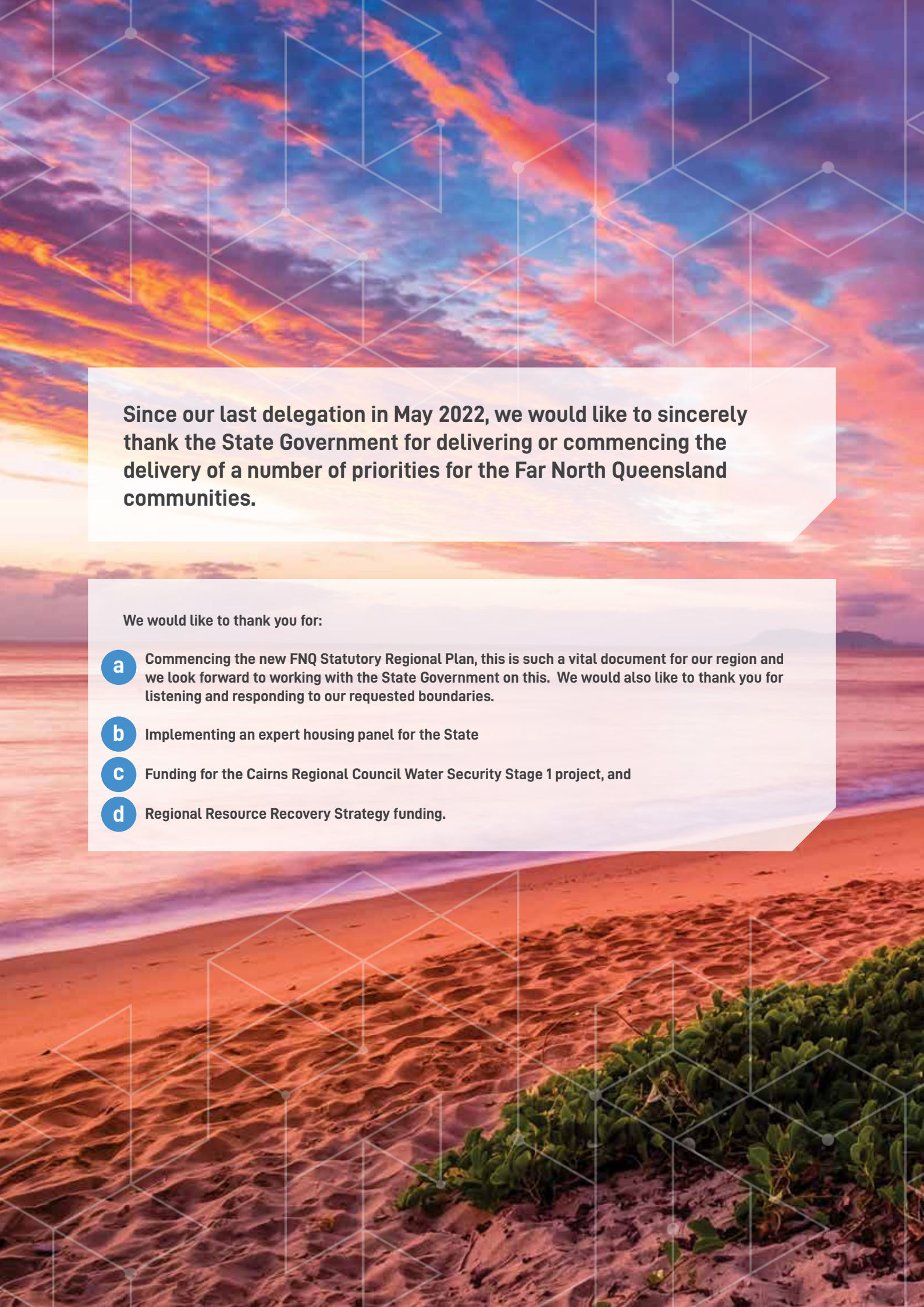




MARCH 2023 STATE ADVOCACY REQUESTS





Since our last delegation in May 2022, we would like to sincerely thank the State Government for delivering or commencing the delivery of a number of priorities for the Far North Queensland communities.

We would like to thank you for:

- a** Commencing the new FNQ Statutory Regional Plan, this is such a vital document for our region and we look forward to working with the State Government on this. We would also like to thank you for listening and responding to our requested boundaries.
- b** Implementing an expert housing panel for the State
- c** Funding for the Cairns Regional Council Water Security Stage 1 project, and
- d** Regional Resource Recovery Strategy funding.

