



# ANNUAL REPORT 2019–2020







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## Purpose of the report

This annual report details the financial and non-financial performance of the Wet Tropics Management Authority from 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2020. It highlights the organisations work, achievements, activities and strategic initiatives, and satisfies the requirements of Queensland's *Wet Tropics World Heritage Protection and Management Act 1993*, the *Financial Accountability Act 2009*, 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 Wet Tropics Management 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](http://www.wettropics.gov.au). Alternatively, hard copies of this publication can be obtained by emailing [wettropics@wtma.qld.gov.au](mailto:wettropics@wtma.qld.gov.au).

## Interpreter service statement

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## Further information



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ISBN 978 1 921591 81 5

This report is printed on Australian made paper that has been certified under the National Carbon Offset Standard.

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The Wet Tropics Management Authority acknowledges Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples as the Traditional Custodians of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area and recognise their connection to this cultural landscape.





30 September 2020

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 2019–20 for the Wet Tropics Management Authority.

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

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

In submitting this report, along with the corresponding State of the Wet Tropics report, the Authority is fulfilling its responsibilities under Australian Government legislation.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Leslie Shirreffs".

**Leslie Shirreffs PSM**

**Chair**





## Message from the Chair

As the world's oldest continuously surviving tropical rainforest, and the traditional land and waters of one of world's oldest living cultures, the Wet Tropics of Queensland World Heritage Area (the Area) plays a central role in the life of the community—providing world-renowned recreational and tourism experiences, significant employment and economic benefit, and nature-based environmental services. It has the largest area of remaining tropical rainforests and the highest biodiversity of any region in Australia. Because of this biodiversity and its abundance of endemic species, it has been assessed as the second-most irreplaceable World Heritage Area on Earth.

Responsible to both the Australian and Queensland governments; the Wet Tropics Management Authority (the Authority) is charged with ensuring that Australia's obligation for the Area under the World Heritage Convention is met.

I am pleased to present the Wet Tropics Management Authority Annual Report 2019–20, highlighting our positive achievements during a very challenging year. As the year commenced, the challenge of building the resilience of the Area to meet the increasingly evident impacts of climate change took strong focus, and increased exponentially in the face of a global pandemic. The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted on the business of the Authority, and the communities that rely on the World Heritage values of the Area.

In spite of the pandemic, during 2019–20 the Authority has continued to collaborate with partners across the conservation and tourism sectors, with all levels of government and with Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples, to ensure that the Area retains both its unique World Heritage values and its deep significance to global and local communities. The continued protection and management of the Area reflects the strength of the Authority's partnerships and has been integral to several key outcomes in 2019–20 including:

- completing the comprehensive review of the Wet Tropics Management Plan 1998 and achieving the agreement of the Australian and Queensland governments for the suite of proposed amendments
- securing an intergovernmental agreement with the Australian and Queensland governments of \$6m per year until 2022 for the eradication of yellow crazy ants

- launching and initiating implementation of the Accept Act Adapt: Climate Adaptation Plan for the Wet Tropics 2020–2030
- instigating development of a Wet Tropics Sustainable Tourism Development Plan with the assistance of Australian Heritage Grant funding, and in collaboration with the community
- signing a five-year partnership agreement with Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service & Partnership (QPWS&P) for priority on-ground management activities in the Area's national parks
- recruiting an impressive new cohort of professionals and community members to the Authority's Scientific Advisory Committee and Community Consultative Committee
- investing in a series of Rainforest Aboriginal-led projects which empower Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples in utilising and retaining cultural practices and knowledge within the Area
- coordinating the development of a protocol which respects and involves Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples in Wet Tropics scientific research.

The Authority's Board has seen some changes this year, with three long-serving directors completing their terms. Dr Leah Talbot, Ms Anne Clarke and Mr John Courtenay have been passionate, committed, active directors, integral to the direction-setting and decision-making of many of our achievements since 2015. The knowledge and professionalism that each of these directors brought to the Board sets a worthy benchmark for new directors. A process to recruit new directors to the Board was commenced during the year, and will come to fruition in the coming months.

I would like to thank my fellow directors, the Executive Director Scott Buchanan and the remarkable staff of the Authority for their significant contributions this year. This especially challenging year has positively highlighted the resilience of our workforce and our ability to innovate rapidly and effectively, with many notable achievements presented in this report.



Leslie Shirreffs PSM

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 includes 1,121 properties which the World Heritage Committee considers to have Outstanding Universal Value—this includes 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<sup>1</sup>. The Area was listed on Australia's National Heritage List in 2007 for its natural values<sup>2</sup>, 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 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 to future generations.

The Queensland Act establishes the Wet Tropics Management Authority and provides the legal basis for the 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 defined under section 10 of the Queensland Act, and 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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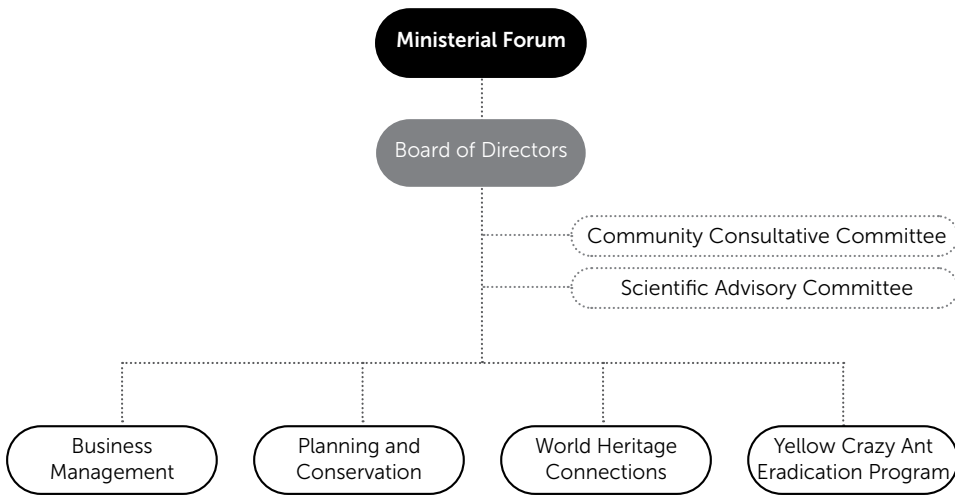
### Our structure

