



ADVOCACY REPORT

**FNQROC
STATE DELEGATION
11-13 AUGUST 2020**



Effectively advocating regional priorities to develop the economies of Far North Queensland





DELEGATION MEMBERS

- Cr Peter Scott, Chair & Mayor
Cook Shire Council
- Cr Bob Manning, Mayor
Cairns Regional Council
- Cr Michael Kerr, Mayor
Douglas Shire Council
- Cr Jason Woibo, Mayor
Hope Vale Aboriginal Shire Council
- Cr Angela Toppin, Mayor
Mareeba Shire Council
- Cr Ross Andrews, Mayor
Yarrabah Aboriginal Shire Council
- Mr Leon Yeatman, CEO
Yarrabah Aboriginal Shire Council
- Ms Darlene Irvine
FNQROC Executive Officer

PRIORITY PILLARS

Key priority projects as identified by the Board and advocated for during this Mayoral Delegation, align with the FNQROC Strategic Economic Priorities of:

- Transport
- Water & energy
- Environment
- Social infrastructure
- Communication

Key Briefing Notes can be accessed via the following FNQROC Website links:

- [FNQROC State Priorities at a Glance](#)
- [FNQROC State Priorities \(Full Brief\)](#)

FNQROC PRIORITY PROJECTS

Road Investment

FNQ Regional Roads
Cairns to Northern Tablelands Access Strategy

Water Infrastructure

Economic Value of Dams over the Longer Term
Gilbert River Irrigation Project

Health

Kidney Transplant Unit at the Cairns Hospital

Social Infrastructure

Social Housing

Environment

Waste Management Costs Generated within Qld State and National
Parks

Economic Drivers

COVID-19 Economic Recovery and Future Resilience



OUR REGION

13 Local Governments
representing
17% of QLD Councils

The largest and fastest
growing region in
Northern Australia



OUR COMMUNITY

279,948 People
(ABS ERP 2019)

316,663km² of land area,
including 1235km of
Eastern seaboard



OUR ECONOMY

\$16.33B GRP

Tourism \$3.1b
Primary Industries \$2.7b
Mining \$1.4b
Construction \$3.8b
Manufacturing \$2.8b



FNQROC hosted luncheon with FNQ Elected Members

Key Topics and Discussions

FNQROC hosted a luncheon with the following FNQ Elected Members to discuss State Priorities:

Hon Curtis Pitt MP, Member for Mulgrave

Hon Craig Crawford MP, Member for Barron River

Mr Michael Healy MP, Member for Cairns

Ms Cynthia Lui MP, Member for Cook

Mr Shane Knuth MP, Member for Hill

Discussions re the financial impact of COVID-19 on individual councils and electorate specific issues as raised.

Opportunities for FNQROC to meet with Community Cabinet during August in Cairns

Apologies

Mr Robbie Katter MP, Member for Traeger

Mr Nick Dametto MP, Member for Hinchinbrook



Ms Ros Bates MP, Shadow Minister for Health & Ambulance Services and Women

Key Topics

- Kidney Transplant Unit for Cairns
- Vision for the FNQ Region

Discussion

- Kidney Transplant Unit - Critical health need for the Cairns and ATSI communities

Comments/Vision

- Shadow Minister is a RN, specialising in chronic care and lobbied Federal Govt prior to entering politics, particularly fighting for Kidney related disease and renal problems. Big supportive of preventative measures.
- Announcements soon in the lead up to the election. Pre-polling numbers will be high, so announcements will come out sooner than later.
- Asked of lobbying efforts to date, advised priority is led by CRC (Ms Bates in Cairns next week and can meet with Cr Manning)
- Vision – works closely with Hon Greg Hunt MP, agree re duplication of services; working on rationalising services to get KPIs met; mental health will be focus post-COVID, Qld 2nd highest rate of suicide; Step Up/Step Down facilities; Drug & Alcohol issues; Emergency Dept need to take the weight off
- Category 3 waiting lists have all been wiped, GP's need to relist

Outcomes / Follow Up

- Set up meeting with Ms Bates and Cr Manning in Cairns next week.



