

# FNQ Regional Water Alliance

## Minutes

<b>Meeting No</b>	33
<b>Meeting Name</b>	FNQ Regional Water Alliance
<b>Date</b>	24 March 2023
<b>Time</b>	10:00am
<b>Venue</b>	Reynolds Room, Douglas Shire Council, 64-66 Front Street, Mossman

### 1. ATTENDANCE

Name	Organisation
Toni Veronese <i>via teleconference</i>	Cairns Regional Council
Mark Wuth	Cairns Regional Council
Simon Page	Cassowary Coast Regional Council
Peter Tonkes	Cook Shire Council
Jonathan Ward	Douglas Shire Council
Alan Clark	Etheridge Shire Council
Cassandra Budd	Mareeba Shire Council
Morris Hamill	Mareeba Shire Council
Bruce Gardiner <i>via teleconference</i>	Tablelands Regional Council
Michael Leslie <i>via teleconference</i>	Wujal Wujal Aboriginal Shire Council
Sam Bann	Yarrabah Aboriginal Shire Council
Dinesha Emmery <i>via teleconference</i>	RDMW
Raquel Esteban <i>via teleconference</i>	RDMW
Richard Kidston <i>via teleconference</i>	RDMW
Jennifer Hartwig	LGAQ
Jess Dean	QLD Water
Linda Roberts <i>via teleconference</i>	QLD Water
Christopher Land	Queensland Health
Brad Milligan	Queensland Health
Amanda Hancock	FNQROC
Darlene Irvine <i>via teleconference</i>	FNQROC

### 2. APOLOGIES

Name	Organisation
Adam Schmalz	Cairns Regional Council
Manu Gravatt	Cassowary Coast Regional Council

Robyn Maddalena	Cook Shire Council
Andrew Healey	Croydon Shire Council
Geoff Tansley	Hinchinbrook Shire Council
Gene Brookes	Hope Vale Aboriginal Shire Council
Ingrid Fomiatti Minnesma	DRDMW

### 3. CONFIRMATION OF PREVIOUS MINUTES

Minutes noted and accepted.

### 4. ACTIONS FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES

Action Item	Action	Responsible Person(s)	Status
<b>32.1</b>	Councils to notify Amanda of their current vacancies, including those currently being filled with labour hire.	All Councils	No longer required.
This information was previously requested by Dinesha Emmery, RDMW but given the Regional Water Capability Project currently underway, Dinesha confirmed that this was no longer required.			
<b>32.2</b>	FNQROC to set up Regional Biosolids Sub-Committee to focus on Biosolids emerging risks and opportunities.	FNQROC	Outstanding
<p>It was agreed at the last meeting that a Regional Biosolids Sub-Committee was required. Each council to confirm their participation and nominate a suitable representative to the committee with Terms of Reference to be developed for the Water Alliance's consideration and endorsement.</p> <p>It was additionally proposed by QLD Water that Louise Reeves, Program Research Coordinator be invited to participate in the committee in an advisory capacity given her extensive work on PFAS NEMP 3.0. QLD Health also confirmed that they would be happy to participate in an advisory capacity</p> <p><b>ACTION 33.1 Councils to confirm their participation in the Regional Biosolids Sub-Committee and nominate a suitable representative to the committee.</b></p> <p><b>ACTION 33.2 FNQROC to extend invitations to QLD Water and QLD Health to participate in the Regional Biosolids Sub-Committee in an advisory capacity.</b></p> <p><b>ACTION 33.3 FNQROC to convene the inaugural Regional Biosolids Sub-Committee meeting and develop Terms of Reference for the Water Alliance's consideration and endorsement.</b></p>			
<b>32.3</b>	Councils interested in mains flushing to notify Jonathan Ward, Douglas Shire Council.	All Councils	Complete.
DSC no longer undertaking mains flushing.			

