



**BOARD MEETING
OF
FNQ Regional Organisation of Councils (FNQROC)
No. 174th**

**Thursday 2 October 2025,
at conclusion of AGM to 4.00pm**

Tablelands Regional Council

Microsoft Teams meeting

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Agenda

1. WELCOME & ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF TRADITIONAL OWNERS

2. APOLOGIES

Mayor Bruce Gibson Hope Vale Aboriginal Shire Council
Mayor Alister Gibson Wujal Wujal Aboriginal Shire Council

3. PRESENTATIONS

3.1 Discussion with Senator Susan McDonald

3.2 QRA, Regional Reconstruction

3.2.1 Major General (Retd) Jake Ellwood Chief Executive Officer and Andrew Abbott General Manager, Queensland Reconstruction Authority.

(25m)

3.3 Discussion with Shannon Fentiman – Shadow Treasurer, Shadow Minister for Women

3.4 Lucy Green LGAQ, Lead Intergovernmental Relations (LGAQ)

3.4.1 LGAQ will provide an overview of LGAQ's recent activities as per the Briefing Note circulate prior to the meeting.

(10m)

4. CONFIRMATION OF PREVIOUS MINUTES

4.1 Confirmation of Minutes of the 173rd Far North Qld Regional Organisation of Councils (FNQROC) Board meeting held on 7 August 2025

Pages 001 to 014

Recommendation:

That the FNQROC Board moves the minutes of the 173rd FNQROC Board meeting held on Thursday 7 August 2025 to be confirmed and adopted.

5. BUSINESS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

5.1 Action items from 7 August 2025 FNQROC Board Meeting

Meeting	Action	Responsible person
3220 (Dec 2024)	FNQROC CEO to look further at investing FNQROC savings with QTC	Darlene Irvine, CEO On hold until financial delegation reviewed.
Status:	In progress.	
3223b (Dec 2024)	To enable FNQROC endorsement of the TNQ Economic Development Strategy (TEDS), the CEO is to work with the Economic Development Technical Committee to review and provide recommended amendments to RDA TN. Once completed to the satisfaction of the Technical Committee the FNQROC Board will review and endorse. Comments provided to RDA TN 4 June 2025 – awaiting response from RDA TN	Darlene Irvine, CEO and RDA TN
Status:		
3238a (June 2025)	FNQROC CEO to identify what the CSO is for Etheridge and other councils in the region	Darlene Irvine, CEO
Status:	FNQROC CEO to provide update	
3238b (June 2025)	FNQROC CEO to request from Ergon the programmed rollout to switch streetlight to LED by 30 June 2030. Maria Anselmo to follow up with Ergon as to timeframes for individual areas.	Maria Anselmo, Climate Resilience Coordinator
Status:	At this stage, Ergon does not have confirmed program dates. However, based on data analysis of the previous 3-year Bulk Light Replacement Program, predicted rollout dates are provided alongside the agenda.	
3238c (June 2025)	FNQROC CEO to bring forward a recommendation to the FNQROC Board on progressing the asset criticality assessment. Held over to the October board meeting.	Darlene Irvine, CEO
Status:	Regional Infrastructure Coordinator to provide update	
3247a:	FNQROC CEO to share recently adopted regional priorities with the FNQ Regional Leadership Network.	Darlene Irvine, CEO
Status:	Completed	

3247b	Mayor Eden to provide Mr James examples of River Improvement Trust costs and the additional cost impediments (cost shifting) to councils.	Mayor Eden
Status:		
3247c	Mr James to provide an update on the OIA reforms	Mr James MP
Status:		
3251a	Mr Graffen to share CCRC AI Guideline policy.	CCRC CEO
Status:	Completed	
3255a:	FNQROC CEO to provide a copy of the draft advocacy brief with the minutes.	Darlene Irvine, CEO
Status:	Completed	
3255b:	FNQROC CEO to seek a copy of the tax zone rebate/offset incentive advocacy brief from Advance Cairns or Gulf Savannah Development to share with the Board.	Darlene Irvine, CEO
Status:	Completed	
3255c	When the State and Federal sitting dates have been published for 2026, calendar invites are to be sent to Mayors ASAP for State delegation first half of 2026 and Federal delegation in August 2026.	Darlene Irvine, CEO
Status:	On hold.	
3258a	Councils to forward their LGAQ motions to FNQROC CEO to be shared with member councils to aide in support for the motion.	All Councils and Darlene Irvine, CEO
Status:	Motions have been received by Cassowary Coast Regional Council and Cairns Regional Council.	
3258b	FNQORC CEO to share booking arrangements for FNQROC Board meeting in Atherton with Mayors and their EAs so that their rooms can be booked.	Darlene Irvine, CEO
Status:	Completed	

6. BOARD REPORTS (WITH NOTICE)

6.1 B115 – Outer Regional and Remote Special Economic Zone

Pages 015 to 024

7. DISCUSSION TOPIC

7.1 Nil

8. FINANCIAL REPORTS

8.1 Financial Report Year to date

9.1.1 Profit & Loss Statement 1 July 2025 – 17 September 2025

9.1.2 Balance Sheet as of 17 September 2025

Pages 025 to 028

Recommendation:

That the FNQROC Board adopts the Profit and Loss and Balance Sheet reports for the period 1 July 2025 to 17 September 2025.

9. Information for the Board

9.1 FNQ Regional Plan Update

9.1.1 CEO to provide a verbal update.

9.2 Incoming / Outgoing Correspondence

9.2.1 Incoming
Nil to report

9.2.2 Outgoing
Nil to report

9.3 CEO Report

To be taken as read - discussion only if clarification is needed or CEO needs to highlight.

Pages 029 to 041

9.2.2 Minutes of FNQROC Advisory Committees: -

- **Regional Mountain Bike Steering Committee #3** – Friday 8 August 2025
Minutes – [available on website](#)
Next Meeting – Friday 17 October 2025
- **FNQ Water Alliance #43** – Friday 15 August 2025
Minutes – [available on website](#)
Next Meeting – Monday 7 November 2025

9.2.3 Minutes of Confidential Meetings

- FNQROC Ferrous and Non-Ferrous Metals and ULABs Contract Meeting
Monday 4 August 2025
Minutes – [available on request](#)
- FNQROC - 25/26 Reseals & Linemarking Meeting #1 (Prestart)
Thursday 14 August 2025
Minutes – [available on request](#)
Next Meeting – 15 October 2025
- FNQROC Regional Supply and Delivery of Liquid Sodium Hypochlorite Contract Review Meeting #4
Friday 15 August 2025
Minutes – [available on request](#)
Next Meeting – TBA
- FNQROC - 25/26 Sewer Relining + Sewer & Manhole Condition Assessment Meeting #1 (Prestart)
Wednesday 10 September 2025
Minutes – [available on request](#)
Next Meeting – 12 November 2025
- FNQROC Regional Procurement Advisory Committee Meeting #47
Friday 19 September 2025
Minutes – [will be available by request](#)
Next Meeting – Friday 28 November 2025

10. GENERAL BUSINESS

10.1 LGAQ ROC Assembly Meeting be-brief

Raised by Mayor Toppin, to provide feedback to the Board.

10.2 Request from Emily Reid, Region Manager, Northern Region. DLG, Water & Volunteers, to attend future FNQROC Board Meeting as an observer.

10.3 Proposed 2026 Board Meeting Dates

Thursday 5 February 2026
Thursday 2 April 2026
Thursday 4 June 2026
Thursday 6 August 2026
Thursday 1 October 2026
Thursday 3 December 2026

Recommendation:

That the FNQROC Board approves the proposed dates for the 2026 FNQROC Board Meetings.

