

Board Meeting No. 134

17 March 2026

FINAL MINUTES

Wet Tropics Management Authority

Wet Tropics Management Authority
Ports North Building
PH: 07 4041 0500

Agenda item 1.1

Chair's welcome and introduction, and apologies

The Chair, Ms Grant, advised that apologies had been received (refer Attendance list).

The Chair provided an Acknowledgement of Country, welcomed all attendees, and invited attendees to indicate the Country from which they were joining the meeting in the online meeting chat.

In Attendance:

Board Directors:

Ms Chrissy Grant	Chair
Dr Sally Driml	Director
Ms Ailsa Lively	Director
Ms Natassia Wheeler	Director
Mr Michael Nelson	Director
Mr Scott Buchanan	Non-voting Director and Executive Director
Ms Naomi Summers	Board Intern

WTMA Staff:

Mr Tim Wong	Manager, Planning and Conservation
Ms Saskia Salmeron-Rodriguez	Manager, World Heritage Connections
Mr Gareth Humpheys	A/Project Manager, Yellow Crazy Ant Eradication Program
Ms Aggie Walsh	Administration Officer
Dr Sean McNamara	Principal Advisor

Partners

Ms Elise Nuridin	Senior Heritage Policy Officer, First Nations and Natural Heritage Section, DCCEEW
Ms Luisa Williams	A/G Assistant Director, First Nations and Natural Heritage Section, DCCEEW
Ms Megan Tutty	Senior Heritage Officer, First Nations and Natural Heritage Section, DCCEEW
Ms Alison Webb	Director – Smithfield and Wangetti delivery team, QPWS
Dr Matt Brien	Regional Director, Northern Region, QPWS
Ms Courtney Gonano	Principal Project Officer, People, Wildlife and Places, QPWS
Ms Angela Siggery	Director, World Heritage Unit, DETSI
Mr Peter Evans	A/General Manager - Investment Infrastructure and Grants, Tourism
Mr Darcy Slattery	General Manager - Policy Industry and Partnerships, Tourism (DETSI)
Ms Toni Browne	General Manager – Investment Infrastructure and Grants Tourism (DETSI)
Professor Steve Williams	Chair, Scientific Advisory Committee

Apologies

Mr William Enoch-Tranby, Ms Lucy Karger, Dr Julia Playford

Agenda item 1.2

Conflict of Interest

Ms Grant declared a conflict of interest regarding the Return to Country (RtC) project, as an Eastern Kuku Yalanji (EKY) person. During Strategic Item 3.1 related to the RtC project, Ms Grant advised that Dr Driml will act as Chair.

Agenda item 2.1

Chair's report

The Chair provided the following updates since the last report:

- Recruitment for an Indigenous Director: the process included an EOI process, followed by committee shortlisting. This position is nominated by the Commonwealth but appointed by the Queensland Governor in Council. The Board is currently awaiting the nomination from Minister Watt.
- The Chair also advised that a joint advisory committee workshop (SAC/CCC/IAC) was held in Cairns on 10 February. Dr Driml facilitated the day, which focused on WTMA's Climate Adaptation Plan (Accept, Act and Adapt). This work will inform the State of the Wet Tropics Report. Dr Driml advised the Board would discuss this later in the meeting.
- The Chair advised she had been in contact with Mr John Foster (DCCEEW) to discuss funding for Traditional Owners to work on programs on Country to improve water quality. Guidelines have been finalised for organisational funding and small grants, and WTMA will be able to submit an application.

Discussion:

A question was raised regarding the timing of the funding process. The Chair advised the Board would hear an update in Agenda item 3.2 shortly.

Resolution:

The Board **noted** the Chair's update.

Agenda item 2.2

Executive Director's report

Summary:

Mr Buchanan provided an update on key matters since the last Board meeting:

- People and culture: continued development of the RICE values statement, creation of an internal SharePoint values page. An update on staffing and acting arrangements was provided.
- Governance and partnerships: noted appointment to the Reef &Rainforest Research Centre (RRRC) Board and ongoing work on priority matters, including feral pig management.
- Wangetti trail: provided an update on governance and key project interfaces.
- FNQ Regional Plan: the WTMA submission provided supports the plan's intent while identifying gaps and alignment requirements.
- Yellow Crazy Ants (YCA): advised of funding uncertainty and consequent contingency planning. Provided progress of the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA) bait permit renewal.

