



WRAPPING UP A BUSY YEAR...

Executive Officer, Darlene Irvine...

Welcome back to everyone, I sincerely hope this period has left you all well rested and ready to face the New Year!

From the FNQROC front, while you have been away we have been planning the year ahead and have completed some exciting new activities:

Our fantastic new website

www.fnqroc.qld.gov.au (same address, new look) is up and running and now features:

- a new member's-only section for staff to share information and documentation;
- previous versions of the Regional Development Manual; and
- an interactive landscape map (trial).

In our new website under the Board section, you will also find the de Chastel review of FNQROC.

Also, the next month's newsletter should come to you in a new e-newsletter format.

FNQROC staff members are excited about the website's possibilities, including that of a potential community portal for Sustainability.

The support of Rutten Tech in the development of the website, and Cairns Regional Council's IT department for switching us over just before Christmas, is very much appreciated.

Emails

FNQROC contact emails have now also changed. You only need to replace the @cairns with @fnqroc for each of us (for example – d.irvine@fnqroc.qld.gov.au). Please change your contact details accordingly but in the meantime, do not fear...the @cairns ones are still coming through.

Procurement tenders

We have just evaluated our first two regional tenders for Sodium Hypochlorite and Liquid Alum. Reports will be coming through to Councils shortly, if not already. Well done and thank you to FNQROC's Regional Procurement Coordinator Steven Cosatto and the technical committee (Bill Cuthbertson, Morris Hamill, Ross Jennings, Jaek Passier, Rob Fenn, Terry Spurrier, Alex Ung, John Bishop and Paul Tollari). Steve will present an overview of our procurement activities and benefits to the next FNQROC Board meeting on 13 February 2012.

Regional Infrastructure Project Coordinator

The position of Regional Infrastructure Project Coordinator was advertised in mid-January and applications will close on 30 January 2012. This is a full time position overseeing the Regional Road Group, Regional Asset Management Strategy Group and the Regional Development Manual. In future it may also take on the recently-formed Water and Waste technical committees. As many of you would know, Gerard Read currently undertakes part of this role as a consultant to FNQROC. I would like to stress that Gerard has done a fantastic job with FNQROC and if I cannot find an appropriate person to take on this role I will have no hesitations in renewing Gerard's contract. However, the services and support we provide is ever increasing and the best way to meet these needs is by employing a full-time coordinator.

I look forward to the New Year and the challenges ahead - it is very exciting!

REGIONAL NATURAL ASSET MANAGEMENT

Regional Natural Asset Management Coordinator, Travis Sydes...

Despite having all the very best of intentions of using the first few 'quiet' weeks of the year to get filing in order and prepare the year's work plan after the frantic pace of last year, myself like many others, got caught up in preparing submissions for the Commonwealth's first round of the Biodiversity Fund. The six year funding package of \$946 million is a component of the Clean Energy Future package and is targeted toward biodiversity outcomes through investment in carbon creation and management-related projects. FNQROC authored two bids for the program - a cross-regional gamba grass management project (three years, \$720,000 funded, \$1,255,500 in-kind), and a natural asset assessment and planning project (1.5 years, \$132,500 funded, \$161,000 in-kind). We also provided comment, feedback and relevant in-kind support to several major bids across the region including a major \$10 million bid from WTMA and Terrain NRM for ecological connectivity projects across the Wet Tropics. It is anyone's guess at this stage as to how the program will roll out, but it is certainly worthwhile throwing our hat in the ring.

We have done the 'hard yards' in planning and design over the past few years, but 2012 is about getting out there and getting the job done!

On a strategic level we will continue working on strengthening partnerships across the broader region to the north and west. The major project to assist this is *The Cape York and Far North Queensland Gamba Grass Management Plan*, co-authored by FNQROC and Cape York Weeds and Feral Animals Program, with the support of Queensland Parks & Wildlife (QPW) and DEEDI and the Cape York Peninsula Pest Management Advisory Group. We have also been laying the foundations for a whole of north region weed (biosecurity) spread prevention network (Townsville to the Tip) and a more strategic NRM/Governance alliance approach across Cape York, Einasleigh Uplands and the Wet Tropics.



