

Minutes Board Meeting 126

In Attendance

Board Directors

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

Observers	
Marella Umback	Senior Heritage Policy Officer, First Nations Heritage Section, World and National Heritage Branch, DCCEEW
Clare Fealy	Senior Heritage Policy Officer, First Nations Heritage Section, World and National Heritage Branch, DCCEEW
Blythe Neville	First Nations Heritage Section, World and National Heritage Branch, DCCEEW
Julia Playford	Executive Director, Office of the Great Barrier Reef and World Heritage, DESI
Dr Matt Brien	Regional Director, Northern Region, QPWS&P
Bruce A-Izzeddin	Project Manager, Tourism Policy, DTS
Angela Siggery	Director, World Heritage Unit, Office of the Great Barrier Reef and World Heritage, DESI

WTMA Staff	
Saskia Salmeron-Rodriguez	Manager, World Heritage Connections
Lucy Karger	Project Manager, Yellow Crazy Ant Eradication Program
Tim Wong	Manager Planning and Conservation
Debra Parker	Business Manager
Alicia Haines	Principal Project Officer, World Heritage Connections
Bruce Jennison	Principal Conservation Officer
Ellen Weber	Senior Scientist, Climate Initiatives
Phoebe Kinley	Principal Project Officer, Presentation and Engagement
Sean McNamara	Principal Advisor
Others	
none	

1. Introduction

1.1. Chair's welcome and introduction

Due to some technical issues, Dr Sally Driml acted as Chair until Ms Chrissy Grant was able to join the meeting.

Dr Driml welcomed meeting participants, announced apologies, and asked Directors if there were any conflicts of interest.

The Executive Director, Mr Scott Buchanan then acknowledged the Traditional Owners of the land of the Cairns Area, the Gimuy Walubara Yidinji and the Yirrganydji Traditional Owners, and the Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples of the Wet Tropics region as the Traditional Custodians of this landscape.

Ms Chrissy Grant was then able to rejoin the meeting and commenced the Chair's report.

1.2. Apologies

Apologies were received from:

Mr Willie Enoch Tranby	Director, Wet Tropics Management Authority Board
Mr D'Arcy Slattery	General Manager, Tourism Policy Partnerships and Events, DTIS

1.3. Conflicts of interest

None reported

2. Reports

2.1 Chair's Report

Since the last Board meeting the Chair:

- attended the International Indigenous People's Forum in Geneva in January 2024. This meeting was proposed at the last World Heritage Committee meeting in Riyadh. This meeting was partnered with International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA), and auspiced by them. Funding to run the Expert workshop was supported by the Australian Government (with participants from ODA countries only), and also supported with partial funding from the UNESCO World Heritage Fund and the IWGIA. Also in attendance were UN Human Rights officials, UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII), and the Expert Mechanism for Indigenous Issues (EMRIP). A draft report regarding the World Heritage Convention and Protected Areas and Indigenous Rights will be provided to the Australian government, and distributed to UNESCO World Heritage Centre, Advisory Bodies, UNHRC and UN Indigenous Mechanism bodies for comment. A full report will be presented to the UNESCO World Heritage Committee in time
- spoke at Queensland Cape York World Heritage meeting in Cairns on 22 November – providing an international perspective of Indigenous issues and World Heritage views
- spoke on the Panel at the Destination IQ event in Cairns on 22 November on Indigenous Engagement in Tourism Sector
- was nominated by the Australian World Heritage Advisory Committee (AWHAC) to join a working group to develop the Indigenous Engagement Standard for Nature Repair legislation. This process was completed in December, prior to the introduction of the Bill into parliament.

- in January 2024, took part in the selection panel to consider selection for the joint WTMA- Terrain NRM Indigenous Advisory Committee (IAC) . An updated paper has been provided to the Board, and
- on 13 February 2024, ran a meeting of the AWHAC Cultural Values Working Group meeting, presenting a range of feedback and updates.

