

# FNQ Regional Water Alliance

## Minutes

<b>Meeting No</b>	35
<b>Meeting Name</b>	FNQ Regional Water Alliance
<b>Date</b>	19 October 2023
<b>Time</b>	10:00am
<b>Venue</b>	McKenzie Room, Level 2, Cairns Regional Council, Spence Street, Cairns

### 1. ATTENDANCE

Name	Organisation
Adam Schmalz	Cairns Regional Council
Josh Smith	Cairns Regional Council
Robyn Maddalena	Cook Shire Council
Brian Pickering	Croydon Shire Council
Garry Pickering	Croydon Shire Council
Peter White	Douglas Shire Council
Geoff Tansley <i>via teleconference</i>	Hinchinbrook Shire Council
Cassandra Budd	Mareeba Shire Council
Morris Hamill	Mareeba Shire Council
Bruce Gardiner <i>via teleconference</i>	Tablelands Regional Council
Dinesha Emmery <i>via teleconference</i>	RDMW
Jess Dean <i>via teleconference</i>	QLD Water
Christopher Land	Queensland Health
Amanda Hancock	FNQROC

### 2. APOLOGIES

Name	Organisation
Toni Veronese	Cairns Regional Council
Mark Wuth	Cairns Regional Council
Shane Bandiera	Cassowary Coast Regional Council
Manu Gravatt	Cassowary Coast Regional Council
Simon Page	Cassowary Coast Regional Coast
Peter Tonkes	Cook Shire Council
Ken Timms	Etheridge Shire Council
Elai Semesi	Hope Vale Aboriginal Shire Council
Kiley Hounslow	Wujal Wujal Aboriginal Shire Council

Sam Bann	Yarrabah Aboriginal Shire Council
Jennifer Hartwig	LGAQ
Ingrid Fomiatti Minnesma	RDMW
Richard Kidston	RDMW
Brad Milligan	QLD Health

### 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>	Douglas Shire Council to confirm their participation in the Regional Biosolids Sub-Committee and nominate a suitable representative to the committee.	Douglas Shire Council	Completed
<b>32.2</b>	FNQROC to extend invitations to QLD Water and QLD Health to participate in the Regional Biosolids Sub-Committee in an advisory capacity.	FNQROC	Completed
<b>33.3</b>	FNQROC to convene the inaugural Regional Biosolids Sub-Committee meeting and develop Terms of Reference for the Water Alliance's consideration and endorsement.	FNQROC	Completed
<b>33.6</b>	Amanda to send summary of council nominations to attend the BNR course to Jess Dean, QLD Water who will liaise with the NQ Alliance who are facilitating the Townsville training hub.	FNQROC	Completed
<b>34.1</b>	Shane Bandiera to provide Amanda with details of non- accredited training to potentially be included in the WIW program. Amanda to circulate to councils to review and for councils to add any further training for inclusion. Amanda to then send the details on to Lee-Anne to investigate further.	Shane Bandiera. Amanda Hancock & Lee-Anne Willis	Outstanding
<b>34.2</b>	Amanda to circulate Consent Form which is to be completed and returned by all participants of the Regional Drought Resilience Plan workshops if they have not already done so.	FNQROC	Completed

### 5. WATER CAPABILITY PROJECT – AMANDA HANCOCK, FNQROC

- The Request for Quote for a Consultant to develop the Regional Capability Plan was opened on 21 August 2023.

- Quotes were requested via Local Buy's Engineering & Environmental Consultancy panel LB312 and the RFQ closed on 14 September 2023
- The project is targeted to commence in October 2023, with completion required by April 2024.
- Three submissions were received which have been considered by FNQROC and recommendations for contract award were sought from the Water Alliance to seek endorsement from the FNQROC Board.
- Funding of \$30,000 has been secured from Jobs Queensland as part of their Grow Your Own program with additional funds available for implementation once the plan has been completed.
- QWRAP funding will also be explored for both stages.

