
Previous Minutes Board Meeting 125

In Attendance

Board Directors

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

Observers

Dr Matt Brien	Regional Director, Northern Region, Queensland Parks and Wildlife Services and Partnerships, Qld Department of Environment and Science (DES)
Marella Umback	Senior Heritage Policy Officer, First Nations Heritage Section, Heritage Division, Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW)
Clare Fealy	Senior Heritage Policy Officer, Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW)
Darcy Slattery	General Manager, Tourism Partnerships and Events, Qld Department of Tourism, Innovation and Sport (DTIS)
Bruce A-Izzeddin	Project Manager, Policy Partnerships and Events, Qld Department of Tourism, Innovation and Sport (DTIS)
Lyn Wallace	Manager, World Heritage, Office of the Great Barrier Reef and World Heritage, Department of Environment and Science (DES)

Wet Tropics Management Authority Staff

Saskia Salmeron-Rodriguez	Manager, World Heritage Connections (WHC)
Alicia Haines	Principal Project Officer, World Heritage Connections (WHC)
Tim Wong	Manager, Planning and Conservation (P&C)
Bruce Jennison	Principal Conservation Officer, Planning and Conservation (P&C)
Ellen Weber	Senior Scientist, Climate Initiatives (P&C) - Online
Phoebe Kinley	Principal Project Officer, Presentation and Engagement
Debra Parker	Business Manager, Business Management (BM)
Sean McNamara	Principal Advisor (BM)
Wendy Brooksby	Administration Officer - WTMA (minute taker) (BM)

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. Ms Grant paid her respects to Elders and her own Elders of the Eastern Kuku Yalanji people and welcomed Directors, observers, and staff to the meeting both in person and online.

Ms Grant welcomed Dr Matt Brien to the meeting and introduced the Board to Ms Marella Umback and Ms Clare Fealy who were attending online on behalf of Erin Dampney, and Ms Lyn Wallace, who was attending for Ms Angela Siggery and Ms Julia Playford.

1.2. Apologies

Apologies were received from:

Lucy Karger	Project Manager, Yellow Crazy Ant Eradication Program, WTMA
Shane Dagwell	Heritage officer, Heritage Projects Section, DCCEEW
Martin Dallen	Assistant Director, Heritage Projects Section, DCCEEW
Erin Dampney	Director, First Nations Heritage Section, DCCEEW
Angela Siggery	Director World Heritage, Office of the Great Barrier Reef and World Heritage, DES
Julia Playford	Executive Director, Office of the Great Barrier Reef and World Heritage, DES

1.3. Conflicts of interest

None recorded.

2. Reports

2.1 Chair's Report

The Chair provided a brief report on her Wet Tropics Management Authority (the Authority) activities since the August Board meeting. These included a meeting with Minister Linard on 29 August, before heading to Sydney for the ICOMOS General Assembly and Scientific Symposium on 1- 9 September 2023. Ms Grant then participated in the 45th session of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee meetings on 10-25 September 2023 in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

On her return to Australia, Ms Grant attended the Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples Regional Forum, 11-13 October, which saw two important resolutions being taken relating to the recognition and acknowledgement of Indigenous Values in the listing for the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area. The Chair noted that these values also inform the business practice of the Authority in its engagement and consultation processes.

The Chair advised that considerable effort has been invested in the development of national standards for the engagement with First Nations Peoples, believing it encapsulates crucial elements for advancing the rights and interests of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders people in the new proposed Nature Positive legislation. The exposure draft of the legislation for this new Agency is due out in December 2023.

Resolution

The Board *noted* the Chair's report.

2.2 Executive Director's Report - Mr Scott Buchanan – Report for Noting

The Authority's Executive Director, Mr Buchanan outlined staffing changes across the organisation including the appointment of the Senior Media and Communications Officer, Senior Project Manager role for the Eastern Kuku Yalanji Return to Country Project, and two newly appointed Supervisors for the Yellow Crazy Ant Eradication Program (YCAEP).

Mr Buchanan also provided an overview of the Authority's outcomes from the Working for Queensland Survey Report 2023. This is an annual whole-of-Government workforce and culture survey, providing insight into the level of engagement that staff feel in their working environment. In recent years, the Authority has enjoyed particularly strong results in the level of engagement and pride in the work of the organisation. However, this year the results across most indicators have decreased. While the Authority continues to outperform other divisions of the Department of Environment and Science (DES) in the aspects surveyed, the reasons for the decline require investigation with the staff. In response, managers are working with their teams to share their views on what has changed and identify areas for improvement. The response rate for the 2023 survey was 80%.