11. MEETING CLOSE AND NEXT MEETING

11.1 Next Meeting

Date & Time Tuesday 2 December 2025 – 10.30am
Venue Cairns Regional Council

Minutes of the 173rd FNQROC Board Meeting

Meeting No	173
Meeting Name	FNQROC Ordinary Board Meeting
Date	7 August 2025
Time	10.00am – 1.20pm
Venue	Cairns Regional Council

REPRESENTATIVES

CHAIR

Cr Barry Hughes, Mayor	Etheridge Shire Council
Cr Bruce Gibson, Mayor	Hope Vale Aboriginal Shire Council
Cr Daryl Sexton, Mayor	Yarrabah Aboriginal Shire Council
Cr Alister Gibson, Mayor	Wujal Wujal Aboriginal Shire Council
Cr Rod Marti, Mayor	Tablelands Regional Council
Cr Trevor Pickering, Mayor	Croydon Shire Council
Cr Lenore Wyatt, Deputy Mayor	Mareeba Shire Council
Cr Lisa Scomazzon, Mayor	Douglas Shire Council
Cr Teresa Millwood, Mayor	Cassowary Coast Regional Council
Cr Amy Eden, Mayor	Cairns Regional Council
Cr Robyn Holmes, Mayor	Cook Shire Council
Cr Ramon Jayo, Mayor (Online)	Hinchinbrook Shire Council

CEO'S

Mr Andrew Graffen, CEO	Cassowary Coast Regional Council
Ms Jacqui Cresswell, CEO (Online)	Croydon Shire Council
Mr Scott Osman, CEO	Douglas Shire Council
Mr Brian Joiner, CEO	Cook Shire Council
Dr Nikola Stepanov, CEO	Tablelands Regional Council
Mr Mark Kelleher, Interim CEO	Yarrabah Aboriginal Shire Council

OBSERVERS

Cr Mary Brown, Deputy Mayor (Online)	Hinchinbrook Shire Council
Ms Lucy Greene	Manager, Intergovernmental Relations LGAQ
Mr Benton Wecker	Lead Intergovernmental Relations LGAQ
Mr Jarrod Cowley-Grimmond	Deputy Director General, Water Resource Management Division, Dept Local Government, Water and Volunteers
Mr Grant Stidiford	Chair, FNQ Regional Leadership Network, DNRM, Manufacturing and Regional and Rural Development
Ms Kitty Mostyn	Department Home Affairs
Ms Leonie Cunningham	Department Home Affairs
Mr Terry James MP	Member for Mulgrave

FNQROC STAFF

Ms Darlene Irvine	Chief Executive Officer
Mr Travis Sydes	Natural Asset Management & Sustainability Coordinator
Ms Amanda Hancock	Regional Strategic Infrastructure Coordinator
Ms Maria Anselmo	Regional Climate Resilience Coordinator
Ms Liz Wakelin	Executive Support Officer
Ms Ieva Pradal	Regional Procurement Coordinator
Ms Bhakti Devi	Regional Waste Management Plan Coordinator

The meeting commenced at 10:02am

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and acknowledged the Traditional Owners of the land on which we met and paid respects to Elders past, present and emerging.

Cr Hughes also welcomed Liz Wakelin, FNQROC Executive Support Officer, to the organisation.

APOLOGIES

Cr Angela Toppin, Mayor	Mareeba Shire Council
Mr Richard Wright, CEO	Yarrabah Aboriginal Shire Council
Mr Peter Franks, CEO	Mareeba Shire Council
Ms Kiley Hanslow, CEO	Wujal Wujal Aboriginal Shire Council

1. Presentation by Grant Stidiford (DESBT) and Chair, FNQ Regional Leadership Network.

Grant Stidiford introduced himself and gave an overview of the FNQ Regional Leadership Network which has replaced the Regional Managers Coordination Network.

(A copy of the presentation will be shared with the Minutes)

Questions from the floor:

- Economic Development is key to sustaining councils and Red Tape Review, where does that fit into this model and how can it alleviate regional and rural councils?
 - Mr Stidiford noted that State is currently focussed on Safety, and that Economic Development will be looked at from a whole of region perspective, requiring a consistent narrative across the region to be identified to take to Brisbane. Mr Stidiford identified housing and access to public infrastructure as the most significant current challenges, with workforce issues—particularly support for councils and broader attraction and retention—being a key concern.
 - It was agreed that further discussion is required around the Red Tape Review. The need for alignment with strategic priorities and elevation of FNQ's voice was noted.

ACTIONS:

3247a: FNQROC CEO to share recently adopted regional priorities with the FNQ Regional Leadership Network.

2. Presentation by Jarrod Cowley-Grimmond, North Region Water Resource Management, Department of Local Government, Water and Volunteers.

Jarrod Cowley-Grimmond gave an overview of:

- The current Governments commitments
- Water Plan Reviews
- Unlocking water project.
- Expressions of interest for unallocated water.
- Purpose of proposed changes is to support farmers through dry periods.

10.32am Mayor Amy Eden joined the meeting.

Questions from the floor:

- Enquiry was made about the meaning of the 10% trigger level on the Barron water plan.
 - Previously there was no level under 50%, once levels were below this you weren't able to access any of your entitlement. Now there is a 10% entitlement access available when it was dry.

- It was raised that there is frustration regarding unallocated supplies in the Gilbert River - 500K unused due to red tape and bureaucracy, which has a detrimental impact on Economic Development.
- Question was made about sleeper licences, and what the government was going to do with these. The Herbert is 100% allocated but this allocation is not being used, which is also hindering economic growth.
 - Mr Cowley-Grimmond highlighted a 'use it or lose it' clause designed to prevent water from being held without use. He also noted that part of the project involves investing in improved measurement systems to better understand and manage sleeper licences.

(A copy of the presentation will be shared with the Minutes)

3. Ms Kitty Mostyn and Ms Leonie Cunningham, Assistant Director Counter Foreign Interference Partnerships, Dept of Home affairs.

Leonie Cunningham presentation highlighted:

- What was foreign interference
- Who was at risk
- Some case studies
- Vectors for Foreign Interference in Local governments:
 - Information
 - People, and
 - Infrastructure
- How to report and how they can help

(A copy of the presentation will be shared with the Minutes)

Questions from the floor:

- It was queried if the incidents described in one of the case studies were verified – Ms Mostyn advised that they are anecdotal only, due to communication challenges, and verification is required.
- In another case study, it was noted that elected officials are permitted to offer personal opinions. Ms Mostyn agreed but also noted the importance of being aware of the risk to Cr's as officials, and the Foreign Arrangements Scheme is to help Cr's understand they may be influenced.
- It was suggested that there was a void in regional and remote areas which needed to be filled i.e. Cape and Torres Islands. Ms Cunningham advised that there is no tidy solution, nothing can be done from a policy or legislative position but agreed that there is a need to fill the void, which would be based on feedback and information shared from the region.
- It was observed that there is a close association/overlap with biosecurity. First national communities are put under pressure as first responders to incursions and

other activities and enquired what consideration is given by the Home Affairs to address this. Ms Cunningham acknowledged the vulnerabilities of the northern Australian coastline and that lack of preparedness, and responsibilities being placed in the hands of first nations communities which needs to be addressed.

- It was noted that Pajinka Lodge was nearly sold to the Chinese, it was suggested that Home Affairs should address Native Title groups, they have a lot of different types of people coming through the Cape and they need to understand.

4. Mr Terry James, Member for Mulgrave representing Minister Leahy

Mr James provided an update on key matters:

- Depreciation review to be announced tomorrow
- Red Tape Reduction - the report is completed and with the Minister – it will be going to cabinet next month, with expected release around October. There are over 1,000 recommendations.
- Review of water plans – review will be carried out prior to the next election.
- River Improvement Trust – funding has been restored, with 10% increase.
- Cook – funding for arts centre approved.
- Residential activation fund – money coming through, await announcement before proceeding. Mr James was advised of the challenges presented of announcing at same time of the budget cycle.
- QRA and betterment funding, councils are encouraged to have their Local Resilience Action Plans up to date.
- ‘Adult crime, adult time’ has seen results.
 - It was commented that parents should be made accountable to ensure their kids were at school. If they are receiving an allowance to take care of their children and they weren’t perhaps this could be considered further.
- Police funding - \$147.9 to bolster QPS new state of the art taser, additional tyre deflation devices etc
- Crime prevention schools – Gold Coast, Townsville, Rockhampton and Ipswich.
- Play On sports vouchers no means testing, One voucher per child 5-17YO.

