



Our vision is 'to protect the values of the Wet Tropics through collaboration, culture, knowledge and passion'.

BOARD COMMUNIQUE 118

The Board of Directors of the Wet Tropics Management Authority (the Authority) met in Cairns on 31 March and 1 April 2022. Key items discussed included:

- **Introducing new Directors**
- **19th Cassowary Awards**
- **Landscape restoration initiatives in the Wet Tropics**
- **Partnership projects with the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service and Partnerships**
- **Australian Heritage Grant funding success**

Introducing new Directors

This was the first Board meeting for the Authority's two newest Board Directors, appointed in November 2021, who bring expertise in both the impacts of climate change and regional and environmental planning in the region.

Professor Stephen Williams, appointed for his expertise in science and research, is a rainforest ecologist whose work has focused on understanding biodiversity, assessing the vulnerability of natural ecosystems to global change and using this knowledge to maximise the positive benefits of natural resource management and policy.

The Board agreed that Professor Williams will take on the role as the Chair of the Scientific Advisory Committee after Professor Iain Gordon's term as a director concluded in November 2021.

Robin Clark, appointed for her expertise in community and governance, has extensive experience in urban and regional, environmental and coastal planning, and natural resource management. Ms Clark has worked for multiple state government agencies across Queensland and across the country over two decades and was formally the Northern Region Regional Director for Planning with the Department of State Development Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning.

The Wet Tropics Management Authority is a statutory body led by a Board of Directors. The current Board of Directors includes Ms Chrissy Grant (Chair), Ms Ailsa Lively, Dr Sally Driml, Professor Stephen Williams, Ms Robin Clark and Mr Scott Buchanan (Executive Director). The Authority's role is to ensure Australia's obligation to the World Heritage Convention is met in relation to the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area.

Landscape restoration initiatives in the Wet Tropics

The Board is supportive of the Authority developing the *Accelerating landscape restoration opportunities in the Wet Tropics Project* that will attract and diversify investment options for ecosystem resilience in the face of climate change across the Wet Tropics.

Part of that plan is to establish a Wet Tropics Restoration Alliance with more than 25 organisations from across the region that will be formally launched by June 2022.

The Alliance will steer the work to support the key assets that currently sustains far north Queensland's regional economy, attract increased investment, and grow the prosperity of the region.

Australian Heritage Grant funding success

The recent good news that the Authority was successful in its application for a \$395,000 federal government Australian Heritage Grant was celebrated. The outcomes of the project will increase education, awareness and recognition of the Indigenous heritage values and cultural landscape of the Wet Tropics, the Board says.

The first step of the process will be for the Authority to hold extensive consultations with Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples' groups across the region to ascertain how they want to tell their stories and share their knowledge in a culturally appropriate way.

In developing the *Wet Tropics Sustainable Tourism Plan 2021-2031*, the Authority engaged broadly with Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples, management agencies, the tourism industry and education sectors. It was very clear that these partners identified a critical need for an accessible knowledge and learning program that facilitates understanding of, and connection with, the rich Rainforest Aboriginal cultural landscape within the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area.

19th Cassowary Awards

The Board is excited to announce that the 19th prestigious Cassowary Awards will be held at Tjapukai Now venue in Smithfield on 8 October 2022, during Australian Wildlife Week.

The Authority also announced streamlining the nomination process, including encouraging self-nomination. The Board was presented with a history of the Authority's gala event, recognising and honouring the great conservation efforts throughout the Wet Tropics community.

Partnership Projects with the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service and Partnerships

The Board welcomed Dr Michelle Ibbett from QPWS&P who provided a detailed overview of the Climate Change Adaptation Plan for Fire Management in Northern Region and the Mountaintop vertebrate species monitoring research project.

Both projects were collaborations between Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service and Partnerships, the Authority and other key partners including Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples.

The Board acknowledged the vital importance of the Adaptation Plan for Fire Management, particularly with the potential of increased fire threats as a result of climate change and raised the importance of engaging Indigenous Rangers in fire management practices.

The Mountaintop vertebrate species monitoring research project, partnering with the Authority and James Cook University, is an important expansion of mountain top species monitoring that James Cook University has been carrying out for decades. It was noted that although the program will finish next year the important monitoring work will continue through the trained rangers.

Board meeting 119 will be held in June 2022.

For more information, please phone 07 4241 0500 or email wettropics@wtma.qld.gov.au