



WRAPPING UP A BUSY YEAR...

Executive Officer, Darlene Irvine...

What a hectic month November has been! Further details of the work undertaken during the past month will be highlighted further in the newsletter.

The **Regional Road Group Technical Committee** (RRG TC) travelled the length and breadth of Tablelands Regional Council looking at its road and bridge projects. Along the way we obtained some valuable technical advice from experts that should save Councils money.

FNQROC with significant assistance from Directors and General Managers from member Councils developed a paper identifying our concerns and issues we face with **Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements**. A copy of this document can be found [here](#). Graeme Newton (CEO of Queensland Reconstruction Authority) and Major General Richard Wilson (Chair, QRA) met with FNQROC and key staff in Mareeba to discuss our issues. As a result, two QRA officers have been dedicated to the region to work with Councils and be the key contact between us and QRA in relation to claims from FNQ. This was a great result and it is becoming more and more evident that when we work together and push the State we can make them listen and act.

We had another big **National Broadband Day** on 14 November 2011. Representatives of NBN Co. spent the day meeting with various parties within the region including UDIA, Local, State and Federal representatives as well as business leaders. I believe we have clearly shown NBN Co. we are keen and we would be very disappointed if we were not included in the three year rollout plan due for release in January/February 2012. A copy of our NBN submission can be found [here](#).

The **TNQ Regional Economic Plan** is now in print and will be formally launched by all partners at the FNQROC board meeting on 12 December 2011. A copy can be found [here](#).

We released our first two **regional tenders** - Sodium Hypochlorite and Liquid Alum – in November. After ironing out some kinks we believe we now have a robust process and all future procurement activities will flow a lot easier and certainly a lot quicker.

FNQROC had a conference call with senior representatives of DERM and DLGP to resolve our issues in relation to **Coastal Hazard Mapping** and **Water Envelope Mapping**.

Travis is currently on well earned leave for six weeks – working with planners has exhausted him!

The **FNQROC Review of Operations and Benchmarking** has been completed and will be presented to the FNQROC Board meeting on 12 December 2011. In short, it has identified on average across the region that for every dollar invested in FNQROC the region receives \$13.30 in return, plus many indirect benefits. Each Council has also been assessed individually.

Keep an eye out for our **new website**, using the same address of www.fngroc.qld.gov.au. The new user-friendly site, with added features such as a forum and historical Regional Development Manual documents, will go live before the end of the year. Rest assured, we will email member Councils and pertinent organisations regarding the change just before it takes effect, as addresses to individual page links will change.

Given FNQROC and Council staff will be on leave over Christmas, our next newsletter will be issued in February 2012.

I would like to wish everyone a safe, cyclone-free, relaxing Christmas and New Year! Love thy liver.

Lastly - never take a racing tip from Gerard, although he nearly had it!



FNQROC staff enjoyed a team building exercise by participating in 'The Great Race' as part of Cairns Regional Council's 'Wellness Week'. We apparently came second.

MERRY CHRISTMAS...



Our office will close on Friday 23 December and will reopen on Tuesday 3 January 2012.

Darlene Irvine will be on annual leave from 23 December returning 3 January.

Sandra McCormack will be on annual leave from 23 December returning 9 January.

Steven Cosatto will be on annual leave from 21 December returning 9 January.

Daniela Gambotto will be on annual leave from 23 December returning 3 January.

Travis Sydes will be on annual leave from now, returning 9 January.

REGIONAL NATURAL ASSET MANAGEMENT

Regional Natural Asset Management Coordinator, Travis Sydes...

Liverpool Creek Taskforce

After being postponed due to an unexpected October deluge, Cassowary Coast Regional Council hosted natural areas management teams from Cairns, Tablelands, Hinchinbrook, Girringun, DEEDI and Cassowary Coast to tackle a range of priority weed species on Liverpool Creek. A total of 25 people were on ground to help deliver a much needed boost to management on glush weed, siam weed, bog moss and brillantaisia as part of Cassowary Coast's ongoing recovery effort post Tropical Cyclone Yasi.



The team came from across the region to share skills and lend a hand.

The key achievement for the taskforce included:

- Control work on four priority weeds for CCRC.
- Extended survey conducted to determine weed spread following a natural disaster.
- Sites treated, tagged and a GPS point taken for easier access for revisits into the future.
- Weed knowledge and resources shared amongst Local Government staff and participating Stakeholders.