Mr James advised that he would like to attend FNQROC meetings on an ongoing basis.

- Cr Hughes noted that the Georgetown Police Station is condemned and they are struggling to keep police staff, some of the \$147.9m would help to build new police station in Georgetown as the current position untenable.
- Mr James was asked about the potential for implementation of Castle Law. Mr James noted that it is unlikely to progress.
- Re 50cent fares, there was concern over the financial loss and potential impact on growing public transport in other areas i.e. Mossman to Port Douglas. They have a provider but can’t get a subsidy. It was also noted there was no public transport in Babinda, and you could extend this to Innisfail.

- Mr James was aware of this and will take it back.
- Mayor Millwood – advocate for public transport on Cassowary Coast due to barriers, low social economic area, residents needing to get to medical appts, etc. Mr James agreed more work is needed on public transport in the region.
- Mayor Eden – requested holistic look across the area, including train transport.
- Mayor Eden also noted that the River Improvement Trust currently has 600 projects, and acknowledged the increase but concerns that it may not be sufficient, council was continually funding more, and it was another example of cost shifting.
 - Mr James asked for the details such as costs associated with River trusts and cost shifting to councils.
- Mayor Eden enquired about and update on Office of Independent Assessor (OIA) reforms. Mr James does not have at this point, he will look into and advise.

ACTIONS:

3247b: Mayor Eden to provide Mr James examples of River Improvement Trust costs and the additional cost impediments (cost shifting) to councils.

3247c: Mr James to provide an update on the OIA reforms

5. Presentation from Lucy Greene, Manager Intergovernmental Relations, LGAQ

Lucy Greene gave an overview of the Briefing Note, which was taken as read. She did expand on:

- Quarterly meeting with Minister Leahy – 13 different items discussed. In particular, child safe standards effective 1 Oct. Local government will be impacted by those standards. LGAQ have requested extension for local Government, and templates for implementation measures.
- Cost shifting data to be updated - increased by 178% since last survey. Request for Councils to provide info.

Cr Hughes noted the lack of focus on maintenance projects by the Government and suggested utilising the \$10m currently available in the budget for the Savannah lander line, as it's an important driver of the economy.

The Chair thanked the presenters and asked them to leave, with the exception of Mr Terry James and LGAQ.

3248 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

Cr Eden noted Cr Tickner should be noted as an Observer in the Minutes.

MOVED: Mayor Rod Marti

SECONDED: Mayor Lisa Scomazzon

That the Board:

Moves the minutes of the 172nd FNQROC Board meeting held on Thursday 5 June 2025 to be confirmed and adopted, subject to Cr Tickner being moved from representative to observer.

CARRIED

3249 BUSINESS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES

Action items from 5 June 2025 FNQROC Ordinary Board Meeting

Meeting	Action	Responsible person
3220	FNQROC CEO to look further at investing FNQROC savings with QTC	Darlene Irvine, CEO On hold until financial delegation reviewed.
<p>Status: papers for signing are with Mr Peter Franks and Mayor Toppin after the financial policy was adopted at the last meeting.</p>		
3223b	To enable FNQROC endorsement of the TNQ Economic Development Strategy (TEDS), the CEO is to work with the Economic Development Technical Committee to review and provide recommended amendments to RDA TN. Once completed to the satisfaction of the Technical Committee the FNQROC Board will review and endorse. Comments provided to RDA TN 4 June 2025 – awaiting response from RDA TN	Darlene Irvine, CEO and RDA TN
<p>Status: In progress. After comments were provided RDA TNQ advised it would be including the Innovation Strategy in the Tropical Economic Strategy. This strategy was not included in our original detailed review.</p>		
3235a	QTC advised they will provide further information to answer the following two questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is the impact of reducing Copper String, and With regard to Beef Tariffs, what opportunities are available to enable those in the industry to get on the front foot with other markets? 	QTC
<p>Status: Completed emails sent to councils</p>		

Meeting	Action	Responsible person
3238a	FNQROC CEO to identify what the CSO is for Etheridge and other councils in the region	FNQROC CEO
Status: Waiting on response from QTC		
3238b	FNQROC CEO to request from Ergon the programmed rollout to switch streetlight to LED by 30 June 2030.	FNQROC CEO
Status: Completion date Q3 2028. Maria Anselmo to follow up with Ergon as to timeframes for individual areas as part of Ergons maintenance program. Darlene Irvine noted pay issues, government increased minimum pay amounts for Ergon works, causing pay complexities for organisations working for both Ergon and councils.		
3238c	FNQROC CEO to bring forward a recommendation to the FNQROC Board on progressing the asset criticality assessment.	FNQROC CEO
Status: To be held over to the October board meeting – the technical committee hasn't met, the next meeting is due 15 th August 2025.		
3238d	The FNQROC CEO to finalise the FNQROC Strategic Priorities ready for publication.	FNQROC CEO
Status: Completed link to website can be found here		
3245a:	The impact of the Universal Principle and Child Safety Standards on councils and the resource required be referred to LGAQ and the Policy Executive.	LGAQ / Policy Executive
Status: Completed Issue raised and being escalated by LGAQ		
3245b	FNQROC CEO to send out updated calendar invites for the December Board meeting and Christmas Dinner	FNQROC CEO
Status: Completed		

3250 BOARD REPORTS

Nil

NOTED

3251 NEW/UPDATED POLICIES

1. New – Use of Generative Artificial intelligence

Policy withdrawn – to be used as in internal guideline under administrative procedures.

ACTION:

3251a: Mr Graffen to share CCRC AI Guideline policy.

2. Reviewed – Policy No. 9 Issuing of Letters of Support

MOVED: Mayor Robyn Holmes

SECONDED: Mayor Lenore Wyatt

That the Board *endorses amended Policy No. 9 FNQROC Letters of Support with an amendment to the 'All other' process response time being amended from 3 working days to 7 working days*

CARRIED

3. Reviewed – Policy No. 8 - FNQROC Advocacy

MOVED: Mayor Trevor Pickering

SECONDED: Mayor Darryl Sexton

That the Board *endorses the FNQROC Policy No. 8 – FNQROC Advocacy*

CARRIED

3253 DISCUSSION TOPIC

Nil

NOTED

3254 FINANCIAL REPORTS

1. Financial Report Year to date

- 1.1 Profit & Loss Statement 1 July 2024 – 30 June 2025
- 1.2 Balance Sheet as of 30 June 2025
- 1.3 Profit and Loss Statement – 1 July 2025 – 29 July 2025
- 1.4 Balance Sheet as at 29 July 2025

MOVED: Mayor Rod Marti

SECONDED: Mayor Trevor Pickering

That the Board:

1. *Adopts the unaudited Profit & Loss and Balance Sheet 1 July 2024 – 30 June 2025*
2. *Adopts the Profit & Loss and Balance Sheet – 1 July 2025 – 29 July 2025*

CARRIED

3255 INFORMATION FOR THE BOARD

1. CEO Report (New)

FNQROC CEO gave an update on the new CEO report. She acknowledged it was long but wanted to ensure the Mayors, particularly the new ones were kept abreast of the topics we work on between meetings. It will be taken as read with discussion only if clarification is needed or CEO needs to highlight any issues.

MOVED: Mayor Barry Hughes

SECONDED: Mayor Lisa Scomazzon

That the Board receives the CEOs Report

CARRIED

2. Draft Federal Advocacy Brief

FNQROC CEO presented the draft outline for the Federal Delegation for feedback.

12.46pm Mayor Jamo left the meeting.

- Recommendation to focus on specific individual stories, for authenticity of issues raised.
- Proposed higher tax zone rebate to entice people to relocate to the region.

RESOLVED:

That for the 2026 delegations:

- a. *State delegation to occur in the first half of 2026, and*
- b. *Federal delegation to occur in August 2026.*

1.10pm Cr Wyatt left the meeting.

