

In Attendance
Directors

Ms Leslie Shirreffs	Chair*
Ms Anne Clarke	Director*
Mr Phil Rist	Director*
Dr Leah Talbot	Director*
Mr John Courtenay	Director*
Mr Scott Buchanan	Executive Director

Observers

Ms Lyn Wallace	Manager, World Heritage, Queensland Department Environment and Science*
Ms Alison Webb	Regional Director, Department of Environment and Science*
Ms Helen Wright	Director, Natural Heritage Section, Australian Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment*

Guests

Mr Darren Scott	Executive Director Investment Development, Department of Innovation Tourism Industry Development*
Mr David Edwards	Projects Chief Executive, Department of Innovation Tourism Industry Development*
Mr Tim Hertz	Project Manager, Department of Innovation Tourism Industry Development*
Ms Tracy Rose	A/Manager, Ecotourism, Department of Environment and Science*

Authority officers

Ms Saskia Salmeron-Rodriguez	Manager, World Heritage Connections
Mr Tim Wong	Manager, Planning and Conservation
Ms M'Lis Flynn	Executive Officer
Ms Jeanette Wormald	Strategic Communications Advisor*
Ms Lucy Karger	Project Manager, Yellow Crazy Ant Eradication Program*
Mr Chris Jahnsen	Principal Project Officer

*attendance via videoconference

1. INTRODUCTION
1.1. Chair's introduction and welcome

The Chair Leslie Shirreffs acknowledged the Traditional Custodians of the Wet Tropics region and paid respect to elder's past, present and emerging. The chair also acknowledged Traditional Owners from each of the regions in which directors and observers were calling from. Leslie welcomed all directors, observers and participants and thanked Authority staff for organising the Zoom videoconference call.

1.2. Apologies

Director Iain Gordon, observers Angela Siggery of the Department of Environment and Science (DES) and James Newman of Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service and Partnerships (QPWS&P) were unable to attend.

1.3. Conflict of interest

There were no conflicts of interest noted.

2. MINUTES AND ACTIONS ARISING

2.1. Endorsement of Board minutes No 110

Resolution

The board **endorsed** the minutes for Board meeting No 110.

2.2. Actions arising

The Executive Director worked through Actions Arising with updates provided to items. All updates have now been made to the Actions Arising table.

Resolution

The board **updated** the actions arising.

2.3. OOS papers

Two papers had been considered out of session by the Board. OO438 - SAC and CCC recommendations for appointment 2020 sought Board endorsement of the appointment of nominees to the Scientific Advisory and Community Advisory committees. OOS 437 Cassowary Awards 2020 Sought approval of the Board for changes to the Cassowary Award format.

Resolution

The board:

- considered OOS 438 and **endorsed** the appointment of the recommended nominees to each committee
- asked that OOS 437 be carried over to the next full board meeting.

3. REPORTS

3.1. Chair's report

The Chair, Leslie Shirreffs addressed the board updating them on her activities and outcomes since board meeting no 110 in November 2019.

The Chair has held a series of meetings and briefings, including with:

- Minister for Environment and the Great Barrier Reef, Minister for Science and Minister for the Arts, the Hon Leeanne Enoch in Brisbane in early March 2020 re climate change, boards appointments, the refresh of the Regional Agreement and other matters
- The Chief of Staff to Hon Key Wyatt's, Minister for Indigenous Australians and Policy Advisor, in February in Canberra, re the Refresh of the Regional Agreement and economic opportunities including Ranger programs
- Mr James Thomas, Policy Advisor to Minister Ley, Minister for Environment re WTMA issues and potential meeting with the Minister

- The Hon Warren Entsch, in Canberra- re Bushfire recovery and tourism opportunities
- First Assistant Secretary, Stephen Oxley and staff of the Australian Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment regarding climate change, refresh of the Regional Agreement and board appointment process, in Canberra
- Mr Wayne Westacott, CEO of Greenfleet about potential projects in the Wet Tropics region
- Mr Steve Greenwood, CEO of Queensland Futures Institute about nature-based economies and opportunities in FNQ
- Ashleigh Morris CEO of Coreo to develop circular economy projects in partnership with Queensland Government including one in the Far North
- Martijn Wilder from Pollination Group about highly innovative climate economics projects
- Mike Berwick from Green Collar Group about carbon neutral tourism

The chair also:

