



ALL SYSTEMS GO...

Executive Officer, Darlene Irvine...

Welcome to our March Newsletter! We have had a busy but exciting February which is evident in the size of this newsletter.

Not only safety conscious, but fashion and charity conscious too!

In our constant endeavour to meet many needs with the one action we have stamped the importance of Workplace Health and Safety within FNQROC and whilst on our technical tours. In ensuring all staff members on technical tours are adequately equipped and visible, we have also supported a very worthy cause being the McGrath Foundation. Pictured are members of the **FNQ Regional Road Group Technical Committee** wearing the spare vests and hard hats for those who forget to bring theirs, proving "only real men can wear pink!" Whilst the colour in this photograph may appear to be orange, believe me, the vests are *bright pink!*



Figure 1 Shining brightly under a bridge or culvert near you are from left David Goodman (CCRC), Col Moore (DTMR), Sam Wakeford (CRC), Tony Hughes (TRC), Tony Rooks (CCRC), Tony Lickiss (CSC), David Trotter (CCRC), Jaime Guedes (Wujal) & Terry O'Keeffe (RoadTek)

FNQROC Board Meeting

We also had our last FNQROC Board Meeting for this term of Mayors at the new Cairns Botanical Gardens Visitor Centre in February. Members thanked Cr Gilmore for his efforts as Chair of FNQROC. The board also congratulated staff of FNQROC and Councils for what they believe was one of the most productive terms in FNQROC's history.

Some of the outcomes of the February board meeting were:

- A request to the FNQROC Sustainability Group seeks quotes to develop a regional business case for street lighting.
- An update of the Regional Procurement Program and its wins to date, together with the challenges faced and the direction for 2012/2013.
- A more strategic/coordinated effort for regional events, rather than ad hoc requests which play Councils off against each other.
- Investigation into a regional Materials Recycling Facility.
- Strategic Workshop to occur on the back of the de Chastel Report recommendations – this will occur post-election in June/July 2012.
- The 2013/2014 Operational Plan and Budget for FNQROC was adopted for Council consideration.
- Acknowledgement of the structural changes to Advance Cairns and FNQROC becoming an executive member of the new Advance Cairns board.
- Investigation into the Regional Coordination of Food Licensing Fees, and
- Adoption of the Regional Pest Management Strategy.



We commenced our involvement in the **Queensland Water Regional Alliance Program (Q-WRAP)**. There was good robust discussion between Council representatives on the proposal and in particular the scope and relevance to the region.

We have also completed interviews for the position of **Regional Infrastructure Project Coordinator**. A decision on this position will be made soon.

Please do not hesitate to direct any queries about any FNQROC programs to myself or any of the Coordinators.

Sustainability Conference

FNQROC is pleased to support Reinventing Progress: Sustainability Leadership for a New Era, on Tuesday 17 April 2012 at The Hotel Cairns.

With the carbon economy on our doorstep, this one-day conference seeks to inspire future leaders to better manage the challenges of the future in a practical and strategic manner. The organisers have harnessed some of Australia's top thinkers in the sustainability conversation to present at the conference, including Professor Ian Lowe AO, Professor Peter Newman, Allan Jones MBE and Dr Paul Downton. There will also be a number of local speakers to make sure we can take it from the global perspective right back down to the local perspective.

The organisers are keen to have elected representatives in attendance, and are offering a special price of \$50 for Councillors, Mayors and Council CEOs. To register visit www.progress.eventzilla.net and select the "FNQROC discount" ticket.

FNQROC is proudly supporting the delivery of this exciting conference which is being organised by the Cairns and Far North Environment Centre.

Have a great March!

REGIONAL PROCUREMENT

Regional Procurement Coordinator, Steven Cosatto...

Water and Waste

As we near completion of the tendering process of our initial procurement projects it is an opportune time to describe the framework associated with this final phase.

Each Council will have its own individual contract (prepared by FNQROC) with each supplier, each Council will still be responsible for its day-to-day operational activities, i.e. ordering, accounts payable etc. FNQROC will administer the contract management aspect of the process, i.e. incident register, insurance register, contract review etc.

