



Impacts and Achievements of the MTSRF

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Showcasing the Australian Government's investment
in the MTSRF for improved sustainability of the
North Queensland region, and Australia

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Cairns, North Queensland



Abstract

[MTSRF Project 4.9.2](#)

Working with protected area managers in the Wet Tropics for sustainable visitor management

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The premise of World Heritage Area designation is to protect, conserve, promote and pass on to future generations, sites that have outstanding natural and cultural heritage values. Management of protected areas must therefore include strategies to protect the asset as well as provide opportunities for visitation. This process works best when there are extensive two-way communications between the protected area managers and stakeholders, including visitors and the host community. As part of the management process visitor strategies need to be developed that allow protected areas to be managed for social and ecological sustainability. This presentation focuses on the benefits of researchers working with protected area management agencies to understand how visitors use the Wet Tropics as well as their perceptions of its management. The research examines the interrelations between stakeholders based on three projects involving the host community, commercial tourism industry and independent travelers. Discussion will focus on the methods of researcher-end user interaction, visitor monitoring systems and identified research gaps.



Working with protected area managers in the Wet Tropics for sustainable visitor management

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Australian Government

Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts





Project 4.9.2

Sustainable nature-based tourism: Planning & management



Objective B: Monitoring visitors at site level and community perceptions

Photos courtesy of WTMA & Julie Carmody





The Wet Tropics World Heritage Area

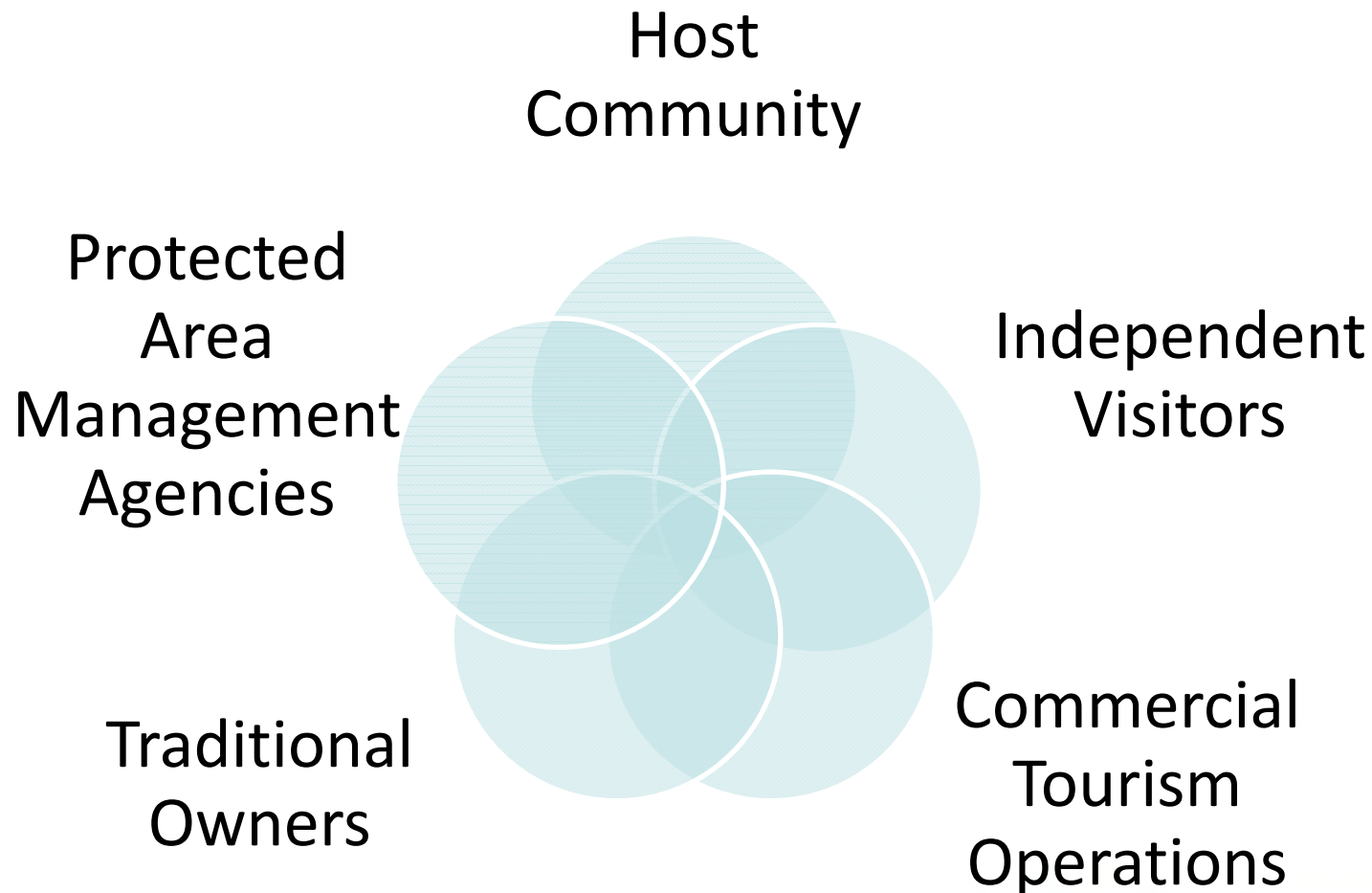
- 8,940 square kilometres
- 2,500 adjoining property owners
- Approx 350,000 residents within 50km of WTQWHA
- 100 scenic sites – high & low visitation
- 150 managed walks – short boardwalk to extended treks
- Commercial operations & FIT
- Traditional owners recognised
- Estimated 4.4 million visits annually
- Estimated 1.76 million visits by residents
- Gross economic value of tourism = \$426 million



