



## QUEENSLAND RECONSTRUCTION AUTHORITY

### *Executive Officer, Darlene Irvine...*

What a month February has been! The State Government has established the Queensland Reconstruction Authority, of which Premier Anna Bligh is the Minister, Major General Mick Slater is the Chair and Coordinator-General Graeme Newton has been appointed the CEO.

The role of the authority is to:

- a) Work closely with Local Governments and communities to ensure the unique characteristics of each community are factored into the rebuilding process, and
- b) Coordinate government and non-government organisations to deliver the necessary services to assist communities to rebuild.

Some key notes from the Premier's address to Mayors and CEOs 11 February 2011:

- The Queensland Reconstruction Authority (QRA) has been set up for a period of two years.
- Focus is on the south-east Queensland floods and Tropical Cyclone Yasi disasters.
- NDRRA assessment is conducted through the authority.
- \$400 million of funding for upfront payments for priority projects. Approval and payment is accessible up front rather than at the end of verification, which will help cash flow problems within councils. NDRRA applications with a schedule of works will still need to be submitted. An accuracy of 70 – 80% is expected.
- Focus is on betterment (beyond current build), mitigation and prevention.
- They will be looking at the four pillars of government: value for money, speed to market, economy and community.
- The QRA uses the authority to push priority areas such as licences and permits (ie. DERM approvals). An example given was...if Brisbane City Council wished to have its fleet of seven city cats consistent in sizes etc with their replacement, then instead of submitting seven applications to DERM the reconstruction authority can support one application covering all seven.
- Emergent works will follow similar process to usual.
- The QRA can also support 'land swap' for flood prone areas and can accommodate a vacancy clause.
- Should councils require it, the authority can arrange teams where there is a skill/labour shortage ie. carpenters, electricians, planners etc.

**Note: The authority will only act when councils ask for that help.**

## REGIONAL PROCUREMENT

I am extremely excited and relieved that FNQROC has found the right person to fulfil the role of Regional Procurement Coordinator. Steven Cosatto started on 14 February 2011 and has been overwhelmed with the enthusiasm shown by council staff in support of the position.

While I do not wish to dampen the enthusiasm of Councils, I would also like to take this time to clarify the direction and priorities for this position. The FNQROC Board supported this position

as part of the 2010/2011 operational plan with a clear guideline that we focus on those activities where there are limited suppliers and where councils are competing against each other – elements which drive up costs. We do have a priority list which was presented to the board. However, as always we are flexible and will reconsider priorities as needed. We will also work closely with relevant technical committees and individual staff involved prior to commencing procurement activities.

At this stage we are looking at Sodium Hypochlorite and Liquid Alum and have been working closely with relevant personnel. While Sodium Hypochlorite is not a big contract for councils there are large consequences to both our communities and economy if service is poor. Currently, there is only one supplier to the region, which is not located within the region. In considering this procurement case, it has been identified that through procuring collaboratively we can entice businesses to setup within the region rather than transporting to the region. This will provide both an economic and sustainable opportunity for the region while improving our business continuity for safe drinking water. This same principle can be applied to many of our other procurement activities.

This is a very exciting chapter and I look forward to the resulting financial, economic and environmental benefits which will follow for the region.

## TROPICAL CYCLONE YASI'S IMPACT ON OUR NATURAL ASSETS

### *Regional Natural Asset Management Coordinator, Travis Sydes...*

There is no doubt the month of February 2011 will remain not just in our minds but in our efforts over the coming months and years. Tropical Cyclone Yasi was an extraordinary event which will have many long-term and complex impacts, not the least for our natural assets and values which contribute so much to our regional economy and lifestyle. From the total loss of canopy in forests to the significant impacts on foreshore dunes and vegetation, it is a difficult task to comprehend the scale of the area severely affected.

