

*In Attendance***Directors**

Ms Leslie Shirreffs	Chair*
Professor Iain Gordon	Director*
Ms Anne Clarke	Director*
Dr Leah Talbot	Director*
Mr John Courtenay	Director*
Mr Scott Buchanan	Executive Director

Observers

Ms Angela Siggery	Director, Cultural Capability and Connections, Department of Environment and Science *
Mr Craig Dean	Principal Advisor, Northern Parks and Forests, Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Environment and Science*

Guests

Ms Cheryl Leavy	Executive Director—Partnerships, Department of Environment and Science*
Ms Haylee Mlikota	Senior Conservation Officer, Department of Environment and Science*

Authority officers

Ms Saskia Salmeron-Rodriguez	Manager, World Heritage Connections
Mr Tim Wong	Manager, Planning and Conservation
Ms Lucy Karger	Project Manager, Yellow Crazy Ant Eradication Program*
Ms M'Lis Flynn	Executive Officer
Ms Jeanette Wormald	Strategic Communications Advisor, World Heritage Connections*
Ms Gretchen Martins	Senior Project Officer, World Heritage Connections
Mr Buddy Ahmat	Principal Project Officer, World Heritage Connections
Ms Ellen Weber	Senior Scientist, Planning and Conservation
Mr Chris Jahnsen	Principal Project Officer, Business Management

*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. Directors-only session

Minutes are not recorded for this session.

1.3. Apologies

Director Phil Rist, Ms Helen Wright and Ms Lisa Buchanan of the Australian Department of Agriculture, Water and Environment (DAWE), and Mr James Newman of Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service and Partnerships (QPWS&P) were all unable to attend. Yellow crazy ant eradication Program Project Manager, Lucy Karger was also an apology.

1.4. Conflict of interest

There were no conflicts of interest noted.

2. MINUTES AND ACTIONS ARISING

2.1. Endorsement of Board minutes No 111

Resolution

The board **endorsed** the minutes for Board meeting No 111, subject to a minor change to Dr Leah Talbot's report (p.5).

2.2. Actions arising

The Executive Director worked through Actions Arising with updates provided to items.

Resolution

The board **updated** the actions arising.

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 111 in March 2020. The Chair acknowledged the efforts of staff to continue delivering on the board's priorities during difficult times and highlighted the new COVID-safe measures being taken by the field teams continuing work on yellow crazy ant eradication.

Leslie expressed appreciation for the sustained work and significant effort of the Aboriginal Partnerships team in their support of the Traditional Owner Leadership Group (TOLG) during some challenges.

Leslie also outlined that this meeting will be the final board meeting for Dr Leah Talbot, Mr John Courtenay and Ms Anne Clarke, who have each made significant contributions during their terms.

Since the March 2020 board meeting, the Chair has engaged in a series of meetings and briefings (all via video or tele-conference), including with:

- Stephen Oxley, First Assistant Secretary, Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment— about bushfire recovery, climate resilience and NESP2
- Martijn Wilder AM, founding partner of the Pollination group, Scott Buchanan and Ellen Weber— about advancing climate resilience projects with the private sector
- John Day and Scott Heron of JCU, director Prof Iain Gordon— regarding climate vulnerability assessments
- the Australian World Heritage Advisory Committee (AWHAC) on several occasions and including the Climate Change Working Group and the cultural values working groups.

Resolution

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

3.2. Executive Director's report

Scott Buchanan provided the board with an update outlining that:

