



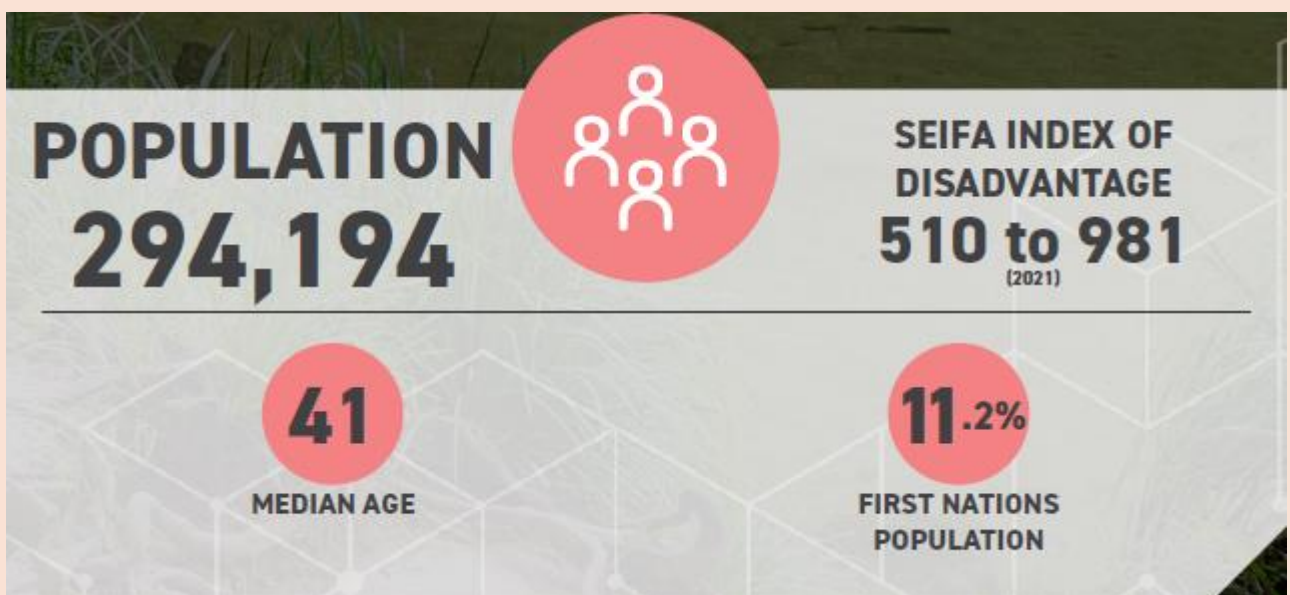
FNQ Regional Organisation of Councils



## Advocacy Report

**FNQROC 2026 State Delegation  
21 – 23 April 2026**

FNQ AT A GLANCE



## FNQ REGIONAL PRIORITIES AT A GLANCE



**Regional and Remote Special Economic Zone** - support promotion and further development.



That the Queensland Government provide funding to commence the Far North Queensland **Regional Growth Strategy** to operationalise the Draft FNQ Regional Plan 2025 and strengthen the effectiveness of future infrastructure, housing and economic investment.



**Disaster Recovery** update



**Water and waste water investment**

1. To address the increasing pressures on trunk infrastructure and the significant renewal needs across water and wastewater reticulation systems, we propose the establishment of an annual renewal and upgrade funding program modelled on successful programs such as Works for Queensland (W4QLD) and the Transport Infrastructure Development Scheme (TIDS). A consistent, long-term funding stream is essential to support population growth in our regions and ensure the sustainable, safe and efficient management of water and wastewater services.
2. We also request that the State makes funding available for treatment plants, pump stations and pipe networks with reduced co-payments, scaled according to the size and financial capacity of councils; reflecting the effective approach used in the early 2000s. This will ensure equitable access to essential infrastructure funding and support councils that simply cannot meet high co-contribution requirements.



**Transport priorities**

1. Clarify the 'triggers' required to establish and support public transport services in regional communities.
2. Fund the implementation of the Palmerston Highway Upgrade Strategy.
3. Review Cairns to Northern Tablelands Access study, and
4. Allocate budget funding to identify and assess existing or alternative access routes between Cairns and the Northern Tablelands to future proof this corridor.
5. Regular updates on the Gilbert River Bridge developing business case and a commitment to fund a 2-lane replacement bridge that delivers safer, more reliable and flood resilient access.
6. That the State Government prioritise the Laura River Crossing under Stage 3 of the Cape York Regional Package.
7. TMR to actively work with local governments in the region to review and update the Regional Road Investment Strategy to guide future transport investment.



**Marine Development**

1. \$4 million to complete a Masterplan and Detailed Business Case for the Port of Mourilyan Industrial Development Area.
2. A \$300,000 investment is sought to undertake a feasibility study for the Port Douglas Waterfront South Precinct.



**Visitor levy**

1. Establish a Visitor Levy Advisory Group through which interested councils can work collaboratively with the State to determine a pathway forward.
2. Amend section 94 of the Local Government Act to provide local Governments with the ability to implement a visitor levy under an opt-in model.



**Closing the gap on service delivery**

That First Nations local governments and communities that are predominately First Nations are appropriately resourced and empowered as genuine partners in the decision making, planning and coordination of Closing the Gap initiatives. Providing dedicated resources to First Nations councils will strengthen their capacity for local decision making, service integration and data led community planning, leading to more effective and sustainable outcomes.



**Government Employee home ownership**

The Queensland Government establish a dedicated Rural and Remote Home Ownership Assistance Scheme (RHOAS) for Queensland State Government employees, to enable long term settlement, workforce stability and stronger regional communities.



**Health care outside major centres**

1. That the Queensland government identifies funding for the expansion and refurbishment of Mareeba Hospital
2. That the Queensland Government reviews the upgrade needs and invests in strengthening primary health care capacity across rural and remote communities such as Georgetown, Croydon, and Chillagoe by funding expanded clinical space, additional medical and nursing staff, consistent opening hours, and infrastructure that enables visiting specialists and emergency care to be delivered safely and reliably.
3. Seek transparency in project costing, assurance that budget pressures will not reduce service scope, and a commitment to keep council informed through scheduled updates on planning, design and construction of health facilities and services.