Our tropical rainforests have evolved with cyclones and arguably require episodes of significant disturbance to maintain diversity. The downside is this also provides opportunities for pest animals such as pigs and weeds such as pond apple, lantana and miconia to take hold. The wet-eucalypt forests which dot the Mission Beach lowlands and extend from the Hull River to the lower Herbert have received a significant blow (pardon the pun) in this event. Tropical Cyclone Yasi's impact extends into the highlands and across and beyond the upper Herbert rangelands which rarely see this level of disturbance.

Recovery operations are underway across the region for several of our iconic animals including the Cassowary and Mahogany Glider. Cassowary recovery operations utilising the lessons from TC Larry in 2006 are in full swing and will no doubt deliver what they can to support them through this event. The situation for the Mahogany Glider is dire. Not sighted since the 1880's the species was rediscovered in the Tully Lowlands in the late 1980's. The entire home range (Hull Heads to Crystal Creek) of this gliding marsupial has been severely impacted with much of the worst hit areas considered to contain the highest populations. Plans are underway for supplementary feeding and den-box programs to respond to the situation on-ground. With much of this habitat situated on private land it will take a real community and agency collaboration to ensure its long-term survival.

The recovery process for our forests, beaches and our iconic species will require stakeholders and the community to work together, while also allowing nature to take its course. Getting the balance right and matching human needs with the long-term resilience and recovery of our natural assets is going to be a unique challenge, particularly for Local Governments which are at the coal-face of the recovery process.



The impacts of Tropical Cyclone Yasi on foreshore vegetation and individual species like the Mahogany Glider (photo by Daryl Dickson) are widespread. The Mahogany Glider, already an endangered species, is under immediate threat as a result of the damage from Tropical Cyclone Yasi which has severely impacted the whole of its' home range.

## REGIONAL ROAD GROUP AND ASSET MANAGEMENT GROUP

**Regional Infrastructure Project Coordinator, Gerard Read...**

### Regional Road Group

Like many other things, Tropical Cyclone Yasi put the kibosh on the planned Technical Committee meeting for 2 February 2011. It was rescheduled for 16 February 2011 and fortunately went ahead as planned. The RRG meeting was held on 14 February 2011 just prior to the Technical Committee meeting.

#### Office Bearers

Cr Peter Scott (Cook) and Cr Margaret Cochrane (Cairns) were re-elected unopposed to the positions of Chair and Deputy Chair respectively at the RRG meeting.

Incumbent Technical Committee Deputy Chair Natasha Murray (Cairns) is on extended maternity leave, and as a result Tony Lickiss (Cook) was elected unopposed to this position at the Technical Committee meeting.

#### LRRS Network Additions

The following road sections were added to the LRRS network at the RRG meeting.

##### *Cassowary Coast*

- Bryant Street, Tully (Butler Street to Dean Road)

##### *Cairns*

- Draper Street (Comport Street to Cook Street)
- Cook Street (Draper Street to Aumuller Street)
- Aumuller Street, Cairns (Mulgrave Road to Hoare Street)
- Hoare Street, Cairns (Aumuller Street to Pease Street)

#### Bridges and Culverts Condition Assessment

Reports from the bridges and culvert inspections on the LRRS network carried out by ARRB last year have been received. The assessment gives an overall condition state of 1-5 (good-unsafe) for each structure. Approximately 50% of structures were in the condition state of 3-5 (poor-unsafe). Consequently Councils are now planning maintenance and replacement works for these structures.

#### Works Program

As a result of the natural disasters which have engulfed Queensland over the past few months the Roads Alliance Board has relaxed the 85% expenditure target for 2010/11 and furthermore has allowed RRGs to shuffle annual allocations in the new 5 year program, providing the 5 year total is unchanged. The new 5 year program was developed at the Technical Committee

meeting. At this stage FNQRRG has chosen to retain the annual allocation as it currently sits across the 5 years. Councils are also reminded to provide 30 June expenditure forecasts **by 11 March 2011**.