- Participated in the board's Climate Workshop at Tjapukai Aboriginal Cultural Park (to be discussed at agenda item 4.1)
- attended Climate Market Institute and Land Restoration Fund workshops—focusing on carbon abatement with co-benefits and investment in climate resilience.
- attended the Hon Sussan Ley's Ministerial Roundtable on Bushfire Recovery for World Heritage in Canberra. The discussions centred on the application of lessons learnt, the emerging recognition of traditional burning practices and recovery action for the 113 species identified as at risk from extinction as a result of the fires. Min Ley outlined three key areas for moving forward—targeted intervention for areas under severe threat, getting the right resources in the right places, and protecting areas not yet burned (specifically mentioning the Wet Tropics as one of those place).
- participated in an Australian World Heritage Advisory Committee (AWHAC) meeting and an AWHAC climate change working group meeting. The working group focused on predictive modelling and how to address specific attributes of World Heritage sites in the modelling
- participated in a workshop with the Queensland Human Rights Commissioner, Scott McDougall on the new Human Rights Act
- led the panel—comprised of Leslie and senior Australian and Queensland Government officials—in the shortlisting of nominees for Wet Tropics Management Authority board director positions. Three of the current directors will complete their term on 25 May 2020.
- attended a Traditional Owner Leadership Group (TOLG) workshop in January 2020.

Resolution

The board **noted** the chair's report.

Action

- Add an agenda item to May board meeting for outgoing directors to share their thoughts on the strengths, weaknesses, experiences and ideas on the operation of the Authority's board.

3.2. Executive Director's report

Scott Buchanan provided the board with an update on the impact of COVID-19 outlining that:

- the emergence of COVID-19 and related contingencies is an urgent, key issue requiring swift and immediate action. The Authority is preparing for staff to potentially work-from-home. Authority staff are now only meeting external clients via videoconference or tele-link, are practicing good hygiene practices and ensuring systems are established to facilitate a smooth transition to working-from-home arrangements.
- the management forum is taking an active role to prepare staff and ensure that information shared does not cause further stress with staff who may already be feeling overwhelmed
- some staff will not be able to work from home depending on the work they do, or if they need to undertake caring duties (kids or immune-compromised family members). DES have allocated 20 days of special leave for staff to utilise if ill and once all sick leave has been exhausted.

- COVID-19 is already having a significant impact on our partners such as the tourism industry and on the Authority's work program, in particular:
 - the progress of the Regional Agreement refresh and the ability of the TOLG to complete the community engagement roadshow and a regional forum planned for May 2020
 - postponing the Paluma Tour Guide School planned for April
 - conducting SAC and CCC inductions via videoconference on 22 May.

Scott also briefed the board on a series of other HRM and operational matters:

- the funding agreement for the Yellow Crazy Ant Eradication Program (YCAEP) has been signed by both the Australian and Queensland Governments. Scott thanked Lucy Karger and Carmel McMahon (Australian Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment) for their work in facilitating the sign-off
- the communications team have been producing and sharing a plethora of targeted, meaningful social media across all platforms, including great videos and imagery. Scott thanked Gretchen, Jeanette, Aaron and Jodie for their fantastic efforts
- the Authority's lease in the Ports Authority building expires in January 2020 and we are investigating a series of options to be able to bring the entire Authority staff, including the workshop, into one space
- a joint funding submission with the DES World Heritage team was recently lodged with the Queensland Government for resilience activities
- proponents for the Wangetti Trail project have been asked to provide more information to the Authority on their proposal, while Bill Carrodus and Angus McLeod continue to undertake the permit assessment
- some issues are emerging around Noah Creek and the permit application that Douglas Shire Council have lodged. The Authority is seeking to have traffic calming measures erected.
- Scott attended the launch of Tourism Tropical North Queensland (TTNQ) new branding which has a byline of 'see great, leave greater'.
- the Authority are advertising an AO6 role for the YCAEP to provide technical support to the monitoring, operations teams and GIS. The AO5 community engagement officer and 2 specialist AO4 engagement officer roles will be advertised soon.
- Buddy Ahmat, previously with the Queensland Department of Transport and Main Roads, recently joined World Heritage Connections as a principal project officer
- Scott will be on leave from 6-17 April and an internal EOI will invite staff to act in the Executive Director role in Scott's absence

Resolution

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

3.3. Director's issues

Anne Clarke

- Advised the board that the Kuranda Infrastructure Advisory Committee may be folded soon. The committee was established through an agreement between Mareeba Shire Council and the Queensland Government and gives advice on appropriate tourism infrastructure in the region.

