

Climate Resilience Technical Committee

Minutes

Meeting No	04
Meeting	Climate Resilience Technical Committee (CRTC)
Date	March 8, 2024
Time	10:30 am – 2:00 pm
Venue	Cairns

1. Acknowledgement of Country

Climate Resilience Technical Committee acknowledges the traditional owners of the lands which we are gathering from and the lands we have crossed to be here today. We pay our respects to Elders past, present, and emerging.

2. Attendance & Apologies

Name	Organisation
Andrew Portelli	Cassowary Coast Regional Council
Anthony Archie	FNQROC
Brett Carlson	Cape York NRM
Cr Dave Bilney	Tablelands Regional Council
Damon Sydes	Cassowary Coast Regional Council
Ellen Weber	Wet Tropics Management Authority
Jacqui Hurwood	Local Government Association of Queensland
Jamie Kleinhans	Douglas Shire Council
Jessie Gray	Bureau of Meteorology
Kate Bertola	Mareeba Shire Council
Keely Macmillan	Mareeba Regional Council
Lucy Graham	Cairns and Far North Environmental Centre
Maria Anselmo	FNQROC
Melissa Mitchell	Douglas Shire Council
Michael Nash	Hinchinbrook Shire Council
Michelle O'Loughlin	Cairns Regional Council
Narelle Dukes	Cook Shire Council
Rachel Wicks	Cairns Regional Council
Rebecca Adamczyk	Tropical Public Health Services
Sarah Frew	Cook Shire Council
Sarah Hoyal	Terrain NRM
Siân Ashton	Cairns and Hinterland, Hospital and Health Services
Tudor Tanase	Tablelands Regional Council

Apologies

Name	Organisation
Sarah Dean	Tablelands Regional Council
Fleur Anderson	Cairns Regional Council
Zoe Williams	Gulf Savannah NRM
Travis Sydes	FNQROC
Barry Hughes	Etheridge Shire Council

3. Guests

Jacqui Hurwood – LGAQ

Rebecca Adamczyk – Tropical Public Health Services

Siân Ashton – Cairns and Hinterland, Hospital and Health Services

4. Previous Minutes

Accepted

5. Climate Update

5.1 The Bureau of Meteorology – Seasonal Outlook Presentation

Dr Jessie Gray - Climatologist/Climate Risk Officer Hazard Preparedness and Response, The Bureau of Meteorology presented the *FNQROC Climate Update*.

Presentation Points

- Annual global mean temperature from February 2023 to January 2024 was the highest on record = 1.52 °C above the 1850–1900 pre-industrial average.
- October rainfall was 65% below the 1961–1990 average, the fifth-driest October on record (since 1900) and the driest since 2002.
- Australia's climate has warmed by 1.50 ± 0.23 °C between 1910 and 2023, leading to an increase in the frequency of extreme heat events.
- The August to October period was Australia's driest three-month period on record since 1900.
- Coral Sea's mean annual SST was 0.61 °C from the 1961- 1990 average.
- Rainfall was above the 1961–1990 average for much of northern Australia.
- Between October to December parts of northern and central Australia were affected by frequent low-to-severe intensity heatwave conditions.
- In the first quarter, Australia experienced multiple major flood events, mostly across inland and northern regions.
- Climate models indicate sea surface temperatures in the central tropical Pacific are expected to continue declining with a forecast return to ENSO-neutral in the southern hemisphere in autumn 2024.
- The oceans have been the warmest on record globally between April 2023 and January 2024. These changes may impact future predictions of ENSO events, if based solely on historical climate variability.
 - The increase in sea surface temperatures is impacting weather.
 - There is a higher degree of uncertainty due to historical data no longer relevant to what we are experiencing today.

Key Messages

- **Warmer than average** daytime temperatures and **below-median rainfall** are generally expected across much of Queensland over the next few months.
- There are indications that there could be an increased chance of unusually high temperatures (i.e. amongst the hottest 20% of historical observations) and **heatwave conditions** across Queensland during autumn.
- **El Niño** is steadily weakening and is forecasted to transition to neutral in autumn 2024.
- The **Madden–Julian Oscillation** is currently starting to move over the Maritime Continent. These could potentially bring heightened rainfall and increase tropical cyclone potential in Northern Australia.
- April to June **rainfall is likely to be below the median** for much of northern tropical Queensland and Australia.
- April to June maximum and minimum temperatures are likely to very likely to be above the median for almost all of Australia.

