



SEASON'S GREETINGS AND ANNUAL LEAVE

Oh my goodness, to have recently heard these words at the end of a meeting made me shiver – “Have a Merry Christmas and a safe New Year”. Where has the year gone? You know it has been a quick one when your 10-year-old says “gee this year went quick”. The year does go quickly when you have your head down working hard. This year FNQROC has been working hard to deliver some quality regional programs which have been recognised nationally. To name a few...

Firstly, we have the Regional Asset Management Strategy. Well done to that technical committee to beat out 29 submitters (many of them SEQ based) to be in the final 6 at the Institute of Public Administration Australia (IPAA) awards!

Secondly, we have the Natural Asset Spatial Data Tool – a true example of cross-departmental benefits. To date we are seeing its benefits in terms of Asset Management, Levels of Service and prioritisation, Planning Scheme development and development approval processes and development applications – it’s the gift that keeps on giving! We are leading the nation with this project with many talking about it and none able to develop and implement it the way we have.

Our Regional Road Group continues to be one of the top in the state. Our Local Laws group is now getting into the nitty gritty of the wording within our new subordinates and our steadfast Regional Development Manual group have begun the arduous task of reviewing the manual.

Networking the Nation has also recently raised its head in this region...so watch this space.

We have included Daniela Gambotto into the FNQROC fold as our Regional Planner and Sustainability Coordinator – yay! We said a quick welcome and now goodbye to Linda Williams who was on a short-term contract to finalise the Local Greenhouse action plans – look out for these. We are still on the lookout for a Regional Procurement Coordinator so if you hear of anyone or are interested, please contact me! With all these people (this is as big as I ever imagined FNQROC to get) I thought it timely that we adopted a corporate uniform and I think we look great in our first group photo!

I wish everyone a safe holiday with time to reflect on what was, relax and reinvigorate for what I am sure will be another quick year. Here goes...*“have a merry Christmas and a safe New Year!”*

Darlene Irvine

Annual Leave:

- Darlene Irvine Monday 20 December, returning Tuesday 4 January.
- Sandra McCormack Wednesday 29 December, returning Monday 10 January.
- Gerard Read Monday 20 December, returning Tuesday 4 January, and also Monday 10 January returning Tuesday 18 January.
- Daniela Gambotto Friday 24 December, returning Tuesday 4 January.
- Travis Sydes Friday 24 December, returning Tuesday 4 January



Decked out in our corporate uniform! Pictured from left, Linda Williams, Travis Sydes, Daniela Gambotto, Darlene Irvine, Gerard Read and Sandra McCormack.

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. Dates are listed at the end of the newsletter. All meetings are open and agendas and minutes are posted on our website two weeks prior/post meeting.

NEWS FROM THE WORKING GROUPS

Regional Planning & Sustainability Coordinator, Daniela Gambotto...

Biodiversity

This month we have managed to arrange meetings with key staff from DERM to discuss the Far North Queensland Regional Plan Implementation Guidelines for Biodiversity Conservation, and Protection of Waterways, Wetlands and Water Quality. These non-statutory guidelines were developed to assist local governments prepare planning schemes and associated policies that compliment the land use policies of the FNQ Regional Plan.

To date, local governments have commented on the draft biodiversity policy with some amendments made in response by DERM. The draft waterways policy however, has only recently been released with little opportunity for consultation up until now.

To assist with providing beneficial input into the development of these guidelines, DERM representatives were invited to the November Planners Group meeting so they could hear local government concerns first hand. DERM representatives from the Brisbane and Cairns offices were made available to field questions from Council planning staff regarding application of the draft guidelines. Considerable discussion took place during this forum and both parties appeared to gain benefit from the consultation.

Following this, FNQROC and Council planning staff have been invited to a Regional Planning Implementation Group (RPIG) workshop designed to further refine the draft documents. Given that local government will be the key implementer of the guidelines, it is hoped the concerns felt by Local Government planners will be further ironed out at this workshop to ensure it is a useable document.

Natural Asset Spatial Data Tool

The other exciting project which is moving along is the Natural Asset Spatial Data Tool. Travis Sydes has been busy pulling this project together over the past few months. We are now looking at ways to implement the tool at a planning level. So far, Council planners are very interested in the mechanism and keen to advance it for use in the new SPA Planning Schemes. The RPIG has also shown interest in how it might be utilised on a regional level and both Travis and I will be presenting to the December meeting for initial feedback.

Regional Natural Asset Management Coordinator, Travis Sydes...

Wet Season means tree planting season

The early onset of the wet season has marked the beginning of what is set to be a big year for revegetation units cross the region. Although a decline in external investment will see a decrease in some areas of our business this year, several large projects under the Federal Governments Caring for Our Country program will continue to promote the region's capacity for landscape restoration. The recent announcement of successful small grants under the Community Action Grants will also see our staff and volunteers busy propagating, preparing sites and planting. Higher elevation planting projects are already underway with floodplain works set to begin toward the end of the wet when the waters subside.

With six Local Government operated revegetation nurseries across the region - Cairns (two), Cassowary Coast (two), Tablelands (one) and Hinchinbrook re-establishing their capacity - we have an enviable capacity and considerable expertise in tropical revegetation. Our nurseries grow a staggering 250,000 trees from over 300 species annually. This could not be supported without the considerable effort of countless volunteers.



High quality and species diversity is the hallmark of our Local Government revegetation nursery stock across the region. These rainforest trees from Tablelands Community Revegetation Nursery at Malanda are ready to go.

FNQ Natural Asset Management promoted nationally

The region's progress in the development and adoption of natural assets was promoted at the recent 2nd Local Government Environment Conference in the south-east recently. Also promoting the Far North was Maree Grenfell who promoted Cairns Regional Council's Sustainability Scorecard Project. Both presentations were well received.

