



REGIONAL UPDATE

Executive Officer, Darlene Irvine...

NBN Submission

We have finally finished our submission to NBN Co for early rollout of high speed broadband within this region. A low resolution copy of the submission can be found on our website at <http://www.fnqroc.qld.gov.au/home/index.htm>. We had a favourable write up in The Cairns Post on 27 August 2011 with a few comments on cairns.com.au. The comments started out as being negative but they became quite positive over the ensuing days. All of this assists community engagement.

TNQ Regional Economic Plan (TNQREP)

This plan is also due for release shortly. It is quite exciting to finally have a Regional Economic Plan which we are all committed to and which supports our local efforts. The effectiveness of this collaboration should not be underestimated - I am already seeing some side benefits which are a result of having to work together on developing this plan.

FNQROC Board Meeting and AGM 8 August 2011

At the Annual General Meeting Cr Tom Gilmore was re-elected as Chair and Cr Val Schier was re-elected as Deputy Chair.

At the ordinary meeting we:

- discussed Drinking Water Quality Management Plans. The board is keen for us to look at this collaboratively.
- discussed Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements (NDRRA) funding. A watching brief is being held with councils. Our biggest concern at the moment is the next event and emergent works associated with that. I have had discussions with relevant managers within councils on how we go forward. LGAQ also has developed a model which it will speak to councils about in the near future (if not already).
- discussed the FNQROC operational review. The Board discussed the quotes received and whether there was a cost benefit of actually reviewing FNQROC operations, particularly as they felt we were already scrutinised on a regular basis. More work will occur in this area.
- adopted the Regional Greenhouse Gas Mitigation Strategy - Managing Risk in a Carbon Economy and the Regional Sustainability Policy. Copies can be found on our website at http://www.fnqroc.qld.gov.au/admin/cities_climate_protection.html Congratulations to Daniela Gambotto and the Sustainability Working Group for finalising these documents.

A reminder that Minutes and Agendas of all FNQROC Board Meetings can be found on our website at http://www.fnqroc.qld.gov.au/admin/board_members.htm

Draft Regionalisation Strategy and Infrastructure Plan

Advance Cairns is leading the regional response to the Draft Regionalisation Strategy and Infrastructure Plan. I have met with other regional partners to provide comment for the drafting of this response. A copy will be forwarded to Mayors and CEOs prior to signoff.

We're moving!

In mid September FNQROC will move to the Australia Post building on Grafton Street (across from the Cairns Convention Centre) along with Cairns Regional Council's regulated parking team. This area will provide us with more room - within this space there should be a desk available if any council officer needs to work in Cairns in between meetings.

Jubilee Bridge is open!

Congratulations to Cassowary Coast Regional Council. This new Jubilee Bridge is a beautiful piece of infrastructure (if you like that kind of thing) which shows a collaborative effort in terms of funding. The bridge, the approaches and roundabouts were funded by Local, State and Federal Governments and the FNQ Regional Road Group.



REGIONAL PLANNING & SUSTAINABILITY

Regional Planning and Sustainability Coordinator, Daniela Gambotto...

Planning Institute of Australia Far North Branch Mini Symposium

With the raft of changes occurring in the planning world, the South East Queensland branch of the Planning Institute of Australia recently held a symposium in Brisbane. The purpose of the forum was to inform the industry of recent updates and ensure they are kept abreast of the issues. Many Far Northern planners showed interest in a similar event being held up here and this month that happened...albeit with a Far North Queensland flavour!

Key staff members from the Queensland Reconstruction Authority and the Brisbane office of the Department of Local Government and Planning attended, along with representatives from Far Northern councils and private industry members.

The final session of the day saw Far Northern planners present the key opportunities and challenges they face in preparing the new SPA Planning Schemes. From the difficulties of interpreting state planning policies into the local context, to obtaining the necessary data to complete their schemes, our Far Northern planners put on a sterling performance and got some key messages out there to the industry. I can happily report they did the region proud!

REGIONAL PROCUREMENT

Regional Procurement Coordinator, Steve Cosatto...

Water and Waste Committee

The Water Treatment Technical Committee recently met at Innisfail's Claire Street Depot. Sodium Hypochlorite and Liquid Alum contract documents are continuing to evolve to the point where the Technical Committee hopes to proceed to the market in the near future. I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the progress made by the Water and Waste Technical

Committee. The project's initial contract documentation has been time consuming, however once finalised will be a foundation for all future projects. The round table discussions and networking are starting to lead us into additional projects. Currently being discussed, in no particular priority, are switchboards, sewer relining and an expression of interest regarding sludge. The next Procurement Water and Waste Committee meeting will be held in Cairns on 15 September 2011.