Currently all Councils are in possession of FNQROC evaluation reports with relevant information (including evaluation analysis, and evaluation committee's recommendation) regarding the tenders and should be working through their approval process. At this stage it is important that each Council's Water and Waste department takes ownership of its approval process for a timely outcome and to ensure all relevant personnel are kept informed. Should any Council require additional information to that which has been supplied, please contact me.

Once each Council has completed its individual approval process (i.e. managerial signoff, contract number etc.) the information is to be forwarded to me so I can finalise each Council's contract and associated documentation (i.e. letters of acceptance, formal instrument of agreements for Mayor and/or CEO sign off).

I would like to take the opportunity to thank Councils for their support to this stage and look forward to a successful outcome for all.

General Procurement

The FNQROC Procurement Committee has secured a presentation by the Director of Education and Engagement for the Australian Competition & Consumer Commission (ACCC). Mr Konrad Chmielewski will present at the next General Procurement Meeting on 16 March 2012 in Cairns. He will focus on supplier collusion within Local Government tendering, tips on identifying collusion, and what options are available. Please contact me should you wish to attend this presentation.

Regional Natural Asset Management Coordinator, Travis Sydes...



Far North Queensland Pest Advisory Forum

A forum for government, business, community groups and individuals to progress weed and feral animal issues.



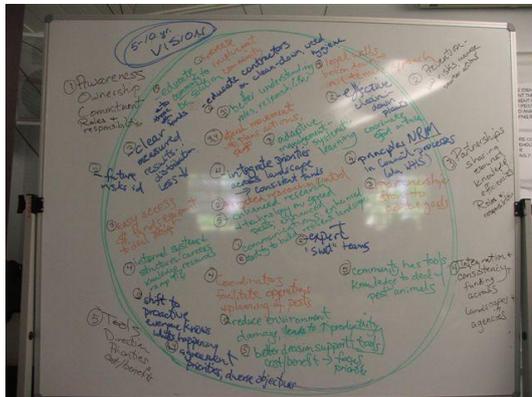
FNQ Pest Advisory Forum – a legacy with a prickly beginning...

History

The *FNQ Pest Advisory Forum* (FNQPAF [pronun: eff-en-cue-paff] as it is affectionately known) has its origins in the *Giant Sensitive Plant Advisory Committee* more than 50 years ago as a joint venture between the State Land Committee, Cane Productivity Services and the former Tully Shire Council. The committee was formed to deal with the devastating impacts of Giant Sensitive Plant (GSP) across the productive lands of the Tully lowlands. A spray team was employed by the committee to engage landowners and educate them in best practice control, develop property pest management plans, assisting with the first round of treatment and then ensuring landowners were undertaking the required follow up.



Giant Sensitive Plant (left) is the weed that got it all started. The FNQPAF in action at Mission Beach (centre) and Wujal Wujal (right)



Brainstorming...Setting our Regional Vision, November 2008



Pests Weeds and Animals Conference, Cairns, May 2008

Evolution

Under this program's watchful eye the GSP situation was brought under control through the use of aerially-applied residual herbicides in cane and the successful introduction of a bio-control agent, *GSP psyllid* (a sap-sucking bug which attacks the plants growing tips). The merit of the collaboration was duly recognised and the *Giant Sensitive Plant Advisory Committee* diversified to become the *FNQ Pest Advisory Committee* and include all weeds and eventually pest animals across all land use types in the Wet Tropics.

One of the primary goals of the committee was to host an advisory forum to engage land owners and provide them with latest on emerging threats and technical information on best practice management – hence the FNQPAF was born. The forum provided an opportunity for stakeholders to progress pest issues and lobby for resources with the State and Local Governments. The committee would then deal with these issues at a regional level or if required, forward on information to the Land Protection Council and then provide feed-back to the community.