As a body corporate operating under the requirements of both state and federal 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 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 Area. The Authority's Board of Directors reports to two ministers, known as the Ministerial Forum:

- The Hon. Leeanne Enoch MP, Queensland Minister for Environment and the Great Barrier Reef, Minister for Science and Minister for the Arts
- 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 serve in a part-time capacity. The Australian Government and the Queensland Government nominate two directors each. The relevant ministers jointly nominate a chair and a designated Aboriginal director. The Authority's Executive Director is a non-voting director. The Board's key function is to implement programs to meet Australia's international obligations for the Area under the World Heritage Convention.

In November 2018, relevant Australian and Queensland ministers approved a staggered approach to the appointment of directors to the Authority's Board. This approach provides continuity of decision-making and enables stronger institutional governance, better succession planning and retention of leadership memory within the organisation. In early 2020, the Authority invited expressions of interest for the three director roles which became vacant at the end of May 2020. The appointment of new directors to these roles is the decision

of the Australian and Queensland ministers and is currently in progress. Details on the operations of the Board and their achievements in 2019–20 are 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 relevant to the management of the Area. One of the Board’s directors chairs each committee, 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.

### **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. The report includes the financial statements and administration of the acts, and a report on the state of the Area.

### **Australian World Heritage Advisory Committee**

The Authority collaborates with other Australian World Heritage property managers through the Australian World Heritage Advisory Committee (AWHAC). The AWHAC advises the Australian Minister for the Environment on policies and programs that benefit World Heritage properties on national or crosscutting issues. During 2019–20, the Authority’s Chair and Executive Director attended quarterly forums where national World Heritage policy programs and initiatives were discussed. A Board director and Authority staff also attended the Australian World Heritage Forum in September 2019, which included an AWHAC meeting.

The Authority’s Chair continued to participate in the AWHAC climate change working group that developed messaging to advise the Australian and state governments about the threats of climate change impacts to World Heritage values and integrity. The Chair also attended a Ministerial Roundtable on the Bushfire Environment Response in February 2020 which was informed by the work of the climate change working group.

## Our performance

This annual report details the Authority's progress against the Wet Tropics Management Authority Strategic Plan 2020–2030, which sets out how the organisation will effectively manage and protect the World Heritage values of the Area, and ensure cooperative management of the Area with Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples.

Five high-level strategies were identified in the strategic plan, and the Authority's achievements in 2019–20 are detailed in accordance with these:

**Strategy 1—Climate change and other threats (see page 10)**

**Strategy 2—Support Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples (see page 13)**

**Strategy 3—Involve the community (see page 15)**

**Strategy 4—World-class tourism and recreation (see page 18)**

**Strategy 5—Minimise impacts (see page 20)**

Additionally, all work undertaken by the Authority 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 22).

## 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 identified as the most significant threat to the Area in the 2018–19 State of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area report. Climate change will impact the biodiversity values underpinning the World Heritage listing of the Area and has the potential to affect the region’s economy. Biosecurity threats to the Area (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. With on-ground management of the Area occurring across a range of tenures, the Authority is collaborating with partners such as Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service & Partnerships (QPWS&P), Biosecurity Queensland, Far North Queensland Regional Organisation of Councils, Terrain NRM, and Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples to address threats to the Area and encourage recovery and rehabilitation of species and ecosystems.

Highlights from 2019–20 include:

- launching the Accept, Act, Adapt: Climate Adaptation Plan for the Wet Tropics 2020–2030
- signing of a three-year intergovernmental agreement for yellow crazy ant control
- signing of a five-year partnership agreement with QPWS&P.

### **Climate adaptation planning and action**

The Authority launched a ten-year Climate Adaptation Plan in November 2019. Developed in partnership with experts and the community, the plan recognises that natural and cultural systems in the Wet Tropics region are experiencing—and will continue to experience—significant, widespread and unavoidable effects as a result of climate change.

The plan is founded on the need to accept this, and embodies the imperative that we act strategically, together and immediately. It also sets out tangible steps to empower action that helps Wet Tropics systems, cultures, communities and economies to adapt. For more information, go to [wettropics.gov.au/climate-adaptation-plan-for-the-wet-tropics-20202030](http://wettropics.gov.au/climate-adaptation-plan-for-the-wet-tropics-20202030).

### **Eradicating yellow crazy ants from the Wet Tropics**

The Queensland and Australian governments signed an intergovernmental agreement for yellow crazy ant control in the Wet Tropics, providing \$9 million each over three years to June 2022. The agreement includes project planning and a communications strategy. After four years of a proposed ten-year program, eradication remains



on track and significant advances have been achieved. This includes three areas validated as eradicated and significant declines of ant populations.

The major focus during 2019–20 was to increase the effectiveness and scope of surveys across the 1,928 hectare infestation area (115 hectares within the Area) by both improving techniques and undertaking surveys when the ants are most active.

Sporadic rains during the wet season and early dry season promoted yellow crazy ant activity and enabled extensive surveys across most of the infestation. Except for two small spots, the large forested areas of Sawmill Pocket and Bentley Park (two of the original infestations within and adjacent to the Area) remained free of ants and progressed a step closer to official eradication.

Two new infestations were detected and treated at Henleys Hill in Cairns (16 hectares) and Vico Street near Gordonvale (153 hectares, including 21 hectares within the Area).