Board directors had a detailed discussion and expressed some strong opinions about the work of the committee, the way in which it is funded and user-pays approaches across the entire World Heritage property. Directors agreed that they will continue to advocate for user-pays systems as a means to support costs associated with managing the World Heritage Area.

Phil Rist

- Shared the exciting news that Giringun Aboriginal Corporation will be hosting the 2021 Queensland Land and Sea Rangers forum

John Courtenay

- No issues to report

Dr Leah Talbot

- Gave presentations at the 2020 Queensland Land and Sea Ranger Forum hosted by Djabugay Rangers. Leah gave a presentation on women-led initiatives at a very well attended ladies-only forum and presented sessions on Indigenous-led research and on available opportunities the Great Barrier Reef Foundation.
- With TOLG members Phil Rist and Joann Schmider, project officer Dr Cath Moran and the Authority's Saskia Salmeron-Rodriguez, attended a successful meeting with Minister Leeanne Enoch. The Minister provided the team with some sound advice and some information for the TOLG to consider.
- Met with Dr Chris Sarra, Director-General of the Queensland Department of Innovation and Tourism Industry Development.

Resolution

The board **noted** director's issues.

Actions:

The Board asked the Authority to inquire to QPWS&P re. the s35 renewal of Skyrail and Queensland Rail authorities - the board would like assurance from QPWS that fees will continue to be levied (as is the case with the existing agreement) and that those fees consider:

- the costs incurred by the community/council (as under the Kuranda Infrastructure Agreement) and by the QPWS; and
- benefits to be derived by the Traditional Owners of the land on which the activities occur and
- that those parties mentioned (Local Government, QPWS and Traditional Owners of the land) be included in negotiations on the renewal.

Follow Up: The fees are not levied under the Nature Conservation Act, but legislation administered by the Department of Transport and Main Roads. Discussions are happening between DTMR, QT, DLGR&MA, and DPC. The ED will follow up with relevant agencies to determine where correspondence should go.

3.4. Queensland and Commonwealth Department reports

Lyn Wallace (World Heritage Unit, Department of Environment and Science)

- The World Heritage Unit has recently provided input to the Australian (State party) report to the IUCN which will be tabled at the July IUCN meeting. It's been challenging, particularly as the NSW Executive Officer for Gondwana is the only person who can speak to Gondwana issues as there is no QLD EO counterpart. This makes it difficult when responding to the many requests for information on the impact of the fires and proposals for recovery.
- K'gari (Fraser Island) staff and Traditional Owners have been working with CSIRO to run climate adaptation workshops, however COVID-19 is now impacting. All workshops, including a 3-day climate vulnerability workshop, have been postponed until November or further notice.
- Appointments to World Heritage property advisory committees continue to be very slow. The Butchulla people of K'gari now have a 2nd native title representative body (NTRB) managing a 2nd native title claim. A representative from this claim group also needs to be added to the advisory committee.
- World Heritage Unit staff are now working from home and practicing social distancing

Helen Wright (Director, Natural Heritage Section, Australian Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment)

- Helen is a Yuin Budawang woman, recently employed as the Director of the Natural Heritage section of DAWE and replacing acting director, Sarah Titchen. Helen has a degree in Human Resources and has spent the previous three years working in Indigenous affairs at the Office of the Registrar of Indigenous Corporations (ORIC) and AIATSIS.
- Sarah Titchen is currently working on special projects related to the bushfire recovery.
- Lisa Buchanan is currently leading the Wet Tropics work in the Natural Heritage section and is the main contact for the Authority.
- James Barker replaced David Williams after his retirement in December as the Assistant Secretary, Heritage Branch
- There is substantial pressure in the team at the moment as a result of the 2019/20 bushfires and the increasing impact of COVID-19. A comprehensive assessment of early interventions and the impact of the fires on world heritage properties is underway to inform which recovery actions to be taken and how to implement action.
- The first payment against the new yellow crazy ant funding agreement is in process. Minister Ley's media team are in discussions with the Authority to develop a media release.

Board directors thanked Lyn Wallace for her update and welcomed Helen Wright to her first board meeting. The board requested that Helen ensures the Wet Tropics continues to be at the forefront of discussions relating to creating bushfire resilience, particularly following on from Minister Ley's roundtable workshop on the impact of the fires on Australian world heritage areas. They also requested that Traditional Owners are engaged early in discussions and that programs are properly funded to ensure it is Traditional Owners who undertake any traditional burning practices.

