



ADVOCACY REPORT

**FNQROC State Mayoral
Delegation
11 March 2025**



DELEGATION MEMBERS

- Cr Angela Toppin, **FNQROC Chair Mayor, Mareeba Shire Council**
- Cr Barry Hughes, **FNQROC Deputy Chair Mayor, Etheridge Shire Council**
- Cr Lisa Scomazzon
Mayor, Douglas Shire Council
- Cr Robyn Holmes
Mayor, Cook Shire Council
- Cr Alister Gibson
Mayor, Wujal Wujal Aboriginal Shire Council
- Cr Rod Marti
Mayor, Tablelands Regional Council
- Cr Teresa Millwood
Mayor, Cassowary Coast Regional Council
- Cr Ramon Jayo
Mayor, Hinchinbrook Shire Council
- Ms Darlene Irvine
FNQROC Chief Executive Officer
- Ms Kylie Hanslow
Chief Executive Officer, Wujal Wujal Aboriginal Shire Council
- Mr Peter Franks
Chief Executive Officer, Mareeba Shire Council

FNQ Regional Priorities

Key priority projects as identified by the Board and advocated for during this Mayoral Delegation, align with the FNQROC Strategic Goals of:

- ❖ [Develop Resilient Transport Infrastructure Connectivity](#)
- ❖ [Water Security](#)
- ❖ [Energy](#)
- ❖ [Respect and Manage Our Natural Assets](#)
- ❖ [Provide Equitable Communication Network](#)
- ❖ [Develop Equitable Social Infrastructure](#)

FNQROC State Priorities Briefing document can be accessed via the following FNQROC Website link:

- ❖ [FNQROC STATE PRIORITIES](#)

FNQROC PRIORITY PROJECTS – SNAPSHOT

CURRENT REGIONALLY IMPORTANT ISSUES TO US INCLUDE:

	Bridges		Housing Shortage
	Roads		Digital Infrastructure
	Income and Financial Sustainability		Resource Recovery and Waste Management
	Regional Plan		Mountain Biking
	Water (Agriculture)		Disaster Recovery Betterment
	Water (Dams)		Gravel Pits new ILUA requirements
	Water (Urban Infrastructure)		



ADVOCACY REPORT



The Honourable Jarrod Bleijie MP, Deputy Premier, Minister for State Development, Infrastructure and Planning and Minister for Industrial Relations.

Attendees:

- **Jock Power**, Advisor to Deputy Premier
- **Isabel Byrne**, Advisor to Deputy Premier
- **Nathan Ruhle**, Chief of Staff to Deputy Premier
- **Michelle Cottrell**, Executive Director, Regional and Spatial Planning
- **Cr Angela Toppin**, Mayor Mareeba Shire Council
- **Cr Barry Hughes**, Mayor Etheridge Shire Council
- **Cr Lisa Scomazzon**, Mayor Douglas Shire Council
- **Cr Rod Marti**, Mayor Tablelands Regional Council
- **Cr Alister Gibson**, Mayor Wujal Wujal Aboriginal Shire Council
- **Cr Robyn Holmes**, Mayor Cook Shire Council
- **Cr Teresa Millwood**, Mayor Cassowary Coast Regional Council
- **Darlene Irvine**, CEO FNQROC
- **Peter Franks**, CEO Mareeba Shire Council
- **Kylie Hanslow**, CEO Wujal Wujal Aboriginal Shire Council

Introduction:

Thanked the Deputy Premier and staff for attending the meeting and conducted introductions.

Two Key Priorities:

- FNQ Regional Plan
- Industrial Relations Act

Discussion Points

- **Regional Plan** – Thank you for the opportunity to provide a detailed response. We believe our response better reflects the region. Some Key areas of concern included:

- Population, employment and housing projections gaps which don't appropriately reflect FNQ and an agile, economically growing region. We would like to focus on policy scenario planning.
- Importance of the commencement of the Regional Growth Strategy and Integrated Land Use and Infrastructure Planning and completion over the next 5 years.
- Minister advised the Department has reviewed our submission, over 100 they have no problems with, there are some they need more information, and there are approximately 70 which they don't think they can accommodate, however, the Minister acknowledged these can be worked through.
- **Industrial Relations Act** – Councils are commencing their EBA process and have noted that changes to the Act in 2016, which caused significant angst for councils and staff. Discussed our four proposed changes:
 - Rights of employees to negotiate directly with the employer to create Employee Agreements, akin to the repealed Act (1999).
 - Restrictions on new employee organisations should the preference be for them to continue to negotiate certified agreements.
 - Amendment – include provision similar to the repealed Act 1999, to reinstate rights of employees to vote on EBA without the agreement of all parties.
 - Amendment - broaden ability for legal representation without leave being granted.

Action required

- Send letter of thanks to the Deputy Premier for the meeting.
- Formulate letter to the Deputy Premier and Office of Industrial Relations requesting proposed changes and review to the Qld Industrial Relations Act 2016.

ADVOCACY REPORT



The Honourable Brent Mickelberg MP, Minister for Department of Transport and Main Roads.

