

## **STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT**

### **TO ESTABLISH THE WET TROPICS RESTORATION ALLIANCE**

“Ensuring Wet Tropics landscapes thrive under a changing climate”

#### **Our commitment**

The Wet Tropics Restoration Alliance (the Alliance) is a coalition of organisations working together to ensure Wet Tropics landscapes and the wildlife they support thrive under a changing and unstable climate by building the capacity for a thriving community to achieve its full social, ecological and financial potential.

We work as partners to reverse the decline of our unique biodiversity and use nature-based and traditional ecological solutions, including revegetation and conservation outside reserves, to address our climate emergency.

The next ten years is our window to climate proof critical areas of the Wet Tropics. With increased investment and significant on-ground actions by Alliance members in target areas, we can help secure the future of the world’s oldest continuously surviving tropical forests, while building economic, cultural and social resilience.

#### **Why we need an Alliance**

Many organisations currently work across the Wet Tropics region to protect, restore and repair our unique landscapes, doing fantastic work to connect and restore land outside of existing protected areas.

However, the challenges for their work are many. The scale of restoration required to save Wet Tropics forests is hampered by limited short-term funding, inconsistent access to information on best practice and emerging environmental markets, and a restoration community whose efforts are under-recognised in terms of the immense contribution they make to the region’s economy and environment. Critically, it is imperative that Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples are provided more opportunities to lead and co-develop land restoration initiatives.

Organisations identified a desire for a coordinated and supported network in the region including landholders, Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples, industry, government, researchers and investors who have common goals and aspirations to champion restoration efforts across the Wet Tropics.

#### **What we want to achieve**

Western and traditional science have identified where we need to urgently restore Wet Tropics forests to limit and reverse the declines of wildlife and ecosystem services. As the climate warms, we believe this critical resilience work must occur over the next decade.

The Alliance will take a strategic and scientific approach to landscape conservation by supporting new and existing forest corridors, creating protective buffers around reserves, and preserving remnant vegetation across the landscape. Restoring ecological functions in priority natural areas provides refuges for unique biodiversity such as our endemic ferns and orchids, possums and tree-kangaroos.

To achieve this, the Alliance will align conservation efforts more strategically to achieve real impact on the ground and scale up investment through natural capital markets and other means. The Alliance will utilise world-leading research and capacity building to secure a better future for our communities, economies, landscapes and wildlife.

Success of our work will be guided by science-based targets (environmental, economic, cultural and social) within a Wet Tropics Restoration Alliance Investment Strategy that will be developed during 2022–2023.

### **How we will work together**

The Alliance is about supporting our members' existing work and developing capacity and income streams. We recognise that people's interest and passion for conservation in their local patch is a key component of improving the resilience of the Wet Tropics.

The Alliance is also about identifying key areas where upscaled investment and on-ground action is required. This will include areas of the landscape that science tells us will be relatively more 'stable' under a changing climate.

These key areas will be identified through the investment strategy.

Wet Tropics Management Authority, Terrain NRM and James Cook University have agreed to resource the foundational work. The role of these partners is to provide ongoing support to members to maximise their impact by scaling up on-ground action and investment, coordination and knowledge sharing.

Alliance members include restoration practitioners and enterprises, Traditional Custodians, land managers, investors and researchers with an interest in protecting, connecting and restoring healthy landscapes across the Wet Tropics for nature and people.

### **Benefits to Alliance members**

There is no cost to join the Alliance, but membership can provide many benefits.

Restoration enterprises, practitioners, and landholders will benefit through:

- A network including (at a minimum) an annual get-together
- Knowledge sharing and best-practice learnings at field days, symposiums and workshops
- New funding opportunities and how they are relevant to your interests
- A 'match-making' service for investors and Alliance members

Investors will benefit through:

- Easy access to a unique collaboration that brings together relevant stakeholders
- An investment strategy that identifies priority areas and activities and matches investors with restorers and landholders

Traditional Custodians will benefit through:

- A co-design process to ensure that Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples' aspirations are at the heart of the Alliance
- A forum that enables, and values, the sharing of traditional ecological knowledge.