Resolution

The board **noted** the Australian and Queensland Government reports.

3.5. SAC and CCC report to the board

There was no SAC or CCC report to the board as the committees have not met since board meeting 110.

3.6. Significant correspondence

Date	In	Out	From / To	Purpose	Action for directors
18 Nov 2019	✓		The Hon Minister Enoch- QLD Minister for Environment	Response to correspondence —to the communique from board meeting 109 (August 2019). Acknowledging YCA, climate planning, relationship with Terrain, Plan review and SAC/CCC appointments pending.	None required
18 Nov 2019	✓		The Hon Ken Wyatt – Australian Minister for Indigenous Australians	Response to June 2019 correspondence from WTMA Chair —acknowledging WTMA work on recognising cultural values, outlining Aus gov't plans re: Indigenous rangers	None required
6 Jan 2020		✓	The Hon Minister Enoch- QLD Minister for Environment	Alert —advising of the start of the process to recruit for vacant board director roles	None required
7 Jan 2020		✓	The Hon Minister Ley – Aust Minister for the Environment	Alert —advising of the start of the process to recruit for vacant board director roles	None required
15 Jan 2020		✓	WTMA	Media release—<i>Call for new executive board members to manage Queensland's Wet Tropics</i>	
21 Jan 2020		✓	WTMA	Media release—<i>Stamp of approval for our Wet Tropics tree dwellers</i> for launch of Australia post stamp series	None required
4 Feb 2020		✓	The Hon Minister Enoch- QLD Minister for Environment	Request —for approval for a proposed process for recruiting for vacant board director roles	None required
4 Feb 2020		✓	The Hon Minister Ley – Aust Minister for the Environment	Request —for approval for a proposed process for recruiting for vacant board director roles	None required
8 Feb 2020		✓	WTMA	Media release/Profile Article Koori Mail—<i>Paying more than lip service to traditional knowledge in land management</i> Highlighting work of Dr Leah Talbot	None required
13 Feb 2020	✓		The Hon Minister Enoch- QLD Minister for Environment	Alert —of correspondence from Minister Ley signing the Yellow Crazy Ant Eradication Program Funding Agreement 2019-2022	None required
24 Feb 2020		✓	WTMA	Media release—<i>collaborative management key to Wet Tropics future</i> for the TOLG roadshow	None required
2 Mar 2020		✓	WTMA	Media release—<i>Working together to protect the Wet Tropics from climate change</i> for 6 March climate workshop	None required
4 Mar 2020		✓	WTMA	Media release—<i>Yellow crazy ants found in Earlville</i>	None required
9 Mar 2020		✓	WTMA	Media release—<i>Climate forum creates history for region</i> following 6 March climate workshop	None required

Resolution

The Board **noted** the correspondence report.

4. STRATEGIC ISSUES

4.1. Climate action

Executive Director, Scott Buchanan addressed the board on a series of climate activities in progress. The funding provided for the Authority's climate actions is almost expended, with a proposal for the remaining \$45k to be allocated to the involvement of Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples. This may need to be reviewed in light of the current COVID-19 restrictions.

On 6 March 2020 the Authority facilitated the *Creating our Future* workshop for industry and partners with representation across the tourism, Rainforest Aboriginal, research, education and conservation sectors. Scott stressed the criticality of early follow-up of workshop outcomes and outlined the actions already undertaken or in progress:

- distribution of a workshop media release, including to participants
- discussions with:
 - Nick Trompf, Executive Chairman, Advance Cairns
 - Stewart Christie, Chief Executive Officer, Terrain NRM
 - Becky Ojala, Sales Manager, CaPTA Group
- identification of short-term actions and their resourcing requirements
- creation of a fulltime position to drive the climate agenda
- establishment of a focus group to guide and prioritise workshop actions

Scott also updated directors on the progress of a potential submission under the Queensland Land Restoration Fund (LRF) program outlining:

- the Authority has had several discussions with officers in DES about developing a submission focused on increasing climate resilience across the entire world heritage area
- the LRF program is not broadly focused, but rather is a carbon farming initiative with premiums for co-benefits
- the Authority's draft application has been the result of intensive efforts in research, calculations and assessment and provided opportunity to partner with others such as Terrain NRM and Green Collar. It used a strategic approach and relied on the involvement of Traditional Owners to undertake the work. The development of the submission required the Authority to quantify costings and assess of the viability of using carbon projects for land rehabilitation in the Wet Tropics.
- the process highlighted that relying on carbon farming and co-benefits, through the LRF model would require private sector investment, an underwriter and many years before any benefits are realised. To further develop a lodgement-ready submission will require substantial time and effort to articulate co-benefits as this round of the LRF program was not necessarily constructed with protected areas in mind.