- it has been a period of enormous change with the transition to working-from-home occurring very rapidly within a 1-week period. There are now 80% of staff working-from-home, with a very successful transition supported by officers such as Gareth Humphreys and the Business Management team
- the 2020–21 Annual Business Plan is complete and the 2019–20 milestone reporting has been submitted to the Commonwealth for approval
- the Wangetti Trail permit process is progressing with the Authority working well with the Queensland Department of State Development Tourism and Innovation (formerly DITID) and Gutteridge Haskins and Davey (GHD)
- Eastern Kuku Yalanji land tenure resolution is close to finalisation and trying to ensure that it can readily become a Cooperative Management Agreement
- the Wet Tropics Plan review has been approved by Minister Enoch and currently sitting with Minister Ley for approval. Julie Colman has done a fantastic job progressing it through the QLD cabinet process
- the Authority has been collaborating with Terrain NRM and CAFNEC as a follow-up from the 6 March 'Creating our climate future' workshop
- the Yellow Crazy Ant Eradication Program (YCAEP) funding agreement has been signed by 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.
- An infestation of yellow crazy ants covering about 150ha at Vico St, Gordonvale was recently uncovered. The infestation is old and the Authority is tracing its origin, however this dense infestation has provided opportunity to collect odours for the detection dog.
- COVID-19 has impacted significantly on Queensland Government projected revenues which will result in a strict savings plan for 2020–21 and may result in reduced support to the Authority from other Queensland agencies.
- The Authority's social media has ramped up significantly this year with its biggest audience increase being from the 13-17 years demographic.

Resolution

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

Action

- Involve Prof Iain Gordon in the development of the Climate Investment Prospectus.

3.3. Director's issues

Anne Clarke—advised that her issues had already been tabled in the closed session and at 2.2.

Prof Iain Gordon—has met with Michael Douglas from University of Western Australia seeking to be involved in their NESP2 project with a Wet Tropics focus. There has been scant funding toward rainforest research for several years since Rainforest CRC.

John Courtenay—no issues to report.

Dr Leah Talbot—no issues to report

Resolution

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

3.4. Queensland and Commonwealth Department reports

Angela Siggery—Director, Partnerships Branch, Queensland Department of Environment and Science

Angela Siggery briefed directors on the range of projects current within the Department of Environment and Science (DES)

- K'gari WHA—Butchilla Peoples were successful in receiving a \$350k Australian Heritage Grant to focus on biosecurity. The K'gari scientific and community committees recently combined into one and approvals for K'gari and Riversleigh committees are progressing.
- Gondwana WHA—currently strong focus on developing post-bushfire reports following the devastating 2019–20 summer. Seeking to find resources to ensure reporting as most resources go to NSW side of Gondwana. A Gondwana strategic plan is being developed and the committee is paused until we can ensure that there is increased Aboriginal representation built into the committee's structure
- Quandamooka—consultant Terry Bailey has been engaged to assist Traditional Owners in moving forward with their World Heritage status aspirations, while DES provides administrative support
- Staff are scoping out a World Heritage strategy which will have significant First Nations involvement in its design. Have been talking to some of the TOLG members and would like to talk to Scott and Leslie
- The Gurra Gurra Framework 2020–2026 was launched on 23 April and will appear on the DES website to coincide to with Reconciliation Week 2020.

Action

- Angela Siggery to provide information to the Authority on 'lessons learned' following the burning of parts of Gondwana WHA in early 2020.

Craig Dean—Senior Advisor, Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service & Partnerships

- Clarified that for the Bulgan Creek project the Offsets Act states that the money must be spent back in the area where the offsets were triggered.
- QPWS also making adjustments due to COVID-19 travel restrictions western Queensland and Cape York.
- All National Park and Forest Day Use areas opened as of early May. Campgrounds still closed under the Queensland government roadmap planning. QPWS will enable a suitable staged reopening of campsites using social distancing.
- COVID-19 has also resulted in a pause in negotiations with Traditional Owners.
- QPWS&P are working on approvals for Wangetti trail. Discussions related to mountain biking along the trail and along a section of Quaid's Road.
- Partnership Agreement - regular progress catchups are underway and effective
- A project involving fishing huts in national parks at Halifax will provide some guidance on process about how to handle compliance on land which has been handed back.

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

As there was no representative available to attend the meeting, the following information was provided by email for tabling:

- The department was renamed to the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment 1 February 2020.
- Lisa Buchanan on maternity leave from 29 May and her position will be backfilled.
- The Authority has met all reporting requirements, therefore the 2020-21 funding allocation should be forwarded by mid-June 2020
- The 2019-20 Australian Heritage Grants were recently announced with three projects in the Wet Tropics funded:

