	Page 2
General information		
Introductory information	ARRs—section 10	Page 2
Non-financial performance		
Government objectives for the community and whole-of-government plans/specific initiatives	ARRs—section 11.1	Page 12
Agency objectives and performance indicators	ARRs—section 11.2	Page 13
Agency service areas, service standards	ARRs—section 11.3	Refer DETSI AR
Financial performance		
Summary of financial performance	ARRs—section 12.1	Page 30
Governance—management and structure		
Organisational structure	ARRs—section 13.1	Page 10
Executive management	ARRs—section 13.2	Page 11
Government bodies (statutory bodies and other entities)	ARRs—section 13.3	Page 12
Public Sector Ethics Act 1994	ARRs—section 13.4	Page 34
Human Rights Act 2019	ARRs—section 13.5	Page 35
Queensland Public Service values	ARRs—section 13.6	Refer DETSI AR
Governance—risk management and accountability		
Risk management	ARRs—section 14.1	Refer DETSI AR
Audit committee	ARRs—section 14.2	Refer DETSI AR
Internal audit	ARRs—section 14.3	Page 33
External scrutiny	ARRs—section 14.4	Page 33
Information systems and record keeping	ARRs—section 14.5	Page 33
Information security attestation	ARRs—section 14.6	Page 34
Governance—human resources		
Strategic workforce planning and performance	ARRs—section 15.1	Page 36

Summary of requirement	Basis for requirement*	Annual report reference
Early retirement, redundancy and retrenchment	Directive No.04/18, *Early retirement Redundancy and retrenchments* ARRs Section 15.2	Page 39
Open data		
Statement advising publication of information	ARRs—section 16.0	N/A
Consultancies	ARRs—section 31.1	N/A
Overseas travel	ARRs—section 31.2	N/A
Queensland Language Services Policy	ARRs—section 31.3	N/A
Charter of Victims' Rights	VCSVRB Act 2024ARRs—section 31.4	Page 35
Financial statements		
Certification of financial statements	FAA—section 62 FPMS—section 38, 39 and 46 ARRs—section 17.1	Refer DETSI AR
Independent Auditor's report	FAA—section 62 FPMS—section 46 ARRs—section 17.2	Refer DETSI AR

* ARRs Annual report requirements for Queensland Government agencies
DETSI AR Department of the Environment, Tourism, Science and Innovation Annual Report
FAA *Financial Accountability Act 2009*
FPMS Financial and Performance Management Standard 2019
VCSVRB Act *Victims' Commissioner and Sexual Violence Review Board Act 2024*

Glossary

Meaning	Term
Area	Wet Tropics of Queensland World Heritage Area
Authority	Wet Tropics Management Authority
Board	Wet Tropics Management Authority Board of Directors
CCC	Community Consultative Committee
Commonwealth Act	*Wet Tropics of Queensland World Heritage Area Conservation Act 1994*
CYPAL	Cape York Peninsula Aboriginal Land
DETSI	Department of the Environment, Tourism, Science and Innovation
eDNA	Environmental DNA
IAC	Indigenous Advisory Committee'
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
PDP	Performance and development plan
QPWS&P	Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service and Partnerships
Queensland Act	*Wet Tropics World Heritage Protection and Management Act 1993*
RNTBC	Registered Native Title Body Corporate
SAC	Scientific Advisory Committee
Strategic Plan	Wet Tropics Strategic Plan 2020–2030
Terrain NRM	Terrain Natural Resource Management
TEQ	Tourism and Events Queensland
TTNQ	Tourism Tropical North Queensland
World Heritage Convention	Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage
WTMA	Wet Tropics Management Authority
WTST Plan	Wet Tropics Sustainable Tourism Plan 2021–2031


WET TROPICS
MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY