

FNQ Regional Water Alliance

Minutes

Meeting No	39
Meeting Name	FNQ Regional Water Alliance
Date	9 August 2024
Time	9:30am
Venue	Committee Room, Level 3, Cairns Regional Council, Spence Street, Cairns

1. ATTENDANCE

Name	Organisation
Adam Schmalz	Cairns Regional Council
Mark Wuth	Cairns Regional Council
Natasha Glaskin	Cairns Regional Council
Shane Bandiera	Cassowary Coast Regional Council
Simon Page	Cassowary Coast Regional Council
Kerryn Bull	Cassowary Coast Regional Council
Robyn Maddalena	Cook Shire Council
Garry Pickering	Croydon Shire Council
Ben Baillie <i>via teleconference</i>	Douglas Shire Council
Peter White	Douglas Shire Council
Raju Ranjit <i>via teleconference</i>	Etheridge Shire Council
Morris Hamill	Mareeba Shire Council
Charles Dyer	Tablelands Regional Council
Louise Reeves <i>via teleconference</i>	QLD Water
Gary Fenwick	LGAQ
Lee-Anne Willis	Water Industry Worker
Amanda Hancock	FNQROC

2. APOLOGIES

Name	Organisation
Toni Veronese	Cairns Regional Council
Daniel Gatto	Hinchinbrook Shire Council
Geoffrey Rewald	Hope Vale Aboriginal Shire Council
Kiley Hounslow	Wujal Wujal Aboriginal Shire Council
Sam Bann	Yarrabah Aboriginal Shire Council

Dinesha Emmerly	RDMW
Ingrid Fomiatti Minnesma	RDMW
Richard Kidston	RDMW
Christopher Land	QLD Health
Brad Milligan	QLD Health
David Wiskar	QLD Water

3. PRESENTATION – BEN STEELE, STANTEC

Ben provided an overview of the present position in relation to the FNQ Water Capability Plan

Copy of Stantec's presentation circulated with the minutes.

4. CONFIRMATION OF PREVIOUS MINUTES

Minutes noted and accepted.

5. ACTIONS FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES

Action Item	Action	Responsible Person(s)	Status
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, CCRC	Outstanding
37.3	Councils to send details of any existing leak detection arrangements to Amanda Hancock to consider the development of a potential regional leak detection arrangement.	All Councils	Outstanding - Response from CSC & DSC to date
38.1	Amanda to obtain outstanding biosolids composition data from Douglas Shire Council.	Amanda Hancock, FNQROC	Outstanding
38.2	Cairns Regional Council to share dewatering options assessment outcomes from Northern Dewatering Upgrade Project.	Cairns Regional Council	Outstanding
38.3	Mareeba Shire Council to nominate FNQROC as a delegate to the QLD Water Consortium for Research & Advocacy on Contaminants (qCRAC)	Mareeba Shire Council	Completed
38.4	Amanda to contact DESI/UU to request that the survey of utilities on their biosolids treatment	Amanda Hancock, FNQROC	Completed

	and management is completed via the Regional Biosolids Sub-Committee.		
38.5	All councils to provide FNQROC with an updated list of their Planned Regional Water & Sewer Infrastructure Upgrades. Councils may also choose to include other projects that they are aware of that may not currently be formally planned or funded.	All Councils	Outstanding – Response form CRC, MSC & TRC to date
38.6	FNQROC to commence procurement process for DWQMP's for 2024/25.	FNQROC	Outstanding
38.7	Lee-Anne to provide brief table for comparison of RTOs quotes to councils.	Lee-Anne Willis WIW	Completed
38.8	Lee-Anne to issue MOU and request POs from councils for contributing to L&D Project Coordinators role. This will be issued first week of July.	Lee-Anne Willis, WIW	Completed
38.9	FNQROC to circulate final draft RDRPs for council's information.	FNQROC	See Item 7
38.10	Bruce, TRC to advise FNQROC of Charles Dyer's details so that FNQROC can add him to the Water Alliance distribution list as a TRC representative.	Bruce Gardner, TRC	Completed

