



## Communiqué

### Board Meeting No 97

23-24 August 2016

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The Board of the Wet Tropics Management Authority (the Authority) convened in Cairns on 23-24 August.

On day one, the first in a series of discussions with tourism, regional development, Aboriginal and environment representatives from the region was held to discuss future resourcing challenges for managing the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area. This was one of the strategic priorities identified by the Board for 2015-2018. The meeting provided an important opportunity for Board members and invited guests to discuss new approaches and initiatives and to explore ideas for resourcing management, presentation and programs within the World Heritage Area that benefit communities, including Rainforest Aboriginal people.

The second day of the Board meeting focused on the Authority's strategic work programs, including the proposed approach to review the Wet Tropics Management Plan for 2018. The Plan provides for statutory protection of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area, and the 10-year review provides an opportunity for the Authority to consult with landholders, Traditional Owners and the broader community to update and improve the Plan operations.

The Board was updated on the yellow crazy ant eradication program, and was pleased that the Australian Government has committed \$7.5M over three years and a further \$1.3M towards eradication from in and around the World Heritage Area. This is on top of the \$3M over three years from the Queensland Government and enables the eradication program to continue. The Board will continue to work with both levels of government to ensure sufficient resources are available.

The 2016-17 business plan and budget was reviewed and endorsed. The plan sets out key milestones and tracks performance against the financial year's deliverables for the Authority.

National Parks, Sport and Racing (through QPWS) and the Wet Tropics Management Authority have signed a three year partnership agreement that defines how the two entities will work together with respect to operational delivery, planning, and policy matters relevant to the World Heritage Area. The new agreement encourages collaboration, active consultation and engagement between the two agencies and Traditional Owners, and fulfils a key Board priority.

An update on the prestigious Cassowary Awards set for 3 December 2016 was provided, and Board members were excited to see progress in both the number of nominations and sponsorships received. This event celebrates the contributions made by the wider community into the protection and presentation of the World Heritage Area. Nominations close on 31 August 2016 and a venue for the awards ceremony is currently being explored.

The Board discussed the upcoming joint meeting with Terrain NRM which is being held at Mission Beach. The morning session includes a site field trip to discuss key shared issues including cassowary protection and management and ecological corridors. The formal meeting will explore shared responsibilities on strategic pest management, threatened species, and engagement with Rainforest Aboriginal people.

Board directors noted progress on strategic Aboriginal engagement in the Wet Tropics area. Traditional Owners attended an informal gathering hosted by the Authority and Terrain NRM to explore options for future engagement. The participants involved in the process welcomed the genuine effort from the Authority and Terrain NRM to re-engage in regional dialogue.

The Board was keen to hold a learning day at their next meeting to better understand the complexity of issues and potential future directions. The next Board meeting is scheduled for December 2016.