



Communiqué

Board Meeting No 96

3-4 May 2016

The board of the Wet Tropics Management Authority (the Authority) convened in Cairns on 3-4 May 2016.

The first day included a roundtable discussion with Wet Tropics tourism and economic leaders and a gathering with key Wet Tropics community organisations and stakeholders to discuss the Authority's strategic priorities for the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area for 2015-2018. The meetings provided an opportunity to introduce the board to the wider community and gain an understanding of each other's priorities. Opportunities and pathways for future collaboration between organisations were also explored. Meeting participants learnt about the Authority's proposed new approach to meaningful and integrated community engagement with our clients, stakeholders and communities of interest throughout the Wet Tropics region.

The second day of the board meeting focused on the Authority's strategic work programs, including the proposed approach to strengthening community and stakeholder engagement and participation in the conservation, protection and presentation of the World Heritage Area, investment into Wet Tropics Visitor Centres and a reporting framework on the Outstanding Universal Value of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area to inform future State of Wet Tropics reports. Following the success of the 2014/15 report on the [Economic Value of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area](#), the board endorsed the theme for the next report *Rare, threatened and endemic vertebrates of the Wet Tropics*.

A briefing on the current field operations and the yellow crazy ant surveys showed positive results. The board acknowledged the announcement of some funding for the yellow crazy ant eradication program by the Queensland Government as a welcomed starting point. It looked forward to pending announcements from the Commonwealth about additional funding. Once the full quantum of available funding was known, the board would consider the best ways forward in progressing the eradication program.

The board committed to the re-establishing its statutory committees, the Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) and the Community Consultative Committee (CCC), including the nomination process. The Authority's refreshed approach to engagement means that the roles and functions of both the CCC and the SAC will reflect proactive engagement, and stronger interaction between the committees and the board. Through these committees, the Authority hopes to strengthen its role with existing networks and develop new networks, encourage broader local community participation including youth, and generate greater awareness and interest of the Area and its values.

The board was excited to reinvigorate the prestigious Cassowary Awards that highlight and celebrate the contributions made by the wider community into the protection and presentation of the World Heritage Area. The Authority will soon call for nominations from individuals and organisations. More information will be made available in the coming weeks.

Following a discussion on the board priorities for the 2015-18 term, key performance indicators were set. These will guide future work programs and projects for the Authority and be used by the board to measure their success. These can be found on the website at www.wettropics.gov.au

The board was updated on international, national and state responsibilities in the recognition and protection of cultural values in the World Heritage Area. The Authority and Terrain NRM are meeting with Rainforest Aboriginal people in late May to seek advice on current priorities for Rainforest Aboriginal people in the engagement and management of the Wet Tropics and acknowledgement of cultural heritage values.

The next board meeting is scheduled for August 2016, when the board will hold a joint meeting with Terrain NRM.