**Fair rating reform**

That the Queensland Government introduce legislative reforms to allow councils to levy rates on State owned properties, ensuring fair cost sharing for the local services these properties rely on.



**Dept of Housing – Management of properties and impact on local government resources**

How can we work collaboratively with the Department of Housing (DOH) to manage the impact of these properties on tenants and the surrounding community, and improve the perception of DOH properties and their tenants?



**Education in remote communities**

The Queensland Government is urged to invest in innovative, place-based education delivery models that allow children to remain in their communities while accessing high quality secondary schooling.



**Waste generated in State and National Parks**

1. FNQROC seeks the Queensland State Government to assume all associated waste management costs generated within the Queensland National Parks networks, including waste generated by Queensland Parks and Wildlife service works, service staff and tourist visitors, or
2. Where a significant amount of waste is being driven by National/State Parks and their visitors, that the State government fund rural or remote councils 100% the cost of small scale innovative initiatives to manage waste, or
3. Implement a waste environmental levy on visitors to State and National Parks.

## DELEGATION MEMBERS

### **Cr Angela Toppin AM, FNQROC Chair**

Mayor, Mareeba Shire Council

### **Cr Barry Hughes, FNQROC Deputy Chair**

Mayor, Etheridge Shire Council

### **Cr Lisa Scomazzon**

Mayor, Douglas Shire Council

### **Cr Rod Marti**

Mayor, Tablelands Regional Council

### **Cr Alister Gibson**

Mayor, Wujal Wujal Aboriginal Shire Council

### **Cr Daryl Sexton**

Mayor, Yarrabah Aboriginal Shire Council

### **Cr Justin Coventry**

Councillor, Cook Shire Council

### **Cr Teresa Millwood**

Mayor, Cassowary Coast Regional Council

### **Cr Amy Eden**

Mayor, Cairns Regional Council

### **Cr Trevor Pickering**

Mayor, Croydon Shire Council

### **Cr Bruce Gibson**

Mayor, Hope Vale Aboriginal Shire Council

## TOP TWO PRIORITIES

### **Regional & Remote SEZ**

The proposed R&R SEZ provides Queensland with a strategic place-based mechanism to address long standing demographic, service delivery and economic challenges facing regional, remote and very remote communities.

By championing and co-designing the R & R SEZ, the State can demonstrate leadership in balanced growth, resilience and equity, delivering tangible economic, social and strategic returns for Queensland as a whole.

### **Regional Growth Strategy**

A Regional Growth Strategy is crucial for informed government decision making – where will our future growth be, what infrastructure is needed to enable it?

It represents a modest upfront investment that will deliver long-term savings, stronger outcomes and greater certainty for both the Queensland Government and the Far North Queensland community.

**David Kempton MP, Member for Cook**

**Hon Ann Leahy MP Minister for Local Government and Water and Minister for Fire, Disaster Recovery and Volunteers**



**Attended by:**

Cr Barry Hughes, Cr Amy Eden, David Kempton MP, Cr Angela Toppin, Hon Ann Leahy MP, Cr Teresa Millwood, Cr Lisa Scomazzon, Cr Justin Coventry, Ms Darlene Irvine (not pictured).

Mr Kempton was updated prior to the Delegation and hosted a dinner with Minister Leahy to start the delegation.

Discussed with Mr Kempton was:

- Regional and Remote Special Economic Zone
- Regional Growth Strategy
- Water and Wastewater \$1.2B renewal
- Transport:
  - Palmerston Highway – Importance of the link, need for master planning when it hits Bruce Highway and link to Mourilyan transport Hub

- Kuranda Range – Review of Cairns to Northern Tablelands Access and Options Analysis
- Gilbert River Bridge
- McLeod Crossing, and
- Laura River Crossing
- Marine Development Opportunities:
  - Mourilyan and the Industrial Development Area
  - Port Douglas South Precinct – maintenance opportunities and transfer of skill sets from Mossman Mill to the maintenance precinct
- Opt-In Sustainable Tourism Fund
- Genuine partnerships with First Nations Councils
- Strengthening health services in rural and remote areas.
- Government employee home ownership in rural and remote areas
- Fair rating of State-owned land
- Impact of Department of Housing properties on Councils
- Waste costs generated in National Parks.

**Shane Knuth MP, Member for Hill**

**Robbie Katter MP, Member for Traeger**



**Attended by (L to R):**

Cr Lisa Scomazzon, Cr Rod Marti, Cr Alister Gibson, Cr Daryl Sexton, Mr Robbie Katter, Cr Trevor Pickering, Mr Shane Knuth MP, Cr Bruce Gibson, Cr Angela Toppin, Cr Barry Hughes, Cr Justin Coventry, Ms Darlene Irvine (not pictured).

**Discussion points:**

- Regional and Remote Special Economic Zone
- Regional Growth Strategy
- Water and Wastewater \$1.2B renewal
- Transport:
  - Palmerston Highway – Importance of the link, need for master planning when it hits Bruce Highway and link to Mourilyan transport Hub
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- Government employee home ownership in rural and remote areas
- Fair rating of State-owned land
- Impact of Department of Housing properties on Councils
- Waste costs generated in National Parks.

**Additional discussion points:**

- Mayor Marti re. Palmerston Highway and connection to Mourilyan
- Croydon & Etheridge – Gilbert River Bridge Richmond/Croydon Road
- It should not be the responsibility of Croydon Shire Council to fund roadworks
- Cook, Hope Vale and Wujal Wujal – Laura and McLeod River Crossings
- Disaster Management funds needed to help clean up the community prior to events
- Yarrabah – RAF and trunk infrastructure funding
- Want to synchronise infrastructure and build together
- Clear picture regarding bridges as priority

- Investment in regions to support and encourage those to come and stay
- Kennedy bog hole - \$70m locked in by QLD Treasury – need to get it rolling
- Etheridge Agriculture precinct is at the end of the funding round – further support for Stage 2
- Fuel crisis
- Health
- Police Station in Georgetown – for 65 years, there has been no toilet in the Station, however a kitchenette has been installed and yet no toilet
- Port Douglas waterfront marine maintenance precinct – propose business case. Ex Mossman Mill employees could work in the precinct
- Sustainable Tourism fund – a 2.5% bed levy for infrastructure, i.e. water, roads, parks, etc, supports tourism
- Disaster Management building required for Douglas Shire
- Healthcare in rural and remote areas – additional funding for Mareeba services.

