



*Far North Queensland Regional Organisation of Councils*

# Information Guide

*Councils working together on agreed regional positions and priorities*



**APRIL 2020**

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## Abbreviations

CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CSIRO	Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation
DAF	Department of Agriculture and Fisheries
DILGP	Department of Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning
DEHP	Department of Environment and Heritage Protection
DTMR	Department of Transport and Main Roads
FNQ	Far North Queensland
FNQ2031	Statutory Regional Plan for Far North Queensland
FNQPAF	Far North Queensland Pest Advisory Forum
FNQROC	Far North Queensland Regional Organisation of Councils
FNQRRTG	Far North Queensland Regional Road and Transport Group
GBRMPA	Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority
IBAPF	Interactive Biodiversity Assessment Planning Framework
JP&RS	Joint Purchasing and Resource Sharing
LG	Local Government
LGAQ	Local Government Association of Queensland
LRRS	Local Roads of Regional Significance
MRF	Material Recovery Facility
MOA	Memorandum of Agreement
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NAMAC	Natural Asset Management Advisory Committee (FNQROC)
NBN	National Broadband Network
NRM	Natural Resource Management
QAO	Queensland Audit Office
QPWS	Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service
Q-WRAP	Queensland Water Regional Alliance Project
RTAPT	Roads and Transport Alliance Project Team
RMPC	Road Maintenance Performance Contract
RA	Roads Alliance
ROC	Regional Organisation of Councils
RPAC	Regional Plan Advisory Committee
SEQ	South East Queensland
TC	Technical Committee
WTMA	Wet Tropics Management Authority
WTWHA	Wet Tropics World Heritage Area

## Introduction to FNQROC from the Executive Officer

Over the past 20 years, member Councils of the Far North Queensland Regional Organisation of Councils (FNQROC) have worked together for the betterment of the region and subsequently their respective Council areas.

The FNQROC Board (Regional Mayors, with CEO's in attendance) and the FNQ Regional Road and Transport Group (FNQRRTG) Board (generally Regional Mayors) currently meet bi-monthly (commencing in February) and elect a Chair for each group at the AGM held annually in October.

It has always been FNQROC's commitment to member Councils not to 'empire build' the organisation, and to ensure an appropriate cost benefit ratio is maintained. Past independent reviews have identified a direct regional cost benefit of \$13.00 and most recently \$24.31 for every \$1.00 invested in FNQROC.

FNQROC currently employ five (5) full time equivalent (FTE) personnel to manage the regional programs. The organisation is currently funded by member Councils and the Roads Alliance. The organisation seeks Grants/Subsidies to fund Board priority projects.

FNQROC membership consists of the following Councils:

- Cairns Regional Council
- Carpentaria Shire Council
- Cassowary Coast Regional Council
- Cook Shire Council
- Croydon Shire Council
- Douglas Shire Council
- Etheridge Shire Council
- Hinchinbrook Shire Council
- Hope Vale Shire Council
- Mareeba Shire Council
- Tablelands Regional Council
- Wujal Wujal Shire Council
- Yarrabah Shire Council

The following key documents guide FNQROC as an organisation and are located on our website<sup>1</sup>:

- [FNQROC Charter](#)
- [5 Strategic Goals](#)
- [FNQROC Operational Guidelines](#)
- [Strategic Operational Directions 2018 – 2022](#)
- [Annual Reports](#)

For the most part, FNQROC is recognised publicly for the Regional Development Manual, which guides all civil engineering within the region. However, FNQROC is much more than this. I would like to think that FNQROC is the silent partner to many actions occurring within Councils.

FNQROC focusses on both strategic and associated operational actions. The Board had decided to focus its attention on five (5) strategic goals, but it is also important not to lose sight of regional

issues, which may quickly rise in importance through changing legislation or economic impacts.

The previous Board worked closely together to build relationships, understand the region as a whole and to support each other and the region. They focussed on reminding the State and Federal governments on who and where we are, the threats to our communities and the opportunities available at regular advocacy efforts to Brisbane and Canberra.