- Return to Country (RtC): outlined refinements to delivery arrangements (temporary restructure) and key risks and mitigations to complete current commitments.
- Restoration initiatives: engagement with Douglas Shire Council on planning scheme settings, planning for a restoration workshop with partners, and progress on Repairing the Rainforest procurement and alliance sustainability.
- Stakeholder engagement: growth in Wet Tropics World Heritage Guide enrolments and work to align with permitting, consultation input to the Queensland feral pig management plan, and consideration of support for Girringun's 30-year celebrations.

Resolution:

The Board **noted** the Executive Director's report.

Agenda item 2.3

Previous minutes: Board Meeting No. 133

Discussion:

No changes were requested to the Board Meeting No. 133 minutes.

Resolution:

The Board **approved** the minutes of Board Meeting No. 133.

Agenda item 3.1

WTMA Quarter 2 Milestone and end of year Milestone report, Annual Business Plan 2026-27, and 5-Year Business Strategy update

Summary: This paper provided to the Board presented the WTMA Quarter 2 and End of Year Milestone Report 2025–26, the Annual Business Plan 2026–27, and proposed minor amendments to the Five-Year Business Strategy 2023–28. It outlines progress against Annual Business Plan deliverables, noting that performance is largely on track, highlights key achievements and risks, and sought Board approval of the reports, the 2026–27 Annual Business Plan, and minor strategy refinements.

Discussion:

Discussion points included:

- Noted that some Annual Business Plan deliverables are at risk. This included the Cassowary Awards, with a further paper to be brought to the Board.
- Discussed potential impacts of funding constraints, including whether the Annual Plan may need amendment and/or clearer caveats if funding is not confirmed.
- Budget development is in progress and needs to be progressed early to support planning and decision-making.
- If additional funding currently being sought is not received, the annual plan may require additional caveats to reflect that the budget may not meet requirements and delivery will be impacted.
- 5 Year Business Strategy updates were noted, including adjustments to two goals in Strategy 4 to address reporting challenges.

- For Strategy 6 (healthy organisation), some procedural actions were consolidated to indicate alignment with relevant standards.

Resolution:

The Board:

- ***Approves*** the 2025-26 Quarter 2 and End of Year Annual Business Plan Milestone reports .
- ***Approves*** the 2026-27 Annual Business Plan, after an additional caveat has been provided indicating that the annual budget still required approval and confirmation.
- ***Approves*** minor amendments to the five-year Business Strategy 2023-28.

Action

Include in the Annual Business Plan 2026-27 an additional caveat indicating that the annual budget still required approval and confirmation

Agenda item 3.2

2025-26 Budget Update

Summary: The Board was asked to review and approve the budget for Financial Year 2026–27 (FY27) at the next Board meeting rather than review a component of the budget at this meeting. This is due to uncertainties in current budget forecasting, with a number of potential revenue sources still to be confirmed. Despite this, it is recognised that the FY27 budget will be challenging, with increasing costs impacting WTMA's capacity to deliver its obligations. Review of the 2025–26 budget indicates it is largely on track with an overall 1% variance. It is expected the budget will be fully acquitted on 30 June 2026.

Discussion:

- Financial position: year-to-date underspend of ~1% was noted as a positive result; wage costs remain an area to monitor, including investigation of leave-accrual assumptions in the budget template (SE QLD vs FNQ entitlements).
- Yellow Crazy Ants (YCA): WTMA have submitted a request for capital funds for a larger drone which will deliver efficiencies compared to smaller-drone operations and reduce helicopter reliance; reimbursement is being sought for cyclone-related treatments.
- Salaries: the year-to-date variance will continue to be monitored.
- The Board asked about resources to promote the tourism value of the World Heritage Area. An Australian Heritage Grant submission was made that, if successful, would resource a comprehensive approach to improve messaging based on analyses of value.
- Strategic fire management: discussions with DETSI were noted; expected funding is no longer proceeding. Limited funding remains to support partial delivery (planned burns in national parks), and further support will continue to be pursued.
- Queensland Reconstruction Authority: the Daintree reforestation bid was unsuccessful.
- Weed management: a separate bid was successful; delivery will be undertaken by the Australian Tropical Herbarium to align with capacity and avoid overextending WTMA resources.
- Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples budget line item (Attachment 3.1.2 / cost centre 1000419): year-to-date expenditure is below profile (27k budgeted vs 3k spent) due to timing of regional forum costs; expenditure is expected to occur before 30 June.