**Bryson Head MP - Assistant Minister for Regional Development, Resources and Critical Minerals**



**Attended by (L to R):**

Cr Lisa Scomazzon, Cr Alister Gibson, Cr Rod Marti, Cr Daryl Sexton, Cr Trevor Pickering, Bryson Head MP, Cr Bruce Gibson, Cr Angela Toppin, Cr Justin Coventry, Cr Barry Hughes, Cr Teresa Millwood, Cr Amy Eden, Ms Darlene Irvine (not pictured).

**Discussion Points:**

- Regional and Remote Special Economic Zone
- Regional Growth Strategy
- Water and Wastewater \$1.2B renewal
- Transport:
  - Palmerston Highway – Importance of the link, need for master planning when it hits Bruce Highway and link to Mourilyan transport Hub
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- Opt-In Sustainable Tourism Fund
- Genuine partnerships with First Nations Councils
- Strengthening health services in rural and remote areas.

**Additional Discussion Points:**

- Etheridge Shire Council and impact on transport corridors. Need to learn from the impact Genex has had
- Graphinex in Croydon – impact on aging infrastructure
- Country Roads connect – good program, needs more money
- Laura & McLeod Crossings
- Diatreme– can’t charge them rates – why not? Currently in limbo, is it going ahead?
- Need a bridge building exercise
- Port Douglas waterfront – marine maintenance precinct. Ex Mossman Mill employees skilled to work there
- Mourilyan Port Masterplan and detailed business case
- Will need Mourilyan if and when defence expand their footprint in Cairns
  - silica resources
- Palmerston Highway – funding of strategic upgrade
- Blue highway (shipping) can always connect when Bruce Highway cannot
- Jubilee Metals
- Mining, agriculture and tourism are the pillars we run on – red tape is having a significant impact
- Support them on high value agriculture on high value lands or support them on welfare.
- \$1.5million jump in fuel costs for Strathmore.

From Assistant Minister

- Critical Minerals strategy this year
- Taroom trough

- Fertiliser issue is front of mind
- EQ resources and Diatreme
- Would like to visit second week of June
- Assistant Minister needs the evidence on where this is (Red tape, advice from departments) – request all verbal reports to be provided in writing so that they can investigate.
- Special Commission – regional and rural QLD. Meet with him when he gets his feet under the desk.

**Hon Brent Mickelberg MP - Minister for Transport and Main Roads**



**Attended by (L to R):**

Cr Bruce Gibson, Cr Trevor Pickering, David Kempton MP, Cr Rod Marti, Cr Daryl Sexton, Cr Alister Gibson, Cr Barry Hughes, Hon Brent Mickelberg MP, Cr Angela Toppin, Cr Teresa Millwood, Cr Justin Coventry, Cr Lisa Scomazzon, Ms Darlene Irvine (not pictured).

**Discussion points:**

- Regional and Remote Special Economic Zone
- Regional Growth Strategy
- Water and Wastewater \$1.2B renewal

- Transport:
  - Palmerston Highway – Upgrade Strategy
  - Kuranda Range – and progression of long term access solutions
  - Gilbert River Bridge
  - McLeod Crossing, and
  - Laura River Crossing
- Regional Road Investment Strategy – update in partnership with TMR.
- Triggers for Public Transport
- Marine Development Opportunities:
  - Mourilyan and the Industrial Development Area
  - Port Douglas South Precinct – maintenance opportunities and transfer of skill sets from Mossman Mill to the maintenance precinct

**Additional Discussion:**

- Palmerston Highway and connectivity with Mourilyan
  - Upgrade strategy finalised – Minister - unfunded as yet – it is bubbling away and will continue to chip away at it
  - Gilbert River, Graphinex project - It shouldn't be up to Croydon to fund this road and Jubilee Metals mining soon with 1020 road trains between June 30 and Christmas on Gulf Developmental Road - RMPC contracts reduced and impact on shoulders with these trucks
    - Minister said if we can get 80% for Gilbert River he will guarantee 20%.
- Laura Crossing and McLeod Crossing

- Minister advised that Country Roads Connect is about chipping away at it.
- Port Douglas Marine Maintenance Precinct
- Cape Tribulation Road, Council would love to do a road swap - the Minister is happy to discuss a road swap
- Public transport options in the region
- Innisfail Bypass
- Thank you for funding of the bog holes on Kennedy Highway – Federal Government reports that State has \$70million, Minister Mickelberg advised that they don't but will follow up. (post meeting note: Feds provided the funding this afternoon)
- Savannahlander
- Communications from the District Office feels secretive. Have had TMR start works in the region without informing council
  - Minister advised that if we're having issues with communication to please let him know.
- Minister Mickelberg asked which was the preference to be done first, McLeod or Laura? – advised McLeod
- RRIS request to partner and include as an action within the Freight Strategy – Minister thinks this would be ok but will check.

**Hon David Crisafulli MP – Premier and Minister for Veterans**

**Hon Jarrod Bleijie MP – Deputy Premier, Minister for State Development, Infrastructure and Planning, Minister for Industrial Relations**



**Attended by (L to R):**

Cr Rod Marti, Cr Alister Gibson, Cr Daryl Sexton, Cr Trevor Pickering, Cr Bruce Gibson, Cr Lisa Scomazzon, Cr Justin Coventry, Cr Teresa Millwood, Cr Barry Hughes, Hon David Crisafulli MP, Cr Angela Toppin, Hon Jarrod Bleijie MP, Ms Darlene Irvine (not pictured)

**Discussion points:**

- Regional and Remote Special Economic Zone
- Regional Growth Strategy

**Additional Discussion:**

- Arterial Road connection between Hope Vale and Cairns
- One road into Yarrabah - seven buses at over the hill, any incidents cuts them off
- Mourilyan detailed business case for Industrial Estate

- Roads/bridges and access – Laura and McLeod crossings, and access to supplies
- Aging infrastructure, water, and damage from events
- Huge thank you for the support in Etheridge Shire during the recent event, in particular Einasleigh
- Etheridge agriculture precinct - Premier advised the State will start the process to make it a coordinated project
- Port Douglas waterfront - Thank you!
- Convention Centre in Port Douglas – Premier advised they should do a business case
- Investing in infrastructure at Mourilyan
- Graphinex using local government roads, need support for these State important projects
  - Temporary camp in - main camp outs on site for 40-50 people.

