

FNQ Regional Water Alliance

Minutes

Meeting No	43
Meeting Name	FNQ Regional Water Alliance
Date	15 August 2025
Time	11:00am
Venue	Committee Room, Level 3, Cairns Regional Council, Spence Street, Cairns

1. ATTENDANCE

Name	Organisation
Josh Smith	Cairns Regional Council
Dean Davis	Cassowary Coast Regional Council
Simon Page	Cassowary Coast Regional Council
Kerryn Bull	Cassowary Coast Regional Council
Jacquie Creswell <i>via teleconference</i>	Croydon Shire Council
Ben Baillie	Douglas Shire Council
Daniel Gatto <i>via teleconference</i>	Hinchinbrook Shire Council
Aditya Mishra	Mareeba Shire Council
Jennifer Hartwig	LGAQ
David Wiskar <i>via teleconference</i>	Queensland Water
Lee-Anne Willis <i>via teleconference</i>	Water Industry Worker
Giovannella Carini <i>via teleconference</i>	RDMW
Amanda Hancock	FNQROC

2. APOLOGIES

Name	Organisation
Adam Schmalz	Carins Regional Council
Mark Wuth	Cairns Regional Council
Toni Veronese	Cairns Regional Council
Shane Bandiera	Cassowary Coast Regional Council
Robyn Maddalena	Cook Shire Council
Peter White	Douglas Shire Council
Raju Ranjit	Etheridge Shire Council
Mark Lawson	Hope Vale Aboriginal Shire Council
Morris Hamill	Mareeba Shire Council

Charles Dyer	Tablelands Regional Council
Mark Vis	Tablelands Regional Council
Kiley Hounslow	Wujal Wujal Aboriginal Shire Council
Sam Bann	Yarrabah Aboriginal Shire Council
Ingrid Formiattl Minnesma	RDMW
Richard Kidston	RDMW
Brett Rip	RDMW
Christopher Land	QLD Health
Brad Milligan	QLD Health

3. CONFIRMATION OF PREVIOUS MINUTES

Minutes noted and accepted.

4. ACTIONS FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES

Action Item	Action	Responsible Person(s)	Status
41.1	Charles, TRC to share learnings of upcoming visit from dog leak detection service.	Charles Dyer, TRC	Outstanding
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	Nomination so far from CSC – See Item 6.2
42.2	Councils to notify Amanda if they wish to nominate a representative to participate in the Trade Waste Uplift Project (TWIG).	All councils	Nominations so far from CRC, CCRC, CSC & TRC
<p>Ben Baillie advised that they have recently welcomed Sabrina McCormack to the role of Plumbing and Trade Waste Officer, and she will be participating in the TWIG. Dan to provide Amanda with Sabrina's details to share with Col Hester, TWIG Project Manager.</p> <p>Amanda advised that she had recently met with Paul Bates, Cairns Regional Council to discuss the intended outcomes of the TWIG.</p>			
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	Nomination so far from CSC – See Item 6.2
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	Outstanding

5. SWIMS, DAVID SCHELTINGA, QLD WATER

David kindly provided an overview of the functionality of SWIM Local as it had recently been identified that not everyone is aware of all the functions available, with several additional functions recently added.

- It was agreed that SWIM Local is an extremely valued tool, with the only barrier to full implementation and use across councils being the time required to set it up.
- David advised that most councils could set up within a week and once set up the system will run automatically.
- David runs 2-day workshops in Brisbane or alternatively is happy to attend councils to assist with full set up with charges only on a cost recovery basis.

ACTION ITEM 43.1 David S to notify Amanda which councils are currently using SWIMS Local.

Jacqui Creswell departed the meeting at 12:06pm.

6. QWRAP – 2024-25 FINAL REPORT & 2025-26 FUNDING APPLICATION

Amanda shared details of 2024-25 final report and 2025-26 funding applications which were endorsed for submission by the Water Alliance.

ACTION ITEM 43.2 Amanda to submit the 2024-25 QWRAP Final report and 2025-26 Funding Application to LGAQ.

7. REGIONAL WATER CAPABILITY PLAN – AMANDA HANCOCK, FNQROC

6.1 Strategic Initiatives – FNQROC Board Recommendation Asset Criticality Assessment

- At the 5 June FNQROC Board meeting, Darlene provided an overview of the previous board discussions regarding water advocacy.
- The FNQROC Board then resolved that FNQROC continue with implementing the recently adopted FNQ Regional Water Capability Plan.
- The Board also directed the Water Alliance to provide their recommendations on progressing an Asset Criticality Assessment.

