

In Attendance

Board Directors

Ms Chrissy Grant	Chair
Professor Iain Gordon	Director
Mr Phil Rist	Director
Dr Sally Driml	Director
Ms Ailsa Lively	Director
Mr Scott Buchanan	Executive Director

Observers

Erin Dampney	Director, Heritage Projects Section, DCCEEW
Martin Dallen	Assistant Director, Heritage Projects Section, DCCEEW
Shane Dagwell	Heritage Officer, Heritage Projects Section, DCCEEW
James Newman	Executive Director, Northern Parks and Forest, QPWS&P
Jeffrey McAlister	Deputy Director General, Tourism and Major Events, DTIS
Elisa Nichols	Executive Director, Office of the Great Barrier Reef and World Heritage (OGBRWH), DES
Angela Siggery	Director World Heritage, OGBRWH, DES
Heather Grant	NQ Land Management Services

WTMA Officers

Julie Colman	Acting Principal Advisor
Saskia Salmeron-Rodriguez	Manager, World Heritage Connections
Lucy Karger	Project Manager, Yellow Crazy Ant Eradication Program
Ellen Weber	Senior Scientist, Climate Initiatives
Alicia Haines	Acting Principal Project Officer
Phoebe Kinley	Principal Project Officer, Presentation and Engagement
Audrey Reilly	Acting Principal Planning Officer
Andrew Vakaci	Acting Senior Project Officer
Keith Speyers	Senior Project Officer
Matt Cheetham	Senior Project Officer, Communications and Engagement
Natalia Dusanovic	Intern
Wendy Brooksby	Administration Officer

Other

Kylie McQuie	HR Dynamics (minute taker)
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Meeting Open:

Board Meeting 120 opened at 8.30 am.

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, acknowledged Darumbal Country where the Chair lives and works as well as acknowledging the Chair's Elders of the Eastern Kuku Yalanji people. On behalf of the Board of Directors of the Wet Tropics Management Authority, the Chair paid respects to Elders past, present and emerging.

Acknowledged the Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples from the Wet Tropics region as Traditional custodians of this land.

The Chair welcomed Directors, observers, and staff to the meeting.

The Chair noted the appointment process for a Rainforest Aboriginal male Director was still in progress. The Hon Tanya Plibersek, Commonwealth Minister for the Environment and Water has been followed up for approval for appointment of a Rainforest Aboriginal male Director.

Noted that for item 4.5 of the agenda, Eastern Kuku Yalanji return to Country, Chair, Chrissy Grant has a conflict of interest and therefore in accordance with the decision taken at Board Meeting No. 117, Dr Sally Driml will be the Chair for that discussion and update.

1.2. Apologies

Apologies were received from:

Tim Wong – Manager, Planning and Conservation

1.3. Conflicts of Interest

None recorded

2. Previous Minutes and Actions Arising

2.1 Endorsement of Board Minutes No 119

Resolution

The Board **endorsed** the minutes for Board meeting 119

2.2 Extraordinary meeting – climate workshop debrief and next steps

2.3 Actions Arising

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

No	Meeting	Agenda Item / Action	Comments
2	113	Communications Strategy	Currently under review and a draft will be provided to the Board at meeting 122 in early 2023.
4	Extraordinary Meeting	Develop a checklist to guide ethical funding	Draft discussion paper prepared, does need CCC input. Ongoing.
5	118	Director Training	Delayed due to the appointment of Rainforest Aboriginal male Director and will be delegated to the new Principal Advisor.
7	118	Involving Youth on the Board	To be discussed later today, has been delayed and sub-committee has not met.
9	119	SAC to develop relationship with Whitsundays Climate	SAC to be consulted at next meeting, prior to Board meeting 121.

No	Meeting	Agenda Item / Action	Comments
		Change Innovation Hub Scientific Advisory Committee	
12	119	CCC minutes to the Board	CCC minutes and report from the 9 June 2022 meeting was circulated to the Board on Thursday 25 August 2022.
14	119	Recommend 2 temporary/interim members to the SAC	This issue was discussed at Directors closed session on Thursday 25 August; will be recorded later today in Other Business.
15	119	Questions that will inform and be incorporated into the planning of the 2022-2023 State of the Wet Tropics report.	SAC to be consulted at next meeting, prior to Board meeting 121.
17	119	Business Case and Strategy for Action	The Executive Director and Chair are travelling to Canberra in September, are coordinating with Sen Green's office.
18	119	Landscape Restoration Initiatives in the Wet Tropics	Will be discussed in item 4.2 today.
19	119	Yellow Crazy Ant Eradication Program Update	Townsville Map will be discussed in item 4.3 today.
20	119	Eastern Kuku Yalanji return to Country	Update to be provided in item 4.5 today.
21	119	19th Cassowary Awards	Nominees considered at Directors closed session on Thursday 25 August, awards will be held on Saturday 8 October 2022.
22	119	Board position on Windfarms	Statement finalised out of session, discussed further at Directors closed session on Thursday 25 August, will be discussed further today in item 3.2.
23	119	UNESCO World Heritage Convention 50th Anniversary	GBRMPA will get back to WTMA after 31 August 2022, Meeting with DES to brainstorm ideas for celebration, talk about the anniversary at Board meeting #121. Be mindful of timing of any events. Keep DCCEEW updated.
24	119	Wind farms Board Statement	Board Statement to be uploaded to WTMA Website
25	119	Wind farms Board Statement	Board Statement to be provided to Relevant Ministers with a letter

Resolution

The Board **noted** the actions arising and updated the actions arising.

