

## **The Wet Tropics Management Authority**

A spokesperson for Minister Andrew Powell provided this response to *Background Briefing's* questions.

**-The Wet Tropics Management Authority is currently without four of its seven board positions filled, including that of Chair. Why hasn't the Queensland government put forward a replacement for Peter Valentine, who ended his Chairmanship in February 2013?**

It has been a longstanding practice that positions on the Wet Tropics Management Authority (WTMA) receive State and Commonwealth approval. The Newman government did put forward a request for replacement to the previous Federal Minister Tony Burke but was unable to secure the support or reach agreement on this appointment. The former Labor government also suspended Commonwealth funding for this body.

**-Why haven't the other three Directorship positions on the board (the positions previously occupied by Julia Leu, Alistair Birtles and an indigenous directorship) been filled by the Queensland government?**

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**-Does the Queensland government accept that without a quorum, the board is hamstrung?**

The Queensland government appreciates that this matter needs to be addressed, which is why we tried to progress this matter with the previous Federal Government. Minister Powell has raised this matter with the new Minister for Environment, Greg Hunt, and is confident the Abbott government will meet their obligations.

**-Does this constitute neglect of an Authority set out in state legislation?**

No. The Queensland Government made every attempt to gain the necessary support of the Federal government but failed to get that support from the former government. While Tony Burke stopped Federal funding for the Authority, the Newman government continued to deliver funding. At the first available opportunity, Minister Powell raised this with the new Minister Greg Hunt who has given assurances the matter will be addressed with priority.

**-Currently, the WTMA does not receive any Federal funding, and hasn't for five months, including three under the new Coalition Government. Is this an acceptable state of affairs?**

Frankly what was unacceptable was the previous government's decision to cut the Federal funding WTMA in the first place. This is why the Newman Government continued to deliver state funding for the organisation.

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**-Does the Queensland government expect to be repaid for funding the Authority since its Commonwealth funding ran out at the start of July 2013?**

We expected the previous Federal government to maintain the Commonwealth funding in the first place. We would not expect Tony Burke to leave the Wet Tropics Management Authority in limbo, but he did. We continued to fund this authority and we are focused on ensuring it is equipped to continue carrying out its work.