Fury, the Authority's first odour-detection dog, was put into active duty in March, following comprehensive training. In April, Fury proved his skill during a training exercise by detecting an unknown infestation of yellow crazy ants (Henleys Hill). Odour-detection dogs will greatly enhance the Authority's ability to find any remaining small pockets of yellow crazy ants.

### **Partnering with Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service and Partnerships (QPWS&P)**

In November 2019, the Authority and the Department of Environment and Science (DES) (through QPWS&P) entered into a five-year partnership agreement for 2019–24. Through this partnership, the agencies work together across a variety of strategic activities, including the collaborative development of project plans to ensure delivery of agreed key priorities. The four key priorities identified for the Area are to:

- lead a whole-of-parks response to climate change threats to World Heritage values
- support QPWS&P components of the refresh and implementation of the Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples' Regional Agreement
- lead whole-of-parks planning for world-class tourism and recreation
- lead a renewed program of prioritised and strategic compliance on park.

### **Mountain-top monitoring**

The Authority supports a mountain-top monitoring program with QPWS&P and Professor Steve Williams (James Cook University). This program was identified as a key action in the 2019–24 partnership agreement between the Authority and QPWS&P, and in the Authority's

climate adaptation plan. In the short-term, the program focusses on species such as the lemuroid ringtail possum, the Herbert River ringtail possum and the green ringtail possum. In the medium term, there will be support and training for QPWS&P to monitor up to ten priority species, including the golden bowerbird and microhylid frogs. The program also includes citizen science initiatives.

The Authority continued its collaboration with the Australian Tropical Herbarium to collect and record mountain-top plant species at risk from climate change. The project aims to secure the future of mountain-top plants by building a multi-strategy ex situ conservation reserve to 'backup' at-risk wild populations and support research, display and education.

### **Recovering threatened species**

The Authority supports threatened species recovery in the Area, chairing and providing secretariat support to the Cassowary Recovery Team (CRT) and Northern Bettong Recovery Team (NBRT) meetings.

In 2019–20, the CRT met three times, focussing on the continued review of the Cassowary Recovery Plan and engaging Traditional Owners in the process. The CRT continued to strengthen essential habitat connectivity and environmentally significant corridors through revegetation efforts at Smith's Gap, Eubenangee Swamp National Park, Wongabel State Forest and Kuranda.

For the second consecutive year, the CRT collaborated with Queensland's Department of Transport and Main Roads and CSIRO to focus on the reduction of cassowary mortality at known 'hot spots'. Cameras placed at these hot spots allow observation and assessment of driver interactions with cassowaries. The learnings and information generated has been invaluable in highlighting that positively influencing driver behaviour is critical to reducing cassowary mortality.

The NBRT met twice in 2019–20, including a two-day meeting in October 2019 that included representatives from all Traditional Owners groups with country within the range of the northern bettong. The meeting was held at the Mount Zero-Taravale Sanctuary—an Australian Wildlife Conservancy property once inhabited by the northern bettong. The property is being considered as a site to re-establish a secure, viable, genetically-diverse population of the northern bettong.

## 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.

The maintenance and strengthening of partnerships with Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples and their organisations is a core Authority focus. In 2019–20, the Authority continued to support Traditional Owner-led activities such as the maintenance of traditional knowledge and practices, presentation and management of cultural values, return to country, and enhanced livelihood and wellbeing through collaborative partnerships.

Highlights from 2019–20 include:

- investing \$50,000 in five Rainforest Aboriginal organisations
- collaborating to develop a research protocol to improve Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples' involvement in scientific permitting
- producing the 'Our Collective Journey' video.

### **Supporting Rainforest Aboriginal led projects**

Through the Authority's Rainforest Aboriginal Grants Program, \$50,000 was invested across five Rainforest Aboriginal organisations for projects that support wellbeing and livelihood outcomes. The recipients were:

- Djunbunji Land and Sea Program Ltd—*Pine Creek Walking Trail*
- Dulabed Malanbarra and Yidinji Aboriginal Corporation—*Participatory 3D Mapping for Dulabed Malanbarra and Yidinji Country*
- Jabalbina Yalanji Aboriginal Corporation—*Cultural Heritage Recording, Protection and Evaluation*
- Dawul Wuru Aboriginal Corporation—*Development of Yirrganydji Fire Management Practices*
- Gunggandji-Mandingalbay Yidinji Peoples Prescribed Body Corporate Aboriginal Corporation—*Develop Cultural Burning Plan.*

The Authority also assisted Giringun Aboriginal Corporation to secure funding to develop a management plan for the Indigenous cultural values of the Area, which were National Heritage-listed in 2012.

## **Scientific research protocols**

In collaboration with Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service & Partnerships (QPWS&P), the Traditional Owner Leadership Group (the TOLG) and researchers, the Authority developed a scientific research protocol and an application for research endorsement (ARE) form to be piloted by QPWS&P for 12 months. The protocol will improve Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples' involvement in scientific research in the Area by connecting researchers with the relevant Traditional Owners as part of the initial permitting process. The launch of the protocols have been delayed due to COVID-19.

## **'Our Collective Journey' video**

The Authority and the TOLG developed the 'Our Collective Journey' video. Presented as a timeline, the video highlights and recognises the knowledge, commitment, hard work and leadership of Elders and Traditional Owners to ensure the involvement of Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples in management of the Area since its listing in 1988. 'Our Collective Journey' will be launched in 2020–21.

## **Maintaining connections**

The Authority maintained connections with Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples through the production and distribution of four editions of the Rainforest Aboriginal News and participation in the QPWS&P Indigenous Land and Sea Ranger Network Conference in March 2020.

## **Refreshing the Regional Agreement**

In 2019–20, the Authority committed \$93,000 in funding and continued (in partnership with Terrain NRM and the North Queensland Land Council) to support the TOLG in their quest to refresh the 2005 Wet Tropics of Queensland World Heritage Area Regional Agreement (the Regional Agreement).

