

Minutes of the 177th FNQROC Board Meeting

Meeting No	177
Meeting Name	FNQROC Ordinary Board Meeting
Date	7 May 2026
Time	10.30pm
Venue	Cairns Regional Council

REPRESENTATIVES

CHAIR

Cr Lisa Scomazzon, Mayor
 Cr Teresa Millwood, Mayor
 Cr Mladin Bosnic, Councillor
 Cr Amy Eden, Mayor
 Cr Robyn Holmes, Mayor
 Cr Trevor Pickering, Mayor
 Cr Alister Gibson, Mayor
 Cr Daryl Sexton, Mayor
 Cr Rod Marti, Mayor

Douglas Shire Council
 Cassowary Coast Regional Council
 Mareeba Shire Council
 Cairns Regional Council
 Cook Shire Council
 Croydon Shire Council
 Wujal Wujal Aboriginal Shire Council
 Yarrabah Aboriginal Shire Council
 Tablelands Regional Council

CEO'S

Mr Brian Joiner, CEO
 Dr Nikola Stepanov, CEO
 Mr Scott Osman, CEO
 Mr Michael Miller, CEO
 Mr Peter O'May, CEO (*online*)
 Mr Ken Gouldthorp, CEO
 Ms Jacqui Cresswell, CEO (*online*)
 Mr Peter Franks, CEO

Cook Shire Council
 Tablelands Regional Council
 Douglas Shire Council
 Yarrabah Aboriginal Shire Council
 Wujal Wujal Aboriginal Shire Council
 Cairns Regional Council
 Croydon Shire Council
 Mareeba Shire Council

OBSERVERS

Mr Benton Wecker
 Ms Cass Liney
 Emily Reid

Lead, Intergovernmental Relations, LGAQ
 Lead, Environment and Climate, LGAQ
 Region Manager, Department of Local
 Government, Water and Volunteers

FNQROC STAFF

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

3296. MEETING OPEN AND WELCOME

The meeting commenced at 10.34am.

Mayor Scomazzon was acting Chair for this meeting and 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.

3297. APOLOGIES

Cr Angela Toppin AM, Mayor	Mareeba Shire Council
Cr Barry Hughes, Mayor	Etheridge Shire Council
Cr Ramon Jayo, Mayor	Hinchinbrook Shire Council
Cr Bruce Gibson, Mayor	Hope Vale Shire Council
Mr Lew Rojahn, CEO	Hope Vale Aboriginal Shire Council

3298. BOARD PRESENTATIONS

3298.1 Hon Grace Grace MP & Mr Michael Healy MP

Mr Healy spoke to the lack of investment in the Cairns region and the significant impact that has on the local economy.

Key points:

- Watching this space about Cairns Hospital upgrade
- Tourism businesses are under pressure
- Businesses still recovering from COVID
- Top end tourism - domestic numbers are good, international numbers not good. This feeds into investment in the area
- Mr Healy empathised that his role is to listen to be able to formulate policy.

Ms Grace acknowledged the traditional owners of the land.

Key points;

- Currently developing policies going forward
- Pleased to see QRA at the meeting and looking forward to their update
- Plans to link with Aboriginal councils to continue dialogue
- Housing, both social and affordable is a focus – any incentives given to developers has gone, considering how to help with housing so that people can live, work and play in their communities
- How can we assist with cost of living – working on lots of initiatives – how tourists get here, working with TMR, etc.
- Wanting to establish relationship to work together proactively rather than reactively
- Wants to hear from Councils and keen to open up dialogue
- Looking forward to hearing about impacts of weather events on the community so that they can work together.

From the floor:

- The point was raised about capital gains tax and how that is expected to help the community when owners pass the cost on to tenants.

Ms Grace acknowledged that this area is a work in progress and there is a need to make it more attractive for investors.

Mr Healy advised that it is a Federal Government issue, noting that better solutions are needed to achieve affordable housing for the coming generations. He has written to the Treasurer and the Prime Minister to advocate for investment in regional area. They are seeing cuts and a lot of talk, but there are real concerns that nothing is happening yet.

- The Chair enquired about a sustainable visitor fund.

Mr Healy is a strong supporter of a Visitor Levy. He noted Cairns, as an example, has 2.2million visitors using the roads and infrastructure which the community are paying for. Concern is that if the State Government doesn't introduce it, allowing councils to create their own revenue, then it may become a State Levy which the region will have to continue to advocate to receive.

Ms Grace highlighted that they understand FNQ is different to Cairns and want to ensure dialogues with those across the whole region.