In a detailed presentation, Mr Buchanan outlined the significant progress that has been made towards the goal of eradication of yellow crazy ants. The area under management covers approximately 2000 hectares, of which 450 hectares are under treatment. The support and contributions made by the community in responding to the YCAEP over the extended period of time was noted. For the minutes, the Chair and the Board noted the work and achievement of Ms Lucy Karger. They acknowledged her leadership, advocacy and commitment, and the dedicated work of the Yellow Crazy Ants team in delivering such strong results.

Work on the communications strategy is underway with consideration of the complexity of the task and the importance of focus and framing of the terms of reference. The Board was advised that the Authority is seeking a Director to sit on the Communication Strategy steering committee, providing Board oversight.

During this round of the Commonwealth World Heritage Grants Program, the Authority did not make a submission, but did assist DES with its submission for the creation of a Knowledge Hub for the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area. The Knowledge Hub is an information hub to support the Wet Tropics World Heritage Guides in the first instance. Its design may consider broader applications that inform educational, commercial and research endeavours. It will also feed into the ongoing Bama Country and Culture project.

Mr Buchanan advised the Board that on 23 October 2023 he signed two Indigenous Land Use Agreements (ILUAs) associated with the Wangetti Trail development including the Cultural Heritage Management Plan. These ILUAs had the support of Traditional Owners and the North Queensland Land Council. The Wet Tropics Management Authority 2022-23 Annual Report and the State of Wet Tropics Report were tabled in the Commonwealth Parliament on the 27 October 2023, and are expected to be tabled in the Queensland Parliament in the sitting week starting 14 November 2023. The Return to Country Collaborative Project Agreement between Wet Tropics Management Authority and Jabalbina Yalanji Aboriginal Corporation RNTBC was signed on 3 November 2023.

Resolution

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

2.3 Previous Minutes —Board Meeting 124

Resolution

The Board *endorsed* the minutes for Board Meeting 124 without change.

3. Strategic Issues

3.1 Strategic Plan Review – Scott Buchanan

Mr Buchanan provided an overview and presentation of the Authority's Strategic Plan 2020 – 2030 Review, conducted by EKOS. The intent of the interim review was outlined along with the positive findings of the review. The presentation included:

- Key positive findings – partnership and collaboration leading to outsized achievements and respect of our partner organisations, the values and commitment of the Authority's staff, and key achievements including the Restoration Alliance, Sustainable Tourism Plan, Yellow Crazy Ants Eradication Program (YCAEP), and improved engagement with Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples
- Identification of challenges, gaps and actions including the nascent Green Economy, increasing invasive species, climate change impacts, the scale of the Authority's obligations, and lack of increase to funding base
- Core components and enablers – communication, knowledge and partnerships
- Clarifying vision, mission, pillars, values, roles and stakeholders
- Effective communication and communication strategy
- Knowledge – a fundamental pillar to place WTMA at the knowledge forefront, and
- A systematic approach to partnerships.

Mr Buchanan then detailed how consideration of the EKOS review was integrated with an all-staff strategic planning workshop process to develop the new 5-Year Business Plan 2023 – 2028. The strategic planning workshop, held on 19 and 20 October, was facilitated by Ms Josh Gibson. The workshop involved all staff and reconnected the participants with the mission and the purpose of the Authority, and established a clear link to the Authority's obligations and responsibilities.

The all-staff strategic plan workshop identified:

- the need to prioritise and focus on the key areas that drive improvement within current resourcing constraints, and clarify and communicate effectively those functions and responsibilities under legislation that are not able to be delivered
- the use of an open business model allowing the organisation to be more systematic in considering actions and projects, and choosing the role it plays in partnership arrangements, and
- Human Rights and rights based approaches in how the Authority engages with Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples, and as core business value across the Authority
- The need for a follow up workshop to focus on Strategy 6 – 'a Healthy Organisation'.