3. Reports

3.1 Chair's Report

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

The Directors attended a half-day closed session held on Thursday 25 August 2022 to assess nominees for the 19th Cassowary Awards and discuss two temporary/interim members to the Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC).

Various meetings attended included:

- Meeting with Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples' Think Tank (RAPTT) and Great Barrier Reef Foundation (GBRF) to obtain feedback from GBRF regarding the proposal submitted by RAPTT for a request for funding. There will be a follow up meeting.
- Participated on selection committee for recruitment of Principal Advisor.
- Wet Tropics Management Authority's participation in the National Environmental Science Program (NESP) workshop on climate change, fire management and threatened species. Professor Stephen William will talk more about it in the Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) update today.

Resolution

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

3.2 Executive Director's Report

The Executive Director Scott Buchanan provided the following updates to Directors:

- Human resources update:
 - Active recruitment and selection process for new Principal Advisor. Successful applicant has not been announced yet, will provide information to the Board when appropriate.
 - Julie Coleman has been doing a fantastic job as Acting Principal Advisor.
 - Two new supervisors for the Yellow Crazy Ants Eradication Program (YCA), Patrick Anisset and Dan Greenwood came from AWP and have previous experience working in the field.
 - Sarah Jordan has gone back to QPWS&P, replacement is Tamara Siemionow from DES. Dr Sally Driml acknowledged Sarah's contribution in getting the Tourism Strategic Plan up and running, she has done an excellent job.
 - There has been a lot of recruitment: 2 x positions advertised for Indigenous Identified roles—one for previous role held by Kristy and second is a Project Officer to support the Australian Heritage Grant program.
 - Quite a few staff are in acting positions and/or taking on new roles, acknowledged the fantastic work by the team over the last 3 months.
- Acknowledged that the team has been under significant work pressure which included end of financial year reporting, building the 2023 financial year budget, work regarding windfarms, preparation for the 19th Cassowary Awards and preparation for the Regional Forum.
- The Wet Tropics Management Authority's entry 'Boots on the Ground' won a DES Excellence Award this week for partnering with Rainforest Aboriginal people to deliver the Reef Assist Program. Acknowledgement to Ellen Weber for her leadership, Chris Clerc (since gone to QPWS&P) for his project management and Aaron Smith for providing training to the Rangers. It was a fantastic

partnership with Rainforest Aboriginal peoples utilising nature-based economy to gain employment for the long term unemployed.

- Business Case: Chrissy Grant and Dr Sally Driml did a fantastic job to pull together the final draft of the Business Case that the Directors have reviewed.
- At DES both Elisa Nichols and Angela Siggery are also looking at their funding as well. They have been in the same funding situation. Working with DES to collaborate to ensure that World Heritage properties in Queensland are properly resourced.
- Limited communication from new Commonwealth Ministers to schedule face-to-face meetings. Working with Senator Nita Green's office to arrange a meeting date. The Hon Chris Bowen's MP's office has responded; however, he is already booked out for the sittings of parliament.
- The Annual Budget was discussed in the Directors closed meeting on Thursday 25 August. Dr Sally Driml suggested that given how tight the Wet Tropics Management Authority's budget is, that it should be discussed at each Board meeting. It is proposed that:
 - At every second Board meeting, have a deep review and discussion about the budget; and
 - At every other Board meeting, have an overall discussion about the budget.
- Deb Parker and the team did a fantastic job preparing, loading, and balancing the budget for the 2023 financial year. Lucy Karger did a great job on the 2023 Yellow Crazy Ant Eradication Program budget.
- Budget update:
 - Total budget for the 2023 financial year is \$12,900,000.
 - Yellow Crazy Ant Eradication Program budget for this financial year is \$7,629,000, there will be significant investment this year for field contractors, James Cook University and Credible Canines for sniffer dogs.
 - Carry over from previous financial year is \$433,000, various reasons why include delays, contracts were cheaper than planned, position vacancies, and unexpected monies received. Will discuss specifics with Directors at the next Board meeting.
- Windfarms: final statement of the Board's position is complete; the Board of Directors have agreed that their position on Windfarms statement will be placed on the Wet Tropics Management Authority's website. It will also be sent to relevant Ministers as well as to Paula Perrett who is the Australian delegate for the UNESCO Climate Change Working group.
- Sustainable Tourism Plan: Sarah Jordan left that project in good stead. Have engaged consultants to look at the program design of the Tour Guide Program. Acknowledgement of the fantastic work by Saskia Salmeron-Rodriguez, Sarah Jordan and Tamara Siemionow.