**Bree James MP – Assistant Minister for Tourism, Early Learning, Creative Industries and Far North Queensland, Member for Barron River**

**Terry James MP – Member for Mulgrave**

**Wayde Chiesa MP – Member for Hinchinbrook**



**Attended by (L to R)**

Cr Lisa Scomazzon, Cr Daryl Sexton, Cr Rod Marti, Cr Trevor Pickering, Ms Bree James MP, Mr Wayde Chiesa MP, Cr Barry Hughes, Cr Teresa Millwood, Cr Bruce Gibson, Cr Angela Toppin, Cr Justin Coventry, Mr Terry James MP (not pictured), Ms Darlene Irvine (not pictured).

**Discussion points:**

- Regional and Remote Special Economic Zone
- Regional Growth Strategy
- Water and Wastewater \$1.2B renewal
- Transport:
  - Palmerston Highway – Importance of the link, need for master planning when it hits Bruce Highway and link to Mourilyan transport Hub
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- Opt-In Sustainable Tourism Fund
- Genuine partnerships with First Nations Councils

- Strengthening health services in rural and remote areas.
- Government employee home ownership in rural and remote areas
- Fair rating of State-owned land
- Impact of Department of Housing properties on Councils
- Waste costs generated in National Parks.

**Additional Discussion:**

- R&R SEZ – the impact it would make on the regions
- Savannahlander
- Need to support rural and regional areas for economic growth, or support us through welfare.
- Sustainable Tourism Fund – advisory group to work with State government to progress this.
  - To fund the impact of tourism, i.e., waste, parks, etc.
  - reinvest in tourism infrastructure, services and marketing
  - bipartisan support needed to get it through – request letter from Miles government.
- Palmerston Highway and Connection with Mourilyan
- Gilbert River Bridge – gold mine and Graphinex, worlds second largest natural graphite deposit, using local government roads.
- McLeod River - arterial road for food security for Hope Vale and all other communities in the Cape.
- Need boat ramps in Hope Vale

- Attitude of taxi drivers is appalling at international airport – refusing to take on small fare rides.
- Bookings in Cape York down 30%.
- Occupancy at Cobbold Gorge down 40%
- How do we stop Bureau of Meteorology and media scare mongering?

**Bart Mellish MP - Shadow Minister for Transport and Main Road & Veterans**



**Attended by (L to R):**

Cr Justin Coventry, Cr Bruce Gibson, Cr Amy Eden, Cr Daryl Sexton, Cr Angela Toppin, Mr Michael Healy MP, Mr Bart Mellish MP, Cr Teresa Millwood, Cr Barry Hughes, Cr Trevor Pickering, Cr Lisa Scomazzon, Ms Darlene Irvine (not pictured)

**Discussion points:**

- Regional and Remote Special Economic Zone
- Regional Growth Strategy
- Transport:
  - Implementation of the Palmerston Highway strategy
  - Kuranda Range – Progression of long term access solutions

between Cairns and the Northern Tablelands,

- Gilbert River Bridge
- McLeod Crossing, and
- Laura River Crossing, and
- Support to updated the Regional Road Investment Strategy to guide future investment.
- Triggers for public transport
- Marine Development Opportunities:
  - Mourilyan and the Industrial Development Area
  - Port Douglas South Precinct – maintenance opportunities and transfer of skill sets from Mossman Mill to the maintenance precinct

**Additional discussions:**

- RMPC
- Lack of communication
- Palmerston Highway and Mourilyan connection
- KRR
- Gilbert River Bridge
- McLeod & Laura Crossings
- In regional communities, without access to public transport, what support can be provided for the community to get to services, i.e., discount taxi.
- Gilbert River Bridge business case – where is this at?
- \$70million for Kennedy Highway – where is the money? Federal Government says State Government has it, State says they don't have it yet.
- Savannahlander – put railway in the road.
- Road resilience

- Cape Tribulation road should be State road.
- Veterans in the Cape with mental health needs, the closest support is in Cairns or Brisbane - we should be looking after those that have given us the service close to home.
- RMPC and cuts to funding for the same amount of work
- 1020 road trains between June and December will have an impact on Gulf Developmental Road, but no funds to maintain them.
- Stability and capacity of Palmerston Highway and master planning connectivity with Bruce Highway and Mourilyan Harbour.
- Regional city - road network is important, sea transport is important when the roads fail.
- Public transport in regional areas
- Blackall/Tambo pilot with Bongo bus to transfer people
- Translink has the maps on where public transport would go if they had extra dollars.

**Michael Healy MP - Shadow Minister for Tourism, Jobs and Training**



**Attended by (L to R):**

Cr Justin Coventry, Cr Bruce Gibson, Cr Amy Eden, Cr Daryl Sexton, Cr Angela Toppin, Mr Michael Healy MP, Mr Bart Mellish MP, Cr Teresa Millwood, Cr Barry Hughes, Cr Trevor Pickering, Cr Lisa Scomazzon, Ms Darlene Irvine (not pictured)

**Discussion points;**

- Regional and Remote Special Economic Zone
- Regional Growth Strategy
- Water and Wastewater \$1.2B renewal
- Transport:
  - Palmerston Highway – Importance of the link, need for master planning when it hits Bruce Highway and link to Mourilyan transport Hub
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- Strengthening health services in rural and remote areas.
- Government employee home ownership in rural and remote areas

- Fair rating of State-owned land
- Impact of Department of Housing properties on Councils
- Waste costs generated in National Parks.

**Additional Discussion:**

- Mr Healy advised this budget will be a tough budget. The Olympic games cost over \$7billion
  - Need focussed ask – don't be broad.
- Attendees advised current tourism bookings are down. What do we need to do or what do we need to ask?
  - Answer – we need to get the State and Federal government to acknowledge and treat as a disaster
- People need confidence in ability to access fuel
- Need to get the Hotelier Association behind it.

