



Board update September 2011

The Wet Tropics Management Authority Board held its 86th Board meeting in Malanda on 8 and 9 August 2011.

A major theme of discussion for the meeting on Tuesday was the services WTMA provides to Rainforest Aboriginal people. After consideration of the issues relating to the negotiation of native title settlements, the Board concluded that WTMA should continue to participate with the objective of ensuring other parties in the negotiations are informed about the World Heritage Area; and ensuring protection of World Heritage Values while respecting as far as possible the rights and aspirations of Rainforest Aboriginal people.

The Board also received a report on progress towards the completion of community development plans under the Eastern Kuku Yalanji ILUA. These plans will play an important role in realising the vision of the parties to the Eastern Kuku Yalanji Native Title settlement.

The interim committee of the Rainforest Aboriginal People's Alliance (RAPA) provided a report to the Board. The Board anticipates that once it is fully functional, RAPA will play an important role in engagement between WTMA and Rainforest Aboriginal people.

Following the meeting, the Board travelled to East Evelyn to launch the \$600,000 Caring for Our Country revegetation project, and took great delight in planting some trees and getting muddy hands.

Joining Board Directors, Peter Valentine, Alastair Birtles and Julia Leu, were observers from the Rainforest Aboriginal community, Leah Talbot and Ernie Grant; QPWS observers, Wolf Sievers and Peter Ogilvie; and Commonwealth agency observers Helen Cox and Jane Ambrose. Community Consultative Committee Chair, Moni Carlisle and Scientific Advisory Committee Chair Steve Williams also attended as observers.

Members noted that three Board vacancies remain unfilled. They were pleased to receive a report on the progress underway to ensure these places are filled as soon as possible.

In keeping with ensuring a close awareness on emerging community and scientific issues, the Board received reports from the Community Consultative Committee (CCC) and the Scientific Advisory Committee. These newly appointed committees are entering a three year term and the Board is keen to ensure that it maintains a close and mutually beneficial relationship. Members committed to attend committee meetings as often as possible.

The Board was especially pleased to receive a report on current Tablelands issues, prepared by CCC Chair Moni Carlisle. In response, WTMA Board Chairperson Peter Valentine took the opportunity later in the day to congratulate Mayor Tom Gilmore on the comprehensive consultation process underway in support of the Tablelands community plan.

During the meeting, the Board adopted new terms of reference for a Wet Tropics Tourism Network. Developed to replace the former Tourism Industry Liaison Group, the network will emphasise inclusion of diverse tourism industry stakeholders. It is intended to ensure opportunities for wide industry participation and to be flexible in response to emerging issues and projects. In approving the terms of reference, the Board re-affirmed the vital importance of its relationship with the Wet Tropics tourism industry.

The Board joined Tablelands community members at a dinner at the historic Malanda Hotel on Monday evening. The Board was particularly pleased to welcome Senator Jan McLucas who spoke in support of the Authority and its work with the Tablelands community.

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