Comments:

- It is positive that the Wet Tropics Management Authority has been able to meet with the investors of the Chalumbin Windfarm, but we should be aware of any potential risks.
- Was there any discussion regarding the Scientific Advisory Committee's most concerning issues of fire and weed management? Yes, there was discussion however from the perspective of the ecosystem function that those areas provide and that fragmentation will exasperate the fire and weed risks

Resolution

The Board:

- **Noted** the Executive Director's report.
- **Endorsed** the discussion of the Wet Tropics Management Authority's budget at each Board meeting
- **Approved** that the statement regarding the Board's position regarding Windfarms be placed on the Wet Tropics Management Authority's website

3.3 Directors' Issues

The Directors provided the following updates:

Dr Sally Driml:

Queensland Government hosts a number of workshops/days each year looking at both general and Indigenous tourism. Will attend workshops/days in November, one is the DestinationQ Forum. Will report back to the Board any information that may be useful for the Wet Tropics Management Authority. Suggest that any Wet Tropics Management Authority tourism staff look at potentially attending these workshops/days as well.

Ms Ailsa Lively:

Has been appointed Chairperson of Cultural Landscapes Hub project. There has been a terms of reference developed, however it has been difficult to arrange for all participants to attend a meeting together.

Was on the panel to assist the tenders for the preparation of the State of the Wet Tropics report.

Attended two (2) Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples' Think Tank (RAPTT) Regional Forum catch up meetings. The RAPTT Regional Forum meeting will now be held on 28-30 October 2022.

Professor Stephen Williams:

Started teaching a new Masters course at James Cook University (JCU) specifically on global climate change. The reasoning behind the new course is exemplified by the Wet Tropics Management Authority trying to deal with climate change and give students training in how to handle global change. Scott Buchanan and Dr Michelle Ibbett from QPWS&P were kind enough to provide video testimonial for the promotion of the new course.

Will update on National Environmental Science Program (NESP) workshop in the Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) update.

Ms Robin Clark:

Attended the Planning Institute's seminar on urban heat. There was nothing specific for the Wet Tropics Management Authority, however it did highlight how important vegetation is in keeping urban areas cool as well as health impacts of increasing heat.

Resolution

The Board **noted** the Director's reports.

3.4 Queensland and Commonwealth Department reports

Elisa Nichols – Executive Director, Office of the Great Barrier Reef and World Heritage and Angela Siggery – Director World Heritage (OGBRWH), Department of Environment and Science (DES) providing the following update to Directors:

- Restructure within DES:
 - the World Heritage team has been moved to the Environment and Heritage Policy and Programs Division and joining with the Office of the Great Barrier Reef. This now named the Office of the Great Barrier Reef and World Heritage.

- Looking at establishing a governance arrangement so that each of the World Heritage areas across the department are elevated.
- The purpose of the restructure is to leverage resources to better support World Heritage management, to elevate and promote a consistent voice, publicise and raise the profile of World Heritage as a concept in Queensland.
- For the UNESCO World Heritage Convention 50th Anniversary, currently looking at ways we could celebrate all Queensland properties together.
- Other Queensland World Heritage properties receive the following funding/project agreements from the Commonwealth government (excluding Australian Heritage Grants):
 - Riversleigh receives \$145,000
 - Gondwana receives \$180,000 to be split between Queensland and NSW
 - K'gari receives \$145,000
 - Will enter into funding negotiations soon when Heritage Projects Section of DCCEEW provide timing to begin negotiations.
- The Australian Heritage Grants open next month. Have been successful a couple of times: Gondwana Cultural Heritage Assessments and the K'gari waste strategy with Fraser Coast Council.
- Queensland's First Nations World Heritage Strategy is currently going through approvals, on its way to Director-General, will be implementing once approved and released.
- New nominations for National Heritage or World Heritage:
 - Quandamooka Country – there has been a significant change in leadership, no update at this time
 - Cape York – small grants program available for \$30k-\$50k grants for interested Cape York Traditional Owner groups to secure funding to support Cultural Heritage Assessments on Country which may then assist in progressing a Heritage listing. Grants program closes in October 2022.
- Gondwana: have formalised the split from NSW for Advisory Committee and Executive Officer functions, have appointed inaugural First Nations Executive Officer. The Advisory Committee is progressing through due diligence checks, the Chair will be jointly appointed by both Federal and State Ministers.
- K'gari: 30th anniversary of its World Heritage listing this year, planning an event to celebrate.
- Riversleigh: visited the property, there is new representation on the Committee. All Rangers attended thank you for James Newman at QPWS&P. A few projects are winding up.

James Newman – Executive Director, Northern Parks and Forest, QPWS&P:

- Human resources update:
 - Alison Webb the Regional Director for the Northern Region is taken another 6 months in Asset Services
 - Chris Kinnaird will continue as Acting Regional Director for the Northern Region for another 6 months
 - Dr Michelle Ibbett – has an opportunity in the Threatened Species team for 2 years, leave at the end of August – EOI will be going out
 - Brett Stallbaum has returned to his substantive position of Principal Ranger Cape York
 - Andrew Millard extended in the Performance and Improvement Team
 - Nick Smith is acting Principal Ranger Tablelands
- QPWS&P hosted the Queensland Ranger Association muster at Broadwater State Forest near Ingham. Bruce Jennison from Wet Tropics Management Authority gave a great presentation and all the Rangers really engaged.
- The Warrgamay Welcome to Country was the best ever, 80 plus people participated in the ceremony.
- Visitor Strategy for Crater Lakes National Parks is now complete, thankyou Wet Tropics Management Authority for your input and advice, this has been signed off.

