

---

## Previous Minutes Board Meeting 123

---

### ***In Attendance***

#### **Board Directors**

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

#### **Observers**

Martin Dallen	Assistant Director, Heritage Projects Section, DCCEEW
Shane Dagwell	Heritage officer, Heritage Projects Section, DCCEEW
Matt Brien	Regional Director, Northern Region, QPWS&P
Gale O'Brien	Acting Deputy Director General, DTIS
Julia Playford	Executive Director, Office of the Great Barrier Reef and World Heritage, DES
Angela Siggery	Director, World Heritage, Office of the Great Barrier Reef and World Heritage, DES

#### **WTMA Staff**

Sean McNamara	Principal Advisor
Tim Wong	Manager, Planning and Conservation
Saskia Salmeron-Rodriguez	Manager, World Heritage Connections
Ellen Weber	Senior Scientist, Climate Initiatives
Phoebe Kinley	Principal Project Officer, Presentation and Engagement
Julie Colman	Principal Planning Officer

#### **Others**

Wendy Brooksby	WTMA (minute taker)
----------------	---------------------

### **1. Introduction**

#### **1.1. Chair's welcome and introduction**

The Chair, Ms Chrissy Grant, acknowledged the Gimuy Walubara Yidinji and the Yirrganydji Traditional Owners of the Cairns area, the Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples participating in the meeting, and the Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples of the Wet Tropics region as the Traditional Custodians of this landscape. The Chair paid her respects to Elders and her own Elders of the Eastern Kuku Yalanji people and welcomed Directors, observers, current and new staff to the meeting both in person and online.

The chair welcomed Matt Brien, Regional Director, Northern Region, to the meeting as a new representative for Queensland Parks and Wildlife & Partnerships and noted that agenda Item 4.5 (Update on the

communication plan) has been deferred to the next meeting and replaced by a late paper (Voice to Parliament) for discussion.

## **1.2. Apologies**

Apologies were received from:

Lucy Karger Project Manager, Yellow Crazy Ant Eradication Program

## **1.3. Conflicts of interest**

None recorded.

## **2. Previous minutes and actions arising**

### **2.1 Previous Minutes—Board Meeting 122**

Minor corrections to the minutes of Board Meeting 122 were identified for Director Robin Clark's report.

#### **Resolution**

The Board **endorsed** the minutes for Board Meeting 122 with inclusion of the corrections.

### **2.2 Actions arising**

The Executive Director, Scott Buchanan, presented the actions arising report to Directors and provided an update on all outstanding items. After Board meeting 123 the sole remaining action (ongoing) on the list is related to the communication plan. The consultant's report on the strategic plan review will inform the communication plan and a presentation is scheduled for the next meeting.

#### **Resolution**

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

## **3. Reports**

### **3.1 Chair's Report**

The Chair, Ms Chrissy Grant officially announced the appointment of Mr William Enoch-Tranby, as the new Rainforest Aboriginal (RAP) male board member to the Wet Tropics Management Authority (the Authority) Board. The Board now has a full complement of Directors. The Directors were pleased to welcome Mr Enoch-Tranby who joined them on the first session of the Directors governance training session on 1 June 2023. The Chair noted that three of the six Directors on the Board are Rainforest Aboriginal People, before briefing the Board on the key activities and events since the last meeting.

The Chair reported on:

- the recent launch of the Joint Terrain Indigenous Advisory Committee (IAC), and the work involved in promoting the expressions of interest for the steering committee to communities, ranger groups and other suitable applicants.
- Minister Plibersek's engagement with YCA, with a site visit and detection dog demonstration.
- Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples Cultural Values Management Plan
- issues arising for the 45<sup>th</sup> session of UNESCO World Heritage Committee meeting 10-22 Sept 2023
- International Indigenous Values Experts workshop to look at the criteria that is used by ICOMOS (Cultural values) and IUCN (Natural values) in the assessment of Indigenous Values across Natural and Cultural Landscapes hosted by the International Indigenous Peoples' Forum on World Heritage (IIPFWH), and

- work with the International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM) to update the management manual for World Heritage.