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**Linus Power MP - Shadow Minister for Natural Resources and Mines**



**Attended by (L to R):**

Cr Alister Gibson, Cr Rod Marti, Cr Daryl Sexton, Cr Trevor Pickering, Linus Power MP, Cr Bruce Gibson, Cr Angela Toppin, Cr Barry Hughes, Cr Lisa Scomazzon, Cr Justin Coventry, Cr Teresa Millwood, Ms Darlene Irvine (not pictured).

**Discussion Points:**

- Regional and Remote Special Economic Zone
- Regional Growth Strategy
- Transport:
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  - Laura River Crossing
- Genuine partnerships with First Nations Councils
- Strengthening health services in rural and remote areas.

**Additional Discussions:**

- Impending development
  - 2 x quartz derivatives floating around for years
- Regulatory impediments need to be looked at and reviewed

- Impact on local government road network to be rectified by local government and rate payers, not the generator.
- Government need to support growth, otherwise they will be supporting welfare.
- Shadow Minister is happy to talk to any businesses having issues to try and resolve it.
- Gold mining starting again in Croydon
- Graphite mine – 2<sup>nd</sup> largest deposit in the world
  - The road network needs to be supported.
- Hope Vale can not charge their mine rates – we want to be able to.
- Mr Power isn't happy with QTRIP – it's not as transparent as it should be.

**Hon Sam O'Connor MP - Minister for Housing and Public Works and Minister for Youth**



**Attended by (L to R)**

Cr Amy Eden, Cr Trevor Pickering, Cr Daryl Sexton, Cr Alister Gibson, Hon Sam O'Connor MP, Cr Barry Hughes, Cr Angela Toppin, Cr Bruce Gibson, Cr

Teresa Millwood, Cr Lisa Scomazzon, Ms Darlene Irvine (not pictured).

**Discussion points:**

- Regional and Remote Special Economic Zone
- Regional Growth Strategy
- Impact of Department of Housing properties on Councils

**Additional Discussion:**

- Invitation to DG to attend next FNQROC meeting declined with no alternative. We know this is a budget issue which the Regional Manager has no control of. Minister advised he will chase up the DG or deputy DG to attend
- CCRC examples given
- Minister advised:
  - Maintenance budget is cooked
  - Projected \$470mil maintenance with \$250m blackhole compared to rental income.
- Discussed that we would like to work with the Department of Housing
- The teams have the framework, they just need to apply it
- Discussed Woree – sorting out ceiling fans first
- Hope Vale housing
  - Criteria of housing eligibility needs to change
  - People need to realise that a house isn't a given.
- Issues in Coen

- The Minister would like to see how we can get rent to buy up and running
  - Model being tested in Palm Island and includes interest free loan for maintenance
  - Tenants can buy – have done 16 in the last year.
- Councils queried why they are not being advised about houses being built
  - 18 units being built in Douglas, example.
  - State view is that if a normal builder doesn't need to go to council than nor do they.
  - Councils advised that they would like a say on the appropriateness of the location of social housing given the issues associated with them.
- Yarrabah wants to take over the management of maintenance orders. The way is it currently working, council staff are being abused.
  - Minister will follow up
- Government transition to home ownership re support from rental relief (Cooktown)
  - Minister things this is a hard one – after discussion if may have some merit
  - Minister will raise this further
- Wujal Wujal has issue with some tenants
- Croydon – two homes pegged out at Christmas but nothing since– classed as 'under construction'
- Cassowary Coast – example tropical design houses, Council has the land to use. Matt from the Ministers Office will reach out to the Mayor.

**Hon Mark Bailey MP - Shadow Minister for Health and Ambulance Services**



**Attended by (L to R):**

Hon Mark Bailey MP, Cr Teresa Millwood, Cr Rod Marti, Cr Daryl Sexton, Ms Darlene Irvine, Cr Lisa Scomazzon, Cr Angela Toppin, Cr Justin Coventry, Cr Amy Eden, Cr Barry Hughes, Cr Bruce Gibson, Cr Alister Gibson.

**Discussion points:**

- Regional and Remote Special Economic Zone
- Regional Growth Strategy
- Strengthening health services in rural and remote areas.:
  - Mareeba Hospital,
  - Primary healthcare capacity across smaller and remote communities
  - Scope and costing of Cooktown Hospital upgrade

**Additional discussion:**

- Mareeba – ED needs refurbishment and upgrade
- Georgetown – hub for lower Gulf Region

- Only have Director of Nursing, causes issues when fatigue management kicks in
- Need at least a nurse practitioner with back up.
- Minister noted that:
  - Staffing is the biggest issue by a country mile
  - Need to ask the government how they are going to secure staff (response – this is why we are pushing R&R SEZ)
  - Cooktown – Minister believes it will be a lower model of care than that expected
  - Road safety is directly related to health.
- Cooktown Hospital - needs these things to make it future proof. The community is concerned there will be no expansion of services
  - Adventure tourism incidents is putting pressure on the hospital.
- Government housing rental to ownership
- Regional health is important - Innisfail helipad issue
- Mossman hospital – treats nearly 2,000 tourists per year – they are fighting for CT scanner as they have to transport patients to Cairns every day for scanning - everyone else has one
  - Appreciate pressure that the Shadow Minister can put on this.
- Hope Vale has a functioning health centre – when the nurse has to leave with patients in the ambulance, it leaves them exposed. Would appreciate support for additional

paramedics so that the nurse doesn't have to leave the centre

- Wujal Wujal – same issues as Hope Vale – staff leaving to deal with emergency leaves them exposed
- Over the past three years, following events, they are left isolated. They need the resources to see them through those times
- Cairns are positioned to be leaders in tropical rural and remote health – this should be enticing for staff
- When investing in things like helicopter – make sure that facilities can handle them i.e. issues in Cairns and Innisfail.

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**Hon Fiona Simpson MP - Minister for Women & Women's Economic Security, Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, Minister for Multiculturalism**



**Attended by (L to R)**

Cr Teresa Millwood, Cr Rod Marti, Cr Daryl Sexton, Cr Lisa Scomazzon, Cr Trevor Pickering, Cr Angela Toppin, Hon Fiona Simpson MP, Cr Justin Coventry, Cr Alister Gibson, Cr Barry Hughes, Cr Bruce Gibson, Ms Darlene Irvine (not pictured).

