

In Attendance**Board Directors**

Ms Chrissy Grant	Chair
Professor Stephen Williams	Director
Ms Robin Clark	Director
Dr Sally Driml	Director
Ms Ailsa Lively	Director
Mr Scott Buchanan	Executive Director

Observers

Mark Hall	Acting Director, Heritage Projects section, DAWE
Martin Dallen	Assistant Director, Heritage Projects section, DAWE
Shane Dagwell	Heritage Officer, Heritage Projects section, DAWE
Chris Kinnaird	A/Regional Director, QPWS&P northern region
Dr Michelle Ibbett	A/Principal Ranger Technical Support, QPWS&P northern region
	A/Manager, World Heritage, DES
Adam Musial	DES World Heritage Team
Christine Howes	Acting Director, Heritage Projects section, DAWE

WTMA Officers

Rebecca Lagerroth	Principal Advisor
Tim Wong	Manager, Planning and Conservation
Saskia Salmeron-Rodriguez	Manager, World Heritage Connections
Julie Colman	Principal Planning Officer
Ellen Weber	Senior Scientist, Climate Initiatives
Alicia Haines	Acting Principal Project Officer
Sarah Jordan	Senior Project Officer, Tourism
Aaron Smith	A/Team Leader, Communications and Engagement
Matt Cheetham	Senior Project Officer

1. Introduction**1.1. Chair's welcome and introduction**

The Chair acknowledged the Gimuy Walubara Yidinji and the Yirrganydji Traditional Owners of the Cairns area and paid respects to their Elders past, present, and emerging. The Chair welcomed newly appointed Directors, Professor Stephen Williams and Ms Robin Clark and noted the appointment process for an Indigenous male Director was still in progress. The Chair also welcomed all other Board members, observers, and staff.

1.2. Apologies

Apologies were received from:

- James Newman, Executive Director, Northern Parks and Forest, QPWS&P
- Jeffrey McAlister, Deputy Director General Tourism, Department of Tourism, Innovation and Sport
- Lyn Wallace – A/Director, Partnerships branch, DES
- Lucy Karger - Project Manager – Yellow Crazy Ant Eradication Program, Wet Tropics Management Authority
- Debra Simmons – Senior Project Officer, Wet Tropics Management Authority

1.3. Conflicts of Interest

None recorded

2. Previous Minutes and Actions Arising

2.1 Endorsement of Board Minutes No 117

Resolution

The Board **approved** the minutes for Board meeting 117

2.2 Out of Session – definition of rainforest

Resolution

The Board:

- **approved** out of session 442 – definition of rainforest.
- **noted** that the Wet Tropics (Rainforest Area) Amendment Management Plan 2022 (Subordinate Legislation 2022 No. 27) made under the Wet Tropics World Heritage Protection and Management Act 1993 was approved by the Governor in Council on 17 March 2022 and notified on the Queensland legislation website on 18 March 2022.

2.3 S62 Guideline for consulting with Rainforest Aboriginal People

The S62 Guideline for consulting Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples with rights and Interests with land and waters in the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area are a statutory guideline that need to be finalised for the Authority to use in permit assessments. It also guides applicants to consult with Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples.

It was clarified that the S62 guideline was discussed with the Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples Think Tank (RAPTT) at their 1-2 December 2021 meeting, however, through an oversight, copies were not provided. The Board felt comfortable with what was in the s62 guideline for how permit assessments are to be implemented. Directors acknowledged this guideline is not the overall free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC) guideline for the Authority, the Board, or any projects to consult with Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples. As per the instructions from Board meeting 117, a copy of the guideline will be sent to RAPTT for noting.

Actions:

- Chrissy Grant will attend the next RAPTT meeting on the 27 April to explain the outcome of the S62 guideline for consulting with Rainforest Aboriginal People process and to discuss the application of FPIC in permits, and for the Authority.
- The Authority to provide a copy of the S62 guideline for consulting Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples to RAPTT for noting, at their next meeting on the 27 April 2022.

Resolution

The Board **approved** the section S62 guideline for consulting Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples with rights and interests with land and waters in the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area with minor amendments.

2.4 Actions Arising

Scott Buchanan presented the actions arising report to Directors. The following additional updates were recorded:

No	Meeting	Agenda Item / Action	Comments
1	113	4.9 Involve the community / Teacher ambassadors	The Yellow Crazy Ant Eradication Program has been working with the Paramatta State School STEM program. Matthew Cheetham was appointed in the Authority's Senior Project Officer role to look at the education program.
6	116	3.6 CCC report / Helicopter issue raised by the CCC	Action arising: Director Sally Driml will send an email to Tim Wong and Peter Rowles to help progress this helicopter issue raised by the CCC. The issue is related to a condition that includes an alternative route over the World Heritage Area, Mission Beach. Director Robin Clark advised there has been a decision on the appeal for the helicopter at Mission Beach. Approval has been given with conditions, although there is no detail on the conditions.
7	116	4.1 Land tenure resolution process / discuss options with Rainforest Aboriginal People	Part of the Authority's new Rainforest Aboriginal People's engagement framework will involve talking to groups about their co-management expectations. Scott attended the Department of Environment and Science (DES) co-management workshop in Brisbane 22-23 March.
8	116	4.3 Business case for funding / Meeting with the Hon Josh Frydenburg MP	The previous Chair and Scott Buchanan didn't meet with the Hon Josh Frydenburg. There is further work to do on the business case for funding.
9	116	4.4 Ecological Restoration Initiative / Project lead Ecological Restoration Initiative	This action has morphed into the Restoration Alliance. Discussions with Traditional Owners in progress.