## Resolution

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

### 3.2 Executive Director's Report

The Executive Director provided a full budget report to the Board and advised that the Commonwealth budget confirmed that the next five-year funding is at the same level as the previous funding agreement without CPI adjustments will present challenges. He acknowledged that due to alignment issues with the payment schedule for the Bama Country and Culture Project, that there will be a need to underwrite the 2024-25 financial year (FY), and that the fixed rental costs for the Ports North Office in the coming year will also be covered by DES. He went on to advise that the 2022-23 FY budget was in a good state for the end of the financial year and updated the Directors on the following key areas:

#### Human Resources

- Recruitment processes are on hold until 1 July due to the current Full Time Equivalent (FTE) employment cap within the Department of Environment and Science (DES) - these impact on recent recruitment activity and the replacement of the Senior Media and Communications Officer who has taken a year's leave of absence.
- Changes to the recruitment standards with a strengthened focus on diversity, inclusion and selecting the most suitable qualified candidate for your organisation.
- Themes of diversity were evident in the Reconciliation Week events and an IDAHOBIT (International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia) day presentation offered to all staff, by staff members, raising awareness of diversity in our midst.

#### Government

- Newly appointed Minister Leanne Linard has reached out to the Chair for a meeting in late June.
- Full sitting of Queensland parliament held in Cairns (9-11 March) included the passing of the Path to Treaty legislation and all Director-Generals will be asked to appear before the Truth Telling and Healing Inquiry. The Authority should be prepared to make a submission and acknowledge our history.

#### YCA

- YCA funding remains outstanding due to delays in the signing and finalisation of the Federation Funding Agreement schedule, This has now been endorsed by the Premier and Treasurer and is awaiting final sign off by Minister Linard and is expected imminently.
- Another yellow crazy ant infestation has been identified in the premises of a nursery supplier and in the vicinity of an organic beef property which poses particular issues. The landholder is very cooperative.

#### Restoration Alliance

- The Interim Steering Committee has been formed to oversee the establishment phase of the Alliance. Selection of Independent Chair is underway.
- The Authority is holding field days in the Daintree to promote the work of Restoration Organisations and Jabalbina / Eastern Kuku Yalanji peoples.

## Resolution

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

### 3.3 Directors' Issues

The Directors provided the following updates:

***Dr Sally Driml:***

- Advised the Tropical North Queensland First Nations' Tourism Action Plan has been released and acknowledged the Authority's Alicia Haines work on the steering group.
- Noted the Plan shows strong alignment with the Authority's Sustainable Tourism Plan and three action items from the Plan are being co-delivered with Wet Tropics Management Authority.
- Highlighted emerging models around volunteering and donations to support restoration initiatives such as:
  - Promoting tourist donations for tree planting in reforestation
  - Reforest seeking donations for replanting – providing coordinates of the tree planted to the donor who can log onto a website and check progress of the tree they have sponsored
  - Yalanji People have been using some volunteering models with Parks on the buy-back blocks.

***Ms Ailsa Lively:***

- Noted Bama Country and Culture steering committee meeting has been deferred to 16 June 2023
- Contributed to the Strategic plan review consultation and commended the process.

***Professor Stephen Williams:***

- Working with WTMA on updating the listing of the current 'threat status' of species for the region which will contribute to the annual State of the Wet Tropics Report 2023-24.

***Ms Robin Clark:***

- Advised the Board of her work on the Planning Institute Sub-committee – reviewing planning information and making recommendations to the Queensland Government of amendments that might ensure more effective consideration of climate change in regional planning.
- Noted that a Queensland Climate Transition Bill has been tabled proposing:
  1. the alignment of the QLD emissions target with the Paris Agreement
  2. a ban on new coal and gas approvals
  3. the phase out of thermal coal, oil, and gas exports, and
  4. a transition committee be established to support employees to transition into new industries.
- Suggested that the impacts of climate change on the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area (the Area) and the related risks is an area that the Authority could look to be actively leveraged for support.