Discussion included:

- updates on the inclusion of cultural values into World Heritage listing. There is a call for a redress mechanism to allow for inclusion for listings at various stages of the listing process. The Outcomes Report recommendations need to go to the advisory bodies and World Heritage Centre to include views on recommendations, and further development is needed in terms of prioritisation
- the potential for the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area to act as an example/test case. There are a number of places internationally that are listed for natural values, which are considering how to include cultural values. The redress mechanism requires flexibility to allow for a range of scenarios and listing stages of properties
- that in the past Native Title has been used as a reason to not progress the listing for Cultural Values, however this should not be a consideration as Native Title outcomes will not impact on the cultural values. Free Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) has not always been conducted at the correct stages of the listing process, and
- the project/report being prepared by Giringun regarding the management plan of cultural values on the National Heritage list that might be considered for inclusion to the World Heritage List.

Resolution

The Board *noted* the Chair's report.

2.2 Executive Director's Report

The Executive Director updated the Board on staffing changes since the last Board meeting including the on boarding of 6 new field staff to the Yellow Crazy Ant Eradication Program, and ongoing recruitment of communications and engagement staff. Since the last meeting Ellen Weber performed the Manager-Planning and Conservation role and was commended for her fantastic work in the position.

Mr Buchanan then provided a comprehensive update on the impacts of Cyclone Jasper including:

- the significant rainfall event that occurred after the cyclone made landfall, causing significant flooding in Cairns, Mossman, and Bloomfield Valley with Wujal Wujal severely impacted by flooding and evacuation of people in the community. Staff safety was a priority during this time, with a number of the Authority's staff living in areas directly impacted
- the post disaster response, with the Authority providing communications with Queensland Reconstruction Authority (QRA), Ergon Energy, Local Government, Clean Co and other service providers to remind them of obligations and offer to provide assistance. Mr Angus McLeod, Senior Conservation Officer with the Authority has been in contact with, and providing ongoing support with QLD Rail, CleanCo, Douglas and Cook Shire Council, Ergon, Telstra
- access issues in the Daintree area/Cape Tribulation, with some roads, and the Noah Range being closed for long periods of time. The Authority received some complaints regarding restricting repairs, although these were based on incorrect information, and have been addressed
- the ongoing body of work to permit repairs, and movements/realignments of infrastructure
- that odour detection dogs had to be rehomed with handlers while repairs are conducted at RSPCA
- the formation of an Environmental Functioning Recovery and Resilience Group, with DESI leading. Other organisations in the group include Terrain and other NRMS bodies, Land Councils, Department

of Agriculture and Forestry (DAF), Department of Treaty, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Partnerships, Communities and the Arts (DSATSIP). A resilience and recovery plan are being drafted – to build back environmental assets and reducing the risks of hazards. DESI and the Authority have provided the following suggestions for inclusion:

- environmental investigations/extent of damage (\$4M requested)
 - Indigenous ranger groups to assess damage to cultural heritage assets
 - Pests and weeds (\$5M requested) for areas that have been scoured out and have increased weed and pest potential, also modelling of pest spread due to flooding
 - National Parks recovery (\$12M – 14M requested)
 - Riparian Recovery (\$16M requested), and
 - An additional FTE to support development assessment work for 2 years for the Authority.
- the continued support to Douglas and Cook Shire Council regarding recovery from cyclone impacts
 - impacts and opportunities under the Eastern Kuku Yalanji (EKY) Return to Country Project to support the Wujal Wujal community. During the disaster the whole of Wujal Wujal was evacuated, with the community is now split between Cooktown, Cairns, Mossman and other smaller communities. There is a large body of work to decide how to get people back to their homes/build new homes. QRA and DSATSIP are working on these issues, and
 - assistance the Authority is providing for the formation of an Eastern Kuku Yalanji Elders Working Group, with support of DESI. Additional funding will likely be sought to complete this process.