No	Meeting	Agenda Item / Action	Comments
12	Extraordinary meeting	1.4 Review of landscape restoration symposium / media release	Action deleted. Workshop to be held in June and a media release will go out then.
14	Extraordinary meeting	1.9 Attracting resources / checklist to guide ethical funding	The CCC are preparing a discussion paper for the Board to consider on the sort of matters the Authority should consider in accepting funding from philanthropists and businesses.
18	117	3.1 Chair's report / Director training	Other director training needs can be put on the agenda as required.
20	117	4.1 Quarterly budget update / send business case to Sarah Titchen	Action arising: Scott Buchanan will seek feedback on the business case from Martin Dallen and Mark Hall in the next monthly catch up with DAWE.
21	117	4.4 RAPTT Update / Authority's Australian Heritage Grant (AHG) application	The Authority's Australian Heritage Grant, The Wet Tropics Cultural Landscape Hub, was successful.

Resolution

The Board **noted** the actions arising.

3. Reports

3.1 Chair's Report

The Chair, Chrissy Grant, briefed the Board on the following significant activities:

- Met with the Hon Minister Ley MP, Commonwealth Minister for the Environment, on the Yellow Crazy Ant Eradication Program and the bid for further funding.
- Invited to K'Gari symposium as a keynote speaker last November. Interesting issues they are dealing with regarding tourism and vehicle traffic.
- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) General Assembly in November. Discussed theme for 50th anniversary of World Heritage Convention.
- World Heritage and climate change round table, hosted by Professor Helene Marsh and Academy of Science.
- Met with Lyn Wallace (DES) around the Queensland World Heritage Strategy and cultural protocols for K'Gari.
- Board appointments process in December. Reviewed documents and advised successful and unsuccessful applicants on the outcome of the process. New director inductions in early February.
- Met with chair and secretariat of National Feral Pig Action Plan and trying to have a follow up meeting with the Chair Ricky Archer, and Justin Perry of the Northern Australian Indigenous Land and Sea Management Alliance Ltd (NAILSMA).
- Attended Australian World Heritage Advisory Committee (AWHAC) meeting in March. Assisted submission to New South Wales (NSW) Heritage regarding the reburial of Mungo Man and Mungo Lady at Mungo Lakes.

- Met with the Association of Marine Park Tourism Operators (AMPTO) CEO, Gareth Phillips, regarding the Master Guide Reef Program.
- Met with Leichhardt candidate Elida Faith and new Cairns and Far North Environment Centre (CAFNEC) President Pia Harkness.

Resolution

The Board **noted** the Chair's report.

3.2 Executive Director's Report

The Executive Director Scott Buchanan provided the following significant updates to directors:

- Federal budget did not include funding commitment for Yellow Crazy Ant Eradication Program – will continue discussions with the Commonwealth and Queensland Governments.
- The rainforest definition amendment was approved by Governor in Council – well done to Julie Colman with the support of Tim Wong.
- Secured \$395,000 Australian Heritage Grant to do a Cultural Landscape Hub project with Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples – well done to Saskia Salmeron-Rodriguez.
- DES confirmed funding \$530,000 funding to progress the Restoration Alliance. Discussions with Terrain, Far North Queensland Regional Organisation of Councils (FNQROC) and James Cook University (JCU) on the governance model. Acknowledged Ellen Weber for her entrepreneurial success on top of the Reef Assist funding last year.
- National Environment Science Program (NESP) meetings with Michael Douglas, Resilient Landscape Hub Leader, and Sheridan Morris, Marine and Coastal Systems Hub Host and contributor to knowledge brokering. Working with Professor Iain Gordon and Director Steve Williams to prepare a Wet Tropics proposal for all the NESP hubs to consider.
- Met with chair and chief executive officer of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA) in February. Discussed elevating our tour guide program through sharing intellectual property and working together on Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples engagement across land and sea.
- Attended release of Jirrbal Traditional Owners country plan, supported by Terrain.
- Wind farms – working with Terrain & CAFNEC to come up with a regional approach.
- Attended workshop in Brisbane with Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service and Partnerships (QPWS&P) executives to consider the DES co-management framework. The workshop looked at what the components of co-management are and what can be done to progress those components systematically.
- COVID update – following a risk assessment and consultative process, DES released a policy that sets out the requirements for employees to be vaccinated against coronavirus (COVID-19).

Resolution

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

3.3 Directors' Issues

The Directors provided the following updates:

Dr Sally Driml was invited to be the master of ceremonies at the inaugural Tourism and Conservation Alliance Queensland meeting on Monday 4 April. She also talked about her research.

Ms Ailsa Lively attended the RAPTT meeting in December. The Chair Chrissy Grant stood down from the RAPTT at this meeting. Liz Wren from Great Barrier Reef Foundation (GBRF) talked to RAPTT about a partnership project through their water quality funding.

Professor Stephen Williams published a paper, and second paper is in submission, that identifies quite a few Wet Tropics species as being highly threatened that weren't previously listed. Nominated the lemuroid ringtail possum as critically endangered under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act).

Ms Robin Clark is undertaking work on the Planning Institute of Australia (PIA) climate change sub-committee. PIA put out a declaration of climate change emergency and a ten-point action plan to address climate in the town planning space.