Previous FNQROC Advocacy Delegation Reports can be located on the [FNQROC website](#).

We are a small core group strongly supported by the expertise held within Councils to develop and deliver advocacy, initiatives and savings to member Councils.

At its core, FNQROC supports Councils on issues where Council boundaries are superfluous or where working collaboratively aides in reducing costs and increasing outcomes for individual Councils. All of these programs compliment the long term Corporate and Operational Plans of our member Councils.

Any elected member can raise an issue for discussion at the Board level; we only need to understand the issue to be addressed and why it is important for the region.

Within this Information Guide is a brief history of the growth of FNQROC and a list of current endorsed strategies, plans and contracts. You also may wish to view our website - [www.fnqroc.qld.gov.au](http://www.fnqroc.qld.gov.au) providing a central point for regional information, data, strategies, and plans.

I look forward to working together to further lift our advocacy efforts with the State and Federal Governments, supported by our experienced operational technical committees.

If you are a newly elected member this may all be daunting and overwhelming, remember myself and the FNQROC team are here to support and guide you should you have any queries.

I look forward to working with the new and returning Mayors and Councillors within the region over the next term.



**Darlene Irvine**  
Executive Officer

<sup>1</sup> [www.fnqroc.qld.gov.au/fnqroc/about-fnqroc](http://www.fnqroc.qld.gov.au/fnqroc/about-fnqroc)

## History and Growth of FNQROC

1980's FNQROC forms as a result of Heritage Listing of the Wet Tropics  
Slow organisational growth to meet needs of Member Councils

- 2001 - FNQROC Executive Officer
- 2004 - Regional Natural Asset Mgmt and Sustainability Coordinator
- 2008 - PT Administration Support (defunct)
- 2010 - PT Regional Planning Coordinator (defunct)
- 2011 - Regional Procurement Coordinator
- 2013 - Regional Infrastructure Project Coordinator
- 2015 - Office and Project Coordinator (defunct)
- 2019 - Executive Coordinator

Technical Committees

- Pre 2001 - FNQ Regional Pest Management Group (operated under own steam pre 2001)
- 2002 - Regional Waste Management Group (defunct)
- 2003 - Regional Development Manual Review Committee
- 2003 - FNQ Regional Road and Transport Group
- 2006 - Regional Planners Group
- 2007 - Regional Asset Management Group
- 2010 - Regional Sustainability Group (defunct)
- 2010 - Regional Procurement Group
- 2011 - Regional Waste Management Group (reformed)
- 2012 - Regional Water Alliance Group
- 2013 - FNQROC Cross Regional Events Group (combined into Regional Economic Development 2016)
- 2014 - Regional Economic Development Group
- 2019 - Animal Management Technical Committee

Sub Committees

- 2011 - Water Chemical Sub group
- 2012 - Bitumen Reseal Sub Group
- 2014 - Waste Steel and Batteries Sub Group
- 2015 - Biosolids Sub Group
- 2019 - Sewer Relining Sub Group
- 2019 - Navua Sedge Select Committee

## Current Strategies / Plans

- FNQROC Development Manual (2003 updated regularly)
- 5 Strategic Priorities (Transport, Water/Energy, Natural Assets, Social Infrastructure & Communication Network) (2017)
- FNQROC Strategic Operational Plan (2018)
- Kuranda Range Road (2019)
- Mobile Communication Blackspots (2019)
- Natural Assets Stewardship Accord (2019)
- Biosecurity Planning (2019)
- Navua Sedge Research and Development Prospectus (2019)
- Navua Sedge Regional Management Approaches for LG (2019)
- Regional Road Investment Strategy (2020)
- Capital Investment in Dams (2020)