Scott further briefed directors on other climate action including:

- the lodging of a submission with the DES sector adaptation program for the 'Right Fire, Right Country' Fire Forum scheduled to be held at Girringun Aboriginal Corporation in Sept/Oct 2020
- discussions with Professor Steve Williams and QPWS&P to develop a methodology that rangers, Indigenous rangers and citizen scientists could use to monitor mountaintop and at-climate-risk species. A project plan has been developed and there is also a PhD student ready to research.

The board had an animated discussion on the potential for further developing and lodging a submission under the LRF program. Directors and managers discussed the pros and cons of further developing the submission in light of low climate resilience outcomes for the Area. Directors conversed about carbon farming, the use of green bonds and who is investing in climate resilience in other regions globally.

Directors agreed that it was not viable to lodge a submission under the LRF for climate resilience and for the Authority to direct efforts toward completing a climate prospectus for the Wet Tropics and seeking investment and partnerships.

Resolution

The board:

- does **not approve** lodging a submission for a climate resilience project under the Queensland Land Restoration Fund Program
- **noted** the outcomes from the Creating our Future forum and provided direction on next steps
- **noted** the other climate initiatives underway across other programs of the Authority

Actions

- Chair to write to the Queensland Minister and Director-General outlining our reasons for not lodging a submission
- finalise the climate prospectus as a priority
- continue exploring private sector investment and partnership opportunities
- ascertain the quantum of carbon stored in the Wet Tropics

4.2. Regional Agreement / TOLG update

Manager Saskia Salmeron-Rodriguez briefed board directors on progress in refreshing the Wet Tropics Regional Agreement and the substantial impact of COVID-19 on how the Aboriginal Partnerships program is delivered.

- The funds forwarded to Terrain NRM to provide project support to the Traditional Owner Leadership Group (TOLG) have now been expensed, and the Authority has some extra funds to facilitate two more TOLG meetings. The two project officers at Terrain will not be funded after June 30 and more funding may need to be found.
- A key meeting was held on 20-21 January and included a presentation by the North Queensland Land Council (NQLC) on their current governance arrangements.
- NLQC have stepped back from the process since January and following a letter that was sent to the Authority with a series of stipulations about how the Regional Agreement process should continue
- The TOLG are seeking to engage Mr Jim Petrich to facilitate next TOLG meeting and to lead the lobbying of government at the highest level. Jim was the original High-Profile Facilitator for the Regional Agreement negotiations from 2001 – 2005 and is highly experienced.
- Letters from the TOLG regarding the Regional Agreement refresh process and seeking support were sent to Queensland Ministers Leeanne Enoch and Jackie Trad and Australian Ministers Ken Wyatt and Sussan Ley
- A draft supplementary agreement has been developed which allows enough time for culturally appropriate consultation on proposed changes to the Regional Agreement. The supplementary agreement would be in place for 2 years during which time proposed specific Regional Agreement changes would be implemented, including the establishment of a new governance body by 2022. The COVID-19 restrictions have the potential to really undermine this work and new approaches need to be investigated.
- The community engagement roadshow community meetings have not been well attended which may be due to a variety of reasons
- The Rainforest Aboriginal People's Regional Forum has been postponed until further notice due to COVID-19

Board directors were concerned about the impact of COVID-19 on the TOLG's capacity to undertake community consultation and progress the refresh of the Regional Agreement. Directors also discussed the potential impact of the letter from the NLQC and discussed potential actions with the two directors who are also members of the TOLG. All agreed that it is vital to continue to advocate for and seek support from all levels of government to continue progressing the refresh of the Regional Agreement to continue to ensure meaningful involvement of Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples in the management of the world heritage area.