There are some great statistics from on the ground which demonstrate just how much can be achieved in collaboration:

- 11 kilometres of survey, mapping and control of glush weed (Cowley Road boat ramp to the Liverpool Bridge highway crossing).
- 15 kilometres on water and 20 kilometres of survey, mapping and control on brilliantaisia.
- 100m of black plastic pegged out over drains to control bog moss and 150 litres of herbicide applied.
- Upper Liverpool Creek to Sherrock's Bridge surveyed for Siam weed.

Extensive landholder engagement was conducted prior to the operation and will contribute to the success of maintaining the advantage the community and Cassowary Coast now has on the weeds in the catchment.

The taskforce is the fourth to be conducted in the region and the third under FNQROC's Resource Sharing in Joint Operations (Natural Assets) MOU, which has gone from strength to strength.

Natural Asset Management Advisory Committee

Tablelands Regional Council hosted the NAMAC meeting in Mareeba this month. The committee met with Queensland Department of Transport and Main Roads to discuss collaboration on roadside pest and natural asset management projects and process across the region. It was determined to initiate an annual consultative process to align priorities and determine key projects for the coming financial year so Councils can reliably incorporate DTMR contracts into annual work plans. We look forward to a more aligned and more beneficial relationship with DTMR into the future.

Tropical Weeds Management Committee

Delegates discussed the progress of the review of the National Siam Weed Eradication Project. The program represents a significant investment in the region with considerable in-kind resources from the impacted Councils (Cairns, Cassowary Coast, Tablelands and Townsville). North Queensland and Far North Queensland regions currently host the only two remaining national cost-shared weed eradication programs in the country. With the future of these programs under a constant national scrutiny we need to be very cognisant of the potential impacts of any downscaling of national commitment, and be prepared to lobby on behalf of the region in this regard.

REGIONAL PLANNING & SUSTAINABILITY

Regional Planning and Sustainability Coordinator, Daniela Gambotto...

Funding opportunities for FNQ

As mentioned in my last update, a new pool of funding for eligible Local Governments and regional organisations has become available. The Community Energy Efficiency Program, being delivered by the Commonwealth Department of Climate Change and Energy Efficiency, is specifically aimed at increasing the energy efficiency of Council and community use buildings, facilities and lighting. The \$200 million of funding will be available over the next five years, and Councils can seek from \$50,000 up to \$5 million for eligible project costs. After discussions with members of the Sustainability Group, it was considered a regional application for the installation of energy efficient light globes in all streetlights would be the best fit for the criteria stipulated.

Ergon is currently in the process of undertaking a trial of energy efficient luminaries, the results of which are likely to be available shortly. Ergon also is undertaking a street lighting audit for all streetlights in FNQ. Both studies will provide important information to support our application, and as such we have approached Ergon to discuss the proposal further. With the first round of funding expected to open in early 2012, it is critical we start to pull necessary information together and prioritise what needs to be done, as well commence engagement with necessary stakeholders.

Waterway envelope mapping and Queensland Coastal Plan

Earlier in the year, the Planners Group had expressed some concern about the delay in receiving important information from the State which would allow them to prepare their new SPA compliant

Planning Schemes. Specifically, these are the waterway envelope mapping identified under the Regional Plan, and the Coastal Hazard Mapping being prepared as part of the new Queensland Coastal Plan. There have been significant delays in obtaining this information, and continually changing timelines have resulted in further frustration for the planners who want to be able to meet the State's interests.

As a result, FNQROC wrote to the Minister for Environment and Resource Management requesting a clear indication of when this information might be available. We are pleased to say this week we met with senior DERM and DLGP officials who have updated us on this situation and will be providing the mapping in coming weeks. They also will liaise with individual Councils to ensure their requests have been adequately met, and provide any additional mapping which may be requested.

Indigenous Planning Schemes

DLGP convened a workshop for the Indigenous Councils which are about to embark on the preparation of their first ever planning schemes. Given the complexity of the planning system, and the multiple constraints facing Indigenous Councils, in terms of resourcing and remoteness, this is going to be quite a feat. The workshop was aimed at providing as much information and support for these Councils as possible to help them along the journey. FNQROC can indeed assist those Councils through sharing our experience with the Regional Planners Group and how this has effectively been used as a forum to exchange ideas and experiences.

