



Annual Report 2020–2021





Annual Report 2020–2021

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 2020 to 30 June 2021. 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, the *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

The annual report is an important document representing communication and accountability. The Authority values comments and welcomes feedback from readers.

Public availability

This publication can be accessed and downloaded from our website at www.wettropics.gov.au. Alternatively, hard copies of this publication can be obtained by emailing wettropics@wtma.qld.gov.au.



Interpreter service statement

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Attribution

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Further information



Wet Tropics Management Authority
PO Box 2050, Cairns QLD 4870
Phone: (07) 4241 0500
wettropics@wtma.qld.gov.au

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The Wet Tropics Management Authority acknowledges Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples as the Traditional Custodians of the Wet Tropics of Queensland World Heritage Area and recognises their connection to this cultural landscape. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and future.



30 September 2021

The Hon Sussan Ley MP
Minister for the Environment
PO Box 6022
House of Representatives
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Minister

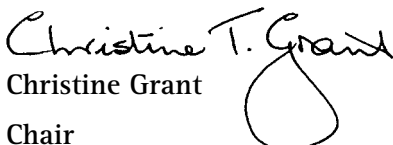
I am pleased to present the Annual Report 2020–21 for the Wet Tropics Management Authority.

Under the *Wet Tropics World Heritage Conservation Act 1994* (Cth), 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


Christine Grant
Chair

Message from the Chair

What a busy year 2020–21 has been for protecting and presenting the significant natural and cultural values of the Wet Tropics of Queensland World Heritage Area (the Area). Characterised by positive actions, new and deepened partnerships and on-ground activity, the Wet Tropics Management Authority (the Authority) made some exciting steps forward this year.

The Authority has worked in collaboration with Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples through land conservation, rehabilitation, and other initiatives, including:

- support for the Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples' Think Tank and the refresh of the 2005 Wet Tropics of Queensland Regional Agreement
- delivery of the Rainforest Aboriginal Grants Program to fulfil cultural responsibilities to Country and improve capacity to manage cultural and natural values across Country
- contracting organisations to deliver pest eradication and land management projects, and
- trialing the Application for Research Endorsement (ARE) protocol, which provides a formal process to enhance engagement with Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples and ensure research planned for Country is undertaken with the free, prior and informed consent of Traditional Custodians.

The Authority and its partners call to climate action—initiated in 2019 with the Board's 10-point plan, articulated in the *Accept Act Adapt: The Climate Adaptation Plan for the Wet Tropics 2020–2030* and practically expressed in the Green and Blue Stimulus Package—has begun to bear fruit. The Area is now benefiting from a \$2.6 million injection of Queensland Government Reef Assist funding. The Authority dispersed the funds across four Rainforest Aboriginal-led organisations and one land management organisation, creating 46 jobs to implement a series of 'boots on the ground' projects, and delivering benefits for threatened species and climate resilience by supporting Rainforest Aboriginal leadership and employment on Country.

A partnership between the Authority, James Cook University and Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service and Partnerships (QPWS&P) has recommenced the

long-term monitoring of mountain top species susceptible to climate change. This project—along with the Australian Tropical Herbarium’s translocation of climate-vulnerable high-altitude plant species, and traditional ecological climate work being done by several Rainforest Aboriginal organisations—is deepening foundational knowledge of climate change impacts across the bioregion. The knowledge gained has further highlighted the urgent case for ongoing investment to address climate impacts.

Together with its community and industry partners, the Authority continues to reduce the impact of yellow crazy ants and eradication remains on track. Generously supported by the Australian and Queensland Governments, our Yellow Crazy Ant Eradication Program demonstrates the power of partnerships in collective effort and measurable impact. That effort was recognised in late 2020 through a Queensland Pest Animal Team award from the Weed Society of Queensland, for exceptional results in on-ground pest animal management. Worthy recognition of what can be achieved when community, industry and governments work together.

The Wet Tropics tourism industry, a foundation of the region’s economy with a crucial role in the protection and presentation of the Area, continued to be deeply affected by the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020–21. The industry’s ability to pivot and adapt has been inspiring, and the Authority has responded through the collaborative development of a Wet Tropics Sustainable Tourism Plan 2021–2031. This plan, released in September 2021, re-imagines a shared vision and creates a roadmap for a more sustainable and resilient tourism future in the Wet Tropics.

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- 4 Our partnerships with our communities, including with Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples, are highly valued and key to the sustainable future of the Area. In June 2021, we were honoured to recognise ten worthy recipients for their extraordinary contributions to the conservation and presentation of the World Heritage Area at the Authority’s prestigious 18th Cassowary Awards.

During 2020–21 the Queensland and Australian governments appointed two new directors to the Authority’s Board. Ms Chrissy Grant, an Eastern Kuku-Yalanji woman, joins the Authority with a wealth of national and international experience relating to Indigenous peoples, natural and cultural diversity and World Heritage. Dr Sally Driml is an honorary senior lecturer and researcher at the University of Queensland and has more than 30 years of experience working across issues of climate change, tourism and

protected area management. We are delighted to welcome these learned and experienced new directors to the Board.

Sadly, in December 2020, the Wet Tropics lost one of its best known and loved nature-based tourism champions, Mr John Courtenay. A recently retired Board director, John's long-held passion and commitment to the tourism industry drove and informed the Authority's work with the sector. The Authority is grateful for his substantial contribution which will continue to guide our work into the future.

We would also like to acknowledge and thank fellow directors, Executive Director Scott Buchanan and the Authority's hardworking and passionate staff for their commitment to the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area.



Ms Christine Grant
Chair



Ms Leslie Shirreffs PSM
Outgoing Chair

About the Wet Tropics

The Wet Tropics World Heritage Area

World Heritage listing of a site is recognition by the international community that the place is such an outstanding example of the world's natural and/or cultural heritage that its conservation is of value to all people. The World Heritage List is comprised of 1,154 properties which the World Heritage Committee considers have Outstanding Universal Value—including 20 Australian properties.

The Wet Tropics of Queensland World Heritage Area (the Area) was inscribed onto the World Heritage List in 1988 for its natural values, meeting all four natural criteria for World Heritage listing and fulfilling the necessary conditions of integrity.¹ The Area was listed on Australia's National Heritage List in 2007 for its natural values,² and in 2012 for its Indigenous cultural values.