General Procurement Committee

MacDonnells Law made a presentation entitled "Contracting by Local Governments" to the General Procurement Committee on 12 August 2011. MacDonnells Law also provided an update on Councils' legal requirements. Coordinators considered it beneficial to utilise the meeting forum for presentations which identified local issues. The Coordinators requested a presentation on insurance be made to the next General Procurement meeting, which will be held in Cairns on 14 October 2011.

REGIONAL NATURAL ASSET MANAGEMENT

Regional Natural Asset Management Coordinator, Travis Sydes...

The good weevil - a pint sized crusader in the fight against salvinia

With the cold of winter behind us (well it has been cold on the Tablelands at least) and the promise of spring upon us, the birds and our gardens are not the only things taking off. Although the wet is still a way off the rise in the mercury and the increase in day length is stirring the weeds in our wetlands, waterways and farms. One such weed is the floating fern salvinia, a major weed in water bodies across the north (and eastern Australia). Salvinia is a *Class 2 Pest* in Queensland and one of *20 Weeds of National Significance* which spreads by dividing rapidly as it does not produce fertile spores. The dense mats it forms choke out light and dump increased nutrients into the water. Compared to many weeds salvinia's impact is rapid and dramatic and generally stirs a great deal of public concern and query. It is therefore definitely one pest which Local Governments need to be well versed in responding to.

The salvinia weevil *Cyrtobagous salviniae* measures in at a tiny 2-3 mm long, but packs a fairly mighty punch on actively growing infestations. A breeding facility based at Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service's Lake Eacham Revegetation Nursery has successfully reared many batches of weevils for release across the far north over recent years. FNQROC assists the program by processing weevil requests and maintaining a release database. As with most weeds however, there is no single 'silver bullet', and weevils are just another tool along with education, prevention, herbicides and mechanical control. Getting the timing right and making sure the community understands the different components of a salvinia management program is important as it can take some months before weevils take off and the impact of control can be seen.



Munch, munch...the salvinia weevil (left) is one of the world's great bio-control success stories. Salvinia divides and grows rapidly to form a thick carpet across water bodies. This example of an infestation in Port Douglas (right) has taken less than one month to cover almost all of a suburban water-detention basin.

Natural Asset Management Advisory Committee met in Cairns on 26 August 2011. Minutes will be released shortly.

Far North Queensland Pest Advisory Forum was hosted by Cairns Regional Council and attracted a massive 95 attendees which is an achievement we hope to see become the rule rather than the exception. The forum hosted both a Thunbergia control and a weed identification workshop which were well received and will be continued. The next forum is scheduled for late November 2011 at Tablelands Regional Council and will include a pest fish identification workshop.

With members of the public in attendance at the forum we strongly encourage Councillors to attend and participate.

National Siam Weed Eradication Program Review – stakeholders and researchers met with the review team for the National Siam Weed Eradication Program. The review team will spend the next month compiling their recommendations on the future of the program.

The Department of Agriculture Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF) is currently undertaking a case study within the Wet Tropics area, investigating the role of the Commonwealth in setting weed management priorities. FNQROC facilitated a round table meeting with the seven delegates last month. The results of this will be used by the Commonwealth but also by the region to develop a report which will assist to guide and advocate our priorities, as well as concerns relating to pest management and landscape repair.

Queensland Biosecurity Bill – On behalf of the region, I have been working with LGAQ in providing comments through the drafting of the Biosecurity Bill. FNQROC has lodged a submission during the consultation period.

Invasive Plants and Animals Round Table – FNQROC is working with DEEDI and regional departments to host a round table meeting across the Northern Region to discuss the current and future delivery of pest and weed management. Riding on the back of the DAFF round table meeting and ensuing case study we hope this will help to consolidate existing partnerships, identify delivery gaps and increase efficiencies and capacity in planning for, responding to and delivering pest management programs across the region.



September 5-11 is Weedbuster Week

Weedbusters is a national program which seeks to raise awareness about the damaging effects of weeds. Weedbusters engages the community through education and awareness activities and on-ground weed management. Local Governments are encouraged to register activities with the community. This year's theme is Prevention and Early Detection. For more information on Weedbuster Week go to www.weedbusters.info.

REGIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE MANAGEMENT

Regional Infrastructure Project Coordinator, Gerard Read...