**ACTION POINT 35.1 Amanda to circulate submission from recommended respondent for the Regional Capability Plan and explore further funding opportunities before seeking FNQROC Board endorsement.**

## 6. REGIONAL BIOSOLIDS SUB-COMMITTEE – AMANDA HANCOCK, FNQROC

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- The first Regional Biosolids Sub-committee meeting took place on 14 September 2023
- Louse Reeves, Major Program Lead, SWEAP & QCRAC, QLD Water provided a very informative presentation detailing the current regulatory position in relation to biosolids.
- The Terms of Reference were discussed and agreed.
- Next meeting scheduled for 21 November when representatives from RMIT will be presenting their BTTAS Tool, developed as part of their work with the Australian Research Council.
- FNQROC are in the process of putting together a document that summarises the current situation regarding biosolids including the risks, opportunities, and potential costs to be presented to the Water Alliance at the meeting on 5 December 2023.

*A copy of the Regional Biosolids Sub-Committee Terms of Reference circulated with the minutes.*

## 7. DRAFT END OF WASTE CODE FOR BIOCHAR – AMANDA HANCOCK, FNQROC

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- Submissions by QLD Water, WSAA & FNQROC previously circulated.
- Current draft EOW Code not acceptable in its current form.

## 8. QUT – IOT FOR WATER HUB – AMANDA HANCOCK, FNQROC

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Amanda advised that:

- At the recent QLD Water Forum, she met Kym Mansfield, Industry Engagement, Business Development, from QUT.
- Kym and a couple of her researchers has since some information regarding an IOT for Water Hub project for which they are seeking up to \$5m funding over 5 years from the Australian Research Council (ARC).
- The IOT is intended to:
  - deliver an industry-informed and led research program to achieve sector-wide transformation and tangible benefits for partners.
  - bring together water industry stakeholders and research providers to co-design and lead innovative research that will: create diverse water resource solutions; provide the supporting science; pilot and demonstrate what's possible; and build industry capacity to adopt the solutions.

- leverage IoT systems to connect waterways, drinking water, stormwater, and wastewater systems to: address management of ageing infrastructure and security of Australia’s water future; make water systems more efficient and easier to run; and provide benefits to the community and the environment.
- Details of proposed projects are available if councils are interested.
- Kym would welcome the opportunity to provide further information if this were something councils would like to explore further.
- Should FNQROC or any of the councils like to partner with the IoT for Water Hub, there is no need for a financial contribution, but involvement as a case study/ies would be valuable.
- Details were also shared regarding landfill leachate and wastewater treatment research also being conducted at QUT. Further details available on request.

## 9. WATER INDUSTRY WORKER – LEE-ANNE WILLIS

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Lee-Anne provided an update and in particular:

- Certificate IV Cohorts
- Treatment training for Certificate III for Water Industry Operations

Councils encouraged to contact Lee-Anne if they have any queries regarding the WIW program.

## 10. QLD WATER – JESS DEAN

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Jess provided the following update:

### High Presser Water Jetting (HPWJ) exemption extension request

- 18-month extension to current exemption requested to OIR

### Biochar EOW code

- Submission was made (on QLD Water website). Thanks to those that made submission (FNQ ROC). QLD Water have not had any contact from DES since then.

### NSW Biosolids Review

- Consultation still open, as it was extended to 30 October.

### QWRAP deed

- Signed for the next 3 years.

### HR Water Operator Attraction/Retention toolkit

- Project reference group to be established to share strategies and video.

**ACTION POINT 35.2 Amanda to circulate email from David Wiskar seeking members for the HR Water Operator Attraction/Retention toolkit reference group. Committee to share with appropriate staff in their individual council and notify Amanda should they wish to participate.**

### TMR Design Standards “Consultation”

- TMR sent out a paper for consultation to only a handful of WSPs, even though what they are proposing will potentially impact any council that interacts with TMR. See post on Zoho.
- The paper is on "Harmonisation of design standards within Department of Transport and Main Roads (TMR) Roads Corridor for Water Entities" and a second for "Sewage Entities". Information from this consultation will be incorporated into the new 'Non-Transport Utility Management and Design Code of Practice Manual' currently under development.

