



## BOARD COMMUNIQUE 123

The Wet Tropics Management Authority (the Authority) is a statutory body overseen by an independent 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.

The Authority's Board of Directors met in person on Friday 2 June 2023. In this communique, the Board reports on the following topics:

- **Board update**
- **Interim review of the Strategic Plan**
- **Draft policy for ethical external funding**
- **Updating policies and guidelines**

### Board update

Board Directors had a busy week in Cairns, including on Wednesday 31 May welcoming new statutory committee members on the Community Consultative Committee and Scientific Advisory Committee at an induction meeting. The Chairs of these committees Dr Sally Driml and Professor Stephen Williams were impressed with the calibre and enthusiasm of members who are commencing a three-year term (2023-2026). Board Directors also attended several Reconciliation Week activities, including a walk to commemorate the historic reconciliation walk across the Sydney Harbour Bridge in 2000 and talks on Path to Treaty and the Voice to Parliament. On Thursday 1 June the Board undertook governance training and met the newly appointed Rainforest Aboriginal male Director – this appointment will be announced shortly.

### Interim review of the Strategic Plan

The Board was updated with findings from the interim operational review of the Wet Tropics Strategic Plan 2020-2030 by external contractors. The purpose of this internal review is to better align the Strategic Plan with the upcoming development of a 5-year funding agreement with the Australian Government. It is also an opportunity to evaluate and refresh the Strategic Plan and improve governance.

The external consultants interviewed more than 50 stakeholders and concluded that the Authority is a positive workplace and is already pursuing an open business model with strong partnerships. Suggested areas for improvement included:

- Communications
- Business systems

- Partnerships
- Resources
- Research and data

The final review will be completed by mid-June 2023. The Board agrees that focussing on the communications strategy is a high priority.

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

In an environment of shrinking government funds, the Board recognises there are opportunities to seek funds from alternative sources but needs to ensure there is an ethical and practical approach to accepting and managing such funds. The Community Consultative Committee (CCC) has developed a draft policy on ethical funding approaches for the Board's consideration. This other funding could include grants, donations and sponsorships for discrete projects. The CCC was clear that external funding should not replace funds from government for core responsibilities. The Board endorsed a case-by-case assessment of funding proposals as recommended by the CCC and thanked them for their considered work. The Board will refine and consider this work within existing government funding frameworks before finalising the policy.

### **Updating policies and guidelines**

The Board approved a process to update various policies and guidelines. This is an opportunity to contemporise and ensure efficacy of these documents and improve access for the public. Documents no longer relevant will be archived and removed from the website. As an example, an update to Policy Statement No 8 – Disposal of timber from within the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area was approved. This policy provides a clear position that any timber legally felled or fallen in the World Heritage Area should be left in-situ and would only be removed off site or outside the Area under exceptional circumstances.

### **Board meeting 124 will be held in August.**

*For more information, please phone 07 4241 0500 or email [wettropics@wtma.qld.gov.au](mailto:wettropics@wtma.qld.gov.au)*