- \$400,000 to the Girringun Aboriginal Corporation to develop a new management plan for the 2012 National Heritage Listed Indigenous cultural values of the Wet Tropics
- \$173,299 to Mamu Aboriginal Corporation to enable Mamu to develop protocols, undertake recordings of significant sites and catalogue important cultural information held in private collections
- \$195,000 to the Cairns Aquarium and Reef Research Centre to create an interactive and interpretive display on the key natural values of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area. The display will tell the story of how the Wet Tropics formed, the processes and events that shaped it, the biodiversity and endemism found in it and the valuable research opportunities and the importance of the aesthetic characteristics of the area.
- On 12 May, the Australian Government announced an additional \$150 million to help native wildlife and plants recover from the 2019-20 bushfires—taking the government’s investment in post-fire wildlife and habitat recovery to \$200 million. Available from 1 July 2020, the funding will be delivered over 2 years and be administered in consultation with the Government’s Expert Panel on Wildlife and Threatened Species Bushfire Recovery
- The funding will support a range of projects including:
 - \$110 million for strategic on-ground support to recover impacted species in the most affected regions.
 - \$12 million for projects to engage local communities in conserving their local environment, and to support knowledge exchange on Indigenous cultural burning and land management
 - \$28 million to resource further scientific assessment and planning coordination for our most at-risk species.

The DAWE heritage branch has also been involved in:

- the Australian Government’s response to the 2019-20 bushfires, including the Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements
- provision of two State Of Conservation reports to the World Heritage Committee about the impacts of the 2019-20 bushfires on affected World Heritage properties (Greater Blue Mountains and Gondwana Rainforests of Australia)
- preparing a 2020 State Party Report on the state of conservation of the Greater Blue Mountains Area
- administering the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage Protection Act (ATSIHP Act)
- drafting a submission to the EPBC Act review on behalf of the Australian Heritage Council
- briefing the Minister about the Wet Tropics Management Plan review
- briefing the Minister about the Wet Tropics Management Authority Board Appointments

Resolution

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

3.5. Significant correspondence

Date	In	Out	From / To	Purpose	Action for directors
27 March 2020		✓	WTMA	Media release—Vital eradication work continues for yellow crazy ant eradication program Response to COVID-19 restrictions and an alert that field staff will continue working using strict social distancing and hygiene standards	None required
29 April 2020		✓	WTMA	Media release—Wet Tropics to transform meetings and home offices Sharing great Wet Tropics images for people to use as backgrounds in the videoconferencing	None required
1 May 2020		✓	Joann Schmider/Traditional Owners Leadership group	Support Letter —for an application under the <i>Growing Tourism in Queensland</i> fund. Application is to develop a Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples' Tourism Strategy and Implementation Roadmap	None required
7 May 2020	✓		Minister Enoch—QLD Minister for Environment	Response to correspondence —to the Board 111 communique (March 2020). Acknowledging COVID-19 impact, tourism destination planning, climate action and WTMA-QPWS Partnership Agreement	None required
12 May 2020		✓	Helen Wright—Director, Natural Heritage Section, Commonwealth Dept of Agriculture, Water and the Environment	Lodgement —submission of the 2019-20 Milestone Report and the 2020-21 Annual Business Plan	None required
20 May 2020		✓	WTMA	Media release—Sharing stories with the world to strengthen connection to country Opening of the Authority's Rainforest Aboriginal Grants program – round 1	None required

Resolution

The Board **noted** the correspondence report.

4. STRATEGIC ISSUES

4.1. COVID-19—implications for WHA and Authority projects, staff and programs

Executive Director, Scott Buchanan briefed directors, outlining that:

- the Authority had a smooth transition to working-from-home with minor teething issues. Early on staff did feel quite isolated and over time we noticed that within individual teams there was great collaboration, but communications with other teams was more sporadic. This is being addressed.
- an earlier decision to move away from desktops to laptops has been very useful during this time. Staff have each been issued a smartphone and we will be removing landlines soon.
- staff have been surveyed about the idea to move back to the office and plans to telecommute in the future. Most staff would like to continue operating from home and are feeling productive and supported. Around 60% of staff want to consider telecommuting in the future.
- feedback from staff is being used to plan and scope out new accommodation where all offices combine into one space. Early research indicates that we could combine into about 400sq m of space.
- the YCA field work continued with new processes in place such as 1 person per car, which required hiring and sharing of vehicles. Gradually moved to 2 people per vehicle and finally 3 people.
- Odour-detection dog, Fury was recently validated and will start officially working
- financial costs due to COVID-19 has been minimal, mainly impacting face-to-face engagement planned for both the TOLG roadshow and the tourism destination planning. The Authority is also investigating changes to its carbon footprint.
- on behalf of all land councils, NQLC advised that the Authority would no longer receive future act notifications. Only outcome of that to date has been an impact on Wangetti Trail discussions.
- the Rainforest Aboriginal grants program is still proceeding
- staff deserve a huge thanks and congratulations for their solutions-focused approach to COVID-19 arrangements

