



Communiqué
Board Meeting No 101
17-18 August 2017

The Board of the Wet Tropics Management Authority met in Cardwell on 17-18 August 2017. They were graciously hosted by the Giringun Aboriginal Corporation, and it was the first time this Board has met on Girramay Country.

Over the course of the two days of meetings and site visits, the Board considered a number of important strategies and plans.

Directors engaged in a focused workshop examining the good progress of the Wet Tropics Plan Review considering submissions made during the first round of formal consultation. Community response has been significant, with 82 formal submissions received, many more attending meetings, workshops and completing the website survey. The Board acknowledged the effort people had put into responding, suggesting that the consultation was successful in raising community awareness of the draft Plan and in providing people and organisations with an opportunity to express their views. It was noted that there was still ongoing consultation with Rainforest Aboriginal people, and as the outcomes from that consultation come through the Board will take this into consideration as well.

The Board considered the range of strategic issues raised in the submissions and, in response, will work with partners and the public to prepare a draft Wet Tropics Management Plan. To assist understanding of the final Plan, the Board proposed that it also include the vision and policy directions of the Authority to meet its World Heritage obligations.

A review of the Wet Tropics Tour Guide Program was endorsed, supporting the provider *Savannah Guides* to deliver an enhanced program that includes professional accreditation.

Board Directors Phil Rist and Leah Talbot informed the Board about the inaugural meeting of the Indigenous Advisory Members (I-AM). This group, consisting of the Indigenous members of the Authority's Board and committees, met to discuss Rainforest Aboriginal people's aspirations and engagement in the management of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area. The I-AM's focus is to deliver on-ground outcomes for Rainforest Aboriginal people and support the Authority in identifying the appropriate tools to achieve this. The I-AM would like to see the 'rubber hit the road' in terms of a clear Aboriginal partnerships service model, appropriate recognition of Aboriginal tradition in policy and management planning; and significant long-term investment in Rainforest Aboriginal people to support their contribution to cultural and natural management within the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area.

The Chairs of the Community Consultative Committee (CCC) and the Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) advised the Board of the success of their recent meetings. The CCC recommended the Authority increase communication products on the impacts of climate change and adaptation strategies for the broader community. The Community Consultative Committee also emphasised community concerns regarding the impact of fire regimes, illegal dumping on the Gilles Range Road, and the need for monitoring cassowaries released from refuge.

The SAC reinforced the importance on providing clear guidance on climate adaptation. A multi-disciplinary expert workshop will be held later in the year, engaging both western science and traditional (tribal) knowledge, to manage for the adaptation and resilience of the World Heritage Area.

Directors were updated on the implementation of the Authority's Yellow Crazy Ant Eradication program, including enhanced engagement with the sugarcane industry. Intensive treatment programs have been delivered, based on the outcomes of the research program underway with James Cook University. The Board congratulated the Authority's Yellow Crazy Ant team on the rapid implementation of the program and successful treatment activities to date.

An update on the prestigious *Cassowary Awards* set for 25 November 2017 was provided. This event celebrates the contributions made by the wider community into the protection and presentation of the World Heritage Area. Nominations close on 8 September 2017 and a venue for the awards ceremony is currently being explored.

The Board were excited by the *Snap the Tropic's* competition that was launched. This competition invites the community to showcase the splendour of the tropical rainforest and what it means to them – to share why they choose to live in this unique region, and what makes them want to wait a while and linger longer on a rainforest walk. The competition is being supported by the Cairns Regional Council and photos can be submitted directly onto the Wet Tropics Management Authority website at <http://www.wettropics.gov.au> on the 'Snap the Tropics' link.

Directors and staff of the Wet Tropics Management Authority were very grateful to the Girringun Aboriginal Corporation and extended their sincere appreciation to the Chair, Board and staff of the Girringun Aboriginal Corporation for their warm hospitality during meeting. It was a privilege to have been shown through the native species nursery, Girringun Arts Centre and Murray Falls and Girramay National Park during their two days meeting on country.

Everyone was impressed by, and appreciative of, the long standing positive relationships Girringun Aboriginal Corporation has with both the Authority and their many other partners and look forward to working together toward Girringun Aboriginal Corporation's aspirations and continuing to build on a strong relationship.

The next Board meeting will be held on 23 and 24 November 2017.