The FNQPAF was without doubt the primary means of passing on information amongst the pest management community in the region and played a crucial role before the recent advent of internet and multi-media in keeping people in touch and getting information out there.

A Regional Approach

When Local Government Area Pest Management plans became a legislative requirement under the Land Protection Act of 2002, the committee also acted to align Local Area Pest Management Plans on regional priorities. This initiated the development of the Local Government Pest Plan Advisory Committee (LGPPAC) to develop a Regional Pest Management Plan and took on the responsibility of acting as the working group for its development and implementation.

The regional plan authored by Gary Werren was completed between 2001 and 2004 and still stands today as one of the most comprehensive assessments of pest and weeds in the Wet Tropics region. Built on these foundations two subsequent revisions of the plan have taken place culminating in recent FNQROC Board endorsement of the *Regional Pest Management Strategy 2010-15* and its supporting appendix the *Pest Assessment, Prioritisation and Planning Framework*.

The most recent evolution which builds on the legacy of the FNQPAF and the success of the regional approach embodied in the FNQROC has seen the transition of the LGPPAC to the FNQROC Natural Asset Management Advisory Committee (NAMAC). The incorporation of natural assets within the original Pest Management Advisory Committee reflects the region-wide adoption of whole of landscape integrated management approach and the level of Local Government expertise and capacity in the field of landscape restoration.

The forum and committee(s) have generally always been held back-to-back and are hosted on a rotational basis around the region. The rotating venue provides each Local Government authority the opportunity to showcase its accomplishments and issues and ensures good coverage of the diverse pest and weed management approaches and challenges across the region. In the days prior to Council amalgamation these collaborative forums and committees provided an opportunity for managers from participating Councils to keep in touch with the neighbours as well as catch up with their own Mayors, CEO's or Councillors in regard to their pest management programs. Post-amalgamation has seen several key changes take place in role of Mayors and Councillors and, as a result of their increased workload, a decline in Mayor and CEO participation in the forum and committee has resulted. Another evident factor post-amalgamation is the reduction in the number of individual Councils and hence the number of representatives around the table.

In the face of these changes (and more departmental name changes than we have room to list here) both the forum and committee have adapted and continued to deliver the dual purpose of getting the information out there and linking decision makers and researchers with each other and the community. Collaboration has always been the key to its success and our most recent efforts in embracing multimedia and the digital age will continue to build on the efforts of 50 years ago. It seems pests and weeds are always going to be here in one way, shape or form and so too will be our need to work together to do something about it.

Keep your eye out for the FNQPAF website, coming soon!

REGIONAL PLANNING & SUSTAINABILITY

Regional Planning and Sustainability Coordinator, Daniela Gambotto...

Street lighting and funding opportunities

The FNQROC Board hosted a presentation from Ironbark Sustainability at its February meeting. The speaker from Ironbark Sustainability, a Melbourne-based consultancy firm specialising in sustainable street lighting, proved a wealth of knowledge on this topic and is keen to assist FNQROC pull together a business case for bulk retro-fitting of the region's street lights. Ironbark Sustainability indicated it may take up to two years to develop a business case judging by its experience in negotiating with other energy distribution businesses. However, the upside is that once prepared the business case puts us in very good stead to seek funding for the regional retro-fit of street lights. In an emerging carbon economy it is essential Councils prepare to manage the risks associated with increasing energy prices. A business case into street lighting should assist us to do just this.

It was resolved at this meeting to obtain an additional two business case quotes to allow us to make an informed decision about which consultant will be able to provide the best service for FNQROC. A proforma report will also be prepared for all Councils to consider for the preparation of a regional level approach to this matter.

Visit from Queensland Reconstruction Authority

The Queensland Reconstruction Authority (QRA) attended the FNQROC Planners Group Meeting to present its 'Planning for Stronger, More Resilient Floodplains' Project. Over the past 12 months the QRA has been busy developing a two-part guideline for Local Governments which will assist with ensuring that floodplain management is adequately addressed through land use planning. The first part, launched last year, provided preliminary mapping and interim provisions for existing planning schemes. The most recent development of Part 2 provides far more detailed mapping and details regarding the incorporation of floodplain land use strategies into specific planning scheme provisions. This refers to the strategic framework, zoning, and overlay code provisions of QPP schemes.