Resolution:

The Board:

- ***Endorse*** the changed approach to assigning expenses to Strategies in the Annual Business Plan 2026-27, and instead seek Board support for budget allocations at Board 135.
- ***Noted*** the current financial position for 2025 – 26, and uncertainty for 2026-27 budget.

Agenda item 3.3

Climate Change Adaptation Plan Review

Summary: This board paper provides directors with an update on the mid-term review of the Wet Tropics Climate Adaptation Plan 2020-30 (Accept Act Adapt) including feedback from statutory committees and themes for new priorities. The outcomes of the review will inform the framework of the 2025-26 State of Wet Tropics and guide WTMA climate change initiative priorities for 2025-30. The paper also provides an outline of the 2025-26 State of the Wet Tropics Report.

The Board was provided with an overview of the Climate Adaptation Plan review progress and background, including the Board's 10-point plan (and its development context, including land restoration), the original process for development of the 2020–30 Climate Adaptation Plan, and the current mid-term review approach, noting a phased process with targeted stakeholder engagement and consideration of the plan's goals, objectives and strategic direction.

Discussion:

- Noted the high volume of potential actions identified through the mid-term review process.
- Discussed the need to map refocused actions back to the original objectives set and to clearly demonstrate how committee input has been incorporated (including feedback to committees).
- Noted that several actions (e.g., modelling and monitoring) are dependent on significant external funding; if funding is not secured, alternative approaches may be needed, including enabling other parties to undertake the work and using innovative methods where feasible.
- Emphasised the importance of leveraging existing resources and datasets (including refugia mapping), and positioning WTMA as a logical coordination/contact point for access and use.
- Next steps: material will be circulated out of session and brought back to the Board at Meeting 135 for final comments.

Resolution:

The Board

- ***Noted*** *the outcomes of the combined CCC/IAC/SAC workshop (Attachment 3.3.1); and*
- ***Noted the*** *draft outline of the adaptation plan review (Attachment 3.3.2), and next steps.*

Agenda item 3.4

Eastern Kuku Yalanji (EKY) Return to Country Project – Timeline and updates

Summary: A timeline has been developed to outline activities required to complete the current Return to Country (RtC) Project and the many further actions required post June 2026, to enable on-Country housing outcomes. The

RtC Project, focused on planning and enabling frameworks, will finish 30 June 2026. However, delivery of housing and actual return to Country will require many years of further support to Jabalbina and EKY People through various government agencies. This will include support for issuing and managing leases and lease conditions, housing construction, and ongoing management of services to the community living in these areas. The Board's increased awareness of these longer-term support requirements will be crucial in their ongoing advocacy efforts to garner longer term government support.

An overview was provided on progress to date, noting that the proposed letter to the Premier has been deferred to a later stage by agreement, and that the Board-requested timeline (Meeting 132) has been provided. The update highlighted more complex workstreams and key risks, including housing, strategic fire management planning and contaminated land, and noted ongoing collaboration with other agencies and refinement of engagement approaches. Progress was reported on significant outcomes to date (including cultural consent from the relevant Traditional Owner groups and support from other agencies), as well as the planning consultant's work, which is tracking well and identifying efficiencies with local governments, with several processes expected to be achievable by mid-year. Infrastructure funding and works were also noted, and contaminated land issues were discussed.

Discussion:

- It was identified that a large risk to the project is an Environmental Management Register layer that sits over the land in question. This is a government mapping layer that indicates the land may be contaminated. The issue is twofold - development cannot occur on 'contaminated land', and the process for carrying out an audit to remove the layer is expensive and requires specialist skills.
- A question was raised about whether Degarra remains a suitable potential site. It was noted that post–Cyclone Jasper flood modelling indicates the area is above the 1-in-100-year flood level, and at a higher elevation than existing residences in Wujal Wujal.
- Progress to date was attributed to sustained project effort and support across the team, including work completed by the planning consultant.
- It was suggested that financial and in-kind contributions (including pro bono support) be captured to demonstrate value delivered through the project.