## 5. REGIONAL WATER CAPABILITY PROJECT – PAUL GILLIES & CHRISTINE IP, QUEENSLAND TREASURY CORPORATION

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- Following endorsement by the FNQROC Board, the FNQROC Regional Water Capability project is underway with support from QTC
- The first steps have been completed which first involved understanding ‘on-the-ground’ capability with the completion of surveys by all councils followed by workshops to socialise the findings and key themes.
- The detailed results were circulated to the Water Alliance on 20 March 2023.
- QTC provided a summary of the key findings and then facilitated a workshop session to discuss and agree the initiatives that the Water Alliance would like to progress to the FNQROC Board for Options Analysis.
- The following initiatives were selected for investigations via an options analysis:

### People

- Ability to attract and retain suitable, qualified staff to support the water and wastewater businesses
- Ability to provide training and upskill the existing workforce
- Ability to access external specialist contractors and consultants

### Processes

The use of documented standardised operating procedures, processes, and templates to guide and assist with:

- capital planning
- capital deliver
- asset management
- procurement and contract management

### Systems and Data

Ability to record, store, access and analyse data, to better inform planning and decision-making activities for:

- capital planning
- capital deliver
- asset management
- procurement and contract management

*A copy of presentation circulated with the minutes.*

## 6. LGAQ UPDATE – JENNIFER HARTWIG, LGAQ

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### New Governance & Bid Pool Funding

Some important updates to Bidpool funding with the new QWRAP governance structure. Bidpool funding will be as follows:

- The working group can approve Bidpool applications under \$50K
- Projects over \$50k will need to go the PSC for approval.

Regional Coordinator funding is available to all regions and is no longer linked to maturity levels as the critical importance of the regional coordinator to the success of QWRAP is well recognised

No co-contribution is required for Regional Coordinator funding which is currently capped at \$35,000 per year. Bid pool funding is available for project management

### **Bidpool Application Documents**

Bidpool criteria and application templates are being reviewed & updated. For the time being, the existing template can be used for applications. The new criteria aims to streamline the document and align the application process with the new Vision, Mission and Strategic Priorities.

### **Annual Report**

The QWRAP Annual Report has been endorsed by LGAQ and the PSC. The report is now published on the QLD water website & LGAQ Congruent. The annual report has been well received and communicates the progress of the QWRAP over the last 12 months

### **New Head of Advocacy**

Sarah Vogler is new LGAQ Head of Advocacy and will be replacing Glen Beckett in the QWRAP PSC. Glen is returning to his substantive role as Head of Assist, and we thank him for the work last year in development of the new QWRAP governance structure.

### **Skills & Training**

New local government funding campaign called Indigenous Capacity Building Project 2022 to 2025. The purpose of the Indigenous Capacity Building Project (ICB) is to provide supported training places and pathways for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to participate in and complete vocational qualifications that lead to employment outcomes and support the skills needs of local small businesses. The ICB builds on the existing three-way partnership established through the Indigenous VET Partnership Program between LGAQ, Councils and Registered Training Organisations

The Department of Employment, Small Business and Training (DESBT) has contracted the LGAQ to manage funds for the implementation of the ICB project across the sixteen Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Councils in Queensland plus those councils with high Indigenous populations.

\* The other councils eligible for funding are:

- Burke Shire Council
- Carpentaria Shire Council
- **Cook Shire Council**
- **Croydon Shire Council**
- Torres Shire Council
- Paroo Shire Council

Total funding across the three-year program is \$850,000 which equates to \$50,000 per eligible council. For more information or enquiries please contact Jim Boden, Project Manager on 07 3000 2226 or email

[jim\\_boden@lgaq.asn.au](mailto:jim_boden@lgaq.asn.au).

## **7. QLD WATER UPDATE – JESS DEAN & LINDA ROBERTS**

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### **Chief Executive Officer**

Recruitment for the Chief Executive officer is currently underway with interviews taking place on 27 March 2023

### **Events & Membership Officer**

Jane Standfast is the new Events and Membership Officer. She has an events management background and has hit the ground running, fitting right in to the qldwater team.