- Research and Monitoring Strategy for Crater Lakes National Parks is now complete as well.
- The Wallaman Falls Girringun National Park capital works project (campground, car parks, visitor centre, walks): still in consultation with Traditional Owners. Final plan may be ready to progress by the end of the year.
- Eastern Kuku Yalanji Cultural Centre in the Daintree: Daintree Cultural Hub project – there have been obstacles and delays, and the project is no longer on track.
- Taken on unique First Nations Recruitment Strategy. There were 88 actions including employee branding. Developed three (3) short employee videos about why it is great to work for QPWS&P. Very proud of the videos.

Comment:

- 3rd Joint Management meeting between QPWS&P and Eastern Kuku Yalanji will be held on the anniversary of the handback on 28th September 2022. Fitting that the meeting will be held on the anniversary date.

Jeffrey McAlister, Deputy Director General, Tourism and Major Events, Department of Tourism, Innovation and Sport (DTIS):

- Eco Trail Projects update:
 - Wangetti Trail: Undergoing Gateway Review at the moment, with the review focussing on the shared use nature of the trail (walking and cycling). No advance on construction yet – however issues are being worked through over the next weeks.
 - Paluma to Wallaman Falls Trail: Have the final Business Case, will share in the next week or two. Want sign-off from the Traditional Owners prior to distribution as the concept was Traditional Owner led. The Hon Stirling Hinchliffe MP announced an initial commitment of \$2 million of Queensland funding for preliminary works.

Comments:

- The Wet Tropics Management Authority Community Consultative Committee (CCC) would like to see community consultation regarding the Paluma to Wallaman Falls Trail, particularly in the Paluma region. Jeffrey responded that the community haven't been formally engaged regarding the trail, because the Nywaigi Traditional Owner group have not engaged in the Business Case as yet.

Erin Dampney – Director, and Martin Dallen – Assistant Director, Heritage Projects Section, Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW):

- Planning to visit in October 2022.
- Confirm change of departments, combined elements from industry and climate change
- The Heritage branch remains within the Heritage, Reef and Ocean division, with the division remaining largely untouched. The Hon Tanya Plibersek is the Minister for Environment and Water (covers the Heritage, Reef and Ocean division). The Hon Chris Bowen is the Minister for Climate Change and Energy and Parliamentary Secretary Senator Jenny McAllister is the Assistant Minister for Climate Change and Energy. Mr David Fredricks PSM is the Secretary of the new DCCEEW.
- Election commitments: working with the government to build the next budget which will be handed down on 25 October 2022.
- The Hon Tanya Plibersek released the overdue State of the Environment Report 2021 on 19 July 2022. The Minister announced that there is a need to overhaul the nation's Environmental Protections, the government will be working on implementing those measures to the identified short comings.
- Also preparing a full response to the Samuel's Review of the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act.

- 45th session of the World Heritage Committee was due to be held and chaired by Russia has been indefinitely postponed. An alternative date, location, and Chair have yet to be decided.
- Gondwana State of Conservation Report is due on 1 December 2022, currently going through final internal clearances. Will share with Queensland and NSW governments in the coming weeks for their review.
- International Council of Monuments and Sites General Assembly and Scientific Symposium (ICOMOS) is scheduled for late August/early September 2023. It is the first one to be held in Australia or in the Pacific region. Expecting more than 1,500 delegates from more than 100 nations. ICOMOS will liaise with property/site managers on how sites can participate in the delivery of the event. DCCEEW will help and support site managers for delivery of the event. One of the tours ICOMOS is planning for delegates to attend a reef and rainforest tour which includes Cairns and Mossman. DCCEEW assumes that the negotiations are underway between ICOMOS and site managers.
- Australian Heritage grants: the next round will open toward the end of September/early October 2022. Up to \$400,000 is available for National Heritage listed places.
- The next meeting of the Australian Heritage Council will be held in Alice Springs from 26 - 28 September 2022.

Comments:

- The Wet Tropics Management Authority is not in negotiations with ICOMOS at this stage. DCCEEW to keep the Authority informed. There is a steering committee meeting on 4 October 2022, Chrissy Grant was approached to join and will raise the issue at this meeting.

Resolution

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

3.5 Advisory Committee reports to the Board

Director Dr Sally Driml provided an update from the Community Consultative Committee (CCC):

- Joint meeting with the CCC and Board was held on Thursday 9 June 2022. Not all the CCC members could be there.
- One of the issues that the CCC was concerned about was communication with the Board. The joint meeting was part of addressing that concern, with a process for ongoing communication agreed to.
- Saskia and Sally have been working on a reporting system. This includes the minutes, concerns and advice of the CCC be provided in a written document for inclusion at Board meetings. The Board's response is then provided via a written document back to the CCC for tabling/discussion at the CCC's next meeting.
- Finalised a written paper for the Board yesterday (Thursday 25 August 2022) which includes a summary of that meeting and detailed report from each CCC member about their local concerns.
- The last CCC meeting was held on Thursday 9 June 2022. The next CCC meeting is scheduled next week on Friday 2 September.
- The next report from the CCC is due for consideration at Board meeting 121.
- CCC members are interested in communication with the community, Sally will be working with Saskia and Phoebe and will discuss further at the next CCC meeting.