Hon Mark Bailey MP, Minister for Main Roads & Transport

Mr David Greene, Senior Policy Advisor
Mr Sanjay Ram, DTMR

Key Topics

- FNQ Regional Roads / RRIS
- Cairns to Northern Tablelands Strategy
- Vision for the FNQ Region

Discussion/Vision

- Overview of the RRIS – looked at inhibitors to economic growth. Seeking \$461m over 4 years, (not including KRR/ Palmerston Hwy).
- Delivery of the findings of the Cairns to Northern Tablelands Study due to Minister for review (Sept). Palmerston Hwy ongoing problems
- \$30m allocated for a smart solution for KRR – roll out ITS solution; adjust road speeds based on weather (wet, misty, poor visibility) or congestion with positive impacts on safety; this funding was part of agreement with Feds for signing the inland rail.
- 5 year program renewal on PDR - successful in securing another \$275m over 5 years with significant indigenous training project in place (skills training), local businesses and local employment.
- TMR will do better with localised indigenous opportunities
- MSC - Final sealing to Chillagoe would assist with tourism/economic development.
- Cr Andrews extended acknowledgement for the Yarrabah Jetty Project
- Vision – great enablers for FNQ is roads; Added State-wide another \$1b to road investment post-COVID (3 Stimulus Packages - \$400m (including \$100m just for sealing); opportunities post-COVID for people moving from cities to regional areas;



Mr Michael Hart MP, Shadow Minister for Housing and Public Works, Energy, Innovation & Digital Economy

Key Topics

- Social Housing
- Digital Connectivity
- Vision for the FNQ Region

Discussion/Vision

- Yarrabah - 354 social housing in total, with 700 on the waiting list.
- Wujal – looking for subsidies for land clearance. 40 people waiting on housing list (existing residents
- Hope Vale – Old generation still waiting and now younger generation coming through with children.
- Dept of Housing has a housing profile on each of our communities for number of transfers
- No current construction in Indigenous communities and none for several years.
- Overcrowding in housing has a direct result on Indigenous health and chronic disease.
- Black Spot Audit has previously been provided to the Shadow Minister; Dark Fibre opportunities.
- Electricity/Energy – Looking at end of grid hybrid technology.
- Vision – Housing –If you have the requirement in the areas, you just need to build it using local workforce and skill development. Full support to fix remote social housing issues.
- Vision - Blackspot / Digital Divide is a bigger issue to fix, may not be 4G/5G towers, utilise dark fibre. Needs 'out of box' thinking to provide a solution across such a big regional area. Need to work together to come up with solutions.



Hon Stirling Hinchliffe MP, Minister for LG, Racing and Multicultural Affairs and Mr Michael Healy MP, Member for Cairns

Key Topics

- All FNQROC State Priorities
- Vision for the FNQ Region

Discussion/Vision

- Introduction to the new Mayors and the vision/challenges of their communities
- Overview of the key State priorities
- Discussions re COVID-19 impacts across the region re key industry sectors

Key Outcomes / Follow Up

- Opportunities for FNQROC to engage with key Ministers further during Community Cabinet in Cairns (Aug 2020)



Ms Ann Leahy MP, Shadow Minister for Local Government

Key Topics

- All FNQROC State Priorities
- Vision for the FNQ Region

Discussion/Vision

- Decentralization and Regionalization
- Roads: LNP Tender Exemption for LG (Extensive tender rights) locked in by Shadow Cabinet
- Dam Study: LNP Water Audit + 100 year plan
- Kidney Transplant Unit
- Social Housing and leakage to urban areas
- Post COVID recovery
- Belcarra issues associated re Indigenous areas. Will look at what is making LG inefficient.

Key Outcomes / Follow Up

- FNQROC to send Regional Road Investment Strategy report to Hon Scott Buchholz MP, Assistant Minister for Road Safety and Freight Transport (Federal)



Mr Robbie Katter MP, Member for Traeger

Mr Brad Tassell, Senior Policy Advisor to Mr Shane Knuth, Member for Hill

Key Topics

- Blue Cards for Indigenous Communities

Discussion/Vision

- Regionalization underpinned by:
 - Roads
 - Communication
 - Housing
 - Water
- Blue Cards for Indigenous and those West of great divide:
 - Jobs
 - Football Clubs
 - Unable to provide assistance to youth in need out West as those that want to help can't due to Blue Card
 - Use Justice groups to approve Blue Card.

