



## BOARD COMMUNIQUE 127

The Wet Tropics Management Authority (the Authority) is a statutory body overseen by an independent Board of Directors. The current Board of Directors includes Ms Chrissy Grant (Chair), Ms Robin Clark, Dr Sally Driml, Mr William Enoch-Tranby, Ms Ailsa Lively, Professor Stephen Williams, and Mr Scott Buchanan (Executive Director). The Authority's role is to ensure Australia's obligation to the World Heritage Convention is met in relation to the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area (the Area).

The Authority's Board of Directors met on **Friday 17 June 2024**. In this communique, the Board reports on the following topics:

- **20<sup>th</sup> Cassowary Awards**
- **Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples' rights, interests and aspirations – staff workshop**
- **Draft s62 guideline – Limited and Developed Visitor Infrastructure**
- **Policy review**
- **Use and risk of artificial intelligence in Authority work**

### **20<sup>th</sup> Cassowary Awards**

Arrangements are underway for the 20<sup>th</sup> Cassowary Awards which will be celebrated at Tjapukai Now on Friday 6 September 2024. First held in 1999, the Wet Tropics Management Authority's Cassowary Awards are the only awards program in Australia to recognise community contributions to World Heritage management. The awards celebrate the efforts of organisations and individuals who participate in conserving, protecting and raising awareness about the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area. The Board was pleased with the new event branding and refreshed award categories and descriptions, hoping this will bring renewed interest to the event and encourage award nominations. Award nominations are open now and will close on 31 July 2024. [Visit www.wettropics.gov.au/cassowary-awards](http://www.wettropics.gov.au/cassowary-awards)

### **Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples' rights, interests and aspirations – staff workshop**

The Board received a summary about an all-staff workshop held in March to discuss embedding Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples' rights, interests and aspirations across all aspects of the Authority's work and strengthening cultural capability across the organisation. At the workshop the Authority discussed what a whole of organisation approach means, looks like in practice and what's needed to adopt it. It was identified that this is the responsibility of the whole of Authority and its success relies on everyone. It was also recognised this process is reasonably well imbedded in current practices, though it was recognised that cultural awareness training would be valuable and is being delivered shortly.

### **Draft s62 guideline – Limited and Developed Visitor Infrastructure**

The 2020 review of the Wet Tropics Management Plan 1998 provided increased clarity for what visitor infrastructure could occur within the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area. The amended Management Plan introduced descriptions for Developed Visitor Infrastructure (that could only happen in zone C) and Limited Visitor Infrastructure (that could happen in all zones). The draft guideline will provide clear explanations about how any proposal for new visitor infrastructure within the different zones of the World Heritage Area would be assessed under the Management Plan. The Board discussed the draft s62 guideline and provided feedback which will be incorporated prior to the Authority undertaking external consultation to ensure the guidelines are understood and useful to any parties seeking to lodge applications for visitor infrastructure in the World Heritage Area.

### **Policy review**

The Board approved the rescinding of three Wet Tropics Management Authority Board policy statements, which are now redundant and superseded by more contemporary guidance material:

- No.2 Roads in the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area
- No.7 Compliance and Enforcement
- No.10 Grazing in the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area

These policy statements are part of a wider audit being undertaken to ensure the Authority's policy documents are relevant, contemporary and provide a consistent framework for the interpretation of legislative and non-legislative matters. The rescinded policies will be archived and removed from the website.

### **Use and risks of artificial intelligence in Authority work**

Given the enormous potential benefit of artificial intelligence (AI) and the potential risks, the Board welcomed a presentation on the use and risks of AI in the Authority's work. The presentation highlighted the Board's obligations in terms of mitigating risks relating to AI. The Board discussed current uses, existing policies, and the need for ongoing vigilance to maintain ethical standards and minimise risk internally and to our stakeholders.

### **Board meeting 128 will be held in Cairns on Thursday 5 September 2024.**

For more information, please phone 07 4241 0500 or email [wettropics@wtma.qld.gov.au](mailto:wettropics@wtma.qld.gov.au)