

FNQROC Regional Waste Management Plan (RWMP) Implementation Technical Committee

Minutes

Meeting No	12
Meeting Name	FNQROC Regional Waste Management Plan (RWMP) Technical Committee
Date	28 th May 2026
Time	9.00 am- 12 noon
Venue	McKenzie Room, 119-145 Spence St Office of Cairns Regional Council

ATTENDANCE

Name	Organisation
Steve Cosatto	Cairns Shire Council
Kristina Davidson	Cook Shire Council
Timothy Harding	Cassowary Coast Regional Council
Emma Egel	Douglas Shire Council
Morris Hamil, Emma Taylor & Bianca Roccella	Mareeba Shire Council
Gary Wedel	Tablelands Regional Council
Bhakti Devi (Meeting Convenor & Facilitator)	FNQROC

APOLOGIES

Name	Organisation
Nigel Crumpton	Cairns Shire Council
Chris Johnston	Cassowary Coast Regional Council
Daniel Dixon	Croydon Shire Council
Alan Clark	Etheridge Shire Council
Onesimo Mukodi	Hope Vale Shire Council
Kiley Hounslow	Wujal Wujal Aboriginal Shire Council
Sam Bann	Yarrabah Aboriginal Shire Council

1. KEY UPDATES – FNQROC & COUNCILS

A) FNQROC - Data Sharing

- Councils must provide formal consent before FNQROC can access individual waste data.
- Action: Bhakti to draft and circulate consent email template.

B) FNQROC - Program Funding

- DETSI has conveyed that Regional Waste Management Plan Coordinator funding ends June 2027 (no extension).
- Surplus funding from previous year will not be used to extend positions. It can only be used for Training of Coordinator.

C) Action: Begin planning for future funding options

D) Councils – Updates

- MSC – New Waste Strategy to be initiated, Eco-cycle Battery Bins installed, and collection initiated, Survey on kerbside recycling concluded
- CRC – Gate Fees have been revised
- TRC – 5 new staff recently recruited in Waste Operations Team
- CCRC – New waste strategy released, and waste education activities initiated
- DSC -

2. REGIONAL ADVOCACY UPDATE

Federal Government Inquiry into Australian Tyre Industry

- FNQROC invited to provide evidence to parliamentary inquiry
- Key points in FNQROC Submission & opportunity to emphasise during public hearing
 - Key issues: high costs, illegal dumping, lack of tracking.
 - Recommendations:
 - Mandatory product stewardship
 - Stewardship scheme to ring fence cost recovery for remote regional councils
 - Transport subsidy of some form like RRTAP to be made available
 - Tracking systems for tyre disposal
 - Incentivized use of tyre derived products in infrastructure & civil works to activate demand certainty which can lead to investment in the region for local processing and production facilities.
- Hearing scheduled for 3 June 2026

3. GUEST PRESENTATION - SUMMARIES

Link to the presentation by each presenter is attached in the Appendix

1. Atlas Soils – Mobile Shredding (“Milk Run”)

Focus: Mattresses, concrete, tyres, volume reduction

Key points

- Mobile shredder travels regionally to process waste on-site.
- Objective: reduce transport + landfill costs.
- Transport costs ~ \$2.50/km → major barrier in FNQ.

- Suggestion: process locally instead of transporting long distances.

Benefits

- Reduces landfill airspace use.
- Potential cost savings by:
 - Coordinating regional runs
 - Using right-sized equipment
 - Supports smaller/remote councils.

Practical insights

- Mattresses: mostly volume reduction; steel recovery limited.
- Concrete: opportunity to make eco-aggregate for reuse.
- Tyres: suitable for landfill capping material.

Timing

- Optimal campaign period: Sep–Oct.

Opportunities

- Regional “milk run” across councils.
- Potential inclusion of Cape York communities.
- Possibility to train local operators.

2. Wolf Peak – “Bag That Builds” (Plastic Recycling)

Focus: Hard-to-recycle plastics → construction material

Key points

- Mixed plastics converted to aggregate using additives (fly ash, lime).
- No need for extensive sorting.
- Produces material for:
 - Roads
 - Concrete
 - Blocks/pavers

System model

- Mobile processing units (2 × 20-ft containers).
- Operates via campaign/milk run model.