The Area is a rich, living cultural landscape for Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples, who have lived continuously in the rainforest environment for many thousands of years. Indeed, it is the only Australian site where Aboriginal people have permanently inhabited a tropical rainforest environment.

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 World Heritage Area to future generations.

The Queensland Act established the Wet Tropics Management Authority and provides 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 Wet Tropics World Heritage Area Management Scheme is an intergovernmental agreement signed by the Prime Minister of Australia and the Premier of Queensland in 1990. It sets out broad structural and funding arrangements for the management of the Area.

1 <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/486>

2 <http://www.environment.gov.au/heritage/places/world/wet-tropics>

Our organisation

Who we are

The Wet Tropics Management Authority (the Authority) was established to ensure Australia's obligation under the World Heritage Convention is met, in relation to the Wet Tropics of Queensland World Heritage Area (the 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 Minister and the Ministerial Forum 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 is conducive to the protection of the Area's natural heritage values and consistent with the World Heritage Convention and relevant legislation.

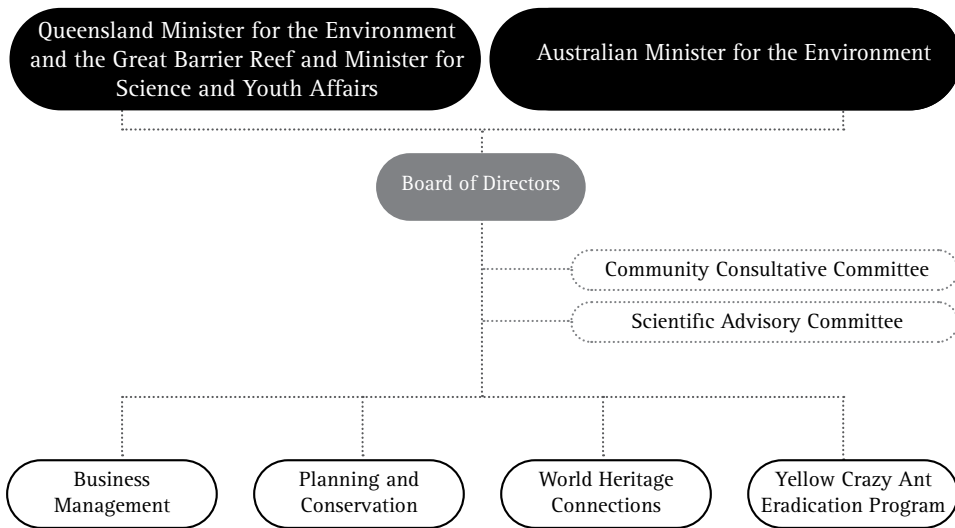
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Our structure

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

The Authority operates as an administrative unit within the Queensland Government's Department of Environment and Science (DES) and is subject to Queensland public sector legislation, regulations, standards and guidelines governing administrative functions and arrangements. The Director-General of DES is the accountable officer for the Authority under the Financial and Performance Management Standard 2009. The Authority is responsible to the Director-General regarding compliance with Queensland Government administrative and financial standards.

Wet Tropics Management Authority reporting structure



Relevant ministers

The Intergovernmental Agreement recognises that both the Australian Government and Queensland Government have joint interests in and responsibilities for the World Heritage Area. The Authority's Board of Directors reports to two ministers:

- The Hon. Meaghan Scanlon MP, Queensland Minister for Environment and the Great Barrier Reef and Minister for Science and Youth Affairs
- The Hon. Sussan Ley MP, Australian Minister for the Environment.

Board of Directors

The Authority's Board of Directors (the Board) is established under the Queensland Act and 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 member and a non-voting director. The Australian Government and the Queensland Government nominate two directors each. The relevant ministers jointly nominate a chair and a designated Aboriginal director. The Board's key function is to implement programs to meet Australia's international obligations for the Area under the World Heritage Convention.

Dr Sally Driml and Ms Chrissy Grant were appointed by the relevant ministers as directors to the Board in October 2020. As of June 2021, the process to appoint a female Indigenous director and a new Chairperson was in its final stages, and a further process is underway to recruit to the director roles which will become vacant in September and November 2021. The appointment of directors to these roles is the decision of the Australian and Queensland Ministers.

In May 2021 the Board identified its priorities for the next three years, taking into account the Wet Tropics Strategic Plan 2020–2030, extensive

consultation during the Wet Tropics Management Plan 1998 review and input from the Community Consultative Committee and the Scientific Advisory Committee. The Board Priorities 2021–2024 inform business planning and are published on the Authority’s website. Details on the operations of the Board and its achievements in 2020–21 are included at Appendix 1.

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 and the Scientific Advisory Committee. These committees meet prior to Board meetings and advise the Authority on programs and research for the management of the Area. Each committee is chaired by one of the Board’s directors, providing a direct line of communication between the committees and the Board.

Our contribution to government objectives

The vision of the Authority is: ‘to protect the values of the Wet Tropics through collaboration, culture, knowledge and passion’.

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 community.

Reporting

a) Statutory reporting obligations

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), each year the Authority prepares an annual report (this report) which includes the financial statements and administration of the acts. The Authority also prepares a report on the state of the Wet Tropics.

b) IUCN World Heritage Outlook reporting

The Authority supplied information to the Australian Government to inform the development of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) World Heritage Outlook Report (the Outlook Report) which was published in December 2020. The goal of the Outlook Report is to improve the conservation of natural World Heritage sites and strengthen the World Heritage Convention through an early warning system, transparency and a proactive approach to knowledge management. The 2020 Outlook Report rated the Wet Tropics of Queensland World Heritage Area as of Significant Concern. The Outlook Report noted ‘the Wet Tropics of Queensland World Heritage site is protected by a strong and updated legislative framework, a dedicated independent Management Authority that enjoys broad community support, and a comprehensive suite of management strategies. However, the insidious and damaging threat posed by invasive plants, animals and diseases, and the impacts of climate change present real danger to the continuing integrity of the site’s biodiversity and associated endemic species.

Whilst significant efforts have been taken to address these threats on the ground, the level of investment does not appear to be commensurate with the urgency for significant preventative and remedial action.'

c) UNESCO Periodic Reporting

The Authority submitted a six-yearly periodic report for the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area in June 2021 via the Australian Government to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) World Heritage Convention. Periodic reporting is a global conservation monitoring activity at the international level and is one of the core conservation monitoring mechanisms of the World Heritage Convention. The World Heritage Centre will produce a report for the Asia and Pacific region, based on the information collected through the periodic reporting exercise. Periodic reporting is a statutory requirement of the World Heritage Convention (Article 29 of the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage).

