



Communiqué

Board Meeting No 99

7 March 2017

The Board of the Wet Tropics Management Authority held their first meeting for the year in Cairns on 7 March 2017, and a number of important strategies and plans were considered by the directors over the course of the day.

During the morning session, directors were guided through the draft Wet Tropics Presentation Strategy. The draft strategy seeks to identify new ways and means of delivering high standards of presenting World Heritage values through identifying actions the Authority can take to improve its work with our partners. The Board is looking to form strong partnerships to improve branding and respond to visitor expectations. The role of visitor information centres, tour guides and volunteers is critical to the success of connecting visitors to the World Heritage Area, its value and experience opportunities.

In the afternoon session, directors endorsed the notification process to commence the Wet Tropics Management Plan review by the end of March 2017. The statutory Plan provides for protection of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area, and the 10-year review creates an opportunity for the Authority to update and improve the Plan operations. The notification will trigger the commencement of a comprehensive consultation process with key stakeholders including the tourism industry, local government, conservation sector, infrastructure providers and the broader community. As part of this consultation, preliminary conversations with some of the Rainforest Aboriginal representative organisations have commenced.

The Board supported the intention for the Plan to improve its operation with regard to Aboriginal Traditions, and the role of Rainforest Aboriginal people in management of the natural and cultural values of the World Heritage Area.

Respective Chairs of the newly re-established Community Consultative Committee and Scientific Advisory Committee reported back on the outcomes of their meetings. It is already apparent that there is great value in the ideas and advice provided by these committees to assist the Board in their decision-making.

The Board endorsed funding for 16 Australian post graduate projects that supports environmental, social and cultural research. This research, funded by the Wet Tropics Management Authority Student Research Scheme, has the potential to inform future management policy of the Area.

Directors were updated on the progress of the yellow crazy ant eradication program, including the ramping up of the program and newly established field office to house additional personnel to implement the upcoming baiting and monitoring program.

The Chair of the Authority, Leslie Shirreffs and Executive Director, Scott Buchanan have continued to strengthen relationships for the organisation through a series of meetings with regional organisations including Cairns Regional Council, the Reef and Rainforest Research Centre (RRRC), Jabalbina Yalanji Aboriginal Corporation, Far North Queensland and Torres Strait Regional Development Australia and the Aboriginal Development Benefits Trust.

Board members are looking forward to next Monday night's 'Science in the pub', where the link between Australia's most famous fossil site and the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area will be revealed. Board Director, Professor Iain Gordon and Professor Mike Archer will share stories about the region's dynamic and diverse environment. Science in the Pub is being held at the Cape York Hotel from 6.30pm to 7.30pm on 13 March 2017 and you can register [here](#).

The next Board meeting is scheduled for May 2017.