
MINUTES
WTMA BOARD MEETING NO. 80: 15 & 16 MARCH 2010

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| PRESENT: | Assoc. Professor Peter Valentine | Chair |
| | Dr Elaine Harding | Director |
| | Ms Allison Halliday | Director |
| | Mr Russell Butler Snr | Director |
| | Dr Alastair Birtles | Observer |
| | Mr Andrew Maclean | Executive Director |
| | Mr Peter Ogilvie | QPWS Observer |
| | Mr Wolf Sievers | QPWS Observer |
| | Ms Bryony Barnett | Chair CCC (via teleconference Agenda Item 3.3 and 6.5) |
| | Prof. Paul Gadek | Chair SAC |

WTMA STAFF: Mr Max Chappell
Dr Paul Chantrill
Mr Nigel Hedgcock
Ms Ellen Weber
Ms Tracy Laird

Agenda Item 2.1 Chairperson's Welcome and Introduction

The Chair opened the meeting at 11.00am. Bryony Barnett was not able to be present in person at the meeting; however a telephone link was made to enable her to present the Community Consultative Committee report (Agenda Item 3.3) and to participate in the Community Engagement paper (Agenda Item 6.5).

Agenda Item 2.2 Apologies

Apologies were received from Ian Mason and Veronica Blazely (DEWHA), Alena Constantine (RET), Jeff Gillies (Tourism Queensland) and Troy Wyles Whelan (RAAC representative).

Associate Professor Peter Valentine
Chair

Dated:

The Chair expressed his appreciation, especially to Alastair Birtles for his taking on the role and duties of Acting Chair for the past nine months until the lengthy process for the Chair appointment had been finalised. The Chair commented that he was delighted to be finally here and looked forward to working with WTMA Directors, our World Heritage partners at QPWS, Wolf Sievers and Peter Ogilvie, other Board Observers and WMTA staff over the next three years.

Agenda Item 2.3 Previous Minutes Meeting No. 79: 9 & 10 November 2009

The Chair referred to the minutes of the previous meeting.

Alastair Birtles commented that the trial joint meeting between the Northern Tourism Industry Forum and TILG had not yet happened (Agenda Item 4.3).

The following amendments were made to Board Meeting No. 79:

Page 16 Under 3.5 Scientific Advisory Committee, 4th paragraph: Amend: Take out last sentence “the Board agreed that the Authority’s role in this issue was primarily one of community education” and replace with: “and agreed that Community education was an important component of the weed eradication program in the Whyanbeel catchment”.

RESOLUTION:

The Board confirmed the Ordinary minutes from Meeting No. 79 and endorsed the Ordinary minutes of meeting 78 as amended.

Agenda Item 2.4 Actions Arising

The Chair referred to the Actions Arising from the previous meeting and the following comments and amendments were made:

The Board commented on the State Coastal Plan and the new *Sustainable Planning Act* and noted recent CSLG concerns.

78/6.2 Alastair Birtles requested information on any impacts or implications on the Wet Tropics WH values and the *Wet Tropics Management Plan* due to the *Sustainable Planning Act 2009*. The Board noted CSLG concerns (Agenda Item 6.2) and requested additional information on coastal planning issues adjacent to the WTQWHA.

Associate Professor Peter Valentine
Chair

Dated:

79/4.2 and 79/7.1 Both are completed and can now be taken off Actions Arising.

RESOLUTION:

The Board noted the status of Actions Arising from previous Board Resolutions, as updated.

Agenda Item 3.1 Chair's Report

Peter Valentine gave a verbal report to the Board on the following matters:

- advised that both the Hon. Kate Jones, Minister for Climate Change and Sustainability, and James Cook University released media statements announcing his appointment as WTMA Chair
- was interviewed on FNQ Breakfast radio and a small article was published in the Cairns Post
- his first official duty as Chair was to brief the Hon. Kate Jones on wet tropics matters
- had the opportunity to attend the recent RAAC meeting at Yungaburra and was very pleased to listen to views of a number of Rainforest Aboriginal People
- has decided it not appropriate for him to continue his role on the WTMA Scientific Advisory Committee and reluctantly resigned from the committee. He will try to attend one meeting a year of each of the Advisory committee and liaison groups to enable him to get a sense of the breadth of issues of interest and concern to the committees
- requested that his letter to the Hon Peter Garrett regarding MTSRF funding for rainforest research be included with the in-camera minutes of the Board for the information of directors and observers; and
- advised that he is considering how the Board agenda may be restructured to ensure an appropriate focus on the key elements of the primary goal for the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area and would welcome suggestions from Directors.

