



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

BOARD COMMUNIQUE 116

The Board of Directors of the Wet Tropics Management Authority (the Authority) met via Zoom on 4 and 5 August 2021. Key items discussed included the:

- **Landscape restoration symposium**
- **2021 Rainforest Aboriginal People's Regional Forum**
- **Climate action initiatives**
- **18th Cassowary Awards**
- **Partnership Agreement with Queensland Parks Wildlife Service and Partnerships**
- **Wet Tropics Management Plan Guideline amendments**

Landscape Restoration Symposium on 13 and 14 September

Following on from the [Accept, Act, Adapt: Climate Adaptation Plan for the Wet Tropics 2020–2030](#) and in line with the Authority's climate action objectives, a two-day symposium will be held at Tinaroo on the Atherton Tablelands and feature a field trip visiting various restoration sites. The Board welcomed news that the symposium will feature a yarning circle with Traditional Custodians led by an Indigenous facilitator. This will focus on Indigenous approaches and practices for landscape restoration. The event will be live streamed on the second day to engage with a broader audience. The Board are looking forward to participating in the event and note its relevance to the [UN Decade of Restoration](#).

2021 Rainforest Aboriginal People's Regional Forum

More than 60 people from across 14 Rainforest Aboriginal organisations, attended the three-day Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples' Regional Forum in Cairns on 23 to 25 July. It was the fourth forum hosted by the Authority in the last five years. As a champion for the Refresh of the Regional Agreement, the Honourable Craig Crawford, Member for Barron River and Minister for Seniors and Disability Services and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, gave the opening address. The forum heard updates from Terrain NRM, DATSIP, North Queensland Land Council and QPWS&P. There was also a presentation from Mr Mick Gooda and Dr Jackie Huggins, co-chairs of the Pathway to Treaty committee. The forum provided an opportunity for in-depth discussion amongst Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples who resolved to continue the refresh of the Regional Agreement and explore future governance arrangements with a focus on youth involvement. Participants expressed their gratitude for the opportunity to have meaningful involvement with management of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area. The Board were delighted with the success and outcomes of the event and thanked Professor Allan Dale, Dr Cath Moran, members of the Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples Think Tank (RAPTT), Authority staff and participants for their work in bringing together the forum.

Climate action initiatives

The Board were briefed about the Authority's core work in climate actions with an update on the Climate Action grants, potential landscape restoration initiatives and the 2020-21 State of the Wet Tropics report. The report will focus on landscape restoration and will feature a chapter on Healing Country – restoration from an Indigenous Perspective. The Board supported the focus of the report and its alignment with the themes of symposium. The Board also emphasised the need for full integration with the aspirations of Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples (RAP). The Authority has advertised [Climate Action Grants](#) and expressions of interest close on the 15 August 2021. Funding of up to \$15,000 will support grants that align to the [Climate Adaptation Plan for the Wet Tropics 2020–2030](#) and have been established to support practical projects that build the evidence base for investments and interventions to improve climate resilience in the Wet Tropics bioregion. The Board was pleased that the grants have received a lot of interest from stakeholders and the media.

18th Cassowary Awards

The Authority's prestigious Cassowary Awards were held in Cairns on 19 June 2021 at the Tanks Arts Centre. The Board reflected on the success and learnings from the event. More than 50 nominations were received for nine categories, which celebrate and support the outstanding contributions made towards the conservation and presentation of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area. The Board were delighted with the calibre of nominations, the sponsorship support this year and the presentation of the event. A list of winners is available [here](#).

Partnership Agreement with Queensland Parks Wildlife Service and Partnerships

The Board reviewed the continued delivery of outcomes under the partnership agreement and its new governance structure. The Partnership Agreement includes a number of projects that the two organisations work on closely together. The range of projects include climate adaptation, fire management, mountaintop monitoring, Indigenous involvement, permit operations, park planning, presentation and strategic compliance. The Board noted that Indigenous employment targets within the QPWS&P Northern Region have been exceeded. The Authority and QPWS&P are now looking at additional components to include in the partnership agreement such as sustainable career paths for Indigenous staff. The Authority continues to work closely with the QPWS&P to implement projects under the agreement.

Wet Tropics Management Plan guideline amendments

The Board reviewed two guidelines under the Authority's Wet Tropics Management Plan 1998. Section 62 Guideline 3 outlines protocols for consulting Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples particularly concerned with land in the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area. A new Section 62 Guideline was developed that outlines protocols for translocating a crustacean or fish in the Wet Tropics of Queensland World Heritage Area. It takes into consideration the challenges and implications of climate change in the environment and how this relates to previous translocation practices. It is anticipated these will come into effect in the near future.

Acknowledging all the work of outgoing Chair, Ms Leslie Shirreffs PSM

Ms Leslie Shirreffs PSM chaired her final meeting for the Wet Tropics Management Authority Board at meeting #116. She reflected on her six years in the position and the many achievements of the Board during her term. These included the Wet Tropics Management Plan review, meaningful relationships with Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples, the Accept Act Adapt initiative, the re-initiation of Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples regional forums, Cassowary Awards, Sustainable Tourism Plan, securing funding for the yellow crazy ant eradication program, the reconstituted Community Consultative and Scientific Advisory Committees, and meaningful productive relationships with community, tourism industry, and government agencies. Leslie thanked the Board and Authority staff for the privilege of working with them. Leslie's term ends on 23 September 2021. Directors and observers from the State and Commonwealth Governments acknowledged Leslie's outstanding chairing efforts, her good humour, vision, tenacity and the kindness and generosity brought to the role. Her peers particularly acknowledged her work in progressing the rights and interests of Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples and improving the protection and presentation of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area.

Board meeting 117 will be held on 17 and 18 November 2021.

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