Key Outcomes / Follow Up

- FNQROC to brief TCICA for consideration and provide contact details for Mr Katter and Mr Tassell to explore further.



Hon Leanne Enoch MP, Minister for Environment & GBR and Science and the Arts

Key Topics

- Waste Management Costs
- COVID-19 Recovery
- Vision for the FNQ Region

Discussion/Vision

- Need to ensure we spend money on things that will be productive.
- Decentralisation and regionalisation
- Overview of Roads, Communication and Housing
- Land Tenure
- Belcarra and Indigenous Councils
- Kidney Transplant Unit
- Vision: National Parks \$8.9m for assets – stabilisation and growth of tourism. \$10m Reef Assist – practical on the ground jobs. Arts focussed on hyperlocal support for artists in Queensland (ie Play Local program)

Key Outcomes / Follow Up

- Cook Shire to check they are not receiving 105% of costs back re Waste Management



Hon Craig Crawford MP, Minister for ATSI Partnerships and Fire & Emergency

Katie Kiss and Haylene Grogan, Advisors

Key Topics

- Social Housing and impacts on indigenous health
- Kidney Transplant Unit for Cairns
- Vision for the FNQ Region

Discussion/Vision

- Regionalization and Decentralization
 - Roads
 - Water & Waste Communication
- Social Housing and leakage to urban areas
- 10 Year Program gives communities apprenticeships, training and employment
- Kidney Transplant Unit
- Belcarra/Indigenous issues

Key Outcomes / Follow Up



Ms Fiona Simpson MP, Shadow Minister for Employment & Small Business and Training & Skills Development and Mr David Crisafulli, Shadow Minister for Tourism & Environment, Science and GBR

Key Topics

- COVID-19 Recovery & Resilience
- Vision for the FNQ Region

Discussion/Vision

- Regionalization & decentralization
- Shadow Minister acknowledges our region is the hardest hit re COVID-19 impacts
- Land Tenure issues
- Yarrabah has 57% unemployment – how can they leverage from the need for fruit picking. Potential link needed with Picking Connector.
- Vision – ample money in training but it is disconnect to need and participant aptitude.

Key Outcomes / Follow Up



Hon Steven Miles MP, Deputy Premier and Minister for Health & Ambulance Services

Ms Rebecca Fanning, Advisor

Key Topics

- Kidney Transplant Unit for Cairns
- Vision for the FNQ Region

Discussion/Vision

- Advised the decision re the location of the Kidney Transplant Unit, would be made by an independent interstate panel within the next month.

Key Outcomes / Follow Up

- Follow up to determine panel outcome



Hon Cameron Dick MP, Treasurer and Minister for Infrastructure & Planning

Key Topics

- FNQ Regional Roads
- FNQ Dam Study
- Gilbert River Irrigation
- COVID-19 Recovery & Resilience
- Vision for the FNQ Region

Discussion/Vision

- Regionalization and decentralization
 - Roads
- Dam Study
- Gilbert River Irrigation Project
- Vision – Treasurer stated he would not forget us. Avoid long-term unemployment and education impact. \$1b loans has gone out. Quick list of things done by State Government.

Key Outcomes / Follow Up



Ms Deb Frecklington MP, Leader of the Opposition and Mr Tim Mander MP, Shadow Treasurer

Key Topics

- All FNQROC State Priorities
- Vision for the FNQ Region

Discussion/Vision

- Regionalization and decentralization
 - Roads
 - Water
 - Communication
 - Social Housing
- Regional Road Investment Strategy
- Water – Ag has buffered us
- Kidney Transplant Unit
- Social Housing
- Vision – Committed to Infrastructure spending. Ambitious dam building. Local procurement – breakdown from Tier 1.