Discussion

Dr Driml asked for feedback on how the staff viewed the outcomes of the Strategic Planning workshop. Views provided to the meeting by those who attended the workshop noted a positive sense of achievement from the staff, along with the recognition that more work remained to reduce the number of projects being undertaken by the Authority. Dr Driml noted that the work of the Board is to assess the risks and identify the threats that any unmet obligations pose to the Outstanding Universal Values of the area. Also raised was the suggestion in the EKOS review regarding proposed new branding and logo for the Authority – this is not proposed at this time, or as part of the development of the communications strategy.

Action

Board to be provided with the final workshops report on the staff strategic planning workshop.

Resolution

The Board **noted** the summary of the EKOS interim review of the 2020-2030 Strategic plan and next steps.

3.2 5-Year Business Strategy – Scott Buchanan

The Directors noted that the Business Strategy is aligned with the Strategic Plan, however the actions under each pillar have been contemporised and now reflect the expected focus and activities of the Authority over the next five years. The Authority will continue to report on the Annual Business Plan milestones for this financial year while pursuing alignment with the 5-Year Business Strategy.

On behalf of the Board, Dr Driml brought to the attention of the meeting that the Strategy acknowledges the obligations under legislation that the Authority is unable to deliver due to current funding constraints. This presents risks that the Board must recognise. Dr Driml also provided feedback from the CCC related to wording used in the strategy. The CCC recommended that the following wording change be considered:

That:

‘support our statutory committees and our non-statutory committees to empower them to participate in decision making ‘

Be changed to

‘support our statutory committees and our non-statutory committees to provide advice to decision makers’

Mr Buchanan, then outlined the particular priority action items under each of the strategies to be highlighted in the 5 – Year Business Strategy:

- Strategy 1 - implement the Climate Adaptation Plan priorities
- Strategy 2 (a Commonwealth government and Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples’ priority) – include Indigenous Values in World Heritage Listings – with tools and funding yet to be defined
- Strategy 3 - focus on empowering community contribution (including statutory and non-statutory advisory bodies) in World Heritage management
- Strategy 4 – alignment with the Wet Tropics Sustainable Tourism Strategy.

It was noted that the 5-Year Business Strategy is an expected requirement of the Federation Funding Agreement between the Commonwealth and Queensland Governments. This agreement is the process of agreement / approval between the State and Commonwealth Governments.

Resolutions

The Board:

- **endorsed** the Wet Tropics Management Authority 5-Year Business Strategy.
- **approved** the consequential minor amendments to the 2023-24 annual business plan.

3.3 WTMA Policies proposed for rescinding – Bruce Jennison and Tim Wong (Paper for approval)

Mr Wong and Mr Jennison reminded the meeting that a tranche of the Authority's policies was identified and agreed upon for review at Board meeting #123. This is the second group from that suite of policies, with a set of three policies proposed for rescinding. Mr Wong and Mr Jennison outlined the key reasons for those recommendations:

Policy No.6 Native Title (Attachment 3.3.1)

Since this policy was developed in 1999, the *Native Title Act 1993* and legislative landscape has evolved and refined considerably. The policy is considered obsolete as it was developed prior to any Native Title determinations in the Area, and the approach to dealing with Native Title has progressed significantly in that time. The *Wet Tropics World Heritage Protection and Management Act 1993* and the Wet Tropics Management Plan 1998 provide guidance on how the Authority relates to Native Title holders and the existence of Native Title is expressly reviewed in all permit assessments. It was therefore recommended to rescind the Policy.

Policy No.14 Involvement of Rainforest Aboriginal People in WTMA Policy, Planning, Permitting and Management (Attachment 3.3.2)

The review of this Section 62 Guideline, which relates to statutory permitting functions including consultation with Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples, indicated that a number of aspects of the guideline are now outdated or superseded. In 2016 the Authority developed the draft Rainforest Aboriginal Strategic Engagement Framework, and more recently, consultation and engagement with Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples has become a standard practice that has been embedded in the culture of the Authority. This is evident in Strategies 3 and 5 of the Authority's Strategic Plan. The guideline is recommended for rescinding.

Policy No.16 Use of Compound Sodium Fluoroacetate (Compound 1080) in the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area (Attachment 3.3.3)

This policy provides guidance regarding the use of Compound 1080. Historically the policy was developed because the legislation was silent on the impact on native and endangered species such as cassowaries and quolls. The Department of Resources and local governments now employ best practice procedures, and awareness levels of unintended consequences for wildlife have changed over the years. The utility of this policy has therefore been superseded and it is recommended for rescinding.