Resolution

The Board **noted** the directors' reports.

3.4 Queensland and Commonwealth Department reports

Martin Dallen (Heritage Projects section, DAWE):

- World Heritage Centre update – Director Dr Mechthild Rössler retired on 30 September 2021. Mr Lazare Eloundou Assomo from Cameroon was appointed as the new director in December. The 45th session of the World Heritage Committee to be held in Kazan, Russian Federation from 19 to 30 June 2022. The location can still be changed by a decision of the 21 member states of the World Heritage.
- State of conservation reports provided to UNESCO for Tasmania and Great Barrier Reef. Currently preparing reports for Greater Blue Mountains area and Gondwana.
- UNESCO's reactive mission to the Great Barrier Reef occurred last week to assess state of conservation and long-term sustainability plan for the reef's protection.
- Recently concluded Australian Heritage Grants assessment. 28 projects approved valued at \$5.78m.
- Australian Heritage strategy review still underway.
- DAWE briefed Australian Heritage Council on the 2021-2022 National Heritage nominations last week.
- Completed assessment of a monitoring, evaluation, reporting and improvement (MERI) plan submitted by the Burnett Mary regional group to undertake post fire monitoring of wetlands, threatened species, and threatened ecological communities project on K'Gari.
- Working with a strategic partner to develop a cooperative management framework to support a proposed World Heritage Listing, for the Murujuga cultural landscape in Western Australia.
- The branch has recently undergone a restructure. A large focus of work now includes progressing heritage assessments. New Director, Erin Dampney, starts in July 2022. She is coming across from the National Library.
- Continue to provide advice and meet with the environmental assessment area on issues related to wind farm developments – Chalumbin and Upper Burdekin.
- Federal budget – branch unsuccessful in getting explicit funding for yellow crazy ants. \$100 million announced to extend the environment restoration fund, including tackling invasive animals and weeds.
- Received the Authority's ask for future world heritage funding for the Wet Tropics.

Chris Kinnaird (Northern Region, QPWS&P):

- COVID-19 has influenced operations. Operational rangers now have controls in place to keep going.
- Regional management team update – Alison Webb has been extended in the director assets role until 30 June 2022 and there is a flow on effect with acting arrangements. Chris Kinnaird Acting Regional Director. Michelle Ibbett Acting Principal Ranger Technical Support. Andrew Bates Acting

Principal Ranger Cape York. Brett Stallbaum Acting Principal Ranger Tablelands. Carol Kinnard Principal Ranger Coastal Tropics (permanent).

- Successful joint management meeting/pest and fire workshop with Jabalbina Yalanji Aboriginal Corporation.
- Wangetti trail is progressing. QPWS&P received a section 34 lease application (under the *Nature Conservation Act 1992*) for first stage works for the Wangetti Trail South walking tracks. It will probably have some trigger for the Authority as well.
- Compliance training for Wet Tropics rangers. Nominated compliance champions for three areas that parks cross into for the World Heritage Area.
- Regional management team went on Mandingalbay Yidinji tour – it was fantastic. QPWS&P houses at East Trinity will be transferred to Mandingalbay Yidinji Aboriginal Corporation (MYAC) for ranger base and operations office. MYAC starting a blue carbon project.

Adam Musial (World Heritage team, DES):

- The new K'Gari World Heritage Advisory Committee held first meeting in February. Climate change adaptation planning underway. Secured funding to employ a Butchulla person for the project. Waste management, visitor management, post-fire management studies all underway or near completion.
- Finalising recruitment for the Riversleigh Executive Officer. Hoping to have the committee in place before federal government caretaker, and first meeting in May in Mount Isa. Refurbishment and cultural interpretation sign work on at Riversleigh. The Waanyi (Boodjamulla) Plan is near completion, led by Traditional Owners.
- Gondwana – finalising recruitment for executive officer, new permanent position. Developed a new governance model for a Queensland based World Heritage committee, with proper representation of First Nations people. Significant appointment process to commence soon. Successful Australian Heritage Grant for Gondwana to do a cultural heritage assessment with First Nations groups.
- Cape York small grants program to help individual communities progress National Heritage Listing.
- Working with Quandamooka Yoolooburrabee Aboriginal Corporation (QYAC) and Quandamooka people (Stradbroke Island) on their proposed World Heritage nomination. A new chief executive officer has started.
- The World Heritage Strategy is being re-drafted into an outward facing First Nations strategy.

Resolution

The Board **noted** the Queensland and Commonwealth Government department reports.

3.5 Advisory Committee reports to the Board

Community Consultative Committee - CCC

Director Dr Sally Driml provided an overview of the role and responsibilities of the Community Consultative Committee (CCC) and the current membership. The current CCC was appointed in the second half of 2020 and has a term of three years.

Feedback to and from the Board is tracked formally to ensure accurate communications. A summarised report was provided to directors for information.

Sally briefed directors on the recent CCC meeting held on the 24 March 2022:

- A major item discussed at meetings is member updates.
- Scott briefed the CCC on the Authority's 2022-23 Annual Business Plan.
- Ethical funding project– the CCC will develop a discussion paper for the Board to consider at a future meeting.