Key Outcomes / Follow Up

- Send NPRH letter to Mr Ian Andrews, Advisor to Ms Frecklington re ATSI Housing Action Plan 2019-2023



Mr Steve Minnikin MP, Shadow Minister for Transport & Main Roads

Key Topics

- FNQ Regional Roads
- Cairns to Northern Tablelands Strategy
- Vision for the FNQ Region

Discussion/Vision

- Regionalization and decentralization
- Regional Road Investment Strategy
- Cairns to Northern Tableland Access Strategy

Vision:

- Engaging with LG over roads
- Stop FIFO contractors
- Gravel pit issues
- Need to get back to supporting infrastructure for economic development – projects need to show GSP
- W4Q – new deal
- Want to delegate to councils and ROC's

Key Outcomes / Follow Up



Hon Anthony Lynham MP, Minister for Natural Resources, Mines & Energy

Key Topics

- FNQ Dam Study
- Gilbert River Irrigation
- Vision for the FNQ Region

Discussion/Vision

- Sand mine – not too far, too quick. Worried about the size of the land they want to giveaway. Cr Woibo talking to mining company.
- Council does not want the road
- Hope Vale wanting dialogue with Minister - submission due end September and not sure of history and process.

Key Outcomes / Follow Up

- Hope Vale to setup meeting with Minister to continue dialogue around submission process and history



Hon Kate Jones MP, Minister for State Development, Tourism and Innovation

Ms Rachel Oudyn, Senior Policy Advisor
Ms Amanda Ronan-Hearn, Policy Advisor

Key Topics

- FNQ Regional Roads
- COVID-19 Recovery & Resilience
- Indigenous Tourism Opportunities
- Gilbert River Irrigation Project Services
- Vision of the FNQ Region

Discussion/Vision

- Regional Road Investment Strategy
- Support around festivals, culture, music and arts for Indigenous Councils and Indigenous Tourism
- Digital CIAF went well, still plan for the fair in the future, but use digital platform as well. Skyrail received funding from \$25m bucket – reliable operator.
- Gilbert River Irrigation Project – 2500 jobs + \$85m/year to Etheridge economy. CBA 1-15 on P90
- Kowanyama BioFutures Enterprise (Anthony Penrith) formally Aurukun BioFutures
- Vision –Tourism: Communities need to look at what the opportunity is. Investments & projects already on books to continue.
- Vision – State Dev: Cairns to get a cut of defense spending particularly maintenance & training

Key Outcomes / Follow Up

- Cr Manning to extend invitation to view the partly completed Art Gallery
- Cr Andrews to write to Premier and Minister Jones MP re Indigenous Tourism



Hon Mark Furner MP, Minister for Agriculture Industry Development and Fisheries

Key Topics

- FNQ Dam Study
- Gilbert River Irrigation Project
- Water Security & Agriculture Impacts
- Vision for the FNQ Region

Discussion/Vision

- Overview of region and COVID impact
- Regionalization and decentralization
- Water Security very important
- Roads Investment Strategy
- Transient workforce for fruit picking
- \$12.5m Recovery Package
 - \$5.5m Digital
 - \$5.0m Reinvigorating trade relationships and enhancing capacity (conducting virtual trade mission to Japan, freight exports)
 - \$2.0m AgTourism #eatqueensland)
- Undertaking virtual trade mission with Japan
- Freight exports

Key Outcomes / Follow Up



Dr Christian Rowan MP, Shadow Minister for ATSI Partnerships, Communities, Disability Services & Seniors & Arts

Key Topics

- Kidney Transplant Unit
- Vision for the FNQ Region

Discussion/Vision

- Medical background and understands the need for a Kidney Transplant Unit
- Competition between Cairns and Townsville – political based, not medical/health based and not based on the needs of the community
- Internal work with HHS necessary to ensure the right infrastructure meets the health needs over the political
- Supported by TCICA and FNQROC
- Vision – practical on the ground improvements re housing, education and health needed prior to looking at ED outcomes and Closing the Gap. Broadly – party understands the need to invest into the region re roads, water security, agriculture development and resource sector. Meaningful change of the ground and empower local communities. Here to assist, not dictate.

Key Outcomes / Follow Up



Hon Glenn Butcher MP, Minister for Regional Development & Manufacture

Mr Frankie Carroll
Mr Michael Glover

Key Topics

- FNQ Regional Roads
- Regional Road Investment Strategy
- FNQ Dam Study
- Vision for the FNQ Region

Discussion/Vision

- FNQ Regional Roads Investment Strategy
- Dam Study
- Gilbert River Irrigation Project
- Social Housing/Land Tenure – Land locked and links to supply chain
- Regionalization and decentralization
- Defense: Normalisation of Weipa and Cherbourg Military Base

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Vision:

- COVID-19 – not sure how long this will last but considers AUS to peak Feb/Mar 2021. Will be Christmas 2020 at least before we can travel South and International Travel could be 2023.
- W4Q
- Additional road funds
- Federal 50yr housing agreement – need to get funding coming back.
- Minister Kate Jones MP – packages coming out soon.