This historically significant document provides a framework for the meaningful involvement of Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples in World Heritage Area management. The TOLG have been tasked with ensuring the Regional Agreement becomes a living agreement, that removes obstacles and facilitates opportunities for Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples to achieve both positive outcomes, and sustainable economic development in the Wet Tropics.

The Authority coordinated roadshows designed to facilitate engagement between the TOLG, the broader Rainforest Aboriginal community and partners in relation to the progress of the refresh of the Regional Agreement. Only four roadshow meetings proceeded, with the remaining three cancelled and the Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples' Regional Forum postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Authority and Terrain NRM will continue to collaborate to support Traditional Owner-led governance and the refresh of the Regional Agreement.

### 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 government land management agencies, landholders, Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples, the private sector, conservation groups, volunteers and the wider community have in managing the Area.

Ensuring the participation of a wide variety of community members requires effective use of a variety of engagement tools and techniques. The Authority utilises media, social media, its website, workshops, public events, communication materials and committees to engage with, educate and include the community.

Highlights for 2019–20 include:

- markedly improved reach and engagement across all social media platforms
- initiating a social media campaign to raise awareness about climate action in the Wet Tropics
- recruiting new advisory committees.

#### **Engaging the Wet Tropics community—digitally**

In 2019–20, social media emerged strongly as a strategic, cost-effective and crucial tool in raising the Authority’s public profile and delivering key messaging. The Authority’s social media presence increased significantly in 2019–20. In the first two weeks of January 2020 alone, Twitter engagement grew by 217%, Instagram by 47.5% and Facebook by more than 100%.

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic limited traditional face-to-face community engagement, but the Authority’s innovative strategies during lockdown kept the Area in the public eye and achieved high social media engagement levels. Monthly media reports showed a marked lift in the Authority’s visibility and reach.

To manage and monitor virtual engagement, the Authority developed:

- a social media implementation plan including scheduled posting across all platforms
- a LinkedIn page
- monthly media reports to track media and social media engagement
- campaigns with strong visual impact.

The use of visually-rich content increased likes and followers across all platforms and shifted the Authority's demographic from an average age of 45+ years to 25+ years. Campaigns included:

- 'Enjoy surreal now, enjoy for real later'—utilising videos to tell the Wet Tropics story (which led to the development of a popular series of background images for video conferencing)
- 'Meet the rainforest locals'—featuring endemic animals
- targeted social media—to boost targeted posts (resulting in engagement of more than 50,000 users for some posts).

The Authority employed social media effectively to boost awareness of the Accept Act Adapt: Climate Adaptation Plan for the Wet Tropics 2020–2030 through the use of a series of hashtags—#AcceptActAdapt, #worldheritage, #rainforest and #wettropics. The hashtags (which link social media users to posts that are relevant to their interests) increase the Authority's reach to a broader audience.

The Wet Tropics eNews continues to be a valuable tool for community and partner engagement, providing detailed updates on the Authority's work to a growing community of more than 850 contacts. Three editions were distributed in 2019–20.

The Authority increased media output and distributed two proactive media releases per month to local and national media outlets, to generate positive publicity for the Authority and its initiatives.

### **Engaging through statutory advisory committees**

Members of the Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) and the Community Consultative Committee (CCC) who were appointed in 2016, completed their terms at the end of 2019. New SAC and CCC members were recruited and appointed in early 2020, with a joint induction for all in May 2020.

Outgoing members of the SAC left an important legacy by providing meaningful input to the review of the management plan, critical advice on the Authority's climate adaptation plan, and guidance in the development of research protocols for engagement between Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples and researchers. New SAC members—appointed for three years until 2023—are an experienced cohort of scientists ideally placed to influence the continued implementation of the Authority's strategic plan and other projects.

Similarly, the CCC actively provided input to the climate adaptation plan and instrumental guidance to the Authority to support the development of a youth engagement strategy. The CCC members developed a series of guiding strategies that will help the Authority to inspire and empower youth to act as guardians and advocates for the values and protection of the Area. New CCC members—also appointed until 2023—will carry forward the youth engagement work and continue providing critical community-based advice to the Authority.

### **Innovative outreach**

An exciting collaboration with Australia Post saw the release of a series of stamps featuring three tree-dwelling mammals of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area.

- The lemuroid ringtail possum that lives in cool, cloud enshrouded misty peaks impacted by climate change.
- The spectacled flying-fox—an essential seed disperser and pollinator of countless tropical rainforest plants.
- Bennett’s tree kangaroo, rarely seen on the ground unless it needs to travel between fragmented rainforest patches.

The stamp set shone a light on some of the Wet Tropics’ incredible creatures and the threats they face to their continued existence.

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

The Wet Tropics World Heritage Area is an exceptional landscape attracting millions of local, national and international visitors. It warrants concerted efforts from the Authority to provide the highest quality standards in presentation.

To realise this, the Authority seeks to provide leadership and to collaborate with partners such as Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples, government, tourism and local business at all levels—from front-counter staff to industry managers.

Highlights for 2019–20 include:

- assisting the development and launch of the Wet Tropics Toolkit with Tourism Events Queensland
- adapting the Wet Tropics Tour Guide Program and Ambassador Program to continue engagement throughout the COVID-19 pandemic
- securing funding to develop a sustainable tourism plan for the Wet Tropics.

### **Promoting and presenting the Wet Tropics**

The Authority helped create and launch Tourism Events Queensland's (TEQ) Wet Tropics Toolkit. This dedicated marketing toolkit will assist tourism businesses located in the region (TEQ's Tropical North Queensland and Townsville regions) to motivate visitors to increase their length of stay, to grow overnight visitor expenditure, and to encourage visitor dispersal across the region.