Resolution

The Board **approved** the rescinding of the following Wet Tropics Management Authority Board policy statements:

- No.6 Native Title (Attachment 3.3.1)
- No.14 Involvement of Rainforest Aboriginal People in WTMA Policy, Planning, Permitting and Management (Attachment 3.3.2)
- No.16 Use of Compound Sodium Fluoroacetate (Compound 1080) in the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area (Attachment 3.3.3).

3.4 The quarterly update on the 2023-24 budget and the milestone report – Scott Buchanan and Debra Parker (Paper for noting)

Ms Parker spoke to the papers as read, noting that the 2023-24 budget is in an improved state compared to the last financial year. However, it is also a more complex budget. Negotiations with the Department of Environment and Science (DES) have provided a \$155,000 boost to the operational budget, with the Authority's lease and accommodation costs for the current budget period covered.

Ms Parker outlined the impact of increased costs due to the Enterprise Bargaining Agreement, and the cost-of-living allowance, with DES providing additional funds to assist with the increased cost-of-living allowance. Increases to the superannuation rate (to 12.75%) are also now in place. A request has been lodged with DES for support in meeting the additional superannuation costs for the Commonwealth-funded staff and for those program-based staff such as the Eastern Kuku Yalanji Return to Country Program and the Yellow Crazy Ant Eradication Program.

The Executive Director spoke to the recently finalised 2023-24 Quarter 1 Milestone Report, noting the significant progress made by the Authority.

Discussion

- Ms Parker and the Directors discussed a range of details that supported their deeper understanding of the budget report.
- Dr Driml thanked both Ms Parker and Mr Buchanan for the comprehensive financial report and detailed explanations.

Resolution

The Board *noted* the first quarter review of the 2023-24 budget and the annual business plan milestones.

3.5 Wrap-up report on the Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples Regional Forum 2023 – Alicia Haines

Ms Haines provided a verbal update on the Rainforest Aboriginal People's Regional Forum. The event, with approximately 90 attendees including 60 Rainforest Aboriginal People, was a successful 3-day event held on the 11- 13 October 2023. Presentations by the attending groups were well received. Key presentations and agenda items at the Forum included the following information and updates:

- Ms Grant and Mr Nobel (Terrain NRM) outlined the proposed Indigenous Advisory Committee (IAC) and opened up discussion on the establishment of the Committee. The meeting recorded the following resolution *'the Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples gathered here today at the 2023 Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples Regional Forum, endorse and support the establishment of the Indigenous Advisory Committee for the Wet Tropics Management Authority and Terrain NRM'*. Expressions of Interest forms to serve on the Committee, terms of reference, and Questions and Answers were circulated to the attendees.
- The Authority, Sharing Stories Foundation and Marawah Law provided presentations to provide a clear understanding of the Bama Country and Culture (BCC) project.
- The BCC Steering Committee and the Authority proposed a colour palette that represent the rainforest and name of story map. Considerable discussion was held about the naming of the story map, and whether it should refer to "Bama" or a more generic term in relation to Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples, particularly considering the broad audience. The Forum resolved through the

plenary that the story-sharing platform would be called “Rainforest – People, Country, Culture Interactive story map”. A dedicated hashtag with this wording will be created, and all groups will actively use this hashtag to promote the product, and Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples’ culture in general. There were strong sentiments that the colour palette should clearly reflect the rainforest. The Forum endorsed the proposed colour palette.

- The development of the interactive story map will be led by Sharing Stories Foundation, a not-for-profit organisation that collaborates with First Nations communities to protect and grow language, stories and cultural heritage. Marrawah Law were commissioned to develop an Indigenous Cultural Intellectual Property (ICIP) Toolkit to ensure Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples IP is protected.
- The next stage of the Bama Country and Culture Project will involve the expressions of interest from groups to take part in the production of their story map. The budget in phase 1 allows for 9 groups to be involved in the production, and each with \$2000 to support story development, copyright or other contingencies. The nine successful applications will be announced by the end of the year.
- The Forum passed resolutions to support the Giringun’s Dingo Declaration, and the Bama Country and Culture Project interactive story map.
- Ms Grant presented the case of Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples supporting the nomination of the Indigenous heritage values identified in the National Heritage Listing to be presented and included on the World Heritage List. There was discussion in the Forum with an agreement for a resolution passed by the Forum for *‘the Authority to investigate the process to ensure that the Indigenous heritage values was put to the Qld and Australian Governments to support a nomination that will recognise Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples’ heritage values across the Wet Tropics of Queensland World Heritage Area.’* Further, that *‘Rainforest Aboriginal People gathered here today provide in-principal support to add the Indigenous Values to the World heritage listing as part of the Case Study’*
- Ms Grant told the Forum that this will not be a quick and easy process but will investigate the possibility of funding through the Australian Governments new grant program specifically for Indigenous Peoples to update existing listings on the National Heritage List and/or the World Heritage List to include their Indigenous heritage values where they are not currently recognised.