CURRENT REGIONALLY IMPORTANT ISSUES TO US INCLUDE:



Housing for our indigenous communities



Waste



Education facilities in Yarrabah



Bulk Water – Etheridge Agricultural Precinct and Lakeland Irrigation Area



Social Housing



Urban water and Sewer



Roads



Digital Connectivity



Health Services for Rural and remote areas

INDIGENOUS AUSTRALIANS



HOUSING

Housing for Indigenous communities

STORY TELLING: Yarrabah, Hope Vale and Wujal Wujal

The recent COVID health restrictions, including social distancing measures highlighted the extent of pre-existing social issues which were amplified during the event, including the number of people living homeless and levels of over-crowding. The impacts were particularly acute for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. While there are distinct differences in public housing needs between discrete Indigenous communities such as Yarrabah, remote Indigenous community and Indigenous populations living in urban areas such as Cairns, generally this is detrimental to:

- Health outcomes (Indigenous peoples are living on average 20 years less than non-Indigenous peoples).
- Education (space to learn at home, ability to get to school).
- Employment (ability to sleep well at night and then go to work).

The lack of stable and safe housing is a particularly disruptive force in the lives of children and youth.

Yarrabah is currently trying to manage a catastrophic housing crisis with over half the population homeless. There are anecdotally 5,000 people living in the community with 376 social houses and 306 people waitlisted.

It is estimated that the community will need 235 new dwellings (\$124.6m), associated trunk infrastructure (\$110.75m), upgrades to existing housing (\$14.04m) and Repairs and Maintenance (\$4.26m) to meet current demand.





EDUCATION

Education facilities in Yarrabah

STORY TELLING: Yarrabah School

The Yarrabah Kindy (Prep), Primary School and High school are currently on 3 different locations. The buildings of all 3 campuses are over 50 years old and require constant maintenance (the high school has spent the entire years maintenance budget in the first term). The schools are connected to ADSL1, the primary school is next to a cemetery and the High School only goes to year 10.

Yarrabah Council is undertaking a masterplan to develop a residential subdivision that will include the planning for a new P-12 campus that is woven into the new residential estate.

At this stage, it is hoped that the \$440,000 required for the masterplan can be funded through the State Government and the Indigenous Land and Sea Corporation (ILSC).

Council and the community are looking for the federal government to provide financial support in 2023-24 and 2024-25 budget for:

- Earthworks and infrastructure to develop the school site, and
- Construction of the new P-12 Campus.

At this stage Yarrabah does not have a design and estimates the cost for a new school for 400-600 students is approximately \$30mil which could be done in two stages. This estimate does not include costs for internet and smart classroom connectivity. Land acquisition is not required.

While this is early stages and the costs are yet to be formalised, we would like to make the Federal and State Government aware of our vision and keep you informed as we progress with the aim of federal support in the future.

(Extracted from Buri Gumun – (one Fire), One People, One Journey Towards Educational Success)

Yarrabah State School was officially opened 23rd April 1966. During the 55 years minimal changes have been made to the existing infrastructure. The introduction of Secondary schooling in 1982 was the last big infrastructure development to the school facilities.

Concerns noted during Yarning Circle included:

Cultural – The facility is built adjacent to the community's historical burial ground. The cultural belief is that this is causing unrest in the spirits of the ancestors, escalating local staff's belief and they're uncomfortable in the work environment.

Cleanliness – The health and hygiene of the facilities are extremely poor. Cleanliness of areas surrounding the classrooms are poor with rubbish un-collected for days, even weeks.

Condition – Continual maintenance and repairs for water damaged rooms. Inappropriate security making the facility look like a jail. Rusting awnings and rotten flooring. Rusting water pipes are producing contaminated drinking water.

If all 466 students attended school the existing facilities would struggle to meet the demand.



SOCIAL HOUSING

Among other factors, the housing crises faced by many community councils is a key driver of mobility to service centres such as Cairns. This situation places additional pressure on an already over-extended housing and homelessness sector as well as intersecting crises supports such as domestic violence and emergency relief.

The 2016 Census indicated that 2,362 people identified as experiencing homelessness in the Cairns region, with 238 sleeping rough, 883 residing in over-crowded dwellings and 432 in temporary accommodation. Of this group, 19% were young people (ABS, 2016). In Cairns, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people account for more than 70% of the homeless population (QCOS, 2014).