## Water Connections Tour

15TH – 19TH May 2023, in the Wide Bay Burnett area - South Burnett, Cherbourg, North Burnett, Woorabinda, Biloela, Gladstone, Bundaberg and Fraser Coast

### Skills

- Skills forum 8<sup>th</sup> June & 9<sup>th</sup> SPG meeting
- Skills snapshot data analysis is underway to produce the report which comes out every two years.
- Water Industry Worker (WIW) stakeholder program update will be held 29<sup>th</sup> March at 1:30pm at Mackay and held on Teams being run by Lee-anne Willis.

### SWEAP/PFAS NEMP

Louise Reeves advocacy work - The PFAS NEMP3 response has been submitted late Feb.

### QWRAP

10TH QWRAP region in the pipeline as TICIA Torres Strait forming a ROC two weeks ago.

**ACTION POINT 33.4 FNQROC & QLD Water to discuss FNQROC participation in QWRAP.**

## 8. RDMW UPDATE – DINESHA EMMERY & RAQUEL ESTEBAN

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### RDMW

- DG is leaving to fill role as CEO of the Brisbane 2032 (Olympic) Coordination Office. Last day is 24 March 2023
- Linda Dobe will be acting DG
- Recently presented at the Cairns Water Supply Regulator Workshop and had the opportunity to catch up with many of attending the meeting today

### Queensland's Urban Water Explorer (<https://explorer.water@qld.gov.au>)

- Soft launch was December 2022
- Feedback so far has shown good level of adoption
- Will be reconvening the working group to review/evaluate it
- Will be updating it with new 2021-22 in March-April
- Plan to promote more broadly in coming months

### QWRAP

- As mentioned already by the other QWRAP partners, the program has undergone some strengthening and refinement through revision of its governance, clarification of roles and responsibilities and development of the program's Vision, Mission, targets, and priorities

### Commonwealth Activities

- Dan Harris sits on the department's urban water reform committee representative
- Gearing towards refreshment of the National Water Initiative
- National Performance Reporting Indicator Review has been completed.
  - Interjurisdictional discussion underway in terms of timeframes for implementation of recommendations.
  - Will provide updates as they become available

## 9. QUEENSLAND HEALTH UPDATE – BRAD MILLIGAN & CHRISTOPHER LAND

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### Single Barrier Systems

Focus on single barrier systems currently due to increased rainfall in the region and added risks as a result and focusing on assisting with day-to-day incidents.

## 10. REEF CREDIT SCHEME, WASTEWATER METHOD PUBLIC CONSULTATION – SIMON PAGE, CASSOWARY COAST REGIONAL COUNCIL

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Simon Page advised that he had recently received an email from Eco-Markets regarding the **Method for Accounting for Nutrient Reduction in Municipal Wastewater Treatment Plans through Managed Bioremediation Operations – Version 1.0** for use under the Reef Credit Standard.

The methodology quantifies the reduction of Dissolved Inorganic Nitrogen (DIN) and Dissolved Inorganic Phosphorus (DIP) discharged from municipal wastewater treatment plants through managed bioremediation solutions.

Simon wanted to make the group aware of the involvement of this methodology.

**ACTION POINT 33.5 FNQROC to circulate for information, the email received by Simon Page relating to Method for Accounting for Nutrient Reduction and the quantification of Dissolved Inorganic Nitrogen (DIN) and Dissolved Inorganic Phosphorus (DIP).**

## 11. PFAS

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FNQROC made a submission on the Draft PFAS NEMP 3.0 supporting the comprehensive submissions of both QLD Water and LGAQ.

Cassandra Budd of Mareeba Shire Council advised:

- MSC has engaged with Queensland Alliance of Environmental Health Sciences (QAEHS) to assist with PFAS sampling plan across the WWTP in response to the draft NEMP 3.0 and potential for adoption of PFAS biosolids thresholds in the EOW code
- Initial investigative samples have been taken as a first step to map PFAS across the WWTP. The goal is to use the data for an RA on biosolids and release water.
- Worth noting that QAEHS <https://qaehs.centre.uq.edu.au/> is a research centre jointly funded by Queensland Health and The University of Queensland. They are not a NATA certified lab but lead research in this area.
- The Sewerage and Water Environmental Advisory Panel (SWEAP) (qldwater) met on the 16<sup>th</sup> of March and discussed:
  - ARC sewer catchment project (SEWAUS) <https://qaehs.centre.uq.edu.au/sewaus-2021> - invitation to participate in annual survey
  - Research projects. We discussed potential for qldwater/SWEAP? to fund early career researcher project that could look at this investigative work at WWTPs and a standard approach to risk assessment. My thoughts here are if we are aligned with our methodology and language, communicating the results and risk will be easier – invitation to get involved
- Louise Reeves from qldwater has been heading up conversations with QAEHS

## 12. UPCOMING EVENTS

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10 – 12 May – Ozwater '23.

8 June – Water Skills Forum, Eagle Farm, Brisbane

19-20 July – WIOA Queensland Conference, University of Sunshine Coast

15 August – AWA North Queensland Conference, Townsville

5-7 September – Annual Forum, Toowoomba

9-10 November – AWA QWater, Brisbane

## 13. GENERAL BUSINESS

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### Chlorate Testing - Adam Schmalz – Cairns Regional Council

The following question was forwarded by Adam as an agenda item for discussion:”

‘Are member councils currently testing for chlorate in their DW schemes and are they reporting exceedance of the QH guideline value of 0.8mg/L as a “detection of a parameter with no guideline value which may impact public health”. If so, are they investigating right through the supply chain and have they had feedback from Coogee as the FNQROC supplier of hypo?

Adam advised that he was interested to know how far drinking water service providers are going to rectify any issues and what successes that ayre having. Cairns Regional Council are in the process of looking at improved process and supply chain solutions.

Cassandra at Mareeba Shire Council advised that she had recently commenced a project looking at this. Brad at QLD Health advised that they were doing work with some remote supplier regarding storage and supply. Amanda noted that FNQROC enjoys a strong relation with Coogee who she is confident would be happy to work with councils to assist where possible.

### Water Industry Worker – Amanda Hancock, FNQROC

An email was circulated on 21 March 2023 with details of the Water Industry Operations (WIO) qualification. Simmonds & Bristow have been successful in their submission to the Water Industry Worker Program.

Interest is also being sought from councils who wish to attend Biological Nutrient Removal Wastewater (Engineering level course) which is a 5-day course. There are talks currently underway with Townsville (NQ Alliance) to access QWRAP funding for the coordination of a course to run in Townsville at JCU instead of Brisbane later this year. Councils indicated a good level interest in nominating candidates for this training.

**ACTION POINT 33.6 FNQROC to notify Lee- Anne Willis, WIW program of the interest in the proposed Biological Nutrient Removal Wastewater course.**

## 14. NEXT MEETING

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Next meeting is Friday 23 June 2023 at Cairns Regional Council, Spence Street, Cairns.

**The meeting closed at 12.50pm.**

**Minutes prepared by Amanda Hancock, Regional Strategic Infrastructure Coordinator**

### AGREED ACTION ITEMS

Action Item	Action	Responsible Person(s)
33.1	Councils to confirm their participation in the Regional Biosolids Sub-Committee and nominate a suitable representative to the committee.	All Councils
33.2	FNQROC to extend invitations to QLD Water and QLD Health to participate in the Regional Biosolids Sub-Committee in an advisory capacity.	FNQROC

33.3	FNQROC to convene the inaugural Regional Biosolids Sub-Committee meeting and develop Terms of Reference for the Water Alliance’s consideration and endorsement.	FNQROC
33.4	FNQROC & QLD Water to discuss FNQROC participation in QWRAP.	FNQROC & QLD Water
33.5	FNQROC to circulate for information, the email received by Simon Page relating to Method for Accounting for Nutrient Reduction and the quantification of Dissolved Inorganic Nitrogen (DIN) and Dissolved Inorganic Phosphorus (DIP).	FNQROC
33.6	FNQROC to notify Lee- Anne Willis, WIW program of the interest in the proposed Biological Nutrient Removal Wastewater course.	FNQROC