Mr Healy has heard from over 34 businesses west of Cairns with smaller operations and low resources on cash assets. The feedback is that people are travelling less, not so much due to cost of fuel but because they don't want to get stuck there. Support is needed from State and Federal.

3298.2 MAJGEN (Retd) Jake Ellwood, CEO & Mr Andrew Abbott, GM of Operations - Queensland Reconstruction Authority

Mr Ellwood provided an overview of the QRA presentation, circulated with Minutes.

Key points;

- Mr Ellwood encouraged councils to let them know if something is missed.
- Primary producers got hit very hard in the last two events, north west centre and south west
- Unusual season because events were overlapping - QRA requested through the Federal Government to consider it as a single activation – this was significant because regardless of the event, those affected could get access to the measures, rather than wait for new announcement.
- LRAPS – these are important. They have moved away from competitive grants as it gave an unfair advantage to larger council with the resources to put together big submissions.
- QRRRP - \$150m per year looking at betterment and risk reduction. This is where LRAPS come into play, work out what is important to your council area.
 - Round 2, is under review – looking at the things which will have big impacts on resilience.
- Flood warning infrastructure – it doesn't matter who owns it, you get a full picture of what's happening in your area. In October Get Ready Gauges, Councils will get a full view. Won't be effective if master plans aren't in place. Councils urged to make sure their masterplans are updated.
- DFRA for QLD is a lifeline.
 - For councils to use DRFA carefully, it pays to have project managers – DRFA will fund them – you are rewarded for good submissions so worth getting a project manager in.
 - Don't put everything into your applications on a hope it will get funded, put in high quality submissions and you'll be assessed quickly.
 - Scrutiny is high, one tick in the wrong place can cost \$millions.
- Fuel – agreed to keep estimated recovering costs as is – still working out what 25/26 looks like.
 - What does that mean for councils? – keep moving, payments are made on actuals so councils are encouraged to get it done now, and be reimbursed.
- Colvin Review –there's only so much money in the pot. More spent on resilience the less there is for recovery – we want full support on recovery assistance. \$16b of tax payers money required for recovery over the last 4 years – we are the most disaster impacted state, next to NSW. \$760m spent on betterment by Fed and State.
- Urged to be cautious when talking about DRFA and betterment because it's a lifeline for QLD.

From the floor;

- Ms Irvine noted that in terms of scale and rate of recovery funding we have had to get, it's less than 0.5% spent on betterment, however reports from QRA show that the return on investment is significant.
- Ms Irvine highlighted that 25,000 people have access affected in Gilbert River, Laura and McLeod Crossings – how do you prioritise resilience upgrades and funding responsibility for those roads?

- Mr Ellwood highlighted that while disaster, betterment, and main roads projects support the same issues, they are from different pots of money. When roads go under, that's the opportunity to go to Federal Government and ask for changes to the infrastructure to focus on resilience.
- He advised that recovery is assumed, not everyone has a recovery bill like us – last year had 600K people seeking personal hardship allowance – no other state has that.
- Mr Franks, sought advice on water and wastewater assets to be considered essential
 - Mr Ellwood noted complexity for those where these assets are profit making.
 - Agreed to seek advice from Mr Andrew Abbott on our advocacy for the inclusion of Water and Wastewater assets as essential.
- Mr Franks raised fuel costs increasing betterment projects. Mr Abbott advised QRA will work with councils to make sure costs are covered.
- Colvin Review – We want no change in recovery assistance.

ACTION 3298.2 : Ms Irvine to seek advice from Mr Andrew Abbott on our advocacy brief re Water and Wastewater being treated as essential assets to ensure there is no conflict/impact on activities behind the scenes related to funding restoration.

3298.3 Kim Daniels, Manager, Stakeholder Engagement (online), Sue Oates, Manager, Hazard Preparedness East, Community Services Group (online) & Jake Hammelswang, Senior Hydrologist, Bureau of Meteorology – Flood Warning Infrastructure Network program (FWIN)

Ms Oates acknowledged the traditional owners of the land. Ms Oates then gave an overview of the presentation, circulate with Minutes.