The major project focus for natural assets this year will be the implementation of planning frameworks, templates and processes which we have collaboratively developed over 2010-11. These include the revised pest management planning approach, natural asset planning and assisting in the development and delivery of a range of local and regional plans and strategies. With the revision of the *Regional Pest Management Strategy* complete, the next major revision will be the *Weed Spread Prevention Strategy* and the supporting *Disaster Management Weed Spread Prevention Code of Practice*. Much of the ground works for these reviews is well advanced and we hope to have the revised Code of Practice out for comment shortly.

Finally an exciting event is in the planning for August 2012 with the first joint agenda of the Cape York Peninsula Pest Management Advisory Forum and the FNQ Pest Advisory Forum. The joint forum will bring pest and natural asset management practitioners together from across the whole of the north to share the latest in technical, operational, planning and research. We also hope to be able to provide some level of accredited training as part of the event.

REGIONAL PLANNING & SUSTAINABILITY

Regional Planning and Sustainability Coordinator, Daniela Gambotto...**Carbon Tax and Local Government**

Upon request from FNQROC, through the Local Government Association of Queensland (LGAQ), representatives from the Federal Department of Climate Change and Energy Efficiency visited the Far North late last year to make a presentation on the Carbon Tax and the likely impacts for Local Governments. Whilst this presentation was welcomed and considered informative, it really only scraped the surface on the complex implications which a

carbon pricing mechanism will have on Local Government. We are still a long way from understanding how the tax will affect our operations and budgetary cycles.

Through the Sustainability Group it was requested FNQROC raise this issue with peak local government organisations and request that they take the lead on assisting us to work our way through these significant national reforms. The implications for local government are going to be consistent across the nation and it would be the most logical option to distribute that information and research through one source. This will help to reduce confusion and ensure consistency for Local Governments. It is considered this would be of great benefit, particularly for smaller Local Governments in regional and remote areas which may not have access to resources and information as readily as our counterparts in larger centres.

Some of the topics of particular interest in which Local Governments may be interested include:

- Carbon pricing for landfill emissions;
- The carbon farming initiative and involvement of Local Governments;
- Reporting requirements for Local Government under the Carbon Tax;
- Implications for Local Government budget cycles;
- Funding opportunities for Local Governments.

To this end, FNQROC will be writing to the Australian Local Government Association and the LGAQ with this suggestion and pushing to move it forward.

Funding opportunities for Far North Queensland

Following discussions with Ergon regarding a potential partnership to access Federal Community Energy Efficiency Program Funding, we seem to have hit a bit of a brick wall in terms of regulatory hurdles to install energy efficient street lighting. Since those initial discussions however, we have been in touch with Melbourne-based consultancy firm Ironbark Sustainability which is well-positioned to assist Councils to prepare a business case and undertake negotiations with energy providers to help overcome these hurdles. From viewing what the consultant has to offer, it is considered their knowledge and experience will provide a solid platform from which we can then launch a regional funding application.

Ironbark Sustainability has been invited to attend the February FNQROC Board meeting to outline the services they can provide. They have also offered to meet with relevant Council staff to discuss the more technical aspects of their consultancy so we are better placed to make an informed decision about how to move this complex matter forward.

Planners Group Meetings

At the last meeting of the FNQROC Planner Group in 2011 it was suggested that the forum be expanded to enable assessment planners to also participate in this regional initiative. Previously, the assessment planners were not specifically excluded, but the focus on the meetings has generally been around more strategic matters such as regional planning and planning scheme preparation. The assessment planners feel that there is benefit in meeting with their neighbours to discuss matters which might be better dealt with on a regional level. As such, this year we will trial splitting the Planners Group meeting, so that the larger group comes together for the first half of the meeting with a relevant guest speaker at every second meeting. The second part of the meeting will see the assessment planners break into a separate meeting where more detailed assessment planning matters can be discussed. FNQROC is happy to facilitate this arrangement and hopes the benefits of the Planners Group can be more widely distributed.