Resolution:

The Board

Noted the Return to Country Project (RtC Project) timeline, and significant achievements since Board #133

Agenda item 3.5

Wangetti Trail Project Update

Summary:

An update was provided by Ms Webb on the Smithfield and Wangetti delivery projects. QPWS has assumed ownership of the Wangetti project and completed a review over recent months, with current focus on progressing the Wangetti–Ellis Beach section. The project has been split into four work packages to enable direct engagement with specialist contractors, improve efficiencies and broaden market interest, including through non-conforming tenders (where tenderers may propose alternative approaches). Two procurement bundles have been released (track construction, and bridges/boardwalks), with a planned pause before the Dark Jungle campground section and three suspension bridges to follow later. A probity adviser is overseeing the process. Funding has been redirected to support delivery of the Wangetti–Ellis Beach section while additional funds are being sought, and planning is progressing for the northern section, including consideration of alternative existing pathways and a

trailhead near Wangetti. Governance arrangements include a major project board and an advisory committee, and an EOI process has been completed to establish community reference groups (Northern, Wangetti and Palm Cove), with establishment planned for April to support two-way communication and co-design. Work assessments for completed works have been undertaken with WTMA staff and approved by the Director-General, and delegations within the procedural guide are being progressed to ensure the appropriate delegate signs off future assessments.

Discussion

There has been a positive response to the community reference groups, including approximately 24 expressions of interest for the Wangetti group and around 15 for the northern group, with further work underway to ensure a diverse mix of participants; the Palm Cove group will also consider improvements.

Resolution:

The Board

Noted the Wangetti Trail Project Update.

Agenda item 3.6

Communications Plan update

Summary: The Corporate Communication Report (2025-26 Q1) presented an overview of key activities, including a social media snapshot, top-performing posts, the Wet Tropics e-newsletter, State of Wet Tropics 2024-25 media release, and resource requests. The report aligns with the Communications Strategy and supports evaluation and measurement of outcomes. Mr Smith gave a brief update on the five social media channels, highlighting the greater than 16k followers and a strong recorded reach. He also noted that all posts have been organic, with no paid boosting or promotions. Mr Smith also highlighted collaboration through a joint post with QPWS, consistently strong engagement on cassowary and Yellow Crazy Ant (YCA) content, the need to refocus effort on Instagram as the weakest-performing channel, and continued growth on LinkedIn as a smaller but higher-engagement channel.

Discussion:

Coverage achieved through the State of Wet Tropics media release was discussed, including how media pickup is tracked and reported. It was noted the media release generated multiple forms of coverage, including radio talkback and additional pickup, and was supported by an interview and Cyclone Jasper damage flyover. The Board noted strong results, including front-page coverage in some outlets and a 17-minute interview; a post-Christmas follow-up was also reported as effective, with discussion about improving timing for future releases for more effective uptake. It was suggested that future media reports include clearer detail on which outlets picked up each release.

Resolution:

The Board

Noted the presentation on the Quarterly Communications Strategy Report

Agenda item 4.0 Reports

Agenda item 4.1 Advisory Committee reports to the Board

Community Consultative Committee

Dr Driml provided an update:

- The CCC discussed current member terms and proposed updates to the Terms of Reference (ToR) to enable extensions and support recruitment.
- A ToR change was discussed to allow members to serve more than two terms.
- Members who were appointed for short terms, in 2025, have had letters sent to them extending their current terms through to 2028. A recruitment process will then commence. To date, attracting an Indigenous representative (male or female) has been challenging.
- Timelines were noted, including advertising for expressions of interest (EOIs) opening before month-end. It was noted that the CCC Chair will be unavailable from Easter to July, with an Acting Chair arrangement in place for this period, and that succession planning will be required ahead of the Chair's term ending 30 September 2026.

