



## **WET TROPICS MINISTERIAL FORUM NO 26**

### **COMMUNIQUÉ**

The World Heritage listed rainforests of the Wet Tropics were the subject of discussion when the Wet Tropics Ministerial Forum held its 26th meeting in Sydney on 25 November 2016.

The Forum, comprising Australian and Queensland Environment Ministers, meets annually to provide oversight to the strategic operation of the Wet Tropics Management Authority, approve annual budgets and consider future directions for meeting the property's World Heritage obligations.

A key focus of the Ministers' discussions was the eradication of yellow crazy ants from the World Heritage Area. The respective governments have committed a combined total of \$11.8 million over three years to the eradication program (Commonwealth \$8.8M which includes \$7.5M for eradication and \$1.3M for community education and capacity development, and Queensland \$3.013M).

The new funding means that the already successful program will continue and be expanded.

The scaling up of this program will ensure threats to the World Heritage values from one of the world's most invasive species are addressed. It will also allow the Wet Tropics Management Authority to build on its current mobilisation of farmers, local residents, Traditional Owners and the community to achieve local eradication in and adjacent to the World Heritage Area.

The Ministers also welcomed the appointment of the new board since the last forum meeting, and supported the Board's priorities of bringing stronger engagement with Rainforest Aboriginal people and the broader community, enhancing tourism opportunities and taking action on climate change impacts and resilience.

The upcoming 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of World Heritage Listing in 2018 was discussed and the forum noted that it presents significant opportunities to raise awareness of World Heritage values and the benefits of World Heritage to the region, Australia and the world.

The Ministerial Forum agreed to work to identify and progress initiatives for maximizing the benefits of a 30 year celebration.

Membership of the Wet Tropics Ministerial Forum comprises the Hon Dr Steven Miles MP, Queensland Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection (Chair), and Hon Josh Frydenberg MP, Commonwealth Minister for the Environment and Energy. Ms Leslie Shirreffs, Chair, Wet Tropics Management Authority, attends the forum as Secretariat.

## **Background**

The Wet Tropics World Heritage Area was inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1988. It stretches over 900,000 hectares from Cooktown to Townsville.

It plays a strong role in the social, environmental and economic life of the far north Queensland community.

In 2013, an international scientific study identified the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area as the second most irreplaceable natural World Heritage site on the planet.

## **Contact details**

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