The toolkit includes inspirational content for tourism operators to use in their own marketing: imagery, video content, facts and figures, marketing copy.

### **Supporting Wet Tropics tourism**

The COVID-19 pandemic caused major changes to the implementation of the Wet Tropics Tour Guide Program, yet created an opportunity for the program to evolve in a new and exciting direction.

While the field school had to be cancelled, the 2020 Wet Tropics Tour Guide Competition was launched in June—guides could submit a 3–6 minute video showcasing their interpretive guiding skills. The intention was to offer support and encouragement to guides at a time when the tourism industry essentially ceased to operate. It allowed guides to utilise their interpretive guiding skills, be promoted by the Authority and Savannah Guides, and be eligible for prizes.



With regional deliveries of the Ambassador Program not possible under COVID-19 conditions, the Authority adapted the program for online delivery—a two-hour Zoom workshop aimed at increasing awareness of the World Heritage values of the Area. This method of delivery created an opportunity for a broader range of people to participate—including visitor information centre staff. More than 150 people participated in the program over six separate workshops.

### **Sustainable tourism plan for the Wet Tropics**

The Authority began the development of a sustainable tourism plan for the Wet Tropics, funded through an Australian Heritage Grant. The creation of the plan comes at a time when both the tourism industry and environment face unparalleled challenges. Whilst the challenges—both current and future—are significant, there is the opportunity to bring together Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples, tourism, conservation and all levels of government to re-imagine a shared vision and roadmap for a more sustainable and resilient future for tourism in the Wet Tropics.

In developing the plan, an engagement framework was created with collaboration as a key focus, ensuring the plan's design is bottom-up and inclusive. A series of regional workshops and more than 60 interviews, identified a suite of opportunities to be further explored and prioritised collaboratively with stakeholders.

To address uncertainty and ensure the efficacy of workshops and ongoing engagement during COVID-19 restrictions, the workshops were delivered virtually using new and innovative methods such as virtual whiteboarding.

The workshops provided critical guidance and information to inform the focus and direction of the final tourism destination plan.

### **Visitor information and experiences**

The up-take and use of the 'The Wet Tropics World Heritage Area—nature's greatest survival story' video continues to grow. The video highlights the key values of the Area and the connections to Queensland's five other World Heritage areas. It is shown at Skyrail, Cairns Aquarium and numerous visitor information centres. Many organisations and individuals use the video for training purposes.

The Authority met with the managers of Wet Tropics visitor information centres where Wet Tropics presentation materials such as posters, stickers and brochures were shared and attendees briefed on Authority programs.

The Authority collaborated with Cairns Aquarium in their successful application for a Commonwealth Government Australian Heritage Grant to develop a state-of-the-art interpretative display on the natural values of the Area.

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.

Highlights for 2019–20 include:

- completion and approval of the Wet Tropics Management Plan 1998 review
- renewal of two maintenance permits for community service infrastructure
- issue of three permits for new projects; one being the notable 100km Wangetti Trail.

### **Review of the Wet Tropics Management Plan 1998**

Under section 53 of the *Wet Tropics World Heritage Protection and Management Act 1993*, the Authority is required to review the operation of the Wet Tropics Management Plan 1998 (the Management Plan) every ten years.

Review of the Management Plan commenced in 2017 and was completed, with its release to occur 2020–21. Submissions made to the Authority during consultation resulted in a raft of changes and refinements. The updated Management Plan encompasses the endorsement of two tiers of government and when implemented, will improve management of the Area by:

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- strengthening protection of World Heritage values and integrity of the Area
- contemporising management practices and reducing red tape
- responding to return-to-country aspirations of Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples
- increasing recognition of Rainforest Aboriginal culture and traditions
- clarifying the type and scale of tourism infrastructure
- increasing flexibility for appropriate tourism.

### **Administering the Wet Tropics Management Plan**

The Management Plan regulates land-use activities that have the potential to impact on the Area’s values and integrity. It includes criteria to assess permit applications for construction and maintenance of roads, electricity transmission lines, water supplies and communication

facilities. Codes of practice and environmental management plans are included as part of permit conditions. The Authority applies policies and guidelines outlining how best to manage the use of the Area.

During 2019–20, the Authority continued to strengthen its partnerships with community service infrastructure providers and local, state and Commonwealth agencies. Pre-lodgement advice was offered on more than ten separate matters, and the Authority assessed and issued three new permits and renewed two maintenance permits for community service infrastructure providers.

The Authority provided advice on methods to avoid or mitigate impacts on the Area. Training was provided to local councils on infrastructure maintenance, as well as liaison with those responsible for the planning, building and maintenance of community services infrastructure both inside and adjoining the Area.

More detail on the Authority's plan administration activities can be found at Appendix 2.

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 2019–20**

### **a) Revenue**

Total revenue recorded for 2019–20 was \$10.5 million with an increase of \$1.5 million from the prior year, due to increased funding from the Queensland Government to the Authority to carry out the Yellow Crazy Ant Eradication Program (YCAEP).

The Authority's main source of revenue was Commonwealth Appropriation funding totalling \$5.7 million (including \$3 million for the YCAEP) which was distributed via Queensland Treasury.

The Authority derived additional revenue of \$200,000 from the Commonwealth Government to develop a sustainable tourism destination plan and \$22,000 from the Queensland Government for reimbursement of operational costs related to invasive species management.

### **b) Expenditure**

Total expenditure for the year to 30 June 2020 was \$9.2 million, a decrease of \$600,000 on 2018–19. This variance can be attributed to the COVID-19 pandemic which restricted travel and recruitment processes, and impacted on some programs.

Savings were realised in the YCAEP budget due to delays in significant contracts in research and odour-detection dog services. These contracts will be realised in 2020–21.