**Discussion points:**

- Regional and Remote Special Economic Zone
- Regional Growth Strategy
- Genuine partnerships with First Nations Councils

**Additional Discussion:**

- Asking for stronger support for First Nations councils as genuine partners in closing the gap
- Repeal of training policy and IEOP
  - The Queensland Government’s repeal of the Queensland Building and Construction Training Policy and Indigenous Economic Opportunity Plan (IEOP) has occurred without consultation with Indigenous Councils.
  - Action is inconsistent with the intent and commitments under the Equal Partners in Government Agreement (The Accord) and Closing the Gap priorities
- Removal of structured pathways for:
  - Local employment and skills development
  - Indigenous business participation in government-funded projects
  - Long-term workforce development in remote communities
- Assault of YASC Staff Member – Housing Repairs & Maintenance (R&M) Delays
  - Building Services Supervisor physically assaulted, sustaining

serious injuries, following escalating community frustration relating to delays in housing repairs and maintenance

- Residential Activation Fund (RAF)
- Hope Vale – what can we do for the women – they have an older ladies group, the younger ones want something similar, they are entering male dominated areas and council wants to support that.
  - Would like to challenge both male and females to grow – want them to get out of the old mission mentality where they are told what to do and when to do it. Want to give them confidence
- Wujal Wujal wanting females to step up
- Douglas Shire:
  - Have elders justice group
  - Indigenous art pop up shop worked well
  - Have some good strong groups in the community.
- Cook:
  - Coen women’s camps working well
  - Laura
  - Cooktown showcasing Cape York region with exhibits.
- Etheridge – there are properties where families escaping domestic violence are placed and left without support, causing issues in the community – wrap around services are needed. There are approximately 3 houses in Georgetown. Minister to take this issue offline with council
- Douglas is experiencing similar issues

- This used to happen in Croydon as well – they don’t have the capacity to look after them – it has now stopped
- Cassowary Coast – indigenous groups with housing don’t pay their rates and are on the sale list – council had been trying to work with them but now being told the board is using the money for their personal purposes, Council was going to sell but told by State to stop. Where does council go for a solution?
- Q. Is the government heading in the right direction?
  - A. it’s still a work in progress – feedback needs to come from community
- Minister understands councils (Indigenous Councils) can’t rate and is working with Minister Leah re water. Quarantined funds from closing the gap, water is the first priority.

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**Hon Andrew Powell MP - Minister for the Environment and Tourism, Minister for Science and Innovation**

**Kate Samois, Chief of Staff**



**Attended by (L to R)**

Cr Daryl Sexton, Cr Lisa Scomazzon, Cr Barry Hughes, Cr Amy Eden, Cr Angela Toppin, Hon Andrew Powell MP, Cr Teresa Millwood, Cr Alister Gibson, Cr Rod Marti, Cr Bruce Gibson, Cr Trevor Pickering, Cr Justin Coventry, Ms Darlene Irvine (not pictured).

**Discussion points:**

- R&R SEZ
- Regional Growth Strategy
- Opt-In Sustainable Tourism Fund
- Managing Waste costs generated in National Parks and seeking sustainable funding solutions.

**Additional discussions:**

- Cook Shire Council example – small volume of waste but large distances to take it
- Minister:
  - You get the benefits of the tourist
  - Very interested to explore pyrolysis – open to these ideas
  - Resource recovery boost fund
  - Will take National Park issue to the team and get more information - Fraser Island State works with council.
- Einasleigh, Mount Surprise, etc
  - Ministers direction to staff is to be Constructive and proactive around waste.
- Croydon – advised that they don’t have funds for fire beaks but do have funds for cultural activities

- Minister advised – extra 120 rangers, 40 dedicated to fire which might be why – funding is moved.
- Hope Vale – would like to share waste strategy – Minister happy to have a look
- It was raised that we wanted to use available Coordinator funding to do things like look at tyre options but we're not able to do this
  - Minister advised he refused to do another plan
  - It was clarified that it wasn't another plan it was looking at the appropriate options for the region. Minister will follow up.
- The conflict of 10% contribution versus 40% if regional was also raised. The Minister is looking at this
- Tourism Sustainability Fund
  - No, will not write to ALP to seek bipartisan support
- Regional Plan request – tourism overlay for areas around the likes of Palm Cove (taken on notice)
- Minister coming to Carnival
- Small councils cannot continue to pay for tourism infrastructure from rate payers
- Minister - Very distinct and clear – we will not introduce a new tax. There is no argument which will change this. Councils can do differential rates.
- Minister advised it will not be a State levy, or an Olympic Levy, as far as the Minister is aware.
- Fuel crisis - Drive tourism
  - Reputation should be for farmers (feelings of guilt)

- Can get fuel?
- Minister advised:
  - TEQ are looking at what can be done
  - People are driving but only moving 100-200km
- Mayor Hughes offered a red carpet invitation to Georgetown
- Savannahlander – put rail on to road bridge in Einasleigh
- BOM and media dramatization of impending cyclones affecting tourism
- Taxis' declining short trips to Cairns International Airport.

**Hon Tony Perrett MP - Minister for Primary Industries**



**Attended by (L to R):**

Cr Amy Eden, Cr Rod Marti, Cr Lisa Scomazzon, Cr Trevor Pickering, Hon Tony Perrett MP, Cr Barry Hughes, Cr Angela Toppin, Cr Alister Gibson, Cr Justin Coventry, Ms Darlene Irvine.