- It appears TMR are prohibiting placement of W&S infrastructure in road reserves... e.g., new meters. The issue is the lack of consultation, the short timeline for the consultation and the “silence is acceptance” tone of the consultation.
- Qldwater has sent a letter asking for an extension to permit proper consultation which was rejected. SEQ Code group (the five SEQ SPs) are sending a letter as well, as they have yet to discuss the issue in detail.
- Amanda advised that FNQROC have been approached by TMR for consultation on the paper which was sent out to council development teams for feedback on 25 September 2023. Responses have been received so far from Cook Shire Council, Douglas Shire Council and Cairns Regional Council. Cairns Regional Council have raised several issues that will require further discussion and FNQROC will be liaising with TMR further.

### **EP Act changes to powers and penalties**

- Following on from the EPOLA Changes of last year, there are further proposed changes to the EP Act under a powers and penalties bill. There is currently a consultation paper out.
- Main concerns are around Recommendation 12 of the Jones and Hedge review on Changes to EA conditions. Under the EPOLA consultation there was a plan to open up EAs every 10 years, which was removed from the final EPOLA Bill due to concern from EA holders. The new version has two proposals that seek to address this.
- Another change is the combination of environmental protection orders, direction notices and clean-up notices into one environmental enforcement order, and new duty to restore provisions for environmental harm.
- Georgina, QLD Water CEO, is leading the consultation on this, so keep your eyes open for a consultation session soon. The consultation closes on 10 November. The [consultation paper \(PDF, 578KB\)](#) is available is available at the link.

### **H2S**

- QLD Water have still not heard from Safe Work Australia about whether a decision on a regulatory impact assessment has yet been made.

### **Webinar series on Harmful algal blooms**

- First session from BOM is tomorrow. Registrations close COB today.

### **Sewerage and Water Environmental Advisory Panel (SWEAP)**

- Next meeting is on 16 November and will feature:
  - Presentation from DES on the EOW Code Framework review
  - Presentation from Kezia Drane on AMR genes in green turtles in Cleveland Bay
  - Discussion on the EPBC Act interactions with WSPs

## **11. LGAQ – JENNIFER HARTWIG**

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Jennifer Hartwig was unfortunately unable to attend the meeting but provided the following update, which was provided by Amanda:

### **Skills Motion**

- LGAQ has received a motion for increased investment in Water Skills and Training that will be raised at the upcoming annual conference. Currently there is little structure, support, or investment for Registered Training Organisations to provide nationally recognised water/wastewater training programs. there is growing issue for RTOs in meeting industry demand for Water Operations training and employers have indicated they are likely to have increased requirements for training, signalling a looming problem for the industry.
- The LGAQ is advocating (State/Federal/ government) to support increased investment in skills training, supply chain improvements, and initiatives that further fortify the economy and improve Australia’s self-

sufficiency in treatment and delivery of potable water, wastewater collection and treatment, and other essential services.

#### Telco Issue

- Queensland Water Directorate are undertaking research on behalf of QWRAP regions into regulatory issues and worker safety regarding telecommunications infrastructure on water assets. The LGAQ are interested in talking to any councils who are experiencing these issues.

#### QWRAP

- **Budget Underspend** Last financial year there was a significant underspend of bid pool funding and the LGAQ encourage the FNQ alliance to continue submitting project applications.
- There was a \$312,188 underspend from 22-23 FY. Allocation of this underspend was approved by PSC on 31 August as below:
- \$90,000 to support three additional state-wide research projects.
  - Local Government HR Toolkit for Water Service Providers (\$20,000)
  - Online Training Resources (\$60,000)
  - Telecommunications Infrastructure and Water Industry Safety Risks (\$10,000)
- \$70,000 to support two additional regional coordinator positions.
- \$152,188 will be rolled over to the 23-24 FY QWRAP bid pool funding allocation.
- The ongoing underspend of QWRAP is a problem that might not reflect well on the program going forward. Better promotion of the QWRAP program to both officers and elected representatives is needed to increase bidpool funding applications and this is preferable to having to make decisions every year about how to spend an underspend. This needs to be the focus of the partner groups and QWRAP regions.