ACTION

3255a: FNQROC CEO to provide a copy of the draft advocacy brief with the minutes.

3255b: FNQROC CEO to seek a copy of the tax zone rebate/offset incentive advocacy brief from Advance Cairns or Gulf Savannah Development to share with the Board.

3255c: When the State and Federal sitting dates have been published for 2026, calendar invites are to be sent to Mayors ASAP for State delegation first half of 2026 and Federal delegation in August 2026.

3256 INCOMING/OUTGOING CORRESPONDENCE

1. Incoming

Nil

NOTED

2. Outgoing

Nil

NOTED

3257 TECHNICAL COMMITTEE MEETINGS

1. Minutes of FNQROC Advisory Committees: -

- **FNQ Regional Roads and Transport Committee #140** – 25th July 2025
Minutes – *available on website*
Next Meeting – 19 September 2025

NOTED

- **Natural Asset Management Technical Committee # 63-** 25 July 2025
Minutes – *available on website*
Next Meeting – 31 October 2025

NOTED

- **FNQROC Climate Resilience Technical Committee #9** – 1 August 2025
Minutes – *will be available on website*

NOTED

2. Minutes of Confidential Meetings

- FNQROC Regional Procurement Technical Committee #46 – 13 June 2025
Minutes – *available upon request*

NOTED

3258 GENERAL BUSINESS

LGAQ Motions

Mayor Millwood noted motions that CCRC are taking to the LGAQ – to be shared with the group.

ACTION:

3258a Councils to forward their LGAQ motions to FNQROC CEO to be shared with member councils to aid in support for the motion.

October FNQROC Board meeting in Atherton

Mayor Marti shared next meeting logistics:

- Arrive Wednesday (1 October) afternoon, dinner in the evening.
- Thursday (2 October) morning tour, FNQROC board meeting at lunchtime.

ACTION:

3258b: FNQROC CEO to share booking arrangements for FNQROC Board meeting in Atherton with Mayors and their EAs so that their rooms can be booked.

3259 NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on Thursday 2nd October 2025, at Tablelands Regional Council.

There being no further business the Chair declared the meeting closed at 1.20pm.

.....
Cr Barry Hughes
FNQROC Deputy Chair

ATTACHMENT 1

Actions from Board Meeting held on 7 August 2025

Meeting	Action	Responsible person
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3255b:	FNQROC CEO to seek a copy of the tax zone rebate/offset incentive advocacy brief from Advance Cairns or Gulf Savannah Development to share with the Board.	Darlene Irvine, CEO

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3258b	FNQORC CEO to share booking arrangements for FNQROC Board meeting in Atherton with Mayors and their EAs so that their rooms can be booked.	Darlene Irvine, CEO

Unconfirmed



FNQROC BOARD MEETING

2 OCTOBER 2025

B115

OUTER REGIONAL AND REMOTE SPECIAL ECONOMIC ZONE

Darlene Irvine #7739312

Recommendation:

It is recommended that:

1. Endorse the Outer Regional and Remote Special Economic Zone concept and commence discussions on the potential of the policy, with the attached policy brief to be treated as a working document during engagement with other regions, State and Federal Government representatives and member councils.
2. Delegate authority to the FNQROC CEO to make minor edits and additions to the suite of options, with any major changes to the policy to be brought back to the Board for consideration.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Following a request by the FNQROC Board at meeting number 173 on 7 August 2025, action item 3255Bc, *“FNQROC CEO to seek a copy of the tax zone rebate/offset incentive advocacy brief from Advance Cairns or Gulf Savannah Development to share with the board”*.

On investigation, there wasn't an advocacy brief written. Based on conversations over the years, and with the added support of Advance Cairns and Gulf Savannah Development, the FNQROC CEO drafted a potential advocacy policy with the objective of:

Establishing an Outer Regional and Remote Special Economic Zone (ORR SEZ) to revitalise outer regional, remote and very remote Australia by addressing structural disadvantages in services, infrastructure, and employment. The ORR SEZ would attract and retain population through a comprehensive package of incentives i.e. financial, professional, lifestyle, and infrastructure, encouraging individuals, families and businesses to relocate, invest and grow in the regions.

With the upcoming Olympic Games 2032 and continual improvements in liveability in the metropolitan areas, the regions are at real risk of losing skilled individuals to these areas. Tailored incentives can reduce growth pressures on metropolitan areas, strengthening local communities, and improving council sustainability, the ORR SEZ would enhance liveability, deliver much needed skills to rural and remote Australia and boost both State and National productivity.

FNQROC currently has not formalised policy position on this advocacy policy.

COMMENT:

This initial draft document is still a work in progress with significant input from Gulf Savannah Development CEO and commentary from Advance Cairns CEO. It should be noted that no further action has been taken by these organisations while they await the FNQROC Boards deliberations.

This draft document was shared with the FNQROC Board 26 August 2025 for comments with favourable responses.

Based on early indications, it is envisaged that this policy could gain significant support across a number of Queensland councils, it may cause some debate with those considered Inner Regional wanting to be included, for example Toowoomba, Rockhampton, Gladstone and Mackay, who are identified as Inner Regional and currently do not attract the zonal tax offset either.

Note: The remoteness structure defines Remoteness Areas and these divide Australia into five classes of remoteness based on a measure of relative access to services. No major changes are proposed to the Remoteness structure for ASGS Edition 4 which will continue to be designed in the same way as previous additions of the ASGS. A review of the Remoteness Structure has been proposed for ASGS Edition 5(2031)¹

RECOMMENDATION OPTIONS:

Option 1: (Recommended)

That the FNQROC Board:

1. Endorse the Outer Regional and Remote Special Economic Zone concept and commence discussions on the potential of the policy, with the attached policy brief to be treated as a working document during engagement with other regions, State and Federal Government representatives and member councils.
2. Delegate authority to the FNQROC CEO to make minor edits and additions to the suite of options, with any major changes to the policy to be brought back to the Board for consideration.

Option 2:

That the FNQROC Board does not support the “Our Regional and Remote Special Economic Zone” draft policy.

CONSIDERATIONS:

Risk Management:

Risk will be managed throughout the process.

Current potential risks include:

- dissent from those council areas not included i.e. those classed as Inner Regional.
- Complexity in Adminstrating the suite of incentive packages

¹ <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/research/outcomes-review-australian-statistical-geography-standard-asgs>

- Managing large industries who may be geographically captured but won't contribute to the broad community needs.

FNQROC

Finance

There is no direct financial impact of this draft policy to FNQROC.

Statutory

The draft policy is in line with the local government principles within the *Local Government Act 2009*, particularly 2c "democratic representation"

FNQROC Strategic Priorities

Linked to Strengthening Liveability and Social Infrastructure in FNQ

Conclusion

It has been discussed for over 10 years that the value of current offsets no longer achieves their initial intention of offsetting the costs of living in the region and encouraging populations to move or remain in the region. As a minimum, tax rebates/offsets as a base for these regions needs a significant review.

Beyond taxation measures, if supported by State and Federal Governments this broad suite of incentives could encourage the establishment of new enterprises, the expansion of existing businesses, and the creation of vibrant, resilient regional economies.

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment 1 – (#771050) What an Outer Regional and Remote Special Economic Zone (ORR-SEZ) could look like.

Darlene Irvine
Chief Executive Officer

What an Outer Regional and Remote - Special Economic Zone (ORR – SEZ) could look like

Objective

Establish an Outer Regional and Remote Special Economic Zone (ORR SEZ) to revitalise outer regional, remote and very remote Australia by addressing structural disadvantages in services, infrastructure, and employment. The ORR SEZ would attract and retain population through a comprehensive package of incentives i.e. financial, professional, lifestyle, and infrastructure, encouraging individuals, families and businesses to relocate, invest and grow in the regions.

With the upcoming Olympic Games 2032 and continual improvements in liveability in the metropolitan areas, the regions are at real risk of losing skilled individuals to these areas. Tailored incentives can reduce growth pressures on metropolitan areas, strengthening local communities, and improving council sustainability, the ORR SEZ would enhance liveability, deliver much needed skills to rural and remote Australia and boost both State and National productivity.