REGIONAL PROCUREMENT

Regional Procurement Coordinator, Steve Cosatto...

The FNQROC tenders for Liquid Alum and Sodium Hypochlorite, which are water and waste treatment chemicals, closed on 19 December 2011 and 9 January 2012 respectively. I was pleased the process attracted more enquiries and tenders for both compared to what individual Councils have received previously. The evaluation processes for both products, which started almost immediately after the tenders closed, are nearing completion. The Tender Evaluation Committee has been impressed with the competitive responses which the collective effort has attracted, and is pleased the efforts over the past six months have come to realisation.

I have been fortunate to receive some quick responses from presenters for the Procurement Technical Committee with commitments from the CMC's Prevention Officer, and the Queensland Chief Procurement Office. Both organisations will provide presentations from their differing perspective on issues they encountered with procurement in 2011.

REGIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE MANAGEMENT

Regional Infrastructure Project Coordinator, Gerard Read...

Regional Road Group

Cape Tribulation-Bloomfield Link – Planning Study

FNQRRG and WTMA representatives met on Friday 20 January 2012 to negotiate and finalise the Planning Study Terms of Reference. This was achieved with the focus of the study shifting away from "engineering" and more towards public consultation to determine what the community sees as the vision for the link. Cairns Regional Council has commenced the Planning Study and it is expected to be finished around the end of April 2012.

LRRS Network Review

A full review of the LRRS network will commence this week and is expected to be completed by the April RRG Meeting. This does not necessarily mean there will be any change - it is good practice to review every two (2) years at a minimum. Cairns nominated Kamerunga Road as an addition at the last Technical Committee meeting and this is currently under consideration.

Roads Alliance Representatives

FNQRRG has had a change in representatives from the Roads Alliance Project Team (RAPT). Rebecca Michael has left LGAQ to take up the position as CEO of the Queensland Transport and Logistics Council and consequently has left the RAPT. Ross Kirkman, who some of you may know, has replaced Rebecca as the LGAQ representative and joins Bettina Cruise from TMR Local Government Relations as the FNQRRG representatives.

TMR Integrated Regional Transport Planning and Freight Studies

The following update has been kindly provided by TMR...

The studies have been progressing slowly in the latter half of 2011. It is planned to have the draft study completed and "on the shelf, ready to go" in the next couple of months. At this stage the draft study will be out for public consultation mid-2012 and this phase is expected to last anywhere from six (6) weeks to three (3) months. Following that, a period of intensive consultation with key stakeholders, in particular Councils, is planned.

Obviously the impending state election may have an impact on this planned program.

Bridge Management Software and System (BMS)

Since the presentation at the previous Technical Committee meeting, a proposal was prepared by MDEH / PBS and submitted to the Roads Alliance Board prior to Christmas. The intent of the proposal was for the Road Alliance Board (RAB) to fund, and make available, the

BMS software to all Councils and RRGs. FNQRRG provided a letter of support for the proposal.

Verbal advice has been received from the RAPT that the RAB will not be funding the proposal as such, however a significant amount of the State-wide Capability Development Fund has been set aside in 2012/13 for distribution to each RRG to progress bridge management capability issues. Precise details are not known at this stage, however it is expected the RAB Chair will send out a communiqué regarding this issue in the upcoming weeks.

Future Works Programs

LRRS TIDS

The Technical Committee is expected to have its new five (5) year works program from 2012/13 finalised at this week's Technical Committee meeting for presentation to the RRG.

Non LRRS TIDS

Cairns and Tablelands have three (3) projects each approved for 2012/13 and 2013/14.