RESOLUTION:

The Board noted the Chair's report.

Associate Professor Peter Valentine
Chair

Dated:

Agenda Item 3.2 Executive Director's Report

The Authority's Executive Director, Andrew Maclean, presented his report, as tabled and provided further updates as follows:

- has exchanged correspondence with the Mayor of the Cairns Regional Council and the Member of the Barron River regarding the condition of the Crystal Cascades facility
- advised that Mayor Val Schier recently travelled to Canberra to meet with the Treasurer Wayne Swan to seek support for a Cairns Cultural Heritage precinct at Trinity Inlet and that he had encouraged her to consider the opportunity for inclusion of World Heritage themes in any future cultural centre; and
- gave an update on Lemuroid Ringtail Possum monitoring at Mt. Lewis and indicated that researchers were hoping to initiate a monitoring program with QPWS staff within the next month.

RESOLUTION:

The Board:

- *noted the Executive Director's report*
- *requested the Executive Director seek a formal response from the Cassowary Recovery Team regarding the Board endorsed cassowary communiqué; and*
- *requested that the Authority write a letter to the Cassowary Coast Regional Council with reference to the December inspection of the Kirrama Range Road, welcoming progress in relation to re-opening the road, emphasising the importance of the road to various stakeholders and requesting an update on the progress of opening the road.*

Agenda Item 3.3 Community Consultative Committee

The Chair of the CCC, Bryony Barnett, presented the CCC minutes via telephone. The following points of interest and concern were:

- lack of MTSRF funded rainforest research after June 2010 and that the CCC were keen to provide assistance where necessary to highlight the need for continued research to ensure knowledge transfer to management agencies, communities and other users is maintained
- public availability of CCC minutes on the WTMA website

Associate Professor Peter Valentine
Chair

Dated:

- some CCC members were disappointed about the limited opportunity by WTMA to participate in the development of Caring for Our County bids, particularly regarding feral pig management and in the southern part of the WTQWHA; and
- the perceived retreat of the public face of QPWS in providing visitor information communication given they had moved this service from the ground floor of their Sheriden Street office to the third floor of the building.

The Chair commented after Bryony's presentation that the August Board meeting in Townsville had great potential to improve relationships at the southern end of the Area.

Wolf Sievers advised that QPWS officers in Brisbane as well as the Wet Tropics region were investigating opportunities to partner with Visitor Centres to provide National Parks information in the future.

RESOLUTION:

The Board:

- *noted the CCC minutes for the 5 March 2010*
- *noted the implications of the Right to Information Act for the CCC minutes*
- *noted the concern raised by the CCC about potential lack of MTSRF funding*
- *noted the CCC were concerned about the retreat of the public face of QPWS and would like QPWS to note their concern*
- *noted the current CCC membership expires in March 2010*
- *noted with pleasure the CCC preparedness to continue their role as active members; and*
- *agreed to extend the term of the current CCC for six months in the first instance.*

The Board thanked Bryony Barnett for her report.

Associate Professor Peter Valentine
Chair

Dated:

Agenda Item 3.4 Rainforest Aboriginal Advisory Committee

Nigel Hedgcock addressed the Board on the RAAC recommendations, as tabled.

RESOLUTION:

The Board:

- *noted that the RAAC met on 1-3 March 2010 (Attachment 3.4(1))*
- *noted Resolution 1 and encourages RAAC to seek a Rainforest Aboriginal AWHIN representative on AWHAC and to support Margaret Freeman in the interim until her replacement*
- *noted Resolution 2 for RAAC to support Joann Schmider to represent Rainforest Aboriginal people on the RPC for the FNQ Regional Plan 2031*
- *endorsed the Authority to work with DEWHA and DERM to brief Ministers on an appropriate appointment consultation process reflecting Resolution 3*
- *recognised the intent of Resolution 4 to provide Indigenous Directors with cultural support from Elders and endorsed a Board protocol for all Directors to seek Chair approval to invite advisory support from time to time*
- *supported the Authority to continue working with Terrain NRM and DERM on collaborative CFoC proposals and to ensure that Traditional Owners are engaged in the development and delivery of projects as much as possible (Resolution 5)*
- *endorsed the Authority to work with the Rainforest Aboriginal leadership group in finalising the RAAC review as soon as possible, including consideration of the RAAC Resolution 6*
- *recognised the general principle of Resolution 7 is to provide for a coordinated and structured approach for Traditional Owner engagement in NRM in the Wet Tropics region across all levels of government and NGOs and endorsed the Authority to work with Rainforest Aboriginal people, government agencies and Terrain to prepare a Board paper; and*