Board directors were impressed with the approach the Authority has taken during COVID-19 and suggested that consideration be given on how to be inclusive with new staff and to ensure office space promotes teamwork and connection.

Resolution

The board **noted** the update on COVID arrangements

4.2. Update on climate action initiatives

Senior Scientist, Ellen Weber briefed board directors on the progress in climate action. A long discussion between directors focused on progress against the 10-point action plan which was outlined in the board paper 4.2(1). Directors were keen to ensure that the Authority seeks to have climate impacted species listed on the Threatened Species List and, work with partners to push this recognition through private sector partnerships, government and the QPWS&P partnership agreement.

Green and Blue Economic Stimulus Package

Scott Buchanan briefed directors on the development of the Green and Blue Economic Stimulus Package. He reminded directors that a key action from the 6 March *Creating our climate future workshop* was to collaborate with partners to ascertain how the region can attract investment into sustainable conservation that builds resilience. The Authority, with Terrain NRM and CAFNEC saw an opportunity to develop a green (rainforest) and blue (reef) stimulus package that creates jobs in the environmental economy, particularly for Indigenous peoples. Other regional partners such as FNQROC, the Traditional Ecological Network, RRC, CQU and JCU and Cairns Chamber of Commerce are invited to put forward their shovel-ready programs as targets for investment.

Directors were impressed with the initiative and congratulated the Authority on its leadership.

Climate change investment prospectus

Ellen guided directors through a slideshow proposing the direction an investment prospectus may take. The Authority will have a series of projects sitting behind the prospectus that will be investment-ready. Part of Ellen's role is to bring all the components together, involve all the Authorities teams and keep all cohesive.

Directors discussed the need to ensure that any prospectus and its development:

- clearly identifies its target audience
- is the vehicle for investment into all the Authority's climate focused initiatives
- is developed in collaboration with partners who are better placed to promote certain aspects
- clearly identifies whether it is theme-based or project-based
- includes the Scientific Advisory Committee.

Resolution

The board:

- **notes** the status of WTMA climate change program initiatives, including from the Board's 10-point plan, QPWS Partnership Agreement and Annual Business Plan frameworks
- **endorses** the Authority to continue progressing a collaborative Far North Queensland Green & Blue Stimulus Package as a follow up to 6 March 2020 workshop
- **endorses** the proposed format, framework and priorities for the Authorities Climate Change Investment Prospectus and asks to keep oversight on content and partnerships.

4.3. Wet Tropics Regional Agreement and TOLG update

Principal Project Officer, Buddy Ahmat briefed board directors on the TOLG's progress in refreshing the Regional Agreement. Buddy shared that several roadshows and the Rainforest Aboriginal Regional Forum have been cancelled or postponed due to COVID-19, but that several other actions have been achieved. These include:

- a review of delivery timelines due to the COVID-19 pandemic
- drafting and distribution of a letter to Minister Jones to highlight the aspirations of the Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples and request a meeting
- submitting of an application for the National Indigenous Australians' Agency – Regional Manager's Discretionary Fund for continuing support for the TOLG
- identifying a high-profile facilitator to secure government commitment to resourcing and implementing the Supplementary Agreement
- developing a revised draft TOLG Workplan
- developing a Negotiation Team Project Plan through the Authority
- developing Project Officer deliverables through the Authority
- reviewing the TOLG Community Engagement Strategy due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Buddy explained that timelines are now critical to ensure the Supplementary Agreement is delivered on time, and consistent messaging from TOLG to ensure continued meaningful community engagement with Rainforest Aboriginal peoples and stakeholders. Budget allocated to the roadshows will be redirected to ongoing TOLG operations, and budget earmarked for the May Regional Forum will be rolled over to 2020/21 to fund the rescheduled event, post COVID-19.