REGIONAL PROCUREMENT

Regional Procurement Coordinator, Steve Cosatto...

After a lot of hard work the Water and Waste (W&W) Technical Committee released its first collective tenders in mid November. Tenders for Sodium Hypochlorite and Liquid Alum, which are water and waste treatment chemicals, were advertised in The Cairns Post and in The Courier Mail on 19 November 2011 and 23 November 2011. The tenders will close on 19 December 2011. To date I have been encouraged by the supplier responses and comments.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all involved, not only just the W&W Technical Committee but also the FNQROC Procurement Committee, for their time and effort in order to reach this stage. I strongly believe the foundation work done by these Committees regarding documentation and the networks established over the past six months will reap dividends, not only for the Committees but also for other Technical Committees not yet established.

At the next Procurement Committee meeting in Cairns on 9 December 2011 will be a presentation by Jardine Lloyd Thompson, an insurance advisory company which specialises in public sector risk and insurances. The presentation will focus on indemnities, risks with indemnities, insurance aspects, sums insured, liability caps and risk assessments. Hopefully the presentation will provide information to the procurement personnel to assist them in upcoming contracts.

REGIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE MANAGEMENT

Regional Infrastructure Project Coordinator, Gerard Read...

Local Roads and Regional Significance (LRRS) Inspection

Sixteen intrepid explorers under the guise of the FNQRRG Technical Committee set out on Thursday 10 November to Chillagoe for its regular meeting. The opportunity was taken to inspect part of the Tablelands "Local Roads of Regional Significance" network on the way out and way back. After a session at the Mareeba Leagues Club with the QRA it was full-steam ahead. Due to the insistence of the engineers present to climb in, out, over and under most bridges encountered, the itinerary was "massaged" on the run. A productive meeting was eventually held at The Hub in Chillagoe and by the time it finished at 6.15pm most in attendance were eager for dinner and a cold beverage – which they duly had, and solved most of the road network issues in the Far North, if not Queensland and possibly even Australia!

The next day was a full day for the return trip via the southern Tablelands, and again the fascination with bridges continued! Regardless, everybody made it to their various destinations at a reasonable hour and it genuinely was a very beneficial exercise for the group to get an appreciation of an area which, while it may be outside their individual day-to-day interest, is relevant to the FNQRRG as a whole.



David Goodman from CCRC gets up close and personal.



Members of the RRG TC in Chillagoe.

RRG TC Chair and Deputy Chair

At the Chillagoe meeting, Colin Moore (TMR) was re-elected Technical Committee Chair and Natasha Murray (Cairns) was elected Deputy Chair for the next 12 months. Congratulations to both on their appointments!

Bridge Management Software and System

Consultants, Mark de Hayr (MDEH) and Dan Schimke (PBS), gave a demonstration of the MS Access based BMS software they have developed to date and potential future developments. It provoked positive discussion among the Technical Committee on topics such as timber bridge assessment and rectification, maintenance prioritisation and scheduling, possible development of a "Local Government Bridge Inspection and Condition Assessment Manual", Level 2 inspection frequencies, and valuation/depreciation.

Other RRGs and Councils have also expressed interest and should the RRGs wish to proceed with the implementation of such a system, a joint application would be prepared to seek funding from the Roads Alliance Board through the State-wide Capability Development Fund for the project.

REMINDER ... Councils through their TC reps are to consider their needs and intent to participate or not and report back by the next TC meeting!

Did you know – across the length and the breadth of FNQRRG member Councils there are more than 900 bridges and major culverts, on the Council road network alone??

Cassowary Coast Timber Bridges

It really has been the "Month of the Bridge"! David Goodman gave a very interesting presentation on some alternative investigation and maintenance treatments currently being carried out on Cassowary Coast timber bridges by Timber Restoration Systems, following the principles and procedures of Dan Tingley, Senior Wood Technologist/Structural Engineer, Wood Research and Development, Oregon, USA.

REMINDER ... Interested and curious parties are welcome to visit these sites, but please make sure you contact David to make arrangements.