Associate Professor Peter Valentine
Chair

Dated:

- *noted Resolution 8 and requested further advice from RAAC.*

Agenda Item 3.5 Scientific Advisory Committee

The Chair of the Scientific Advisory Committee Prof. Paul Gadek addressed the Board and the minutes of the meeting held on 9 March were tabled at the meeting. Prof Gadek made the following additional comments:

- congratulated the Chair on his appointment to the WTMA Board
- SAC members provided input into the Draft Wet Tropics Research Strategy and endorsed the approach taken to develop the strategy; as well as the use of the Strategy as a tool for negotiating research outcomes for the Authority
- provided advice on the scientific merit of the World Heritage CfOC bids currently being developed
- advised that SAC members were extremely concerned about the apparent lack of continued CERF investment into rainforest research programs and feared that the new 'hub' program would dilute investment and diminish capacity to deliver integrated science and knowledge; and
- SAC agreed that the Chair of SAC should write a letter to the Hon. Peter Garrett MP AM seeking his assurances for continued appropriate levels of investment into research programs for the WTQWHA.

The Executive Director advised that the Wet Tropics Research Strategy has developed during its preparation over the past few months in response to comment from SAC members as well as the changing research context in the region, to encompass a broader scope than the previous Research and Information Needs report. He advised that the Authority proposes to release a draft of the Wet Tropics Research Strategy for comment that will have the benefit of ensuring wider stakeholder engagement about WTMA's future roles in research and also establishing a platform for WTMA's engagement in priority setting for the CERF investment.

The Chair of WTMA asked that the Directors be provided with a copy of the draft of WTMA research strategy for review and comment prior to distribution to stakeholders. The Executive Director advised that it should be possible to distribute the draft WTMA research strategy to the Board in the next two weeks for comment and then an out-of-session meeting can be arranged.

Peter Ogilvie suggested that in the review of the SAC and other WTMA committees, that the Authority should investigate the operational guidelines and framework of other World Heritage properties in Australia.

Associate Professor Peter Valentine
Chair

Dated:

The Chair of WTMA formally resigned from the SAC, adding that he would be pleased to be invited to attend meetings on an occasional basis in the future.

RESOLUTION:

The Board:

- *noted the SAC minutes from 9 March 2010*
- *noted the current SAC membership expires in March 2010*
- *noted with pleasure the SAC preparedness to continue as active members*
- *agreed to extend the term of the current SAC for six months in the first instance; and*
- *expressed their appreciation to the SAC for their letter to the Minister regarding Rainforest Research funding.*

At this stage of the meeting the WTMA Chair opened a discussion about the MTSRF funding. He advised he had an opportunity to discuss this issue with Peter Wright from Minister Garrett's office and be briefed on the future rainforest research funding for the region. The Minister's office advised that the new guidelines would be available at the end of March and this would include invitations from research institutions to express their interest in tendering for funds to undertake DEWHA research priorities through the new hub arrangements.

RESOLUTION:

The Board:

- *expressed its unanimous and grave concern that after June 2010 and the end of MTSRF there has been no specific focus on tropical rainforest research nor any assurance about the quantum of such support*
- *called on the Commonwealth Government to urgently reassure the community that an appropriate level of investment will continue*
- *strongly endorsed the Chair's letter to the Minister in its call for appropriate scale of dedicated investment in tropical rainforest research in northern Queensland with the Authority intimately engaged in the planning and delivery of this funding*

Associate Professor Peter Valentine
Chair

Dated:

- *furthermore strongly endorsed the letter from the Chair of its Scientific Advisory Committee (Professor Paul Gadek)*
- *directed the Executive director to urgently write a letter to DEWHA seeking direct involvement in the identification of tropical rainforest research as a priority in any hub guidelines and with the Authority intimately engaged in the planning and delivery of this funding; and*
- *requested the Authority to prepare a position statement and circulate to WTMA stakeholders.*

Agenda Item 4.1 2009-10 Project Implementation Report

Andrew Maclean addressed the meeting and made the following comments:

- Debra Anderson's temporary appointment as A/Business Manager has been extended to July 2010 to continue administration of the WTMA finance and business management systems
- noted that QRail funds identified in the financial report might be used to support restoration work in the WTMA CFOC vegetation corridor bid; and
- noted that while only \$8K in funds had been allocated the Climate Change Project that this did not take into account significant WTMA officer time.

Alastair Birtles commented that monitoring progress of projects was very important to the Board and asked that the reporting framework be further streamlined so that it was easier to track quarterly updates. The Board endorsed the use of 'traffic lights' to highlight project deliverable progress.