Discussion included:

- the scale and type of damage caused by the event, including significant landslips in many areas, with large mud flows and areas stripped to boulder fields/bedrock. Roads have been impacted with ongoing slips and significant slumping in some areas, and
- the impact of previous riparian restoration - in some areas of previous riparian restoration, the bank/land has been protected, however the understory has been ripped out, with increased weed risks.

Resolution

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

2.3 Previous Minutes —Board Meeting 125

Dr Driml noted that the comments on the Business Strategy made by the Community Consultative Committee (CCC) regarding 'empowering' the community were not included. A specific recommendation on the matter was further discussed at the Community Consultative Committee on 19 February 2024, and recommended:

Item 3.2 – change the wording from:

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

to

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

Resolution

The Board *endorsed* the minutes for Board Meeting 125 with the changes suggested above regarding the IPA2 comment.

3.0 Strategic Issues

3.1 Indigenous Advisory Committee – paper for decision

Ms Grant took the paper as read and provided a short overview of the paper, which included an outline of the process for forming the Indigenous Advisory Committee (IAC) for the Authority and Terrain NRM. The committee will be a non-statutory committee established to ensure that the views, interests and aspirations of Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples are included in the delivery of the strategic plan and work programs of the Authority and Terrain. The paper includes the IAC selection panel's recommendations regarding proposed members.

Discussion

Discussion included the development process, including some misinformation regarding the IAC, and the breath of membership sought.

Resolution

The Board **approved** the recommendations of the selection panel for the establishment of the joint WTMA and Terrain NRM Indigenous Advisory Committee.

3.2 State of the Wet Tropics 2023-24 Theme – paper for decision

Mr McNamara and Ms Weber provided an overview of the provided paper. Mr McNamara outlined the proposed approach to the State of the Wet Tropics – a big picture assessment of the integrity and condition of the area. This approach will include data provided through the third cycle of UNESCO Periodic Report and will support upcoming reporting requirements including the Queensland State of the Environment, and potentially support upcoming external reporting under the IUCN Outlook Reporting process.

Discussion included:

- the support that the CCC can provide to the development and content of the report
- presenting and receiving feedback on the proposed framework from the SAC and CCC
- the identification of indicators to assess. Some of these indicators will be difficult in terms of data availability
- the use of existing reporting process and frameworks for the development of the report – UNESCO Periodic Reporting, and IUCN World Heritage Outlook Reports
- determining which indicators relate to World Heritage attributes, and those indicators related to supporting management decisions
- the proposed requirement that the report both indicates areas for potential management improvement, and areas to highlight for increased investment, and
- post cyclone Jasper related information, and links between these impacts and on World Heritage attributes, for example, scenic amenity.

Resolution

The Board **approved** that the theme for the 2023-24 State of the Wet Tropics Report be a 'pressure-state-response' assessment of the integrity and condition of the area

3.3 Paper for rescinding – Policy No. 3 Marketing and Merchandising – paper for approval

Ms Salmeron-Rodriguez took the paper as read and indicated that the policy is out of date and obsolete. As the recommendation to rescind the policy was straight forward, there was minimal discussion and the Board agreed with the recommendation.

Resolution

The Board **approved** the rescinding of Policy Statement No. 3 – Marketing and merchandising.

3.4 Communications strategy - Paper for endorsement/noting

Ms Kinley provided a description of the request for quote process, including details of the terms of reference for the consultant. Ms Kinley indicated that the request for quote process is open and closes at the end of February and will be assessed by a panel led by Ms Salmeron-Rodriguez. A 4-stage strategy development process will be overseen by a steering committee, and a request was made for a Board Director to be part of the steering committee. Ms Clark indicated interest in being involved and declared that her husband had taken part in a previous communications document for the Authority. Ms Grant also indicated an interest in taking part in the steering committee and suggested the two directors sharing involvement and alternating attendance on the steering committee. After a discussion of the coordination of Board involvement in the steering committee, the Board made the following resolutions.