### Resolution

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

### 3.4 Commonwealth Government Department Reports

***Mr Martin Dallen, Assistant Director, Heritage Project Section, Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW)***

Mr Dallen added DCCEEW's congratulations and welcome to the incoming Board Member, Mr William Enoch-Tranby and commended the 50% representation of Rainforest Aboriginal People on the board '*Giving advocacy to the people who have cared for this land for millennia.*' Then reported on the following items:

- recently announced Federal budget allocations (\$439M for NHT over 5 years; \$431M for Threatened Species; \$50M for RAMSAR) and confirmed \$13.5 million for the Authority (\$2.7million annually) for the next five years and revisiting the Authority's projects going forward
- structural changes within DCCEEW
- The Australian Heritage Council (AHC), and AHC consideration of the *Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act) reforms
- Deloitte report on Economic and Social Value of Australia's World Heritage Properties and thanked the Authority for its contribution.
- National Climate Risk Assessment – developing and national framework to inform national priorities for climate adaptation and resilience action.

#### **Discussion included:**

1. A request for an update on the EPBC and other environmental legislation review. Mr Dallen advised that legislative changes that may result in separation of the EPA from the Department into a Statutory Authority and noted that the Department is committed to enacting the recommendations.
2. A request for a contact for the Taskforce to ensure input into new national standards and guidelines – this work is happening within First Nations Heritage Branch, and Mr Dallen assured the Board that the Authority will be involved in any developments or consultations.
3. Request for an update on a new World Heritage Strategy consultation - Mr Dallen advised that Greg Terrill is leading the consultation, which may open later this year.

**Action:** Martin to provide Sean McNamara the DCCEEW Branch contact in the Environmental Legislation review area and to keep the Board/WTMA informed on changes to the EPBC

#### **Resolution**

The Board **noted** the Commonwealth Government Department report.

### **3.5 Queensland Department Reports**

***Julia Playford, Executive Director, Office of the Great Barrier Reef and World Heritage, Department of Environment and Science (DES) provided the following update to Directors updated the Board on:***

- Riversleigh– next meeting will be in Sydney (UNSW) due to continuing flood impact
- Queensland Museum Heritage Fossil Dreaming Project - to be delivered with support from the Department.
- New Queensland-based Gondwana Advisory Committee
- Cultural Values Assessment Project - to be delivered by end of the year
- Climate Adaptation Project (Australian Heritage Grant funding) to be delivered with traditional owners - the Butchulla people - and will link with the Cultural Values Assessment. This work is planned for completion by the end of 2024
- K'gari – Health checks project with QPWS and the celebration of the formal return of the traditional name – under the *Queensland Place Names Act 1958* with formal ceremony attended by Minister Linard
- There is a current climate adaptation project, that is a partnership between Butchulla people and QPWS&P and it is proposed to be delivered by the end of 2023.

The board and the meeting observers discussed:

- the funding process between the Commonwealth and the States and noted the issues and impacts of the current arrangements, including a proposed arrangement by the Commonwealth of individual schedules for properties.
- the potential impact of the static funding allocations to World Heritage properties, particularly in maintaining number of advisory body meetings.

***Angela Siggery, Director, World Heritage, Office of the Great Barrier Reef and World Heritage, Department of Environment and Science (DES) provided the following update to Directors:***

- State and Federal Governments' Cape York election commitments, with free prior and informed consent of Traditional Owners, to explore World Heritage on the Cape.
- Boundaries are not required to be defined prior to deliver a Tentative Listing.
- State and federal departments are working together with an ambitious timeframe to deliver a Tentative List submission to the Commonwealth in January 2024 and then to UNESCO by 1 February 2024 to ensure noting at the next World Heritage meeting.