The conference was well attended by a wide range of local, state and federal stakeholders gathered to share learning and insights into planning and adapting to climate change.

Regional Infrastructure Management Coordinator, Gerard Read...

Regional Road Group

A Technical Committee meeting was held on Friday 22 October 2010 and was hosted by Wujal Wujal Aboriginal Shire Council. This was the first Technical Committee meeting conducted at Wujal Wujal, which has recently become a member of FNQRRG. Some Technical Committee representatives took the opportunity of inspecting the following completed and in-progress projects on the Thursday prior as they made their way north:

- Replacement of the Owen's Creek bridge and approaches on Myola-Oakforest Road (Tablelands)
- Sealing of a 400m unsealed section on Myola-Oakforest Road near the Barron River (Tablelands)
- Drainage, widening and sealing of a 4km section of Bilwon Road (Tablelands)
- Construction of alternative concrete link slab crossing at the Normanby River on Battlecamp Road (Cook)
- Sealing of a 4km unsealed section through the range on Battlecamp Road (Cook)
- Sealing of the 800m unsealed section of the access up to the Grassy Hill lookout in Cooktown (Cook)

Other recent matters of interest:

- Cairns link, Draper Road (Comport-Cook) and Cook Street (Draper-Aumuller), was added to the LRRS network.
- Cairns also nominated Kenny Street (Draper-Buchan), Aumuller Street (Mulgrave-Hoare) and Hoare Street (Aumuller-Pease) for addition to the LRRS network. They are currently preparing a justification case for their inclusion to be considered at the next TC meeting.
- Mark Farrenden and Ian Steele from ARRB gave a summary presentation on the findings of the Level 2 structures inspection project. This project will prove to be of great benefit as it has provided an objective position of the current condition of bridges and major culverts on the LRRS network. Councils are now analysing the data and preparing construction and maintenance programs to address any shortcomings.
- Development of the 2011/12 - 2015/16 works program is in progress. The Technical Committee will determine a draft works program at the next TC meeting on 17 December in Cairns.
- The Roads Alliance Board is currently trialling its "Performance Evaluation Framework" prior to release. FNQRRG has been participating in this trial.
- Successful funding announcements under the "Regional Safety and Development Program" (RSDP) have not been made to date. FNQRRG applied for seven creek crossing projects on the Cape Tribulation to Bloomfield Road totalling \$4.5m (100% funding applied for) and five projects on Ootann Road totalling \$4m (50% funding applied for).
- FNQRRG will be lobbying the Roads Alliance Board and LGAQ to remove enforcement of the NDRAA condition pertaining to non-reimbursement of Council day labour and plant given the dire social and economic impacts it will have on Councils and communities.

REMINDERS

1. All Councils are to check expenditures and make timely submission of TIDS Claims to DTMR please!
2. Councils are to submit any Base TIDS projects for non-LRRS roads, and SafeST projects to TMR for consideration from 2011/12 onwards prior to the next TC meeting.

Asset Management

The first Asset Management Group (a merger of all the service level groups) was held in Cairns on Wednesday 20 October and was very successful in terms of attendance and input. A number of matters were discussed:

- Cairns gave a presentation on generic AM processes used within Council.
- Travis Sydes gave an update on the Natural Assets datasets he is putting together across the region. A word of warning - do not do a Google image search for "Natural Assets" and expect to find pictures of remnant vegetation etc!!
- Members intend to prepare service level frameworks for Marine Facilities, Airports, Waste and Landfill assets.
- Members intend to develop common unit rate calculation methodologies.

All Councils should now be in the home straight with preparation of core Asset Management Plans for the various asset classes in order to meet the December 2010 deadline.

Regional Development Manual

The first meetings with Council representatives to discuss review submissions for the FNQROC Development Manual were held in Cairns on 9-10 November. It was two long and exhaustive days and sadly the task wasn't fully completed. A big thank you to those who attended! As a result another meeting has been scheduled for **Wednesday 15 December 2010** in Cairns to complete this process for Water and Waste issues. Once this has been finalised meetings with industry will be scheduled in early 2011.

DATE CLAIMERS 2010 - 2011

Not all FNQROC groups have set their 2011 meeting dates as yet. The January and February newsletters will contain more details.

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

FNQROC	FNQRRG
Monday 14 February 2011, Cairns Regional Council, Cairns – 10am	Monday 14 February 2011, Cairns Regional Council, Cairns – 1.30pm
Monday 11 April 2011, Cook Shire Council, Cooktown – 10am	Monday 11 April 2011, Cook Shire Council, Cooktown – 1.30pm
Monday 6 June 2011, Cairns Local Disaster Coordination Centre, Woree – 10am	Monday 6 June 2011, Cairns Local Disaster Coordination Centre, Woree – 1.30pm
Monday 8 August 2011, Cairns Regional Council, Cairns – 10am	Monday 8 August 2011, Cairns Regional Council, Cairns – 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 17 December 2010 – Cairns (tentative) 2011 – to be advised
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The **Regional Development Manual (Water and Waste) group** will meet in the Committee Room, Level 3, at 10am. (Organiser: Darlene Irvine and Gerard Read).

Wednesday 15 December 2010 – 10am

FNQROC CONTACT DETAILS

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DID YOU KNOW?

- ✓ *A two hour motion picture uses about 3.3km of film*
- ✓ *The bull frog is the only animal that never sleeps*
- ✓ *Termites eat wood twice as fast when listening to heavy metal music*

“Accept no one's definition of your life; define yourself.” ~ Harvey Fierstein