Regional Road Group

Works Program

Expenditure on the 2010/11 program came in at around 62% for the group. All Councils are currently “making hay while the sun shines” on the 2011/12 program in order to lift that number. There is speculation (and it is only speculation at this stage!) that bonus TIDS allocations will be made to Regional Road Groups which fully expend (ie. 100%) their allocation each year. Should this come to fruition, the importance of expeditious planning and delivery of these projects will be spotlighted!

Development of the 2012/13 onwards five-year program has commenced, and plans are for it to be completed by Christmas this year.

Councils are reminded to ensure reimbursement claims are submitted to the Department of Transport and Main Roads (DTMR) for any unclaimed expenditure on the whole TIDS program.

Cape Tribulation - Bloomfield Link

WTMA has requested an impact assessment be carried out considering all social, cultural, economic and environmental factors for the link prior to any approval for link upgrades. The Mayors of Cairns, Wujal Wujal, and Cook plus DTMR have requested a meeting with WTMA representatives to discuss the scope and extent of this. This meeting has not yet been held.

Sealing of Accesses to Properties

DTMR has agreed to align with the FNQROC Development Manual policy regarding sealing of property accesses onto state controlled roads for new developments. However, DTMR will reserve its right to retain its existing policy of providing a 1.5m sealed shoulder protection strip for upgrading of existing property accesses onto state controlled roads.

NDRRA

The Technical Committee has for some time been considering the establishment of a Regional Program and Logistics Coordinator for NDRRA. At this stage it has been decided not to proceed any further. Darlene Irvine and I attended an information session in Brisbane hosted by LGAQ regarding its Local Government Disaster Recovery Services and NDRRA matters in general. Among a number of things the main message arising was day labour provisions are effectively dead! LGAQ is still prepared to lobby for future events however it would need factual information from Councils regarding typical historical day labour requirements for disaster events.

131940 Website – Traffic and Travel Information

All Councils have agreed to participate in the *131940.qld.gov.au* website managed by DTMR. This website is aiming to be the central information resource to provide real-time information on Queensland's road network to road users and the general public. Councils will be able to upload information from its own road network onto the website.

Training

A training session in the use of the "MetroCount" traffic counter units and software has been locked in for Friday 23 September 2011 at the Cairns Local Disaster Coordination Centre, Windarra Street, Woree commencing at 9.30am. Representatives from Croydon, Etheridge, Cairns, Tablelands and Cook councils have been confirmed to date.

Asset Management Group

The Asset Management Group meeting was held on 10 August 2011 in Cairns. Gary Everson from Cassowary Coast Regional Council gave a very insightful presentation at the meeting on the impacts of storm surge based on the "Yasi experience"!

Asset Management Plans

All Councils are well advanced in the development of their asset management plans. The 30 September 2011 deadline has crept up and most are in the final stages of adoption by Council.

Regional Asset Management Strategy – Data Update

The group is proceeding with an update of the existing asset data (which is four to five years old) contained in the RAMS. Jeff Roorda & Associates have been engaged to undertake this in the next couple of months.

Unit Rates & Methodologies

Development of an asset valuation unit rate database and calculation methodology framework is in progress and expected to be produced in draft by November 2011.

Next Meeting

The next Asset Management Group Meeting will be held on Thursday 10 November 2011 at 10am in the Committee Room, Level 3, Cairns Regional Council.

And another thing...Gerard's tips for the Spring Carnival!!!

Caulfield Cup – Shamrock and Absolutely

Cox Plate – Smart Missile and Helmet

Melbourne Cup – Lucas Crannich and December Draw

DATE CLAIMERS 2011

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

FNQROC	FNQRRG
Monday 10 October 2011, Cassowary Coast Regional Council, Innisfail – 10am	Monday 10 October 2011, Cassowary Coast Regional Council, Innisfail – 1.30pm
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 1 September 2011, Cairns Regional Council, 12pm

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

Water and Waste Committee – Thursday 15 September 2011, Cairns Regional Council, 10am
 General Committee – Friday 14 October 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, 10am

FNQROC Sustainability Group Meetings (FNQROC Organiser: Daniela Gambotto)

Friday 2 September 2011 – Cassowary Coast Regional Council

FNQROC Planning Group Meetings (FNQROC Organiser: Daniela Gambotto)

Friday 7 October 2011 – Cairns

Friday 16 December 2011 – Cairns

FNQROC Local Laws Group Meetings (FNQROC Organiser: Darlene Irvine).

TBA

FNQROC CONTACT DETAILS

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