Resolution

The board:

- **noted** the key developments in the refresh of the Regional Agreement
- **noted** the risks and issues for finalising the supplementary agreement, completing the community engagement roadshow and the withdrawal of NQLC from the process

Actions

- Saskia Salmeron-Rodriguez to arrange video-conference meeting between TOLG and Ministers Enoch and Trad to discuss current status of the Regional Agreement refresh, the effects of COVID-19 and engaging Mr Jim Petrich as a negotiator

4.3. Yellow Crazy Ant Eradication Program – project plan and update on funding agreement

Lucy Karger updated the board on the current status of the yellow crazy ant eradication program (YCAEP) including:

- the 2019-2022 Intergovernmental funding agreement and draft workplan were signed by the Queensland and Australian Governments on 13 February 2020. Lucy thanked Scott Buchanan and Helen Wright (DAWE) for their support in ensuring sign-off.
- the likelihood that that YCAEP budget will be underspent by \$1.5m for the 2019-20 financial year. The budget uses real costs based on the experience of previous years and includes contingencies for discovery of new infestations. This year we had less new infestations and worked faster and more successfully than anticipated.
- the team are investigating the impact of seasonality on survey results and adapting survey methods in response, as well as undertaking presence / absence probability research
- trace surveys underway to assess how yellow crazy ants got to the Henleys Hill site, and DNA testing being done to see which other populations this infestation is alike to. The Wet Tropics infestations are genetically different to the Townsville populations.
- no new infestations have been found in sugarcane, and are very proud that this is likely a reflection of the work of Mulgrave Central Mill's, Matt Hession and Cane Industry Engagement Officer, Wes Moller
- the Authority can confidently say that in a couple of years there will be several sites of complete eradication
- additional odour-detection dogs will be acquired by June 30, 2020
- the operations team is working very efficiently and effectively, and morale markedly improved due to the excellent leadership of Jochem van der Reijden

The board thanked Lucy for her comprehensive update and congratulated her team on their continued great work in an increasingly difficult environment. Directors were concerned that the underspend may be reallocated to COVID-19 response and suggested that the Authority continue to examine options for reducing the underspend and develop further contingency plans.

Resolution

The board **noted** the yellow crazy ant eradication program status update and advised the Authority to continue to examine options for reducing the Yellow Crazy Ant Eradication Program underspend including assessing how we could support the eradication of the Townsville area outbreak.

4.4. Status of the Wet Tropics Management Plan review

Manager of Planning and Conservation, Tim Wong provided directors with a brief update on the status of the management plan review, sharing the following:

- the Queensland Premier gave approval on 19 February 2020 for the Authority to send amendments to the Wet Tropics Management Plan to the Queensland and Australian Ministers' for approval. In the Premier's letter to Minister Enoch she noted the Authority's extensive consultation and a belief that the amendments will strengthen consideration of Rainforest Aboriginal tradition.

- the package of draft amendments was sent the Australian and Queensland Ministers and was approved with very few changes.
- the draft amendment plan will be now lodged through Queensland Minister's office to Cabinet. The Queensland Cabinet are scheduled to meet 8 June 2020
- thanked Principal Planning Officer, Julie Colman for her significant leadership in the project

Directors were impressed that the Plan review and its proposed amendments have continued to progress and acknowledged Tim Wong and his team for the substantial amount of work they have completed. A particular acknowledgement was given to Julie Colman for her excellent work developing the Ministerial Council submission and related documents.

Resolution

The board **noted** the progress of the Wet Tropics Management Plan review

4.5. Wet Tropics Sustainable Tourism Destination Plan

Principal Project Officer, Chris Jahnsen is leading the development of the Wet Tropics Sustainable Tourism Destination Plan and provided board directors with a comprehensive update on his research and progress in developing the plan. Chris outlined that he is:

- researching and drawing on previous Authority planning such as the Wet Tropics Walking Strategy, Nature-based Tourism Strategy and the Presentation Strategy
- utilising a community-driven, bottom-up, approach to ensure the plan is realistic and grounded and involves Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples appropriately
- following IUCN principles and best practice for protected area management
- researching and assessing the variety of tourism products, ideas, trends and systems such as Indigenous community-driven tourism, e.g., Mossman Gorge, circular economy systems, responsible tourism, low-volume high-yield approaches etc
- assessing how to adjust the consultation process in light of COVID-19 restrictions
- seeking an extension for delivery of the plan in September or October 2020.

The board were impressed with the extent of analysis that Chris had undertaken and already articulated. They suggested there might be an opportunity to draw upon the linkages between the Wet Tropics and Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Areas and 2020 as the Year of Indigenous Tourism. Directors discussed how tourism can be divisive in Aboriginal communities particularly in relation to permitting and access, however ensuring the plan has a strong emphasis on benefit sharing could be meaningful.