Recognition

The work of the Authority and its partners was recognised in 2020–21 through two prestigious awards. In December 2020 the Authority, along with all program stakeholders and partners, received a biannual Queensland Pest Animal Team award, from the Weed Society of Queensland (Pest Animal branch) for its Yellow Crazy Ant Eradication Program. This award recognises 'any project, ongoing or completed in the last two years, that has, or is, achieving exceptional results in on-ground pest animal management and has, or is, delivering an outstanding contribution to pest animal management in Queensland'.

In May 2021 the Society for Ecological Restoration Australasia (SERA) also recognised the Authority with a SERA International Award for Restoration Excellence (below 50 ha). The award recognises the Authority's role in restoring rainforest on Mt Hypipamee in the Atherton Tablelands section of the Area. With partners, the Authority facilitated the planting of endemic rainforest trees across 8.5ha to create a 1.7km corridor that now links 142 hectares of remnant and regrowth forest. The project targeted a landscape with significant biodiversity values, engaged local communities, and fostered on-going (multi-institutional) research partnerships to deliver conservation outcomes.

Our performance

This annual report outlines the Wet Tropics Management Authority's (the Authority) progress against the Wet Tropics Strategic Plan 2020–2030 (the Plan). The Plan details how the Authority will work with partners and the community to effectively manage and protect the World Heritage values of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area (the Area) and ensure cooperative management with Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples.

Five high-level strategies are identified in the strategic plan, and the Authority's achievements in 2020–21 are detailed in accordance with these:

Strategy 1—Climate change and other threats (see page 13)

Strategy 2—Support Rainforest Aboriginal People (see page 16)

Strategy 3—Involve the community (see page 18)

Strategy 4—World-class tourism and recreation (see page 20)

Strategy 5—Minimise impacts (see page 22)

All of the Authority's work is underpinned by its commitment to delivering high standards of corporate governance, prioritising workplace health and safety, and ensuring that financial management demonstrates transparency and accountability (see page 24).

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

Climate change is the most significant threat to the Area, impacting the biodiversity values which underpin the World Heritage listing of the Area and with the potential to affect the region's economy. Biosecurity threats (including tropical weeds, yellow crazy ants, and other pest animals) also negatively impact on World Heritage values and place further pressure on already threatened species and ecosystems.

The Authority collaborates with partners such as Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service and Partnerships (QPWS&P), Biosecurity Queensland, Terrain NRM, and Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples to address threats and facilitate recovery and rehabilitation of species and ecosystems.

Climate adaptation planning and action

The Authority has made significant progress in delivering actions outlined in *Accept, Act, Adapt: Climate Adaptation Plan for the Wet Tropics 2020–2030*. For example, the Authority, with funds from the Queensland Government's Reef Assist program, is supporting Gimuy Walubara Yidinji People to partner with James Cook University in leading a monitoring and research program into mountain-dwelling possum and bird species in Dinden National Park. This aligns with actions 5 and 18 of the Climate Adaptation Plan in fostering the integration of traditional ecological knowledge with western science and supporting research and monitoring led by Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples.

During 2020–21 the Authority, QPWS&P and James Cook University supported the recommencement of a long-term mountain top monitoring program to better understand how particularly susceptible endemic upland possums and birds are responding to changes in climate. Mountain tops of the Wet Tropics are highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change and it is known that endemic forest species are already reduced in both distribution and population, primarily as a result of climate change. Because of their high conservation and evolutionary value these species are a highly valued component of Wet Tropics biodiversity. Results in 2020–21 confirmed alarming indications that all endemic possum species are rapidly declining from these areas. Monitoring provides QPWS&P and the Authority with a clearer understanding of the distribution and abundance of these climate-threatened taxa. It also assists in defining management actions to aid conservation, promote resilience and assist in facilitating the adaptation of these species and their habitats against ongoing climate change.

To assist in protecting threatened species and strengthening the resilience of natural areas for climate adaptation, in 2020–21 the Authority successfully secured \$2.6 million in Queensland Government Reef Assist funding for land conservation and rehabilitation works. Collaborating with Traditional Custodian groups and other natural resource management organisations, this work included:

- priority invasive species control with the Gunggandji Mandingalbay Yidinji Peoples Prescribed Body Corporate Aboriginal Corporation in their trustee area
- weed removal in Wooroonooran National Park with Mamu Traditional Custodians and at Dirran’s End Nature Refuge and Barrine Park Nature Refuge with North Queensland Land Management Services
- montane species research and monitoring in Dinden National Park led by Gimuy Walubara Yidinji Peoples
- cultural heritage research in the Goldsborough Valley carried out by Dulabed and Malanbarra Yidinji Peoples, and
- removal of 5ha of lantana and initiating the planting of 5000 seedlings in high elevation rainforests at Misty Mountains Nature Refuge.

In 2020–21 the Authority continued to work with the Australian Tropical Herbarium to research, ‘rescue’ and translocate high altitude plant species threatened by climate change, to botanic gardens across Australia for the safeguarding of genetic material for the future.

The Authority also continued to build a coalition of partners to drive adaptation efforts in the region, working closely with Terrain NRM, the Cairns Regional Council, the Cairns and Far North Environment Centre and 20 other key organisations to develop and launch the Green and Blue Economic Stimulus package.

Eradicating yellow crazy ants from the Wet Tropics

14 In the second year of the Project Agreement for Yellow Crazy Ant Control–Wet Tropics of Queensland (an agreement between the Commonwealth of Australia and the State of Queensland), the Authority has made considerable progress in leading its Yellow Crazy Ant Eradication Program. The Authority has delivered continued success towards eradication and significant advancements in targeted surveillance. Overall, eradication remains on track, with about 85% of the total treatment area no longer requiring broadscale treatment and transitioned to long-term monitoring and spot treatment. The discovery of 12 new detections in 2020–21 confirmed that targeted surveys based on observations and comprehensive data analysis, and the move to a seasonal model, was ideal in detecting other areas of infestation.

The Authority continued to make significant improvements in survey capacity and methodologies and broadened the extent of its surveys to look for remaining infestations throughout the Cairns and Kuranda regions. Staff intensively surveyed 882,484 points covering 4,076ha in total, including 646km along the boundary of and within the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area, as well as large areas of sugarcane.