Discussion

Discussion focussed on the cultural significance of the Dingo to many First Nations Peoples, the status of the Dingo as a protected species in national parks in Queensland under the *Nature Conservation Act 1992*, and specification of Dingoes as a restricted species / invasive pest under the *Biosecurity Act 2014*, requiring landowners to manage / kill them.

Action

Provide to the Board a copy of the Dingo Declaration from the National Symposium held prior to the Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples Regional Forum.

Resolution

The Board *noted* the report on the Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples Regional Forum 2023.

3.6 Restoration Program Update – Ellen Weber

Ms Weber and Mr Wong provided a presentation regarding the Wet Tropics Restoration Program, focused on scaling up land restoration opportunities in the Wet Tropics. The presentation provided an overview of the Program and deliverables including:

- the establishment and implementation of a Wet Tropics Restoration Alliance including the establishment of an interim steering group
- the delivery of up to three demonstration sub-catchment restoration plans (place-based plans): Daintree lowlands, Southern Atherton Tablelands, and Cassowary Coast. The Southern Atherton Tablelands features areas of high productivity and present an opportunity to showcase buffering in the areas abutting the World Heritage Area. The Daintree Lowlands is a deep climate refugia where ancient rainforest has been able to persist – characterised by high levels of endemism and primitive rainforest. The Cassowary Coast work is being launched with a two-day workshop at Mission Beach looking at the various techniques and innovations regarding tree planting in restoration work
- quantification of the climate benefits of Wet Tropics forests as carbon sinks and major carbon stores, with preliminary results from recent assessments presented, and
- the expansion of new and emerging standards and approaches to account for forest restoration – supporting access and uptake of market opportunities.

Other points raised during the update included:

- The need to provide a compelling story to investors while ensuring the product is high integrity, high value and high impact – promoting the Wet Tropics as a good value investment
- An update of the Jabalbina pilot project was also provided. Jabalbina received \$900,000 from Reef Assist and an additional \$2.2 million funding through the Land Restoration Fund in collaboration with Rainforest 4 Foundation to rehabilitate 39 hectares of land on a former cattle property on the Daintree River. Jabalbina currently have 5 rangers employed to deliver these activities and it is anticipated this will be increased next year as activities scale up. Jabalbina is being courted by a number of large investors. There were strong messages from Jabalbina for investors to work with them and to that they want to build the capacity and increase the number of Rangers.
- better carbon assessments were and are required to identify contested landscapes – existing mapping shows 54,000 hectares in the Wet Tropics are suitable for carbon plantings
- the issue of the December 2024 funding cliff for the Authority’s Restoration Program
- the Commonwealth and State 30 by 30 program, and the need to counter the view of decision makers that the Wet Tropics is already protected
- the need to align opportunities with emerging nature positive and nature repair markets, and
- discussion of key elements in successful community restoration projects, regardless of complexity, degree of contestation of the landscape, and variations in environments:
 - the involvement of multiple partners
 - access to blended finance, and
 - community ownership.

Discussion

Topics discussed included the following:

- Dr Driml identified that the nature repair markets work is likely to require different skill sets and enabling legislation
- Ms Weber spoke to a 2-day workshop on Accounting for Nature that she attended noting the dynamic environment in this area
- Commonwealth engagement on the Nature Repair Bill - nature repair markets are an area that may hold mutual benefits for the Commonwealth and the Authority through engagement
- Terrain NRM have been engaging with the investment community, attending international conferences and networking with the Cassowary Credit Scheme

- The 2024 Nature Positive Summit in Sydney
- The World Economic Forum is holding a biodiversity and nature positive auction to highlight biodiversity and Nature Repair benefits. Terrain NRM, Cairns Regional Council and the Authority are partnering on providing a product to this forum
- The Chair advised that she had taken part in a closed meeting of the National Standards Committee working on the development of national standards for engagement with Indigenous Peoples for the Nature Repair Bill.