Key Outcomes / Follow Up

Utilize your Ministerial Champion and build a relationship with them.



Mr Dale Last MP, Shadow Minister for NQ and Natural Resources, Mines & Water

Key Topics

- All FNQROC State Priorities
- Vision for the FNQ Region

Discussion/Vision

- LNP committed to building dams – setting up the Qld Dam Company (taking away from SunWater) to build all regional dams. Recommendation for a 20% reduction of the cost of irrigation water. Dam maintenance and safety upgrades, rec facilities etc should not be passed on to irrigators (government cost); Water feeds economic development around agriculture / farming;
- Releasing Vegetation Management Plan next week, including land clearing / economic development. All about cutting red/green tape for LGs. If approvals not received within 30 days, deemed approved.
- Important to manage National Parks that are currently owned before adding more.
- Post COVID / Economic Recovery – FNQROC messaging refreshing to hear that communities want to be part of the solution and not just looking for a handout; Need to diversify re agriculture; needs an overarching strategic plan for the industry to ensure we have a variety of crops so we do not end up with a glut of the same crop.
- Indigenous land tenure especially leases

Outcomes / Follow Up

- Shadow Minister happy to take federal issue forward re Social Housing & Closing the Gap
- Supports Cairns as the location for Kidney Transplant Unit over Townsville; data and health community needs.
- Vision – does not want to hear about the ‘potential’ of the NQ and get on with development with minimal red/green tape. Lobbying and representation pre-election is competitive – looking for projects that are ready to go and deliver jobs with ROI.



Hon Mick de Brenni MP, Minister for Housing & Public Works, Digital Technology & Sport

Key Topics

- Social Housing
- Mobile Coverage Report
- Vision for the FNQ Region

Discussion/Vision

- Wujal Wujal – land locked and not shovel ready, but need subsidisation to develop.
- Hope Vale – Land Tenure issues. Land-locked, purchased land but needs significant \$s to develop. 80% of workforce local, looking at apprenticeships/traineeships.
- Opportunities Post COVID to re-write the rules and minimise red tape around remote and indigenous social housing.
- Construction creates jobs and supply chains, and results in community pride. Using state land to better advantage. FNQROC can lobby Federal with the State support.
- Minister appreciated the efforts of the Mayors to travel and meet face to face.
- Understands in the remote areas how tight housing already is.
- Local Housing Plans (not Brisbane centric), now inclusive of Yarrabah. Familiar with Hope Vale Housing Plan.
- Land Tenure remains a challenge for the region.
- Vision – ATSI housing body; support delivery of outcomes like home ownership, land tenure, invested \$100m into Works for Tradies; \$1.08b into remote communities.

- \$105m from commonwealth; Community Cabinet in Cairns August – opportunity for Mayors; FNQROC request to work together – well received and Minister would support – needs Commonwealth support;
- Digital – opportunity to deliver better internet speeds and connectivity through Dark fibre. Work with private sector or Govt Capital. Tele-health, small biz and students struggle with connectivity – critical post-COVID as Southerners move north and the ability to work remotely.
- FNQROC mobile gap analysis – study findings 70% of our road network in a blackspot – used by HV and tourists. Critical for home schooling, safety, tourism and critical for attracting people to our region for economic growth. Dark fibre goes wherever high voltage power lines go.
- PCYC turnover to Sport & Rec, guarantee job security of every staff member and provide certainty of program continuing.
- Vision – recognises opportunities around digital connectivity; key priorities ATSI Housing Action Plan, Stage 2 of Housing Plan early 20/21, closing the digital divide and capitalise on the opportunities.

Outcomes / Follow Up

- Minister happy to meet with FNQROC again prior to election
- Minister's office to send REIQ quarterly residential tenancy data / vacancy rates very low (watch and brief)