Scientific Advisory Committee

Professor Williams provided an update:

- The SAC met over two days (9–10 February), following a joint committee workshop on upland rainforest management responses to climate change impacts.
- The workshop included land manager representatives and organisations including QPWS, Terrain and CAFNEC, and progressed selection of on-ground management responses.
- Key outputs included identifying refugia and corridors, reviewing available information, and options to increase ecosystem resilience (including gene banks and ex situ conservation).
- General comments emphasised a shift from reactive recovery toward proactive resilience actions ahead of impacts occurring.
- An update was provided on the long-standing nomination of upland ecosystems as a threatened ecosystem under the EPBC Act. It was noted the nomination is being refined to focus on endemic vertebrates, and the proposed spatial elevation threshold will be adjusted to 600 m to better demonstrate impacts observed between 600–800 m. While submission had been anticipated for May, there is consensus that further consultation is required (including on biocultural aspects) and additional time will be needed to meet nomination guideline requirements, including incorporation of First Nations and WTMA input.
- It was noted that at 800 m most of the area is within the World Heritage Area, whereas lowering the threshold to 600 m would include more area outside the World Heritage boundary; quantification of the areas inside/outside is still to be completed, and a further update will be provided to the Board.
- Consultation with Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples is underway to inform biocultural landscape elements. It was noted the IAC will meet on 9 April, providing an opportunity for an update on the nomination process.

Indigenous Advisory Committee

Ms Grant provided an update:

- It was noted that three members attended the joint committee workshop in February, and that the next meeting is scheduled for April.
- It was noted that State of the Wet Tropics and climate change work will be included on the April meeting.

Action

Ms Salmeron-Rodriguez to contact Ms Haines to include the upland nomination work as an agenda item for the April IAC meeting.

Resolution:

The Board **noted** reports from CCC, SAC and IAC.

Agenda item 4.2 Director's issues

Dr Driml:

- Directors discussed the value of preparing high-level economic indicators for the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area in the directors only session
- The DCCEEW Report on the Economic and Social Value of Australia's World Heritage Properties was discussed, including the non-separation of Wet Tropics World Heritage Area figures, and limitations including the immediately post-Covid timing and alignments with other assessments.
- Tourism and Events Queensland (TEQ) have released a tender for a "triple bottom line" nature-based tourism project (awarded to Deloitte), with data collection expected to commence in 2027 and outputs anticipated in 2028.
- Available tourism data for the Tropical North Queensland (TNQ) tourism region, including areas adjacent to the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area, will be investigated.

Ms Lively:

- Ongoing engagement with the Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples' Think Tank was noted.
- Ongoing work with the Gunggandji PBC is progressing.
- Regarding the Economic and Social Value of Australia's World Heritage Properties report, it was noted that some outcomes are difficult to measure (including those discussed in Chapter 4); however, measurable benefits for First Nations people were noted from reconnecting to Country and stabilising their lives (including outcomes observed through Reef Assist participation), and this could be explored further by WTMA in any future assessments.

Ms Wheeler:

- Ms Wheeler has been focused on supporting Wet Tropics operators , including identifying ways to proactively assist businesses when critical infrastructure is damaged or unavailable.
- Recent engagement in Canberra was noted, including discussions relating to WTMA and Yellow Crazy Ants (YCA).

Mr Nelson:

Mr Nelson presented the Board with a draft social media planning template outlining a structured, proactive approach to WTMA's social media presence, focused on consistent monthly planning, clear content pillars and increased use of visual and video-based content. The template proposes defined brand and content pillars—such

as landscape and biodiversity, culture and Country, learning and discovery, caring for Country, and experiences in the Wet Tropics—to ensure alignment with organisational objectives. It emphasises the growing importance of short-form video and reels to increase engagement, the strategic differentiation of platforms (with LinkedIn used primarily for corporate and stakeholder messaging and Facebook/Instagram for place-based storytelling), and stronger integration of First Nations content and on-ground experiences. The presentation was provided as a practical planning tool to support current communications activity and inform future refinement of WTMA's social media strategy, noting the need to balance positive place-based storytelling with messaging that reflects conservation challenges and climate impacts.

Discussion:

There was agreement with the approach presented. It was noted that the current team focus is the website and that thematic posting is supported; however, capacity is the key issue at present. It was also noted that there have been some roadblocks with some approaches. The approach presented can feed into current social media work, and it was noted by the Board that what has been presented is highly useful. It was also noted that conservation and protection of the area must remain as a core focus, and that it will be important to retain balance. Members also noted an opportunity to consider the time invested in social media and to more clearly demonstrate impacts (for example, flood events) in an engaging way.