In Far North Queensland, the demand for social housing continues to outstrip housing stock, compounded by a vacancy rate of 0.6% overall (SQM Research, February 2022).

Our social housing needs are rapidly increasing:

	2020	2022
Rental vacancy	1.7% (Herron Todd White)	0.6% (SQM Research)
DHPW Social Housing Register (Excludes Yarrabah)	4,975 (3,411 (68.5%) Indigenous)	6289 (4,582 (72.85%) Indigenous)
No. of Properties needed	2370	3041

Housing as we all know is the basic necessity to address:

- Health (life expectancy).
- Education (attendance and performance).
- Youth crime,
- Employment (participation rates), and
- Much more.

It is noted there are a number of housing strategies and investment opportunities in the Qld housing plan however it is difficult with the resources we have outside of Cairns to capitalise on these opportunities.

We thank the State Government for implementing a State Housing supply expert Panel. This panel provides transparent, independent advice to the government about how to measure, report on and address land supply, development and housing affordability issues. Housing issues are not consistent across the State and it is hoped the differences are recognised and solutions are place based rather than blanket.



ROADS

FOR DISCUSSION:

- 1 Kuranda Range Road**
What is stopping the State from asking the Federal Government to invest \$20mil of the \$210mil into identifying a solution to the capacity and efficiency issues surrounding Kuranda Range Road.
- 2 Gilbert River Bridge**

FOR DISCUSSION AND UNDERSTANDING:

Kuranda Range Road – We're appreciative of the \$210mil and 20% the State needs to contribute however this funding does not have an impact on the capacity and efficiency issues of Kuranda Range Road. Any solution is 10 years in the making and we know it has had an impact on economic growth. Why not ask for funding from the \$210mil to identify a solution to the capacity and efficiency issues surrounding Kuranda Range Road?

Gilbert River Bridge – Councils wanted to lodge a NEMA resilience funding application to undertake a business case for upgrading the Gilbert River Bridge from a low level single lane bridge with councils contributing the other 50% however TMR would not support this, nor discuss if the funding was received that TMR would undertake the business case. Councils would like to understand how on one hand they're asked to help get funding to do activities in region but when we do we're simply told it won't be supported.





WASTE

We are near to completing our Regional Resource and Recovery Plan.

We've identified a series of actions to collaboratively deliver resource recovery outcomes and provide positive impact across 11 council areas.

What is clear; due to low economies of scale, long transport distances and low rates bases, continued funding and regulatory support is required to achieve State and Federal targets.



HEALTH SERVICES

for Rural and Remote areas

FNQROC supports the NQPHN request of \$2.15m over two years to complete feasibility studies for all six demonstration sites which aims to develop a new primary health care solution to address the growing crisis in the rural primary care workforce and primary care access in rural and remote areas.

Collaborative and Place-Based Primary Health Care Services

Current service delivery models are failing regional communities resulting in diminishing health and wellbeing outcomes and increasing burdens on hospital facilities. Gaps in critical services also have a negative impact on liveability and the ability to attract and retain families to regional and remote areas, potentially contributing to long-term economic decline within regions. Collaborative, place-based solutions for primary health care are urgently needed.

FNQROC supports the North Queensland Primary Health Network (NQPHN) through the Better Health NQ Alliance to prioritise funding of a new primary health care solution to address the growing crisis in the rural primary care workforce and primary care access in rural and remote areas of North Queensland. It is envisaged that this will provide an opportunity for regional areas to forge the way forward in primary healthcare reform by co-commissioning Local Primary Health solutions across 6 demonstration sites for national primary care funding reform in rural and regional areas:

- Tablelands
- Mission Beach and Tully
- Cardwell
- Western Corridor (Richmond/Hughenden)
- Bowen
- Clermont

The service model is a localised, hub and spoke approach consisting of multi-disciplinary primary care teams that are regionally managed with clinical supervision and draw on the latest technology platforms. Funding sources are a combination of Local, Federal, State government and private providers with the NQPHN at the centre of care coordination, design and implementation in

partnership with all stakeholders (local community, clinicians, health services, all levels of government, workforce agencies and education providers).