Resolutions

The Board:

- **Endorsed** 2 Directors to be part of the communications steering committee and makes a nomination at meeting 126.
- **Noted** the update on the development of a new communications strategy.

3.5 Mid-year Budget Review - Paper for noting

Mr Buchanan provided an overview of the budget update process and paper, and the spreadsheet provided in the Board paper. The information provided was up to the end of January, to provide the most up to date information. The following standout items were highlighted:

- professional and organisational development is still under spent, however current review and planning is underway to ensure staff training and cultural capability training will account for this
- Rainforest Aboriginal Partnerships budget is underspent due to the IAC being delayed – this is being considered for small grants projects/support
- climate change and science budget will be used in a priority place experts' workshop
- The Return to Country project line items will be balanced, and redirection of resources will not affect the budget lines, and
- there is some underspend with Yellow Crazy Ants funding, and a request has been made with DESI to carry the funds over to the following financial year.

Discussion

Professor Williams asked to what extent cyclone Jasper has led to delays and impacted allocations within this financial year. Mr Buchanan indicated that the budget is tracking well and there are no indications that

there will be significant underspends to carry over to the following financial year. Ms Parker advised that if there are in fact underspends in Commonwealth funding, that these could be quarantined and allocated to next year's budget.

Resolution

The Board **noted** the budget update to 31 January 2024, including current remaining budget and commentary

3.6 Application for Research Endorsement trial reporting - Paper for noting

Saskia took the paper as read, which included an update on progress of the Application of Research Endorsement (ARE) process. This is the fourth year since the process commenced, and issues in implementation have been encountered. A draft review report has been prepared for the QPWS&P Deputy Director General outlining some recommendations to improve the delivery of the process and increase its effectiveness.

Discussion

Dr Driml asked about how the addition of tourism permits will impact on tourism. Ms Salmeron-Rodriguez advised that the process for tourism is quite different than for research activities. For commercial activity permits that are existing activities, it would not be likely that refusing existing permits would be considered as these are ongoing, as opposed to the three – year lifespans of research approvals. An example focus for these might be to link tourism operators with the guides program. This may become part of the protocol process. The current focus is streamlining the ARE process as much as possible, for example, through a tiered system. A number of other models are being considered.

Professor Williams discussed previous approaches to providing an avenue for paid participation in research, and asked if there was an update on this. Ms Salmeron-Rodriguez responded that this is an ongoing issue, and this needs to be built into processes and budgets and include education for research institutions. For example, CSIRO and AIMS are building this into their costs. It is not always about payment, and often about respect for Traditional Owners and providing opportunity to engage. Ms Grant added that there is an education process needed here for universities regarding compensating people for their time and knowledge and following best practice standards. A more wholistic approach to research builds in this assistance/collaboration. Discussion also covered the risks of the process leading to important research activities not being carried out, or carried out in other locations.

Resolution

The Board **noted** the progress on the operationalisation of the Application for Research Endorsement process.

3.7 Restoration Program Update - Paper for noting

Mr Wong provided a short overview of the paper, which was taken as read. Key updates and points outlined by Mr Wong included:

- the funded program of work, through DESI, and some core funding is progressing well
- that while there was initial excitement about the potential for capital flows, there has so far been very little been put on the table
- that formal markets for natural capital (biodiversity and carbon) are not well developed in Australia, although some policy initiatives in Europe are progressing
- there is limited understanding of the ability to generate returns on investments
- options for how the Authority can support progress, and these may require specific expertise, as outlined in the paper provided to the Board, and
- that the restoration program is funded until the December 2024, and additional funding will be required after this date.

