

FNQ Regional Water Alliance

Minutes

Meeting No	42
Meeting Name	FNQ Regional Water Alliance
Date	9 May 2025
Time	9:30am
Venue	Kingsford Room, Level 3, Cairns Regional Council, Spence Street, Cairns

1. ATTENDANCE

Name	Organisation
Josh Smith	Cairns Regional Council
Shane Bandeira <i>via teleconference</i>	Cassowary Coast Regional Council
Simon Page	Cassowary Coast Regional Council
Kerryn Bull	Cassowary Coast Regional Council
Robyn Maddalena	Cook Shire Council
Ben Baillie	Douglas Shire Council
Raju Ranjit <i>via teleconference</i>	Etheridge Shire Council
Aditya Mishra	Mareeba Shire Council
Morris Hamill	Mareeba Shire Council
Kiley Hounslow <i>via teleconference</i>	Wujal Wujal Aboriginal Shire Council
Jennifer Hartwig <i>via teleconference</i>	LGAQ
Ingrid Formiatti Minnesma <i>via teleconference</i>	RDMW
Giovannella Carini <i>via teleconference</i>	RDMW
Louise Reeves <i>via teleconference</i>	Queensland Water
Lee-Anne Willis <i>via teleconference</i>	Water Industry Worker
Amanda Hancock	FNQROC
Darlene Irvine	FNQROC

2. APOLOGIES

Name	Organisation
Natasha Glaskin	Cairns Regional Council
Adam Schmalz	Carins Regional Council
Mark Wuth	Cairns Regional Council
Toni Veronese	Cairns Regional Council
Jacquie Creswell	Croydon Shire Council

Peter White	Douglas Shire Council
Daniel Gatto	Hinchinbrook Shire Council
Mark Lawson	Hope Vale Aboriginal Shire Council
Charles Dyer	Tablelands Regional Council
Mark Vis	Tablelands Regional Council
Sam Bann	Yarrabah Aboriginal Shire Council
Ted Aldred	RDMW
Brett Rip	RDMW
Richard Kidston	RDMW
Christopher Land	QLD Health
Brad Milligan	QLD Health
David Whiskar	QLD Water

3. CONFIRMATION OF PREVIOUS MINUTES

Minutes noted and accepted.

4. REGIONAL WATER CAPABILITY PLAN – DARLENE IRVINE

Strategic Initiatives –

Initiative 8 – Driving change in water and wastewater grant funding

Initiative 5 – Strategic awareness of water and wastewater service delivery

Initiative 6 – Prudent and efficient water and wastewater services in FNQ

Darlene provided an update on the feedback from the FNQROC Board at their recent Strategic Priorities Workshop and advised that Board direction is being sought at the next FNQROC meeting.

Darlene Irvine departed the meeting at 10.00am

5. ACTIONS FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES

Action Item	Action	Responsible Person(s)	Status
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.	Received from CRC, CSC, MSC & TRC to date	Superseded - see Item 6.1
40.2	Each council to nominate a suitable representative to the Regional Leak Detection Sub-Committee. Ieva Pradal to facilitate the committee and progress the Regional Leak Detection Joint Procurement arrangements.	HSC, HVSC & WWASC	Superseded – see Item 7.1
40.4	FNQROC to commence development of procurement documentation for the next Regional Beneficial Reuse of Biosolids	Amanda Hancock, FNQROC	In progress - see Item 8.1

	arrangement as the current contract with Arkwood will expire on 30 September 2025.		
41.1	Charles, TRC to share learnings of upcoming visit from dog leak detection service.	Charles Dyer, TRC	Outstanding
41.2	Amanda to re-circulate details of micro-credential training and seek nominations for Cairns based training to take place in September 2025.	Amanda Hancock, FNQROC	Complete
Amanda advised that she recirculated the details of the micro-credential training on 17 March 2025 but had only received nominations from Cairns Regional Council. Cassowary Coast Regional Council indicated they may have some attendees to nominate. SCADA training schedule to be circulated with the minutes. Councils will notify Amanda and Lee-Anne of any additional nominations.			
41.3	David Wiskar, QLD Water to share information regarding the SWQROC Sewerage Infrastructure Strategy.	David Wiskar, QLD Water	Complete – See Item 6.1
41.4	David Wiskar, QLD Water to share information of the NSW Productivity Commission Review into water and wastewater funding models.	David Wiskar, QLD Water	Complete
41.5	Amanda to advise the Water Alliance separately of actions required to progress each of the Water Capability Plan agreed priority initiatives for implementation.	Amanda Hancock, FNQROC	Ongoing
41.6	David Wiskar, QLD Water to liaise with Queensland Urban Utilities regarding release of their Biosolids Dewatering study. Thereafter further consideration to be given to releasing the RFQ for a Regional Biosolids Dewatering Options Analysis.	David Wiskar, QLD Water	See Item 8.2