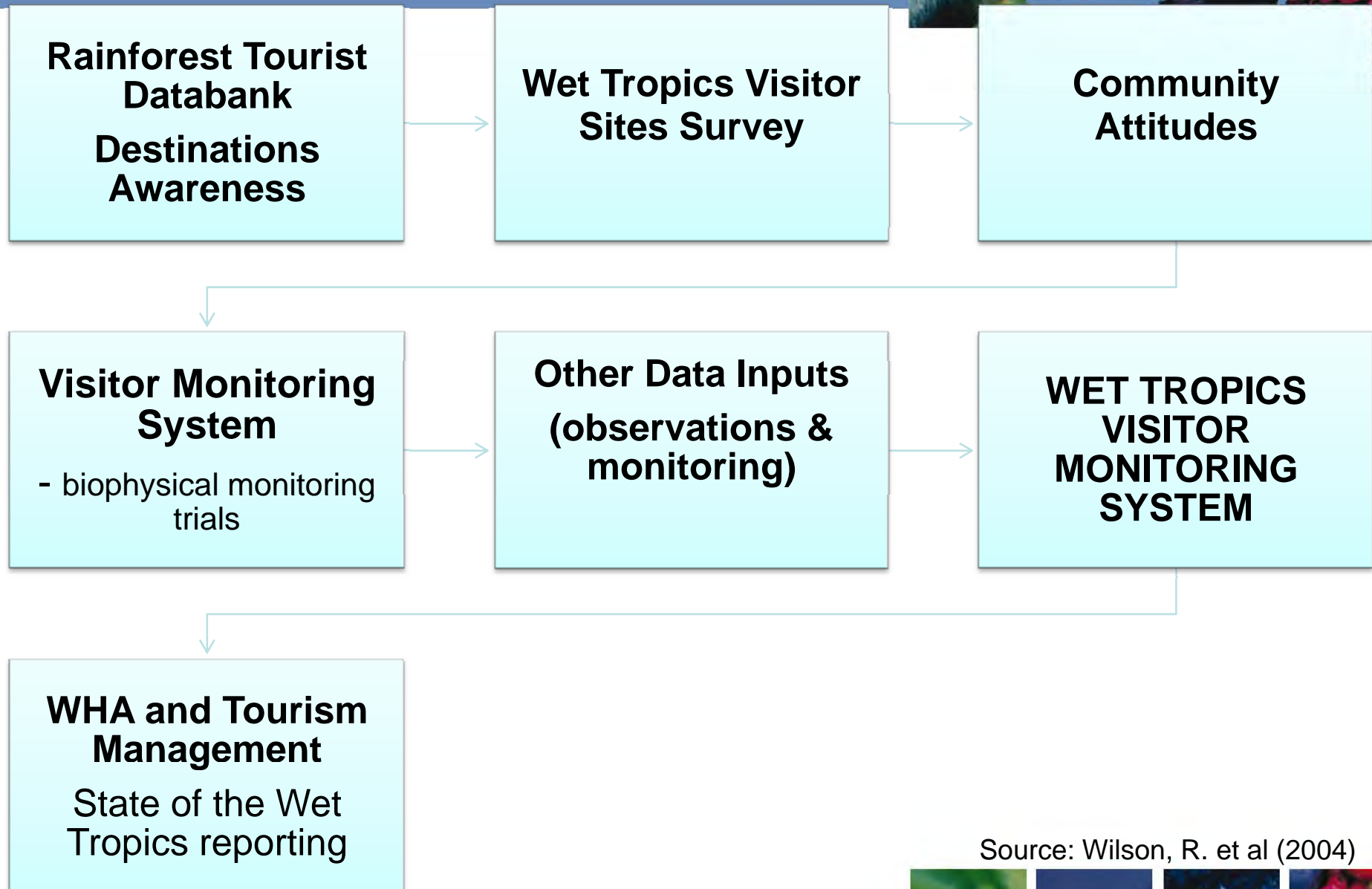
Refs: Bentrupperbaumer & Reser (2006); Prideaux & Falco-Mammone (2007)