The lack of General Practitioners and poor levels of Medicare funding for other skilled health providers such as Nurse Practitioners is creating an inequitable health service across our nation and is known to lead to poorer health outcomes for people living in regional and remote communities. It has been shown that for every \$1 invested in prevention, \$14 is saved in subsequent public health interventions.¹

Within the North Queensland Primary Health Network (NQPHN) catchment, 10 general practices (6%) have closed since early 2021, the majority citing difficulties recruiting GPs and other primary health care staff.

FNQROC communities, along with many other rural and regional areas in Australia, are losing or have limited access to medical services. This is exemplified by:

- a. The town of Mission Beach has not had a General Practitioner since late 2021 and other clinics have closed their books to new patients.
- b. Tablelands has an aging GP cohort with fears they cannot be replaced, and many of the current clinics are not taking on new patients
- c. In 2020/21, 44.6% of all presentations to the Mossman Hospital emergency department were 'GP type' presentations.
- d. Many of our communities serviced by a resident nurse and the Royal Flying Doctor Service.

Health service issues are complex and solutions are not blanket. The proposal aims to improve the current situation with place-based solutions.

**FNQROC supports the request for:
\$2.15m over two years to complete feasibility studies for all six demonstration sites.**

¹ <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/28356325/>



WATER

Bulk (Agricultural)

Etheridge Agriculture Precinct

Etheridge Shire is seeking to develop a regional agricultural precinct which fosters high value cropping and beef production on dry land and irrigated pastures. The intent is to streamline key issues such as water allocation, vegetation management, native title, land tenure and the EPBC Act approvals and requirements.

An application is currently with the Federal Government to fund a dedicated officer to manage the steps required to develop this precinct.

Lakeland Irrigation Area Scheme

Update on progress.

The detailed Business Case is due for completion May 2023. Benefits identified for the region include:

- Access to reliable, adequate and affordable water supply capable of supporting horticulture and broadacre cropping;
- Servicing up to 10,000 ha of arable freehold land expanding the ability to grow higher value and more diverse range of crops
- Prosperity through increased agricultural activity and associated indirect benefits such as increase in population, transport and value add.



URBAN WATER AND SEWER

Below is a summary list of Planned Regional Water and Sewer Infrastructure Upgrades which total over \$420million across the region. We thank the State Government for the support provided to date however much more is needed to provide safe drinking water and manage our sewer needs, particularly within our unique environment.

Summary of Planned Regional Water Infrastructure Upgrades - Significant Projects

current as at February 2023

Project Type	Projected/Planned Investment	Additional Notes
Cairns Regional Council		\$249,940,001
Cairns - Hypochlorite Site Works	\$ 829,923	
STP Pumping Station/Plant Upgrades	\$ 910,078	
Babinda STP Upgrade	\$ 200,000	
Cairns Water Security – Stage 1 Project	\$ 248,000,000	<i>Grant Funded</i>
Cassowary Coast Regional Council		\$10,200,000
Cardwell - Meunga Intake Reservoir Upgrade	\$ 4,000,000	
Tully - Hyatt Street Reservoir Upgrade	\$ 4,000,000	
Tully - New Clarifier for STP	\$ 2,200,000	
Cook Shire Council		\$17,245,000
Cooktown - Water Main Renewal	\$ 460,000	<i>PLUS estimate \$5M (\$400K p.a.) required over next 10 years.</i>
Cooktown Borefield (Contingent Water Supply)	\$ 700,000	
Cooktown Annan WTP Shed	\$ 100,000	
Cooktown flow meters	\$ 80,000	
Cooktown – reline reservoirs	\$ 500,000	
Cooktown – Replace High Level Reservoir roof	\$ 640,000	
Cooktown Fire Station Reservoir – replacement Cl shed	\$ 100,000	

