



REGIONAL UPDATE

Executive Officer, Darlene Irvine...

Digital Economy Day – Monday 14 November 2011

Monday 14 November 2011 is shaping up as our Digital Economy day! We would welcome involvement in any number of the activities occurring on this day!

10.45am - 12pm	Federal, State and Local elected member briefing with Duncan Bremner, Stakeholder Relations, NBN Co (at Cairns Colonial Club).
12pm - 2.15pm	Digital Economy Lunch - hear from Duncan Bremner and Anthony Godden (NBN Co, Stakeholder Relations and Greenfield development) and Wally Donaldson (DEEDI) (at Cairns Colonial Club).
2.30pm - 3.15pm	Anthony Godden to meet with development industry representatives (at Cairns Colonial Club).
3pm - 5pm	iChoose Digital Economy roadshow workshop (at Cairns Colonial Club)
3.45pm - 4.45pm	Anthony Godden to meet with Local Government representatives to discuss pit and pipe and other greenfield questions/clarifications (at Cairns Regional Council).

This day is a great opportunity to (a) politically support early roll out of the NBN in FNQ (within the three year plan) and (b) obtain an operational understanding of the implications and what we need to prepare for when the NBN is rolled out. Please make the time and book for one of more of these. For further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Regional Development Manual

We have had our final discussions with the working groups with regards to the review of the manual. We have one final detail related to standards for the 'As Constructed' requirements and we are currently reviewing the option to join the IPWEAQ - ADAC program for our specifications. We have included industry in these discussions and it is hoped this will be resolved or that a decision will be made this month. It is expected the amended manual will go to councils early in the new year for public consultation.

Natural Disaster Recovery Relief Assistance

I have been working with council representatives to pull together a document for the Queensland Reconstruction Authority (QRA) outlining our issues and concerns with their current processes. Cr Gilmore will be meeting with General Wilson and Graeme Newton (QRA) next week to discuss these issues in further detail on 10 November 2011. This region has been impacted by declared events every year for at least the past 10 years, and it is important we get our issues articulated for resolution. Not only is it an issue for recent events but it will be an issue for future events which are expected to occur in the next wet season.

FNQROC Review of Operations and Directions

The review of FNQROC operations and directions is nearly complete with a report and presentation due at the next FNQROC Board meeting on 12 December 2011. We did not have the budget to survey everyone we work with internally (more than 150 people) but we did ask deChastel & Associates to survey all the Mayors, CEOs, the executive teams of Cairns and Tablelands, a selection from each technical committee (we ensured we had a cross section from all member councils) and representatives from external stakeholders such as DLGP, DERM, Biosecurity, Terrain NRM, WTMA and GBRMPA.

We understand this is the first such review of a ROC and after 10 years in this position I am keen to see the recommendations on how we can improve our services to the councils to support them in the future. I am also eager to see the cost benefit of FNQROC to member councils.

LGAQ and Dept of Climate Change and Energy Efficiency Workshop

LGAQ and the Department of Climate Change and Energy Efficiency had organised two round-table meetings (Mackay and Toowoomba) with Local Government to provide more information about the impacts of the carbon price mechanism, Carbon Farming Initiative and Low Carbon Communities Program on Local Government. We have been in communication with LGAQ to run this workshop in FNQ. Tentatively, we are looking at either 17 or 18 November 2011 from 10.30am - 12pm.

And another thing...

I hope you all had a better Melbourne cup than I did. The three horses I picked came nowhere, and the three I had as backups didn't come anywhere either! Next year I'm going to pick nine horses and then bet on the ones I didn't pick!

REGIONAL PLANNING & SUSTAINABILITY

Regional Planning and Sustainability Coordinator, Daniela Gambotto...

Much to my disappointment, we were unable to pull off the Planners Group tour to Cooktown this month. Local Governments are really pushed at the moment in terms of time and capacity to complete their new SPA planning schemes. Unfortunately, two days out of a tight schedule to visit Cooktown just was not achievable for many of our hard working planners. And given the recent heavy rains received around the region, it is possible the trip might have been cancelled due to road conditions anyway. Regardless, that's not the end of it! I will be pushing to get the group organised for a visit to our northern colleagues as soon as the rain stops in 2012.