6. REGIONAL WATER CAPABILITY PLAN – AMANDA HANCOCK, FNQROC

6.1 Strategic Initiatives

SWROC Water Infrastructure Strategy

Amanda provided a brief overview of the SWQROC Water Infrastructure Strategy which was a regional scale detailed review of water and sewerage infrastructure across six councils in South-West Queensland. It was funded under the Queensland Government BOR6 program and the following asset categories were covered:

- Drinking Water Quality Testing & Assessment
- Sewage Treatment Plant Inspection and Assessment
- Sewer and Manhole CCTV Inspections and Condition Assessment
- Reservoir Inspection and Assessment
- Sewer Pump Station Inspection and Assessment
- Bore Inspections (Desktop Review)

- Primary objective was to establish a ten-year capital program to assess the risk probability of assets. (For Methodology see Page 266 onwards of the SWQWSA (Southwest Queensland Water & Sewerage Alliance) Asset Criticality Report.
- This involved calculating the asset criticality using an Asset Criticality Tool developed by QLD water, and likelihood to determine a score and risk range which then served as a tool for prioritising work. Assets with higher scores correspond to higher priority for maintenance and investment. This was captured in a ten-year capital program.
- This program is being used to drive advocacy - high risk assets were identified but perhaps most importantly, the work done to quantify the cost of infrastructure failures. See SWQWSA Emergency Water Supply Cost Analysis Report.
- Project delivery quantified at \$87,552,266.73 over ten-years
- Infrastructure Delivery Office (region) \$2,600,000.
- At the recent FNQROC State Delegation, the Honourable Ann Leahy MP, Minister for local Government and Water raised this project and asked if we had thought of doing something similar. The Minister acknowledged that the cost was somewhat prohibitive we advised that we would be looking at how we could scope it out in stages.
- In 2023 a summary of all significant planned water infrastructure upgrades was collated by FNQROC ahead of the State delegation and since then we have received updated information from Cook Shire Council, Mareeba Shire Council and Tablelands Regional Council which is now in the process of being updated.
- Once this has been updated, we can then work out where the gaps are and what we need to do to produce a final report.
- Amanda will be in touch with summary of information provided to date and request for any additional information required at this stage.

6.2 Operations Initiatives

Initiative 3 – Standardised SOPs, work instructions, templates and processes

It was agreed that there would be several quick wins associated with this initiative and that a Sub-Committee would be set up to progress.

ACTION ITEM 42.1 To progress Initiative 3 of the Water Capability Plan, each council to nominate a representative to sit on a Standardised SOPs, work instructions, templates and processes Sub-Committee to be facilitated by FNQROC.

- **Trade Waste Uplift Project (TWIG)**

Amanda advised that she had recently attended the inaugural Trade Waste Uplift Group (TWIG) meeting and briefly went through the presentation delivered by Colin Hester, QLD Water WBBUWA Coordinator, who is the TWIG Coordinator together with the proposed Charter.

Councils to notify Amanda should they wish to nominate a representative to participate in the TWIG group otherwise progress updates will be provided by Amanda. Councils will review and provide feedback once a draft Trade Waste Management Plan is available for review.

ACTION ITEM 42.2 Councils to notify Amanda if they wish to nominate a representative to participate in the Trade Waste Uplift Project (TWIG).

TWIG Presentation, proposed Charter circulated with the minutes and other reference documents.

Amanda advised that closely connected to Initiative 3 was Initiative 4 – Standardised water and wastewater asset design and specification. Following discussion, it was agreed that SCADA was the highest priority with

councils each operating to varying to specifications. Councils to nominate a representative to sit on a Standardised Water and Wastewater Asset Design and Specification Sub-Committee to progress. This may be the same person as the previous committee or an alternative representative. The meetings will be held concurrently on the same day.

ACTION ITEM 42.3 To progress Initiative 4 of the Water Capability Plan, each council to nominate a representative to participate in a Standardised Water and Wastewater Asset Design and Specification Sub-Committee to focus on SCADA in the first instance.

Initiative 11 – Building and sustaining a strong water workforce for FNQ.

Amanda advised that she will be progressing this direct with councils Human Resource and Learning and Development Teams in the first instance. Further updates to follow.

7 REGIONAL JOINT PURCHASING – AMANDA HANCOCK, FNQROC

7.1 Regional Leak Detection Arrangement

- The application for funding via the Regional Drought Resilience Plan has been approved but with a much tighter timeframe than originally hoped which has required an adjustment to the scope of the project.
- Further update to be provided shortly.
- Robyn advised that

7.2 Drinking Water Quality Management Plan Audits

- These are well underway, final report will be provided once they have all been completed. Feedback already provided by Dan Deere to the Regulator at the recent workshop in Cairns.

7.3 Regional Sewer Relining

- 24/25 program still underway, expected completion July 2025
- 25/26 program is currently with Relining Solutions for pricing expected commencement August 2025
- Contract extensions will then be exhausted. Meeting will take place later in the year to consider Scope for future arrangements.