As a minimum, tax rebates/offsets as a base for these regions needs a significant review. The value of current offsets no longer achieves their initial intention of offsetting the costs of living in the region and encouraging populations to move or remain in the region.

Beyond taxation measures, this broad suite of incentives would support the establishment of new enterprises, the expansion of existing businesses, and the creation of vibrant, resilient regional economies.

Policy imperatives

Demographic Renewal

- Reducing workforce, loss of services and reduced community liveability
- Young people leaving for education/employment and not returning
- Reliance on fly/drive in/fly/drive out workforce/services

Service Equity and Community Wellbeing

- Limited services such as policing, healthcare, education, childcare and aged care.
- High rates of suicide² and mental health issues

² Compared with major cities and inner regional areas. In Queensland in 2023. 18.5% of persons died by suicide in outer regional areas, remote areas and very remote areas, however a much smaller percentage of Queensland's population lives in those regions compared with major cities and inner regional areas.

- Higher rates of chronic disease and reduced life expectancy in remote areas

Infrastructure Foundations

- Limited road, rail and air connectivity raises costs and reduces accessibility
- Unreliable and expensive connectivity limiting education, health and business opportunities
- Lack of affordable, quality housing constrains population growth and workforce attraction
- Inadequate health, education and community facilities

Economic and Structural Barriers

- Low return on investment (ROI) deterring private sector participation
- High logistics costs, freight and supply chain inefficiencies undermine competitiveness
- Environmental and planning approvals create delays and uncertainty
- Over reliance on a narrow set of industries and resource extraction
- Most raw products leave regions unprocessed, missing higher value opportunities

Strategic and National Imperatives

- Food, energy and medical supply chain risk
- Underutilisation of inland/northern regions
- Increasing need for resilient infrastructure and adaptive economies in the face of climate and disaster vulnerability
- Significant opportunity to support Traditional Owners in leading economic development.

Benefits

Economic

- Boost regional and remote economies by stimulating private sector investment and supporting local circular economies
- Attract and retain skilled migrants, professionals, and remote workers to grow the population and expand service delivery
- Encourage regional manufacturing and industry development
- Diversify regional economies by supporting new industries such as renewable energy, critical minerals advanced agriculture, defence supply chains and digital services.

- Enhance export competitiveness and position regions for Asian and Indo-Pacific trade, export and manufacturing opportunities.

Social and Community Benefits

- Increase regional and remote populations, reducing growth pressures on metropolitan areas
- Improve liveability through investment in housing, infrastructure, digital connectivity and essential services
- Facilitate Indigenous economic participation and partnerships, creating new opportunities for cultural, social and financial prosperity
- Retain young people and families in the regions by providing greater education, employment and lifestyle opportunities
- Strengthen local councils and community sustainability through a broader ratepayer base and expanded workforce.

National Interests and Strategic Benefits

- Strengthen Australia's resilience by enhancing food security, energy security and supply chain reliability
- Support more efficient and sustainable government service delivery through stronger regional hubs
- Reduce economic and infrastructure pressure on high growth metropolitan areas
- Build resilience in the face of climate, disaster and geopolitical risks
- Position Northern and Inland Australia as a strategic contributor to national security and Indo-Pacific resilience.

Geography

The Inland Development Belt is essentially those areas defined as Outer regional Australia, Remote Australia and Very Remote Australia within the mapped Remoteness Area (RA)³. Under the Australian Statistical Geography Standard (ASGS) within the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

Industries in scope

- Government services
- Mining and resources
- Transport and logistics
- Agriculture

³ <https://maps.abs.gov.au/index.html>

- Community services
- Indigenous economic development
- Healthcare
- Education & training
- Critical minerals
- Advanced manufacturing
- Agri-food
- Bio futures/fuels
- Marine & aviation maintenance, repair and overhaul (MRO)
- Tourism & events
- Defence
- Renewables & transmission

Platter of Packages

The following suite of incentives could be tailored to the specific needs of each area and applied on a sliding scale according to remoteness, as defined by the Australian Statistical Geography Standard (ASGS).

		State Responsibility	Federal Responsibility
Family-Centred Incentives			
Relocation	Relocation + retention bundle (for households), eg \$8–12k relocation grant	✓	✓
Childcare subsidy	An extra 15–25% gap subsidy for approved services for first 24 months in ORR SEZ post codes		✓
Childcare capacity	Capital grants to add places in undersupplied towns, and incentives for extended hours to match shift work	✓ (and local government)	
Refundable tax offset	Capped at \$1,500 per child per annum for approved educational costs		✓
Travel	Travel and accommodation support for remote boarding if it is required	✓	
Vehicle	Car registration discount	✓	
Personal tax	Personal tax incentive, e.g. increased remote area offset/allowance		✓
Professional Attraction and Retention			
HECS-HELP	write-off of 10% of HECS-HELP debt per year of service in priority roles		✓

		State Responsibility	Federal Responsibility
	(health, teaching, engineering, planning etc)		
Salary loading	Regional salary loading guidance for state and federal funded roles	✓	✓
Zone Tax Rebate/offset	Zone Tax Rebate/offset Redesign could be replaced with a Zone Living Allowance Rebate. Could be \$5,000+ per adult, \$2,500+ per child, tailored specially for ORR SEZ areas		✓
Residential taxes/utilities	Offset/rebate for rent, mortgage interest or housing costs in approved ORR SEZ postcodes with an annual cap (e.g. \$7,500)	✓	✓
Fringe Benefits Tax	Partial FBT exemption on employer-provided relocation assistance, housing allowances, flights, vehicles, childcare, and flights for ORR SEZ employees. Could be capped at \$25,000 per employee per year		✓
Cost-of-living Relief			
Air travel	Airfare fair-go: capped resident fares on designated regional air routes	✓	
Development charges relief	Targeted headworks rebates for workforce housing and childcare built by employers/consortia	✓	
Housing and Liveability			
Transfer duty	Transfer duty concession for home buyers and build-to-rent projects delivering key-worker housing in ORR SEZ postcodes. Given the high build and logistics costs in very remote regions, full exemption given on transfer duty up to \$600K with scaled concession beyond \$600K up to \$800K (based on incremental brackets)	✓	
Arts and Culture	Incentives for cultural, arts and live music/festivals to extend their tours into ORR SEZ postcodes	✓	✓
Workforce Pipelines (school → TAFE/university → job → upskill)			

		State Responsibility	Federal Responsibility
Placement contracts	Guaranteed placement contracts with TAFE/university & employers: final-year placements convert to job offers (with appropriate requirements met), with a retention bonus after 12 months in the role	✓	
VET and apprenticeships	School tech & trades stream: expand VET in schools; paid pre-apprenticeship summer programs	✓	
Workforce			
DAMA	Expand the existing DAMA program to include incentives to move to ORR SEZ postcodes		✓
Qualifications	Harmonise international qualifications/skills across the nation and provide more streamlined transfer of accreditation across a range of fields including engineering, medical and allied health.	✓	✓
Industry Incentives			
Lending	Banks underwritten by Federal Government (i.e. NAIF) so banks may be more prepared to loan to local residents to build/buy a house/business (i.e. lower risk profile of banks so they don't require 70% deposit before approving a loan)		✓
Regulatory approvals	Streamlined approvals for environmental, regulatory and consent requirements	✓	✓
Manufacturing		✓	✓
Payroll Tax		✓	✓
Transport and Logistics		✓	✓
Research and Development	R&D tax offset to stimulate rural innovation	✓	✓
Depreciation	Accelerated depreciation of capital	✓	✓

		State Responsibility	Federal Responsibility
Exports	Subsidy for exports through remote ports/hubs	✓	✓

Profit and Loss

Far North Queensland Regional Organisation of Councils 30241 For the period 1 July 2025 to 17 September 2025