Comment:

- CCC report has been received by the Board of Directors via email

Director Professor Stephen Williams provided an update from the Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC):

- The last SAC meeting was held on Thursday 26 May 2022. Topics covered including Spectacled Flying Fox issue, fire and climate change report from QPWS&P, windfarms, Restoration Alliance, potential nomination of Wet Tropics upland ecosystems as a threatened ecosystem under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) Act due to climate change, National Environmental Science Program (NESP) and new SAC members.
- New SAC members – two people have been identified as suitable and have been recommended.
- National Environmental Science Program (NESP) funding initiative, stakeholder meeting held on 3 August 2022 organised by Ellen Weber (WTMA Senior Scientist, Climate Initiatives) and Iain Gordon (ANU).
- Discussed various issues that were identified as priorities including:
 - fire and fire vulnerability in the context of climate change
 - understanding threatened species across the Wet Tropics including the loss of sound scapes in the forest and song lines
 - recognition of the importance of environmental monitoring
 - prioritising the protection of refugia and places for restoration.

Comments:

- There is strong and overwhelming support for fire and vulnerability work, particularly as we have seen other World Heritage rainforests suffer significant fire damage. There is also a need to incorporate Traditional Owner knowledge and practices into that research.
- NESP team were very keen to progress the fire and fire vulnerability issue as a matter of urgency, and QPWS&P are very important partners in this work. Michael Douglas from Resilient Landscapes Hub (NESP) has asked the Wet Tropics Management Authority to create a package for users and are needing a strong QPWS&P contact to assist and ensure both organisations align regarding fire vulnerability and incorporating Traditional practices.

Resolution

The Board **noted** the SAC and CCC reports.

3.6 Significant correspondence

The Board reviewed the Significant Correspondence.

Correspondence In:

	none
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Correspondence Out:

3 June 2022	The Hon Tanya Plibersek, Commonwealth Minister for Water and the Environment – congratulations on her appointment, introduction to the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area and invitation to meet to discuss key focus areas for the Authority.
6 June 2022	Senator Nita Green, Special Envoy for the Great Barrier Reef - congratulations on her appointment, introduction to the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area and invitation to meet to discuss key focus areas for the Authority.
6 June 2022	Senator the Hon Murray Watt, Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry and Minister for Emergency Management - congratulations on his appointment, introduction to the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area and invitation to meet to discuss the Yellow Crazy Ant Eradication Program.
7 June 2022	Ms Mica Martin, CEO of Cairns Regional Council – offer of an opportunity to sponsor the Cassowary Awards.
8 June 2022	The Hon Meaghan Scanlon MP seeking support for Spectacled flying-fox research in the Wet Tropics.

8 June 2022	Letter to Lucy Graham, Director of CAFNEC, with the Board's response to the Environmental Defender's Office report on Flying Fox Roost Management Reform for Queensland.
23 June 2022	Mr Damien Dickman, Chairman Girramay Peoples Aboriginal Corporation – Letter of support for funding to acquire Warringah property, Bilyana, on Girramay country, north of Cardwell
29 June 2022	Professor Darren Crayn, Australian Tropical Herbarium James Cook University – Letter of support 'Rustproofing the Rainforest' grant application to tackle the threat of Myrtle Rust to the native biodiversity.
6 July 2022	The Hon Meaghan Scanlon MP – invitation to the Cassowary Awards
6 July 2022	The Hon Tanya Plibersek, Commonwealth Minister for Water and the Environment – invitation to the Cassowary Awards
8 July 2022	Gavin Singleton, Project Manager, Yirrganydji Land and Sea Program Dawul Wuru Aboriginal Corporation – letter of support for Dawul Wuru Aboriginal Corporation's application to the National Indigenous Australians Agency Tourism Fund.

Resolution

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

4.0 Strategic Issues

4.1 Update for the 2022-2023 and 2023-2024 State of Wet Tropics Reports

Julie Colman spoke to Board Paper 4.1 and provided an update for the Annual Report and State of Wet Tropics Report (SoWT):

- The Annual Report is on its way; this report was pulled forward to provide more time to the State of Wet Tropics Report.
- Both reports are running to the time schedule even though they have short turnaround times.
- For the Annual Report there are no surprises in the document, it is the same as the milestone reporting the Directors have seen. This report is in graphic design process now.
- State of Wet Tropics Report was circulated to the Directors this week, the due date for Director feedback is Wednesday 31 August 2022 at close of business.
- Directors are asked to input feedback into the one SharePoint document so that everyone's comments are in one document. Directors are to provide feedback regarding content, not editorial changes.
- Acknowledgement of difficulty accessing the one SharePoint document, this is being resolved.
- Apologise to the Directors that their review/feedback timeframes are tight/short.
- The State of Wet Tropics Report is currently approximately 11,000 words, will be looking at sharpening the text and messaging.
- The document has been sent to both SAC and CCC as well as the Land Restoration Fund.
- Traditional Owners have provided feedback and approval for specific wording.

Comments:

- Generally happy with the document. The contractor, Remarkable NRM has done a lot of work about the different environmental markets which is fantastic information.

Action:

Directors to provide feedback by close of business on Wednesday 31 August 2022.

Resolution

The Board **noted** the update regarding the Annual Report and the State of Wet Tropics Report

4.2 Landscape Restoration Program update

Ellen Weber, and Keith Speyers spoke to Board Paper 4.2.