Discussion

Dr Driml advised that seeking to embed expertise within the Authority might not be the best way forward, and that partnering with other organisations and individuals with this expertise is advisable. Dr Driml also advised that care is needed as there are bad faith actors in the natural capital space. Even though systems and frameworks are being established for voluntary credits, there is no monetary returns on investment as yet. Philanthropic investment is likely to be the most promising avenue at the moment, with some potential opportunities for tourism.

Ms Clark indicated that she attended the Restoration Alliance workshop on the Cassowary Coast, and it was a positive day, and followed on from Dr Driml's comments in terms of what should be the Authority's focal areas/geographical areas to best prioritise restoration investment.

Other discussion included:

- that expertise should be sought to provide assistance and support for the alliance in terms of financial mechanisms, and that further strategic partnerships should be explored
- restrictions on government involvement in receiving funding from investors
- marketing the program and seeking investment for the wet tropics, and
- green infrastructure and condition assessment tools that support investment.

Resolution

*The Board **noted** progress with the Wet Tropics Restoration Program, and the key challenges to be addressed related to restoration investment in the region.*

3.8 Yellow Crazy Ant Eradication Program Update - Paper for noting

Lucy Karger presented a current update on the program, including the following key points:

- the good news is that the program has declared the largest eradication to date of 365 hectares. There is now a total of 450 hectares declared 'eradicated'
- using a developed GIS dashboard/system, Ms Karger highlighted:
 - An overview of current treatment sites and areas, and upcoming declared eradication sites were illustrated including sites in Kuranda, Gordonvale, Sawyer Pocket, and Bently Park, and within the World Heritage Area
 - the additional 96 hectares to be eradicated by 30 June 2024, and

- the recently identified infestation areas at Goldsborough.
- by June 2024, the YCA Eradication Program the program will achieve eradication across 25% of the are under management
- in terms of global significance, the declared eradications are the largest single eradication recorded
- This is the first-time eradication has been declared within the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area. This fact may provide opportunities for media for the Queensland and Australian Governments
- the program was originally planned to require 10 years; however, this will need to be extended. The funding strategy for funding beyond the 10 years can be provided to the Board, and
- The opportunity to host an upcoming International invasive ants symposium.

Discussion:

The Board congratulated Jasmin Spring for the work on the GIS dashboard, and Lucy and the team for the hard work.

Resolution

The Board *noted the update on the Yellow Crazy Ant Eradication Program and congratulates the team for their efforts.*

4.0 Reports

4.1 Advisory Committee Reports

Community Consultative Committee (CCC) - Dr Sally Driml (Report for noting)

Dr Driml advised that the CCC met the day before the Board meeting (19 February), and provided the following update:

- CCC member updates – these will be provided to Board Directors out of Session
- impacts of cyclones was discussed, with Mr Wong providing an update at the meeting. Some observations:
 - rehabilitated streambank areas have held up well under the rain and floodwaters. Areas adjacent that were cleared were quite eroded – the rehabilitation has been working well in some places
 - Steve Nowakowski noted the damage to houses in Kuranda, and the river walkway has disappeared due to floodwaters
 - Sarah Hoyle notes revegetated areas on the tablelands had performed well, although along the coast quite a bit of rubbish has been washed up, and
 - Lucy Graham reported that CAFNEC have been involved with mangrove monitoring for some time – and emphasized the value of long-term monitoring.
- all were concerned about land slip areas, associated subsequent runoff into the Great Barrier Reef, and weeds in these areas
- the group earlier raised the issue of climate change in responses in World Heritage area. Ms Salmeron-Rodriguez and Ms Kinley provided information regarding climate adaptation plans and the government provided toolkit. These are useful but there remains continual issue of finding funds to undertake work identified as desirable from toolkit process
- there may be opportunities for World Heritage areas to combine in terms of sharing information and advocacy in terms of climate change adaptation.