Additional points from discussions:

- When BOM releases heatwave warnings – does it consider humidity?
 - It doesn't include humidity in the forecast. It has been raised to include humidity in the heatwave warning service.
- Briefing to new Council
 - Last year The Bureau delivered a climate projection briefing to Councils using a tool for agriculture.
 - This year The Bureau is exploring briefing options with a focus on climate change and preparing for high-risk weather.
 - The Bureau is also exploring the development of an information package on high-risk weather and communications for elected Councillors.
 - CRTC members including Disaster Management officers support:
 - Deliver preseason and weather briefing, and
 - Induction pack for high-risk weather season.

4.1 ACTION: *Share a copy of The Bureau's previous briefing to Councils.*

5.2 LGAQ – Policy and Governance Update

Jacqui Hurwood, Policy Officer – Environment & Building presented *LGAQ: Climate Risk & Resilience Advocacy and Government Updates.*

Key points raised during the presentation:

- Gap identified:
 - Understanding the impact of GHG Emissions and transition to net zero on Council assets and how to consider risk on assets under finance.
 - Local Government capacity and capability to transition to net zero and the need for additional support to achieve this.
 - Consideration around social licencing and how to support Local Governments in this space, LGAQ highlighted this as a high priority. Questions on how LGAQ is supporting Councils were raised and further information was required.
- LGAQ will also provide a briefing to elected Council members however there will be a delay in delivery to allow for Council members to settle into position and conclude inductions.
- Q CRC self-assessment tool for Local Government will be available in April 2024.

LGAQ submitted recommendations:

- **Clean Economy Jobs Bill 2024** was introduced on 14 February – reducing greenhouse gas emissions.
 - Fund councils to conduct emissions inventories and emissions reduction plans.
 - Support councils to invest in capital projects and supplement operational expenses.
 - Include local government voice on the Clean Economy Expert Panel
- **Draft Greenhouse Gas Emissions Guideline** – supporting decision makers to assess new/expanded ERA applications in line with emission reduction goals.
 - Local government training package including guidance material on greenhouse gas emissions reporting,
 - Fit-for-purpose guidance on emissions boundaries and the quantification of Scope 3 emissions.
 - Dedicated funding program to support local governments transitioning to net zero.

Additional Notes:

- FNQROC Water Alliance and Waste Management Technical Committee members discussed changes proposed in the draft GHG Emissions guidelines highlighting.
 - a need for clarity on the type of amendment that will activate the need for a GHG Emission Audit report and abatement plan.
 - Lack of resources and time available to adhere to reporting requirements.
- Committee members were informed of the CRTC Greenhouse Gas Emissions reporting projects underway and the benefit of this project for meeting GHG Emissions requirements under the proposed EA applications process.

Government Updates

- **Queensland Treasury Draft Carbon Credit Policy** – establishing a policy framework for the use of carbon credits by government and non-controlled entities – LGAQ seeking council feedback by 15 April.
- **The Energy and Climate Change Ministerial Council** met on 1 March 2024, next meeting in July.

Training Opportunities

- Free online course: Using NABERS for Sustainable Building Planning in Queensland
- Becoming Climate Ready: Enabling local government to identify and manage climate risk better – Griffith Climate Ready Initiative (EOI open – launch in April 2024)
- Potential future opportunity for councils: Interpreting and using climate data and climate scenarios for decision-making – NESP Climate Systems Hub

Funding Opportunities

- Community Energy Upgrade Fund open until 30 April
- Regional Microgrids Program applications are open until 19 December 2025 for Stream A (Regional) or B (First Nations)

NESP – Biodiversity Workshop

- The National Environmental Science Program's Climate Systems Hub is developing a new knowledge-sharing and climate adaptation guidance platform to assist biodiversity managers to step through the development of adaptation plans, understanding climate risks, and accessing information on biodiversity adaptation options or interventions.
- To help design the platform, the Climate Systems Hub is looking to host workshops in Brisbane and Cairns (or an alternative Northern location), from April to June this year.