#### Cape Tribulation - Bloomfield Link

The Regional Vision Strategy for this link was developed and finalised at the RRG and Technical Committee meetings. The link study on the section within Cairns LGA has been completed. Cook has agreed to extend the study throughout its shire. These documents will be presented to WTMA for consideration in the near future.

#### Joint Purchasing & Resource Sharing

FNQROC's newly appointed Regional Procurement Coordinator Steve Cosatto attended both meetings and outlined the Joint Purchasing and Resource Sharing strategy for the next 12 months. The initial focus will be on water/sewer treatment chemicals, bituminous products and fuels. Other matters under consideration are:

- Supply of cement powder
- Galvanising
- Supply of street lighting poles
- Regional bitumen reseal contract
- Regional "store"

We welcome Steve on board and look forward to the seeing the potential gains over the next 12 months!

#### NDRRA

Extensive discussion was held at both meetings regarding the NDRRA day labour issue, which is very apt at the moment. LGAQ has been intensely lobbying the Federal Government for a relaxation of the condition, along with the "special circumstances" inclusion of other infrastructure assets under the program. Furthermore, they are investigating organisational structures to resolve the issue should the Federal Government stand firm.

#### Queensland Rail Interface Agreements

LGAQ has asked QR to review the Interface Agreement conditions due to a number of issues, and recommends Councils hold off on signing them until further notice. If Councils have already signed them there will be opportunity to renegotiate agreements.

#### **Asset Management Group**

The next Asset Management Group Meeting will be held on Thursday 24 March 2011 at 10am in the Committee Room, Level 3, Cairns Regional Council, Cairns.

## PLANNING AND SUSTAINABILITY

### ***Regional Planning and Sustainability Coordinator, Daniela Gambotto...***

#### **Decision Support Tool**

This month we held the inception meeting for the LGAQ-funded Decision Support Tool and Training Project. Representatives from all relevant agencies including Terrain NRM, Northern Gulf NRM, GBRMPA, WTMA, DLGP (formerly DIP), DERM and Local Government were involved in this first meeting. We discussed the proposed Tool and how to ensure the final product is something the planners will be able to use when they prepare their new planning schemes. The data-gathering stage is now underway which will provide the consultants with all the relevant documents they need to prepare a thorough Tool for the FNQ region.

#### **FNQROC Planners Group**

The first FNQROC Planners Group meeting was also held this month. As usual it was a jam-packed agenda and included plenty of fruitful discussion between the region's Local Government planners, representatives from DLGP (formerly DIP), DERM and Terrain NRM. This month DLGP sent David Rowland, Director of Regional Planning, from head office to discuss the Far North Queensland State Planning Regulatory Provisions and new Planning

Schemes. This was an important opportunity for the planners to present FNQ specific issues which can be referred directly back to Brisbane. It also presented the planners with a chance to gain advice directly from a senior DLGP official.

### 2011 FNQROC & FNQRRG MEETINGS

Dates have been set for the FNQROC and FNQRRG board meetings for 2011. In order to share the meeting venues between our member councils, next year's meetings will be split between Cairns, Cooktown and Innisfail. One of the Cairns meetings will take place at the Cairns Local Disaster Coordination Centre in Woree, which has been a hive of activity of late. Dates are listed below. All meetings are open and agendas and minutes are posted on our website prior. **Please note the April and June meeting venues have swapped around since the last newsletter.**

### 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 25 March 2011, Cassowary Coast Regional Council, Innisfail, 10am.

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

Wednesday 30 March 2011 - Cairns	Wednesday 21 September 2011 – Cairns
Wednesday 8 June 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 24 March 2011 – Cairns Regional Council

<b>FNQROC Sustainability Group Meetings</b> (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

<b>FNQROC Community Plan Meetings</b> (FNQROC Organiser: Darlene Irvine).
Thursday 10 March 2011 - Cairns Regional Council

<b>FNQROC Planning Group Meetings</b> (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 CONTACT DETAILS**

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