***Matt Brien, Regional Director, Northern Region, Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service & Partnerships (QPWS&P)***

Mr Brien provided a comprehensive report on the key partnership activities relating to the coastal tropics area. Highlights include:

- Strategic fire management – evaluation of recovering montane communities on Bishops Peak, assessment of Mount Mackay vegetation, conducting early burns in the vicinity of Cairns, Cardwell, and East Trinity, and identifying planned burns and lantana treatment at Mt Spurgeon
- A program of specialised training and development for rangers
- High altitude species adaptation to climate change including the species monitoring program for 2023 and feral cat management using artificial intelligence
- Status report of achievements in the Indigenous Employment and Development Strategy
- An outline of activities to maintain the parks presentation to World Heritage Standards
- Jindalpa Boardwalk Capital works funding has been approved for \$6.03million - construction phase 2024-25 financial year.
- A range of strategies supporting the targeted compliance program, and
- Feral control mechanisms customised to mitigate various issues in Girringun National Park.

***Ms Gale O'Brien, Acting Deputy Director General, Department of Tourism Innovation and Sport (DTIS)***  
***Ms O'Brien provided an update including:***

- details of the ecotourism infrastructure funding of \$9.2million, and the Eco Certified Destination program
- noting the independent geotech report on the Wangetti Trail, section 34, addressing raised concerns has been prepared
- noting the EPBC letter of self-assessment has been prepared for submission
- that DTIS is seeking to finalise the other parties to the Indigenous Land Use Agreement. These parties are the Council, the Authority and the Wangetti Aboriginal Land Trust, and
- advising that the Authority is the lead on developing an exemplar model for tour guide training in Queensland's terrestrial World Heritage areas.
- Risk is that may be a lack of buy-in from locals.

### **Action:**

Ms O'Brien committed to arrange an update on the EPBC advice through her office for Sean McNamara and communicate future changes as they arise.

### **Resolution**

The Board **noted** the Queensland Government Department reports.

### **3.6 Advisory committee reports to the Board**

***Director Dr Sally Driml, Chair of the Community Consultative Committee (CCC), thanked Phoebe Kinley for her work in the CCC secretariat role and updated the Board on the first meeting of the new Committee. Dr Driml noted:***

- A joint SAC and CCC meeting was held on 31 May to welcome new members to both groups and to conduct an induction session for all committee members
- the CCC is an enthusiastic group which is largely new with only two continuing members
- as a new group the members identified and collated key issues to inform the development of a workplan, and
- the key issues raised by the group focused on threats to the Area, communications, and the acknowledgement of the past achievements of the CCC, which were shared to provide context.

***Director Professor Stephen Williams provided an update from the Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) acknowledging the value of the joint induction session held with the CCC and noting:***

- the new SAC members bring diversity, and a valuable mix of skills and experience to the role of the committee
- efforts are continuing to attract an appropriately qualified member to fill the Indigenous male representative position on the committee
- the new SAC identified three broad focus areas: the impact of fire under climate change, threat levels on native species, and the importance of restoration initiatives.

### **Discussion**

The board discussed a range of issues pertaining to the National Environmental Science Program (NESP) research process and communication in relation to three research proposals developed by the Authority, the SAC and land management organisations (including QPWS&P and Rainforest Aboriginal groups). The Executive Director confirmed that he had been contacted within the last week and there was still some interest in these projects. The documents have been provided to the SAC members for comment by 7 June 2023. Planning and Conservation officers will refine the proposals for ED approval and submission.

### **Action**

Executive Director to forward the reviewed package on to NESP.

### **Resolution**

The Board **noted** the Scientific Advisory Committee and Community Consultative Committee reports.

### 3.7 Significant correspondence

The Board reviewed the significant correspondence from Mark Hall, Assistant Director, Heritage Branch, DCCEEW (an invitation to comment) and The Hon Tanya Plibersek MP (invitation to contribute to innovative ideas to halt and reverse decline in our biodiversity).