- Tim Wong gave update on wind farm issues. The CCC supported the actions the Authority is taking with regards to input into the assessment process and input into regional considerations for better planning and renewable energy zones; and engaging with the Queensland Government to develop a more holistic approach to energy planning.
- Sustainable tourism plan update provided by Sarah Jordan.
- The CCC and SAC held a 1-day workshop in November to look at the proposed Restoration Alliance process. Ellen Weber and team put a proposal to the workshop to inform the way ahead. There is a lot of excitement within the CCC around this concept.
- CAFNEC and Environmental Defenders Organisation (EDO) Report on flying foxes – the CCC advise the Board to consider endorsement of the recommendations in the EDO report considering the important role that spectacled flying foxes play in the health of the rainforest by performing pollination and seed dispersal roles.
- Youth on the Board – we need to empower youth to learn something useful rather than just be an observer. Terrain model worth considering.
- CCC referred the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Sixth Assessment Report to the Board for their information. The CCC is very keen for the Authority to promote adaptation but are also constantly advising the Authority to talk about the importance of mitigation and investigate local mitigation opportunities.
- Free, prior and informed consent principles (FPIC) – RAPTT hasn't been consulted. The RAPTT cultural values project is going to be working on FPIC guidelines. The Wet Tropics Management Plan guidelines may be premature.
- Sally advised that the previous Chair raised a suggestion with the CCC about a joint Board and CCC meeting, and this would be discussed in Agenda Item 5.2.

Member updates:

- Most common concern is wind farms and the potential for negative impact, but not all negative. The group recognises renewable energy a good thing but comes at cost.
- Members are concerned about activities and threats outside the World Heritage Area on private land e.g., clearing and changes in land use. There are a lot of new people in the region who don't understand the intent of managing the environment in this region – there is a need for education.
- Meetings with Paluma community have commenced about the Wallaman Falls walking trail. It's currently at a feasibility study stage. Pleased to see Traditional Owner led approach.
- A letter to CAFNEC from Minister Scanlon regarding flying foxes was shared.
- Directors discussed how Terrain and local government could also be engaged in educating landholders outside the World Heritage Area. The Authority could look at options e.g., through our communications strategy and the Restoration Alliance.

Actions:

- The Authority (and Board) will continue to pursue the actions noted in relation to wind farms.
- Share the Wet Tropics Restoration Alliance discussion paper with the CCC, for information, following the outcome of agenda item 4.5.
- Write to CAFNEC regarding the Board's formal response to the EDO report following the outcome of agenda item 4.4.
- In relation to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Sixth Assessment Report, the Board agreed that mitigation is an important issue and will consider the CCC advice in the review of their strategic priorities.
- Chrissy to attend the next RAPTT meeting to explain the following advice from the board:
 - S62 guideline for consulting with Rainforest Aboriginal People embeds the FPIC principles within the permit processes that needs to happen under the Wet Tropics Management Plan (a statutory requirement).

- It's not the Authority's guidelines for FPIC, it's the implementation of the FPIC principles through permitting.
- It's an operational document to ensure everybody (the Authority and applicants) do the right thing, at the right time, at the right place.

Resolution

The Board **noted** the CCC report.

Scientific Advisory Committee - SAC

Director Steve Williams provided directors with an update on agenda items for the next SAC meeting, proposed for the first week of May:

- scientific advice on wind farm impacts
- potential for NESP funding
- more detailed advice on the Restoration Alliance
- implications of listing uplands ecosystems in the Wet Tropics as threatened ecosystems under the EPBC Act;
- a couple of climate actions that need science behind it re: Board's strategic priorities
- flying fox research issue
- an eighth member of the SAC.

Tim Wong provided directors with an overview of the SAC membership. In relation to the Application for Research Endorsement (ARE) research protocol trial, QPWS&P Permissions Management has commenced an evaluation and the Authority will have an opportunity to provide comment.

Actions:

- Director Sally Driml will look at the Board 118 minutes and provide the Board comments to the CCC when the CCC minutes are sent back to CCC members.
- Saskia Salmeron-Rodriguez to forward the ARE trial evaluation to Director Steve Williams when it is available for comment.

Resolution

The Board **noted** the SAC report.

3.6 Significant correspondence

The Board reviewed the Significant Correspondence.

Correspondence In:

8 November 2021	Letter from Sharon Bailey, Deputy Director General, Queensland Government Procurement regarding the application of ethical supplier mandate requirements when supplying services to Queensland Government agencies and statutory bodies.
10 November 2021	A copy of a letter the Hon Meaghan Scanlon MP, Minister for the Environment and the Great Barrier Reef, Queensland Government received from The Hon Sussan Ley MP Minister for Environment – listing of lowland tropical rainforest of the Wet Tropics as an endangered ecological community under the <i>Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act)</i>
12 January 2022	An email from a property owner in the World Heritage Area raising concerns over World heritage Listing over freehold property
18 January 2022	Letter from Caroline Emms, President Rainforest Reserves Australia with an urgent request regarding the industrial development of Chalumbin wind farm and the Wet Tropics

9 March 2022	Letter from The Hon Sussan Ley, Commonwealth Minister for the Environment, Commonwealth Government with advice of successful application under 2021-2022 Australian Heritage Grant Program of \$395,000 for project AHGIV000098 <i>The Wet Tropics Cultural Landscapes Hub</i>
11 March 2022	Email from Ros Matley with minutes from Australian World Heritage Advisory Committee (AWHAC) meeting

Correspondence Out:

22 November 2021	Board communique 117 to the Board communique distribution list
6 December 2021	Letter to the Hon Sussan Ley, Commonwealth Minister for the Environment, Commonwealth Government providing a copy of the Yellow Crazy Ant Eradication Program Annual Report Card
17 January 2022	An email to property owner in the World Heritage Area providing information on what World Heritage listing over property means and options for lawful use of the land under the Wet Tropics Management Plan 1998.
14 February 2022	Letter of support to Board Chairperson Anthony (Manni) Edwards, Goondoi Aboriginal Arts Corporation regarding Great Barrier Reef Foundation Traditional Owner stage 2 grant application
21 March 2022	Letter to Caroline Emms, President Rainforest Reserves Australia with a response to her letter dated 18 January 2022 regarding proposed windfarm developments in the areas adjacent to the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area
21 March 2022	Letters of thanks to all speakers at the Wet Tropics Landscape Restoration Symposium 13-14 September 2021
25 March 2022	Letter to Chief Executive Officer Josh Thomas, GBRMPA, regarding sharing intellectual property relating to tour guide training programs.
30 March 2022	Letter to the Hon Meaghan Scanlon MP, Minister for the Environment and the Great Barrier Reef, and the Hon Sussan Ley, Commonwealth Minister for the Environment, (and Cc to Jabalbina Yalanji Aboriginal Corporation RNTBC Board of Directors) with formal advice regarding potential conflict of interest.

Other:

October to December 2021	The Authority's media and community engagement quarterly report
--------------------------	---

Resolution

The Board **noted** the Significant Correspondence report.

4. Strategic Issues

4.1 Update from the Board's strategic planning session (31 March 2022), includes the Board's priorities for 2022-23

The Chair, Chrissy Grant, provided an update on the director's planning day held on 31 March 2022. Directors identified training needs, had a briefing on the Authority's enabling legislation, and the responsibilities of the Authority (and Board) to meet World Heritage obligations. The Authority's Risk Appetite Statement and Strategic Risk Register were reviewed and updated, and Directors discussed how they can support media and communications.

Managers updated directors on the Authority's progress with implementing the Wet Tropics Strategic Plan 2020-2030. Directors were pleased to hear how agile, proactive, and dynamic the Authority has been in delivering these priorities and responding to issues that present real challenges for Authority. Directors recognised the importance of securing on-going funding to continue meeting World Heritage obligations for the Wet Tropics.

Directors will continue to work on the following actions towards the next meeting:

Actions:

- Director training -
 - Deliver governance training for directors before 30 June 2022.
 - Training on the Act and Plan amendments
 - Microsoft teams – platform for director engagement in between meetings
 - Briefing for Robin Clark and Sally Driml on the history and policy implications of the Wangetti walking trail.
- Scott Buchanan to re-send the Authority's Business Case for Funding to Directors for comment.
- Rebecca Lagerroth to update Board's priorities table to clarify alignment to the Wet Tropics Strategic Plan 2020-2030 and the role of the Board in delivering the priorities.
- Schedule a Board planning day to review and update the Board's strategic priorities; including time to identify the role of the Board to deliver actions versus the role of the Authority.

Resolution

The Board **approved** Professor Stephen William to chair the Authority's Scientific Advisory Committee, during the term of his appointment on the Board of Directors.

4.2 2022-2023 Annual Business Plan and Budget; and 2021-2022 Milestone Report

Scott Buchanan advised that the Authority is required to submit a performance report to the Commonwealth Government on 30 April 2022 as per the Project Agreement for the Wet Tropics of Queensland. There are three performance report components:

- 2021-2022 Milestone Report – 87% of activities are on track and/or delivered. Some activities are at risk.
- Five-year Business Strategy – proposing two changes: 1) removing Healthy Parks, Healthy People activity. Without DES going down this path, it's difficult to achieve; and 2) removing formation of biosecurity taskforce. There's not a lot of interest from other agencies, although the Authority works closely with local governments, Terrain NRM and agencies on a practical level.
- 2022-2023 Annual Business Plan - 95% of budget is on fixed costs. Operational capacity is becoming more difficult.

The Board supported the change in budgeting at the strategy level in the Annual Business Plan (versus milestone level last year). The Board recommended including a contingency for emerging issues in Strategy 5.

Action:

The Authority to submit the Authority's performance reporting requirements to the Commonwealth by the 30 April 2022, with one amendment to the 2022-2023 Annual Business Plan– the inclusion of a contingency for responding to emerging issues in Strategy 5.

Resolution

The Board

- **Endorsed** the Authority's 2022-2023 Annual Business Plan and budget.

- **Endorsed** the Authority's proposed update to the 2018-2023 Business Strategy.
- **Endorsed** the Authority's 2021-2022 Milestone Report.

4.3 Theme for the 2021-2022 State of Wet Tropics Report

Ellen Weber advised that State of Wet Tropics (SOWT) report is a requirement under the *Wet Tropics World Heritage Protection and Management Act 1993* (the Act) and needs to be submitted to the Queensland and Commonwealth Governments by 30 September each year. The Authority proposed that the 2021-2022 SOWT report look at the potential for environmental markets, including carbon markets and co-benefit markets to enhance climate adaptation of the Wet Tropics forests.

Directors identified that the topic may provide an opportunity to bring more investment and confidence into the Wet Tropics e.g., through the Restoration Alliance. It may also present an opportunity to incorporate a case study on ecosystem services/biodiversity or cassowary credits e.g., how they are working and what landholders and investors are looking for. Important to not underestimate the complexity of carbon modelling, or the time and cost to develop this SOWT report. Directors identified that a lot of the opportunities for this topic are outside the World Heritage Area and queried how this topic was relevant to the State of the Wet Tropics.