The Planners Group caught up anyway in Cairns this month. There was much discussion regarding the application of the Queensland Planning Provisions and the availability of other relevant data necessary for councils to meet their state interest requirements through the planning schemes. On a lighter note, Nikki Huddy, from PLANZ Town Planning, was invited to speak to the planners regarding the Active Healthy Communities Resource. This package provides a suite of tools for incorporating mechanisms to promote healthy lifestyles throughout councils' corporate, operational and planning frameworks.

On the Sustainability front, a couple of funding opportunities have reared their head in recent weeks. I have been busy sifting through the information and sorting out what will be the best approach for us to take as a region in regards to accessing potential funding buckets. Most of it relates to the pending impacts of the carbon tax and assisting councils to manage their risks in a low carbon economy. Fortunately, with our Regional Greenhouse Gas Mitigation Plan recently adopted by the FNQROC Board, we are in a great position to be able to push forward with a regional grant application. I will be liaising directly with individual council officers to identify their priorities and to seek a regional approach to this great opportunity.

REGIONAL PROCUREMENT

Regional Procurement Coordinator, Steve Cosatto...

On 10 October 2011 the FNQROC Board reviewed and unanimously passed the Procurement Memorandum of Agreement. This significant milestone now provides certainty for the development of regional procurement activities and clarity for the relevant technical committees, council and FNQROC staff members in undertaking projects. The MOA addresses the areas of:

- Principles and governance arrangements for collective regional procurement;

- Identification of areas of procurement improvement;
- Channels of communication for the purpose of endorsement, information gathering, market research and benchmarking;
- Providing a platform to undertake larger, taskforce based activities when required;
- Roles and responsibilities for member councils involved;
- Dispute resolution;
- Improved efficiencies and operating capacity of councils; and
- Operational savings.

The MOA can be accessed [here](#).

The month of November includes meetings for the FNQROC Water and Waste and Procurement working groups.

The Water and Waste Procurement meeting will be joined by a representative from the Queensland Water Directorate who will discuss items such as the direction of water alliances across the state, issues facing water and waste boards, and chemical water treatment benchmarking.

The General Procurement meeting will be joined by a representative from the Queensland Government Chief Procurement Office who will provide the group with advice regarding resources which Local Governments can access through the Chief Procurement Office. At this time, I would like to welcome Croydon Shire Council representatives who will be attending their first meeting, and also a belated welcome to the Torres Strait Island Regional Council representative.

I will also be attending the Regional Road Group meeting in Chillagoe this month to present the MOA and FNQROC's Contract for Supply of goods, and to discuss options which are now available.

REGIONAL NATURAL ASSET MANAGEMENT

Regional Natural Asset Management Coordinator, Travis Sydes...

Local declaration of weeds – why is action and planning on a local and regional scale so important?

The upcoming Liverpool Creek taskforce in Cassowary Coast will target a range of our most formidable weeds including the nationally identified pond apple (Weed of National Significance, State Class 2), siam weed and miconia tree (National cost shared eradication targets, State Class 1) as well as the State significant glush weed (State Class 1). Add to this already reasonably ugly list of management candidates, and two non-declared weeds which have been identified locally as high priority management targets - Brillantaisia (*Brillantaisia lamium*) and Bog Moss (*Mayaca fluvatis*) - and we really have our work cut out for us.

Brillantaisia is worthy of our attention and an interesting case study to boot. A particularly tenacious weed which has demonstrated three of the worst attributes you could wish for in an invasive plant - rapid seed production, a long seed life and the ability to spread long distance in water and on vehicles or machinery. We know the exact point of its introduction in the Mossman area as well as how it hitchhiked across four or five catchments to end up in the Maria and Liverpool Creeks and Feluga region in Cassowary Coast. Several outbreaks in the Tablelands have so far been suppressed. In a regional context Brillantaisia has alarm bells ringing and aptly demonstrates the need for local action as well as regional collaboration on other such weeds.