- If you are interested in being involved or after more information, please email David Putland, Climate Science Knowledge Broker, at David.putland@des.qld.gov.au by COB Friday 22 March.

6. Actions

No.	ACTION	Responsible Person(s)	Status
3.1	Upload Terms of Reference to the FNQROC Website.	FNQROC	Completed
3.2	Distribute The Bureau Climate Season Outlook Summary for Far North Queensland.	FNQROC	Completed
3.3	Update the Risks & Recommendations for Resilience Factsheet to include recommendations from CRTC	FNQROC	Completed
3.4	Discuss the use of the Keeping Our Cool toolkit for Non-governmental Organisations and communities with CAFNEC.	FNQROC	Completed – CAFNEC focusing on advocacy and will park this work for now.
3.5	Include on the FNQROC website information about the Keeping Our Cool Project and how to access the Toolkit.	FNQROC	Completed
3.6	Include on the Council website, information about heatwave preparedness.	CRTC Council Members	Carryover as Action 4-3.8
3.7	Arrange a Heat Mitigation and Adaption presentation from Darwin.	FNQROC	Carryover as Action 4-3.7
3.8	Update RDRP draft strategies and actions with feedback provided from the CRTC meeting.	FNQROC	Completed
3.9	Form a Working Group for GHG Emissions Inventory and audit project.	FNQROC	Completed
3.10	Send out dates for Climate Resilient Actions - Adaptation & Community of Practice workshop. (carry on from 2.9 Action Item)	FNQROC	Paused due to recovery from TC Jasper and flooding events.

7. Regional Disaster Management

7.1 Update from FNQROC Board

- Meeting No.164 1/02/2024.
- Motion: Apply for grants for a Regional Coordinator of Disaster Management and Resilience.
- The position would establish a Technical Committee to design and develop scope and terms of reference for Disaster Management Response review and then recommendations on delivery back to the boards.

Discussion notes from participants in the meeting including local disaster management coordinators and FNQROC CEO.

- The Disaster Management officers across Far North Queensland have established a group that meets fortnightly. This was established after COVID-19 and has continued since. The group includes Disaster Management representatives from:

- Cassowary Coast Regional Council
- Douglas Shire Council
- Cairns Regional Council
- Tablelands Regional Council
- Cook Shire Council
- Wujal Wujal Aboriginal Shire Council
- Mareeba Shire Council
- The group is active, with some Councils engaging in review processes of recent disaster events.
- The group members and CEO of FNQROC highlighted that the formation of a regional disaster management technical committee/group under FNQROC can offer:
 - Platform to advocate for regional needs, best practices, and outcomes.
 - Opportunity to establish standard operating procedures and guidelines.
 - Holistic approach to Disaster management through established technical committees in FNQROC portfolios e.g. Animal Management, Water Alliance, Roads, and Transport, etc.
 - Coordinated approach to seeking funds, e.g. flood warning intelligence.
- The next steps include *Applying for grants for a Regional Coordinator of Disaster Management and Resilience (FNQROC Motion from meeting No. 164)*.
- Members of the Disaster Management group will be updated and offered the opportunity to provide feedback on the position description and the Terms of Reference for a Disaster Management Technical Committee.

8. Round Table Discussion

8.1 Presentation - 2023-24 Season Recovery Update Slides from QRA

4.2 ACTION: Share *2023-24 Season Recovery Update Slides from QRA* slides with all attendees.

8.2 Round Table Discussion

During the summer of 2023-24, our region faced an unprecedented series of extreme weather events including bushfires, tropical cyclones, flooding, and heatwaves. With impacts reverberating across multiple government areas, we opened the floor for Climate Resilience Technical Committee members including disaster management officers from Public Health and Local Government to share valuable insights on successful strategies, barriers, challenges, and opportunities for enhancing response and recovery. Below is a summary of key points discussed in the meeting.

- **Update from Cairns and Hinterland Hospital and Health Services (CHHHS)**
 - CHHHS stood up Incident Management Teams to respond to TC Jasper, the subsequent flood and flood recovery.
 - During the disaster events, CHHHS contacted vulnerable patients in the community to ensure they had emergency medical supplies and supports.
 - CHHHS has disaster management representatives on LDMGs and DDMGs in the region.
 - CHHHS have regularly reviewed and updated disaster plans.
 - Business continuity planning is occurring across the HHS.