Action

The DES Delivery Office presentation, presented by Tim Wong and Ellen Weber, to be provided to Board members.

Resolution

The Board *noted* the update report on the Restoration Program.

4. Reports

4.1 Advisory Committee Reports

Community Consultative Committee (CCC) – Chair: Dr Sally Driml

Dr Driml outlined the current makeup of the CCC, noting its nine members are drawn from a range of communities and groups that are active in the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area and the broader region. Importantly, the members bring their expertise to the CCC but do not represent their organisations. The CCC is highly motivated and recognises the importance of relationships with organisations such as Queensland Parks and Wildlife and Partnerships. Each member of the CCC prepares a 5-minute update that is shared with the meeting and is recorded in writing to pass on to the Board.

The CCC received presentations from:

- Ms Carol Kinnaird (Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service and Partnerships) who briefed the meeting on a range of programs, and provided an overview of the development of a culturally appropriate visitor management approach for Wallaman Falls.
- Ms Ellen Weber (Principal Scientific Officer for the Authority) on the Restoration Alliance.

From the November 6 meeting, the CCC prepared the following key messages for the Board. They have:

- developed some input for the Authority's Communication Strategy which is under development
- provided some advice on wording changes relating to communication with the community in Strategy 3 of the 5-Year Business Plan. This has been implemented
- set climate change communications as a workshop focus for 2024
- prepared a range of key statements around communication with the community that the Authority may wish to utilise, and
- noted the changes in policy positions by state and federal governments on renewables, and the need to be responsive in a dynamic environment.

Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) – Chair: Professor Stephen Williams

Professor Williams updated the Board on the outcomes from the SAC meeting held on 28 August 2023.

These include that the committee:

- focussed on threatened species, and the findings outlined in the State of the Wet Tropics Report
- noted that the number of threatened species in the Wet Tropics has increased by 25% in the last 4 years
- highlighted that both state and federal governments have set protection of threatened species as a policy priority
- acknowledged the National Environmental Science Program (NESP) funding which is linked to the threatened species plans
- noted that the whole of 'Eastern Forests of Far North Queensland' has been identified as a priority place, the core of which is the Wet Tropics region, and
- discussed the issue of how to effectively leverage the current level of concern and attract resources to make a positive conservation impact.

Professor Williams outlined the SAC's proposed 3-step process regarding the development of the priority place concept:

1. A workshop bringing together high-level technical expertise to collate, analyse and produce a map the identified threatened species and the areas impacted and note the declining biodiversity in those areas of lesser-known endemic populations. Proposed for April 2024
2. A workshop to incorporate Traditional Knowledge and cultural perspectives of threatened species of the areas which could be a partnership initiative between Terrain NRM and the Authority.
3. Bring together the information and propose a way forward from both workshops to inform broader stakeholder and community consultation.

Action

Dr Driml to pass on the CCC members updates to the Board.

Resolution

The Board *noted* the CCC and SAC reports.

4.2 Directors' issues

Dr Sally Driml

Dr Sally Driml spoke to her reappointment to the Board for a second term and her acknowledgement of the stability and experience of the Board going forward. Her focus for the coming term is on communication of the risks to the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area and through her work with the Board and the CCC to stimulate interest and attract funding to mitigate or manage some of those risks. Dr Driml shared her observations from a recent trip to national parks in Western Australia noting differences with the current Queensland system.

Ms Ailsa Lively

Ms Lively provided the following update:

- attended the 9th Healing Our Spirit Worldwide Conference (Sept 11 – 15) in Canada which provided insight into the positive health outcomes of work being done by indigenous peoples using Traditional Knowledge and Culture
- attended the Rainforest Aboriginal Forum and the BAMA Country and Culture session
- noted there are a significant number of young people attending the Forum who may not understand the nature of the Regional Agreement and proposed a need to provide some information about the Agreement so that reports against it speak to an informed audience.
- proposed that there is an agenda item for the first session in 2024 Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples Regional Forum giving an introduction to the Regional Agreement, and

- advised that there is a Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples Thing Tank (RAPTT) meeting in Gordonvale mid-November to discuss its future.

After some discussion with the Board, Mr Buchanan proposed that the Authority could support the RAPTT to further their submission for funding from the Great Barrier Reef Foundation (GBRF) so that the RAPTT could employ a project officer to engage with communities with the objective of forging a direction for RAPTT.