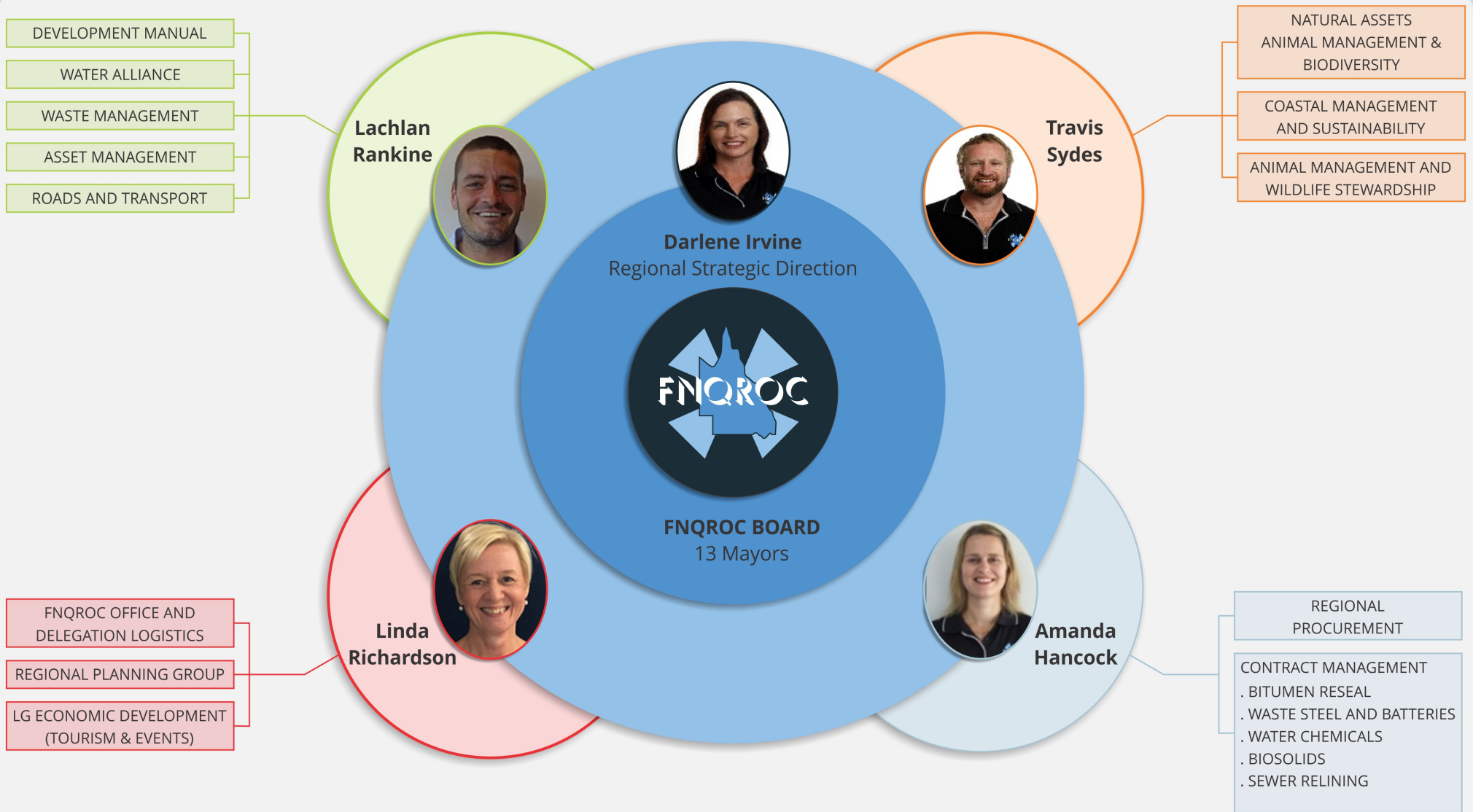
## Current Regional Arrangements

- Regional Sodium Hypo and Liquid Alum Contract (commenced 2012)
- Regional Bitumen Reseal Contract (commenced 2013)
- Regional Scrap Steel and Battery Contract (commenced 2015)
- Biosolids (commenced 2017)
- Regional Procurement & Contract Documentation Project (commenced 2019)
- Sewer Relining (commencing 2020)