In the past, management of the State's floodplains has been ad-hoc with limited data available to undertake the task comprehensively. Through the QRA, new data is now available which will facilitate a more holistic approach to flood mapping and risk management. The key new consideration the QRA is pushing for, from a planning perspective, is the incorporation of 'likelihood' and 'consequence' into the risk management process. The QRA is promoting a 'fit-for-purpose' approach to floodplain management which allows Local Governments to tailor the level of planning to suit the local conditions. The incorporation of floodplain management into planning schemes is voluntary for Local Governments. However, we consider QRA'S work to be a positive step forward to pre-emptive disaster management, and with strong support being offered from the QRA it is a great opportunity for Local Governments to utilise these resources.

REGIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE MANAGEMENT

Regional Infrastructure Project Coordinator, Gerard Read...**Regional Road Group****Current Works Program**

Expenditure levels for 2011/12:

- LRRS TIDS = 40%
- Non LRRS TIDS = 52%
- SafeST TIDS = 74%

Future Works Programs**LRRS TIDS**

The Technical Committee had a thorough and frank discussion at its February Technical Committee meeting and decided to completely "pull apart" the existing program and critically review priorities in the next month. Uncertainty over potential NDRRA works which could conflict with projects on the works program has impacted on the program development phase. Furthermore, a number of listed projects have increased in scope and/or value since they were first submitted some years ago which also has an impact. The new 5 year works program from 2012/13 will be finalised at the March Technical Committee meeting.

TIDS Cycleways

Allocations for the new state wide TIDS Cycleways program has not been notified by TMR to date. Cairns Regional Council has 13 projects under consideration.

SafeST TIDS

URGENT REMINDER ... All Councils are to consider potential SafeST projects for 2012/13 and 2013/14 and submit direct to TMR on the standard SafeST submission form!

FNQRRG Councils currently do not have any SafeST projects listed for the next two years and this funding could be lost to another region if submissions are not made.

TMR LRRS Works Program

Negotiations are continuing with TMR to ensure the works program development for the state-controlled LRRS network is incorporated into FNQRRG business. Essentially, the TMR and Council LRRS network is one and should be treated the same way in terms of project prioritisation and program development. This has not occurred in recent years.

DID YOU KNOW??? ... 100% of an RRG's LRRS & Non-LRRS TIDS allocation can be transferred to the TMR LRRS network in any one year, and likewise 20% of an RRG's TMR LRRS capital allocation can be transferred to the Council LRRS network in any one year.

Works Program Development and Delivery

A very robust discussion regarding the integrity of the works program development phase and program delivery was had at the February Technical Committee meeting! Topics discussed were:

- Design delays.
- Improving project delivery and the low current expenditure level.
- Improving concept cost estimation at the program development phase.
- Cost indexation during the course of a 5 year program.
- Capping the limit of funding contingency on projects.
- Project priority rankings.

Tony Lickiss of Cook Shire Council will present a policy paper on this issue at the March Technical Committee meeting.

In addition the RRG has adopted the following as Policy:

“Councils are to fully complete planning and detailed design for TIDS projects in the FY prior (eg. 12/13) to the FY they are allocated for construction (eg. 13/14). Should this not be complied with, the RRG will make alternative arrangements to have this planning and design outsourced. This policy will come into effect on 30 June 2013.”

LRRS Network – Kamerunga Road

Kamerunga Road, Cairns has been added to the FNQRRG LRRS network. This section commences from the end of the State-controlled section (also known as Stratford Connection Road) at the Cairns Western Arterial underpass, extends west to the Redlynch Intake Road (at the Red Beret Hotel corner) and then north to the Cairns Western Arterial – total length approximately 1km. This addition is subject to approval by the Roads Alliance Board.