7.4 Regional Supply & Delivery of Water Chemicals

- Contract meeting took place on 5 March 2025.
- Update regarding supplier operations and general operating conditions provided
- No issues of concern raised regarding the contract

Ingrid Formiatti Minnesma departed the meeting at 10.18am.

8 REGIONAL BIOSOLIDS – AMANDA HANCOCK, FNQROC

8.1 Arkwood Contract

- Amanda advised that all councils except Tableland Regional Council had indicated a preference to appoint Arkwood as a Sole Supplier and subject to councils approval, seek pricing from them for a 3-year contract.
- Councils are in various stages of submitting their council reports seeking council approval.

8.2 Dewatering Study

- Amanda advised that she had recently contacted Urban Utilities to request a copy of their dewatering study.
- A very detailed response had very kindly been provided which was shared with the Alliance. Email to be circulated following the meeting.

Copy of the email from Urban Utilities regarding biosolids circulated with the minutes.

- There are two other relevant studies currently underway:
 - Water Services Association of Australia (WSAA) project, 'Weighing Up the Options'; looking at various treatment options Stage 1 of the report is expected to be available shortly. Louise Reeves, QLD Water is aware of the need for any solution to work for councils with relatively low volumes across a large geographical area – our biosolids data including sites, tonnage and composition has been forwarded to QLD Water to hopefully incorporate in next stage.
 - An SEQ Biosolids Strategy Group - comprising Unity Water, Urban Utilities, City of Gold Coast and Logan has recently been formed. Louise Reeves, QLD Water have been invited to attend as observer and will look for outputs to be shared where appropriate with FNQROC.

In light of the information provided by Urban Utilities and the pending studies it was agreed not to progress the dewatering study at this time and to focus on firming up current arrangements.

Kiley Hounslow departed the meeting at 11.09am.

9 QLD WATER UPDATE – LOUISE REEVES, QLD WATER

Louise Reeves, Qld Water provided an update.

Copy of QLD Water update presentation circulated with the minutes.

10 QWRAP/LGAW – JENNIFER HARTWIG, LGAQ

Jennifer Hartwig, LGAQ provided an update.

Copy of LGAQ update presentation circulated with the minutes,

11 WATER INDUSTRY WORKER – LEE-ANNE WILLIS, WIW

Lee-Anne Willis, Water Industry Worker provided an update.

Copy of Water Industry Worker update email circulated with the minutes.

12 RDMW

Ingrid Formiatti Minnesma unfortunately had to depart the meeting before her update but circulated an update following the meeting to be circulated with the minutes.

Copy of Water Planning update from RDMW circulated with the minutes.

Giovannella Carini provided an update on behalf of Brett Rip advising that half of the regions DWQMP Audits had been submitted and a reminder that all should be submitted by the EOFY. Otherwise, it is back to business following the recent weather events.

13 GENERAL BUSINESS

- Robyn, Cook Shire Council indicated that the benchmarking data used by RDMW and QLD Water don't appear to match which was difficult to explain at a recent council meeting. For example, QLD Water refer to Cook Shire Council as a medium sized council whereas RDMW refer to them as small. Louise indicated that this was down to the different categories being used by each organisation to display and compare data. Louise advised that if requested they can compare data by specific data sets.
- Josh, Cairns Regional Council indicated that they may have additional attendees for the micro credentials training and interest in the various Card training courses.

Darlene Irvine returned to the meeting at 11.55am.

- Raju, Etheridge Shire Council requested a copy of the 2023 Summary of Planned Regional Water Infrastructure Upgrades – Significant Projects.

ACTION ITEM 42.4 Amanda to provide Raju, Etheridge Shire Council with a copy of the 2023 Summary of Planned Regional Water Infrastructure Upgrades – Significant Projects

14 UPCOMING EVENTS

- Water Connections Tour – 12-15 May
- QLD Water Annual Forum - 20/21 August, Eagle Farm, Brisbane

15 NEXT MEETING

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 1pm

Minutes prepared by Amanda Hancock, Regional Strategic Infrastructure Coordinator

AGREED ACTION ITEMS

Action Item	Action	Responsible Person(s)
41.1	Charles, TRC to share learnings of upcoming visit from dog leak detection service.	Charles Dyer, TRC
42.1	To progress Initiative 3 of the Water Capability Plan, each council to nominate a representative to participate in a Standardised SOPs, work instructions, templates and processes Sub-Committee to be facilitated by FNQROC.	All councils
42.2	Councils to notify Amanda if they wish to nominate a representative to participate in the Trade Waste Uplift Project (TWIG).	All councils

42.3	To progress Initiative 4 of the Water Capability Plan, each council to nominate a representative to participate in a Standardised Water and Wastewater Asset Design and Specification Sub-Committee to focus on SCADA in the first instance.	All councils
42.4	Amanda to provide Raju, Etheridge Shire Council with a copy of the 2023 Summary of Planned Regional Water Infrastructure Upgrades – Significant Projects	Amanda Hancock, FNQROC