Correspondence also went out regarding the Queensland Indigenous Land and Sea Ranger Program (2 letters of support) and to Mark Hall (response: Comments provided by the Authority regarding the proposed listing of the Townsville Field Training Area on the Commonwealth Heritage List)

#### Resolution

The Board **noted** the significant correspondence report.

## 4. Strategic issues

### 4.1 Interim Operational Review of Strategic Plan 2020-2030

***EKOS Consulting have been engaged to support the review the Authority's strategic plan. The Board met with EKOS to discuss their findings and interim recommendations from the consultation phase. The final report is expected 16 June 2023.***

The Executive Director spoke to a presentation and outlined the five key areas informing the plan review:

1. Communications: focus on 'telling the Authority's story', articulating World Heritage Values and supporting the Authority's partners to tell their story
2. Business systems: improvements through best practice benchmarking within our industry group such as the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA)
3. Partnerships: refining our core business understanding to better support partners and identify what the Authority brings to the relationship, working with the open business model, community driven development and co-design, and develop specialisations that complement our partners
4. Resources: improve sustainability through benchmarking best practice compliance, understanding our permitting risks and leveraging the base through some aspirational (Lighthouse) projects to lead and inspire partners and government agencies, better articulation of our values, leverage our influence in the region and access to government to support resource acquisition
5. Research and data: delivering quality data and research and positioning the organisation to support partners to tell their story.

The Chair provided an overview of the Board discussions from the morning session on the strategic plan review and the Board's governance training workshop. Key points included:

- the strategic focus on the communication strategy as a high priority
- the clear articulation and messaging of the World Heritage Values and incorporating our vision in the communications program
- seeking opportunities for engagement at that international level and heighten international interest in the Wet Tropics World Heritage area issues
- raise Minister Plibersek's awareness of the Authority as a key player in realising her stated mission "no extinctions on my watch".

#### Resolution

The Board **noted** the update on the discussions on the strategic plan review.



## 4.2 Changes to the Wet Tropics Management Authority Website – Julie Colman & Sean McNamara

Mr McNamara outlined the context for removing aged documents from the Authority's Website to ensure that publicly available documents are current and accurate. He noted changes in technology impacting the effective management of policies, their accessibility, and the importance of currency of material on the website.

Ms Colman presented the historical events surrounding the definition of a rainforest and outlined the changes in the legislation and the Wet Tropics Management Plan 1998. The legislation now incorporates the definition of a rainforest (Section 3A of the Wet Tropics Management Plan). The improved compliance clarity through the inclusion of the definition in the legislation was noted and assurances were made that material being removed from the website will be archived to support any future research needs.

Discussion included:

- clarifications regarding the process for removal from the website of these documents, and process for reviewing other potentially out of date documents.
- the effect of the changes to the definition of a rainforest such as the relevant planning instruments and mapping such as regional ecosystem mapping.

### Resolution

The Board:

**approved** the deletion from the Authority's website of outdated Wet Tropics Management Authority guidance documents.

**approved** the rescinding of the Wet Tropics Management Plan 1998, Section 62 Permit Assessment Guideline 2: Definition of a Rainforest.

## 4.3 Review of Board Policy Statement No. 8 and policy update

Prepared by C. Clerk & B. Jennison and presented by Tim Wong

Mr Wong introduced Policy Statement No. 8 Disposal of Timber from within the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area and noted that it was one on a list of policies scheduled for review and contemporising over the coming 12 months.

He outlined the hierarchy and role of legislation and non-legislative documents and provided an overview of the elements forming the framework for decision making and permit assessment that is consistent, transparent, and legally defensible. In conclusion, the proposed process for review and contemporising the list of policies was presented to the Board.

Discussion included:

- priorities for future policy statements for review, and the identification for policies to rescind, and
- Further clarification of the historical context and current use of a number of existing policies.

### Resolution

The Board

- **approved** updated Policy Statement No. 8 – Disposal of timber from within the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area (Attachment 4.3.1)
- **noted** the Authority's process to review and contemporise remaining policies.