The directors were keen to hear more about the rate of attendance at TOLG meetings and the time commitment required of members. Authority staff outlined that meeting frequency has increased, and that substantial amounts of work are being generated for staff and TOLG members outside the meetings through emails, calls etc to keep the process moving.

Resolution

The board:

- **notes** the key developments of the Regional Agreement program since board meeting 111
- **notes** the issues and risks to finalising the Supplementary Agreement

4.4. Yellow Crazy Ant Eradication Program—update

Lucy Karger was unable to attend the meeting, however M'Lis Flynn outlined some key recruitment updates, including:

- Mike Trenerry has been seconded from DES to an AO6 role to manage community engagement, the technical and GIS teams, until 31 December 2020
- Annie James is soon to be employed 3 days per week to undertake community engagement
- Seeking to extend Jochem van der Reijden—Field Operations Manager—until 31 December 2020

The board directors commended the YCAEP team for their continued achievements during such difficult times.

Resolution

The board **noted** the yellow crazy ant eradication program status update and its management during the COVID-19 pandemic.

4.5. Wet Tropics Sustainable Tourism Destination Plan

Tourism Project Manager, Chris Jahnsen, and Project Officer, Emma Hedditch updated the board on the progress of developing the Sustainable Tourism Destination Plan—a key priority for the board. Since the board met in March 2020 and COVID-19 restrictions came into place, Chris and Emma have been agile and adaptive, discovering innovative ways to continue engaging with stakeholders and key informants to ensure the project stays on track. Significant inroads have been made using online engagement techniques to gather input and to better understand requirements and expectations for developing a framework for appropriate tourism experiences. Online workshops have been facilitated with Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples, the steering committee, regionally based stakeholders and content-matter experts. Chris also outlined that the extension to the plan completion date will ensure that appropriate engagement is completed with all sectors in particular Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples.

The board were impressed with the amount of information that has been gathered during the restrictions of COVID-19 and discussed what the post-COVID situation may be for the tourism industry in the region

Resolution

The board **noted** the changes to delivery timelines for the sustainable tourism plan, which will see the project completed by the end of October 2020. The required variations and timeline extensions to grant agreement AHG75102 have now been signed off by the Commonwealth.

4.6. Gurra Gurra Integrated First Nations Framework

Cheryl Leavy, Executive Director of DES Partnerships, shared the exciting new Gurra Gurra Framework 2020–2026 with the board. Cheryl outlined the transparent process which was used to develop the framework, the underpinning values and principles and most importantly the structural change which is to occur under the framework. Gurra Gurra seeks to reframe the way DES does business by holding country and people at the centre of operations and decision-making. Ten initiatives will guide progress toward the Gurra Gurra vision—*to walk forward together, from two paths to one, in a partnership founded on respect, trust and First Nations peoples' vision for Country and people.*

Directors were impressed with the initiative and considered the framework to be highly relevant to the way the Authority conducts its activities and welcomed future work on its implementation in the Wet Tropics. The board were interested to understand how Gurra Gurra might be applied to the work that the TOLG is doing for the Supplementary Agreement and the refresh of the Regional Agreement.

Actions

- Leah Talbot to share co-design research with Cheryl Leavy and her team
- Leah Talbot to raise the Gurra Gurra Framework with the TOLG with a view to whether the TOLG can meet with Cheryl and discuss potential application

4.7. QPWS&P Values Based Management Framework

Haylee Mlikota, QPWS&P Senior Conservation Officer, briefed board directors on the use of a Values Based Management Framework (VBMF) in QPWS&P. A VBMF is an adaptive management cycle that incorporates planning, prioritising, doing, monitoring, evaluating & reporting into all areas of business. Haylee outlined that QPWS&P have developed a guideline for partnering with First Nations Peoples that provides a decision pathway which is integral to VBMF planning. The VBMF Implementation Project is key to embedding VBMF and includes park-level management indicators, on-ground tracking and health checks to determine efficacy of VBMF in delivering management outcomes in particular places.