RESOLUTION:

The Board:

- *noted the financial status report current at 30 January 2010 (Attachment 4.1(1) and (2))*
- *noted the mid year work plan progress report (Attachment 4.1(3)); and*
- *noted the mid year report on implementation of the QPWS/WTMA partnership agreement (Attachment 4.1(4)); and*

Associate Professor Peter Valentine
Chair

Dated:

- *and welcomed the intention of QPWS and WTMA to bring a draft Partnership Agreement to May Board meeting to facilitate planning of activities for the following financial year.*

Agenda Item 4.2 Wet Tropics Management Authority Business Plan

Andrew Maclean addressed the Board.

Elaine Harding commented on the useful format used for the 3-year business plan including the deliverable categories and looked forward to seeing further refinement of performance indicators.

Alastair Birtles thought that the draft business plan required some further work. He regarded the business plan a guiding document to assist the Authority to achieve its objectives and part of this would include the inclusion of timed key deliverables that would be achieved over the next three years.

Alastair Birtles further commented that a growth strategy is needed that would be aligned to the business plan and linked to WTMA project goals and targets, particularly in those areas where there were opportunities for external funding investment opportunities.

RESOLUTION:

The Board:

- *noted the first draft business plan at Attachment 4.2(1); and*
- *agreed that Directors would provide comments on content and format directly to the Executive Director by the end of March in preparation for further consideration at the May Board meeting.*

Agenda Item 5.1 Wet Tropics Management Plan

Max Chappell addressed the Board. He advised that there have been delays in completion of the draft Management Plan due to staff changes within the Office of the Queensland Parliamentary Counsel (OQPC).

Associate Professor Peter Valentine
Chair

Dated: _____

RESOLUTION:

The Board:

- *noted the Amendment Plan still requires further drafting and final checks of a legislative drafting nature by OQPC before OQPC prepares the document as a final Wet Tropics Amendment Plan 2010*
- *noted the interim advice with respect to the Sustainable Planning Act 2009 with respect to the Wet Tropics Amendment Plan*
- *endorsed amendments be made to the Amendment Plan or zoning maps as listed below*
- *endorsed a new provision being made in the Amendment Plan to the effect that the Wet Tropics Management Plan is consistent with the FNQ2031 Regional Plan for matters under section 28 Sustainable Planning Act 2009*
- *agreed that once the final Amendment Plan has been prepared it will be determined whether a special Board meeting should be held to consider the Plan or the Plan will be an agenda item of the May Board meeting*
- *noted the Authority will investigate whether the Wet Tropics Ministerial Council can consider and recommend out-of-session (rather than via a meeting) the final Amendment Plan to Governor-in-Council; and*
- *noted that once the Amendment Plan is approved by Governor in Council that the Authority undertakes a review of its delegations register to address any matters resulting from such amendments to the Wet Tropics Management Plan.*

Proposed additional amendments to Amendment Plan or zoning maps

- (a) Amendments to zone D provisions:
Alternative wording at **Attachment 5.1(1)** of Board paper approved to better clarify the management purpose and intended physical and social setting of zone D areas.
- (b) Restricted activity declarations (RADs) and WT permits:
That new RAD provisions be linked to WTMP Part 4 'Permits' such that standard permit procedures are applied in assessing RAD permit applications.

Associate Professor Peter Valentine
Chair

Dated:

(c) Landing aircraft:

That under s26(m), 'landing of an aircraft in a (natural) clearing' no longer to be an allowed activity but under:

- s27 allow landing of an aircraft 'if reasonably necessary for safety purposes'; and
- s33 allow 'landing of an aircraft' under a permit

Benham's Track:

- Benham's Track to be classified as 'presentation (restricted)' to allow TCC to regulate access such that Townsville's water supply can be properly managed while at the same time allowing access under permit to tour groups and locals.
- an amendment under WTMP Part 6 'Issue of permits by entities other Authority' to recognise local governments as entities who can issue WT permits subject to the Authority's delegation.

(d) Cardwell Gap zone C:

- the amendment to zone C width associated with proposed realignment of Bruce Highway near Cardwell Gap – refer Board paper **Attachment 5.1(2)**.

(e) Red Cedar zone D site:

- the removal of zone D classification for 'Red Cedar' visitor site at Gadgarra State Forest due to demise of red cedar feature.

Agenda Item 6.1 Tourism Industry Liaison Group

Andrew Maclean addressed the Board and explained the background to his recommendation that the TILG be abolished in favour of a new broadly based World Heritage Ecotourism Network operating in conjunction with the Northern Region Tourism Forum. The Board declined to support the recommendation, preferring that the *status quo* be retained at least until after the completion of the foreshadowed community engagement strategy and the establishment of the new ecotourism network.