Tourism Stakeholders in WTWHA

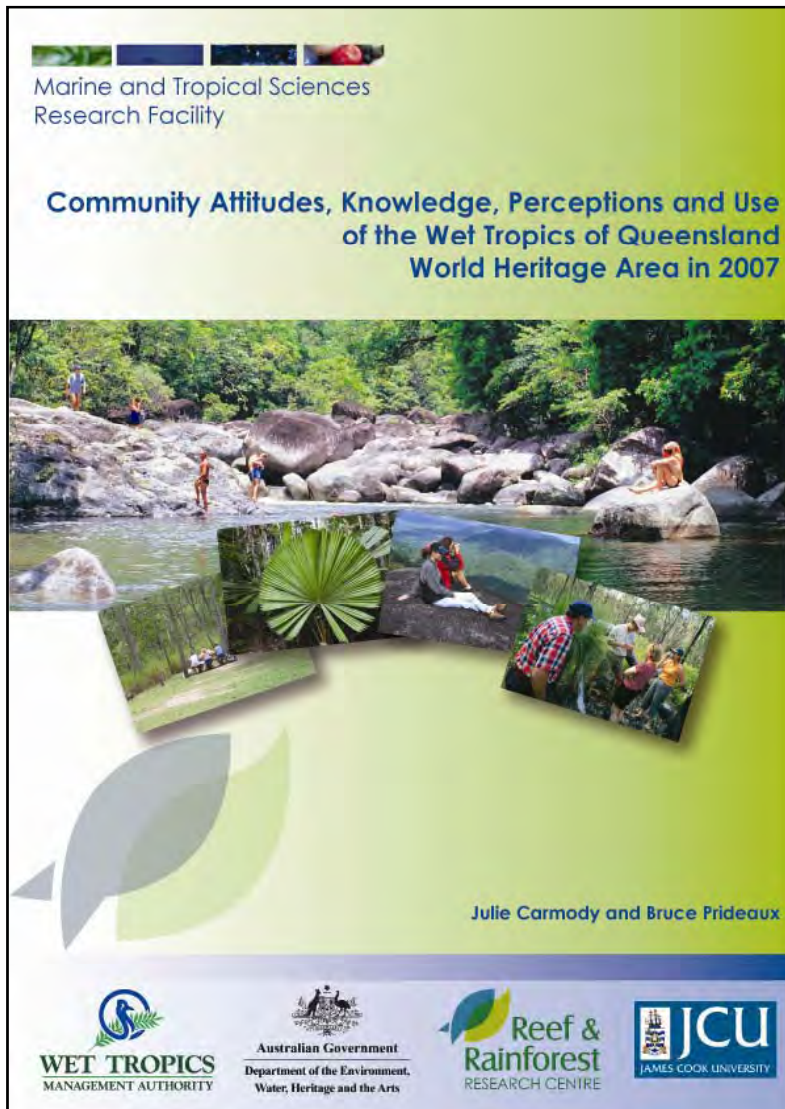


WT Visitor Monitoring System



Source: Wilson, R. et al (2004)

1. Host Community



- NQ Residents
- >4000 surveys
- 853 respondents (20.6%)
- Cape Tribulation to Townsville
- Two distribution methods
- May – Oct. 2007
- Limitations



Previous Community Surveys

1992	<i>Community Attitudes to the WTWHA: A Benchmark Study (AGB McNair)</i>	2,000 telephone interviews
1993	<i>Community Attitudes to the WTWHA (AGB McNair)</i>	2,000 telephone interviews
1996	<i>Community Attitudes to the WTWHA (AGB McNair)</i>	1,900 telephone interviews
1999	<i>Attitude Survey – WTQWHA Neighbours (AC Nielsen)</i>	500 telephone surveys with landholders neighbouring the WTQWHA
2002	<i>The Role of the WTWHA in the Life of the Community: A Survey of the North Queensland Community</i>	788 surveys (postal & door knocking)

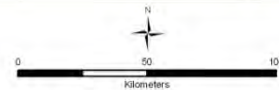


Wet Tropics Tour Guide Handbook Locations



1. Black Mountain (Eastern Kuku Yalanji)
2. Kulki [Cape Tribulation] (Eastern Kuku Yalanji)
3. Dubuji [Myall Beach] (Eastern Kuku Yalanji)