Key points:

- It is a complex model in QLD – with disaster management being distributed to local government. It is a different approach to QLD, QPS arrange disaster management.
- BOM are here to support through planning, response and disaster management.
- This has been a particularly heavy wet season, starting before Christmas.
- There are a range of models of flood monitoring – run all info through flood models to see what's happening – with semination of those products, they report to the local disaster management groups – any intelligence from what's happening on the ground is important for community messaging.
- Ms Daniels noted that the bulk of 1600 rain gauge sites are in QLD – BOM will acquire 124 existing sites across our area – it's a small portion, not everything that was requested but working with a number of high priority sites.
- Happy to have a chat about FWIN with each council, share Jake's contacts with Councils

ACTION 3298.3: FNQROC to share Jake Hammelswang contact details to the Board.

3298.4 Benton Wecker, Lead, Intergovernmental Relations and Cass Liney, Lead Environment and Climate, LGAQ

Benton Wecker gave an overview of the LGAQ Briefing Note.

Key points:

- There have been some concerning stories about the personal safety of Mayors and Councillors – the LGAQ Policy Executive is looking at what more we can do to keep elected members safe.
- In preparation for the Annual Conference, the motions portal opening on 1 June, LGAQ will provide an update to each council on all 2021-2025 resolutions that will expire this year. The Policy Executive motions for 2026 will also be provided to councils.
- Fuel - Councils were asked to continue providing updates on requirements to fuel@lgaq.asn.au, with LGAQ continuing to advocate to State and Federal governments for councils to be treated as essential users under State and Federal legislation.

Ms Irvine advised the Board that LGAQ CEO, Alison Smith, will attend the July meeting to provide an update on LGAQs structure, key contacts and services provided to members.

3299. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

MOVED: Cr Daryl Sexton

SECONDED: Cr Rod Marti

That the Board:

Moves the minutes of the 176th FNQROC Board meeting held on Thursday 7 March 2026 to be confirmed and adopted.

CARRIED

3300. BUSINESS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES

Action items from 5 March 2026 FNQROC Ordinary Board Meeting

Meeting	Action	Responsible person
3284.1	FNQROC to share RDA 15 year celebration video link with the minutes.	Ms Lainie Poon, RDA TN

Link provided - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hXURuFgML5c		
3284.2	JCU (Tiana) to provide further information on RHMT funding and briefing note	JCU
Provided with March Minutes		
3284.3	LGAQ to send 'Councils are your everyday campaign' video.	LGAQ
Completed		
3286.1	Re Tropical Economic Development Strategy (TEDS) – the draft amended strategy presented to FNQROC at the December 2025 meeting be sent to members for any further comments to be included and the report and amended strategy to be reconsidered at our May 2026 meeting.	Member Councils and CEO, FNQROC
Included in the agenda for finalisation		
3287.1	FNQROC CEO to provide detailed breakdown of 2.5% and 2.75% charges for RRTG endorsed works program to Cassowary Coast Regional Council.	CEO, FNQROC
Completed		
3294.1a	FNQROC CEO to Invite Department of Housing Director General to the next FNQROC Board meeting to discuss social housing concerns.	CEO, FNQROC
Completed – declined request, raised with Minister		
3294.1b	Councils to provide a list of social housing addresses where issues are occurring to create a 'heat map' for our State delegation. (note these addresses will not be released).	Member Councils and CEO, FNQROC
Completed, hotspot mapping used in State Delegation		

3301. BOARD REPORTS

3301.1 B116 – RDA Tropical Economic Development Strategy

Discussed:

- Some concerns about RDA not engaging directly with Councils
- Can we support a document that also includes TCICA councils? Do they support it and is the data correct for them?
- There was concern that a true reflection of the RDA region may not be possible without direct engagement with all Councils within the RDA boundary.
- Ms Irvine noted that the concern was that the existing TEDs is outdated and this is what they are using to advocate for the region. This proposed updated plan is better than the existing, has been consulted with economic development officers and sent to FNQROC councils for comment March – April.
- Concern was raised that a true reflection of the region, particularly outside FNQROC may not be possible without direct engagement with Council's and that the document had not been endorsed by Torres and Cape Indigenous Councils Alliance (TCICA).

Mr Michael Miller identified a conflict of interest having recently been appointed to the RDA TN Board. As he is not a voting member of FNQROC he was not asked to leave the meeting.

MOVED: Cr Robyn Holmes

SECONDED: Cr Teresa Millwood

“That the Board:

Note the plan and request RDA TN to meet with each of the councils to consult on the strategy.”

CARRIED

3302. POLICIES FOR REVIEW

3302.1 FNQROC Operational Guidelines

Ms Irvine provided an overview of the amendments to the updated FNQROC Operational Guidelines.

Clarification was sought regarding:

- Section 4, Media Releases, and the reasoning for approval to be by the Chair rather than that whole Board.

