



THE MANY FACES OF FNQROC...

Executive Officer, Darlene Irvine...

I am very excited that FNQROC now has its full complement of staff to fulfil our obligations to the FNQROC Board and subsequently to councils and their staff. Actions from technical meetings are starting to be completed in a timely manner which allows us to move forward at a pace which I think is better able to support councils.

I have also just completed a basic overview review of ROCs across the nation to get a better understanding of where we sit in comparison. This report can be found in the FNQROC Board agenda for 11 April 2011. In short we sit quite well in terms of the cost and delivery of projects. I found it also comforting talking to CQ LGA which seems to run very similar to us (different programs though) – it's nice to know we are not alone.

Regional Development Manual

It will be action stations shortly with the review of the Regional Development Manual. We had to clean up some documents following workshops held at end of last year and we have also been waiting on some guidelines for Water Sensitive Urban Development to help councils to meet the Healthy Water Ways State Planning Policy. The National Broadband Network also had us contemplating the implications on our Regional Development Manual.

Civil Works for the next 3 to 5 years

We heard at the Infrastructure and Planning conference in mid March about the enormity of the works which need to be undertaken due to the recent floods and cyclone. For example, take the case of DTMR. This department can only resource 30% of the work they need to undertake over the next three years, which means it will outsource 70%. This work, combined with the work needed across the rest of the state and in particular SEQ, will undoubtedly have an impact in this region and our ability as councils to source contractors and equipment. I believe this will be a topic of discussion between LGAQ and the Queensland Reconstruction Authority in the next couple of days. Value for money is a key consideration for NDRRA funding and if councils and DTMR are competing against each other and driving prices up this value is effectively compromised. I expect to hear more about resolving this in the near future. We have however begun a cost benefit analysis of purchasing a pavement stabiliser for the region.

National Broadband Network and Digital Economy Strategy

We recently went out for quotes to:

- A. provide expert advice and guidance for attracting NBN Co. to this region, and
- B. to develop a Digital Economy Strategy – in short identifying our capability and capacity.

We have progressed with Part A and have engaged Mach Technology (David Ives) to assist with this process. David has extensive networks and more recently worked within DEEDI focussing on NBN.

On Monday 21 March 2011 we had two NBN Co. executives visit the region and meet with councils and ICT businesses. It was a very fruitful day to begin developing the relationship and highlighting the support we have for an early roll out in this region. The FNQROC Board will also formally consider a letter and submission to NBN Co. at its next meeting.

It is envisaged we will develop a newsletter on this topic to keep all interested parties informed of the progress to date.

Delegation with Minister Foreign Affairs and Trade

Kevin Rudd, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, will bring a delegation of 54 ambassadors to Cairns on 7 and 8 April 2011. A working breakfast has been organised for the morning of 8 April 2011 which will be focussed on regional councils. It is expected that available Mayors or CEOs will be on a panel supported by the Chair of the RDA to discuss this region and how we are 'open for business'.

Tropical Innovation Awards

The Tropical Innovation Awards will also be launched on 5 April 2011. There are many industrious people in the region doing what they do best – it would be great to see them recognised for their ingenuity. If you know any of these people please encourage them to lodge an application. Details can be found on www.tropicalinnovationawards.com.



REGIONAL PROCUREMENT

Regional Procurement Coordinator, Steven Cosatto...

Hi all, firstly I would like to thank the FNQROC board for providing me with the opportunity to be involved with FNQROC in the inception of its procurement portfolio. I appreciate there will be challenges ahead but many more benefits to be gained for the region, as shown by other ROCs such as Hunter Valley and Southern Sydney.

Prior to my appointment with the FNQROC team I was employed within Cairns Regional Council as Technical Officer Quality Assurance based at the Martyn Street Depot where my primary focus was on Quality Documentation and Australian Standards within Cairns Works Construction Department.

My role here at FNQROC will be guided by the Board and technical committees and will focus on the facilitation of resource-sharing (documentation, contracts, processes, standing offers etc) and the coordination of regional procurement activities which meet FNQROC guidelines. The focus will be on areas where there are limited suppliers in the region and where councils are competing against each other to drive prices up.