## Previous Strategies / Plans

- 2001 - Strategic and Business Plan Developed
- 2001 - Response to FNQ2010
- 2002 - Regional Pest Management Strategy (superseded 2010)
- 2003 - Regional Waste Management Strategy
- 2004 - Regional Development Manual (superseded - version 8 current)
- 2006 - Regional Weed Spread Prevention Strategy
- 2007 - Regional Asset Management System and Strategy (superseded 2009)
- 2007 - FNQ Regional Plan 2009-2031
- 2007 - Disaster Management Weed Spread Prevention Code of Practice
- 2008 - Cross Regional Hymenachne Management Strategy
- 2008 - Regional Ciities for Climate Protection Action Plan
- 2008 - Focus on FNQ Regional Plan 2009-2031
- 2008 - Regional Weed Spread Prevention Strategy (2008-2010)
- 2009 - Regional Pest Taskforce commences
- 2009 - Regional Biodiversity Priority Mapping
- 2009 - Adaptive Management Plan for Pond Apple in FNQ
- 2009 - Alternative Business Models for Managing our Road Network
- 2010 - Regional Asset Management System and Strategy
- 2010 - Levels of Service Templates for Asset Management
- 2010 - Community Pest and Weeds Portal (no longer operational)
- 2010 - Initiated TNQ Regional Economic Plan
- 2010 - Natural Area Restoration Design Guide and Specification (Draft)
- 2010 - Regional Procurement initiated
- 2010 - Regional Pest Management Strategy (2010-2015)
- 2010 - Regional Resource Sharing in Joint Operations (Natural Asset Management) (superseded 2014)
- 2011 - FNQROC NBN Submission
- 2011 - Independant Review of FNQROC
- 2011 - Regional Greenhouse Gas Inventory & Mitigation Action Plan
- 2012 - FNQROC Strategic Direction 2012 - 2017
- 2014 - Best Practice Guidelines for Cross Regional Events in the FNQ Region
- 2014 - Alternative Mechanisms to manage our urban water services
- 2015 - TNQ Regional Mountain Bike Strategy

## FNQROC Organisational Chart - 2020





**Figure 1: Ootann Road**

## **FNQ Regional Road and Transport Group (FNQ RRTG)**

### **Roads Alliance**

The Roads Alliance (RA) is a partnership arrangement between LGAQ on behalf of all Queensland Local Governments and DTMR. Established to create a more collaborative and coordinated approach to road management and investment.

The Roads Alliance evolved due to increasing community expectations for better road infrastructure and recognition that DTMR and Local Governments confront similar problems in managing the road network. In May 2001, DTMR and LGAQ committed to a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for a Statewide Management and Investment Alliance (Roads Alliance), this has continued with the signing of a new MOU in 2018.

The key objectives of the Roads Alliance are to:

- Maximise economic development and benefits through better funding allocations;
- Achieve maximum efficiencies for the State and Local Governments through a combined approach to road network planning and project scheduling;
- Invest in improved road management and delivery capability through increased training, advanced technology and systems transfer.

Local Roads of Regional Significance (LRRS) are generally higher-order Local Government roads and lower-order DTMR roads. This network should link communities, economic drivers, transport nodes and tourism locations. LRRS roads available for [viewing here](#).

The Roads Alliance is not just about the distribution of road funding, but about working toward improved long term planning, better asset management practices, smarter purchasing, resource sharing and investment, and improvement of DTMR and Local Government technical capability.