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Due to the travel restrictions in response to COVID-19, the Authority recognised savings in the 2019–20 budget for travel, training and development. The annual Student Research Grant Scheme also did not proceed in 2019–20 due to COVID-19, further contributing to savings in the expenditure budget.

Operationally, the Authority dispensed \$2.2 million to local contractors.

### **c) Financial management**

As a statutory body, the Authority's overall fiscal transactions are incorporated into the DES financial statement for 2019–20.

The Authority appointed an external auditor to review two Commonwealth grants to ensure compliance with established financial practice management by verifying revenue and expenditure records.

## Wet Tropics Management Authority operating statement

Controlled revenue and expenses	Notes	2019–2020	2018–2019
<b>Revenue</b>		<b>\$'000</b>	<b>\$'000</b>
<b>Revenue from government</b>			
Payments for outputs		4,608	3,165
Asset assumed/liabilities transferred			
<b>Sub-total government revenue</b>		<b>4,608</b>	<b>3,165</b>
<b>Own source revenue</b>			
User charges			
Grants and other contributions	1	5,700	5,700
Taxes fees and fines			
Gain on disposal of fixed assets			
Other revenue		224	202
Interest			
<b>Sub-total own source revenue</b>		<b>5,924</b>	<b>5,902</b>
<b>Total revenue</b>		<b>10,532</b>	<b>9,067</b>
<b>Expenses</b>		<b>\$'000</b>	<b>\$'000</b>
Operating expenses			
Program			
Wet Tropics Management Authority		9,278	9,824
<b>Sub-total operating expenses</b>		<b>9,278</b>	<b>9,824</b>
Non-operating expenses			
Depreciation		8	6
Asset write-downs/loss on disposal			
<b>Sub-total non-operating expenses</b>		<b>8</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Total expenses</b>		<b>9,286</b>	<b>9,830</b>
<b>Operating result</b>		<b>1,246</b>	<b>-763</b>

### Notes:

- 1 Effective from 2019–20 Commonwealth funding is received as a Commonwealth Appropriation paid via Queensland Treasury. For transparency purposes these payments are reflected as 'own source' revenue.

## Human resources

### a) Our people

Authority staff (including contracted and temporary staff) are empowered to demonstrate leadership at all levels, with all staff being responsible and accountable for their behaviours, actions and decisions.

Throughout the year the Authority focused on creating stronger workforce relations built on mutual trust and respect. The Authority is committed to fostering and valuing a diverse and inclusive culture and efforts toward inclusiveness and diversity are highlighted by various plans, including close compliance with the DES Cultural Capability Action Plan 2019–21 and DES Disability Service Plan 2017–20. The workforce profile includes 13% of staff who identify as Indigenous and 18% of total women employed are in senior positions.

The Authority and its staff abide by the principles identified under the *Public Sector Ethics Act 1994* of:

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

In 2019–20, the Authority continued to build a strong and accountable workforce by ensuring compliance with the DES Code of Conduct and supporting staff to demonstrate high ethical standards and values. All new staff completed induction training, and all staff regularly undertake mandatory training in areas such as fraud and corruption awareness, procurement, finance, cultural awareness and domestic and family violence. The Authority expended \$17,000 of the allocated \$20,000 to training and development which included mandatory first aid and CPR training.

### b) Human rights

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The Authority is committed to respecting, protecting and promoting human rights. Under the *Human Rights Act 2019*, the Authority pursued its obligation to act and make decisions in a way that is compatible with human rights and, when making a decision, to give proper consideration to human rights.

The DES website gives direction to the general public for reporting alleged wrongdoing by employees, right to information, complaints handling, and on the role of the Queensland Ombudsman and judicial review. In 2019–20, the Authority began reviewing its own website to ensure that staff and the general public can readily locate pertinent human rights information, including in regard to complaints management. The Authority received nil complaints in 2019–20.

### **c) Response to COVID-19**

Employees across the Queensland public service contributed to the COVID-19 pandemic response in a variety of ways. One Authority staff member contributed by performing work as an Australian Defence Force reservist. During the most severe period of the COVID-19 pandemic (late March–early June), 66% of the Authority’s workforce optimised flexible and remote working arrangements, while field staff continued to undertake yellow crazy ant eradication work in the field using strict social distancing measures. Flexible and remote working arrangements support a diverse workforce and enable Authority staff to balance work and personal demands.

### **d) Safety and wellbeing**

The Authority is committed to providing all employees, volunteers and contractors with a workplace that is free from harm. A culture that highlights safety as an absolute priority and uses best-practice governance and risk-management processes to identify and manage hazards associated with work-related activities is strongly encouraged.

The Authority lodged two Workcover claims during 2019–20 and recorded eight workplace incidents related to staff undertaking field work. Injury types were minor and primarily limited to eyes, legs, lacerations and two tick bites, resulting in a total of five lost workdays.

The Authority’s staff have access to the DES Employee Assistance Program with Benestar. This excellent service offers access to services relating to individual wellbeing, organisational performance, workforce wellness, and support for employees affected by domestic and family violence.

### **e) Early retirement, redundancy and retrenchment**

No redundancy/early retirement/retrenchment packages were paid during 2019–20.

### **f) Strategic workforce planning and performance**

The Authority’s strategic workforce planning framework has been reviewed this year to ensure an integrated approach to planning across the organisation. This workforce planning aligns to the Authority’s strategic objectives, validating commitments to building a contemporary workforce that demonstrates high levels of expertise, innovation, collaboration, and leadership.

The Authority continues to focus on key areas including talent acquisition, employee health and wellbeing, and maximising performance through encouragement to participate in performance and development processes throughout the year.

Staff were also supported to undertake a range of development options, including on-the-job training, relieving opportunities, short-term projects and participation in formal training activities.

### g) Workforce profile

We employ a diverse range of talented people who work together to realise the Authority's vision to 'protect the values of the Wet Tropics through collaboration, culture, knowledge and passion'.