- the CCC provided a recommendation that the Authority approach the Australian World Heritage Advisory Committee (AWHAC) and seek opportunities for World Heritage areas to work together to advocate for further funds, and
- the group discussed strategic priorities:
 - the CCC would like to support the Communications Strategy process, and
 - the CCC also alerted the Board of the following issues and opportunities:
 - renewable energy: this issue is broader than windfarms and associated impacts on the Wet Tropics. Lucy Graham and Steven Nowakowski would like to provide a briefing to the Board in terms of what we need to be aware of regarding renewable energy
 - CCC support for priority actions to address emergencies/priority places.
 - The CCC would like to look at the Accept, Act, Adapt plan in terms of visibility and communications
 - CCC input into the communications strategy
 - CCC have an interest in providing input into the Regional Plan review.
 - The addition of community education and prevention element for fire management guidelines. Seeking a briefing on the fire management project and guidelines being developed, and
 - CCC would like to engage in the design of community consultation for the Wangetti Trail by the Department of Tourism and Sport (DTS).

Mr Buchanan advised that the Authority had reached out to World Heritage property managers through AWHAC and had discussions with the Queensland government although there did not appear to be a strong interest regarding joint advocacy. This probably reflects the low resourcing of the other areas. However, DESI is supportive.

Ms Grant raised the alignment of the World Heritage toolkit developed through DCCEEW with input from Traditional Owners from most of the World Heritage sites and the Authority's Accept Act Adapt plan.

Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) – Adjunct Professor Stephen Williams

Professor Williams advised that the SAC was held on 21 November 2023, with 4 main discussion topics:

1. YCAEP update
2. Strategic Rehabilitation Plan in association with TERRAIN NRM
3. Priority Place workshop
4. NESP – National Environmental Science Program and Funding.

With regards to discussion topics 4 - NESP: Professor Williams gave an overview of discussions at the meeting. Helen Marsh joined the SAC meeting and provided an update. There seems to have been communications issues, and some missed opportunities in terms of seeking funding for research proposals. However, there is now an opportunity to seek funding for concrete proposals, and representatives are planning to visit Cairns to discuss potential projects.

Professor Williams also provided an update on the Priority Place workshop. This was planned for March but is now likely to be delayed by a month or two. The workshop is planned to be a technical workshop with invited attendees.

Discussion

Mr Buchanan indicated that WTMA has had discussions with Michael Douglas and there are plans for a potential meeting in March. The Authority will also meet with the Deputy Vice Chancellor (JCU). Stuart Lockie will be attending the meeting and will assist to ensure some concrete research proposals are developed. The Authority could seek the names of potential researchers and work with them directly.

Action – organize for a Board Briefing by Lucy Graham and Steve Nowakowski regarding renewable energy infrastructure.

Resolution

The Board *noted* the CCC and SAC reports.

4.2 Directors' issues

Ms Chrissy Grant had to leave the meeting at this point and handed over the Chair's role to Dr Sally Driml.

Dr Sally Driml

Dr Sally Driml did not have anything further to add on top of the CCC meeting update.

Ailsa Lively

Ms Lively provided the following update:

- Ms Lively attended the Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples Think Tank (RAPTT) planning meeting in November, looking at refocusing and reestablishing with partners. Discussions included:
 - establishing a regional peak body for Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples, and the governance model, and resourcing/business case to facilitate this, and
 - the Regional Agreement and discussions regarding what is covered in the current form of the document, and if a review is timely.
- the Bama Country and Culture (BCC) Project – there has not been a recent steering committee meeting, however Authority staff member Kieran Sellars has been organising small group meetings for input into the project.

Stephen Williams

Dr Stephen Williams discussed communications regarding the expert workshop for Priority Places, and damage caused by cyclone Jasper.

Robin Clark

Ms Clark provided the following update:

- the Cassowary Coast River Improvement Trust has been working with Queensland Rural Industry Development Agency (QRIDA) regarding grants for repair works for farm properties. This work has also included the state agencies through the Queensland State Assessment and Referral Agency (SARA) to determine the scope of the river improvement works. The Trust aims to ensure that works and funds are allocated and spent appropriately to best practice standards. There are no river improvement trusts north of the Barron River. Board members and observers discussed some of the issues regarding riparian works that include rock works, and
- the Planning Institute of Australia (PIA) has been preparing guidelines on urban heat and has prepared 3 fact sheets – these are now available on their website.