A number of principles as contained in the Roads Alliance MOU underpins the Roads Alliance. In total, the Roads Alliance framework has eight (8) recognised elements to its operation:

- Regional Road Groups and Technical Committees (RRTG)
- Local Roads of Regional Significance (LRRS)
- Asset Management
- Program Development and Reporting
- Road Safety
- Regional funding arrangements, incl. Transport Infrastructure Development Scheme (TIDS) funding
- Joint Purchasing and Resource Sharing
- Workforce Capability

The program is currently circa \$5.8m annually.

FNQ RRTG meetings are scheduled to follow the FNQROC Board meeting and comprises of elected members (generally the Mayor) from each Council, together with the District Director of DTMR.

The RRTG Technical Committee (TC) comprises senior staff (in the engineering field) from each Council and DTMR. Both the RRTG and TC meet regularly and separately with recommendations from the TC put to the RRTG for ratification.



Figure 2: Tate River Causeway

## FNQ Regional Road and Transport Group (FNQ RRTG) Membership

- Cairns Regional Council
- Cassowary Coast Regional Council
- Cook Shire Council (southern part)
- Croydon Shire Council
- Douglas Shire Council
- Etheridge Shire Council
- Mareeba Shire Council
- Tablelands Regional Council
- Wujal Wujal Aboriginal Shire Council
- Yarrabah Aboriginal Shire Council
- Department of Transport and Main Roads (FNQ)

### Incumbent Executive

RRTG Chair	Cr Peter Scott (Cook)
RRTG Deputy Chair	Cr Tom Gilmore (Mareeba)
RRTG Secretariat	FNQROC
TC Chair	Ashley Greenwood (Tablelands)
TC Deputy Chair	Michael Ringer (Cairns)
TC Technical Coordinator	Lachlan Rankine (FNQROC)
Roads Alliance Project Team Representatives	Scott Britton (LGAQ)
	Tanya Lindenberg (TMR)

## Key Program Summaries

### FNQROC Board Advocacy

The FNQROC Board, as a collective of Mayors regularly travel to Canberra and Brisbane to meet with Senators, Ministers and Shadow Ministers to advocate for our region. The intent of these delegations is to show unity and advocate those issues or opportunities, which have an impact on the region. These delegations provide Mayors with the networking, knowledge and confidence to bring their councils back for local issues. Over the past two years, the previous board has developed the FNQROC Brand and gained respect for our united front and trusted reputation.

During delegations, the board undertake anywhere from 16 to 26 meetings over 2 days. Generally, there will be one or two key regionally agreed issues that have priority and are discussed at all meetings. We then allocate time for any portfolio specific issues to be conversed. Over time, the FNQROC Board have become polished in how these meetings are performed and communicating key messaging.

The Delegation Agenda (meeting times), accommodation, flights etc. are co-ordinated and funded by FNQROC for the benefit of the region.

### Procurement

The Procurement Coordinator role is now in its eighth year and funded by the contributions of member Councils made on the following basis:

1. Cairns, Cassowary, Cook, Douglas, Mareeba and Tablelands contribute \$25,000 annually (this amount being less than previously identified savings per Council).
2. The remaining Councils contribute 20% of savings made through their involvement in FNQROC procurement activities.

The FNQROC mandate for procurement is:

- Where there exists limited supply for a product and/or service; and/or
- Where member Councils are competing against each other for the same goods and/or services;
- Where products or services could be scheduled to provide an improved service delivery;
- Where member Councils would benefit from the sharing of knowledge and collaboration.

### Regional Bitumen Reseal

We are into our seventh year of the annual Bitumen Reseal Program. This program commenced as a result of councils competing against each other for works to be completed within the financial year. This competition between councils drove prices up and in some instances, councils were not getting any or only one response to their tenders and regularly the annual program was non-delivered.

In 2018/19, the program successfully delivered with six member councils participating. Whilst the overall program was smaller than in prior years, there was still over 876,000m<sup>2</sup> of road requiring just under 1.5 million litres of bitumen sprayed over 83 days.

All works were completed before the end of the financial year, despite a longer than average wet season. Councils involved in this arrangement also benefit from the appointment of a qualified and experienced Program Coordinator to oversee delivery of the program.

