

FNQR Regional Waste Management Plan (RWMP) Implementation Technical Committee

Minutes

Meeting No	4
Meeting Name	FNQR Regional Waste Management Plan (RWMP) Technical Committee
Date	27 th March 2025
Time	9.30am-11.00am
Venue (Virtual)	Teams Meeting

1. ATTENDANCE

Name	Organisation
Kristina Davidson	Cook Shire Council
Tim O'Brien	Douglas Shire Council
Morris Hamill	Mareeba Shire Council
Liam Bradford	Mareeba Shire Council
Gary Wedel	Tablelands Regional Council
Bhakti Devi (Meeting Convenor & Facilitator)	FNQROC

2. GUESTS

Andrea Baldwin, *Team Leader, Albury Waste Management Centre (via teleconference)*

3. APOLOGIES

Name	Organisation
Steve Cosatto	Cairns Regional Council
Geoff Allnutt	Cassowary Coast Regional Council
Ryan Francis	Croydon Shire Council
Raju Ranjit	Etheridge Shire Council
Mark Lawson	Hope Vale Aboriginal Shire Council
Kiley Hounslow	Wujal Wujal Aboriginal Shire Council
Sam Bann	Yarrabah Aboriginal Shire Council

4. UPDATE ON IMPLEMENTATION PLAN ACTIONS (REFERENCE DOCUMENT)

#	Implementation Action	Status	Actions Arising
1	Regional Education & Engagement Plan (REEP) Engaging Contractor for Delivery of REEP	A) A report to the FNQROC Board has been submitted to minute the endorsement of board to apply for LGIS Funding for Regional Coordinator/Contractor so that it is available to attach to the Funding Application.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Draft LGIS Funding Application (FNQROC) 2. Provide relevant inputs (Members) 3. Draft (reverse) scope of work for contractor (FNQROC) 4. Share a list of contractors to get the quotes from (Members)
2	Waste Data Management Capability Enhancement	<p>A) An Excel-based Survey to assess the current state of waste data management capability maturity has been drafted for taking a trial assessment and provide feedback to know if any changes are required.</p> <p>B) The Excel-based survey file is available on FNQROC Shared Folder so that each member council can access and complete it</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Upload Excel file on to shared folder (FNQROC) 2. Members to review and comment within a week of uploading (Members). 3. Finalize the survey and invite members to take the survey (FNQROC) 4. Fill in the survey by 30th April 2025. (Members) 5. A short report prepared on Waste Data Capability Maturity Assessment making a fundable action within RWMP Implementation Plan report to DETSI by 15 May 2025 (FNQROC)
3	Regional Resource Recovery	<p>A) Commenced drafting Excel based survey to get the baseline of current recovery process & infrastructure, plans that each member council has for the following critical resource streams</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • C & D Waste • Green Organics • E-waste • Batteries • Mattresses 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Upload Excel file on to shared folder (FNQROC) 7. Review and comment within a week of uploading (Members). 8. Finalize the survey and invite members to take the survey (FNQROC) 9. Fill in the survey by 30th April 2025 (Members). 10. A short report prepared on Regional Resource Recovery making a case for fundable action within RWMP Implementation Plan report to DETSI by 15 May 2025 (FNQROC)
3	Waste Infrastructure	A) Commenced working on an Excel based Input File to be uploaded on the shared folder for each member council to input information on any waste management or resource recovery project or program that may have been recently initiated or in planning esp. if they are aligned to the RWMP key actions and/or State set	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Upload the Excel based input sheet to capture info on Individual Council waste infrastructure initiatives recently completed or in planning (FNQROC)

#	Implementation Action	Status	Actions Arising
		targets. As this will be included in the Implementation Plan report to be submitted by 30 th June 2025.	2. Members Councils to submit the info in the Excel based input sheet.
4	Enhanced Kerbside Recycling	A) Remote & smaller councils have requested access to Container for Change service. B) FNQROC is investigating the options given that most service providers are provide pick up service.	1. Document the options & share with remote & smaller councils (FNQROC) 2. Remote & smaller councils implement the most feasible options 3. Monitor & evaluate the implementation experience and performance
5	Organic Waste Recovery	No action yet.	No next steps yet.
6	Energy from Waste (EfrW)/Waste to Energy (WTE) for Residual Waste Management	A) Proposal for creating a temporary Working Group on WTE/EfrW. B) Purpose of the working group would be to identify & understand minimum feedstock requirements, any pros and cons related to various technology options and report back to the RWMP TC to resolve whether there is scope to explore regional or sub-regional scale EfrW or WTE plant.	1. Members to submit their names to be part of the working group.