#### Funding for travel and accommodation associated with training.

- Councils may not be aware that as part of the QWRAP they can access bid pool funding to cover the costs of travel and accommodation for staff to attend training e.g., cert 3. So long as the criteria of 2 or more participating councils is met.

#### Funding for project management

- Please note there is also funding allocations for project management which can apply to any sort of significant water/sewerage collaborative project (not just QWRAP, such as state/commonwealth infrastructure grant applications, initiatives/projects identified by the QTC or reef council pilot projects in STPS). The criteria are two or more councils working together. LGAQ understand current limitations with resourcing, but please let them know if there is anything they can do to assist the alliance.

#### Bid Pool Documents

- The feedback period for the new bid pool documents has closed and these documents will now be uploaded to the Qldwater website. Jennfier has incorporated FNQROC feedback to include ROC representative into the signature block at the end of the bid pool funding application.
- Please have a read of the bid pool procedure and start using the new templates for funding applications and associated reporting.

## 12. REGIONAL JOINT PURCHASING

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Elliott Meelen provided the following information:

- Trility provided an interesting presentation on Chlorine Gas v Sodium Hypochlorite v Electro chlorination systems at the recent FNQ Interest Day organised by WIOA.

- Coogee Chemicals have organised an open day at their depot on Thursday 2 November which will be followed by a presentation back at Cairns Regional Council on Managing Chlorates delivered by Coogee Chemicals and a contract meeting for the Sodium Hypochlorite contract.
- Councils encouraged to send representatives to this event.

**ACTION POINT 35.3 Elliott to circulate invitation to the Coogee Chemicals depot open day to Cass, MSC and Bruce, TRC.**

- Bruce advised that TRC are looking at updating their telemetry and suggested there may be an opportunity for councils to work collectively on the development of regional consistent technical specifications etc. in this space.
- Geoff advised that he had recently developed their Technical Specification and Scope of Work and would be happy to share with TRC.
- Pete advised that DSC has also recently undergone a detailed review of their systems and requirements.
- It was agreed that this was an area where councils would benefit from working more collaboratively.

**ACTION POINT 35.4 Geoff to provide TRC and FNQROC with a copy of their telemetry Technical Specification and Scope of Work.**

- Regional sewer relining arrangement shortly to get underway.
- Morris advised that next year MSC will be focused on condition assessments.
- Amanda advised there was perhaps an opportunity to look again at a trial of AI for condition assessments which was previously supported by QWRAP but wasn't progressed.

## 13. QUEENSLAND HEALTH – CHRIS LAND

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Chris provided the following update:

- Tropical Public Health Services (Cairns) is currently undertaking preparedness for disaster management due to the impending disaster season. This involves reviewing disaster management processes and policies and undertaking disaster management exercises as a whole public health unit to test the rigor of our plans.
- Part of Chris's role in the SEHO Water position is to update Drinking Water Scheme overviews for all Drinking Water Service Providers (DWSP) in our area. These overviews provide a snapshot of important information about the drinking water schemes which is useful during a disaster event. Chris will be contacting some of the DWSPs in the FNQROC area to update contact and plan details in due course.

## 14. RDMW – DINESHA EMMERY

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Dinesha provided the following update:

### Queensland Water Strategy

- At the 2023 LGAQ Conference, the Queensland Water Strategy was launched. The Strategy focuses on 4 key areas: Healthy waterways, First Nation Partnerships, Water for Regional Prosperity and Safe and Secure Water. For more information, please visit [Queensland water strategy | Department of Regional Development, Manufacturing and Water \(rdmw.qld.gov.au\)](https://rdmw.qld.gov.au/queensland-water-strategy)

### Urban Water Risk Assessment (UWRA)

- The Department of Regional Development Manufacturing and Water wrote to the CEOs advising that ARUP has been engaged to undertake Stage 1 of the Urban Water Risk Assessment (UWRA) project.