Strong industry partnerships, community education and a continued media presence were vital to the eradication program. The sugar industry continued to demonstrate broad support and cooperation, implementing an agreed harvesting protocol to minimise the potential spread of yellow crazy ants. The analysis of MSF Sugar’s harvester movement data—which is used to track harvester movement from areas of infestation to trace potential spread of yellow crazy ants in and out of known infestations—identified several additional infestations. The Authority also continued to work with James Cook University on a range of research projects to help achieve eradication.

The seventh annual Natural Asset Management Advisory Committee (NAMAC) Taskforce event was held in May 2021. The event attracted 113 participants from 11 organisations who joined the Authority to survey 571ha across 233km of headlands from 78,955 inspection points over five days. A further 68 ant samples were collected for examination, with no yellow crazy ants detected.

Several Traditional Custodian groups participated in the NAMAC taskforce, and the Authority collaborated with representatives from Gimuy Walubara Yidinji, Gunggandji Mandingalbay Yidinji and Dulabed and Malanbarra Yidinji Peoples on a series of activities including employment, training and consultation during 2020–21.

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

Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples have been integral to the care and management of Wet Tropics landscapes for many thousands of years. As Traditional Custodians, Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples bring unique connections, knowledge and skills to the contemporary management of the Area. The Authority values the critical role of Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples and recognises that the active incorporation and promotion of Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples' rights, interests and aspirations is essential to successful collaborative management.

In 2020–21 the Authority continued to support the Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples Think Tank (RAPTT), engaging Grant Thornton Australia Pty Ltd to provide secretariat services for the RAPTT. Four meetings and a two-day workshop were held to progress the refresh of the Wet Tropics of Queensland Regional Agreement (the Regional Agreement). The RAPTT finalised a draft supplementary agreement which outlines the ongoing commitment sought from the Australian and Queensland governments and other partners to deliver the refresh of the Regional Agreement. Negotiations commenced with five relevant Australian and Queensland Ministers to investigate funding and partnership opportunities, with the RAPTT receiving in-principle support and positive feedback. The Honourable Craig Crawford, Member for Barron River and Queensland Minister for Seniors and Disability Services and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, agreed to champion the work of the RAPTT to advocate for the refresh to be progressed and delivered.

The Authority commenced planning for the fourth Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples' forum—to be held 23–25 July 2021. The forum will bring together approximately 80 representatives of Rainforest Aboriginal Prescribed Bodies Corporate, Registered Native Title Bodies Corporate, and cultural heritage bodies and other partners to meet and discuss matters of importance to Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples. The forum will also provide an opportunity for government and other organisations to share information and learn from Traditional Custodians.

Staff built their skills to implement a rights-based approach through targeted training in native title, human rights and good decision making delivered by the Queensland Ombudsman and Crown Law. An audit of all Authority internal policies and procedures was also undertaken to ensure compliance with Queensland's *Human Rights Act 2019*.

A \$40,000 Rainforest Aboriginal Grants Program was delivered to assist Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples to fulfil cultural responsibilities to Country, enhance their knowledge, and improve capacity to manage cultural and natural values across traditional land and sea estates in the Area. Five projects were funded varying from cultural mapping to the development of an Indigenous-led tourism handbook.

The Authority continued to highlight and promote the achievements and on-Country work of Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples through the production of four Rainforest Aboriginal Newsletters, and the 2021–22 People Country Culture Calendar. The calendar featured Eastern Kuku Yalanji artist Emma Burchill’s artwork showcasing the seasons on her Country.

A timeline video—Our Collective Journey—was produced and released by the Authority in 2020. The video highlights the significant determination, resilience, courage, knowledge and leadership of Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples in the management of the Area, while promoting and celebrating the accomplishments of a 30-year collective journey.

In October 2020 the Authority, together with QPWS&P, launched the Wet Tropics Application for Research Endorsement (ARE) trial. The trial delivers on long-standing commitments made under the 2005 Regional Agreement. All relevant research permit applications made within the Area are subject to the ARE, which provides a formal process to enhance engagement with Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples and ensure any research being conducted on Country is undertaken with the free, prior and informed consent of Traditional Custodians.

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

The Wet Tropics World Heritage Area is a key feature of the north Queensland landscape. The Authority collaborates with a diverse range of partners and stakeholders and recognises the valuable role land management agencies, landholders, Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples, the private sector, conservation groups, volunteers and the wider community have in managing the Area.

Reinvigorating engagement through COVID-safe events and meetings utilising a blend of face-to-face and live streaming was a key feature of 2020–21. The Authority worked with partners, presenters and venues to create engaging events that focused on sharing important stories about the Area. Across a series of four ‘Science and Smashed Avocados’ breakfast presentations in Kuranda, Cairns and Mission Beach, Wet Tropics audiences learned about:

- Indigenous perspectives for future proofing and fire management of the Wet Tropics with Djabugay Traditional Custodian Barry Hunter and Dr Peta-Marie Standley
- climate change in the Wet Tropics with Associate Professor Susan Laurance and Dr Cath Moran
- the Outstanding Universal Value of the Area and how the Authority works with the community to protect it with Dr Martin Cohen and Gimuy Walubara Yidinji Traditional Custodian Gudju Gudju Fourmile, and
- sustainable tourism in the Wet Tropics with Dr Sally Driml and Russell Boswell.

The Authority planned and held the 18th Cassowary Awards at the Tanks Arts Centre in June 2021. These long-standing awards—running almost annually since 1999—are the only awards in Australia to recognise community members’ increasingly vital contribution to World Heritage management and longevity. Hosted by the Authority’s Board and attended by more than 180 guests, the awards received 50 nominations with 10 individuals and organisations receiving awards.

Minimal COVID-19 cases in Far North Queensland also allowed larger regional events to be staged in 2020–21. The Authority participated in and provided sponsorship for the Cairns Regional Council’s 2021 Ecofiesta, highlighting the value of the Area, educating attendees about the impact of yellow crazy ants on the region, and assisting people to re-engage with the Wet Tropics through local tourism and volunteering.