Scale & impact

- 6,000 t plastic → 8,000 t aggregate/year
- ~ \$600k avoided landfill costs
- ~ 7,000 t CO₂ reduction

Commercial model

- Pricing: mobilisation + day rate
- Works best with:
 - Local use of product
 - Stockpiling if needed

Challenges

- Biggest barrier = offtake market for product
- Councils must specify use in projects to drive demand

3. Ark Recycling – Solar Panel Recycling

Focus: Establish solar panel recycling facility in North QLD

Key points

- Current situation:

- 600,000–800,000 panels decommissioned annually in QLD
- <5% recycled
- No recycling capacity outside SEQ

Technology

- Mechanical process, ~99% material recovery
- Outputs:
 - Glass (largest fraction)
 - Aluminium
 - Minor silver recovery

Proposal

- Build regional facility (20–25 jobs)
- No council capital required
- Possible revenue share from gate fees

Challenges

- Feedstock variability (especially solar farms)
- Need strong volume data and projections

Actions: Councils to

- Estimate current + future solar panel volumes
- Consider providing letters of support

4. Second Life Solar

Focus: Reuse before recycling

Key insights

- Up to **80–90% of panels (<10 yrs)** are reusable.
- Recycling value low (~\$2/panel) vs reuse value high.

Opportunities

- Council drop-off + testing hubs
- Data modelling for future volumes
- Large economic potential from reuse

Actions: Councils to

- Estimate current + future solar panel volumes
- Consider providing letters of support

5. Bedding Stewardship Council (Mattress)

Focus: National stewardship program

Key points

- 2.1M mattresses recycled since 2024
 - Expanding to: Pillows, quilts, linen

Challenges

- Low regional volumes
- Storage/logistics
- Charities reluctant to accept used items

Opportunities

- Hub-and-spoke model
- Partnerships with:
 - Social enterprises
 - Hotels, mining, defence sectors

6. Cross-Cutting Themes

Major regional challenges

- Transport costs (dominant issue)
- Low volumes → poor commercial viability
- Lack of local recycling infrastructure
- Difficulty securing end markets (offtake)

Key opportunities

- Regional collaboration (“milk run” models)
- Mobile processing technologies
- Local reuse (reduce freight)
- Integrating waste into:
 - Landfill capping
 - Construction materials

4. FOLLOW ON DISCUSSION FROM GUEST PRESENTATIONS

Level of Interest from Councils

- Regional shredding (Atlas Soils) with Cape York inclusion – Strong
- Plastic pilot feasibility (Wolf Peak) – Weak
- Solar panel volumes (Arc Recycling) – Medium in the Council reports on solar panel volumes

5. ACTIONS ARISING FOR FNQROC

1. Email the data consent letter wording to Councils
2. Initiate an RFQ process to Local Buy listed suppliers for doing Regional Milk Run of Shredding Services
3. Contact Second Life Solar for the report on solar panel volume mapping by Council.

6. REGIONAL WASTE EDUCATION & BEHAVIOUR CHANGE ACTIVITIES

Group 1 & 2 Councils

CRC

- **New initiatives / activities (including updates to existing work)**
 - Development of new marketing & communication campaign – “Know before you throw”
- **Work in progress**
 - Continuing to host school groups, early learning centres, and community groups at the Material Recovery Facility
- **Planned activities**
 - Trash to Treasure event in August

CCRC

New initiatives / activities

- Redesign and implementation of bin contamination notices to provide clearer guidance on contamination issues and corrective actions.
- Design of targeted illegal dumping flyers/posters to combat issues raised by our Illegal Dumping Officer.
- Review and update of information within Recycle Mate to improve accuracy of local disposal guidance and available drop-off locations.

- Development of a coordinated waste education communications framework/strategy to support ongoing comms and repeat messaging.
- Development of new school and community engagement activities focused on waste avoidance, recycling and resource recovery.

Work in progress

- Delivery of school-based waste education sessions focused on waste reduction, recycling and resource recovery.
- Community engagement through local events, displays and activities promoting correct waste disposal and recycling behaviours.
- Development of educational resources including posters, signage, stickers and other behaviour change materials.
- Planning and promotion of the 2026 Waste to Art competition and exhibition, encouraging reuse, resource recovery and creative thinking around waste materials.

Planned activities

- Continued delivery of waste education at schools, community events and council-supported activities.
- Rollout of updated contamination reduction and recycling education materials across the region.
- Increased promotion of Recycle Mate as the primary disposal information tool for residents.
- Battery and e-waste education campaign, subject to communications approvals, focusing on safe disposal practices, fire risk awareness and available drop-off locations
- Targeted seasonal education campaigns addressing contamination, batteries, illegal dumping, tourism impacts and resource recovery opportunities.