- The focus of the project is examining the risks to Drinking Water Quality, Water Supply Security and Service Delivery.
- Stage 1 is due to close later in the year.
- Local Governments were invited to provide additional information on the challenges they faced in delivering water and sewerage services. Information can be provided till 23 October 2023 via [urbanwaterrisk@rdmw.qld.gov.au](mailto:urbanwaterrisk@rdmw.qld.gov.au).
- 2 workshops are scheduled for late October with participants from LGAQ, qldwater and select service providers to help inform this project.

Bruce advised that Tablelands Regional Council had provided a response to the request for additional information. Adam from Cairns Regional Council also confirmed that they had sent a response.

**ACTION POINT 35.5 Bruce to provide FNQROC with a copy of TRC's submission to the Urban Water Risk Assessment (AUWRA) project.**

## 15. PLANNED REGIONAL WATER & SEWER INFRASTRUCTURE UPGRADES

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Amanda advised that the Planned Regional Water & Sewer Infrastructure Upgrades captured in the last State Advocacy needed to be updated as it was current as of February 2023.

**ACTION POINT 35.6 Amanda to circulate the Planned Regional Water & Sewer Infrastructure Upgrades captured in the last State Advocacy document. Councils to review and update as appropriate and return to Amanda before the next Water Alliance meeting.**

## 16. UPCOMING EVENTS

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- 9-10 November - AWA QWater, Brisbane

## 17. GENERAL BUSINESS

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- Dinesha advised that other Water Alliance's are utilizing QWRAP funding to develop regional capability particularly looking telemetry and the FNQ Water Alliance are encouraged to consider opportunities in this space.
- Amanda advised that the Regional Capability Project will identify priority actions which it is expected will include telemetry. This will be considered further at Project Implementation stage.
- Bruce advised that Muhammad Abdullah had recently been appointed at TRC and should be added to the Water Alliance distribution list please.
- Garry advised that Brian Pickering new appointee at Croydon Shire Council should also be added to the Water Alliance distribution list please.

**ACTION POINT 35.7 Muhammad Abdullah, TRC and Brian Pickering, Croydon SC to be added to the FNQ Water Alliance distribution list.**

## 18. NEXT MEETING

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Next meeting is Tuesday 5 December 2023 at Kingsford Room, Level 3, Cairns Regional Council, Spence Street, Cairns.



The meeting closed at 12.10pm.

Minutes prepared by Amanda Hancock, Regional Strategic Infrastructure Coordinator

## ACTION ITEMS OVERLEAF

### AGREED ACTION ITEMS

Action Item	Action	Responsible Person(s)
34.1	Shane Bandiera to provide Amanda with details of non-accredited training to potentially be included in the WIW program. Amanda to circulate to councils to review and for councils to add any further training for inclusion. Amanda to then send the details on to Lee-Anne to investigate further.	Shane Bandiera, Amanda Hancock & Lee-Anne Willis
35.1	Amanda to circulate submission from recommended respondent for the Regional Capability Plan and explore further funding opportunities before seeking FNQROC Board endorsement.	Amanda Hancock
35.2	Amanda to circulate email from David Wiskar seeking members for the HR Water Operator Attraction/Retention toolkit reference group. Committee to share with appropriate staff in their individual council and notify Amanda should they wish to participate.	Amanda Hancock & All Councils
35.3	Elliott to circulate invitation to the Coogee Chemicals depot open day to Cass, MSC and Bruce, TRC.	Elliott Meelen
35.4	Geoff to provide TRC and FNQROC with a copy of their telemetry Technical Specification and Scope of Work.	Geoff Tansley
35.5	Bruce to provide FNQROC with a copy of TRC's submission to the Urban Water Risk Assessment (AUWRA) project.	Bruce Gardiner
35.6	Amanda to circulate the Planned Regional Water & Sewer Infrastructure Upgrades captured in the last State Advocacy document. Councils to review and update as appropriate and return to Amanda before the next Water Alliance meeting.	Amanda Hancock & All Councils
35.7	Muhammad Abdullah, TRC and Brian Pickering, Croydon SC to be added to the FNQ Water Alliance distribution list.	Amanda Hancock