Directors thanked Haylee and expressed appreciation at the way in which multi-faceted considerations were applied to park planning, particularly as it relates to service levels to meet visitor expectations.

4.8. 2020-21 Annual Business Plan and budget—update

Executive Director Scott Buchanan talked the board through each of the items within the 2020–21 budget. Scott outlined that the budget is aligned with each of the strategies in the Authority’s Strategic Plan and drills down to activities planned for the upcoming year.

Resolution

The board **endorsed** the Authority’s 2020-21 budget.

Action

- Canvas SAC and CCC members about having two video-conferenced meetings per year as a cost saving and facilitate attendance

4.9. Draft Wet Tropics Communication Strategy Consultation

Strategic Communications Advisor, Jeanette Wormald, addressed board directors on the development of the draft communications strategy. The strategy will guide the Authority in creating and delivering a strong corporate identity, brand and voice which is immediately identifiable to a local, national and international audience and will guide effective digital engagement. Jeanette explained that the strategy will also enable the development of on-point messaging and communications products. Jeanette outlined that a full complement of skilled staff in the media and communications team has led to increasing success in sharing messages across all social media platforms—Twitter, facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn—with marked increases in engagement, shares and likes.

Board directors applauded the success of the social media campaigns and engagement and were pleased to learn more about the plans for the communications strategy.

Resolution

The board:

- **noted** that the Authority is consulting on a new Communications Strategy 2020-2022
- **endorsed** the implementation of key components of the Communications Strategy during consultation.

Action

- Media and communications team to circulate media releases, monthly media reports and any links to interviews or videos to board directors

4.10. Youth engagement implementation plan

Senior Project Officer, Gretchen Martins briefed the board on the implementation of a youth engagement plan. Gretchen outlined that in late 2019 Community Consultative Committee identified a series of strategic activities for youth engagement to be undertaken by the Authority over the next 5 years. In 2020–21 the Authority will focus on 5 key activities and tactics, including:

- development of a seasonal calendar app and ongoing app and interactive tool development
- a social media photo and video content series
- lesson plans and classroom resources
- event engagement eg: Cairns Children’s Festival, EcoFiesta etc
- ‘The Wild Ones’—a club for kids where they can complete tasks and earn stickers, bookmarks etc.

Gretchen advised directors that social media is not always the most effective way to engage youth, and that those aged between 13-24 are the least engaged with Wet Tropics social media content. The youth implementation plan aims to address this and increase the engagement of youth in Wet Tropics issues.

Directors were very pleased to see the work of the Community Consultative Committee being readily utilised to guide youth engagement.

Resolution

The board **endorsed** the Youth Engagement Implementation Plan 2020-2022.

Actions

- Jeanette Wormald to share the communications strategy and the youth implementation plan presentations with the communications teams at TTNQ and TEQ.

4.11. Partnership agreement between the Authority and QPWS&P

Craig Dean, Senior Advisor at QPWS&P, worked through a key partnership activities table which outlines progress against each activity. Key activities include activities such as development of an adaptive fire management plan, supporting high altitude species adapt to climate change and engagement in negotiations to refresh the Regional Agreement.

The board congratulated both QPWS&P and the Authority for negotiating an agreement that addresses mutual aims and helps each organisation achieve strategic goals.

Resolution

The board **noted** progress in implementing the priority deliverables in the 2019-2024 WTMA/ DES (QPWS&P) Partnership Agreement

Actions

- Include the WTMA–QPWS&P partnership agreement as a regular board meeting agenda item.

4.12. Board directors debrief—reflections from outgoing directors

As the final meeting for directors, Dr Leah Talbot, Ms Anne Clarke and Mr John Courtenay, the Chair, Leslie Shirreffs, shared her thoughts about the departing directors and the achievements of the current board. All directors and the Chair had been appointed following a period when the Authority had no board directors. Leslie shared that during their terms, each of the departing directors had made a significant difference to the Wet Tropics and were integral to the strong team that the board have become. Leslie lamented at their

departure, however stated that the foundations the board had built, will be evident for many years to come. Leslie has valued everyone's perspectives and enjoyed the camaraderie of the board. Leslie listed a few of the many positive achievements of the board including:

- Adopted a rights-based approach and re-instated the Rainforest Aboriginal News
- Held three on-country Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples' forums
- Finalised a protocol which compels researchers to involve Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples
- Took on climate change as a priority and released the Climate Adaptation Plan
- Reviewed the Wet Tropics Management Plan 1993 and developed a new strategic plan
- Reinstated and reinvigorated the Cassowary Awards
- Re-established Community Consultative and the Scientific Advisory Committees and linked them to the board
- Improved and made new relationships with partners and stakeholders
- Secured ongoing funding for the Yellow Crazy Eradication Program

Dr Leah Talbot

Departing director, Dr Leah Talbot, agreed that the board had covered much ground resulting in many achievements. Leah shared that board conversations could be both challenging and refreshing, with each individual bringing absolute commitment to the board and connection to the Wet Tropics. She was pleased that the board and the Authority's focus shifted toward internal and external relationships and that within the board interactions were respectful.

In closing, Leah thanked the Authority's staff, in particular the Aboriginal Partnerships team and advised that the Authority should continue to seek to be part of *putting country back together* in partnership with GBRMPA.

Mr John Courtenay

Mr John Courtenay, a 2nd departing director, expressed that he has enjoyed working with staff of the Authority whom he sees as very committed. He particularly thanked Scott and considered him his ideal Executive Director. John always looked forward to attending the board meetings, considers Leslie Shirreffs to be a wonderful chair and believes the board to be excellent. John shared some great stories about the early days of tourism in the World Heritage Area and the early attitudes of the Authority toward tourism. He also believes that future board members should continue to be skills-based. John really enjoyed being on the board and considers his term as director as one of the milestones of his life.

Ms Anne Clarke

The final departing director, Ms Anne Clarke, was also very positive about the board. Anne believes there is great chemistry between directors and considers this board to be the most functional board she has been engaged in. She would like to have completed another term as a board member because of the strong position and focus the board now occupy. Anne enjoyed leading the CCC immensely and, given her passion for education, was impressed to see the youth engagement strategy moving forward now. Finally, Anne thanked the board for the fun, experiences and was grateful that others felt a difference had been made.

Professor Iain Gordon

Director, Professor Iain Gordon, stated that although he will miss departing directors, he plans to maintain his relationships with them. Iain believes that what the board has achieved to date is extraordinary, and that the Authority has risen up. He has relished the open conversations that directors have had and enjoyed being able to share views and discuss them in a robust manner. Iain feels enriched by the interactions and conversations he has been engaged in and vows to carry on the work that the board have started.

Scott Buchanan

Executive Director, Scott Buchanan responded to the commentary of directors and put forward his own thoughts. Scott was humbled by the high praise given to him and the Authority staff by Leah, Anne and John. He believes that the current board have an excellent skillset and bring together diverse perspectives and experiences. Scott has enjoyed the determination of directors and appreciated their ability to listen with curiosity and turn visions into actions. He felt that outgoing directors have been strongly ethical in approach, yet also bringing care for staff and the Authority's partners into the forefront of the way business has been done. The board meetings have always had a sense of fun and challenge too. In closing Scott stated that Leah, John and Anne will be very difficult to replace.

The board thanked Executive Officers Ellen Weber and M'Lis Flynn, as well as other staff, for the support they have provided during the terms of these directors.

Actions

- Seek to schedule a joint meeting with the GBRMPA board for late 2020/early 2021. Items for the Authority to table include climate change and action, the tourism destination plan, youth and communications strategies, pest management and 'bringing country back together' between the two world heritage areas.
- Invite Cheryl Leavy to present the Gurra Gurra Framework to WTMA staff, and invite QPWS&P to join
- Develop a plan to collaborate with the Great Barrier Reef Foundation on shared purpose such as climate action

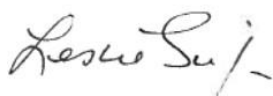
5. GENERAL BUSINESS

5.1. Approval of board communique 112

Resolution

The board **approved** the communique for meeting 112.

Board meeting 112 closed at 1.30pm



.....
Ms Leslie Shirreff PSM
Chair

Date 17/11/2020