The Authority was also able to implement effective and vital face-to-face community engagement and education on its Yellow Crazy Ant Eradication Program. Staff gave school talks, undertook door-knocking, one-on-one consultations and attended several community events across the region. Call outs increased by 63% from the previous year due to increased presence of signage throughout the region, as well as the production and distribution of identification cards for yellow crazy ants, dust banners for fence displays, bumper stickers and rear side advertising on buses. The Authority also continued to work with Kuranda Envirocare to support the Yellow Crazy Ant Community Taskforce partnership for community volunteer participation and engagement.

The inclusion of live-streaming and the creation of video content was further embedded into the Authority's events and post-event work. This increased the Authority's online engagement significantly, enticing and inviting the local and international community to engage with the wonder of the Wet Tropics. The Authority's production and release of more video content reflects changing trends in social media and saw increased followers and engagement with Wet Tropics campaigns and messaging across all social media platforms. For example:

- the 'Science and Smashed Avocados' series was watched online by more than 3,000 people, and
- more than 50,000 watched and half a million people were reached with a post for International Day of Forests highlighting Reef Assist restoration work being undertaken in the Area. This was the Authority's most successful Facebook post to date.

The Authority's implementation of climate resilience and landscape restoration projects with Traditional Custodians and other partners under the \$2.7 million Reef Assist funding also incorporated capacity building and skill-sharing in communications. Authority staff trained Indigenous rangers in the use of drone technology, videography, photography and media. These new skills empower the rangers and foster deeper relationships between the Authority and Traditional Custodians.

The Community Consultative Committee (CCC) and Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) were key informants for the Authority in 2020–21, providing a link between the views of the scientific and the broader community, and the Board. The CCC provided meaningful advice to the Board regarding the Board's Priorities 2021–2024, the Sustainable Tourism Plan, climate action, and for a planned Landscape Restoration Symposium. In 2020–21 the SAC provided significant guidance in the development of the Climate Action Grants program, published a journal article titled 'Managing a World Heritage Site in the Face of Climate Change: A Case Study of the Wet Tropics in Northern Queensland' and provided expert advice on a Wet Tropics climate risk vulnerability analysis.

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

One of the Authority’s obligations under the World Heritage Convention is to present the globally significant values of the Area. Sharing these values and promoting their worth is key to providing meaningful and enriching visitor experiences. The Wet Tropics’ World Heritage status warrants concerted efforts to provide the highest quality standards in presentation, including a diversity of experiences and activities that are ecologically sustainable and maintain the integrity of the Area.

Wet Tropics Sustainable Tourism Plan

During 2020–21 the Authority continued its consultation and development of the Wet Tropics Sustainable Tourism Plan 2021–2031 funded by the Australian Government through the Australian Heritage Grants. The extensive consultation process involved more than 150 individuals representing over 80 groups and organisations. This process delivered a wealth of insights and clear direction on opportunities to combine collective efforts and deliver the best visitor experiences. The plan will be launched in September 2021.

Building community appreciation and advocacy of the Area

In response to positive feedback and sustained industry demand, the Wet Tropics Ambassador Program was adapted and delivered online three times during 2020–21 to more than 80 people by Savannah Guides under a Memorandum of Understanding with the Authority. Participants were a mix of local, national and international trainees and included Cassowary Coast councillors who demonstrated their commitment as Wet Tropics Ambassadors, proudly promoting the Ambassador logo embroidered on their corporate uniform.

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One in-person Ambassador Program delivery took place in Mission Beach, with 25 participants plus several Authority staff and Board directors in attendance. This was delivered in conjunction with the Authority’s ‘Science and Smashed Avocados: Sustainable tourism in the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area’ breakfast event, which had 22 external attendees and was watched 998 times online during and after the event.

A handbook for Indigenous tour operators in the Wet Tropics

The Authority’s Rainforest Aboriginal Grants program provided \$10,000 in funding to Buluwai Indigenous Corporation to develop a tour operator handbook specifically for Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples and groups working on Country.

Focused on Indigenous-led nature-based and cultural tourism experiences, the handbook will discuss developing experiences and creating a set of

standards, working in partnerships across the bioregion to take Indigenous tourism to the next level.

Work on the project has expanded to developing a comprehensive Indigenous cultural training cadet program for Indigenous guides, which will lead to ongoing education and permanent roles in tourism, education and land care.

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

The Authority works closely with partners and stakeholders to achieve a balance between protection of the Area’s Outstanding Universal Value and allowing appropriate development for essential community and visitor infrastructure (including for tourism and recreation). It also actively supports Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples to achieve aspirations to live and work on Country, and other commercial and non-commercial land uses by private landholders within the Area.

The Authority received Queensland Parliament approval of the updated Wet Tropics Management Plan (the Management Plan) on 11 September 2020. This followed endorsement by Australian Minister the Hon. Sussan Ley and the then Queensland Minister, the Hon. Leeanne Enoch. The updated Management Plan reflects the significant contributions, feedback and input from the extensive community and industry consultation process. The updated Management Plan delivers an improved zoning plan, greater clarity for tourism infrastructure and improved recognition and consideration of Aboriginal Traditions in development assessments.

During 2020–21, the Authority assessed and approved three permit applications related to new infrastructure and provided advice to dozens of enquiries relating to proposed activities that did not require a permit. One significant permit approval was for the replacement of the Noah Creek bridge on Cape Tribulation Road. The bridge is located in an area of the Daintree National Park which is potentially the most biodiverse catchment in Australia supporting extensive endemic flora. The existing single-lane timber bridge was aged and deteriorating and was to be replaced with a dual carriageway concrete bridge. Cognisant of potential long-term negative impacts on cassowary and other fauna, the Authority negotiated the inclusion of electronic speed signs and rumble strips at the bridge’s approaches to encourage drivers to slow down when approaching and departing the bridge.

The Authority progressed a number of major permitting process and system improvements in 2020–21. It introduced a new online permit application system and a linked permit database to improve record keeping and streamline the assessment and approvals process and developed and implemented a standardised system to assess native title and human rights matters.

Considerable efforts were applied to compliance matters, including responses to illegal tree clearing in the Area and the investigation of illegal mining (fossicking) across a number of sites within the Area. The Authority collaborated with Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service and Partnerships (QPWS&P) to develop a strategy to guide compliance on the National Park estate within the Area and a Strategic Compliance Plan for other tenures.

