

Policy

Wet Tropics Management Authority

Roads in the Wet Tropics WHA

Policies provide a framework for consistent application and interpretation of legislation and for the management of non-legislative matters by the Wet Tropics Management Authority. Policies are not intended to be applied inflexibly in all circumstances. Individual circumstances may require a modified application of policy.

Background

Within the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area, possibly the most significant man made features are the roads. Their potential to negatively impact upon the World Heritage values of the Area, in all phases of their existence is significant. Most roads serve a multitude of uses - access, freight and more recently, presentation of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area and tourism values. Yet, they are a prime source of disturbance, fragmentation, visual disturbance, intrusion by weeds and feral animals, pollutants, road kill, increases the risk of fire.

The Wet Tropics Management Authority can play a role in aiding to mitigate many of these impacts, by the development, implementation and auditing of a code of practice for road works within the region.

In association with the Department of Main Roads, and a number of stakeholder groups, including other government departments, representatives of local government and the tourism industry, a code of best practice for roadworks in the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area bioregion has been developed. This code, entitled "Roads in the Wet Tropics - Best Practice Manual" relates to all facets of roadworks from design, through planning to construction and maintenance. It is a recognition of the potential impacts of roads, and the joint efforts to mitigate the negative and maximise the positive impacts that roads can have in the region.

Policy statement

To reduce the impacts of roads, the standards set in the "Roadworks in the Tropics Best Practice Manual" will be implemented across the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area. A field guide entitled "Road Maintenance Code of Practice for the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area" (Department of Main Roads) also accompanies the Manual and will be attached as conditions to permits issued by the Wet Tropics Management Authority for the maintenance of roads in the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area.

In addition to standards recommended under the code, site specific conditions may apply to permits issued for road construction and upgrade activities.

Interim protocols for Aboriginal involvement in the permit assessment process will apply in considering road construction and upgrade proposals.

Interpretation

Best practice in planning, design, construction and maintenance will reduce the acts of road construction and maintenance work.

Application of the manual by all authorities undertaking road works should minimise adverse impacts on World Heritage values and the integrity of the Area. There may also be a reduction in maintenance costs as a result of applying some of the recommended maintenance practices.

Implementation

Wet Tropics Management Authority staff will work with Department of Main Roads staff to inform road infrastructure agencies of the existence and contents of the manual, and of the benefits for organisations who comply with its standards. Workshops and pilot areas demonstrating application of the manual standards are proposed.

Experience in the application of the manual and associated codes is likely to lead to recommended modifications. The Board of the Wet Tropics Management Authority may be asked to revisit the document at various times in the future if significant change is considered necessary as a result of growing experience.

Disclaimer

This policy does not necessarily reflect the views of the Australian and Queensland Governments.

Approval

Wet Tropics Board

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