Scott advised, in terms of climate adaptation and real actions the Authority could take, one of the most effective things the Authority could do is make the connections across a landscape that is fragmented, to protect the Outstanding Universal Values of the World Heritage Area. Directors were comfortable with this rationale.

Action:

By Board meeting 119 in June 2022, Ellen Weber and Rebecca Lagerroth to work with Managers to present a plan, scope and cost for delivering the two possible SOWT report themes options for 2022-23 (i.e., involving Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples in the management of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area and Wet Tropics threatened species and recovery planning), for director consideration.

Resolution

The Board **approved** the Authority's 2021-2022 State of the Wet Tropics Report theme as 'the potential of environmental markets to enhance climate adaptation of Wet Tropics Forests'.

The Board considered possible themes for the 2022-2023 State of Wet Tropics Report, given the time required to prepare these reports:

- Involving Rainforest Aboriginal People in the management of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area – including cultural values and joint management.
- Wet Tropics threatened species and recovery planning – important for getting future funding.
- Link with being agile and proactive, and the priority places listing (if successful).
- Opportunity to address the concept that everything is safe because it's in the World Heritage Area, which is not the case.

4.4 Spectacled flying-foxes

The Cairns and Far North Queensland Environment Centre (CAFNEC) requested that the Board endorse the Environmental Defender's Office (EDO) report, *Flying-fox roost management reform for Queensland*. The Board discussed the following:

- The SAC had previously provided advice regarding spectacled flying-fox management in the Cairns local government area.
- The EDO report makes recommendations regarding matters and spatial extent outside of the Board's remit.
- There were components of the report that the Board agreed with (particularly in regard to best practice, the involvement of Traditional Owners and advocating for non-intervention wherever possible), however there were other components that the Board would not support.

The Board acknowledged that there is a paucity of scientific data that could be used to quantify impact, if any, of spectacled flying-fox roost management on the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area. This was also raised by the SAC.

The Board questioned the specific application of the higher impact management actions under the Code of Practice adjacent to the World Heritage Area with respect to endangered or threatened species. Attachment 4.4.3 was not endorsed as it is not clear that the Code of Practice has been correctly interpreted in that paper, and therefore the paper is not a true reflection of the Authority's position.

Actions:

- The Board will make a formal request to Minister Scanlan to invest in research on spectacled flying-foxes and the potential impacts of roost management practices on the Outstanding Universal Value and other vital biodiversity matters in the Wet Tropics rainforests.
- The Board to write to Minister Scanlon advising that it would be valuable for the Department of Environment and Science (DES) to increase the amount of research on spectacled flying-foxes in World Heritage Areas.
- Tim Wong and Ellen Weber to seek further clarification from DES Wildlife on the application of the Code of Practice— *ecologically sustainable management of flying-fox roosts*, in particular the interpretation of section 41A of the Nature Conservation (Animals) Regulation 2020 that gives the local government the as-of-right authority to manage flying-fox roosts within the designated 'urban flying-fox management areas' which invokes the code of practice. Need to clarify if it triggers assessment by anyone other than the Local Government Authority? Consider whether amendments may be required for appropriate assessment of Outstanding Universal Values adjacent to the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area. Keep Director Sally Driml informed on the outcome.
- Ellen Weber to advise Mark Hall (DAWE) whether this spectacled flying-fox roost management matter was a controlled action under the EPBC Act, or not.

Resolution

The Board **resolved** to inform CAFNEC that they discussed the EDO Report at length and that there are components of the report that the Board agreed with, however there were other components that the Board would not support. It will be explained the EDO report makes a number of recommendations that are outside of the Board's remit. However, the report did prompt the Board to consider their responsibility regarding the potential impacts on Outstanding Universal Value.

4.5 Landscape restoration initiatives in the Wet Tropics

Ellen Weber advised it is the Authority's intention to

- Launch the Alliance in June 2022 in partnership with key organisations.
- Invest in the establishment of the Alliance with support from the DES Director General.
- Go out to consultation with a Wet Tropics Restoration Alliance discussion paper that has been developed with key partners.
- Bring along Rainforest Aboriginal People as part of the conversation.

- Plan and deliver targeted people-purpose, place-based restoration activities.
- Develop an investment strategy for the Wet Tropics that identifies new markets and approaches for forest restoration.

The director's identified that the Southern Atherton Tablelands area has not been chosen as the best corridor for preserving climate and biodiversity in the region. The area was chosen based on a pragmatic reason i.e., there are already initiatives going on there, there is investment and community support, and that the Authority is utilising the alignment of resources. Directors advised that it is important that the priority areas selected for the restoration activities address the aims of the project.

Action:

Directors to provide feedback to Ellen Weber on the Wet Tropics Restoration Alliance discussion paper by 30 April 2022.

Resolution

The Board *noted*:

- the progress in developing the Wet Tropics Restoration Alliance, including the intention to formally launch the Alliance by June 2022.
- the Alliance model outlined in the Wet Tropics Restoration Alliance discussion paper.