The benefits to a regional alliance on procurement can already be evidenced in our first project (Water Chemical Treatment – Sodium Hypochlorite, used to treat drinking water) on two fronts. Firstly, we received feedback from the suppliers who were very keen to present their products/organisation to the Procurement Group. During the presentation both companies commented that if FNQROC was to commit as a group and for a specified time frame eg. 3+2 years, it would certainly provide the companies with the assurance needed to not only invest in infrastructure in the region but to also provide additional support ie. delivery, pricing etc.

An application for Federal funding through Regional Development Australia is proposed for the significant upgrade to the storage capacities for Sodium Hypochlorite. RDA has advised applications will be given greater consideration if projects sought under this program included delivery of concrete economic and social benefits, commitment to innovation, building capacity in local communities, and a link to regional communities across traditional boundaries.

The next general Procurement Group meeting will be held in Cairns on 8 June 2011.

REGIONAL NATURAL ASSET MANAGEMENT

Regional Natural Asset Management Coordinator, Travis Sydes...

Myrtle rust – a significant threat to the Far North

The recent entry of the plant fungal disease myrtle rust (*Uredo rangelii*) into Australia and subsequent detection at a nursery in the Cairns is of great concern to the region. The pathogen is specific to plants in the family Myrtaceae which is a major and dominant component of our tropical forests and woodlands and includes the widespread genus of *Syzigium*, *Eucalyptus*, *Callistemon*, and *Melaleuca* to name just a few. The disease is spread by wind-borne spores and will not be able to be eradicated or contained. It has already been detected on over 30 different host species and causes a range of symptoms from deformation of leaves, stunting of plants, die-back to plant death. The broader implications for this outbreak in tropical Australia are as yet unknown but are likely to be very significant; potentially altering forest structure in the first instance, with multiple and compound effects cascading through ecosystems as a result. Regional natural asset managers will discuss the issue in the upcoming meeting of the FNQROC/Terrain NRM Landscape Repair and Resilience Working Group on 29 March 2011. Local Governments and industries such as tourism should begin to consider appropriate adaptation strategies and seek to keep abreast of the latest developments and advice from State and federal departments.



Left: Myrtle rust is distinguished by yellow spores (image: ANGB). Right: blackened canopy as a result of the early stages of myrtle rust on *Syzigium jambos* at Maui, Hawaii, 2009 (image: Travis Sydes)

Cyclone Yasi Response

The task of facilitating and guiding recovery efforts and communications during the ongoing cyclone recovery effort by Cassowary Coast Regional Council and Hinchinbrook Shire Council is delivered through their respective Natural Environment working groups. A bi-weekly recovery bulletin is being produced to keep both regions up-to-date with the latest news, information and key contacts. These are available on a dedicated portal on the Terrain NRM website:

<http://www.terrain.org.au/component/content/article/2-public-general/553-cyclone-yasi.html>

Upcoming events

Cape York Pest Management Advisory Group, 6 April 2011, Cairns

National Pond Apple Management Group & Pond Apple Working Group, (joint meeting), 14 April 2011, Cairns

Natural Asset Management Advisory Committee, 15 April 2011, Ingham (note the FNQ Pest Advisory Forum will not be held in conjunction with this meeting).

REGIONAL ROAD GROUP AND ASSET MANAGEMENT

Regional Infrastructure Project Coordinator, Gerard Read...

Regional Road Group

The Regional Road Group Technical Committee travelled to Innisfail for its meeting on 25 March 2011. All Councils and DTMR were represented and a productive meeting was held. David Trotter and Tony Rooks from Cassowary Coast Regional Council took the team on an

insightful inspection of the new Jubilee Bridge construction project. It will be an impressive piece of infrastructure from an engineering sense and will obviously be of great benefit to the Innisfail community. At this stage the opening is planned in August 2011.



Bridge Management System

The Roads Alliance Board is investigating the provision of a standard Bridge Management System for use by Councils across the State, similar to DTMR's system.

Works Program

Current expenditure on the LRRS projects is low which was to be expected given the disruption to Council works programs due to the extensive wet season and TC Yasi. The new works program has been fine-tuned and will be presented to the next RRG meeting for endorsement.