Resolution

The Board *noted* the Directors' reports.

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

Clare Fealy Paper: Report for noting

Ms Fealy acknowledged Traditional Owners, and took the paper previously provided as read. This report included an update on the National Adaptation Plan, the First National Heritage Grants Program, the potential tentative World Heritage listing for Cape York, the Deloitte Economic and Social Value of Australia's World Heritage Properties Report, and World Heritage Committee updates.

Ms Fealy provided additional updates:

- For the National Heritage and Commonwealth Heritage nominations round – the round remains open, and the closing date has been pushed back with no date set yet, and
- Australian Heritage Council positions are now open for expressions of interest.

Discussion

Ms Driml would like to receive the Deloitte report when this is available. Ms Fealy advised that this is in the final drafting stage and will hopefully this will be available very soon.

Dr Driml also asked about the mailing list for Board and CCC members for the EPBC Act review. Ms Umback advised that all people have been added to the mailing list, and it may be that no further communication has been made yet.

Resolution

The Board *noted* the Commonwealth Government report.

4.4 Queensland Department reports

Queensland Parks and Wildlife Services and Partnerships

Dr Brien provided a comprehensive report on the activities of the work being undertaken by QPWS&P in the Northern Regions including:

- the teams have been largely working on repair works after Cyclones Jasper and Kirrily
- before that there was a significant workload dealing with fires, and QPWS&P had had a good program of planned burns
- current efforts are focussed on recovery, with up to 12 months ongoing work required
- that QPWS staff are currently active in the Wujal Wujal community, and have sent a team of 15 people to assist with recovery efforts including damage assessment and infrastructure repairs
- in terms of Traditional Owner engagement, QPWS&P have met with a number of groups, including Mamu, Choorechillum, and Wadjanbarra, Tableland Yidinji, and have been taking part in discussions regarding ILUAs and MOU. The use of MOUs is the focus and preference of the Department.

QPWS&P staff are seeking further information from the groups on the effectiveness of MOUs. The Jabalbina blended team model is progressing, with the Partnerships team is spearheading this work

- Values Based Management Framework (VBMF) Roadmap: work is ongoing developing key values, levels of service, and thematic strategies for each of the parks. Strategies include the fire and pest strategy, research and monitoring strategy, visitor management strategy, and health checks as part of research and monitoring strategy. This work is ongoing for Paluma, Girringun, Curtain Fig, Mt Spurgeon and Mt Lewis, Eubenangee, and Herberton National Parks. The Authority is invited to these workshops and will see final drafts prior to finalisation and implementation, and
- that to support this VBMF Roadmap work, QPWS&P Northern Region has received an AO5 planning role for the increased work.

Discussion

Dr Driml commended the progress on the VBMF process and asked if the health checks will be publicly available. This is not clear yet as the process has just commenced, although this work could feed into the Authority's reporting.

Department of Tourism and Sport (DTS)

Mr A-Izzeddin took the report provided with the Board papers as read and covered key points in response to three questions from the CCC. These questions were taken on notice at Board meeting 125:

- regarding maintenance work of the Wangetti Trail, the trail is dependent on a high level of service, and DTS will work closely with QPWS&P regarding the trail development and maintenance. The partners are looking to develop a process for rapidly reopening the trail after the recent weather events
- regarding the consultation process, it has been acknowledged that engagement with Traditional owners has been good, however has been lacking with the broader community. The Board will be provided with additional detail regarding upcoming consultation, which can be shared with the CCC, and
- regarding the management of the trail in terms of fires: concern has been raised about safety and management of the trail. The response is that the alignment along the road is subject to fire risk due to fuel loads and frequent arson. Consulting firm Wagners have been required to develop a construction fire management plan and protocols for the higher danger periods. This will be in place prior to the trail being open. The Environmental Management Plan specific to Wangetti captures the fire risk.