Please also note the LRRS network has been postponed for two months and is now expected to be completed by the June RRG Meeting.

Cape Tribulation-Bloomfield Link – Planning Study

Cairns Regional Council has commenced the Planning Study in earnest and also commenced detailed design for the Woobadda Creek crossing. Expect to see and hear consultation notices in all media forms in the next few months. A requirement from WTMA in the Terms of Reference was for Emmagen Creek to continue to be a “hold point” for 2WD traffic and the current flood immunity of this crossing to be maintained when considering any future safety improvements. This was accepted at the February RRG Meeting.

Update from the Roads Alliance (RA):

- The RA is focusing heavily on improving program management practices (eg. business rules, procedures and processes) from both a whole of State and RRG perspective.
- The LRRS Change Notification Form has been reviewed and the new form will be released in the near future.
- The RA has engaged ARRB to conduct interpretation and training workshops in use of the NetRISK data. It is 100% funded by the RA.
- The RA Board Chair has changed from Greg Hallam (LGAQ) to David Stewart (TMR Director-General).

Next Technical Committee Meeting

The next Technical Committee meeting will be held at Cassowary Coast Regional Council Chambers, Rankin Street, Innisfail on Friday 23 March 2012 commencing at 9.00am.

Next RRG Meeting

Due to the Council elections, the next RRG meeting will not be held until Monday 25 June 2012 at the Civic Reception Room, Cairns Regional Council, Spence Street, Cairns commencing at 1.30pm following the FNQROC Board meeting.

Regional Asset Management Group

Asset Management Plans, Adoption by Council

In response to a query from a member council regarding the adoption of Asset Management Plans, DLGP has confirmed that Asset Management Plans do have to be adopted by Council. Financial Regulation 2010 states:

- “(1) A Local Government must prepare and **adopt** a long-term asset management plan.
 (2) A long-term asset management plan continues in force:
 (a) for the period of at least 10 years stated in the plan; or
 (b) until the earlier adoption of a new long-term asset management plan.”

Effects of Extreme Weather Events

Below is an excerpt from the report to Parliament No. 2 for 2011, Results of Local Government Audits:

“2.1.6 Asset Management Plans

An asset management framework would generally include the development and implementation of plans and programs for asset creation, operation, maintenance, rehabilitation or replacement, disposal and performance monitoring. The incorporation of risk management strategies that address the possibility of extreme weather events occurring and their impact may not have been adequately considered in the formulation of the asset management framework by some local governments. In light of the extensive damaged assets requiring repair, a review of the comprehensive nature of the asset management plan should be an area of focus.”

In essence, Councils must review their Asset Management Plans if significant damage to assets is sustained during extreme weather events (which in all likelihood will have a regular impact in our FNQ region).

Future NDRRA Funding

In response to another query from FNQROC regarding the consideration of likely future NDRRA funding in Asset Management Plans, DLGP has provided the following advice:

“All forecast plans are subject to assumptions and whether something is included or not includes an assessment of “probable v possible” plus associated risks of including / not including. If the history tends to indicate probability, then it would be OK to include the associated NDRRA transactions. A scenario analysis / risk analysis should also be included that allows a Council to understand what the impact is if the “event” does not occur and the Council needs to be able to react to that. There is obviously a significant risk if a Council plans for NDRRA funding and it does not eventuate. Maybe councils can plan for a higher level of certainty in NDRRA by reducing the value of the NDRRA funding cash flows in the forecasts as a mitigation strategy.”

Regional Asset Management Strategy – Data Update

JRA had planned to complete the data update by end of February 2012, however the circumstances referred to earlier regarding extreme weather events and NDRRA funding has delayed this action. JRA has asked Councils to:

1. Provide the total funding for flood damage (NDRRA) expected to be received in the next 1,2,3,4 years for Transport Assets (roads and bridges).
2. Provide the total value of destroyed infrastructure (if different to the total above).
3. Advise whether their Asset Management Plans have or have not been updated to reflect the current state of the assets.