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

Cape Tribulation - Bloomfield Link

Representatives from FNQRRG will be meeting with WTMA in the near future to discuss environmental considerations for future works on the link and in particular the Woobadda Creek culvert project. The link study on the section within Cook Shire is in progress and is expected to be completed within the next fortnight.

The new Bloomfield River crossing at Wujal Wujal is still planned to be completed prior to Christmas 2011.

Resource Sharing

Given the resource battles councils face, a financial analysis of the buy –vs- hire comparison for Pavement Stabilisation Plant and Underbridge Units is about to commence. Consideration will be given to regional logistics as part of this analysis.

NDRRA

There is still some confusion regarding delivery of the NDRRA program through the newly formed Queensland Reconstruction Authority, in particular the day labour issue. LGAQ met with the QRA on 30 March 2011. It is expected the meeting will discuss the potential for a Regional NDRRA Program Coordinator to assist with delivery planning and to strengthen Councils' position in terms of resource coordination and procurement and support the 'value

for money' component of the funding. There is a likelihood councils will struggle to secure supply on an individual basis given the huge demand created by disaster recovery programs state wide. As an example DTMR have already identified it can only resource 30% of the work they need to undertake and will be outsourcing 70%, and that is on top of the requirements of SEQ due to the floods.

COAG Road Reform

COAG recently released its Road Reform Plan Feasibility Study and Local Government Consultation Paper to facilitate discussion between the COAG Road Reform Project (CRRP) and Councils regarding how road reform options being considered by CRRP may impact Councils.

The paper describes options being considered by the CRRP project in relation to heavy vehicle pricing and funding, initial thinking on how the road reform options will impact local government and poses discussion questions to test this thinking and gather information to inform further analysis.

LGAQ hosted a half day CRRP consultation workshop on 30 March 2011 at LGAQ House in Brisbane, however councils may still make written submissions up to 11 April 2011.

Road Safety

QT representatives will be invited to future meetings to discuss FNQ road safety programs, projects and initiatives and to determine if FNQRRG can assist in any way.

Next Meetings

Technical Committee – 10am - Friday 20 May 2011, Level 3 Committee Room, Cairns Regional Council, Cairns.

RRG – 1.30pm after the FNQROC Board Meeting - Monday 11 April 2011, Civic Reception Room, Cairns Regional Council, Cairns.

Asset Management Group

The Asset Management Group meeting was held on 24 March 2011 in Cairns and was well attended and constructive.

Regional Asset Management Strategy (RAMS)

The group has decided to update the asset registers within the regional strategy. Jeff Roorda & Associates has been engaged to undertake this project. JRA developed the original RAMS and the data is now four to five years old with councils having found an additional \$1billion in assets since that time. This data will be vital for collective advocacy and should be particularly useful for any RDA submissions. Strength in numbers!

Asset Management Plans

All councils appear to be progressing well with the development of these plans and no problems are envisaged meeting the deadline. FNQROC will be writing to DLGP to ascertain the current status of their "Asset Management Advancement Program" and to confirm new deadline dates for development and submission of Core and Advanced AM Plans.

Unit Rates and Methodologies

The group has decided to develop:

- A regional unit rate calculation methodology - it is envisaged this document would be similar in principle to the FNQROC Regional Development Manual and used internally as a guideline with Council-specific clauses available.
- A unit rate database for the region.

Next Meeting

The next Asset Management Group Meeting will be held on Thursday 19 May 2011 at 9.30am in the Committee Room, Level 3, Cairns Regional Council, Cairns.

Regional Planning and Sustainability Coordinator, Daniela Gambotto...

Sustainability

Regional Greenhouse Gas Mitigation Plan and Action Plan

The first Sustainability Group meeting for 2011 was held this month. There was plenty on the agenda including a review of the regional Greenhouse Gas Mitigation Plan and Action Plan. Some vital input was obtained from the group and this will be incorporated into the plan which will be finalised in the next month. Individual Councils are also in the process of finalising their own GHG Mitigation and Action Plans which will see on-ground delivery of specific local actions for each Local Government area.