5. GUEST TALK – CHAT WITH ANDREA BALDWIN, TEAM LEADER, RESOURCE RECOVERY AT ALBURY-WODONGA REGIONAL COUNCIL, NSW

(While some of the FNQROC member councils may already be doing much of what the Albury-Wodonga regional Council is doing, the purpose of sharing the journey of Albury-Wodonga regional Council is to spark inspiration & discussion on

- *their approach towards becoming financially sustainable; and*
- *potentially emulating some of their initiatives in FNQ at regional or sub-regional scale)*

Andrea shared her 17 years waste management journey at Albury-Wodonga Regional Council.

- Council was accepting 185,000 tonnes and recovering 15%. Today, through investment in infrastructure & education Council has extended the life of landfill for another 40 years. Current onsite recovery rate is 54% & the bin service has a recovery rate of 76%.
- Journey of the regional Council began with landfill air space planning which they undertook because the low recovery rate of the Council at the time meant that the landfill would have to close by 2020.
- The landfill airspace planning and full cost modelling allowed the Council (which is NSW state's non-levy zone) to make a business case initially for
 - A self-imposed education levy to create a funding pool at Council level to invest in a waste education and community engagement program called Halve Waste.
 - And later, a landfill levy that covers the full and true cost of operating, maintaining and ongoing mandatory monitoring (30-50 years) of the landfill after its closure.

- To-date, Albury-Wodonga Regional Council has invested in the following infrastructure & initiatives to improve their recovery and landfill diversion targets
 - **REGIONAL INITIATIVES**
 - Regional Waste Education & Engagement:
 - [Halve Waste](#) – education program across 18 councils and funded by a self-imposed levy at the landfill
 - Onsite bus to showcase site to schools/communities
 - Education Centre
 - Regional Servicing Contracts
 - *Collaborative kerbside collection* contracts for eight councils – five are with Cleanaway and three are with JJs
 - *Comprehensive contamination management program* driven by Cleanaway and overseen by Halve Waste program.
 - *Bin assessment program* for kerbside services as carried out by the HW team
 - *Comprehensive contamination management program* driven by Cleanaway and overseen by Halve Waste program.
 - *Pilot soft plastic program* in the kerbside recycling service – started in 2022 and continues to operate for additional households and surrounding councils.
 - **FOOD WASTE**
 - Service Level Agreement with [Goterra](#) to provide land for maggot/robot technology to manage commercial food waste
 - Service Level Agreement with Cleanaway to provide a bulky waste collection point for food and garden waste material collected from kerbside
 - **POLYSTYRENE** - Collect, sort and melt polystyrene and on sell this to the market. Currently Council receives \$600 per tonne for good quality melted poly product overseas¹. Our machine was purchased through a grant cost around \$120k, you can get cheaper machines it depends on your volumes.
 - **WASTE MANAGEMENT & RESOURCE RECOVERY INFRASTRUCTURE**
 - A drive through recycling centre for residents which includes a drop off location, processing area and an upcycle shop (3 portals each 1400 sqm)
 - Material Recovery Facility for Construction and Demolition waste
 - Push Pit for General Waste

6. SHARING WINS & HIGHLIGHTS

REVISION OF RATES & CHARGES – TOWARDS MORE SUSTAINABLE WASTE MANAGEMENT SERVICE

Douglas Shire Council & Cook Shire Council shared their respective success stories on revising their rates and charges to make them more reflective of the costs incurred by Council and to encourage waste generators take more responsibility for their waste.