Workforce statistics as at 30 June 2020 are shown below:

<b>Full-time equivalent by occupation type and gender</b>			
<b>Occupational stream</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Total</b>
Administration	10.5	12.7	23.2
Operational	1	9.8	10.8
Professional	2	1	3
Technical		1	1
Senior executive service		1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>13.5</b>	<b>25.5</b>	<b>39</b>

<b>Full-time equivalent by employment type and gender as at 30 June 2020</b>						
Employment type	FTE		FTE		Total FTE	Total FTE%
	Female	Male	Female	Male		
Contract		1	0.00%	3.92%	1	2.56%
Permanent	8	6	59.26%	23.53%	14	35.90%
Temporary	5.5	19.5	40.74%	76.47%	24	61.54%
<b>Grand total</b>	<b>13.5</b>	<b>25.5</b>	<b>34.62%</b>	<b>65.38%</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

At 30 June 2020, the Authority's establishment totalled 66 positions of which 27 were vacant. There was a permanent separation rate of 4.55%.



# Appendix 1. Wet Tropics Management Authority Board of Directors

## **Wet Tropics Management Authority Board of Directors**

Act or instrument

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*Wet Tropics World Heritage Protection and Management Act 1993*

Functions

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Under section 10(1) *Wet Tropics World Heritage Protection and Management Act 1993* (the Act), the functions of the Wet Tropics Management Authority Board are to:

- develop and implement policies and programs relating to the management of the Area
- formulate performance indicators for the implementation of policies and programs approved by the Ministerial Forum
- advise and make recommendations to the Minister and the Ministerial Forum regarding:
  - the management of the Area
  - Australia's obligation under the World Heritage Convention in relation to the Area
- prepare, and ensure the implementation of, management plans for the Area
- administer funding arrangements for the Area
- enter into, and facilitate the entering into of, cooperative management agreements (including joint management agreements) with landholders, Aboriginal people particularly concerned with land in the Area, and other people
- enter into arrangements for the provision of rehabilitation and restoration works relating to any land in the Area
- gather, research, analyse and disseminate information on the Area
- develop public and community education programs regarding the Area
- promote the Area locally, nationally and internationally
- liaise with the governments and authorities of the state, the Commonwealth, other states and the territories, and international and foreign organisations and agencies
- monitor the state of the Area
- advise and report to the Minister and the Ministerial Forum.

## Achievements

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In 2019–20, the Board:

- reviewed and approved the amended Wet Tropics Management Plan 1998 in preparation for final approval by Queensland Governor-in-Council
- launched Accept Act Adapt: Climate Adaptation Plan for the Wet Tropics 2020–2030 and strengthened relationships with partners by progressing climate action collaboratively
- continued the work program to refresh the Wet Tropics of Queensland Regional Agreement with the Traditional Owner Leadership Group
- tabled the 2018–19 Annual Report and the State of the Wet Tropics report in the Queensland and Australian parliaments, with the latter's theme 'A snapshot of opportunities and threats'
- secured an Australian Heritage Grant for the development of a Wet Tropics sustainable tourism destination plan
- recruited new membership for both the Scientific Advisory Committee and the Community Consultative Committee
- signed a five-year partnership agreement with Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service & Partnerships outlining how the agencies will roll out the \$1.8m/year commitment to World Heritage management in national parks
- continued to support and champion the work program to eradicate yellow crazy ants in and adjacent to the Area including the identification of new infestations.

## Financial reporting

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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	8	\$520 daily fee		\$5,720* 11 sitting days \$22,490*
Member	John Courtenay	6	\$400 daily fee		\$3,400* 8.5 sitting days
Member	Anne Clarke	8	\$400 daily fee	\$400 daily fee Chair Wet Tropics CCC*	\$4,400* 11 sitting days
Member	Iain Gordon	7	\$400 daily fee	\$400 daily fee Chair Wet Tropics SAC*	\$3,800* 8.5 sitting days
Member	Leah Talbot	6	\$400 daily fee		\$2,200* 8.5 sitting days
Member	Phillip Rist	5	\$400 daily fee		\$2,600 6.5 sitting days
Executive Director	Scott Buchanan	8	N/A	N/A	N/A
Number of scheduled meetings/sessions	The Board met on six separate occasions in 2019–20 including out-of-session (OOS) meetings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 20–21 August 2019: 2 days (meeting #109)</li> <li>• 14–15 November 2019: 2 days (meeting #110)</li> <li>• 23 January 2020: 1 day (preparation for climate action workshop)</li> <li>• 6 March 2020: half-day (climate workshop with partners)</li> <li>• 19–20 March 2020: 1.5 days (meeting #111)</li> <li>• 20–21 May 2020: 2 days (meeting #112)</li> </ul>				
Total out-of-pocket expenses	<p>The Board cost \$93,294 to operate, mostly for sitting fees, appointment process for new directors, reimbursement of out-of-pocket expenses, travel expenses, governance training, information technology support, site inspections and catering.</p> <p>The Board is fully funded by the Australian Government—the Queensland Government does not contribute to its operational cost.</p>				

\* In addition to sitting fees for Board meetings, directors are entitled to be remunerated for the additional work time required to carry out the role, as specified in Remuneration Procedures for Part-time Chairs and Members of Queensland Government Bodies (the Remuneration Procedures). Refer category: Regulation, Administration and Advice Level 2. This may include chairing the Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) or the Community Consultative Committee (CCC), attendance at strategic meetings and workshops, document development, meetings with key partners including ministers, correspondence, preparation and travel time.

\*\* Board director opted to only accept sitting fees for part of the year.

## Appendix 2. Administration of the Wet Tropics Management Plan 1998

The Wet Tropics Management Plan 1998 regulates land use activities that have the potential to impact on the integrity of the Area. In 2019–20, Authority staff audited and advised a number of agencies or organisations undertaking activities in the Area under existing permits.