Planning

Decision Support Tool

The LGAQ funded Decision Support Tool and Training Project is moving along. The draft Decision Support Tool has been prepared and is currently under review by the Project Reference Group and Local Government planners. A lot of effort has also gone into the format for the training component of this project. The two-day training aims to provide planners with the know-how to successfully integrate NRM targets into their planning schemes. We therefore want to ensure the course is structured for maximum gain by the region's planners.

Incorporating Biodiversity Provisions in new Planning Schemes

Travis and I are continuing to support Tablelands Regional Council to develop a biodiversity overlay map for its new planning scheme. The methodology used to provide the finer detailed mapping required for the planning scheme is currently being fine-tuned, and will eventually be rolled out for use by other councils. We are also in discussions about how FNQROC can facilitate the preparation of a regional biodiversity overlay code to support the mapping.

WMP2 tour

To ensure the first Sustainability Group meeting for 2011 included an element of fun, we arranged a tour of the new William McCormack Place 2 building in Cairns. WMP 2 is a Department of Public Works managed project designed to achieve the 'World Leader' 6-star Green Star Office Design rating from the Green Building Council of Australia. Aside from being identified as one of the most energy-efficient commercial buildings in Australia, it also confirms the 6-star rating can be achieved even in a tropical environment. It was previously considered not possible due to the stringent requirements to achieve such a rating.

The design of WMP2 combines existing best practices with a number of innovations to reduce its environmental impacts and improve indoor environment quality for the building's users. WMP2's design is predicted to reduce energy/emissions by approximately 60% and reduce potable water use by 75% compared to a median office building.

We were fortunate to gain an insiders' view of the building including a tour of the highly technical air cooling system, solar panelled roof top, on-site water storage facility and the grey water system. MGF Engineering Consultants were pleased to show us the intricacies of their design and they welcome other groups to do the same. The tour is highly recommended from this Sustainability buff!!



Electric...

Kirsty Lamperd of Tablelands Regional Council enjoys the views from the roof which is covered in 410m² of photovoltaic panels which provide 64kw of power.

DATE CLAIMERS 2011

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

FNQROC	FNQRRG
Monday 11 April 2011, Cairns Regional Council, Cairns – 10am	Monday 11 April 2011, Cairns Regional Council, Cairns – 1.30pm
Monday 6 June 2011, Cook Shire Council, Cooktown – 10am	Monday 6 June 2011, Cook Shire Council, Cooktown – 1.30pm
Monday 8 August 2011, Cairns Local Disaster Coordination Centre, Woree – 10am	Monday 8 August 2011, Cairns Local Disaster Coordination Centre, Woree – 1.30pm
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).

Friday 20 May 2011, Cairns Regional Council, Committee Room, Level 3, 10am

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

Wednesday 8 June 2011 – Cairns	Wednesday 21 September 2011 – Cairns
Wednesday 7 December 2011 – Cairns	

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

Friday 27 May 2011 - Cook Shire Council

Friday 26 August 2011 - Cairns Regional Council

Regional Asset Management Committee Meetings (FNQROC Organiser: Gerard Read).
Thursday 2011 – Cairns Regional Council

FNQROC Sustainability Group Meetings (FNQROC Organiser: Daniela Gambotto)
Friday 4 March 2011 – Cairns Regional Council
Friday 3 June 2011 – Cairns Regional Council
Friday 2 September 2011 – Cairns Regional Council
Friday 2 December 2011 – Cairns Regional Council

FNQROC Community Plan Meetings (FNQROC Organiser: Darlene Irvine).
Thursday 14 April 2011 - Cairns Regional Council

FNQROC Planning Group Meetings (FNQROC Organiser: Daniela Gambotto)
Thursday 7 and Friday 8 April 2011 (LGAQ Decision Support Tool Training) – venue to be confirmed
Friday 17 June 2011 - Cairns
Friday 19 August 2011 - Cairns
Friday 7 October 2011 – Cairns
Friday 16 December 2011 – Cairns

FNQROC Local Laws Group Meetings (FNQROC Organiser: Darlene Irvine).
Thursday 10 March 2011 – Tablelands Regional Council, 65 Rankin Street, Mareeba

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Martin Luther King said: *"Take a leap of faith. You don't have to see the whole staircase, just take the first step."*