- Key partners Terrain NRM, James Cook University (JCU) and Far North Queensland Regional Organisation of Council (FNQROC) met in July 2022 to review the outcomes of the consultation and how to refine the Wet Tropics Restoration Alliance.
- Following the workshop, the key partners drafted the Communique for the Establishment of the Wet Tropics Restoration Alliance.
- The key partners agreed to hold an inaugural workshop on Friday 16 September 2022 with partners and supporters (approximately 30 organisations and individuals)
- The objective of the inaugural workshop as a 'soft launch' is to report back to partners and supporters on the outcomes of the consultation, to reach consensus on the core aspects of the Wet Tropics Restoration Alliance as outlined in the draft Communique, and to seek endorsement from partners and supporters via a formal commitment to the Wet Tropics Restoration Alliance.
- The Communique will be sent out to partners and supporters from Monday 29 August 2022. Following the 'soft launch' the work will begin with partners and supporters on developing an investment strategy as well as tangibly demonstrating what it means to be part of the Wet Tropics Restoration Alliance.

Comments:

- Feedback to Ellen regarding the wording in the Communique:
 - The Wet Tropics Restoration Alliance will be a supporter and provide 'care packages' to partners that are working in areas that the Alliance has identified as priority landscapes.
 - Need to have trust in the collaborative approach which will guide the shape and the form of the investment strategy. The value proposition and priorities are being built collaboratively from the ground up. The Wet Tropics Management Authority can only provide the data for recommendations of where investment should go.
- How many people have signed up or are interested in the Wet Tropics Restoration Alliance.
 - 26 groups or individuals signed up initially last year, have been a few more since then
 - 2 groups are already eager to attend the 'soft launch'.
- What is the role of landowners? Is there a benefit to landowners? There is not much focus on them.
 - Land managers aren't just QPWS&P or the Wet Tropics Management Authority.
 - Landowners are land managers as well. Need to be more inclusive of landowners, they are the ones that can accelerate restoration.
 - Will add value proposition for Landowners in the Communique.

Resolution

The Board:

- **Noted** the outcomes of consultation on the Wet Tropics Restoration Alliance discussion paper; and
- **Noted** the proposal for a 'soft launch' of the Wet Tropics Restoration Alliance through an inaugural meeting of interest organisations on Friday 16 September 2022.

4.3 Yellow Crazy Ant Eradication Program update

Lucy Karger spoke to Board Paper 4.3:

- Have prepared a 12-month Annual Report to the Commonwealth to 30 June 2022.

- Over time it appears there is an increase in the total area being managed, however there is a decrease in area that requires active broadscale treatment.
- New detections in the last 14 months: 6 sites of approximately 198ha including a new infestation detected in the World Heritage Area of approximately 77ha. Still mapping the extent of the infestation.
- Are targeting where to conduct surveys so can find other areas of infestation. Have been successful including using targeted cane high-priority survey efforts.
- Survey window is December to August/September which is very limited. Current survey season extended to mid-September 2022. Increase in the surveillance area is significant and impressive especially compared to 2016 including survey efforts to include downstream, outside infestation areas, persistent sites and high-risk cane areas.
- Achievements from 2013 to 2022:
 - More than 70% if the total area no longer requires broadscale treatment
 - Stronger connections in the community and industry
 - Strategic collaboration with sugar industry and targeted surveillance
 - Skilled multi-disciplinary team
 - Using odour detection dogs
 - Eradication at a fourth site
- Wet Tropics Management Authority is developing a methodology with James Cook University (JCU) to objectively analyse and define survey data for specific sites to inform the Authority's confidence in absence of Yellow Crazy Ants prior to declaring eradication.
- Survey types:
 - Odour detecting dog surveys have an 80% chance of finding ants
 - Lure surveys have a 24-28% chance of finding ants
 - Sticky trap surveys 50-60% chance of finding ants
- Odour detection dog surveys have limitations including the length of time the dog can work, where a dog works, the need for dogs to be continually trained in odour detection. However the success rate is fantastic and will need more odour detection dogs. Could potentially reduce the timeline for detection to eradication.
- Next survey season likely begin in December 2022 pending weather.
- Next treatment round planned for December 2022 with 3 treatments planned for 2023
- Challenges with the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA). Application for renewal was applied in July 2021. The day before the permit was due to expire, were told they won't meet the deadline. Will write to Senator Murray Watt the Minister for the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry via the Chairperson of the Board of Directors to alert him to the protracted and unsatisfying process experienced with the APVMA.
- Approximate Townsville Yellow Crazy Ant infestation (to be confirmed):
 - Alligator Creek (delimitation has not been completed) – 1,176ha
 - Douglas – 88ha
 - Black River – 172ha
 - Mt Stuart/St Johns – 19 ha
- Townsville City Council (TCC) have been fantastic and proactive to take on the responsibility for the eradication program. TCC are working with Wet Tropics Management Authority, the Invasive Species Council (ISC) and Biosecurity Queensland.
- Wet Tropics Management Authority teams have been travelling to Townsville to provide training with local government, volunteers, other organisations to share knowledge and information.

Comments:

- Observation that the sites in Townsville are quite far apart. Yes, initially think the spread has been based on flooding and/or industry based.