The Authority has been supporting the Commonwealth's Review of COAG Councils and Ministerial Forums (the Conran Review) and has provided subsequent technical advice and support to the Queensland Government for implementing recommendations of the review. Partly in response to the Conran Review, the Authority also prepared and submitted drafting instructions for a review of the *Wet Tropics World Heritage Management and Protection Act 1993* (a Commonwealth act) to the Office of the Queensland Parliamentary Council for comment.

High quality executive, partnership and governance work to ensure the Authority remains an accountable and capable organisation

The Authority is committed to excellence in corporate governance and management to ensure financial and business planning appropriately supports and enhances the achievement of strategic goals.

Financial summary 2020–2021

a) Revenue

Total revenue recorded for 2020–21 was \$13.1 million with an increase of \$2.5 million from the prior financial year. The Authority was successful in gaining an additional \$1.9 million from the Queensland Government's Reef Assist Program which has been invested in land management activities in the Area. The remaining reportable revenue pertained to the 2019–20 approved deferrals which were appropriated to activities in 2020–21.

The Authority's main source of revenue was Commonwealth appropriation funding totalling \$5.7 million and distributed via Queensland Treasury. This funding ensures the continuity of vital daily operations for the Authority including its Yellow Crazy Ant Eradication Program.

The Authority also derived additional revenue of:

- \$30,000 from the Commonwealth Government to finalise the Tourism Destination Plan and support the Cassowary Renewal Recovery Plan
- \$15,500 category sponsorships from our 2021 Cassowary Awards, and
- \$10,500 in unplanned revenue from Queensland Government for the reimbursement of operational costs related to its Yellow Crazy Ant Eradication Program.

b) Expenditure

Total expenditure for the year ending 30 June 2021 was \$11.6 million, with a noticeable increase of \$2.3 million from 2019–20. The primary driver of this variance can be attributed to the Authority distributing \$1.725 million in Reef Assist grants to various Aboriginal corporations and other Wet Tropics natural resource management service providers.

Recruitment and selection processes were delayed for four vital Authority positions, which in turn contributed to savings in employee-related expenditure. Savings in the expenditure budget can be attributed to decisions not to proceed with both the Citizen Science Grants Program and delaying the Landscape Restoration Symposium, and delays in finalising a major and complex contract.

Operationally, the Authority dispensed \$2.042 million to regional suppliers for specialised services and advice with a \$1.99 million appropriation for outsourced delivery of local seasonal contract labour hire.

c) Financial management

As a statutory body, the Authority's overall fiscal transactions are incorporated into the DES financial statement for 2020–21. The full-time equivalent (FTE) data—including Authority staff—are included in the Department of Environment and Science (DES) financial statements for employee expenses.

Wet Tropics Management Authority operating statement

Controlled revenue and expenses	Notes	2020–2021	2019–2020
		\$'000	\$'000
Revenue			
Revenue from government			
Payments for outputs		6,204	4,608
Asset assumed/liabilities transferred			
Sub-total government revenue		6,204	4,608
Own source revenue			
User charges			
Grants and other contributions	1	6,845	5,700
Taxes fees and fines			
Gain on disposal of fixed assets			
Other revenue		56	224
Interest			
Sub-total own source revenue		6,901	5,924
Total revenue		13,105	10,532
Expenses		\$'000	\$'000
Operating expenses			
Program			
BBA Business Management		11,561	9,278
Sub-total operating expenses		11,561	9,278
Non-operating expenses			
Depreciation		7	8
Asset write-downs/loss on disposal			
Sub-total non-operating expenses		7	8
Total expenses		11,568	9,286
Operating result		1,537	1,246

Notes:

1 Commonwealth funding is received as Commonwealth Appropriation paid via Queensland Treasury. For transparency purposes these payments are reflected as 'own source' revenue

d) 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 DES in discharging his 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 DES's quarterly controlled self-assessments and internal audits, in conjunction with external requests from the Queensland Audit Office.

An external auditor was appointed during 2020–21 to independently review two of our Commonwealth grants to ensure compliance with established financial practice management by verifying revenue and expenditure records.

Integrated Services through robust governance practices

a) Public sector ethics

The Authority's staff are public sector employees, and we are bound by the *Public Service Act 2008*, the *Public Sector Ethics Act 1994*, and the Code of Conduct for the Queensland Public Service (Code of Conduct).

The Authority and its staff abide by the four ethical principles identified under the *Public Sector Ethics Act 1994* which are embedded in the Code of Conduct:

- integrity and impartiality
- promoting the public good
- commitment to the system of government
- accountability and transparency.

The DES Workforce Relations and Integrity (WRI) team provides general advice to the Authority and co-ordinates training on ethical issues including the Code of Conduct, ethical dilemmas, conflict of interest and other employment. Its objective is to support and promote a culture of integrity and accountability.

The WRI team also investigate and report misconduct and corruption, liaise with the Crime and Corruption Commission Queensland and lead public interest disclosure protection.

b) Education and training

The Authority continues to build a strong and accountable workforce by ensuring high ethical standards and values, adherence to the Code of Conduct for the Queensland public service. Staff complete DES Corporate Induction Program mandatory training, including annual refreshers in Emergency Safety, Fraud and Corruption Awareness, Code of Conduct and Information Privacy Awareness.

In 2020–21 staff also completed other training regarding workplace health and safety, cultural awareness, public sector management, human rights, procurement, disability awareness, information security and domestic and family violence.

The Authority invested \$12,000 in training and development which included mandatory First Aid and CPR, Good Decisions and Level 1 Procurement Training. Community engagement staff undertook International Association for Public Participation Engagement Essentials training.

c) Procedures and practices

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

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

d) Human rights

The Authority continues to build a human rights-based culture that has an ongoing commitment to protect, respect and promote human rights. In 2020–21 processes were initiated to review internal policies, operational procedures, decision-making frameworks and the staff induction manual to ensure compatibility with the Queensland *Human Rights Act 2019* (the Act). The Authority began drafting both a Customer Complaints Policy and Procedure and a Considering Human Rights Policy and Procedure to guide staff in addressing human rights in the context of their decision making. Staff also completed the DES mandatory human rights training.

The Act commenced in full on 1 January 2020. Twenty-three human rights are protected under the Act, which places obligations on the public sector to ensure actions and decisions are compatible with human rights. In 2020 DES established a Human Rights Working Group (HRWG) to help prepare business units such as the Authority to embed human rights into its business by providing leadership, co-ordination, and support.