Barriers and Challenges

- **Data Acquisition and Prioritisation:**
 - Acquiring data on affected areas took months, leading to challenges in establishing a prioritisation list.
 - Lack of imagery and access limitations hindered understanding of the actual impact.

- **Communication Issues:**
 - Miscommunication due to network outages.
 - Many agencies operated independently without coordinating with Council Disaster Teams.
 - Emergency alert messages requiring approval faced delays, limiting communication with community members.
- **Infrastructure and Access Constraints:**
 - Water disruptions caused by landslips at water intake points.
 - Limited access due to landslips and road damage.
 - Permits needed for entry into environmental protection areas.
- **Scale and Preparedness:**
 - Lack of understanding of the full scale of damage.
 - Surprise factor: Expectations were for a Category Two cyclone, not extensive flooding.
- **Capacity and Timing:**
 - Capacity issues during the holiday period when some staff were away.
 - Disaster management officers on holiday during the event, impacting response coordination.
- **Network and Communication Breakdown:**
 - Networks for key recovery messages were down.
 - Emergency Alerts requested by DSC were refused, causing frustration in the community towards the local council.

Strengths, Gaps and Opportunities

- **Inter-Council Collaboration:**
 - The **Council-to-Council program** facilitates access to assistance from other councils within Queensland. This collaborative approach run by LGAQ would work well, especially for disaster events occurring during holiday periods when staff are on leave.
 - Establish a more **structured communication framework** between councils. Consider a system akin to **Regional Resources Management (NAMAC)**, enabling local councils to rely on each other for assistance during emergencies.
- **Community Disaster Groups:**
 - **Tablelands Regional Council Disaster Management** directly engage with **Community Disaster Groups**. These groups played a crucial role in disseminating key community recovery messages.
 - Their active involvement contributes to effective community response and recovery.
- **Capacity Solutions:**
 - **Working with prisoners** for cleanup efforts proved to be a viable option in Cassowary Coast Regional Council.
 - When seeking external assistance, it's desirable that volunteers have **local knowledge** and are **adaptable to local weather conditions**.
- **Staff Training:**
 - Prioritise **training programs for staff**. Identify staff next in line for coordinating Disaster management and train them with the necessary skills and knowledge that will enhance disaster response and recovery efforts.
- **Rapid Damage Assessment and Trigger Points:**
 - Implement a system for **rapid damage assessment**. Having predefined **trigger points** will facilitate efficient response and recovery actions.

4.3 QRA Local Action Plans

Noted that the QRA Action Plans were sent to Climate Resilience Technical Committee council members impacted by Tropical Cyclone Jasper to assist with identifying projects to fund through available funding streams.

9. Regional Drought Resilience Plan (Wet Tropics & Gulf Hinterland)

9.1 First Draft Pathways and Actions

- Maria Anselmo met with the Water Alliance committee to discuss water security actions and potential projects. Two stand-out projects.
 - Water conservation education and behaviour change program.
 - Water leak detection program.
- Next steps: both plans are going to CSIRO for review, then back to key stakeholders for final review through round three engagement.

9.3 Round Three Engagement

- Online event for key stakeholders identified for implementation of actions.
- Wed 10 April via Microsoft Teams for Wet Tropics and Gulf to Hinterland
- Objectives
 - Review the final draft before adoption from the FNQROC Board.
 - Establish networks for the implementation phase.
- Next Steps: present at the upcoming FNQORC board meeting in April for adoption through flying minutes.