1 JULY-17 SEPT
2025

Trading Income

FNQROC

FNQROC: Annual Contribution	628,092.00
Total FNQROC	628,092.00

Waste and Resource Recovery

Regional Waste Management Plan Funding	40,351.42
Total Waste and Resource Recovery	40,351.42

Regional Climate Resilience

Climate Resilience: Resilience Program	19,940.91
Total Regional Climate Resilience	19,940.91

Natural Assets

Wet Tropics Bio Security Future	37,436.77
Total Natural Assets	37,436.77

Total Trading Income	725,821.10
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Other Income

Interest Income	2,002.28
Total Other Income	2,002.28

Gross Profit	727,823.38
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Operating Expenses

Bank Service Charges	168.61
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FNQROC

FNQROC: Delegations	3,379.74
FNQROC: Mayoral delegations - accommodation, meals, travel expenses	7,646.98
FNQROC: External Meeting Expenses: Registration Fees	1,579.98
FNQROC: External Meeting Expenses: Travel, Accom & Meals	1,616.08
FNQROC: Internal Meeting Expenses: Miscellaneous	713.64
FNQROC: Internal Meeting Expenses: Catering	78.72
FNQROC: Mobile Phone Expenses	665.79
FNQROC: Salaries	35,510.60
FNQROC: Stationery & Office Expenses	2,017.32
FNQROC: Stationery & Office Expenses:Website	201.00
FNQROC: Subscription/membership	16,742.82
FNQROC: Vehicle Expenses	1,732.56
FNQROC: Uniforms	249.59
Total FNQROC	72,134.82

Infrastructure

Infrastructure: Salaries	18,798.43
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Infrastructure: Mobile Phone Expenses	190.92
Total Infrastructure	18,989.35
Regional Roads & Transport	
RRTG: External Meetings: Registration Fees	1,386.36
RRTG: External Meetings: Travel, Accom & Meals	1,377.62
RRTG: Internal Meeting Expenses: Catering	108.55
Total Regional Roads & Transport	2,872.53
Regional Urban Water	
Water: Internal Meeting Expenses: Catering	113.09
Water: External Meeting Expenses: Travel, Accom & Meals	(712.20)
Total Regional Urban Water	(599.11)
Regional Waste & Recycling	
Waste: External Meeting Expenses: Travel, Accom & Meals	252.00
Waste: Resource Recovery Salaries	19,149.68
Total Regional Waste & Recycling	19,401.68
Regional Natural Asset Management	
Nat Asset: Vehicle Expense	1,600.00
Nat Asset: External Meetings: Travel, Accom & Meals	538.22
Nat Asset: Internal Meeting Expenses: Catering	193.63
Nat Asset: Mobile Phone Expenses	190.92
Nat Asset: Salaries	16,886.84
WTBFP - Media and Collateral Development	28,688.00
Total Regional Natural Asset Management	48,097.61
Regional Climate Resilience	
Climate Resilience Salaries	15,114.37
Climate Resilience - Internal Meeting Expenses	38.64
Climate Resilience - Conference/training	1,053.03
Climate Resilience: Climate Resilient Councils Program	131.83
Total Regional Climate Resilience	16,337.87
Regional Procurement	
Regional Procurement: Bitumen Reseal Project:Project Coordinator Fees	9,400.00
Regional Procurement: Sewer Relining - Consultant Fees	14,200.00
Regional Procurement:Internal Meeting Expenses: Catering	109.09
Regional Procurement: Internal Meeting Expenses: Miscellaneous	108.55
Regional Procurement: Mobile Phone Expenses	190.92
Regional Procurement: Salaries	16,231.14
Total Regional Procurement	40,239.70
Regional Mountain Bike Strategy	
Regional MTB Strategy	2,081.09
Total Regional Mountain Bike Strategy	2,081.09
Total Operating Expenses	219,724.15

Net Profit

508,099.23

Balance Sheet

Far North Queensland Regional Organisation of Councils 30241

As at 17 September 2025

17 SEPT 2025

Assets

Bank

Cheque Account	116,081.03
FNQROC Savings	1,301,541.73
Total Bank	1,417,622.76

Current Assets

Accounts Receivable	601,878.75
Total Current Assets	601,878.75

Total Assets

2,019,501.51

Liabilities

Current Liabilities

Accounts Payable	567.73
ANZ Credit Card:FNQROC	16,957.55
GST	25,278.86
Payroll Liabilities:AL Payable Current	97,008.22
Payroll Liabilities:LSL Payable Current	10,715.00
Payroll Liabilities:LSL Payable Non-Current	71,033.70
Rounding	(0.24)
Total Current Liabilities	221,560.82

Total Liabilities

221,560.82

Net Assets

1,797,940.69

Equity

Current Year Earnings	508,099.23
Opening Bal Equity	293,928.07
Retained Earnings	995,913.39
Total Equity	1,797,940.69



CEO Report to the Board

Prepared by: Darlene Irvine

Board Meeting Date: 2nd October 2025

1. Executive Summary

FNQROC Continues to progress key strategic priorities, with a major focus in areas linked to the forthcoming release of the FNQ Regional Plan, the October Federal Delegation, and advancing regional advocacy initiatives. While several priorities remaining pending, work is actively underway across natural asset management, regional roads and transport, mountain bike strategy, water alliance and climate resilience. The Federal Advocacy brief has been finalised ensuring our core issues are firmly positioned for federal conversations in October.

A new policy concept has been initiated to attract and retain populations through a comprehensive package of incentives i.e. financial, professional, lifestyle and infrastructure.

Operationally, FNQROC is driving collaborative progress across councils through technical committees, capability reviews, strategic partnerships, particularly in water security, climate resilience, procurement and waste management.

The organisation remains in a stable financial and governance position, with staffing culture, and compliance steady.

Looking ahead, the release of the FNQ Regional Plan and outcomes of the Federal Delegation will be pivotal in shaping the next phase of regional priorities.

2. Strategic Progress

STRATEGIC PRIORITY	STATUS	NOTES
2.1 FNQ Regional Plan	Pending	Not yet released – was due end of August
2.2 Regional priorities into long term Strategic Operational Plan	In progress	
2.3 Federal Advocacy	Pending	Federal delegation brief finalised and sent to Federal members
2.4 NATURAL ASSET MANAGEMENT		
2.4.1 Contribute to the review of the Land Protection Fund methodology.	Pending	FNQROC expression of interest in contributing to review accepted.
2.4.2 Represent regional and local priorities on the State Oversight Group	Ongoing	Research proposals submitted to State Oversight Group for cat management and aquatic weeds risk assessment, these will be assessed at the next sitting of the committee in October.
2.5 REGIONAL MOUNTAIN BIKE STRATEGY		
2.5.1 Investigate whole-of-life trail maintenance approach	Pending	Tablelands Cycle Sports will be hosting a training session with Blue Sky Trails to use the Trail Vision MTB asset management and trail audit system in the second half of 2025. This will provide the region with an introduction to a whole-of-life trail maintenance approach.
2.5.2 Advocate for the rollout of the mountain bike infrastructure plan	Ongoing	Regional MTB Strategy Communication Plan in development with the Steering Committee.
2.6 REGIONAL ROADS AND TRANSPORT		
2.6.1 Update the FNQ Regional Road Investment Strategy, including a review of the heavy vehicle network and first/last mile roads in collaboration with TMR		
2.1 WATER ALLIANCE		
2.1.1 Asset Criticality assessment		GBA Engineers have been invited to provide an overview of their work on the development of the South West Queensland Water and Sewage Alliance Infrastructure Strategy which included a detailed asset criticality assessment.