Through the HRWG, DES distributed communication and awareness resources, factsheets, and guides, delivered education and training to all staff, and has been supporting the Authority in its review of legislation, policies, and procedures for compatibility with human rights.

Since commencement of the 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 the Act.

e) Information systems and record keeping

Information is a critical asset enabling the Authority to deliver its services effectively, efficiently and consistently. The Authority complies with the *Public Records Act 2002* and keeps complete and accurate records of its activities.

The Authority has a record-keeping policy which further defines the expectations of staff and manages its records by:

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

The Authority initiated improvement of information and recordkeeping systems by developing and implementing mandatory record-keeping training for staff. This will help ensure a more seamless record keeping experience, inform better decision making and improve reporting processes.

Both a paper-based and electronic document and records management system (eDocs) are currently utilised to manage and secure administrative and core business records. Administrative records are disposed of appropriately and in accordance with the Queensland Government's General Records and Disposal Schedule, and the State Archives Retention and Disposal Schedule.

Using ESRI mapping software, the Authority has also begun developing a new mobile data collection system to collect, collate and store yellow crazy ant data. This is part of an increased focus on the use of innovative technology for capture, online interactive mapping and centralised cloud-based record-keeping of the large amounts of data generated from yellow crazy ant eradication work.

The Authority utilises the whole-of-government SAP system for financial performance management and Aurion for human resource management.

As a statutory body, the Authority complies with DES Information Security. DES will incorporate the Authority into the preparation and lodgement of the 2020–21 Information Security Annual Return.

Governance—Human Resources

a) Workforce profile

Full-time equivalent (FTE) by occupation and employment type and gender.

Staffing full-time equivalent (FTE) by occupation type and gender (as at 18 June 2021)			
Occupational stream	Female	Male	Total
Administration	14	9	23
Operational	1	13	14
Professional	4	2	6
Technical		1	1
Senior executive service		1	1
Total	19	26	45

Full-time equivalent by employment type and gender as at 18 June 2021						
Employment type	FTE		FTE		Total FTE	Total FTE%
	Female	Male	Female	Male		
Contract		1	0.00%	3.85%	1	2.22%
Permanent	12	5	63.16%	19.23%	17	37.78%
Temporary	7	20	36.84%	76.92%	27	60.00%
Grand total	19	26	42.22%	57.78%	45	100.00%

The Wet Tropics Management Authority establishment as at 30/06/2021 includes a FTE cap of 51 positions and the Authority experienced a permanent separation rate of 5.89% for the 2020-21 reporting period.

b) Strategic workforce planning and performance

The Authority continues to empower, support, and equip staff to successfully deliver its services into the future. The Authority began a process to refresh its strategic workforce planning framework to address the needs of a diverse workforce. The workforce plan will integrate common workforce themes, challenges, and solutions to articulate the Authority's future workforce vision.

The plan will cover:

- inclusion and diversity
- leadership and management development
- talent retention
- flexible work arrangements, and
- health and wellbeing.

During 2020–21 the Authority recruited to vacant positions using the mandated and COVID-responsive Queensland Government recruitment process. The Authority continued striving for improved workforce inclusion and diversity, including fostering a workplace culture that supports and promotes the interests of First Nations Indigenous people.

The tenets of diversity and inclusion are woven through the Authority's programs and initiatives. The Authority acknowledges and promotes the benefits of gender equity including women in leadership. In 2020–21 of the seven positions at A06 or higher, 56% were women. Additionally, the Authority recognises and promotes cultural and generational diversity, LGBTIQ inclusion and working with people with a disability as set out in strategies such as the Gurra Gurra framework, the Cultural Capability Action Plan, Reconciliation Action Plan, Disability Service Plan and Queensland public sector LGBTIQ+ inclusion strategy.

The Authority maintains its talent pool by ensuring staff are supported to access to a range of opportunities, including further education, conferences, and seminars. In 2020–21 staff utilised on-the-job development opportunities through higher duties, secondments and hot-tasking. A range of tools are also available to assist managers and employees to have meaningful career and personal development conversations and staff are encouraged to consider the full range of development opportunities open to them. This could include on-the-job training, relieving, short term projects, coaching and mentoring and participation in formal training activities.

c) 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 shifted during 2020–21 as COVID-19 continued to impact on working arrangements. Managers acquired skills in managing teams working from home and in how to continue delivering outcomes in a challenging environment.

The challenge of ongoing COVID-19 restrictions and requirements for social distancing also impacted on opportunities to engage in traditional face-to-face leadership training. Online and technology-based learning increased, and several managers and team leaders completed leadership development training through iLearn.

d) Working for Queensland Survey

In 2020–21, the Authority’s workforce participated in the annual Working for Queensland Survey, which was designed to explore employee perceptions of the workplace climate in areas such as employee engagement, job satisfaction and leadership within the public service.

The Authority had a response rate of 71% with a return rate 8% higher than 2019. Key results for the Authority included:

- a 27% increase in work/life balance satisfaction
- positive responses from 100% of respondents regarding their opportunity to ‘decide how I do my work’
- increased engagement from 76% in 2019 to 81% in 2020, and
- flexible work arrangements reflected a 30% increase

The Authority’s survey results highlighted that employee wellbeing, reducing excessive workloads and improving development opportunities remains important to employees. An internal staff working group has taken leadership in identifying where there are opportunities for improvement and to drive positive workplace change.

e) Reward and recognition

The Authority values its employees and recognises that their success and achievements contribute to the Authority’s continued high performance. Reward and recognition help to maintain a healthy and positive workplace culture.

During 2020–21 at weekly staff briefings and through email and online, Authority staff—including the Executive Director and managers—regularly and openly acknowledged positive behaviors and the outstanding, challenging and important work of other staff.

At the 2020 Director-General’s Safety Behaviour Awards, the Authority’s Logistics Coordinator’s outstanding commitment to safety was recognised and he received a Safety and Wellbeing leadership award (individual category).

f) Employee health and wellbeing

The Authority is committed to cultivating a supportive workplace that demonstrates a strong commitment to staff health, safety and wellbeing. It utilises risk management techniques and processes, follows and adapts DES procedures, and engages in processes to identify, manage and reduce risk, hazards and work-related incidents.

The Authority takes a proactive approach to welfare to support those employees who may be vulnerable. It also promotes best practice in early intervention strategies to appropriately manage injury and illness cases and ensure the best possible return-to-work outcomes. During 2020–21 staff also accessed the DES wellness program including free skin cancer checks, flu vaccinations and mental health awareness sessions.