Cooktown Annan WTP intake tower repairs and walkway repairs	\$ 500,000	
Cooktown Annan WTP electrical/SCADA upgrade	\$ 4,000,000	<i>Funded</i>
Coen Water Main Renewal	\$ 150,000	<i>PLUS estimate \$1M (\$150K p.a) required over next 10 years.</i>
Coen WTP electrical/SCADA upgrade	\$ 4,000,000	<i>Not funded. Treatment plant needs a full upgrade including building.</i>
Lakeland WTP replace hypochlorite shed	\$ 105,000	
Lakeland WTP New bore and pipework	\$ 80,000	
Lakeland WTP Electrical/SCADA Upgrade	\$ 100,000	
Lakeland – Water main renewal	\$ 400,000	
Lakeland – Valve/Hydrant replacement	\$ 200,000	<i>Over 10 years</i>
Laura WTP – Replace reservoir	\$ 400,000	
Laura WTP – Electrical/SCADA upgrade	\$ 1,000,000	
Laura WTP – High Level Reservoir deck replacement	\$ 100,000	
Cooktown Sewage pump replacement	\$ 720,000	<i>Over 10 years</i>
Cooktown STP belt press renewal	\$ 500,000	
Cooktown STP Electrical/SCADA upgrade	\$ 1,000,000	
Cooktown reline manholes	\$ 100,000	
Cooktown STP renewals	\$ 500,000	<i>UV system, filter system,</i>
Coen Sewage pump replacement	\$ 210,000	<i>Over 10 years</i>
Coen recycled water UV system and tank	\$ 200,000	
Coen STP SCADA	\$ 400,000	<i>No SCADA on site at present</i>
Croydon Shire Council		\$4,100,000
Alternative Raw water Supply for Irrigation	\$1,114,000	<i>Grant Supplied</i>
Raw Water Supply storage upgrade For WTP	\$261,000	<i>Grant Supplied</i>
Install new office/laboratory and amenities building at the Water Treatment Plant	\$200,000	<i>Council Funded</i>
Fire Hydrants & Sluice Valve Replacement	\$50,000	<i>Council Funded (Ongoing)</i>
Eliminate Water Reticulation "Dead Ends" where Practical	\$650,000	
Replace all existing AC Pipe within town	\$650,000	
Upgrade 100mm Water pipe in Samwell Street From Elizabeth Street to the Primary Health Clinic	\$450,000	
Supply and Install Generator Back up power to both the Belmore Pump Station and the Water Treatment Plant, including SCADA connections, housing sheds and concrete bases	\$350,000	
Up Grade the Chlorine dosing and Coagulation dosing areas	\$200,000	
Install Undercover storage area at the WTP	\$95,000	
Upgrade SCADA & Computer Systems	\$35,000	
Upgrade security measures at Council WTP	\$45,000	

Douglas Shire Council		\$31,600,000
Douglas Shire Water Security - Mossman River Intake	\$ 13,000,000	<p><i>Council is forecast to exceed its licenced extraction limit at the Rex Creek intake in 2025/26, which is the sole water source for the Mossman/ Port Douglas water supply scheme. The Mossman River intake will provide an additional, more resilient water source.</i></p> <p>The project includes the new intake infrastructure, an additional treatment process at the Mossman WTP and an energy recovery turbine to minimise operational energy usage.</p>
Douglas Shire Water Security – Membrane Replacement Programme	\$3,200,000	<p><i>The existing membranes used in the primary treatment process at Mossman WTP, Whyanbeel WTP and are obsolete. Retrofitting of modern Australian-manufactured membranes at all Douglas Shire WTPs to improve energy efficiency, reduce chemical usage.</i></p>
Douglas Shire Water Security - Cooya Beach Reservoir	\$ 1,650,000	<p><i>Constructed in 2007 as part of developer contributions for the new Cooya Beach subdivision, the 3.6ML storage capacity remains unconnected to the water network. As such, Council is unable to guarantee fire flows in Cooya Beach due to the lack of flow / pressure.</i></p>
Douglas Shire Water Security - Whyanbeel Trunk Main Upgrade	\$ 6,000,000	<p><i>The existing trunk main is undersized and has a frequent burst history which leads to significant interruptions to water supply in the Whyanbeel water supply scheme.</i></p>
Douglas Shire Water Security – Mossman Recycled Water Scheme	\$ 1,750,000	<p><i>Substitution of treated water with recycled water. The distribution network in Mossman was constructed in 2011, but the provision of a tertiary treatment process at Mossman WWTP was never completed. The production of recycled water at Mossman WWTP for irrigation of Council's parks, golf course, sports grounds, cemetery and road reserves. will reduce the discharge of effluent to the Great Barrier Reef and reduce the risk of environmental incidents.</i></p>
Douglas Shire Water Security – Port Douglas Recycled Water Scheme	\$ 4,000,000	<p><i>Substitution of treated water with recycled water for irrigation of Council's parks, sports grounds and road reserves. The production of recycled water at Port Douglas WWTP will reduce the discharge of effluent to the Great Barrier Reef and reduce the risk of environmental incidents.</i></p>
Port Douglas WWTP – Inlet Works Upgrade	\$ 2,000,000	<p><i>The existing inlet works at Port Douglas WWTP is limiting capacity. Existing screening components at the inlet works are inefficient and obsolete resulting in reduced aeration times and increased risk of pollution incidents.</i></p>