- Townsville have been aware of the infestation for some time. Townsville ants are different to the Cairns ants as determined by genetic analysis. Townsville ants likely came from the port of Townsville. Townsville have been treating Yellow Crazy Ants in urban areas for some time, therefore likely the ants at Alligator Creek have been moved there from the urban infestation. Given the size of the infestation it is obvious the ants have been at Alligator Creek for a long time. Alligator Creek is also the site of a large new housing development, so potentially the ants may have arrived at that site from dirt being brought in.
- Do Yellow Crazy Ants have a preferred soil? No, they have been found in forest, cane and residential areas. As long as they have a food and water source and if the conditions are suitable they can persist.
- The team are also using environmental DNA (eDNA), it offers another opportunity to find Yellow Crazy Ants, particularly in areas that the team don't go or is difficult to access. For example, could take a water sample from the Barron River and test whether there is any Yellow Crazy Ant DNA in the water sample. Currently applying this tool while working with MSF Sugar, taking samples from harvested cane to test for Yellow Crazy Ant DNA.
- The Board is impressed with the significant increase in effort and the success over the past 18 months thanks to the continued support of the Commonwealth and State governments.

Resolution

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

4.4 Regional Rainforest Aboriginal Forum

Alicia Haines spoke to Board Paper 4.4:

- The Regional Rainforest Aboriginal Forum is in the planning stages.
- Was postponed from the initial scheduled date in July 2022 to the new date of 28-30 October 2022.
- Invitations have been sent out to Rainforest Aboriginal peoples and organisations.
- Invitations to governments and stakeholders will be sent out approximately Monday 29 August 2022.
- Most costs have been paid for, acquitted prior to 30 June 2022. Outstanding costs such as accommodation, facilitator fees, travel assistance and Welcome to Country have yet to be paid.
- Have engaged the Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples' Think Tank (RAPTT) to advise and assist with development and planning of the Forum program. There have been 2 meetings with RAPTT to date, with another scheduled next week as well as a scheduled full day session to prepare the presentations.
- The themes, program, and presentations will be reflective of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area Regional Agreement.
- The schedule will be the same as last year:
 - Day 1 closed session
 - Day 2 full day
 - Day 3 half day

Action:

- Alicia to provide a further update regarding final arrangements at Board meeting 121.
- Alicia to report the outcomes of the Regional Rainforest Aboriginal Forum at Board meeting 122.

Resolution

The Board **noted** the update about the 2022 Regional Rainforest Aboriginal Forum.

4.5 Eastern Kuku Yalanji Return to Country

Chrissy Grant stepped out of the Chair and Dr Sally Driml stepped into the Chair for this item.

Audrey Reilly spoke to Board Paper 4.5:

- There has been progress since the last Board meeting.
- The process itself difficult, there is a lot of legislative complexity intersecting in the land, administration development and planning space.
- Approach has been to divide work into 3 main areas: Native Title, Planning, and Master Planning
- Native Title: The Wet Tropics Management Authority has acting as an enabler, consulting with Jabalbina Yalanji Aboriginal Corporation (JYAC) and Cape York Land Council (CYLC). The objective is to find a legal platform that would deliver individual tenancy on common property and would be legally recognised by institutions such as banks.
- Very proud of what has been achieved so far, it is a step closer for Eastern Kuku Yalanji peoples realising their aspirations to return to Country.
- Planning: Once Native Title has been addressed, and have the owner's consent and have a tenancy agreement, how does that fit into the Planning Scheme and will it be recognised? Have spoken to the planners about what they require for permissions management in terms of the Planning Scheme and have made progress. The Douglas and Cook Shire Councils will recognise the minutes from the JYAC Board meetings, cultural governance clearance as well as the tenancy arrangement.
- Both Douglas and Cook Shire Councils have previously identified Return to Country Local Plan Precincts in their Planning Schemes however only a couple of them have assessment criteria required for development.
- Planners have agreed to make it easier and streamline the development approval process specific to each use type to remove the barrier for uptake by Eastern Kuku Yalanji peoples.
- Master Planning: Has highlighted a need to pursue the Master Planning exercise to provide the assessment criteria for all Return to Country Local Plan Precincts so that Eastern Kuku Yalanji people can move back onto Country to meet their cultural aspirations, practice their traditions on Country and have a connection to Country.
- Difficulty of the Master Planning exercise is the meshing of a Cultural planning process with a Planning Scheme process and all the considerations such as value of the environment, slope access, infrastructure etc.
- One of the risks identified in this process is that there is no one State agency that aligns completely with return to Country planning.
- In absence of funding at this stage, considering forming a working group with representation from various State departments, agencies and interest groups to try to find pathways through the legislation and garner interest and buy in for funding.
- Acknowledgement to Robin Clark for her advice during this process.

Comments:

- Jamie Merrick the Director General of Department of Environment and Science (DES) has stated that the Department of State Development has an aspiration to be more involved to support return to Country planning. Jamie will take the proposal to the Department of State Development (and other departments) to achieve buy in and potential commitment to resources. DES alone doesn't have the funding.
- How long does it take to create an ILUA? Between 8 to 14 months.
- Given this matter may provide advice and processes for other Traditional Owner groups, councils, Authorities and groups across the state (potentially replicated), this may assist in the funding proposal.