4. Marrdja Botanical Walk (Eastern Kuku Yalanji)
5. Jindalba (Eastern Kuku Yalanji)
6. Alexandra Range Lookout (Eastern Kuku Yalanji)
7. Mossman Gorge (Eastern Kuku Yalanji)
8. Barron Gorge (Djabaguy)
9. Danbulla Drive (Dulguburra Yidinji)
10. Cathedral Fig Tree (Dulguburra Yidinji)
11. Goldsborough Valley (Malanbarra & Dulabed)
12. Lake Barrine (Dulguburra Yidinji)
13. Curtain Fig Tree (Ngadjon-Jii)
14. Lake Eacham (Ngadjon-Jii)
15. Babinda Boulders (Wanyurr Majay Yidinji)
16. Mount Hypipamee & Dinner Falls (Ngadjon-Jii)
17. Josephine Falls (Ngadjon-Jii)
18. Henrietta Creek & Nandroya Falls (Ma:Mu)
19. Crawfords Lookout/Mamu Canopy Walk (Ma:Mu)
20. Tully Gorge (Jirral)
21. Lacey Creek (Djiru)
22. Licuala (Djiru)
23. Murray Falls (Girramay)
24. Broadwater (Warrgamay)
25. Wallaman Falls (Warrgamay)
26. Jourama Falls (Nywaigi)
27. Big Crystal Creek (Nywaigi)

- Legend**
- Locations
 - ★ City/town
 - WHA



This drawing is considered a sketch only.
The data shown on this sketch is from a variety of sources.
The accuracy of externally sourced data may not have
been checked by the Wet Tropics Management Authority.