So how does this relate to local declaration/action and regional response? The outbreak was detected at a local level by Cairns Regional Council staff from Mossman who blew the whistle on it and got word out across the region, at the same time figuring out how to control it and trying to push it back to core areas. When it turned up in other regions they were quick to respond and no doubt several major new outbreaks have been averted as a result. Brillantaisia has subsequently been identified in the pest management planning and prioritisation processes for both Cairns and Cassowary Coast and nominated as a pest under

their local laws. Declaration under local laws in itself does not control pests but it does give a legislative weight and management priority to support on ground staff and community groups trying to do something about it.

That said in reality we now have two core infestations in the Wet Tropics which will continue to provide a risk of introduction for all of the coastal lowlands as well as the higher rainfall areas of the Tablelands. So not exactly a disaster averted but at least we have a fighting chance to prevent it from getting worse if we continue to work together.

To finish on lighter note (it's not all doom and gloom) a fantastic integrated management approach in the Mossman region is transforming a *Brillantaisia* infestation into a riparian rainforest on an epic scale and come 14 November 2011 Yasi-weary Cassowary Coast staff and landholders will get a helping hand and much needed morale boost on issue in the Liverpool Creek Taskforce. The take home message is that when it comes to pests and weeds your technical staff on the ground are a good judge of character and can generally pick a problem plant or animal when they see it. At both a regional and local scale we need to work at better ways to support their intuition and deliver faster responses for more timely intervention when it's required.



Brillantaisia (left) is a serious weed of creek lines and forested areas (Image Sheldon Navie). In the Wet Tropics there are two major infestations, one each in Cairns and Cassowary Coast Regional Council areas (right).

This month in natural asset management:

Weed Society Queensland update:

The executive of WSQ met this month to discuss key initiatives and projects from around the state and abroad. Central to the discussion was the recent Australasian-Pacific Weed Science Society Conference in Cairns and the upcoming Pest Animal Symposium in Roma next year.

CSIRO - Tropical Forest Research Centre Open Day

CSIRO and other agencies opened their doors to the public for a showcase of tropical research and expertise. FNQROC participated in the day with a poster display and a range of handouts and information. It was a great opportunity to talk with landholders about their views in regard to trends and the strategic direction of pest management around the region.

Conservation Sector Liason Group (WTMA)

FNQROC and other observers participated in the first meeting of the revised CSLG this month. The meeting provides an opportunity for stakeholders from across the conservation sector to discuss issues relating to the broader management of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area, and for observers like FNQROC to provide an update on key programs and initiatives with non-government and community conservation groups.

DEEDI State Interest Check Panel training

A range of representatives from around the northern region recently attended a one-day workshop on conducting state interest checks on Local Government Area Pest Management Plans. Three panels representing Cape York, Wet Tropics and Dry Tropics worked through assessments for Etheridge Shire Council and Burdekin Regional Council. The panels will be called on to conduct State interest checks for pending Pest Management Plans from across the region.

Northern Region Invasive Plants and Animals Round Table

FNQROC recently facilitated a round-table discussion with DEEDI and NRM groups in regard to the current and future strategic directions for invasive species management, collaborations and partnerships across the greater northern region. This meeting builds on the outcomes of the August round-table with Commonwealth Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries and will help to guide strategic directions and partnerships in the coming years.

Upcoming events:

Cape York Peninsula Pest Management Advisory Group – 9-10 November, Bamaga

Cassowary Coast Liverpool Creek Taskforce – 14-20 November

Hinchinbrook NRM Forum – 15-16 November, Ingham

Tropical Weeds Management Committee – 24 November, Cairns

FNQ Pest Advisory Forum – 24 November, Tablelands Regional Council

Natural Asset Management Advisory Committee – 25 November, Tablelands Regional Council.

REGIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE MANAGEMENT***Regional Infrastructure Project Coordinator, Gerard Read...***Works Program

The Technical Committee has commenced developing the new five year works program from 2012/13 for the LRRS and Non LRRS TIDS funding. This year we are also collating and submitting projects for the new Cycleways TIDS funding, which is allocated on a state-wide competitive basis. Both programs will be completed prior to Christmas 2011.

All Councils are tearing into their 2011/12 projects with a significant wet season forecast. In total Far North Queensland has approximately \$7.7 million in TIDS subsidy allocated this year which equates to approximately \$13.9 million in project values across the various TIDS programs.

AGAIN ... Councils are reminded to ensure reimbursement claims are submitted to TMR for any unclaimed expenditure on the whole TIDS program.

TIDS Bid Pool

This was mentioned in last month's newsletter. Far North Queensland has three projects at risk of losing funding, however strong cases have been made to retain the funding of all three.

Audits are currently being conducted across RRGs by DTMR to determine the quantum of funding eligible for inclusion in the pool. It is likely any available funding would be notified to RRGs to bid for in early November 2011. The bid process would be similar to the Regional Safety and Development Program in 2010 and the Flood Resilience and Safety Program earlier this year.

Cape Tribulation - Bloomfield Link

WTMA representatives attended the RRG Meeting held in Innisfail on Monday 10 October 2011 regarding the future development of the Cape Tribulation – Bloomfield LRRS link and in particular the Woobadda Creek crossing project.

WTMA will not consider a permit for the Woobadda Creek crossing project, or any future capital upgrade projects, on the link until a planning study (environmental, social, cultural and

economic) for the road has been carried out.

The course of action set by WTMA to progress the Woobadda Creek project and any future projects is outlined below:

1. WTMA to provide a draft Terms of Reference for a Planning Study to FNQROC / FNQRRG;
2. FNQROC / FNQRRG to consider draft Terms of Reference;
3. Final Terms of Reference to be negotiated and agreed to by WTMA and FNQROC / FNQRRG;
4. FNQROC / FNQRRG (through Cairns Regional Council) to undertake Planning Study;
5. Once Planning Study is complete, Cairns Regional Council to lodge application to WTMA for construction of Woobadda Creek crossing;
6. WTMA to consider application and issue permit (subject to conditions).

Next Technical Committee Meeting

The next Technical Committee meeting will be held at the The Hub, Chillagoe on Thursday 10 November 2011 at 2pm. An election for Chair and Deputy Chair will be held at this meeting.

Next RRG Meeting

The next RRG meeting will be held in Cairns on Monday 12 December 2011 at 1.30pm following the FNQROC Board meeting.

DATE CLAIMERS 2011

The **FNQROC and FNQRRG Meetings** (FNQROC Organiser: Darlene Irvine; FNQRRG Organiser: Gerard Read).

FNQROC	FNQRRG
Monday 12 December 2011, Cairns Regional Council, Cairns – 10am	Monday 12 December 2011, Cairns Regional Council, Cairns – 1.30pm

FNQ Regional Road Group TC Meetings (FNQRRG TC Organiser: Gerard Read).

Thursday 10 November 2011, Chillagoe

FNQ Procurement Group Meetings (FNQROC Organiser: Steve Cosatto).

General – Tuesday 8 November 2011, Cairns Regional Council, 10am
 General – Friday 9 December 2011, Cairns Regional Council, 10am

Natural Asset Management Advisory Committee (NAMAC) Meetings (FNQROC Organiser: Travis Sydes).

Friday 15 November 2011, Tablelands Regional Council

Regional Asset Management Committee Meetings (FNQROC Organiser: Gerard Read).

Thursday 10 November 2011, Cairns Regional Council

FNQROC Planning Group Meetings (FNQROC Organiser: Daniela Gambotto)

Friday 16 December 2011, Cairns Regional Council

FNQROC CONTACT DETAILS

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DID YOU KNOW?

The dot over the letter 'i' is called a tittle.

There are one million ants to every human in the world.

The lion in the original MGM logo killed its trainer.

"A gold medal is a nice thing - but if you're not enough without it, you'll never be enough with it." *From the movie 'Cool Runnings'*.