Douglas Shire Council (as shared by Tim O'Brien – Technical Officer Resource Management)

¹ However, the return does not cover the cost of the labour involved to do this. So this is a good initiative if a landfill has a reduced life or if Council generates a lot of poly. Once about 18 tonnes of processed poly is collected, it is possible to send it away, requiring storage, until it reaches minimum volume.

Following the closure of the only landfill in the Douglas Shire, Council entered a contract for cartage and disposal of residual landfill (for both domestic and commercial sources). To cover some of the associated cartage and disposal costs the Resource Management Team put forward a recommendation to significantly increase our commercial landfill disposal fees.

This was workshopped with Councillors to ensure that they had sufficient knowledge of waste management operations and associated costs. This resulted in a successful outcome as the Councillors agreed with the proposal for an increase in commercial disposal fees and to keep domestic disposal fees low.

- The proposal was essentially a user pays system for commercial customers while domestic landfill disposal fees would only incur the standard CPI increase:
- The rationale behind keeping the domestic fees low was to discourage illegal dumping. The costs associated with managing illegal dumping and the potential environmental impacts would not be of benefit to Council.

Cook Shire Council (as shared by Kristina Davidson – Waste Management Coordinator)

One of the actions identified in Cook Shire's Waste Reduction and Recycling Plan 2018-2028 was to "Review fees and charges and consider the implementation of a fee on commercial green waste and cardboard." Upon my appointment in 2023, I discovered that half of the waste streams were being received either free of charge or at heavily subsidised rates.

- Prior to the 2024/25 financial year, all fees were reviewed, and the actual costs of managing each waste stream were identified. This review did not include operational costs for the facilities but focused solely on the costs associated with managing each individual waste stream (disposal and transport).
- The proposed fees and charges were then workshopped with the Councillors, where we explained the legislative and WHS (Workplace Health and Safety) requirements for waste handling, as well as a broader explanation of Queensland's Waste Reduction targets.
- We also discussed the costs associated with managing each waste stream, the cost to the Council, fees charged by surrounding Councils, and the current fees charged by Cook Shire Council.
- As a result of these discussions, the Councillors approved an increase in fees across all waste streams, including the introduction of a green waste disposal fee and a fee for mulch. For instance,
 - Disposal of concrete increased from \$0 to \$172 (domestic) and \$208 (commercial), with a commitment to achieve full cost recovery by 2027/2028.
 - Disposal fee for green waste increased from \$0 to \$10 per cubic metre.
 - Disposal fees were also introduced for all commercial waste streams, including regulated wastes and recycling.
- The aim of these changes is to encourage individuals and businesses to take responsibility for their waste, promote sorting and recycling, and support the establishment of local businesses for processing concrete and/or green waste.

ENHANCED KERBSIDE RECYCLING – THROUGH EXPANDING THE REACH FOR CONTAINERS FOR CHANGE

Mareeba Shire Council (as shared by Liam Bradford, Water & Waste Technical Officer)

- One of the main issues Council experiences is the challenge of rolling out Container for Change collection points to many rural properties that are located at long distance away from existing collection sites. This is a problem we are working with COEX to find a solution.
- The volume of recyclables collected is slowly increased as collection points are introduced nearer to their properties and residents become aware of the services.
- The second issue Council faces is that of occasionally getting contamination at the Container for Change collection point. As the residents deposit their containers by scanning their contact details, staff from COEX

is able to reach out to the people when they find contamination and educate them. This approach by COEX is reducing contamination in the recyclables.

7. COLLABORATIVE PROBLEM-SOLVING

- Croydon Shire Council has indicated experiencing problem diverting E-Waste from going to landfill as they no longer send their waste to facilities at Cairns Regional Council.
- This is the information I was able to find from doing some desktop research.
 - From Planet Ark website, I got a list of 17 businesses that offer pick up service for E-waste. Searching for Croydon Shire as the location for which the service is required yielded the locations shown on the link [Recycling Electrical Appliances in the Croydon Shire Council area - Planet Ark Recycling Near You](#)
 - From [B-Cycle website](#), you will be able to see 128 results for businesses (between 280 to 500 km) which act as drop-off points for Batteries [Find a B-cycle Drop off point - B-cycle](#)
- Requesting other member councils to share any information they may have for Croydon