File Reference : j4551/Map/2
Preparation date : 19/10/09

2. Commercial Tourism Operations

Wet Tropics Tour Guide Handbook

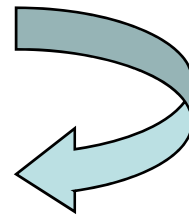
(forthcoming, 2010)

- 27 sites
- Geographic range
- Tourism industry
- Scientists
- Traditional owners
- WTMA staff
- DERM staff



Wet Tropics Tour Guide Handbook

- 27 sites – 131 operators holding commercial activity permits across these sites
- 52 tour operators participated
- Tour guide input – 400 surveys sent out for guides
- Returned – 29 surveys
- Published information
- Scientists, botanists, geologists & aboriginal elders
- Walking track maps – Dungey & Whytlaw (Footloose Publications)

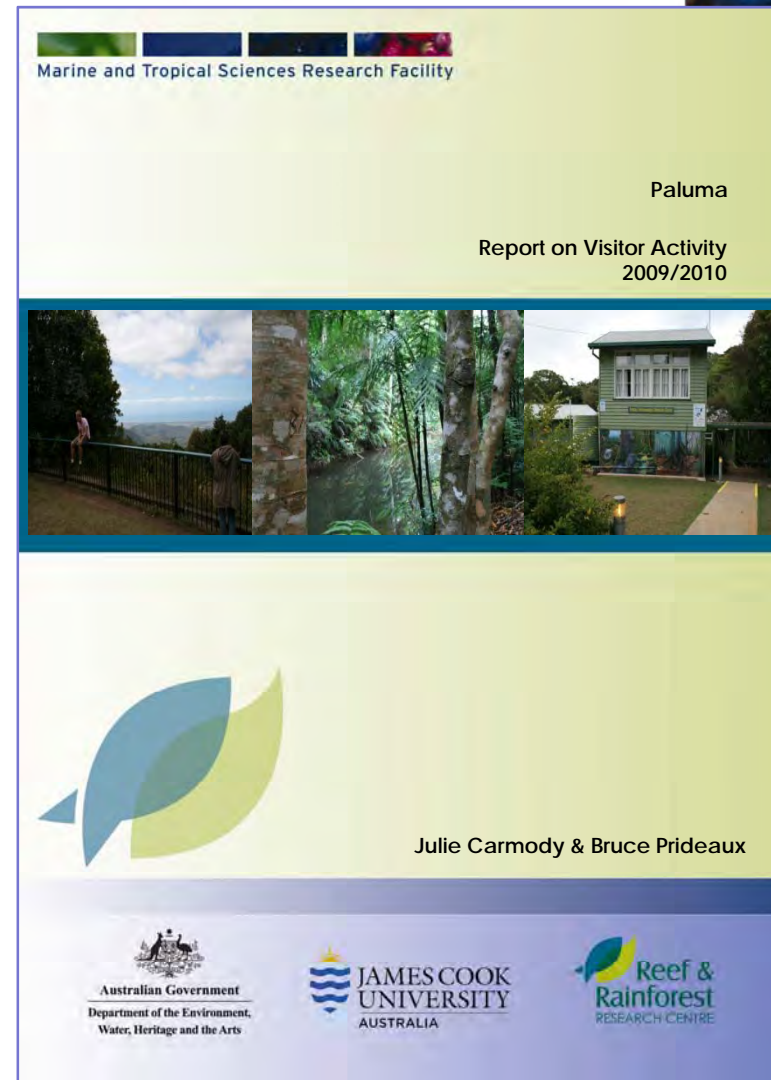


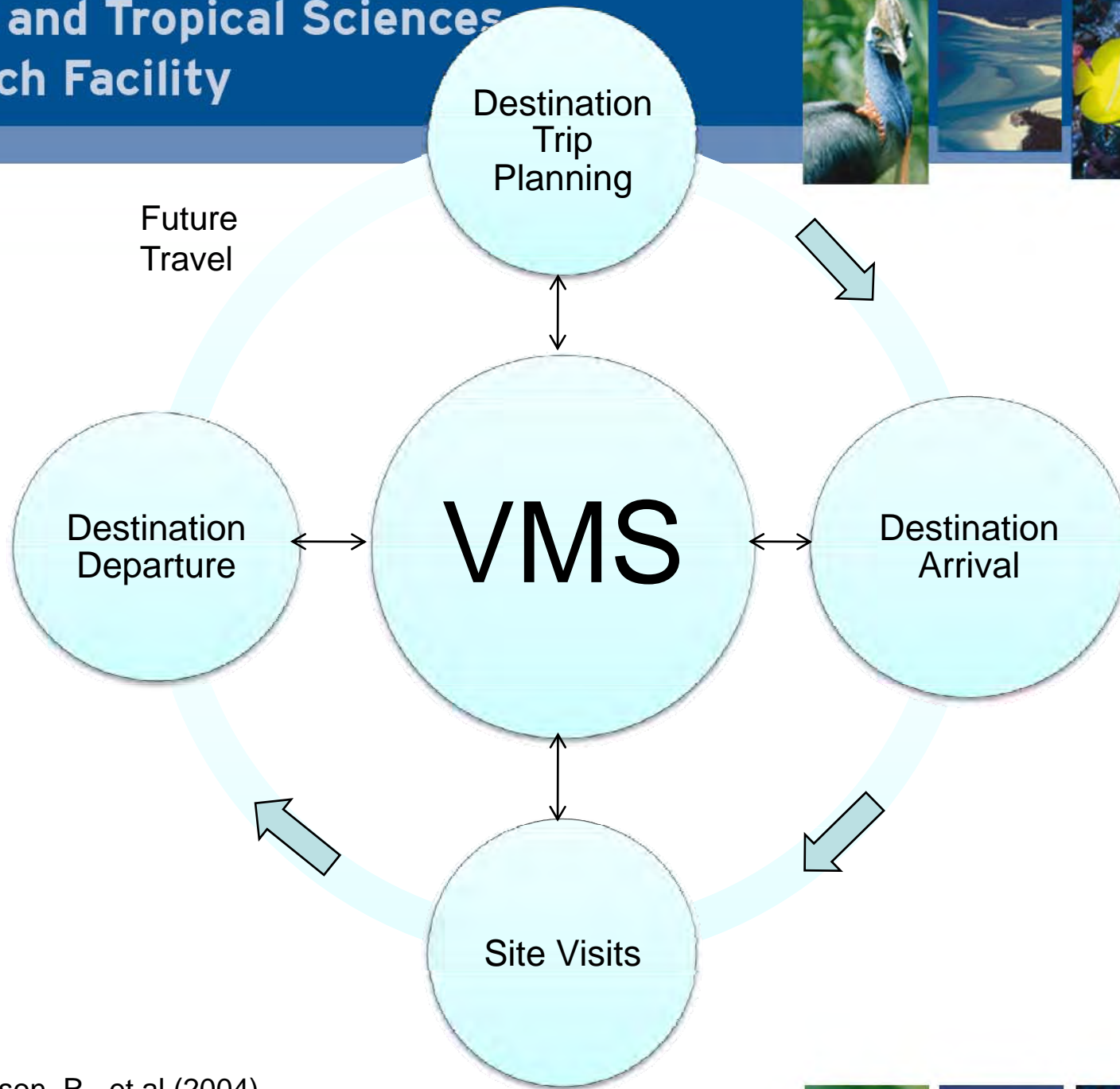
WET TROPICS TOUR GUIDE HANDBOOK



3. Visitor Site Reports

1. Paluma
2. Lake Tinaroo
3. Wallaman Falls
4. Henrietta Creek
5. Mamu Canopy Walk
6. Barron Falls
7. Mossman Gorge
8. Dubuji
9. Kulki
10. Emmagen Creek
11. Executive Report





Source: Wilson, R., et al (2004)



Working with the Stakeholders

- Roundtable discussions with WTMA & DERM managers
- Rangers - counter data
- Mamu staff - surveys
- DERM staff – various
- Traditional owners
- WTMA – mapping
- Commercial tourism operators