Comments:

3. Regional Advocacy Priorities

ADVOCACY PRIORITIES	STATUS	NOTES
3.1 STRENGTHENING LIVEABILITY AND SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE		
3.1.1 Address cost shifting	In Progress	Included in Federal Delegation (October)
3.1.2 First nations Housing	In Progress	Included in Federal Delegation (October)
3.1.3 Social and Affordable housing	In Progress	Included in Federal Delegation (October)
3.1.4 Strengthen climate resilience	In Progress	Included in Federal Delegation (October)
		Draft concept developed for Outer Regional and Remote Special Economic Zone
3.2 RESILIENT TRANSPORT		
3.2.1 Road Network Resilience	Link	Linked to 2.6.1 Review of Regional Road Investment Strategy Included in Federal Delegation (October)
3.2.2 Public Transport and Urban Mobility	Pending	Waiting on Regional Plan to be released
3.2.3 Freight and Supply Chains	Link	Linked to 2.6.1 Review of Regional Road Investment Strategy Included in Federal Delegation (October)
3.2.4 Multi-Modal Integration	Pending	Waiting on Regional Plan to be released
3.2.5 Emergency and Climate Resilience	Pending	Waiting on Regional Plan to be released and pending advice from Technical Committee
3.3 NATURAL ASSETS		
3.3.1 Biosecurity preparedness and resilience	Ongoing	A natural assets disaster management scenario workshop will be hosted by FNQROC again in November 2025 in collaboration with Climate Resilience Coordinator. A regional aquatic weed risk assessment proposal has been submitted to the Land Protection Fund.
3.3.2 Collaborative governance	Ongoing	Contributing to Digital Russell Australia project with Jaragun Ecoservices and Geoscience Australia

3.3.3 Integrated domestic animal management	Pending	The Animal Management Technical Committee is preparing a business case for a workforce capability and modernisation review which will be tabled to the FNQROC Board later in 2025.
3.3.4 Support ongoing development of outdoor recreation and tourism	Ongoing	Mapping data for Smithfield Mountain Bike Park updated and TrailForks online mapping portal updated in collaboration with Cairns Mountain Bike Club and project officers from DETSI.
3.3.5 Climate and ecological resilience	Ongoing	Working with FNQROC Climate Resilience lead to deliver Cassowary Coast Local Area Natural Environment Disaster Preparedness Plan.
3.3.6 Innovation and sustainability	Ongoing	Assisting development of natural asset planning tools. Tablelands Natural Asset Management Strategy 2025-2035.
3.3.7 Regulatory and Resource efficiency	Ongoing	Preparing departmental communications regarding conflicts between State legislation regarding disposal of carcasses from feral animal control program.
3.3.8 Integrated land use planning	Ongoing	Assisting regional conversation around development or Strategic Rehabilitation Areas to guide approaches taken in the upcoming Regional Plan as well as local planning approaches.
3.4 WATER SECURITY		
3.4.1 Regional water infrastructure funding pool to support smaller councils in preparing robust business cases.	Ongoing	LGAQ Policy Executive have proposed an appropriate water funding motion for the annual conference.
3.4.2 Reform of disaster recovery funding eligibility to recognise water and sewerage as core infrastructure	Ongoing	Included in Federal Delegation Advocacy Brief
3.4.3 Increased State and federal investment in long term, multi-use water infrastructure (e.g. Dams, hydroelectric projects)	Ongoing	Included in Federal Delegation Advocacy Brief
3.4.4 Climate resilient planning frameworks including risk mitigation for intense rainfall events and debris blockages.		

3.5 WASTE	
3.5.1 State and Federal investment in planning, design, construction and operation	
3.5.2 Fit for purpose solutions for remote and rural communities	
3.5.3 Minimise costs passed on to households and ratepayers	
3.5.4 Address transport and logistic barrier unique to FNQ	
3.6 ENERGY	
3.6.1 Greater investment in resilient energy infrastructure in regional areas	
3.6.2 Transparent pricing methodologies	CSO approximates obtained and shared with member councils
3.6.3 Support for decentralised energy solutions and appropriately located renewable technologies.	

4. Operational Overview

OPERATIONAL PRIORITIES	STATUS	NOTES
4.1 FEDERAL DELEGATION		Underway
4.2 STATE DELEGATION		Scheduled for February
4.3 ANIMAL MANAGEMENT		
4.3.1 Facilitate regional cat management taskforce for collaboration on key actions	In progress	Submission made to Research Review Committee (in conjunction with State Oversight Group) for regional cat management research proposal.
4.3.2 Develop Scope for Workforce Capability Review and Modernisation of Animal Management in Far North Queensland	Pending	The Animal Management Technical Committee is preparing a business case for a workforce capability and modernisation review which will be tabled to the FNQROC Board later in 2025.

4.3.3 Assist in disaster management capacity development across councils	Planned	Annual disaster preparedness scenario planned for November 2025
4.3.4 Re-establish indicators and produce an annual report card	Pending	Linked to 4.3.2 review of report card and indicators will be undertaken when the scope of the workforce capability review is established
4.3.5 Conduct four technical committee meetings	Ongoing	
4.4 NATURAL ASSET MANAGEMENT		
4.4.1 Review and implement Council Biosecurity Plans	Ongoing	Reviews for Cassowary Coast and Hinchinbrook delivered in 2025. Mareeba plan in draft and Tablelands in planning.
4.4.2 Implement and review the regional natural asset management strategy	Planned	Regional natural asset management strategy review process planned for November 2025.
4.4.3 Support local natural asset and biosecurity advisory committees and working groups	Pending	Attendance at all meetings as required. Report back on local needs at regional and State level committees and advisory groups.
4.4.4 Assist in disaster management capacity development across councils	Planned	Annual disaster preparedness scenario planned for November 2025.
4.4.5 Re-establish indicators and produce an annual report card	Ongoing	Review of report card and indicators planned for 2026.
4.4.6 Support Wet Tropics Healthy Water ways initiatives	In progress	Co-authoring review of the invasive aquatic weed's indicator initiated, planned completion last half of 2025. Attended Reef 2050 plan review workshop.
4.4.7 Conduct 4 technical committee meetings.	Ongoing	Meetings of the Natural Asset Management Advisory Committee facilitated quarterly
4.5 REGIONAL MOUNTAIN BIKE STRATEGY		
4.5.1 Establish a regional adventure trail working group	Planned	Call for nominations will be made in November 2025 for working group to initiate in February 2026.
4.5.2 Support partnerships between Councils, clubs, and state agencies to deliver strategy actions	Ongoing	MTB Strategy Communication Plan drafted by Steering Committee.

<p>4.5.3 Support GIS and on-ground rollout and communication of trail upgrades and features.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Mapping data for Smithfield Mountain Bike Park updated and TrailForks online mapping portal updated in collaboration with Cairns Mountain Bike Club and project officers from DETSI.</p> <p>Collating and preparing adventure trail data for Adventure Trails Working Group</p>
<p>4.5.4 Conduct four steering committee meetings.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	
<p>4.6 REGIONAL ROADS AND TRANSPORT</p>		
<p>4.6.1 Conduct 2 (min) RRTG meetings</p>	<p>Planned</p>	<p>Next meeting scheduled to take place on 2 December 2025.</p>
<p>4.6.2 Conduct 4 (min) RRTG TC meetings</p>	<p>Planned</p>	<p>Next meeting scheduled to take place on 15 October 2025 to coincide with the first day of the RRTG TC Technical Tour.</p>
<p>4.6.3 Develop and implement the FNQ RRTG Capability Agreement & Action Plan</p>	<p>In progress</p>	<p>Currently under review.</p>
<p>4.6.4 Manage four year (\$24.8mil) works program</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>New Project Management Tool developed by Shepherd Services to assist with development and ongoing coordination of TIDS works program. Next phase to bring in payment claims process which will involve bringing TMR on to -use of the system. Meeting took place on 1 September 2025 with TMR FN District, FNQROC and Shepherd Services to progress.</p>
<p>4.6.5 RRTG Technical Tour September 2025</p>	<p>Planned</p>	<p>The Technical Tour is scheduled to take place from Wednesday 15 October 2025 to Friday 17 October 2025 and is being hosted by Douglas Shire Council and will include a trip to Wujal Wujal Aboriginal Shire Council and extend to some Cook Shire Council roads. TMR Acting District Director invited to attend.</p>
<p>4.6.6 Complete Regional Road Treatment Study</p>	<p>In progress</p>	<p>Phil Hunt, Road Engineering services engaged to complete the study. Final report expected by December 2025.</p>
<p>4.7 WATER ALLIANCE</p>		
<p>4.7.1 Conduct 4 Alliance meetings</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Last meeting held on 15 August 2025. Next meeting scheduled to take place on 7 November 2025.</p>