In 2020–21 six workstation assessments were completed by an occupational therapist to advise staff on practices to ensure optimal comfort, and to reduce exposure to workstation related injuries.

The Authority's Workplace Health and Safety Team ensured legislative compliance to ensure adherence to relevant policies and procedures. The team also developed and implemented an improved, comprehensive risk register and began a process for reviewing processes such as updating the Remote Working Procedure to better align with the risk register.

g) Flexible working arrangements

Providing flexible working arrangements is a key enabler of an inclusive and productive workforce. Flexibility and adaptiveness characterised the Authority's response to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020–21. Through the development and review of the Authority's Return to Workplace Transition Plan and the COVID-19 Workplace Health and Safety Plan, staff were able to safely transition back to the workplace following lockdowns as well as continue to work-from-home as part of their flexible work agreements.

The replacement of landlines and desktop computers in 2020 with mobile phones and laptops also facilitated the smooth transition between home and office and enabling improved mobility and connectiveness for staff.

h) Industrial and employee relations framework

The Authority abides by the tenets of the DES industrial and employee relations frameworks. The *Industrial Relations Act 2016* provides a framework for co-operative industrial relations setting out the minimum employment standards for employees, and the *Public Service Act 2008* prescribes arrangements and responsibilities specific to public service employees.

Employee conditions are detailed in the Queensland Public Service Officers and Other Employees Award – State 2015, and all staff are covered by the State Government Entities Certified Agreement – State 2019.

i) Early retirement, redundancy, and retrenchment

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

Appendix 1. Wet Tropics Management Authority Board of Directors

Wet Tropics Management Authority Board

Act or instrument

Wet Tropics World Heritage Protection and Management Act 1993

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 World Heritage Area. The Authority administers the Wet Tropics legislation and sets policies and procedures which govern activities and land use within the Wet Tropics of Queensland World Heritage Area. The Authority's mission is to lead, inspire, advise and support the Australian and global community to protect and share the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area in perpetuity.

The specific functions of the Authority are detailed in section 10 (1) of the Act.

Achievements

In 2020–21, the Board:

- welcomed two directors, Ms Chrissy Grant and Dr Sally Driml
- advised on a response to the Conran Review
- endorsed proposed changes to the *Wet Tropics World Heritage Protection and Management Act 1993*
- collaborated with partners to develop the Green and Blue Economic Stimulus Package
- met on Country with Eastern Kuku Yalanji Bama, Jabalbina Yalanji Aboriginal Corporation and the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service and Partnerships to discuss joint management negotiations for the Daintree, Ngalba Bulal and Black Mountain national parks
- continued to provide expert advice and championed the eradication of yellow crazy ants from the Area
- championed a rights-based approach to refresh the Wet Tropics of Queensland Regional Agreement with Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples.
- recognised community contributions in protecting the Area at the prestigious Cassowary Awards
- significantly enhanced meaningful and productive relationships with the community, tourism industry and other government agencies.

Financial reporting

The Authority provides audited financial statements as required by the Financial Accountability Regulation 2009.

Remuneration

Position	Name	Meetings and/or sessions attendance	Approved annual, sessional or daily fee	Approved sub-committee fees if applicable	Actual fees received
Chair	Leslie Shirreffs	6	\$520 daily fee		\$33,800* 8 sitting days
Member	Chrissy Grant	6	\$400 daily fee		\$5,400* 8 sitting days
Member	Iain Gordon	5	\$400 daily fee	\$400 daily fee Chair Wet Tropics SAC*	\$8,800* 7.5 sitting days
Member	Sally Driml	6	\$400 daily fee	\$400 daily fee Chair Wet Tropics CCC*	\$5,400* 8 sitting days
Member	Phillip Rist	3	\$400 daily fee		\$2,600 3.5 sitting days
Executive Director	Scott Buchanan	6	N/A	N/A	N/A

Number of The Board met on six separate occasions in 2020–21 including out-of-scheduled session (OOS) meetings (ie. eight sitting days in total):

- 26–27 November 2020 (meeting #113): two days, held at Cairns
- 24–25 February 2021 (meeting #114): two days, zoom meeting
- 30 April 2021 (Out of Session meeting #439 and #440): 0.5 day, zoom meeting
- 25–27 May 2021 (meeting #115): 2.5 days, held at Daintree
- 19 June 2021 (Out of Session meeting #441): 0.5 day, held at Cairns
- 19 June 2021 (Cassowary Awards): 0.5 day, held at Cairns

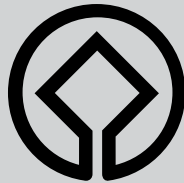
Total out-of-pocket expenses The Board operations cost a total of \$90,344 in 2020–21, with the main expenses attributed to sitting fees, reimbursement of out-of-pocket expenses, information technology support, travel and accommodation, meeting expenses and advertising for director recruitment processes. The Authority’s Chair and members were eligible to be reimbursed for \$810 of out-of-pocket expenses in 2020–21, this included taxi fares, motor vehicle reimbursement and travel allowance. The Board is fully funded by the Australian Government—the Queensland Government does not contribute to its operational cost.

* Chair and Member fees approved by Cabinet and Governor in Council—see Queensland Government Remuneration Procedures for Part-time Chairs and Members of Queensland Government Bodies – Regulation, Administration and Advice Level 2 (Daily)

** In addition to daily fees to attend board meetings, the Chair and members of the Board 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.

Abbreviations

AWHAC	Australian World Heritage Advisory Committee
CCC	Community Consultative Committee
Commonwealth Act	<i>Wet Tropics of Queensland World Heritage Area Conservation Act 1994</i>
DES	Department of Environment and Science
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
QPWS&P	Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service and Partnerships
Queensland Act	<i>Wet Tropics World Heritage Protection and Management Act 1993</i>
RAPTT	Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples Think Tank
SAC	Scientific Advisory Committee
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation



Ground Floor, Ports North building

Cnr Grafton and Hartley Streets

Cairns Qld 4870 | PO Box 2050 Cairns QLD 4870

Ph: 07 4241 0500 | wettropics@wtma.qld.gov.au

www.wettropics.gov.au

The Wet Tropics Management Authority is able to undertake its work in the Wet Tropics of Queensland World Heritage Area with the assistance of the Australian and Queensland Governments.