Resolution

The board **noted** the progress in delivery of a Wet Tropics Sustainable Tourism Destination Plan.

4.6. Strategic Risk Register

Chair, Leslie Shirreffs briefed directors on the strategic risk register. Leslie outlined that the register is about strategic risks such as the potential for loss of funding, or unexpected withdrawal of partnership agreements or not being able to meet commitments in our strategic plan. Operational risks to people and operations are covered in other internal risk registers that the Authority develops.

The board were supportive of the register and discussed the risks and risk rating which should be closely monitored such as those relating to the Authority's climate agenda.

Resolution

The board **endorsed** the strategic risk register.

4.7. QPWS&P–WTMA Partnership Agreement

Regional Director for QPWS&P (DES), Alison Webb briefed directors on the WTMA-QPWS&P Partnership Agreement signed in early 2020. The agreement encourages both agencies to work together across a

variety of activities that align to the Wet Tropics Strategic Plan and the refresh of the Wet Tropics Regional Agreement, including the collaborative development of project plans. Alison updated directors on progress made against each of the key priorities identified in the plan including:

- development of a climate change project plan focusing on mountaintop species is being drafted and negotiated between the two agencies
- planning and consequent postponement (due to COVID-19) of a fire planning workshop with Traditional Owners. Queensland Fire Service, the Authority and QPWS&P staff
- implementation of an Indigenous employment strategy driven by a new HR Indigenous employment officer, and positive collaboration with Indigenous rangers external to QPWS&P
- a new strategic approach to compliance

Alison also stressed the major and immediate impact of COVID-19 on QPWS&P leading to several major actions such as:

- closing access to Murray Falls, Mossman Gorge, Cape York and ceasing face-to-face engagement with Traditional Owners and their communities to protect them
- daily meetings with the Executive Management Group of DES resulting in updated actions and directives
- delays in some major projects and assessing how negotiations with the Eastern Kuku Yalanji peoples will progress into the future
- postponement of the Gurra Gurra framework launch. The framework sets out how QPWS&P will work more effectively and appropriately with First Nations peoples and is intended to be extended to all of DES

The board thanked Alison and congratulated both agencies on achieving a meaningful partnership agreement which will help each to achieve strategic operations and objectives.

Resolution

The board:

- **noted** that the Authority and QPWS&P have entered into a 5-year partnership arrangement 2019-2024
- **noted** the final report for the final year of the 2016-2019 Partnership Agreement

4.8. Annual Business Plan and budget

Executive Director, Scott Buchanan took board directors on a detailed journey through the draft 2019-20 Milestone Report for the Australian Government. The milestone report, due on 30 April each year, is a requirement of the National Partnership Agreement the State has with the Australian Government. The milestone report details progress and expenditure against milestones from the Wet Tropics Strategic Plan. Scott briefed directors in detail on each achievement and outlined projects which may be impacted by COVID-19 or other issues. Of the 35 milestone deliverables, 80% are completed or on track, with the remaining 20% (7 deliverables) in progress and to be completed in the 2020-21 year. Scott also tabled and outlined a draft 2020-21 Annual Business Plan for director's approval. The business plan is to be lodged with the Australian Government in conjunction with the milestone report.

Directors congratulated staff for the array of outcomes achieved in 2019-20 despite a markedly reduced communications team and huge workload across the entire organisation. In particular, board directors acknowledged the caliber of the current social media, the strategic recruitment which has been successfully undertaken and the capacity of staff to achieve in the face of multiple emerging challenges.

Resolution

The board:

- **endorses** the draft 2020-2021 Annual Business Plan
- **notes** the draft report on the 2019-20 Annual Business Plan

Actions

- Arrange for the Executive Director to meet with Sheriden Morris at the Reef and Rainforest Research Centre (RRRC) to discuss the development of a biosecurity taskforce
- Ascertain if the Authority has signed an agreement with Terrain in relation to threatened species recovery (Milestone 1.4b 2019-20 report)
- Invite Cheryl Leavy (QPWS) to address the board on the Gurra Gurra Framework and the co-stewardship work being led by Karell Ross in the QPWS&P Tenure Resolution team
- Feature the researcher protocol in the next issue of the Rainforest Aboriginal News
- Liaise with the Threatened Species Commissioner's office on how to get climate-impacted species onto her focus list
- Board to write to Minister Enoch about the potential to run joint management land tenure resolution process for areas in the Wet Tropics
- Consider developing a paper for the August board regarding the development of a protocol for involvement of Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples in the commercial activity permitting process

5. GENERAL BUSINESS

5.1. Strategic communications and media update

Strategic Communications Advisor, Jeanette Wormald briefed board directors on the array of achievements made by the communications team since early 2020. Joining Jodie Thomas (Communications and Media Officer p/t) are Jeanette, Aaron Smith (Communications and Media Officer) and Gretchen Martins (Senior Project Officer).