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

- Garry Fenwick, LGAQ provided an overview of the current challenges and potential opportunities regarding the management and disposal of biosolids

Copy of Gary Fenwick, LGAQ's presentation circulated with the minutes

- Amanda provided an overview of the negotiations currently underway with Arkwood regarding the available 12-month contract extension. Increased costs proposed as Arkwood can no longer use Springmount as a wet weather beneficial reuse option.
- Longer term need to consider strategic position regarding biosolids.
- Various gasification/pyrolysis trials underway across the State.

- No significant capital investment is being stalled due to uncertainty in the regulatory environment.
- Longer term solution appears a way off and FNQ need an interim plan
- Biosolids dewatering appears best option to reduce volumes given the expenses associated with transportation together with a potential wet weather storage option for the region.
- David Wiskar, QLD Water and Garry Fenwick, LGAQ have both indicated broad support for a study with funding from QWRAP.
- All agreed it would be sensible to undertake a biosolids study focused on the identification of dewatering and wet weather storage options.

ACTION 39.1 FNQROC to develop a Scope for a biosolids dewatering and wet weather storage study and circulate to the Water Alliance for approval.

- FNQROC now sitting on QLD Water Consortium for Research & Advocacy on Contaminants (Qcrac)
- Opportunity to attend Biochar Technical Reference Group meeting on 15 August where they will run through the revised version of the EOW Code for Biochar line by line.
- FNQROC to attend on behalf of the Water Alliance and provide feedback.

7. REGIONAL DROUGHT RESILIENCE PLANS

Amanda provided the following updated on behalf of Maria Anselmo, FNQROC Regional Climate Resilience Coordinator:

- Minor updates from CSIRO were applied to both plans: No changes to Water Security Actions.
- The final plans were submitted to the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (State and Federal).
- The plans were presented for endorsement at the FNQROC Board meeting on 1st August 2024.
- Thank you for sharing your time, knowledge and experience over the past 12 months. Your insights have been valuable in shaping the water security pathways and actions.

Next Steps

- Announcement of RDR Plans by State and/or Federal governments.
- Funding announcement for the implementation of the plans.

Documents are available upon request (not for public communications) -

- Wet Tropics Regional Drought Resilience Plan
- WT RDRP Pathway 1 Water Security Action Summary
- Gulf Hinterland Regional Drought Resilience Plan
- GH RDRP Pathway 1 Water Security Action Summary

RDRP Factsheets circulated with the minutes

8. LGAQ – GARY FENWICK, LGAQ – PROJECT MANAGER, QWRAP

- Gary encouraged the Water Alliance to consider new projects for FY 24-25.
- There is \$1m in bid pool funding allocated
- FNQ Water Alliance likely to be seeking support for implementation of the FNQ Water Capability Plan project which is due to be presented to the FNQROC Board for endorsement in October 2024.

9. QLD WATER – LOUSE REEVES, MAJOR PROGRAM LEAD, QLD WATER

- Lousie provided a detailed presentation on behalf of David Wiskar detailing the various initiatives taking place at QLD Water.
- QLD Water Election Manifesto also now finalised

Copy of QLD Water Presentation and Election Manifesto circulated with the minutes.

10. REGIONAL JOINT PURCHASING

- Biosolids – Councils reminded to respond to the email sent by Ieva Pradal, FNQROC Procurement Coordinator on 2 August 2024 regarding Arkwood's contract extension.
- Water Chemicals – ongoing
- Sewer Relining – Few councils participating in 24/25 but FNQROC continuing to facilitate to ensure the arrangement remains in place.
- Drinking Water Quality Management Plans – due this year. FNQROC will be releasing a RFQ shortly.

