



# Advocacy Strategies for FNQROC

In advocating for sustainable economic growth and development in Far North Queensland the FNQ Regional Organisational of Councils has committed to adopt the following strategies:

## PREPARATION

It is acknowledged that State and Federal Governments respond better to Mayors as a collective rather than councils individually. To enable and support this, the FNQROC Board needs to ensure it is well prepared.

### 1. Cooperatively develop and agree top infrastructure needs list with priorities

As an organisation with diverse priorities, it is important to agree on priorities and then focus the majority of our energy into achieving outcomes and not being distracted by minor issues. If we spread our focus too widely we limit our ability to effectively advocate on priority areas.

We need to obtain solid agreement and commitment to the top priorities from all councils so nobody can pick us off individually and weaken our cause.

### 2. Be clear about the outcomes we aim to achieve

It is important that the FNQROC members are able to agree on and describe in some detail the outcomes they are aiming to achieve. This will include empirical information such as percentage of change, ratios and actual numbers. We also need to be clear on how we believe outcomes are to be achieved. What actions we recommend for the State and Federal Government's, for example.

### 3. Develop a consistent approach

As an organisation with a significant number of member councils, all with diverse interests and issues within a common regional setting it is essential that all councils develop a consistent approach to advocating on behalf of the region. This can be done through discussion and agreement in FNQ ROC Board meetings with documented agreement on the ROC's position on issues.

### 4. Use clear and consistent language

The words and phrases used need to be well understood and agreed upon such that ambiguity and misunderstanding is avoided. The use of position papers and press releases in the name of the Chair and CEO are ways in which a clear and consistent message can be communicated.

## PRESENTATION

It is acknowledged that State and Federal Governments respond better to Mayors as a collective rather than councils individually. To enable and support this, the FNQROC Board needs to ensure it is well prepared.

### 5. Seek professional advice

We understand the need to seek professional advice when needed to develop an advocacy strategy around what we are asking for, who it is aimed at and where and when it should be delivered to get some action. This may also include employing an advertising agency to design and deliver a public marketing campaign to get the right message to the right people in the most professional and productive way possible.

## 6. Know your subject

We recognise that it is essential to demonstrate that the ROC has a very good understanding of the issues it is attempting to address. Understanding on specific issues might be developed by individual member councils, councils working together and or FNQROC on behalf of member councils to further understanding. It is important to research all the information needed to support reasoning.

## POLITICS

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## 7. Community Support

Ensure our professional advice includes a wider public marketing campaign to let our communities know what we are doing regionally and seek public support for the campaign. Federal and State politicians can't hide behind closed doors if we do this; our communities are their constituents as well.

## 8. Look for opportunities to influence

FNQROC Board members are involved in many different organisations, both within their council jurisdictions, across the region and the State. In these situations they have the opportunity to raise with policy makers and managers FNQROC goals, particularly those which relate to their Council. Informing the FNQROC of these discussions enables an understanding of the advocacy members are involved in.

## 9. Be informed of the changing State and Federal politics and policy

As many of the FNQROC goals are influenced by actions of the State Government it is essential that the Board are appraised of political and machinery of government changes. Keeping in touch with relevant ministers and their director general will enable the mayors and CEOs to stay informed of contemporary issues. Making time in FNQROC Board meetings for members to report on matters raised with elected members and officials at state and federal government level will assist in reviewing the advocacy strategy.

## 10. Seek alignment with organisations and institutions with similar goals

There will be other public and private sector organisations with goals similar to FNQROC. Keeping them appraised of the ROC's advocacy and seeking their support on contemporary issues is an opportunity to build support for common goals.

## 11. Deputations

Actively asserting our priorities is vital to success. Organised annual visits of all the Mayors to Canberra and George St (Brisbane) to meet with appropriate ministers is required. Then have all the local reps for the region in one room with all the Mayors at one time (separate for government and opposition members).

Mayors of councils most affected by each of the priority projects are to be responsible to drive the push on those projects with the support of the FNQROC Board members.

## 12. Persistence

Time will be set aside at every FNQROC Board meeting to discuss progress of the campaigns. Any glitches or movement will be responded to immediately. Any additional information which becomes available is utilised where appropriate. We need to employ the squeaky wheel theory.