Cape Tribulation - Bloomfield Link – Planning Study

WTMA has provided its draft Planning Study Terms of Reference for negotiation and agreement with FNQRRG. Cairns, Cook, Wujal Wujal and TMR TC reps are reviewing the draft and the matter is on the agenda for next week's RRG meeting. Cairns has indicated it will undertake the Planning Study in-house and is ready and raring to go once the ToR is locked down!

It should be remembered that WTMA will not consider a permit for the Woobadda Creek crossing project, or any future capital upgrade projects, on the link until the Planning Study (Environmental, Social, Cultural and Economic) for the road has been carried out.

Current Works Program

Approximately **30%** of the LRRS, Non LRRS and SafeST TIDS programs have been completed for 2011/12. The RSDP has \$700,000 subsidy allocated this year and this work has yet to commence. Councils are in the process of critically reviewing their programming and forecasts to ensure these

programs meet the required 85% expenditure level by 30 June. Projects believed to be vulnerable in terms of completion in 2011/12 have been highlighted.

AND AGAIN ... Councils are to ensure reimbursement claims are submitted in a timely manner to TMR for any unclaimed expenditure on the whole TIDS program.

New Works Program

The Technical Committee is in the process of finalising its new five year works program from 2012/13 for LRRS TIDS funding.

REMINDER ... All Councils are to review the existing 2012/13 to 2015/16 program for changes, and submit any new projects for consideration by 23 December 2011.

Cairns and Tablelands have three projects each recommended for funding in the 2012/13 and 2013/14 Non-LRRS TIDS program. This will be considered by the RRG at its next meeting on 12 December 2011.

Cairns has nominated 13 projects (\$1.19m in subsidy value) for funding from the new Cycleways TIDS program, which is allocated on a State-wide competitive basis on a one-year basis. A subsidy totalling \$4m is available across the State.

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 by the end of January 2012.

TIDS Funding for Preconstruction and Planning

DID YOU KNOW? ... under the TIDS Policy, funding can not be allocated to a stand alone project for only preconstruction and planning. However, these costs can be claimed and included in a funding request for a construction project which does proceed.

Joint Purchasing & Resource Sharing Toolkit

The Roads Alliance "JP & RS" Toolkit has been released and is available to access on the Roads Alliance website through LG Online. It is a framework and guideline on how RRGs/Councils should approach JP & RS, is relatively user-friendly, and contains a number of linked templates.

Next Technical Committee Meeting

The next Technical Committee meeting will be held at Cairns Regional Council on Friday 3 February 2012.

Next RRG Meeting

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

DATE CLAIMERS 2011-2012

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 |

* Please note 2012 FNQROC and FNQRRG Meeting Dates will be announced on our website following the 12 December 2011 board meeting, and will be included in the February newsletter.

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

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| Friday 3 February 2011, Cairns Regional Council, Cairns, 10am |
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| Natural Asset Management Advisory Committee Meetings Organiser: Travis Sydes |
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| <p>23 & 24 February 2012, Cassowary Coast Regional Council, Cairns, 10am</p> <p>24 & 25 May 2012, Yarrabah Aboriginal Shire Council, 10am</p> <p>23 & 24 August 2012, Cairns (with Inaugural Joint Forum of CYP & FNQ)</p> <p>23 & 24 November 2012, Hinchinbrook Shire Council, Ingham, 10am</p> |

| FNQ Procurement Group Meetings (FNQROC Organiser: Steve Cosatto). |
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| <p>General – Friday 9 December 2011, Cairns Regional Council, 10am</p> |

| FNQROC Planning Group Meetings (FNQROC Organiser: Daniela Gambotto) |
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| <p>Friday 16 December 2011, Cairns Regional Council</p> |

| FNQROC Sustainability Group Meetings (FNQROC Organiser: Daniela Gambotto) |
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| <p>Friday 2 December 2011, Cairns Regional Council</p> |

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DID YOU KNOW?

- ❖ The tongue of a blue whale is as long as an elephant.
- ❖ Our eyes are always the same size from birth.
- ❖ [Kirk Douglas](#)' real name is Issur Danielovitch Demsky. [Richard Clapton](#)'s real name is Terry Gonk.
- ❖ Ken, Barbie's boyfriend, debuted in 1961. Unfortunately, they split up on Valentine's Day 2004.

"Creativity is allowing yourself to make mistakes. Art is knowing which ones to keep" - Scott Adams.