Resolution:

The Board **noted** the Director's issues.

Agenda item 4.4 Queensland Department reports

Office of Great Barrier Reef and World Heritage

(Note that this report was brought forward in the agenda to allow Ms Angela Siggery to provide the report and be available for questions)

Summary

The update provided in advance by the Office of the Great Barrier Reef and World Heritage (DETSI), included progress in appointing new members to the K'gari and Riversleigh World Heritage Advisory Committees, a First Nations Heritage Grant secured by the Waanyi PBC to investigate Riversleigh cultural values, and planned Riversleigh promotion during Queensland Dinosaur Week (4 to 11 May 2026). The update also covered Gondwana Rainforests matters (Ministerial attendance, climate adaptation work due late 2026, and an EOI for the next committee term closing 9 March 2026) and Great Barrier Reef actions (public consultation on the Reef 2050 Catchment Water Quality Strategy, review of the Reef 2050 Long-Term Sustainability Plan, and submission of a State of Conservation Report to UNESCO for July 2026 consideration).

Ms Siggery further advised that the current Executive Director, Dr Playford, has announced her retirement, and that a new Deputy Director-General for the Division will also commence soon. Further, an Advisory Board Centre review on governance arrangements has been undertaken, with additional work on induction sessions to be undertaken when three chairs are onboarded (K'gari, Gondwana, and Riversleigh).

Agenda item 4.3 Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW) Report

Summary: The Board noted the written report provided by DCCEEW, including a restructure within the Heritage Division (First Nations and Natural Heritage Section) and updated key contacts; delivery of the First Nations Climate Change Series (a six-part documentary produced with First Nations-owned media company Little Rocket and screened at COP30); progress on environmental law reforms following passage of the Environment Protection Reform Bill 2025, with implementation underway (transitional arrangements, National Environmental Standards, regulatory and process updates, and establishment of a National Environmental Protection Agency); and forthcoming heritage matters including Australia's State Party Report on the Great Barrier Reef to be considered by UNESCO at the World Heritage Committee's 48th session in July 2026, and the Australian Heritage Council's priority assessment list for new heritage nominations (public comment period effective from 29 January 2026). Ms Williams further advised the Board that the current round of the Australian Heritage Grants program was in the final process and sign off stage.

Resolution:

The Board **noted** the DCCEEW report.

Agenda item 4.4 Queensland Department reports

Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service and Partnerships

Summary:

Dr Brien provided the update for the December 2025–February 2026 period, covering resourcing, park planning, fire, pests, capital works and compliance across the Wet Tropics management areas. Workforce updates included permanent ranger appointments across Coastal Tropics, Tablelands and Daintree, continued recruitment for vacant roles (including Ranger in Charge and Resource Ranger positions), staffing for the Cyclone Jasper repair team, and recruitment across park services, pest and assets teams. QPWS&P reported progress under the Value Based Management Framework (VBMF) planning program (including desktop level-of-service assessments and planning workshops with Traditional Owner groups), continued delivery of the fire management uplift program and planned-burn preparation, and ongoing First Nations engagement (including fire planning meetings and on-Country cultural induction planning). Pest management work included feral pig control planning and trials, feral cat monitoring and weed control, and continued research and monitoring (including park health checks and threatened species work). Capital and recovery works were progressing, with Cyclone Jasper repairs sequenced through 2026 and completion targeted by June 2027, alongside priority upgrades (including Mossman Gorge Loop Track procurement, Wallaman Falls camping area upgrade, Josephine Falls carpark upgrade, and Lake Eacham day-use detailed design). Compliance matters (including squatter issues and alleged illegal encroachment investigations) and a Skyrail authority review were also noted.

Ms Gonano provided as outline the QPWS&P short term pilot project: People, Wildlife and Places, and its focus on strengthening relationships and improving outcomes across boundaries with neighbours and partners. Ms Gonano noted the intent to move away from transactional approaches and to reduce friction by improving engagement pathways and clarifying how willing stakeholders can contribute. Ms Gonano highlighted the focus on sharing responsibilities across conservation, fire, pest and weed management and testing practical on-ground involvement.