11. WATER INDUSTRY WORKER

Lee- Anne Willis provided the following update:

- Current training underway:
Cert III in WIO (treatment) - Envirocheck has started the FNQROC Treatment cohort with 10 participants. Feedback so far has been mostly positive. The next block training is scheduled for the 9 – 12 September, an email will be sent with details for the learners.
- Proposed future training:
 - Cert IV - is currently stalled presently due pricing discrepancies between S&B quote and current service agreement MRC2023/013. Lee-Anne has reached out to Trility to provide a quote.
 - BNR course – The WIM alliance has had a Bidpool approved to assist with costs to have an Activated Sludge / BNR Course delivered in either Mackay or Townsville. Helen Stratton from Griffith University will be delivering the course in late November. Once location is confirmed Lee-Anne will send out more information on costs and registration details.
 - Cert III in WIO (Network) - Lee-Anne has had an enquiry from Douglas Shire for arranging a cohort for Network teams to undergo training. Lee-Anne requested if any other councils have interest in this training.
 - Cook Shire has previously mentioned the requirement for network; however, they would like to see the funding location loading item addressed prior to attending any training outside their region.
 - Micro credentials – Using water data and Introduction to DWQMP was delivered in Carins this week and this was well received. Introduction to SCADA will be delivered by Murray Thompson in Brisbane on 4th & 5th September, and anyone interest in attending this training can reach out to Lee-Anne for details and for registration.
 - Chlorine Gas – Lee-Anne has had an enquiry from Douglas Shire for arranging some training for the Chlorine Gas unit. Lee-Anne will contact Queensland Health to see if Chris Blake has anyone in the WaSH team looking to participate in this training.

Amanda advised that Ingrid Fomiatti Minnesma had provided the following update to deliver on her behalf:

Water Plan (Gulf) 2007

- On 15 March 2024, the Minister announced that the replacement of the Gulf Water plan.
- The Preliminary Public Consultation period was announced following the Minister's performance assessment report (released on 5 December 2023). The report identified some emerging issues and matters, and the importance of the water plan in supporting growth in both agriculture and the emerging critical mineral industries.
- The water plan review will revisit the share of water between all water interests including the interests and values of water for First Nations peoples, towns and communities, agriculture, industries, emerging critical mineral requirements and the environment.
- The first round of public consultation closed 19 July 2024.
- <https://www.business.qld.gov.au/industries/mining-energy-water/water/catchments-planning/water-plan-areas/gulf>

Gulf RWA

- On 15 March 2024, the Minister announced the \$4M Gulf RWA, with \$2M funding support from the Department of Resources' Office of Critical Minerals Queensland. The RWA will progress in parallel with the Gulf water plan review.
- The RWA is a two-year process that will be informed by extensive stakeholder engagement, stakeholder groups will help to identify all water supply options in the regions.
- The Gulf RWA will be a comprehensive assessment that examines future water demand and will set out how existing infrastructure, new infrastructure and non-infrastructure solutions can be used to maximise water supply in the Gulf and drive economic growth.
- [Regional Water Assessment Program | Department of Regional Development, Manufacturing and Water \(rdmw.qld.gov.au\)](https://rdmw.qld.gov.au)

Water Plan (Cape York) 2019

- The Minister's performance assessment report was released on 1 June 2024.
- [Cape York water plan area | Business Queensland](#)

Water Plan (Wet Tropics) 2019

- Minister's performance assessment report was released on 14 June 2024. Based on the outcomes from the Minister's Performance Assessment Report, it is proposed to postpone the expiry of this water plan from 1 September 2024 to 1 December 2032. Consultation on the proposal to postpone the expiry of the water plan closed on 15 July 2024.
- [Wet Tropics water plan area | Business Queensland](#)

Water Plan (Burdekin Basin) 2007

- The expiry date has been postponed by three years to 1 September 2026.
- The process to review and replace the Burdekin Basin water plan is underway.
- [Burdekin Basin water plan area | Business Queensland](#)