Unit Rate Database

FNQROC is establishing a unit rate valuation database for Councils in an attempt to develop some consistency and “defence” come audit time. Councils have been requested to provide updated rates for this exercise and to define the “make up” of these rates so as to allow an “apples with apples” analysis and comparison.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be hosted by Cassowary Coast Regional Council around May 2012. Venue, date and time is to be advised.

DATE CLAIMERS 2012

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

FNQROC	FNQRRG
Monday 25 June 2012 Cairns Regional Council, Cairns – 10am	Monday 25 June 2012 Cairns Regional Council, Cairns – 1.30pm
Monday 13 August 2012 Tablelands Regional Council, Atherton – 10am	Monday 13 August 2012 Tablelands Regional Council, Atherton – 1.30pm
Monday 8 October 2012, Cassowary Coast Regional Council, Innisfail – 10am	Monday 8 October 2012, Cassowary Coast Regional Council, Innisfail – 1.30pm
Monday 10 December 2012, Cairns Regional Council, Cairns – 10am	Monday 10 December 2012, Cairns Regional Council, Cairns – 1.30pm

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

Friday 23 March 2012, Cassowary Coast Regional Council, Innisfail, 10am

FNQROC Asset Management Meetings (FNQRRG TC Organiser: Gerard Read).

May 2012 – date, time and venue to be announced

Natural Resource Management Meetings (FNQROC Organiser: Travis Sydes)

NAMAC: 24 & 25 May 2012, Yarrabah Aboriginal Shire Council, 10am
NAMAC: 23 & 24 August 2012, Cairns (with Inaugural Joint Forum of CYP & FNQ)
NAMAC: 23 & 24 November 2012, Hinchinbrook Shire Council, Ingham, 10am

FNQROC Procurement Group Meetings (FNQROC Organiser: Steven Cosatto).

16 March 2012, Cairns Regional Council, 10am
4 May 2012, Tablelands Regional Council, venue and time to be advised
3 August 2012, Cook Shire Council, time to be advised
2 November 2012, Cassowary Coast Regional Council, Innisfail, time to be advised

FNQROC Planning Group Meetings (FNQROC Organiser: Daniela Gambotto)

10-11 May 2012, Wujal Wujal/Cooktown Road Trip, to be confirmed

FNQROC Sustainability Group Meetings (FNQROC Organiser: Daniela Gambotto)

4 May 2012, Cairns Regional Council, 10am

FNQROC CONTACT DETAILS

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Regional Planning & Sustainability Coordinator	Daniela Gambotto	07 4044 3376	d.gambotto@fnqroc.qld.gov.au
Regional Procurement Coordinator	Steven Cosatto	07 4044 3408	s.cosatto@fnqroc.qld.gov.au
Administration Officer	Sandra McCormack	07 4044 3343	s.mccormack@fnqroc.qld.gov.au

FNQROC Administration Officer, Sandra McCormack...

I am thrilled to learn my *Did You Know?* section is actually read! Proof of this comes courtesy of Cairns Regional Councillor Paul Gregory, who usually fires me an email soon after the Newsletter is distributed to wax lyrical about my choice for the month. However, Cr Gregory stepped up to the plate last month when he provided a *Did You Know?* of his own!

Did You Know?...the first two numbers on compass bearings always add up to the same number as the first two numbers of their reverse bearings? Eg. 270 degrees, opposite bearing 90 degrees; 310 degrees, opposite bearing 130 degrees; 320 degrees, opposite bearing 140 degrees; 350 degrees, opposite bearing 170 degrees; and so on!"

Thanks Cr G. Perhaps he has thrown down the gauntlet to other avid readers of the newsletter? I invite contributions to my inbox at s.mccormack@fnqroc.qld.gov.au.

Meanwhile, here are some more...

- ❖ More personal telephone calls are made on Mother's Day in the USA than on any other day in any other country.
- ❖ Most reverse charge calls takes place on Father's Day.

And finally, as usual, we end with a poignant quote...

"You never know how strong you are, until being strong is the only choice you have."