4.7.2 Submit quarterly reports and annual reports to LGAQ	Ongoing	Queensland Water Regional Alliance Program (QWRAP) 2024/25 Funding Acquittal and 2025/26 Regional Coordinator Funding Application & Annual Plan submitted to LGAQ on 3 September 2025.
4.7.3 Commence implementation of the FNQ Regional Water Capability Plan	In progress	Priority operational initiatives identified by the FNQ Water Alliance to progress - See 4.7.3.1 - 4.7.3.4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4.7.3.1 Initiative 3 – Standardised SOPs, work instructions, templates and processes 	In progress	Councils in the process of nominating suitable representatives to a sub-committee to progress this initiative. Council encouraged to consider nominating council officers that would benefit from involvement in this project as a good opportunity for networking and professional development.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4.7.3.2 Initiative 4 – Standardised water and wastewater asset design and specification 	In progress	As above, Initial focus is on SCADA. CRC SCADA Coordinator to attend the next Water Alliance meeting to share the standards recently developed by CRC.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4.7.3.3 Initiative 11 – Building and sustained a strong workforce for FNQ. 	In progress	Liaising with QLD Water and other industry stakeholders to identify current initiatives already underway across the State. Sub-committee to be formed to progress this initiative.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4.7.3.4 Strategic initiatives – see 2.17.1 See Asset Criticality Assessment in-progress. 	In progress	See 2.1.1.
4.7.4 Conduct an EOI for Biosolids centralised storage/dewatering, transport and disposal options	Removed	4.7.4 replaced with 4.7.5
4.7.5 Facilitate implementation of a new Regional Beneficial Reuse of Biosolids arrangement commencing 1 October 2025	In progress	Participating councils have all approved Arkwood as sole supplier. New contract terms agreed with Arkwood. All councils with the exception of Douglas Shire Council have approved contract award. Douglas Shire Council to consider contract award recommendation at their council meeting on 30 September 2025.
4.7.6 Develop and implement a Regional Trade Waste Environmental Management Plan	In progress	
4.8 DEVELOPMENT MANUAL		
4.8.1 Conduct a review of the Development Manual	Planned	Requested changes to the Development Manual recorded for next review – anticipated to take place in 2026.
4.9 PROCUREMENT		
4.9.1 Conduct 4 technical committee meetings	Ongoing	The next meeting is scheduled for November 2025.

4.9.2 Maintain regular communication with agencies (e.g. Local Buy and State Government) and provide feedback	Ongoing	
4.9.3 Review and update the FNQROC Procurement website and document suite	In progress	The LGT 3.0 Document Suite will be released in December 2025 to the FNQROC Councils. It will be tailored specifically to address evolving procurement and contract management practices.
4.9.4 Facilitate identification and evaluation of new regional procurement opportunities	Ongoing	
4.9.5 Undertake contract administration for existing regional contracts.	Ongoing	
4.9.6 Conduct contract reviews for:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bitumen Reseal 	In progress	<i>Regional Bitumen Reseal</i> – Participating councils have approved their programs for Financial Year 2025/26 and works started in September 2025.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sewer Relining 	In progress	<i>Regional Sewer Relining</i> – Participating councils have approved their programs for Financial Year 2025/26 and works started in September 2025.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Removal of Biosolids 	In progress	<i>Regional Removal and Beneficial Reuse of Biosolids.</i> - Arkwood Organics has been approved as sole supplier and a new contract will commence on 1 October 2025. (See also 4.7.5)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scrap Metal and ULABs 	In progress	<i>Collection & Disposal of Ferrous, Non-Ferrous Metals and ULABs</i> – tender is open for this regional arrangement, and evaluation will start in October 2025.
4.9.7 Oversee procurement for the Regional Water Leak Detection Program	On hold	Funding approved – waiting on signed contracts for funding.
4.10 Climate Resilience		
4.10.1 Conduct 4 Technical meetings	On going	Next meeting scheduled for 20 th November 2025
4.10.2 Prepare and implement Greenhouse gas emissions reduction action plan	In progress	Data collection completed and progressing to the regional inventory that will inform the action plan. Aboriginal shire Councils Emission Reduction Action Plan completed.

		GHG Working group met on the 4 th September to review Regional Inventory Report - they will review draft with internal stakeholders and provide feedback. Submitted EOI for additional support from Great Barrier Reef Foundation to conduct cost/benefit analysis on emission reduction actions.
4.10.3 Undertake a regional climate risk assessment	In progress	
4.10.4 Develop the FNROC Climate Resilience Action Plan (2026 – 2031)	In progress	Co-designing methodology with CRTC.
4.10.5 Continue to identify funding and implement the Regional Drought Resilience Plans (Wet Topics and Gulf Hinterland)	On going	Received letter of approval for Gulf Hinterland and Wet Tropics funding.
4.10.6 Continue to identify funding and implement QRA Regional Resilience Plans	In progress	Submitted funding for Heat & Humidity Resilience Action Plan to identify highly vulnerable areas and develop high-priority actions. Outcomes of NEMA Disaster Resilience Fund are expected in September/October 2025.
4.10.7 Continue to support updating QRA Local Resilience Action Plans	On hold	Reaching out to Disaster Management teams to understand each Councils position and process for updating LRAPs.
4.10.8 Develop regional framework for local natural environment disaster preparedness plan – pilot project with Cassowary Coast Regional Council.	In progress	Awaiting development of GIS Mapping for High-Risk Biosecurity Areas and Local High Value Environmental Areas.
4.10.9 Expand and implement the Rivers to Reef Climate Action Plan (2021-2026)	In progress	Completed
4.11 REGIONAL WASTE MANAGEMENT		
4.11.1 Provide updates to DETSI as required	On going	
4.11.2 Appoint a Regional EBCI Coordinator (Contractor)	In progress	Funding application submitted

<p>4.11.3 Manage the delivery of the regional waste education and marketing plan</p>	<p>on hold</p>	<p>waiting on funding advice - 4.11.2</p>
<p>4.11.4 Undertake a needs assessment for enhancing data capability in FNQROC Councils</p>	<p>in progress</p>	<p>Developed a tool to assess the data capability of the member councils of FNQROC</p>
<p>4.11.5 Facilitate collaboration opportunities for enhancing kerbside commingled recycling & resource recovery of priority and problematic waste streams</p>		

5. People and Culture

- Staffing:
 - No changes
- Workforce wellbeing or culture insights
 - Nil workplace or union issues
 - Staff technically employed by CRC, are in the process of negotiating the next EBA.

6. Finance

- Financial snapshot
 - Invoices sent to councils
 - Regional Drought Resilience Plan Scheme funding has been approved for Wet Tropics and Gulf – managed by FNQROC and delivered in partnership with Terrain NRM and Gulf NRM.

7. Governance and Compliance

- Audit commenced August and completed in September 2025.t
- Compliance actions - Nil
- Changes in legislation, standards or reporting requirements - Nil

8. Risks and Issues

RISK/ISSUE	IMPACT	MITIGATION
(Eg project delays due to resourcing)	Medium	(Engaging contract support)
(Regulatory compliance shift)	High	(Escalated to)
Nil to report		

9. Advocacy and External Relations

- Stakeholder Engagement

Date	Engagement
8-Aug	Regional Mountain Bike Steering Committee
12- Aug	FNQ Regional Plan Briefing
13-18 Aug	Annual Leave
20-21 Aug	RNL FNQ Meeting – Thursday Island
28-Aug	Community Service Obligation for FNQ – QLD Treasury (Maria Meeting)
29-Aug	LGAQ Roads and Transport Advisory Group meeting
29 Aug – 15 Sept	Annual Leave
25 Sept	Overview of Compass IoT

10. Looking Ahead

- Federal delegation in October
- Release of Draft FNQ Regional Plan