



Communiqué
Board Meeting No 102
15 January 2018

The Board of the Wet Tropics Management Authority had their first meeting for 2018 in Cairns on Monday, 15 January. The meeting replaced the scheduled November meeting which was delayed due to the Queensland election.

A key focus of the meeting was the review of the Wet Tropics Management Plan. The Board considered and approved the release of the 'Wet Tropics Management Plan Review Phase 1 Consultation' report. The board was heartened by the strong community engagement in the consultation process, including more than 30 workshops and information sessions with Rainforest Aboriginal people, direct mail to over 2,500 landholders, neighbours and other stakeholders, face to face meetings with all local governments and relevant State and Commonwealth departments, an on-line public survey and contracted consultancies with the tourism and conservation sectors. The Authority will now draft an amendment plan taking into consideration the comments from the more than 90 submissions received. It is anticipated the draft amendment plan will be released for consultation in late 2018.

The Chairs of the Community Consultative Committee and the Scientific Advisory Committee updated the Board on recent meetings, including issues related to cassowary post-release monitoring, fire management education, climate adaptation workshop and development of an Aboriginal research protocol for activities on traditional country in the World Heritage Area. The Board thanked the Chairs for their reports and reiterated the value and benefit they received from the two committees.

A report was presented on the successful Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples Workshop at Palm Cove, which was attended by some 60 representatives of regional Native Title bodies, senior government officials, North Queensland Land Council (NQLC) and Terrain NRM. This is the first regional gathering of Traditional Owners for some years, and participants appreciated the opportunity to discuss issues relating to Aboriginal land and cultural management and to provide feedback to the Plan review. The workshop resolved to refresh the Regional Agreement, signed by State and Commonwealth governments and elders in 2005. The Authority is now progressing outcomes and actions from the workshop, in collaboration with the NQLC.

Directors were updated on the Yellow Crazy Ant (YCA) Eradication Program and the successes experienced to date. It was encouraging to learn that one site - Wiseman West - has been declared as YCA free, with another two sites on track for eradication in 2018. However increased vigilance has resulted in the discovery of another five areas of infestation. The sites have been fully surveyed and treatment is now in progress. As a result of the joint funding provided by the Commonwealth and State governments, the Authority has been able to implement innovative and comprehensive techniques for achieving eradication and identifying areas of infestation.

The Wet Tropics Tour Guide School will be held on Mandingalbay Yidinji Country on the 16-17 March 2018. This is the first guide school that will be held on-country and co-hosted by an Aboriginal organisation; the Mandingalbay Yidinji Aboriginal Corporation (MYAC). MYAC will jointly plan and co-facilitate the field school in partnership with Savannah Guides. The guide school will support Indigenous Rangers to progress through the program to achieve certification as Wet Tropics Guides.

The Board were briefed on the upcoming Cassowary Awards, which were also delayed as a result of the State election and are now rescheduled for 10 March. The Authority was congratulated by the Board for the high calibre entries and the significant sponsorship secured for the event. The Board looked forward to the gala awards night as a celebration of those who contribute to the World Heritage Area, and one of the premiere events of the Wet Tropics calendar.

The next Board meeting will be held on 8 and 9 March 2018.