- The Board is very pleased that the Department of State Development are supportive.
- Working group is a great idea as issues or concerns could be addressed via this group as well as be a representation of a cross agency approach.
- What is the level of funding required? Approximately \$991,000 over two years. QPWS&P – Partnerships does have a team that does this type of work and they may be able to support this process.
- The Board acknowledged the great progress of this matter.

Resolution

The Board **noted** the progress with the Eastern Kuku Yalanji return to Country planning process.

4.6 Youth Involvement

Chrissy Grant returned as Chair.

Natalia Dusanovic, Heather Grant and Andrew Vakaci spoke to Board Paper 4.6:

- Received the draft outcomes report prepared by the consultants from the Wet Tropics Management Authority Youth Roundtable event held in April 2022 as a complimentary event to the launch of the Reef Assist film. It was an opportunity to seek feedback on the barriers and opportunities for youth to engage in a smart green economy and the natural capital world.
- This work ties into the Wet Tropics Management Authority's Strategy 3 involving the community in relation to engaging youth in ways that resonate with their interests, encourage participation and future leadership in the management of the World Heritage Area.
- Natalia has been reviewing and refining the draft report's recommendations. Found that the draft recommendations were general, and that further consultation was required with participants of the Youth Roundtable event for more specific and targeted feedback.
- Invited Heather Grant as one of the participants of the Youth Roundtable and the Reef Assist program who has been working with NQ Land Management Services to share her experience.
- Draft Recommendations and further feedback received via further consultations:
 1. Provide or establish long-term funding for nature-based programs.
 2. Co-create programs which are place and people specific.
 3. Recognition of nature-based workers as skilled workers.
 4. Provide opportunities for networking between young people and organisations working in similar fields.
 5. Draw on the Youth Roundtable participant group to further develop recommendations, ideas and opportunities.
 6. Have a voice for young people on organisational boards and committees.
- Next steps to consolidate findings from the further consultations into a final report with tangible recommendations.

Comments:

- Natalia has done a fantastic job; the recommendations will be incorporated into the Reef Assist program as well.
- Currently looking at how the CCC can encourage youth to participate especially with membership for the advisory board being renewed in 2023.
- Youth Engagement Working Group (Chrissy, Robin, Keith and Matt) have not met since the last Board meeting; however, progress includes involving youth in the Wet Tropics Restoration Alliance particularly via Cairns and Far North Environment Centre (CAFNEC).
- The Wet Tropics Management Authority can contribute to training and education of youth, particularly in the area of governance.

- One of the key points from youth is wanting employment in the sector, will need to look at how to bring both youth and potential employers together.
- The Office of the Great Barrier Reef and World Heritage is looking at how to connect young people into communities of employers. Considering a formal program to match young people with employers in the environmental sector. Looking forward to seeing the final report, as it seems we are all having the same discussions.
- The understanding is that the next stage for the Wet Tropics Management Authority is to review the Youth Engagement Strategy and use the final report from the Youth Roundtable to inform this review, has there been progress and timeframe for finalisation?
 - Matt and Keith are working on this
 - The Youth Roundtable report will be finalised within next 2-3 weeks, participants will be asked to be co-authors of this document.
 - Once the document is complete, discuss and collaborate with Cairns and Far North Environment Centre (CAFNEC), Australian Youth Climate Coalition (AYCC) and Youth Empowered Towards Independence (YETI) which the Wet Tropics Management Authority is developing strong relationships with.
- Acknowledgement that the Wet Tropics Management Authority needs to work closely with its partners and facilitate how meaningful training and employment in the natural capital world for young people can be delivered. Do need to work, align and coordinate with the Office of Youth in DES and Department of Employment, Small Business and Training (DESBT).
- The Board was pleased that the recommendations align with the strategic plan and the Board's priorities on youth involvement.

Action:

James to follow up youth employment opportunities and pathways in QPWS&P.

Resolution

The Board **noted** the update of the draft report from April 2022 Youth Roundtable meeting.

5.0 Other Business

5.1 Board communique:

Resolution

The Board **approved** the Communique for Meeting 120.

5.2 Other Business:

Appointment of Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) members:

- Discussed and deliberated on Thursday 25 August 2022 at the Director's closed session
- Agreement for Associate Professor Nathan Waltham and Dr Justin Perry to be approached and endorsed as interim Scientific Advisory Committee members up to December 2023.
- Both have informally agreed, however haven't been officially approached or informed by the Wet Tropics Management Authority as yet.

Resolution

The Board **endorsed** the appointment of Associate Professor Nathan Waltham and Dr Justin Perry as interim Scientific Advisory Committee members up to December 2023.

19th Cassowary Awards:

- The prestigious Cassowary Awards gala will be held on Saturday 8 October at Tjapukai Now. The Board received more than 30 nominations and were impressed with the calibre of nominees. We are looking forward to the Award ceremony as an important event to recognise the amazing contributions of the Wet Tropics community to conserve, present and protect the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area.

Acknowledgements:

- Great to see all the observers at the Board meeting today.

2023 Board Meeting Dates:

Action:

Propose the dates for 2023 Board Meetings.

Meeting Close

Board Meeting 120 closed at 2.36pm.

Next Board meeting will be held on Thursday 6 and Friday 7 October 2022

Cassowary Awards event will be held on Saturday 8 October 2022

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Christine T. Grant". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped 'G' at the end.

Ms Christine T Grant

Chair

7/10/2022