Prof. Stephen Williams

Dr Stephen Williams is continuing to work with Ms Weber, Mr Wong and Mr Carmichael on establishing the Scientific Advisory Committee threatened species workshop planned for April 2024.

Ms Robin Clark

Ms Clark advised that she has been appointed to the Cassowary Coast River Improvement Trust and attended the state meeting for the Trusts held in Cairns. Her role on the Trust is to advise on contemporary and sustainable river improvement practices.

Mr William Enoch-Tranby

Mr Enoch-Tranby provided the following update:

- appointed to the Destination IQ panel for the upcoming State Tourism conference on 22 November
- acknowledged the opportunity to meet with representatives from Tourism Australia, Tourism Queensland, and Tourism Tropical North Queensland (TTNQ).

Resolution

The Board *noted* the Directors' reports.

4.3 Commonwealth Department of Climate Change Energy Environment and Water (DCCEEW) – Marella Umback

Ms Umback took the DCCEEW report as read and invited questions from the Board and the broader meeting. She advised the Board that the funding brief for the next round of Federation Funding Agreement (FFA) has been provided to the Minister for signing and is expected to be with the Queensland Minister in the next few weeks.

Discussion

- Dr Driml advised that the CCC would like to be able to comment on potential changes to the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act) or be involved in any opportunities for public comment.
- Ms Umback responded that there may be industry workshops and policy briefings as part of the interrogation of the draft legislation process.
- The Chair asked for an update on the Deloitte's Report on the Economic and Social Value of Australia's World Heritage Properties report

Action

Ms Umback to send the appropriate mailing list to ensure that the Board and CCC receive the updates as developments on the EPBC Act reforms

Resolution

The Board *noted* the Commonwealth Government report.

4.4 Queensland Department reports

Department of Environment and Science – Ms Lyn Wallace

Ms Wallace presented the DES World Heritage Team’s report as read and opened for questions.

Regarding the Cape York proposed tentative listing process, the Chair enquired about the Authority’s role in the upcoming Minister’s workshop, given the proximity of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area. Ms Grant also noted that she will be in attendance in a different role.

Ms Wallace advised that the purpose of the meeting is to scope out the next five years of preparation for a nomination would entail with the Traditional Owners. The Commonwealth has made some changes to their requirements for a tentative listing submission.

Department of Tourism, Innovation and Sport – Mr Darcy Slattery (General Manager, Policy, Partnerships and Events, Department of Tourism, Innovation and Sport)

Mr Slattery outlined the scope of his role and his industry background of over 6 years in tourism and events in Queensland, presented the report prepared by his team as read and invited questions from the meeting.

Discussion

In relation to the Wangetti Trail, Dr Driml commended the engagement with Tradition Owners in the planning phase. She then presented three areas of concern, on behalf of the CCC, to relay to the Department of Tourism Infrastructure and Sport (DTIS). She noted:

- the need to improve general community engagement by DTIS
- the need for identified, ongoing resourcing for the management of the Trail, and
- the need for the provision of adequate fire management in view of the recent fires.

Queensland Parks and Wildlife Services and Partnerships (QPWS&P) – Dr Matt Brien (verbal update)

Dr Brien provided a comprehensive verbal update, reporting:

- the stabilisation of the Regional QPWS&P leadership team with the appointment of new northern area manager, Nick Smith, and Regional support officers – Steve Mastro Monaco and Paul Berry
- the recent Wet Tropics Management Authority Partnership Agreement meeting focused on delivering greater alignment of reporting and sharing mutually beneficial goals and outcomes
- The Jabalbina Transitions Framework – working with the department’s Partnerships Team on the blended model. This involves Jabalbina Rangers and Queensland Parks and Wildlife Rangers working side by side and working through the impacts on HR, escalation, and communication processes.
- Values Based Management Framework Roadmap for the Daintree – focus on building capacity
- Many of the parks in focus for the coming year are in the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area and QPWS&P will be working closely with the Authority. Included parks are Eubenangee Swamp National Park (NP), Girringun NP, Herberton Range NP, Mt Lewis NP, and Paluma Range NP
- Dr Brien advised that this is the beginning of an expected and extended high fire danger season. He provided a detailed account of the fires, including planned burns, lightning strikes and other man-made fire causes over the period between 1 Aug and 31 October 2023 for QPWS as a whole:
 - QPWS&P provided response efforts for 210 fires, 188 of which impacted QPWS managed estate. Approximately 516,570 hectares of parks and forests were burned during the period

- Of the 188 bushfires on the QPWS&P estate - 36% of the fires initiating on neighbouring land, accounting for 200,000 hectares of area burned
- 110 bushfires (64%) originated on QPWS estate. 4 bushfires were contained on Parks' estate and 26 bushfires moved off the Parks' estate.