## ***Regional Water Chemicals – Supply & Delivery***

The contracts for the supply and delivery of Sodium Hypochlorite and Liquid Alum, the most commonly used chemicals by both Water and Wastewater areas of councils, have been made under a collective procurement arrangement since 2012. Eleven member councils now participate in this arrangement, which not only continues to offer good value for money but also the added benefit of centralised contracts management provided by FNQROC.

## ***Collection & Disposal of Ferrous Metal & Used Lead Acid Batteries (ULABs)***

This arrangement has been in place since 2015 involving eleven member councils. The intent of the arrangement is that Ferrous Metal and ULAB stockpiles (predominantly car batteries), are managed at acceptable levels and Councils receive a fair and certain value for the materials.

The contracts are based on a supplier led collection schedule and pricing linked to metal markets. Over 9,500 tonnes of Ferrous Metal and 150 tonnes of ULABs was collected throughout the region during the 2018/19 year, together with a further 105 tonnes of non-ferrous metal.

## ***Removal and Beneficial Reuse of Biosolids***

Biosolids are treated sewerage sludge and the major by-product of the wastewater treatment process. When treated and appropriately managed, biosolids can be beneficially used for a number of purposes. Many member Councils Waste Water treatment plants produce biosolids that currently meet the stabilisation criteria required for beneficial reuse. The collective arrangement focuses on streamlined pricing and on ensuring the provision of consistent terms of contract across the region in order to achieve efficiency benefits to both supplier and Councils alike. Seven member councils participate in this arrangement.

## ***Regional Sewer Relining***

There has been an appetite in the region for some time regarding the development of a Regional Sewer Relining arrangement. There are six councils interested in participating and a Regional Sewer Relining Project Committee formed. The first meeting has taken place and we are now in the process of undertaking supplier engagement and gathering data in order to understand what opportunities might be available.

Sewer relining involves not only the actual relining but also identifying and accessing manholes, liaising with property owners, arranging traffic control, managing flow-control and other appropriate by-pass methods together with viewing copious amounts of pre and post-works CCTV all of which makes for quite a complex and time-consuming process for both councils and suppliers. Sewer relining certainly appears to fit many of the criteria we use to establish if an arrangement might benefit from a regional approach and work will continue in the new financial year on the development of this arrangement.

## ***Regional Contract & Procurement Documentation***

The development of regionally consistent contract and procurement documentation is the first of a series of procurement projects endorsed by the Board as part of the Strategic Operational Plan. The project is part funded by the State-wide Capability Development Fund following a funding application submitted by the Far North Queensland Regional Road and Transport Group (FNQ RRTG) and will deliver a comprehensive suite of contract and procurement documents to all FNQROC councils.

The document suites developed by Mr Gerard Meade of Helix Legal in conjunction with Cairns Regional Council will ensure that Councils have easy access to a range of documents that balance protection with the need for commerciality and practicality. The documents are intended to be fair and reasonable; in simple plain English and easy to understand.

All thirteen FNQROC member councils are participating in this arrangement and council officers are encouraged to make use of the documentation and to provide feedback on what works well or perhaps not so well. The project intends to be one of continuous improvement; therefore, it is important that feedback is captured and actioned accordingly.

## **Waste Management**

Far North Queensland faces a unique set of challenges in delivering cost effective and sustainable waste services. Considering the region incorporates two World Heritage listed areas (Wet Tropics and the Great Barrier Reef) those challenges can vary significantly from one council to the next.

All councils in the region struggle with issues such as access to secondary markets, transport costs, and the increasing costs and difficulties in developing new waste infrastructure. This all impacts on the ability of Councils to achieve strategic ambitions, deliver, and operate viable networks of resource recovery facilities.