**Discussion points:**

- Regional and Remote Special Economic Zone
- Regional Growth Strategy

- Transport:
  - Palmerston Highway – Importance of the link, need for master planning when it hits Bruce Highway and link to Mourilyan transport Hub
  - Kuranda Range – Review of Cairns to Northern Tablelands Access and Options Analysis
  - Gilbert River Bridge
  - McLeod Crossing, and
  - Laura River Crossing
  - Public Transport triggers

**Additional Discussion:**

- Fuel and Fertilizer
- Minister:
  - Prosper 2050 document - whole of government ownership – still working through timber, seafood and fisheries sections.
  - Grow primary industry by \$30million by 2030
  - Impact and sovereign capability isn't where it should be i.e. Fuel and Fertiliser
  - Biosecurity challenges continue to grow - 42 of 100 offices in place in the rural and regional areas.
- Tablelands – water and biosecurity are the biggest concern to primary industries, particularly Navua Sedge. Invitation to the Minister to visit our region
- Douglas Shire Council:
  - trying to keep conservation groups away from GQUAL
  - Lots of cattle coming through now
- Etheridge Ag Precinct – red and green tape – Premier indicated he would talk to Coordinator General

- Happy to see biosecurity numbers rising – would like to see indigenous communities trained to be involved, not just left to their own devices
- Graphinex at Esmeralda – keep one eye on the road they are going to be using, it's a local government road, not a State road.
- Cairns showground – commenced master plan, would like State involvement in it.
- Lakeland dawns access through roads

**Hon Di Farmer MP - Shadow Minister for Education and the Early Years, Shadow Minister for Youth Justice**

**Hon Shannon Fentiman MP - Shadow Treasurer, Shadow Minister for Women**

**Nikki Boyd MP - Shadow Minister for Local Government and Water**



**Attended by (L to R):**

Hon Di Farmer MP, Cr Amy Eden, Cr Lisa Scomazon, Cr Rod Marti, Cr Trevor Pickering, Hon Shannon Fentiman MP, Cr Barry Hughes, Cr

Angela Toppin, Cr Alister Gibson, Ms Nikki Boyd MP, Cr Justin Coventry Ms Darlene Irvine (not pictured).

**Discussion points:**

- Regional and Remote Special Economic Zone
- Regional Growth Strategy
- Water and Wastewater \$1.2B renewal
- Transport:
  - Palmerston Highway – Importance of the link, need for master planning when it hits Bruce Highway and link to Mourilyan transport Hub
  - Kuranda Range – Review of Cairns to Northern Tablelands Access and Options Analysis
  - Gilbert River Bridge
  - McLeod Crossing, and
  - Laura River Crossing
  - Public Transport triggers
- Marine Development Opportunities:
  - Mourilyan and the Industrial Development Area
  - Port Douglas South Precinct – maintenance opportunities and transfer of skill sets from Mossman Mill to the maintenance precinct.
- Opt-In Sustainable Tourism Fund
- Genuine partnerships with First Nations Councils
- Strengthening health services in rural and remote areas
- Government employee home ownership in rural and remote areas
- Fair rating of State-owned land
- Impact of Department of Housing properties on Councils

- Waste costs generated in National Parks.

**Additional Discussion:**

- Would like you to keep pressure on government – whatever you can do would be great
- Graphinex project – 2<sup>nd</sup> biggest deposit in the world. Concerned about impact on roads, lots of damage out west. We should be going back to basics - Shelter, food, water and clothing
- Education is breaking up families in remote areas
- Disaster Management
  - Category D foreshores, etc, took 18 months to get that funding going.
  - With Narelle we're going to be fighting again – that is essential infrastructure for mental health
- Need to keep the quality of trade used for E2G, hospital – need to keep pipeline at work to keep these people in place i.e. CUF
- Visitor Levy – have QTIC on board, need to continue working, perhaps name change
  - It is a shame that politics is playing with this – perhaps some councils could become members at Hoteliers Association to get them on board.
- In Douglas population trebles – impact on sewerage, waste, water, parks, etc, small councils can't afford this
- Rate payers are struggling to pay for tourism/infrastructure
- Residential Activation fund (RAF)
  - \$14million with 13,000 rate payers in Tablelands – water is difficult
  - Council is being responsible.

- ALP would like information sharing of the work that LGAQ is doing around water
- Coen water supply cost
- Lakeland Downs is a growth area – want to put in water and sewer
- Childcare – funding qualified staff is difficult
- Enabling transition to home ownership
- Road access and bridges – resilience to enable people to get in and out of the region via McLeod and Laura crossings
- Gulf water plan – not a good outcome
- Youth justice issues – still have the issue of youth getting bail
- Agriculture in schools is important
- Discussed R&R SEZ and how it would work across the region. Ms Fentiman was interested in this concept
- ALP message is government made a lot of promises around cost of living, justices, etc, need to hold them to account.

**Hon Cameron Dick MP - Deputy Leader of the Opposition**



**Attended by (L to R):**

Cr Daryl Sexton, Cr Rod Marti, Cr Bruce Gibson, Cr Lisa Scomazzon, Hon Cameron Dick MP, Cr Angela Toppin, Cr Alister Gibson, Cr Amy Eden, Cr

Trevor Pickering, Cr Barry Hughes, Cr Justin Coventry, Ms Darlene Irvine (not pictured).

**Discussion points;**

- Regional and Remote Special Economic Zone
- Regional Growth Strategy
- Water and Wastewater \$1.2B renewal
- Transport:
  - Palmerston Highway – Importance of the link, need for master planning when it hits Bruce Highway and link to Mourilyan transport Hub
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- Strengthening health services in rural and remote areas
- Government employee home ownership in rural and remote areas
- Fair rating of State-owned land
- Impact of Department of Housing properties on Councils
- Waste costs generated in National Parks.

**Additional Discussions:**

- Sustainable tourism fund. We would love a letter supporting it
  - Differential rating doesn't work for us
  - Same as paid parking – need legislation to support
  - We want to put our best foot forward for Olympics
  - This would make our tourism sustainable
- Common user facility
  - This would keep Tier 1 contractors in region – E2G – Cairns water security – Cairns Hospital need pipeline to keep these trades here
- Special Economic Zone – Mr Dick was interested in this concept.
- PDR continuation of this – Laura and McLeod Crossings - Coen can not be serviced by sea
- Coen water treatment plant
- Government housing rental to mortgage
- Critical need for infrastructure – \$100million needed in Yungaburra, difficult with 13,000 rate payers
- Gilbert River Bridge – would love to meet with Minister King if you can assist
  - \$150 million - \$500,000 for business case funded, calling on you to push Federally
- Impacts on food for communities due to Laura & McLeod Crossings
- Goal post shifting with funding treaty/truth money now focussed on Water. Mr Dick advised:
  - \$300million - \$103million all focussed on water.