Discussion

- Prof. Williams enquired about fire statistics, and how this year has compared with previous years. Dr Brien advised that these statistics reflect a significant upturn of activity at this early stage in a season that is expected to be more extreme due to climate change factors. Of particular concern is the amount of fuel load that has built up over a 5 – 10 year period.
- Mr Slattery thanked Dr Driml for the feedback from the CCC and would take it back to his team in the department for a response to the Board.

Resolution

The Board *noted* the State Government reports.

5. Actions arising and significant correspondence

5.1 Actions arising – Scott Buchanan

The Executive Director spoke to the actions arising, noting the significant number of items completed and the ongoing work to bring the development of the draft Communications Strategy and the Ethical Funding guidelines/policy documents to completion.

Discussion

The Directors discussed a range of interactions they had individually undertaken in search of more information about the status of the EPBC Act reforms and any anticipated stakeholder consultation or updates. The view of the meeting was that the Commonwealth is keeping the EPBC Act reform details inhouse and is not seeking external engagement at this stage.

Action

- Ms Salmeron Rodriguez to provide the next steps and process for the Communication Strategy in the Executive Directors Report for meeting #126
- Prepare the final draft of the Ethical Funding Policy (no longer Guidelines) in time for the next Board meeting.

Resolution

The Board *noted* the status and completion of actions arising from previous meetings.

5.2 Significant correspondence – Chrissy Grant

Significant correspondence was provided to the Board members for perusal and comment. Noteworthy correspondence included submissions to:

- State development, infrastructure, local government and planning regarding the review of State Code 23: Wind farm development
- Science Grants Team Supporting DES R&D Linkage – Managing vines for forest restoration – Andrew Marshall.
- State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning regarding the review of State Code 23: Wind farm development

An additional document was included in the significant correspondence list and made available to the Board members at the meeting: Letter of support for the submission for an Australian Heritage Branch (AHG) grant to create a Knowledge Hub for the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area.

Action:

- Send to the Board a copy of the Knowledge Hub letter omitted from the Significant Correspondence Board documents provided prior to the meeting.
- Send to Dr Driml a copy of the Review of State Code 23: Wind farm development submission to the Department of State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning

Resolution

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

5.3 Board self-assessment – Chrissy Grant

The Board reviewed the following elements that contribute to the effectiveness of the meeting, and to informing the Directors and their decision-making:

- the format of the agenda, and effectiveness of the Board papers and presentations,
- the inclusion of a Directors Only session prior to the Board meeting, and
- the reports prepared by the government departments and sent out with the board papers (a change from verbal reports followed up with report notes post the meeting)

The Board generally agreed to:

- addressing strategic issues and items requiring approval or decision as first items of business, followed by reports for noting improved the flow and the focus of the meeting
- Minutes in the shorter format are more direct and concise
- Some tables in the reports may be improved by collating data sets to improve review and analysis
- The presentation of budget information has improved the Directors understanding of the reports
- Directors Only session – enhances decision-making by providing a more focused discussion and allows a review of the proposed positions at the Board meeting.

Discussion

- Consider whether enough background to the decisions arrived at in the Directors Only session is provided to the meeting observers.
- Propose a rating sheet be prepared for the board to support a collatable
- Invite feedback from the meeting observers and those who prepare reports for the Board.

Action

Mr McNamara to produce a spreadsheet to guide the Board to rate the elements of the Board meeting

6. Other business

- 6.1 Sean to send out a proposed the Board meeting calendar
- 6.2 Cassowary awards date – between Sept and October 2024

7. Board Communique

Resolution

The Board **approved** the Communique for Board meeting # 125.

Meeting Close

Board Meeting #125 opened at 10.17am and closed at 4.20 pm.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Christine T. Grant." The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped flourish at the end of the name.

Ms Christine T Grant
Chair
20 February 2024