Discussion included consideration of whether engagement would be targeted or open to parties reaching out when they have an interest, with advice that contact details were available and follow-up welcomed. It was also confirmed that WTMA would reach out to discuss how WTMA can support community engagement (including First Nations engagement) and broader community engagement.

Action

WTMA to reach out to Ms Gonano to discuss how WTMA can support community engagement (including First Nations engagement), and broader collaboration on shared conservation, fire, pest and weed responsibilities, including practical on-ground involvement.

Tourism Division (DETSI)

Mr Slattery (DETSI, Tourism Division) introduced colleagues and handed over to Mr Evans and Ms Brownie. Mr Evans advised he had been acting as General Manager (Investment, Infrastructure and Grants) until the previous day and handed over to Ms Browne. Mr Evans outlined the role, including investment attraction (international and domestic), experience development, infrastructure support for proponents navigating regulatory pathways, grants programs (including the Regional Tourism Infrastructure Fund and Tourism Icons Investment Fund), and aviation attraction (Connecting Queensland Fund). Ms Browne advised she was commencing in the role and looked forward to working with WTMA.

Mr Slattery provided a presentation: *Destination 2045 Update (March 2026)*, noting:

- Destination 2045 includes ambitious long-term projections for Queensland tourism (visitor expenditure, gross value added and direct jobs), while showcasing environment, lifestyle, culture and regions.
- Six priority areas: ecotourism, events, connectivity, experiences, brand and industry.
- Consultation to inform Destination 2045 included extensive regional consultations and “deep dives”.
- Governance arrangements include a Tourism Cabinet Committee (subcommittee of Cabinet) and an Interdepartmental Committee to support delivery across portfolios.
- Progress reporting indicates actions delivered, actions underway/on track, actions not yet commenced (not planned at this stage), and actions pending third-party discussion where further escalation may be required due to cross-government complexity (e.g., tenure pathways).
- A prioritisation approach has been applied across actions (impact vs effort), with categories including major priorities, “easy wins” (noting these are not necessarily easy), targeted opportunities, and strategic vision projects.
- 45 by 45 projects work is progressing with QPWS and the Director-General’s Office, including criteria for what qualifies as 45 by 45. Priority projects mentioned included (among others): Thorsbourne, Wangetti Trail, Smithfield Mountain Bike Trails, Lake Eacham, Palm Island and “Sunday Skyway”, and Springbrook Master Plan.
- Mr Slattery asked the Board for feedback on what it would like to keep across, opportunities for WTMA to support or lead work aligned with Destination 2045, and how regularly Destination 2045 updates would be valuable.

Discussion included closer collaboration with Tourism to support delivery of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Guide program, including use of the Tourism Support Hub and other mechanisms to strengthen alignment with permitting and operator engagement. Discussion also included support options for small businesses affected by damaged or unavailable infrastructure, including current grant eligibility settings, alternative assistance pathways, and engagement with local stakeholders to identify practical resilience and support measures in response to repeated disruption from ferry outages.

Action

Mr Slattery to connect WTMA with the Tourism Support Hub to support delivery of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Guide program.

Resolution:

- Board **noted** the Queensland Government department reports.

Agenda item 5.0 Actions arising, and significant correspondence

Agenda item 5.1 Actions arising Board Meeting 133

The Board was provided with the previous actions arising and progress was discussed