MSC

New Initiatives:

- New Battery Bins & regular communications surrounding this
- Recycling/GO Kerbside Collection Survey, as part of this we included all our alternative resource recovery options

Works in Progress:

- Recycle mate chatbot has been added to our website & communications will be released about this shortly
- Some recent composting workshops have been run free of charge to the community

Planned Activities

- Councillors are very interested in the Garage Sale Trail initiative, so we will start investigating this

DSC

New initiatives

- Launch of Community Food Waste Challenge (campaign + workshops + incentives) to reduce food waste
- Development of a Tourism Sector Waste Toolkit with QR codes and accommodation-based resources
- Trial of a Community Recycling Station (bulk bin compound) near ferry access points
- Introduction of Local Waste Champions Recognition Program to celebrate positive behaviours
- Rollout of “Douglas Chooses to Reuse” reusable cup pilot in Port Douglas
- Development of a “Cover Your Load” campaign targeting tradies and contractors
- Expansion of Garage Sale Trail program to support reuse and circular economy initiatives

Work in progress (Ongoing)

- Bin performance feedback program providing ongoing contamination messaging to residents
- Recycle Mate promotion campaign to support correct sorting behaviour

- School and early learning waste education programs (curriculum-aligned delivery)
- Transfer station education program to improve sorting and resource recovery
- Pop-up education stalls and community engagement at markets, events and transfer stations
- Ongoing business engagement and waste audits (hospitality, tourism, commercial sectors)
- Continued home composting and organics diversion support for households
- Illegal dumping education and enforcement campaign targeting known hotspots

Planned activities

- Increased support for multi-unit dwellings (targeted signage, communication and site visits)
- Expansion of on-ground engagement in remote communities through outreach and local events
- Further digital campaigns and multilingual resources targeting tourists and transient populations
- Continued rollout of circular economy initiatives (reuse, repair, reduced consumption)
- Ongoing council-generated waste review program to improve internal practices
- Broader implementation of waste awareness calendar campaigns (e.g. batteries, plastics, e-waste, litter, compost)

TRC

New initiatives / activities (including updates)

- Trial of Containers for Change public bin basket attachments, combined with messaging to encourage correct container recycling and reduce littering behaviour
- Delivery of “Recycle Right” education campaign (videos and messaging) to improve correct recycling practices and reduce contamination
- Increased public-facing education aligned with regional recycling systems (Cairns MRF) to build understanding of what happens to recyclables and why correct sorting matters
- Participation in regional education and awareness initiatives through FNQ partnerships, supporting consistent messaging across councils

Work in progress (ongoing activities)

- Ongoing kerbside recycling education, focusing on:
 - What goes in each bin
 - Avoiding contamination
 - Correct preparation of recyclables
- Continued public communication campaigns and reminders (social media, calendars, notices) reinforcing correct bin presentation and waste behaviours
- Ongoing promotion of recycling behaviours and resource recovery benefits, including:
 - Reducing landfill
 - Conserving resources
 - Supporting the circular economy
- Behaviour-focused messaging linked to waste drop-off facilities, guiding correct disposal of:
 - Green waste
 - Metals
 - Batteries and problem waste
- Continued community awareness messaging supporting “right waste, right place” behaviours

Planned activities

- Development and expansion of **public recycling behaviour change initiatives**, including education linked to new or upgraded infrastructure (e.g. public place recycling)
- Potential expansion of **container recycling initiatives**, supported by targeted behaviour change messaging to increase participation

- Continued alignment and development of **education campaigns under regional waste strategies**, ensuring consistent messaging across FNQ councils
- Ongoing design of **community awareness and behaviour change programs**, focused on:
 - Reducing contamination
 - Increasing recycling participation
 - Improving overall waste habits

Group 3 Councils

CSC

New initiatives / activities (including updates)

- Introduction of “No Label, No Service” behaviour-based kerbside program, reinforcing correct bin use, reducing contamination and discouraging unsafe disposal (e.g. batteries in bins)
- Implementation of bin audit and “Get It Sorted” tagging program, providing direct feedback to residents to improve sorting behaviour
- Delivery of storm readiness clean-up messaging aligned with free dumping periods, encouraging proactive waste removal and safe disposal before weather events
- Integration of “Separate & Sort Your Waste” messaging during disaster and recovery periods to guide correct waste separation under high-pressure conditions

Work in progress (ongoing activities)

- Ongoing education on correct waste sorting and separation, particularly at transfer stations and during clean-up events
- Continued community messaging reinforcing “right waste, right place” behaviours, especially for general waste, recyclables and problem waste
- Regular social media communications and reminders to reinforce expected waste behaviours and compliance requirements
- Ongoing promotion of safe disposal practices for hazardous and problem waste, including batteries, gas bottles and e-waste
- Embedded behaviour change messaging within service delivery, particularly in remote communities where self-haul and transfer station use is common
- Continued awareness messaging during disaster response and recovery, focusing on sorting, safety and correct disposal practices

Planned activities

- Further development of targeted behaviour change initiatives focused on:
 - Improving waste sorting
 - Reducing contamination
 - Addressing hazardous waste risks
- Expansion of education-led approaches linked to compliance and service rules (building on “No Label, No Service” model)
- Continued strengthening of waste education messaging during disaster preparedness and recovery, given high cyclone/flood exposure
- Development of simple, clear and locally relevant education materials suited to remote and diverse communities
- Ongoing alignment with regional (FNQROC) behaviour change messaging, to ensure consistency across councils