4.7 Yellow crazy ant eradication program update

Scott Buchanan provided an overview of Yellow Crazy Ant program achievements:

- 40 new seasonal staff recruited to support the surveys.
- Increasing awareness of industry through toolbox talks.
- There have been two new yellow crazy ant detections since January.
- Three odour detection dogs operating.
- Annual Report Card distributed in December 2021.
- JCU delivered their progress report in February 2022.
- Where yellow crazy ants have been treated, species diversity is returning.

Directors acknowledged that funding wasn't included in the Commonwealth budget despite positive meetings with Ministers and local members. The Authority will continue to follow up with the Commonwealth and Queensland Governments. The different scenarios for the Yellow Crazy Ant Eradication Program were discussed, depending on future funding. Directors recognised and appreciated the fabulous work Lucy Karger has done in advocating for the Yellow Crazy Ant Eradication Program.

Resolution

The Board *noted* the update to the Yellow Crazy Ant Eradication Program.

4.6 Update on QPWS&P and WTMA Partnership Agreement Projects

Dr Michelle Ibbett from QPWS&P provided directors with an update on two projects under the Partnership Agreement with the Authority:

1. QPWS&P Northern Region Adaptation Plan for Climate Change for Fire Management

The Board were briefed on the process for developing the Plan, who was involved, the Plan's goals and four focus areas. The next step is to develop an implementation document that will identify activities at the bioregional scale through targeted workshops. QPWS&P will seek assistance from the Authority, the SAC and CCC to convene a workshop to identify Wet Tropics specific activities in early 2022. The Board suggested QPWS&P include Indigenous Rangers on their bioregional working groups.

Directors acknowledged that fire planning for climate change in the World Heritage Area is critical as it is a risk to rainforest areas. The SAC identified that developing a spatial map of fire vulnerability for Wet Tropics rainforest, including priority assets for protection, was a top research priority a couple of years ago.

2. Monitoring climate threatened high-altitude species in the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area. There are a range of endemic fauna in the Wet Tropics that are particularly vulnerable to climate change impacts. Their habitat extent is contracting, and their populations are declining. In addition:

- There have been approximately 170 individual surveys since October 2020.
- 23 new transect sites have been established.
- More than 35 QPWS&P Rangers have been trained in possum monitoring methodology.
- monitoring kits are now available for QPWS&P staff to utilise.
- QPWS&P and JCU would like to add priority bird species into the project.
- Possum monitoring will continue over the remaining 18 months of the project.
- QPWS&P is continuing efforts to engage Traditional Owners. In 18 months, there will be trained rangers that will continue to undertake the monitoring. There are some operational challenges that need to be worked through.

Action:

SAC to discuss how they could progress the following research priority at next meeting – developing a spatial map of fire vulnerability for the Wet Tropics rainforest, including priority assets for protection – and the alignment of this with the QPWS&P Northern Region Adaptation Plan for Climate Change for Fire Management.

Resolution

The Board **noted** the updates on QPWS&P and WTMA Partnership Agreement projects: mountaintop vertebrate species monitoring and the Climate Change Adaptation Plan for Fire Management in northern region.

4.8 Rainforest Aboriginal People's Think Tank (RAPTT) Update

Alicia Haines provided a background briefing on the Rainforest Aboriginal People's Think Tank (RAPTT) for new directors. The Great Barrier Reef Foundation (GBRF) offered RAPTT financial support to progress to a regional governance structure at the last Rainforest Aboriginal People's regional forum. The Authority funded a project officer to shape a funding proposal to the GBRF. GBRF has provided feedback to RAPTT that they will consider at their next meeting on the 27 April. Directors identified that the GBRF funding would provide a foundation, although ongoing funding would still need to be sourced for the Regional Agreement work. Also, if the GBRF funding is not successful, the Authority will need to look at alternative approaches for how to progress the Regional Agreement.

The Authority received funding for the Australian Heritage Grant. The team will start implementing the project plan, which includes setting up a steering committee, advertising a A05 position for two years, and looking at support letters received for the project. Directors identified that part of setting up the framework for this project would be how it feeds into the RAPTT Australian Heritage Grant project, and the Regional Agreement work as well.

The Chair, in her capacity as a Cultural Heritage Values Project Steering Committee member, provided an update on the RAPTT Australian Heritage Grant for the Cultural Values Management Plan. The project is currently funded to 30 June 2022. A request for extension has been sent to the Commonwealth. The Project officer, Dr Yancey Orr, is employed by Giringun Aboriginal Corporation. The project involves developing a cultural values management plan for the Wet Tropics, developing a nomination for the

Queensland Heritage Register, looking at free, prior, and informed consent, capacity building and Intellectual property rights.

Resolution

The Board **noted**

- the Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples Think Tank (RAPTT) recently submitted a funding application to the Great Barrier Reef Foundation.
- the awarding of a \$395,000 Australian Heritage Grant to the Authority for the Cultural Values Landscapes Hub.

4.9 19th Cassowary Awards

Saskia Salmeron-Rodriguez provided a background to the Authority's Cassowary Awards, the Board's gala event to recognise community contributions to World Heritage Area management. The 19th Cassowary Awards is proposed for 8 October 2022 (part of Australian Wildlife Week) at Tjapukai Now. The venue is owned by Djabugay Traditional Owners who have offered a very competitive rate inclusive of entertainment and catering. Saskia provided directors with a briefing on the awards format, categories, nominations process, budget, and sponsorship arrangements.

Resolution

The Board **approved** Tjapukai Now as the venue for the 19th Cassowary Awards, and the date of Saturday 8 October for the 19th Cassowary Awards.