The Authority approved three permits for new projects within the Area:

- Bulgun Creek reservoir
- Wangetti Trail
- Barron Gorge walking track.

Authority staff assessed and renewed two community service infrastructure maintenance permits under the plan:

- Cairns Regional Council
- Douglas Shire Council.

### Pre-lodgement advice on permit applications provided in 2019–20

#### Douglas Shire Council

Advice regarding:

- design and construction of the proposed Noah Creek bridge
- repair of land slips on the Bloomfield Track
- Daintree microgrid proposal
- proposed Alexandra Range slope stabilisation works.

#### Department of Defence

Advice regarding:

- upgrade of North-South Road, Tully Training Area.

#### Mareeba Shire Council

Advice regarding:

- construction of Barron Falls walking trail at Kuranda.

#### Stanwell Corporation

Advice regarding:

- management of 22kv power line easement at Kareeya
- retrieval of cable at Kareeya.

#### Tablelands Regional Council

Advice regarding:

- assessment of three culverts on Danbulla Road where maintenance is required
- trimming of dangerous branches over Gillies Highway.

#### Cassowary Coast Regional Council

Advice regarding:

- replacement of Jurs Creek water pipeline.

## Broadcast Australia

- various at Mount Bellenden Ker.

## Department of Innovation and Tourism Industry Development

Advice regarding:

- energy options
- the Wangetti Trail.

## Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service &amp; Partnerships

Advice regarding:

- Mossman Gorge track upgrades

## Cairns Regional Council

Advice regarding:

- upgrade of Crystal Cascades carpark, visitor amenities and drainage
- geotechnical investigations at the Majuba Creek water intake.

## Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships

Advice regarding:

- permit requirements for activities relating to a residential subdivision in Wujal Wujal—building a road and grading or interfering with earth.

In accordance with section 27 of the Management Plan, staff assessed a number of proposals on human safety and infrastructure risk-management grounds:

## Stanwell Corporation

Advice regarding:

- repair of landslip-prone rock faces at Kareeya
- removal of dead tree at Kuranda intake.

## Cairns Regional Council

Advice regarding:

- removal of vegetation for rock fall protection at Freshwater Creek water intake.

## Department of Transport and Main Roads

Advice regarding:

- trimming of vegetation on Palmerston Highway.

## Queensland Rail

Advice regarding:

- trimming of vegetation deemed a safety risk.

## Department of Defence

Advice regarding:

- emergency trimming of dangerous vegetation at Paluma Lease
- removal of dangerous hung tree at Tully Training Area.

In accordance with section 28 of the Management Plan, staff assessed a number of proposals as having only minor and inconsequential impacts on the Area. In 2019–20 proposals were:

#### Department of Transport and Main Roads

Proposals for:

- road repair on the Palmerston Highway
- road Repair on the Kuranda Range Road
- descaling of loose rocks on the Captain Cook Highway.

#### Powerlink

Proposal for:

- refurbishment of Barron Gorge-Kamerunga power line towers.

#### Skyrail Rainforest Cableway

Proposal for:

- proposed boardwalk repairs at Red Peak Station.

#### Energy Queensland

Proposal for:

- emergency access for repairs to bushfire-affected pole at Oak Beach.

#### Department of Defence

Proposal for:

- taking of water from Jarra Creek for revegetation irrigation.

#### Cassowary Coast Regional Council

Proposal for:

- repair of slip and erosion issues, Bulgun Creek water intake road.

Authority staff provided advice to numerous private landholders regarding vegetation or fauna issues, in addition to actively participating in discussion relating to weed issues within and adjacent to the Area, including attendance at the Tablelands Pest Management Advisory Committee meetings and involvement in a workshop on Koster's curse (*Clidemia hirta*). Siam weed (*Chromolaena odorata*) control has been discussed with land agencies such as QPWS&P. The Authority continues to be involved in the Cairns Fire Management Group and reviewed the Bushfire Risk Management Plan for the Cairns region.

### **Investigation, enforcement and compliance**

Three Authority staff members completed compliance training and were accredited as Authorised Officers under the *Wet Tropics World Heritage Protection and Management Act 1993*.

Reminder notices were sent to all maintenance permit holders advising of the requirement to complete and provide an annual return showing compliance with the maintenance permit conditions.

Staff investigated a number of potential compliance issues including:

- unauthorised use of all-terrain vehicles at Bramston Beach
- alleged clearing at Sides Road, Julatten
- clearing of vegetation adjacent to the C.R.E.B Track south-west of Wujal Wujal
- alleged clearing of vegetation adjacent to the Area near Tully Falls Road and Arthur Baillie Road
- condition of a community dump site near Kija (Roaring Meg Falls), Wujal Wujal.

Authority staff also continued an ecological monitoring program looking at the impacts of cattle at the 10 Mile property lease—near Wujal Wujal.

### **Land dealings**

- The Authority continued to liaise with a leaseholder at 10 Mile regarding transfer of the lease.
- Negotiations with Department of Environment and Science, the Queensland Department of Natural Resources Mines and Energy, and a landholder at Shipwreck Bay—near Cape Kimberley—regarding freeholding continue.
- Negotiations are continuing with HQ Plantations regarding harvesting of plantation timber within the Area.
- Discussions continue with various Rainforest Aboriginal groups regarding land proposed for housing.

## Terms and abbreviations

Authority	Wet Tropics Management Authority
Area	Wet Tropics of Queensland World Heritage Area
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	Queensland Department of Environment and Science
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
Management Plan	Wet Tropics Management Plan 1998
QPWS&P	Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service & Partnerships
Queensland Act	<i>Wet Tropics World Heritage Protection and Management Act 1993</i>
SAC	Scientific Advisory Committee
TOLG	Traditional Owner Leadership Group
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation











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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.