Ms Irvine highlighted that this only relates to FNQROC adopted positions.

- Section 12.3 – Out of Session Motions (between Board Meetings) – how many votes constitute approval. Ms Irvine advise it would the same as a quorum as per the Charter - 50%+1.

MOVED: Cr Teresa Millwood

SECONDED: Cr Rod Marti

That FNQROC adopts the amended FNQROC Operational Guidelines with the following amendments:

- 12.2 – additional dot point “has an impact on FNQROC Budget approval levels*
- 12.3 – Add “A successful vote is 50% plus 1*

CARRIED

3303.DISCUSSION TOPIC

3303.1 Regional Drought Resilience Plans (RDRP) (Wet Tropics and Gulf and Hinterland)

Ms Irvine gave an overview of the tabled discussion paper, to be circulated with the Minutes.

Key points:

- As hosts/owners of these plans, FNQROC is required to endorse the draft projects to be submitted 31 May 2026 and the final projects to be submitted 30 June 2026.
- FNQROC will also be the principle for any funding allocated when the program opens in July 2026.
- Ms Anselmo noted that Cook, Hopevale and Wujal are included in the Cape and Torres Strate Resilient Plan, which is coordinated by TCICA. She highlighted that all councils are at different stages of drought resilience and advised that it is worth looking at to improve what’s already been done in drought and bush fire resilience.
- The Board enquired as to who were the members of the Climate Resilience Technical Committee. Ms Anselmo advised that the committee comprises council staff. The Committee looks at climate issues which drove the development of the RDRP. The committee also work with the Water Alliance group in the development of projects.
- The question was raised if this was something that FNQROC needed to coordinate
 - Ms Irvine advised that FNQROC endorsed these plans 1 August 2024 which made FNQROC the owners/hosts. Round 2 funding for these plans is \$1.6m for each plan (\$3.2million in funding for the region). If we don’t manage it ourselves, that funding will go to a third party to manage.

RESOLVED:

In relation to endorsing projects to be submitted for funding under round 2 of Drought Resilience Plan Program:

- a) *The FNQROC Climate Resilience Technical Committee (CRTC) to:*
 - *Review the projects for each stage and make a recommendation to the Board*
 - *Representatives are to discuss these recommendations with their CEOs and or Mayors*
- b) *For the Draft projects to be submitted - FNQROC CEO to review the recommended projects, draft flying motion and facilitate a virtual meeting May 26th after 3pm for any Mayor wishing to discuss the projects, and*
- c) *For the Final projects to be submitted – FNQROC CEO to review the recommended projects, draft flying motion and facilitate a virtual meeting if requested.*

ACTION 3303.1: FNQROC to schedule a virtual meeting with Mayors and CEO's on 26 May 2026 at 3pm, for those wishing to discuss projects being submitted 31 May 2026 under the Wet Tropics and Gulf Hinterland Drought Resilience Plans. The need for a virtual meeting to discuss projects to be submitted 30 June 2026 will be decided at a later date.

3304. FINANCIAL REPORTS

Financial Report Year to date

MOVED: Cr Rod Marti

SECONDED: Cr Trevor Pickering

That the Board:

Adopts the Profit and loss and Balance Sheet reports for the period 1 July 2025 to 16 April 2026.

CARRIED

3305. INFORMATION FOR THE BOARD

3305.1 FNQ Regional Plan Update

The FNQ Regional Plan was launched yesterday and is being adopted by today after which time it will be available online.

Ms Irvine also reiterated she is ready to assist these councils if needed – she will act if asked.

ACTION 3305.1: FNQROC CEO to send an update on the Cape York, Gulf and North Queensland Regional Plans to relevant Mayors and CEOs.

3305.2 State Delegation – April 2026

Ms Irvine advised that the delegation report had now been sent to Mayors and was available on the FNQROC Website. All action items and key information has also been sent to Mayors as a reminder.

Key points:

- One of the action items was to meet with Mr Andrew Cripps – Special Commissioner for Regional and Rural Queensland. The meeting took place on Wednesday 6th May 2026.