Jeanette outlined the variety of achievements including:

- a social media campaign resulting in a marked increase in content on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. In a 13-day period the team established an Authority LinkedIn page and increased Twitter engagement by 217%, Instagram engagement by 47.5% and Facebook engagement by 100%.
- monitoring interaction and engagement daily using Hootsuite
- introducing live links to social media platforms in email signatures
- incorporation of three hashtags to every image used on social media *#AcceptActAdapt #WetTropics #WorldHeritage*
- developing a 'meet the locals' weekly post which is directly linked back to the Authority's climate messaging

Jeanette also stated that a comprehensive communications strategy is currently under development which will further define the ways in which the Authority communicates its key messages, particularly in relation to the climate agenda, the yellow crazy ant eradication program and other key strategic themes.

Board directors thanked the communications team for their efforts and were excited to learn about the improved social media engagement and the positive impact it will have on presenting the world heritage area.

Resolution

The board **noted** the progress of the Authority in developing a strategic communications plan and the update on activities.

Action

- All media releases to be sent directly to board directors

5.2. 18th Cassowary Awards OOS paper 437

Chair, Leslie Shirreffs addressed directors regarding the Cassowary Awards out-of-session paper distributed for endorsement in February 2020. Leslie outlined her concerns about proposed changes to the format, funding and perceived purpose of the awards event. Directors expressed concern that the proposal was a

change of direction for an event that had been successful in the preceding years and were unsure about the impact of introducing ticket prices on our partners, sponsors and attendees.

Directors heard that the purpose of the proposed changes was to raise the event to a more prestigious level, to create a profile for the event and attract potential new sponsors through the engagement of a 'high profile entertainer'. Substantial review of industry standards and analysis was undertaken to shape the proposal.

Directors thanked Jeanette and Gretchen for their research and confirmed that they were satisfied with the current format of the awards ceremony. The board invited the Authority to harness its current branding, and fully capitalise on social media for the awards scheduled for November 2020.

Resolution

The board **did not approve** the proposed introduction of a ticket price and other proposed changes.

Action

- Consider developing a board paper for 2021 outlining options and clarifying the purpose of the Cassowary Awards

5.3. Wangetti Trail Proposal

David Edwards, Projects Chief Executive, and Darren Scott Executive Director Investment Development, Department of Innovation Tourism Industry Development (DITID) and Tracy Rose, (DES) addressed the board to brief them on Queensland Ecotourism Trails project, in particular the Wangetti Trail. There are currently eight projects in progress, three within the Wet Tropics and three emerging trail projects across Queensland, with all at varying stages.

Darren and David explained that the Cooloola Great Walk was a good example of their process, whereby through face-to-face, on-country meetings with native title claimants or holder's agreements have been reached such as using a native title compensation model to build in benefits for Traditional Owners.

In relation to the Wangetti Trail directors learned that:

- there has been continuous negotiation with Traditional Owners
- a permit application has been lodged with the Authority
- the Authority has requested more information
- the DITID, QPWS&P and the Authority have met to clarify issues and develop a construction guide
- a cultural heritage survey at Mowbray River pedestrian bridge has been completed
- EPBC referral to be submitted in April 2020
- Scheduled construction planned for the 4th quarter of 2020
- Engagement with the Authority has been very positive and valuable and will be ongoing
- the team are proud of their upfront, proper and meaningful engagement

The directors thanked Darren, David and Tracy for a thorough and informative presentation and expressed their congratulations on the success of the engagement model being utilised

Resolution

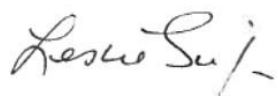
The board **noted** the activities and process underway to develop the Wangetti Trail project.

5.4. Approval of board communique 111

Resolution

The board **approved** the communique for meeting 111.

Meeting 111 closed at 1.00pm



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Ms Leslie Shirreff PSM
Chair

Date 06/05/2020