Attendees:

- **Mr Tony Meredith** – Chief of Staff to Minister
- **Mr Kav Samaraweera** – Senior Policy Adviser
- **Cr Angela Toppin**, Mayor Mareeba Shire Council
- **Cr Barry Hughes**, Mayor Etheridge Shire Council
- **Cr Lisa Scmazzon**, Mayor Douglas Shire Council
- **Cr Rod Marti**, Mayor Tablelands Regional Council
- **Cr Alister Gibson**, Mayor Wujal Wujal Aboriginal Shire Council
- **Darlene Irvine**, CEO FNQROC
- **Peter Franks**, CEO Mareeba Shire Council
- **Kylie Hanslow**, CEO Wujal Wujal Aboriginal Shire Council

Introduction:

Thanked the Minister and the staff for attending the meeting and conducted introductions.

Discussion Points:

- **Kuranda Range Road and Barron River Bridge** – we sort clarification of the State's long-term plans for these. The Minister advised we will have a better understanding of the States plans for the bridge soon. The Minister advised:
 - Alternate Range Crossing need it tied to the FNQ Regional Plan.
 - Another crossing in the near term is not likely.
 - Advocacy should be around reliable, resilient and efficient (what does this look like?).
- **Palmerston** –
 - Members discussed the needs for master planning where the Palmerston intersects with the Bruce Highway and Mourilyn.
 - Potential to undertake Upgrade strategy works while doing DRFA.

- **DRFA extension** – State has asked for an extension of time; it would be helpful to support them.
- **Betterment** - Hahn, Gregory etc. the State is seeking betterment, they would welcome FNQROC support for their application. Minister will see if they can share this information with FNQROC CEO.
- **Gilbert River Bridge.**
- **Gregory Developmental Road** – Appreciate that this road is coming into the spotlight.
- **McLeod River Bridge.**
- **Bloomfield River Bridge** – Request the State look at ownership of this – is an inhibitor for Wujal Wujal boundary expansion and is causing issues for Douglas Shire Council financials.
- **Ootann** – State is looking at this – can make the case around supply chain.
- **Cape Tribulation Road** – Douglas Shire Council advises this is owned by Council, but they can't afford it, and would like the State to take it on. Minister advised this is a harder problem than Ootann.
- **Maintenance on State Roads** – Minister acknowledged the lack of maintenance on State Roads, currently a \$6billion backlog. Members supported the focus on maintenance as we don't want to see more infrastructure failing in the region.

Action required:

- Send letter of thanks to Minister Mickelberg for the meeting.

ADVOCACY REPORT



The Honourable Ann Leahy MP, Minister for Local Government and Water and Minister for Fire, Disaster Recovery and Volunteers.

Attendees:

- **Cr Angela Toppin**, Mayor Mareeba Shire Council
- **Cr Barry Hughes**, Mayor Etheridge Shire Council
- **Cr Lisa Scomazzon**, Mayor Douglas Shire Council
- **Cr Rod Marti**, Mayor Tablelands Regional Council
- **Cr Alister Gibson**, Mayor Wujal Wujal Aboriginal Shire Council
- **Cr Robyn Holmes**, Mayor Cook Shire Council
- **Cr Teresa Millwood**, Mayor Cassowary Coast Regional Council
- **Darlene Irvine**, CEO FNQROC
- **Peter Franks**, CEO Mareeba Shire Council
- **Kylie Hanslow**, CEO Wujal Wujal Aboriginal Shire Council

Introduction:

Thanked the Minister for attending the meeting after such a big day.

Three Key Priorities:

- FNQ Draft Regional Plan
- Water
- Disaster Recovery

Discussion Points:

- **FNQ Regional Plan process** – appreciated the time to review and provide a detailed response which looked like our region, not SEQ writing it for us.
- **Industrial Relations Act** – Councils are commencing their EBA process and have noted that changes to the Act in 2016, which caused significant angst for councils and staff. Discussed our four proposed changes and advised we will be writing to Minister Bleijie about these.

- **Federal Interim Report** – DEP, FAGS.
- **SouthWest Water project** – Minister Leahy raised this project and had we thought of doing something similar. Minister advised the cost was somewhat prohibitive (which was acknowledged), so we are looking at how we could scope this out in stages.
- **Bulk Water** – where is the States stance on this? Discussed bulk water for:
 - Gilbert
 - Lakeland
 - Tablelands
- **Some of our big inhibitors to Agriculture and bulk water include:**
 - Vegetation Management
 - Native Title
 - Tenure
 - Water Management
 - Water Allocation and Transportation (Perhaps GQAL should be renamed something else like Strategic Production Land?).
- **Disaster Recovery – general discussion including:**
 - Wujal Wujal Aboriginal Shire Council story regarding insurance – flooding verses overland flow.
 - \$4 million betterment for TC Jasper – still don't have money (CAT D) – QRA advised they don't have a process.
 - Discussed caravan extension past 31st March 2025.

Action required:

- Send letter of thanks to Minister Leahy for the meeting.
- Cook Shire and Douglas Shire Councils to write to Minister Leahy to seek an extension of the caravans past the 31 March 2025.