Discussion

Dr Driml advised that the CCC wanted it conveyed that consultation on Wangetti Trail has not been well planned. Some CCC members would like to provide input into the design of the consultation, if the department is open to this suggestion. Mr A-Izzeddin will take these comments back to the Wangetti Team, and contacts can be provided directly.

Ms Salmeron-Rodriguez requested information regarding the proposal for Wallaman Falls. Mr A-Izzeddin will report back on this issue at the next meeting. Ms Salmeron-Rodriguez advised that a representative from Warrgamay would like QPWS&P and the Authority to be involved.

Dr Driml also asked a question regarding a press release from new Minister regarding bike tracks. The Authority is not aware of these proposals. Permits will be required, and early engagement will assist.

Action – CCC contacts to be provided to Mr McNamara to provide to DTS representatives.

Department of Environment and Science

Dr Playford took the Board paper provided as read. The paper included an update on Queensland World Heritage estate including K’gari, Australian Fossil Mammal Sites (Riversleigh Section), Gondwana Rainforests of Australia, and the Great Barrier Reef, along with an update on the Cape York World Heritage Project, and the World Heritage – Enhanced Interpretation and Signage Project. Dr Playford further provided the following update on the tentative listing for Cape York:

- this is the first time undertaking a cultural landscape listing, and the process has been underway for over 10 years
- tentative listing indicates an intention to prepare the listing - not identifying areas unless full Free Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) has occurred, and Traditional Owners agree – involving wide consultation across Traditional Owner groups. Flexibility is being provided in terms of opting in or out until the listing is signed
- currently only areas within national parks are being considered for the tentative listing
- the Cape York Land Council has been engaged, and the team has also written to all groups to indicate that they can be worked with independently. In all cases, an information session and a meeting with the Board is occurring. It is hoped that this agreement process for the tentative listing is completed by mid-April 2024.
- there will be significant funding requests for a range of management actions generated from this process. The Queensland and Australian governments are aware of this, and
- World Heritage areas are the most important parts of the country – we can link this to the Olympics in terms of tourism to world class World Heritage areas.

Discussion

Dr Driml raised the opportunity of the World Heritage areas joining together and coordinating climate change advocacy and actions. This could be taken into consideration through the tentative listing.

Resolution

The Board **noted** the State Government reports.

5.0 Actions arising and significant correspondence

5.1 Actions arising – Scott Buchanan

The Executive Director spoke to the actions arising, noting the commentary provided.

Resolution

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

5.2 Significant correspondence – Dr Sally Driml

Significant correspondence was provided to the Board members for perusal and comment. Noteworthy correspondence included a letter to the Premier of Queensland, the Honourable Steven Miles MP, congratulating the new Premier and extending an invitation to visit the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area.

Resolution

The Board *noted* the significant correspondence report.

5.3 Board self-assessment – Dr Sally Driml

Mr McNamara presented an online form for Board directors to conduct a self-assessment for each Board meeting. The current form was developed by Authority staff member, Ms Wendy Brooksby. A general discussion on the content and objective of the form, and the timeframes for responses post meeting was held. A self- assessment was not conducted at the Board meeting.

6.0 Other business

Dates for Board 127 and 128 were discussed, along with the dates for the Cassowary Awards. Mr McNamara will work with Directors to select suitable dates.

Mr Buchanan raised the upcoming community cabinet, and the potential to propose a delegation with the Premier.

6.1 Board Communique

Resolution

The Board *approved* the Communique for Board meeting # 126.

Meeting Close

Board Meeting #126 opened at 11.06am and closed at 3.30 pm.

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

Ms Christine T Grant
Chair
14 June 2024