6.2 Asset Criticality Assessment

- Amanda provided a brief overview of the *FNQROC 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)
- The primary objective was to establish a ten-year capital program to assess the risk probability of assets.
- 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.
- At the recent FNQROC State Delegation, the Honourable Ann Leahy MP, Minister for local Government and Water raised this project and asked if FNQROC would be doing something similar. The Minister acknowledged that the cost was somewhat prohibitive, and 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 so far.
- Councils generally have a good level of information available on their assets above ground, the situation is less certain for underground assets.
- Ben at Douglas Shire Council advised that they have recently engaged Brightly to assist with their infrastructure asset management and would be happy to ask them to provide an overview of their work at the next meeting.
- It would also be beneficial if George Bourne & Associates who undertook the SWQROC project could also be invited to present an overview of the project at the next Water Alliance meeting.
- David Wisker advised that the Department of Local Government, Water and Volunteering has just established a Local Government Depreciation Taskforce to identify the challenges for councils in managing depreciation, present opportunities to reduce the impacts of depreciation on councils' sustainability and enhance stakeholder awareness of the implications of depreciation on investment decisions.
- Josh suggested the TOTEX benchmarking study being undertaken by Cairns Regional Council WSAA may also be of relevance.
- Following presentations, the Water Alliance will discuss and agree recommendations to the FNQROC Board regarding proposed approach.
- Amanda to provide a verbal update to the FNQROC Board at the next meeting.

Action item 43.3 Ben to invite Brightly to present an overview of their work on Asset Management with Douglas Shire Council

Action Item 43.4 Amanda to invite George Bourne & Associates to provide an overview of their work with SWQROC on Asset Criticality.

Action Item 43.5 David W to provide details of the Local Government Depreciation Taskforce.

Action Item 43.6 Josh to provide details of the TOTEX Benchmarking Study being conducted by Cairns Regional Council and WSAA.

Southwest Queensland Water and Sewerage Alliance Asset Criticality Report and Emergency Water Supply Cost Analysis Report circulated with the minutes.

6.3 Operations Initiatives

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

Initiative 4 – Standardised water and wastewater asset design and specifications

- Amanda advised that to date only one council has nominated a representative to participate in the above projects.
- The representative does not need to be a member of the Water Alliance.
- Councils are encouraged to nominate suitable council officers that would benefit from what will be a good opportunity for networking and professional development.
- FNQROC will facilitate the development of suitable Terms of Reference for the committee(s) to be agreed and provided to the Water Alliance for endorsement.

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

Amanda advised that she had recently attended a further Trade Waste Uplift Group (TWIG) meeting and recently met with Paul Bates from Cairns Regional Council who is keen to support the project and is happy to share Cairns Regional Council's Trade Waste Agreement.

Paul Bates, Cairns Regional Council and Alayne Stein, Tablelands Regional Council also attended this meeting.

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

- Amanda advised that she will be progressing this initiative.
- A sub-committee is to ideally be established made up of councils HR/IR and L&D representatives to progress the various actions
- Lots of work already happening in this space so important to reach out to relevant stakeholders in State and Local Government and industry such as Buildskills Australia, Jobs Queensland, Qld Water, WSAA etc.
- Terms of Reference to be agreed and provided to the Water Alliance for endorsement.

7 REGIONAL JOINT PURCHASING – AMANDA HANCOCK, FNQROC

7.1 Regional Collection & Beneficial Reuse of Biosolids – CRC, CCRC, CSC, DSC, MSC & TRC

- The current contract with Arkwood will expire on 30 September 2025 with no further extension options available.
- Councils are in the process of seeking council approval of the new contracts with Arkwood.
- Amanda will circulate a draft contract for approval which will be based on the existing contract with the inclusion of new rates.

7.2 Regional Leak Detection Arrangement – CCRC, MSC & ESC

- Still waiting for funding to be approved.
- Simon Page mentioned that there could be an opportunity to incorporate Flow Detection ahead of the Leak Detection program.

ACTION ITEM 43.7 Simon to provide further details of proposed Flow Monitoring to potentially take place ahead of Leak Detection program.

7.3 Regional Sewer Relining – CRC, CCRC & TRC

- Councils are in the process of seeking council approval of the new contracts
- Works to commence in September 2025

7.4 Regional Supply & Delivery of Water Chemicals – All except HVASC & WWASC

- Current contracts ongoing

8 QLD WATER UPDATE – DAVID WISKAR, QLD WATER

David Wiskar, Qld Water provided an overview of the recently released 2024 Urban Water Industry Workforce Snapshot Report which can be accessed [here](#).