Alastair Birtles commended Paul Chantrill on the new partnership initiatives currently being developed with the tourism industry.

RESOLUTION:

The Board:

Associate Professor Peter Valentine
Chair

Dated: _____

- *affirmed the critical importance of effective and efficient liaison between WTMA and the tourism industry as a means of maintaining high standards of World Heritage presentation and maintenance of high environmental performance standards*
- *approved the establishment of a Wet Tropics World Heritage Ecotourism Network and noted that the concept has the broad support of the industry and agency partners; and directors to communicate their views directly to the Executive Director; and*
- *requested regular reports on implementation progress.*

Agenda Item 6.2 Conservation Sector Liaison Group

Elaine Harding addressed the Board and made the following comments.

- A number of presentations were made at the recent CSLG, including updates on the amended *Vegetation Management Act 1999* and by members of the Quoll Seekers Network; and
- CSLG member Margaret Moorhouse has agreed to coordinate the CSLG and other conservation sector representatives to write a letter about the closing of the QPWS shop and suggested a future World Heritage gateway for WTMA, QPWS and GBRMPA.

The Board supported the exploration of the idea of progressing a World Heritage gateway and visitor centre with our partners i.e. Cairns Regional Council, the Tourism Industry, DERM and GBRMPA and agreed that such a proposal should be incorporated into the draft business plan to ensure resources can be committed to the task.

RESOLUTION:

The Board:

- *noted the CSLG minutes for the 1 March 2010*
- *noted the implications of the Right to information Act for CSLG*
- *noted the concern raised by the CSLG about private land being cleared and the need to raise awareness about the Vegetation Management Act*
- *noted concerns about the QPWS visitor centre relocation and the need for a World Heritage gateway; and*

Associate Professor Peter Valentine
Chair

Dated:

- *advised the CSLG that the Board has asked the Authority to actively engage with a full range of partners to explore this opportunity.*

Agenda Item 6.3 Review of the Rainforest Aboriginal Advisory Committee (RAAC)

Nigel Hedcock gave the Board a briefing of the review of the RAAC. The Board noted that the paper being presented represented a preliminary assessment and that further consultation and analysis was necessary.

The Board agreed that the RAAC Review should be considered as a significant component of the community engagement strategy.

RESOLUTION:

The Board:

- *noted progress and issues of the RAAC review and that recommendations will be presented to the August Board meeting; and*
- *endorsed the Authority to develop proposed new RAAC model.*

Agenda Item 6.4 Caring for our Country funding

Paul Chantrill addressed the Board. Paul attended the World Heritage Managers Conference in Canberra (9-10 March) and was advised at the meeting that CfOC funding for specified WH management will be \$4.5M (not \$6M as indicated in the CfOC 2010-11 Business Plan) due to the need to service other WH Property Advisory Committees and Executive Officers.

RESOLUTION:

The Board:

- *endorsed the concepts for the proposed bids for specified opportunities for WTWHA funding; and*
- *noted progress in the development of Caring for our Country proposals (Attachment 6.4(1)).*

Agenda Item 6.5 Community Engagement

Andrew Maclean briefed the Board.

Associate Professor Peter Valentine
Chair

Dated:

Board members stressed the need to develop a community engagement strategy as a matter of urgency. They were concerned that limited progress had been made to date except for some minor adjustments to WTMA committees.

Board members stressed the importance of maintaining widespread community support for the Authority including building strong partnerships with new and existing stakeholders.

Elaine Harding proposed that the draft strategy should be presented for approval at the November 2010 Board meeting and recommended additional resources be sourced if necessary to complete the task.

RESOLUTION:

The Board:

- *affirmed the vital importance to the Authority's activities of positive engagement with the community*
- *approved the development of a community engagement strategy for the Wet Tropics*
- *endorsed the objectives and scope of the strategy*
- *requested the strategy be ready for the Board by the November Board Meeting; and*
- *requested the Authority to convey this information and timelines for the development of the strategy to the statutory committees and advisory groups.*

Agenda Item 7.1 Protocol for communication between Directors and Board Observers and Authority staff

Due to time constraints this Agenda Item was deferred to the next Board meeting.

Agenda Item 7.2 Future Meeting Dates

Andrew Maclean addressed the Board:

RESOLUTION:

That the Board noted the proposed dates for the meetings to be held for the remainder of 2010.

Associate Professor Peter Valentine
Chair

Dated: