
Meeting communiqué – August 2017

Gondwana Rainforests of Australia World Heritage Area Technical and Scientific Advisory Committee and Community Advisory Committee



The Gondwana Rainforests Advisory Committees met in Brisbane on Thursday 3 August and Friday 4 August. The Advisory Committees:

1. Invite Minister Miles, Minister Upton and Minister Frydenberg to attend meetings to discuss the protection and management of the Gondwana Rainforests. Meeting dates have been drafted until October 2019.
2. Commend the managing agencies on the development of a **strategic agenda for advisory committee operations** for the term to October 2019. The focus on strategic planning, while allowing for addressing emerging issues, is welcome and the committees look forward to the comprehensive yet flexible program over their forthcoming terms.
3. Appreciate the efforts to address concerns about the **Scenic Rim Trail**, and provide the following advice, pending receipt of further details about the proposal and opportunities to comment:
 - Insufficient detail was provided to address some members' concerns, and the committees would like further assurances on a range of issues, particularly given the precedent set by the project, if approved, and the risk of incremental creep.
 - While there has been some further development of the proposal by the proponent, including putting in the extra campgrounds, the management of the independent travellers and the resourcing for this remain unclear.
 - There are still no further details about the QPWS proposals, which may include larger groups using the area for trips spanning multiple days when there are minimal facilities provided.
 - Members would appreciate more detail about how the public will benefit from the proposal and how the project is in the public interest.
 - The Advisory Committees look forward to further opportunities to provide advice as both the Commonwealth EPBC and the Qld approval processes develop.
4. Appreciate the updates about the **Green Mountains campground** developments and request further information including:

- Further detail about monitoring plans as, to date, information about monitoring has been limited to water and sewerage; additional variables need to be monitored, including downstream monitoring.
 - Further detail on how the project meets the public interest requirements in the legislation.
5. Commend the progress on the **Strategic Management Framework** and look forward to the document being placed on public exhibition. The following comments are provided for consideration in the finalisation of the draft:
- a. The mechanisms for management of threats from outside of the property are not identified. There is reference to buffers and connectivity but local government planning requirements are not specified. It was noted that, given that the EPBC Act protects World Heritage values from threats, practical ways need to be identified that ensure this occurs across all land tenures.
 - b. State of the Parks is used for internal agency reporting, but there does not appear to be an explicit mechanism linking monitoring and management. The Monitoring Framework project appears to be a separate process and it is not clear how it feeds back in a cohesive way. Further, it is not clear how monitoring and reporting on the NSW and Qld section of the property will be integrated.
 - c. The committees welcome the Queensland Government's announcement of \$35 million for the revitalisation of park infrastructure, and look forward to similar announcements regarding essential management and monitoring in the World Heritage Area.
6. Appreciate the presentation by Tim Low; members are looking forward to further consultation on the development of the **Queensland climate change resilience strategy** for World Heritage properties.

Community Advisory Committee

The Community Advisory Committee (CAC) has developed their agenda for the coming term including key matters in relation to promotion and interpretation and enhanced engagement with local government and communities in the management of the property.

The Community Advisory Committee:

1. **Is pleased** to have the NSW members appointed and looks forward to enhanced collaboration between the NSW and Queensland governments on the management of the property.
2. **Seeks** clarification on the IUCN Outlook reporting process and seeks opportunities to provide supporting information, including through a review of agency comments on the draft IUCN Outlook report.
3. **Emphasises** the importance of cross-tenure land-use planning and other conservation initiatives to reduce threats, protect buffers and support the conservation and protection of

the values of the Gondwana Rainforests of Australia WHA (through both land-use planning regulation and incentives (including conservation covenants on private land)).

4. **Recommends** development of training courses specific to the Outstanding Universal Value of the World Heritage Area for tourism operators that engage with visitors to the properties.
5. **Recommends** the development of a suite of interpretive mission cards to support the Nature Play concept as a vehicle for promoting the Gondwana Rainforests.

Technical and Scientific Advisory Committee

The Technical and Scientific Advisory Committee (TSAC) focussed on monitoring programs and threatened species conservation within the property.

The Technical and Scientific Advisory Committee:

1. Commends the work of both NSW and Queensland in developing new and innovative **approaches to monitoring the values of the property** in response to the advice provided by TSAC in December 2015. The approaches in each state are scientifically sound and realistic (with a combination of practical assessments and more detailed research). More specifically, the TSAC:
 - **Commends** the NSW Government on the use of the Evaluation, Monitoring and Reporting Framework (EMaR) to provide for effective, scalable monitoring of the World Heritage values of the Gondwana Rainforests.
 - **Welcomes** the opportunity to provide advice on the development of the Gondwana Rainforests Monitoring Framework which is consistent with global approaches and seeks an update on progress at the March 2018 meeting.
 - **Commends** the Queensland Government on the Values-based Park Management Program and the implementation of adaptive management.
 - **Recommends** the Management Committee provide support to integrate the two monitoring approaches in NSW and Queensland.
 - **Supports** research and monitoring information being made more accessible, noting with concern that the 2010 audits revealed that only 25% of available data was accessible.
2. **Commends** the NSW Saving Our Species (SoS) team on the projects being undertaken for site-based species and looks forward to future funding of more threatened species within the property under the landscape-managed species SOS projects. The TSAC can assist with determining priorities for these projects, if required.
3. **Looks forward** to receiving similar information about threatened species management programs in Queensland.