Etheridge Shire Council		\$420,000
Georgetown - Raw Water Tank	\$ 195,000	
Charleston Dam Connection to Forsayth and Georgetown	\$ 150,000	
Forsayth - Upgrades to WTP	\$ 75,000	
Hinchinbrook Shire Council		
TBC		
Hope Vale Aboriginal Shire Council		\$650,000
WTP Filter Upgrade	\$ 650,000	
Mareeba Shire Council		\$21,282,178
Mareeba WTP Filtration Upgrade	\$ 8,713,818	
Mareeba WTP New pressure booster pump station	\$ 3,345,904	
Mareeba WTP Raw Water Pump Station Upgrade	\$925,512	
Bi-Lakes Gravity Sewer Trunk Main Project	\$4,701,140	
AC Pipe Renewal Project	\$3,595,804	
Tablelands Regional Council		\$80,821,000
Ravenshoe S2 - WTP, Pump Station, Trunk Pipelines	\$ 14,600,000	
Atherton - Borefield, Trunk Pipelines, Pump Station,	\$ 18,912,000	
Atherton - Tolga water trunk connection duplication	\$1,500,000	
Malanda Johnstone River Estate water supply connection and reservoir	\$5,500,000	
High Country - Reservoir, Pump Station, Chlorinator	\$ 400,000	
Millaa Millaa - WTP, Trunk Pipelines	\$ 400,000	
Mt Garnet - Borefield, Trunk Pipeline, Pump Station	\$ 1,840,000	
Yungaburra - Reservoir, WTP, Pump Station, Trunk Pipeline upgrades to cater for growth	\$ 1,581,000	
Atherton STP Upgrade	\$ 26,900,000	
Atherton trunk sewer upgrades to cater for growth	\$2,500,000	
Yungaburra STP Upgrades	\$ 6,688,000	
Wujal Wujal Aboriginal Shire Council		
TBC		
Yarrabah Aboriginal Shire Council		\$8,000,000
Sewage and Reticulation Treatment Plant	\$ 8,000,000	<i>Grant funded</i>
Town Water Supply	To be advised	
TOTAL SIGNIFICANT NETWORK INVESTMENTS	\$ 424,258,179	



DIGITAL CONNECTIVITY

REQUEST

- More strategic governance of state funding to programs (such as Mobile Black spot Program and Regional Connectivity Program) to meet actual needs of remote people.

Mobile Blackspot Audit

FNQROC has undertaken a mobile blackspot audit on our heavy vehicle and tourism routes within the region. These routes totalled over 5,100km and it was found that 3,550km (~70%) was in a blackspot (3G and 4G). Within capital cities and the surrounds, this would be less than 1%, highlighting the continuing digital divide.

It is recognised that these blackspots will not be eliminated overnight, it is also recognised that a strategic prioritisation plan to reduce these blackspots is also required. To develop this strategic prioritisation plan it would require working with (but not limited to):

- Telco's to understand their future plans.
- Dept. Emergency Services to identify their priority areas for coverage.
- Transport/Agricultural/grazing/mining industries.
- Dept. Transport to understand their future capital projects and incident cluster areas in blackspots.
- Ergon/Powerlink to understand their future capital projects.

It is also understood there are a significant number of microwave tower/transmitter locations across the region, which are at the end of their life. The taxpayer paid for these assets and we are seeking to understand if these could be used to improve mobile communications.

AUSTRALIA'S LEAST DIGITALLY INCLUDED RURAL AREAS ARE NORTH WEST QLD (52.6) COASTAL QLD (55.4).²

Australian Digital Inclusion Index scores 2020

	Australia	Rural Australia	Cairns	NWQ
Access	76.3	72.7	72.2	67.7
Affordability	60.9	53.6	52.9	54.0
Digital Ability	52.0	46	45.8	36.1
Overall Digital Inclusion	63.0	57.4	57.3	52.6

² https://digitalinclusionindex.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/TLS_ADII_Report-2020_WebU.pdf



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