TIDS Cycleways

Cairns have nominated 13 projects for potential funding from the new State-wide TIDS Cycleways program. It is expected that allocations will be notified in late February / early March 2012.

SafeST TIDS

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 urgently!

Next Technical Committee Meeting

The next Technical Committee meeting will be held at Cassowary Coast Regional Council in Innisfail on Friday 23 March 2012.

Next RRG Meeting

The next RRG meeting is at the Cairns Botanic Gardens Visitors Centre in Edge Hill on Monday 13 February 2012 at 1.30pm, following the FNQROC Board meeting.

Regional Asset Management Group

Regional Asset Management Strategy – Data Update

Jeff Roorda & Associates have been engaged to undertake an update of the data in the Regional Asset Management Strategy. This is currently in progress and expected to be finalised by the end of February.

Business Continuity Plan for Cyclonic Events

Whilst not strictly in the field of Asset Management, Cairns Regional Council has developed a new "Business Continuity Plan for Cyclonic Events" in light of last summer's displacement caused by Tropical Cyclone Yasi. Details were presented at the last meeting by Andrea Jeynes and Robert Clark.

- Focus is on external services that Council provides, but internal services are addressed - particularly where they play a role in the delivery of an external service.
- The prime focus is on the lead-up to and during the cyclone. The post cyclone effort is considered but is reasonably under control.
- The plan will be used as a basis to develop further Business Continuity Plans for other events eg. fire, pandemic, terror attack etc.

For further details contact Andrea Jeynes at Cairns Regional Council on 07 4044 3520.

Levels of Service

Cassowary Coast has developed a clever “Level of Service” v “Budget Consideration and Condition Impact” tool. It is a very useful tool for the budget process with Councillors. Gary Everson gave a demonstration of the tool at the last meeting.

For further details contact Gary Everson at Cassowary Coast Regional Council on 07 4030 2240. It is stressed that the tool is still in the development phase.

The next meeting will be hosted by Hinchinbrook Shire Council at the IT Training Room, Tyto Library & Gallery, 73-75 McIlwraith Street, Ingham on Wednesday 15 February 2012 at 10am.

DATE CLAIMERS 2012

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

FNQROC	FNQRRG
Monday 13 February 2012 Cairns Botanic Gardens Visitor Centre, Collins Avenue, Edge Hill, Cairns – 10am	Monday 13 February 2012 Cairns Botanic Gardens Visitor Centre, Collins Avenue, Edge Hill, Cairns – 10am

* Please note further 2012 FNQROC and FNQRRG Meeting Dates will be announced on our website following the 13 February 2012 board meeting. The dates will be included in the March newsletter.

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

Natural Resource Management Meetings (FNQROC Organiser: Travis Sydes)
Regional Vertebrate Pest Working Group meeting, 15 February 2012, Innisfail NAMAC: 23 & 24 February 2012, Cassowary Coast Regional Council, 10am 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).
24 February 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)
17 February 2012, Cairns Regional Council, 10am

FNQROC Sustainability Group Meetings (FNQROC Organiser: Daniela Gambotto)
23 February 2012, Cairns Regional Council, 10am

FNQROC CONTACT DETAILS

Position	Name	Phone	Email
Executive Officer	Darlene Irvine	07 4044 3038	d.irvine@fnqroc.qld.gov.au
Regional Natural Asset Management Coordinator	Travis Sydes	0448 852 732	t.sydes@fnqroc.qld.gov.au
Regional Infrastructure Project Coordinator	Gerard Read	0407 735 304	g.read@fnqroc.qld.gov.au
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

DID YOU KNOW?

On average, people move house every seven years.

Mel Blanc, who played the voice of Bugs Bunny, was allergic to carrots.

One in 10 people in the world live on an island.

The opposite sides of a dice cube always add up to seven.

"The future depends on what we do in the present." - Mahatma Gandhi.