- \$70million left – unfair to indigenous councils
- Water is only one element of closing the act.
- The Queensland Government's repeal of the Queensland Building and Construction Training Policy and Indigenous Economic Opportunity Plan (IEOP) occurred without consultation with Indigenous Councils
- \$300K for Port Douglas Marine maintenance precinct – employ ex mill skilled workers
- Sustainable Tourism Fund – ferry got taken out, visitor fund would have given those tourist businesses some relief
- Caravan park example in Douglas Shire
- Dept of Housing properties;
  - Impact on councils and resources
  - Issues across the region from Hope Vale to Coen, through to Cassowary Coast
- Overhaul of the whole system is needed
- Q. what can we do to change the mind of ALP on the Sustainable Tourism Fund?
  - A. Advocacy is very clear
- Cameron commended the region on the brief and the professionalism of the Mayors
- Very interested in the R&R SEZ.

**Hon Dale Last MP - Minister for Natural Resources and Mines, Minister for Manufacturing and Minister for Regional and Rural Development**



**Attended by (L to R):**

Cr Alister Gibson, Cr Barry Hughes, Cr Angela Toppin, Cr Rod Marti, Hon Dale Last MP, Cr Trevor Pickering, Cr Amy Eden, Cr Justin Coventry, Cr Lisa Scomazzon, Cr Bruce Gibson, Cr Daryl Sexton, Ms Darlene Irvine (not pictured).

**Key Discussions:**

- Regional and Remote Special Economic Zone
- Regional Growth Strategy
- Water and Wastewater \$1.2B renewal
- Transport:
  - Palmerston Highway – Importance of the link, need for master planning when it hits Bruce Highway and link to Mourilyan transport Hub
  - Kuranda Range – Review of Cairns to Northern Tablelands Access and Options Analysis
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- Public Transport triggers
- Marine Development Opportunities:
  - Mourilyan and the Industrial Development Area
  - Port Douglas South Precinct – maintenance opportunities and transfer of skill sets from Mossman Mill to the maintenance precinct
- Opt-In Sustainable Tourism Fund
- Genuine partnerships with First Nations Councils
- Strengthening health services in rural and remote areas.

**Additional Discussions**

- Please tap Police Minister – In Georgetown Police Station has no toilet, yet a kitchenette installed. They still have to use QGAP toilet in another building
- Gravel pits – Etheridge up to ILUA process
- Gilbert River Bridge
- Graphinex and gold mine firing up – issues re roads, will tear up Richmond Croydon Road .
- Reduced RMPC contract – will need to increase to manage maintenance of the shoulders.
- McLeod Rive importance to Cape communities.
- Minister will be signing off on all consent orders. Has done four this year.
- Q. Does the home come with the land, or is it just the house? - It needs to be house and land for security – transition to home ownership
- Common user facility and Mourilyan – connectivity to both is important

- Visitor suitability Fund and example of how it could have helped during this period of fuel crisis – particularly to the drive tourism market.
- Cape York 40% down in bookings
- Wujal Wujal and Douglas boundary realignment.
- Yarrabah/Cairns boundary
- Importance of Palmerston Highway at B Double route and connection to Mourilyan Harbour

**ACTION:** Keep the Minister updated on Mourilyan Industrial business case, he is very interested

- Continued development of PDR and connection to agriculture and defence
- Coen water infrastructure needs
- Rural developments and Special Economic Zone
  - Potential to move from rental to housing
- Community cabinet in the next 12 months in Cooktown. Most of them are driving – make sure councils jump on this – lock in the relevant ministers to visit
- We don't mind feeding and using the resources in our region

**ACTION:** Talk to Andrew Cripps about R&R SEZ

### Hon John-Paul Langbroek MP - Minister for Education and the Arts



#### Attended by (L to R):

Cr Rod Marti, Cr Lisa Scomazzon, Cr Barry Hughes, Hon John-Paul Langbroek MP, Cr Amy Eden, Cr Justin Coventry, Cr Bruce Gibson, Cr Trevor Pickering, Ms Darlene Irvine (not pictured).

#### Discussion points;

- Regional and Remote Special Economic Zone
- Regional Growth Strategy
- Flexible place based education models in remote communities.

#### Additional Discussion:

- Agriculture – in the curriculum in some schools but not all in the western areas of QLD
  - It is needed in place, not at TAFE, they need to be in paddocks
- Croydon – Grade 7 have to go away, splits up the family unit.
- Up to 10 kids staying home and home school would like donga type set up to

enable these high school students to stay in place rather than board.

- Crocydon Shire will commit to supporting this. Could even buy the donga/demountable.
- There is a model at Julia Creek – this is a hub and spoke model, but for university
- There is also an example Cairns.
- Mitchell Potts – Chief of Staff
- Jas Lee – Infrastructure
- Gold mine and Graphinex coming online, could encourage families to stay
- Government rental housing transition to home ownership and Special Economic Zone
- Direct instruction – don't like it and don't attend.
  - When they go to boarding school, told the sit at year 3 to 4 level
  - Have about 40 primary school students who want to go to Cooktown school, but not allowed to take the bus
  - Kids are disengaged
- Seven teachers resigned last year because of DI and the way it is run
- Want DI gone and State back into the school at Hope Vale
- Thank you to Mitchell for his assistant re Cultural Centre
- New gallery – Cairns Regional Council has plans – we're happy to share but can't afford to fund it
- Mossman High School discussion
- Re DI in Douglas Shire - Adult learning starts with 12 and end with approx. 3 –

question if the funding is going to the right place

- Alexandria Bay School – numbers decreasing due to residential properties being purchase by conservationists
- Minister to go back and investigate these matters
  - We owe our existence to regional areas
  - some of these things will take time to fix.
- Schools needing/relaying on the pool
  - Is there any opportunities related to pools linked to schools and lessons which we could access to keep pools open?
  - Answer: won't fund pools in a school – very happy to consider the situation where we don't own the pool

**ACTION:** write to the Minister re funding opportunities to support local pools to keep them open.

- Hope Vale – some teachers have been turning up stoned. Has offered the principal the opportunity to do drug testing when council does it but they haven't taken it up
- We're giving you grassroots information from the community.