Water Plan (Fitzroy Basin) 2011

- The expiry date has been postponed by three years to 30 August 2025.
- The process to review and replace the Fitzroy Basin water plan is underway.
- [Fitzroy Basin water plan area | Business Queensland](#)

Water Plan (Barron) 2023

- The Barron water plan review was finalised on 23 June 2023 with the release of the Water Plan (Barron) 2023, Barron Water Entitlement Notice 2023, and the Barron Water Management Protocol June 2023.
- [Barron water plan area | Business Queensland](#)

Water Plan (Mitchell) 2007

- The Minister's Performance Assessment Report was released on 5 December 2023. The report confirms that the water plan and its implementation continue to sustainably manage water resources in the Mitchell catchment.
- The Mitchell water plan expires on 1 November 2027.
- [Mitchell water plan area | Business Queensland](#)

Water Plan (Great Artesian Basin and Other Regional Aquifers) 2017

- The Minister's Performance Assessment Report was released in October 2022.
- The GABORA water plan expires in on 1 September 2027.

[Great Artesian Basin and other regional aquifers water plan | Business Queensland](#)

Ingrid also provided the following short summary of funding programs:

2024–2027 Works for Queensland

- Stimulus Program - led by DHLGPPW

National Water Grid Fund

- Up to 50% funding for priority urban water infrastructure projects (excluding wastewater)
- Queensland Government submits funding proposals
- Types of projects funded include recycling plants, groundwater storage, dams, weirs, pipelines, desalination plants, bores and water treatment systems

Closing The Gap: \$150 million for First Nations Water Security

- Funding available for First Nations communities for regional and remote areas
- Proposals for Australian Government funding can include construction projects, science projects and business cases
- Queensland Government submits funding proposals

Ingrid has confirmed she is keen to attend the next Water Alliance meeting.

13. UPCOMING EVENTS

- 21 August – QWRAP Chairs and Coordinators Forum
- 22-23 August - qldwater Annual Forum
- 26 October - State Government elections
- 21-22 November - Emerging Contaminants Workshop

14. GENERAL BUSINESS

- Robyn from Cook SHIRE Council asked Morris to provide an update at the next meeting on the electro chlorination at Dimbulah and Chillagoe which was kindly agreed by Morris.

ACTION 39.2 Morris Hamill to provide an update on the electro chlorination at Dimbulah and Chillagoe at the next Water alliance meeting.

- It was also suggested that a Trade Waste Environmental Management Plan which is required every 2 years might be suited to a regional arrangement.

ACTION 39.3 FNQROC to investigate potential for a Regional Trade Waste Environmental Management Plan arrangement.

15. NEXT MEETING

Next meeting scheduled for Friday 8 November 2024 in Cairns.

There being no other business, the meeting closed at

Minutes prepared by Amanda Hancock, Regional Strategic Infrastructure Coordinator

ACTION ITEMS OVERLEAF

AGREED ACTION ITEMS

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37.3	Councils to send details of any existing leak detection arrangements to Amanda Hancock to consider the development of a potential regional leak detection arrangement.	All Councils
38.1	Amanda to obtain outstanding biosolids composition data from Douglas Shire Council.	DSC
38.2	Cairns Regional Council to share dewatering options assessment outcomes from Northern Dewatering Upgrade Project.	CRC
38.5	All councils to provide FNQROC with an updated list of their Planned Regional Water & Sewer Infrastructure Upgrades. Councils may also choose to include other projects that they are aware of that may not currently be formally planned or funded.	All Councils
38.6	FNQROC to commence procurement process for DWQMP's for 2024/25.	FNQROC
39.1	FNQROC to develop a Scope for a biosolids dewatering and wet weather storage study and circulate to the Water Alliance for approval.	FNQROC
39.2	Morris Hamill to provide an update on the electro chlorination at Dimbulah and Chillagoe at the next Water alliance meeting.	Morris Hamill, MSC
39.3	FNQROC to investigate potential for a Regional Trade Waste Environmental Management Plan arrangement.	FNQROC