Feedback from the meeting:

- Mr Cripps is now a public servant and can only take direction from the Premier. He has been given three key areas to focus on:
 1. Review leadership network
 2. Find a way of getting senior management positions into regions
 3. Identify ways to better anticipate and mitigate major industry disruptions, such as the Mount Isa smelter situation and Mossman Mill so the State isn't pushed into a corner and can plan better.
- Ms Irvine discussed the Rural & Regional – Special Economic Zone and a suggestion was made to include a map of the different zones and the number population numbers in each of them.
- It was noted that having a high-level bureaucrat in the region was a positive but that it is important that the right messages are conveyed.
- Ms Irvine advised that she will start to work on the brief for the Federal Delegation in August.
- It was requested that special focus be put on obtaining a meeting with Minister Catherine King MP.
- In the absence of the Chair, Cr Marti shared Mayor Toppins sincere thanks to all the work the Mayor's did during the delegation, it was a very successful delegation.

3305.3 Incoming / Outgoing Correspondence

3305.3.1 Incoming

Nil

3305.3.1 Outgoing

Nil

NOTED

3306 CEO REPORT

The CEO report was taken as read.

3307 FNQROC MEETINGS

3307.1 Minutes of FNQROC Advisory Committees

- **FNQROC Regional Roads and Transport Group #87**
Friday 5 March 2026
Minutes – [available on website](#)
- **FNQROC Planners Meeting #84**
Friday 20 March 2026
Minutes – [available on website](#)
- **FNQ Regional Water Alliance #46**
Friday 17 April 2026
Minutes – [available on website](#)
- **FNQ Regional Roads and Transport Group Technical Committee**
Friday 24 April 2026
Minutes – [available on website](#)

NOTED

3307.2 Minutes of Confidential Meetings

- **FNQROC Bitumen Reseal Contract Meeting #5**
Wednesday 15 April 2026
Minutes – *available on request*
- **FNQROC Sewer Relining Contract Meeting**
Tuesday 14 April 2026
Minutes – *available on request*

NOTED

3308 GENERAL BUSINESS

3308.1 Fuel

3308.1.1 South West QLD ROC Fuel Tracker

3308.1.2 Fuel Prioritisation

3308.1.3 DSC SLM seeking guidance on regionally consistent approach to fuel price supply volatility and initiatives

Key points:

- Ms Irvine advised that as part of her review:
 - The SWQROC Fuel Tracker required self-reporting and with some of the update timelines exceeding a week it might not be helpful to alleviate fears.
 - She noted Redlands has it on their disaster dashboard with the information being drawn from the Qld Government (Fuel Prices API) (it is a legislative requirement for fuel information to be provided to the State on a daily basis.
- There are many fuel tracker apps out and about such as FACQ Fuel and Deals, Petrol Spy, Fuel Map Australia. These apps use Qld Government data.
- Fuel prioritisation was briefly discussed:
 - LGAQ was taking the lead for LG's in advocating for designation as an essential service
 - Ms Irvine advised prioritisation was something we could do in the future if the Mayors wanted – we have done something similar before with Sodium Hypochlorite.
- In terms of providing guidance to councils so that can put in place plans, Ms Irvine asked Mr Wecker if there were forward plans if we did go to stage 3. It is hard for councils to plan how they will plan for the next stage if they don't know what it will look like.
 - Mr Wecker advised that the LGAQ fuel forum was occurring at the time of the meeting, and will provide feedback on this.

ACTION 3308.1.3. LGAQ to provide update on what stage 3 for managing fuel might look like so that councils can develop appropriate contingency plans.

3309 NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on Thursday 2 July 2026, 11.00am at Cairns Regional Council.

There being no further business the Chair declared the meeting closed at 13.11pm.

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Cr Lisa Scomazzon - Acting FNQROC Chair

ATTACHMENT 1

Actions from Board Meeting held on 7 May 2026

Item	Action	Responsible person
3298.2	Ms Irvine to seek advice from Mr Andrew Abbott on our advocacy brief re Water and Waste Water being treated as essential assets to ensure there is no conflict/impact on activities behind the scenes related to funding restoration.	FNQROC CEO
3298.3	FNQROC to share Jake Hammelswang contact details to the Board.	FNQROC ESO
3303.1	FNQROC to schedule a virtual meeting with Mayors and CEO's on 26 May 2026 at 3pm, for those wishing to discuss projects being submitted 31 May 2026 under the Wet Tropics and Gulf Hinterland Drought Resilience Plans. The need for a virtual meeting to discussed projects to be submitted 30 June 2026 will be decided at a later date.	FNQROC CEO
3305.1	FNQROC CEO to send update on the progress of the Cape York, Gulf and North Queensland Regional Plans to relevant Mayors and CEOs.	FNQROC CEO
3308.1.3	LGAQ to provide update on what stage 3 for managing fuel might look like so that councils can develop appropriate contingency plans.	LGAQ