Originally established in 2004 and comprising of member Councils, the Regional Waste Management Group (RWMG) was to undertake a regional Waste Management Strategy (excluding Cairns, Douglas and Mareeba). The group re-established in 2011 to consider opportunities in terms of regional waste management and resource recovery solutions. Members have worked together in a cooperative, coordinated and proactive manner, engaging with the State and other stakeholders concerning development of the waste industry in Far North Queensland.

## **Natural Asset Management and Sustainability**

The Natural Asset Management and Sustainability role represents the interests of FNQROC Local Governments across operations related to the natural environment including biosecurity (pests and weeds); water quality and GBR; landscape repair and restoration; biodiversity conservation / planning and climate adaptation.

The Natural Asset Management Advisory Committee (NAMAC) guides the majority of the technical aspects of the role. The NAMAC consists of representatives from member Councils, Terrain NRM and QDAF and so reflects the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) entered into by the State Government (DAF), Natural Resource Management groups (RGC) and Local Government (LGAQ) at a state level.

Beginning in 2019 the role is also facilitating the delivery of the FNQROC Animal Management Technical Committee (AMTC). The AMTC brings together local laws officers and managers from across the region with Queensland Health, Biosecurity Queensland Animal Health and Queensland Police Service, to collaborate on regional issues and programs. The work of the committee supports councils in executing their responsibilities and services under the Animal Management (Dogs & Cats) Act 2008, Animal Care and Protection Act 2001, Biosecurity Act 20014 and the Local Government Act 2009. Alongside the NAMAC, the AMTC works to deliver the FNQROC Animal Management & Wildlife Stewardship Policy.

The role also incorporates spatial planning program communications using GIS across the other technical portfolios of FNQROC.

## **Economic Development (incl. Tourism & Cross Regional Events)**

The FNQROC LG Economic Development Committee consists of representations from member Council's, Department of State Development, TIQ, Tourism Tropical North Queensland (TTNQ), Advance Cairns and RDA FNQ&TS.

The FNQROC Economic Development Committee discussions focus on the following key strategic deliverables as aligned to the [FNQROC Strategic Operational Plan \(2018\)](#):-

- Shared knowledge re Local, State and Federal government programs, grants, policy development and drivers impacting regional Economic Development
- Collaborate sharing of current Economic Development projects across councils and stakeholders to build regional knowledge and networks
- Identifying collaborative opportunities for regional branding and sponsorship
- Identifying sleeper and future economic development issues and opportunities that may impact the region
- Identifying cross regional events which leverage visitation across council boundaries and present opportunities for joint funding applications
- Identifying regional training, skill development and future presenters of interest.

## ***FNQROC Representation***

In 2018/19 FNQROC was represented on the following external boards and working groups:

- LGAQ Policy Executive (Cr Manning)
- Inland Queensland Roads Action Plan (IQ-RAP) (Cr Gilmore)
- Reef Urban Storm Water Management Implementation Group (RUSMIG) (T Sydes)
- Wet Tropics Healthy Waterways Partnership (T Sydes)
- Weed Society Queensland Executive (President) (T Sydes)
- Panama TR4 Regional Working Group (T Sydes)
- Regional Managers' Coordination Network (D Irvine)
- Wet Tropics Healthy Waterways Technical Working Group (T Sydes)
- State Oversight Group – Land Protection Fund Co-investment model (T Sydes)
- Biosecurity Act Regulations Reference Group (LGAQ/BQ) (T Sydes)
- National Tropical Weeds Management Committee (T Sydes)
- Natural Resources and Environment Sub – Committee (T Sydes)
- LGAQ Roads & Transport Advisory Group (D Irvine)
- Local Authority Waste Management Advisory Council (LAWMAC) (L Rankine)
- GBR Wetlands Network (DES) – LG representative (T Sydes)
- Yellow Crazy Ant Reference Group (T Sydes)
- FNQ Trade and Investment Group (L Richardson)
- TTNQ Regional Tourism (L Richardson)
- Agricultural Supply Chain Study (D Irvine)
- Savannah Way Ltd (D Irvine)

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