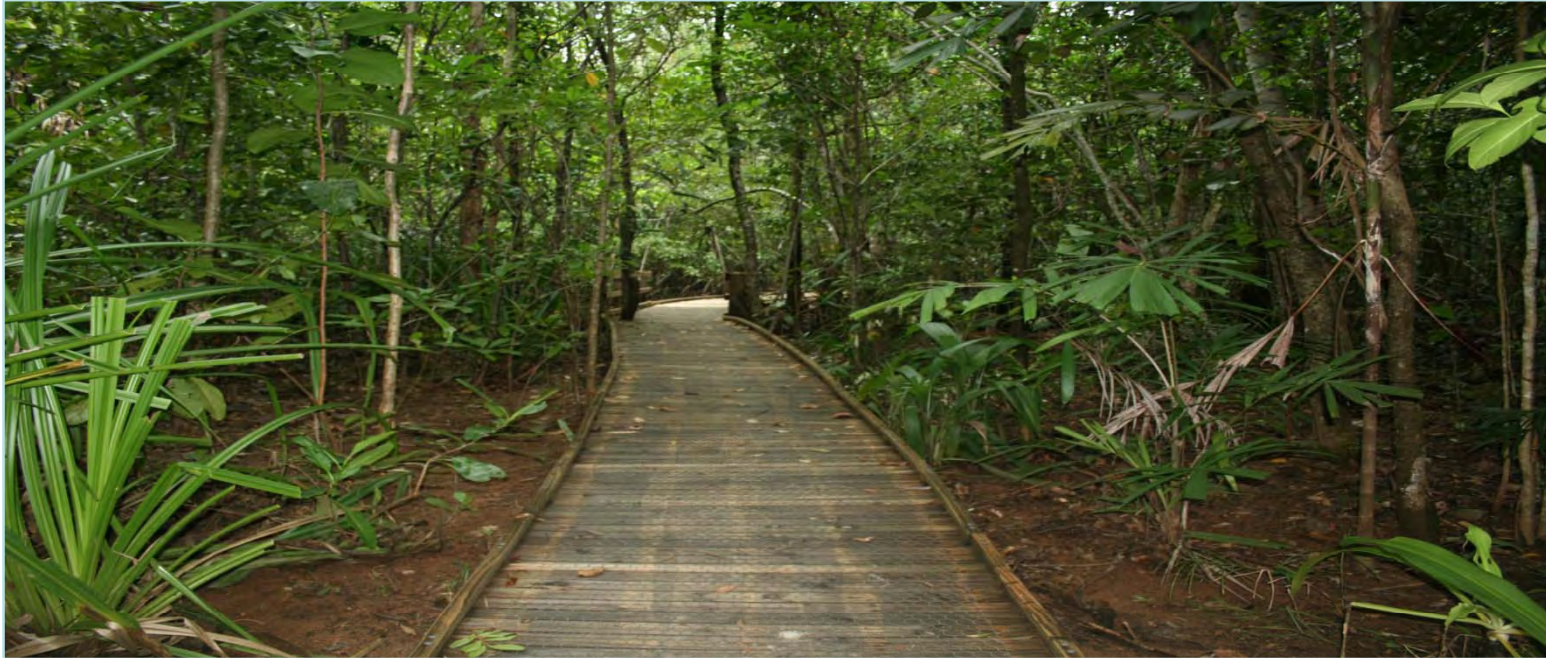
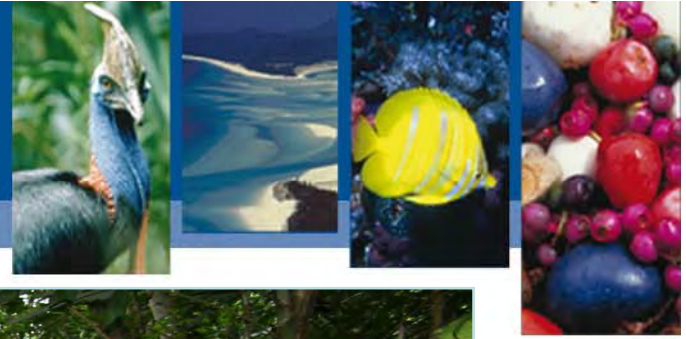




Considerations & Lessons Learnt

- Meetings with stakeholders important
- Frequent & more visitor site monitoring needed
- Community surveys
- Visitor & host community expectations met
- Natural environment, facilities, signage & other people affect the visitor experience – positively!
- Stakeholder interaction = sustainable WHA

Marine and Tropical Sciences Research Facility



THANK YOU

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