Noting this was David's last meeting before he leaves QLD Water to take up a position with Barcoo Shire Council as Chief Executive Officer, Amanda thanked David for his tireless work supporting the regions and the urban water sector during his time at QLD Water. His constant support has been very much valued and appreciated by the FNQROC and FNQ Water Alliance.

9 QWRAP/LGAQ – JENNIFER HARTWIG, LGAQ

Jennifer Hartwig, Project Manager, QWRAP, provided an update.

Copy of LGAQ update presentation circulated with the minutes,

10 WATER INDUSTRY WORKER – LEE-ANNE WILLIS, WIW

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

- WIW Program – LDPC Role
 - QWRAP Partner Steering Committee has approved the WIMWA Bid Pool funding for the Program to continue with the LDPC role to coordinate until 30th June 2025.
 - Mackay Council is in process of extending Lee-Anne's contract to coincide with the end of the funding.
- Funding for NWP Qualifications
 - DTET (Department Trade, Employment and Training) has released a new Subsidised Training Program. User Choice has now completed and moved to the new model Career Start.
 - The funding for Cert III in WIO is currently \$8,020.00. Lee-Anne is waiting on more information to be released on the new funding model.
- Cert III in Water Industry Operations – Network
 - Lee-Anne has found some discrepancies in the proposal issued by Trillity and has requested they resubmit to address the issues.
- Cert III in Water Industry Operations – Treatment
 - Majority have advised that EnviroCheck would be the preferred RTO to deliver this training.
 - Due to a change in numbers, and Councils involved, Lee-Anne will require participant numbers from Councils. If organised this month, there is potential to start the training in October.
- Cert IV in Water Industry Operations
 - After having meetings with Trillity, Lee-Anne is currently waiting on a quotation for this.
- Micro Credential Training - EOI
 - Practical Implications for DWQMP - 12
 - Making use Water Data - 9
 - SCADA - 11
 - Numbers are currently below the numbers required. Other options are being investigated.
 - <https://forms.office.com/r/ZdgQmu84fa> EOI Micro Credentials for those that would like to express interest.

- Procurement Policy
 - Would councils like the RFQs to go through Local Buy.
 - RFQ was decided to be preferred option.

11 RDMW – GIOVANNI CARINI, WATER SUPPLY REGULATION, DLGW&V

Ingrid Formiatti Minnesma, Executive Director, Northern Region Water Resource Management, was unfortunately unable to attend the meeting but circulated an update to be circulated with the minutes.

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

Giovanni Carini provided an update on the key regulatory dates for councils to be aware of.

Copy of email from Giovanni Carini, Senior Regulatory Officer, Water Supply Regulation with key regulation dates circulated with the minutes.

12 GENERAL BUSINESS

- Contact list for current Water Alliance members to be circulated.
- Interest in Water Alliance meetings next year taking place at different councils, alternating with Cairns perhaps with the opportunity to incorporate site visits.
- Shane, CCRC
 - DWQMP Micro-Credential Training – EOI for regional delivery – nominations to Sarah Hemry, QLD Water
- Product information received, councils to request further information from Amanda is required from:
 - MASS Products Safer Access Covers
 - TRILITY Networks - Pipeline Testing & Disinfection

ACTION POINT 43.8 Amanda to circulate contact list for the FNQ Water Alliance.

13 UPCOMING EVENTS

- QWRAP Chair & Coordinators Meeting – 19 August, Eagle Farm
- QLD Water Annual Forum - 20/21 August, Eagle Farm, Brisbane
- WIOA 2025 Queensland Water Industry Operations Conference and Exhibition, 29 & 30 October, Bundaberg
- WIOA FNQ Water Interest Day – Friday 14 November – Shane keen for this local event to be supported!
- AWA QWater '25, Gold Coast

14 NEXT MEETING

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 2:30pm

Minutes prepared by Amanda Hancock, Regional Strategic Infrastructure Coordinator

AGREED ACTION ITEMS OVERLEAF

ACTION ITEMS

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43.2	Amanda to submit the 2024-25 QWRAP Final report and 2025-26 Funding Application to LGAQ.	Amanda Hancock, FNQROC
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43.4	Amanda to invite George Bourne & Associates to provide an overview of their work with SWQROC on Asset Criticality.	Amanda Hancock, FNQROC
43.5	David W to provide details of the Local Government Depreciation Taskforce.	David Wiskar. QLD Water
43.6	Josh to provide details of the TOTEX Benchmarking Study being conducted by Cairns Regional Council and WSAA.	Josh Smith, CRC
43.7	Simon to provide further details of proposed Flow Monitoring to potentially take place ahead of Leak Detection program.	Simon Page, CCRC
43.8	Amanda to circulate contact list for the Water Alliance	Amanda Hancock, FNQROC