10. Rivers to Reef Climate Action Plan

11.1 Deliverable Update

- **M.1: Emission Monitoring:**
 - In progress. Cassowary Coast commenced. Tablelands, Cook and Douglas meetings are locked in.
 - Discussions with CEO Wujal Wujal Aboriginal Shire Council to contract internal staff to work with Ironbark.
 - Hinchinbrook Shire Council have completed their inventory.
- **M.5: Low carbon procurement.**
 - The project is on hold due to staff turnover.
- **A.1 Regional climate risk strategy.**
 - CSIRO has engaged with FNQROC to develop a quantitative risk assessment and adaption strategy including an evaluation and monitoring framework. The outcome: A Regional Risk and Resilience Strategy. This also aligns with a recent funding request through the QRRRF.
 - If we are successful with CSIRO, then we will run one regional workshop and another online workshop to review identified risks and adaptation actions. For those Councils looking to run internal climate risk assessment and adaptation actions, this could line up well.
 - The proposal includes developing a framework for evaluation and monitoring with an opportunity for the framework to be developed and owned by the CRTC.
 - CRTC members discussed the importance of linking this strategy to existing strategic work, including the Regional Drought Resilience Plans, and existing risk assessment methodologies, such as DCCEEWs CROMP and the QCRC Climate Risk Assessment framework.
- **A.3 Heat event management responses: In progress.**
 - Workshop with Workplace Health and Safety Cairns and Tablelands Regional Council completed.
 - Running a second workshop
 - At this stage key gaps were identified:
 - heatwave-specific resources e.g. assessment forms, first aid training, first aid kits, and heatwave risk management plans suggested the development of a regional TARP- triggers, Action, and Response Plan.
 - Post heatwave awareness and mitigation actions.
 - What works well: internal communications across departments and teams.

- **A.6 Disaster management response for natural assets.**
 - Terrain NRM leading a Regional Biodiversity Disaster Management project. CRTC & NAMAC members are invited to the workshop Mon 11 Mar 2024.
- **Other Updates**
 - The Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience is offering a variety of courses to upskill staff in disaster management response and recovery.
 - DCCEEW - Climate Risk and Opportunities Management Program Resources including the Capability Uplift Program with courses on climate risk management through the APS Academy.
 - Local Government Elections – Offering the option to present on climate resilience and the CRTC.
 - CRTC Members expressed interest in having a CRTC presentation to the new Council board.

4.3 ACTION: Maria to send out an EOI to Council Members for a presentation on climate resilience in Far North Queensland to elected Local Government members.

11. Round Table Updates

Organisation	Current and/or upcoming project/s
Cairns Regional Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decarbonisation workshops running this week – aligning with the Net Zero Reduction Plan.
Cape York NRM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biodiversity Nature Capital Plan
Cassowary Coast Regional Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 Mega Watt of Solar. • Coastal Erosion Management work commenced. • GHG emissions inventory project commenced.
Hinchinbrook Shire Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reef Guardian funded solar installation for 2-3 facilities.
Mareeba Shire Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GHG Emissions Audit completed.
Tablelands Regional Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GHG Emissions Inventory commencing this month. • Reef Guardian funded projects commencing including installation of solar panels. • Energy management is moving ahead to stage two. • Operational Plan 2024-25 to include the development of an Emissions Reduction Strategy.
Terrain NRM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Running a coordinated approach to Biodiversity Disaster Response and Recovery funded through the Federal Government, DCCEEW. • Speckled Flying Fox strategy.

12. Business Arising

- Regional Biodiversity Disaster Workshop Monday 11th March 2024.

13. Points for noting to the FNQROC Board

- Regional Drought Resilience Plan (Gulf to Hinterland and Wet Tropics) for adoption.
- Key points regarding Disaster Management discussion.

14. Next meeting

- Following dates for CRTC meetings:
 - Friday 7th June 2024 – Cairns

The meeting closed at 2.38 pm.

Minutes prepared by FNQOC Climate Resilience Coordinator – Maria-Helena Anselmo.

ACTION ITEMS

No.	ACTION	Responsible Person(s)
4.1	Share a copy of The Bureau's previous briefing to Councils.	FNQROC
4.2	Share 2023-24 Season Recovery Update Slides from QRA slides with all attendees.	FNQROC
4.3	Provide CRTC members with an update on the final draft and FNQROC Board decisions.	FNQROC
4.4	Send EOI to CRTC Council Members for presenting climate resilience in Far North Queensland to elected Local Government members.	FNQROC
4.3.8	Include on the Council website, information about heatwave preparedness. (Carryover as Action 4-3.8.)	CRTC Council Members
4.3.7	Arrange a Heat Mitigation and Adaption presentation from Darwin. Carryover as Action (4-3.7)	FNQROC