4.10 Involving youth on the Board

Rebecca Lagerroth provided the background context to involving youth on the Board, which was an initiative of previous Board members. The purpose of the discussion is to consider options, seek Director input and direction to develop a proposal for a future Board meeting. Options discussed included:

- a young person observing Board meetings/processes.
- A young Rainforest Aboriginal leader program.
- a wet tropics youth forum/symposium – from which people could nominate to come and observe the Board and sit on the SAC/CCC as well
- a young people/s working group.
- Interns – often results in people applying for positions
- workplace integrated learning programs through universities.

Director Robin Clark shared some experience from the Terrain NRM youth leader program. The Terrain Board appreciated the perspectives shared by the youth leader. Directors liked the idea of a young people's working group, targeting 20–30-year olds that included opportunities for Rainforest Aboriginal People and non-Indigenous people to get involved. They were keen to find the right model for the Authority and its purpose. They identified that the planning and selection process has to be well thought out and recognised the importance of meeting the needs of the Board and maintaining the young person's interest, including by mentoring them through a process. Directors recognised the importance of estimating the time required to do the mentoring and to develop the work required; and being mindful of the resource implications of setting up and maintaining this. They noted that the young person/s also needs to be flexible to attend/participate. Directors acknowledged that the issue about remuneration or at least covering expenses needs to be thought about.

Actions:

- Rebecca Lagerroth to coordinate a working group of the Chair Chrissy Grant, Director Robin Clark and Matthew Cheetham to develop this concept of involving young people on the Board further.
- Robin Clark to approach Terrain for more information about their program. And Rebecca/Matt to investigate any other programs of involving young people on Boards.
- Look at funding opportunities to support youth involvement in the Board.

4.11 Wet Tropics Sustainable Tourism Plan 2021-2031 implementation update

Sarah Jordan provided a recap on the development of the Wet Tropics Sustainable Tourism Plan 2021-2031. Since the launch of the Plan the Authority has focused heavily on engagement with various partners and stakeholders. Priority actions in progress include:

- Delivery of a Wet Tropics Sustainable Tourism Plan road map this financial year.
- Establishing a new interagency working group for increasing efficiency in delivering ecotourism actions. The interagency working group includes the Authority, DES QPWS&P, the Department of Seniors, Disability Services and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships (DSDSATSIP), the Department of Tourism, Innovation and Sport (DTIS) and Tourism Events Queensland (TEQ).
- Development of the Wet Tropics Cultural Landscape Hub (funded by Australian Heritage Grant)
- Participating in a Steering Committee to drive development of a Tropical North Queensland First Nations Tourism Action Plan
- Working with a new QPWS&P working group to develop guidelines for World Heritage Area presentation in Queensland, to create consistency in branding.
- Delivering sustainable tourism roadshow with the tourism industry and Ambassador programs with Savannah Guides.
- Implementing the Memorandum of Understanding with DES and TEQ to evolve the Wet Tropics Tour Guide Program.
- Working with QPWS&P to progress the Partnership Agreement milestones – collaborative implementation of the Values Based Management Framework and maintain Parks Presentation to World Heritage standards.

The Board congratulated Sarah Jordan and Saskia Salmeron-Rodriguez for their achievements since the launch of the Plan.

Resolution

The Board **noted** the status update of the implementation of the Wet Tropics Sustainable Tourism Plan 2021 – 2031.

4.12 Consequential amendments to the Wet Tropics Management Plan 1998

Julie Colman briefed the Board on recommended advice from the Office of Queensland Parliamentary Council (OQPC) and relevant legal advice regarding the *Wet Tropics World Heritage Protection and Management Act 1993* (the Act) and the Wet Tropics Management Plan 1998 (the Plan) amendments.

Resolution

The Board

- noted an Office of Queensland Parliamentary Council recommended change to section 52 of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Protection and Management Act 1993, arising from of the Board 114-approved Act changes. The purpose of the change is to enable consequential changes to the Wet Tropics Management Plan 1998 where they arise directly from changes to the Act.

- approved the Authority to progress consequential amendments to the Wet Tropics Management Plan 1998, where those changes are required to align the Plan with the Board approved changes to the Wet Tropics World Heritage Protection and Management Act 1993.

5.0 Other Business

5.1 Board communique

Aaron Smith discussed the draft communique with directors.

Action:

Aaron Smith to finalise the communique and email to the directors for approval prior to distribution.

5.2 Board meeting dates for 2022

Directors approved the following Board meeting dates for 2022:

Board meeting #119, 9-10 June 2022. Location TBC. This will be a face-to-face meeting aligned with a CCC meeting.

- Day 1: half day meeting with CCC and half day closed session Board meeting
- Day 2: full day open Board meeting

Board meeting #120, 25-26 August 2022. Virtual meeting. Includes Board consideration of Annual Report, State of Wet Tropics report and Cassowary Award nominations.

- Day 1: half day (afternoon) closed session Board meeting
- Day 2: full day open Board meeting

Board meeting #121, 6-7 October 2022. Location – Cairns. Followed by the Cassowary Awards (Saturday 8 October).

- Day 1: half day (afternoon) closed session Board meeting
- Day 2: full day open Board meeting

Resolution

The Board **approved** the Board meeting dates for 2022

Meeting Close

Board Meeting 118 closed at 4.57pm.

Next Board meeting will be held on 9 & 10 June 2022



Ms Christine T Grant
Chair
10/06/2022