Agenda Item	Actions arising from Meeting #133 and previous	Comments
#133 Agenda item 2.2 Executive Director's Report	Committee secretariats to send a link to Regional Plan to Committees (for) comment.	Completed - Link sent
#132 Agenda item 3.3 WTMA State of Wet Tropics 2025-26 Tropic (Strategy 6)	The Authority to develop the project plan including key dates for Board and Committee consideration.	Ongoing – details of Board and committee review dates presented in Board paper at Meeting #134
#132 Agenda item 3.2 Return to Country Update on Eastern Kuku Yalanji Return to Country project (Strategy 2)	Project team to provide a communications plan / next steps to seek resourcing and support, and contingency plans.	Partially completed – Board 133 Agenda item 3.1 – contingency plan still in development . Update to be provided at 134
#131 Agenda item 3.4 Outcomes from the Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples' Regional Forum (Strategy 2)	Ms Haines to send Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples Forum Outcomes Report to Board for information and share with IAC, CCC and SAC.	Underway – report is going through final approvals processes.
#131 Agenda item 4.1 Advisory Committee reports to the Board	WTMA to: consider the three-year term for CCC members suggestion from the Board.	At Board 133, the Board Approved: • Continue 6 new members (mid-term intake) to 3 years – (June 2028). • Recruitment CCC 3 existing (until end **March** 2026) + 2 RAP new – (to March 2029). Note that this should be 31 May 2026.
#131 Agenda item 4.4 Queensland Department reports Tourism (DETSI)	WTMA and DETSI to touch base regarding suggestions to improve community engagement	Completed - Cairns based public consultation for Wangetti has been set up by DETSI
#130 Agenda item 6.1- Other Business	WTMA (Ms Salmeron-Rodriguez) to create a forward engagement calendar of events to be discussed so that WTMA Board Directors can attend and be advocates, and for the committees as well, aligned with Comms Strategy.	Ongoing – Board engagement added to WTMA SharePoint calendar. WTMA Management Forum considers upcoming events for suitability in the first instance.

The Executive Director summarised progress against actions arising, noting:

Resolution

The Board **noted** the actions arising.

Agenda item 5.2 Significant correspondence

List and copies of correspondence distributed prior to meeting.

Date	To/From	Description	Action for Directors
27/01/2026	From WTMA Executive Director to Ms Kathryn Moody, QTIC	Letter of Support – Seasonal Mobility and Staff Accommodation Exchange (SMASE).	Note
16/12/2025	From WTMA Executive Director to Ms Lynda Gregg, Madjandji Aboriginal Corporation	Letter of Support for Madjandji Aboriginal Corporation's application for the Australian Heritage Grant round 8 (2025-26) grant opportunity.	Note
10/12/2025	From WTMA Executive Director to Denis Kelly, South Cape York Catchments	Letter of Support – Wallaby Creek Restoration Project. A significant portion of the Wallaby Catchment is within the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area, and cyclone Jasper caused significant damage.	Note
10/12/2025	From WTMA Executive Director to Dr Jeff Shellberg, Cape York Water Partnership	Letter of Support – Trevethan Creek Restoration Project. The Trevethan Creek Catchment, partially within the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area, sustained significant damage due to cyclone Jasper.	Note
08/12/2025	From Dr Rachel Chay, Biosecurity Qld to Ms Chrissy Grant, WTMA Chair	Response to letter sent on 29 September to Mr Graham Bolton, Qld DPI, regarding the National Electric Ants Eradication Program / Concerns regarding the Threat of Electric Ants in the Kuranda Region.	Note
5/12/2025	From WTMA Executive Director to Ms Whitney Rassip, Girringun Aboriginal Corporation	Letter of Support re: Australian Heritage Grants Round 8 – Girringun Aboriginal Corporation funding application for the project proposal – *Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples Draft Cultural Values Management Plan Finalisation.*	Note
3/12/2025	From WTMA Executive Director to Ms Tina Marton, Wicked Environmental Solutions PTY LTD.	Letter of Support – Australian Heritage Grants Round 8 – Wet Tropics Blue Thunbergia removal and workforce capacity building.	Note
3/12/2025	From WTMA Executive Director to Adj Prof. Sheridan Morris, Reef and Rainforest Research Centre	Australian Heritage Grants Round 8 – Integrated Pest Management of Feral Pigs in the Wet Tropics of Queensland.	Note

Resolution:

The Board **noted** the significant correspondence report.

Agenda item 6.0 Other Business

Agenda item 6.1 Other Business

The Chair advised the next Board meeting (Meeting 135) will be held online on 11 June 2026.

Agenda item 6.2 Board self-assessment

The Board discussed agenda structure and opportunities to better align the 'day 1' program with the Board meeting day. Discussion included clearer guidance for observers (required vs optional attendance), making risk considerations more explicit in the open Board meeting where appropriate, and having observers attend only for agenda items where they are presenting, or have a genuine interest in.

Communique

Ms Kinley prepared the draft communique during the meeting and will circulate to Directors for approval.

Meeting closed 4.00pm.