#### 4.4 Ethical funding draft guideline

##### Draft guideline for ethical external funding for the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area

Dr Driml acknowledged the support of Ms Salmeron-Rodriguez and the CCC in the development of the draft and noted the need to change the term 'guideline' in the title. The purpose of the document is to inform responses and proposals for funds that may come to the Authority in addition to the core government (State and Federal) funds committed to the Authority.

The presentation identified ethical, practical and process considerations that may need to be taken into account:

- the nature of the business or the source of its revenue generation, including looking at environmental and cultural impacts, past practices of the business, in Australia and overseas
- conflicts of interest
- alignment of project objectives
- alignment with state and federal government policies
- community and traditional owner concerns
- practicalities of the of the proposal in cost benefit analysis terms
- legal requirements
- capacity and capability to make an effective analysis and recommendation on the funding proposal
- the governance of the process for assessment and recommendation
- the pros and cons of using investor and receiver prospectus framework(s) to support alignment of values, of reporting by both parties, cultural IP assurance and other cultural issues, and
- the point in the process that the various government approvals may need to be sought.

After discussion, Dr Driml summarised the discussion points for refining the Ethical Funding Guideline draft:

- Change title to a Board policy
- Further refine the criteria informing the case-by-case approach
- Include agreement by the parties on the consistency of the story in reporting promotion and publication materials
- Establish a level of funding delegation and scope that would require activation of the policy requirements
- Include mechanisms to ensure Traditional Owners maintain control of their stories and cultural intellectual property.

##### Actions:

- Ms Siggery to send the Land and Sea Ranger's framework to CCC Chair
- Dr Driml and Ms Salmeron Rodriguez to work on refining the Ethical Funding draft

##### Resolution

The Board **endorsed** the further development of the draft Guideline for Ethical External Funds for the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area.

#### 4.5 Agenda Item Change: Voice to Parliament

The Executive Director introduced the paper for consideration by the Board as a statement supporting the Voice to Parliament position ahead of the coming Referendum. He stated that he was seeking the views of the Board in relation to presenting a public statement of support. He noted:

- The Uluru Statement from the Heart is an invitation from First Nations People, for Australians to come together. It proposes a Voice to Parliament, recognising First Nations People in the

Constitution, thus providing some level of security and certainty of continuation. A Makarrata Commission to support truth telling and treaty.

- The historic significance of the Referendum in Australia's evolution as a nation
- The democratic and apolitical nature of a referendum – it represents the will of the people
- Major sporting bodies, government bodies and other organisations are publishing their support for the Voice to Parliament
- The Board's recent consideration of the preamble to our Act that provides its context and purpose
- Its intention was to acknowledge the significant contribution that Aboriginal people can make to the future management of the cultural and natural heritage within the area, particularly through joint management agreement, i.e. by having a voice.

The Board had a robust discussion considering whether the Statement is published as a view of the Board and not necessarily of the Authority, the impact of divergent views, and a process of consultation to advise and listen to the feedback of key stakeholders on the proposed publishing of the Board's position and promoting 'The Voice' where and when we can.

#### **Resolution**

The Board **endorsed** the publishing of a position statement in support of the Voice to Parliament pending the outcome of the agreed consultation process.

## **5 Other Business**

### **5.1 Board minutes: discussion and decision on style and length**

Mr McNamara introduced the issue of the length and style of the board minutes and opened the issue for discussion. The Board considered providing briefer minutes in a short summaries style with a table of the papers presented at the meeting as an appendix. Proposed changes to the agenda format and meeting papers were also put forward.

#### **Resolution**

The Board **approved** the shortened approach to the collation and presentation of Board minutes, the restructure of the agenda for the next meeting and the scheduling of the main Board papers to immediately follow the administrative business of the meeting.

### **5.2 Board Communique:**

#### **Resolution**

The Board **approved** the Communique for Board Meeting # 123

#### **Meeting Close**

**Board Meeting #123 opened at 11.06am and closed at 5.05pm**



Ms Christine T Grant  
Chair  
15 August 2023