FNQ RRTG Technical Committee Minutes

Meeting No	147
Meeting Name	FNQ RRTG Technical Committee Meeting
Date	16 October 2026
Time	10:00am
Venue	McKenzie Room, Level 2, Cairns Regional Council, Spence Street, Cairns

Representatives

Name	Organisation
Travis Mitchell (Chair)	Cairns Regional Council
Jedda Bennett-Kellam	Cassowary Coast Regional Council
Nichoas Hook	Cook Shire Council
Dan Dixon	Croydon Shire Council
Steven Carr	Douglas Shire Council
David Fletcher	Etheridge Shire Council
Kael Whitnell	Mareeba Shire Council
Brendan Slattery	Tablelands Regional Council
Nick Lennon *via teleconference*	Wujal Wujal Aboriginal Shire Council
Amanda Hancock	Technical Coordinator, FNQROC

Observers

Name	Organisation
Natalee Jennings	DTMR - LG Partnerships Team

Apologies

Name	Organisation
Adam Hagy	Cook Shire Council
Dan Dixon	Croydon Shire Council

Michael Geoghegan	Yarrabah Aboriginal Shire Council
Richard Sheedy	DTMR – Far North District
Jarrod Hellmuth	LGAQ

1. **Welcome and introduction.**

2. **Apologies**
   Apologies noted.

3. **Project Prioritisation Tool – Benefit, Value and Road Safety Consideration – Justin Fischer, Shepherd Services**
   Justin provided an overview of the matters raised in the discussion paper *Project Prioritisation Tool – Benefit, Value and Road Safety Considerations* – Appendix 1.

   It was agreed that the current Benefit Cost Analysis (BCA) component of the Program Management Tool (PMT) is no longer fit for purpose.

   A range of alternative assessment methodologies was discussed, including the use of QRA benchmark rates, asset valuation data, asset criticality measures (i.e. the consequences of not undertaking the works), travel time impacts and diversion rates. Consideration was also given to incorporating existing datasets, such as Black Spot information and network condition data.

   The group agreed that the current project scoring methodology remains effective and that an enhancement of the existing Multi-Criteria Analysis (MCA) framework may be sufficient. David Fletcher advised that he currently uses a relatively simple project prioritisation model, elements of which could potentially be adapted for incorporation into the PMT. This model would allow both the assessment criteria and weighting factors to be tailored to suit the program's requirements.

   Action Item 147.1: David Fletcher to provide the project prioritisation model for consideration as a potential enhancement to the PMT.

   Regional Condition Information was also discussed and the value of developing a more consistent regional understanding of the LRRS network noting several councils already hold RACAS information. It was agreed that this would be revisited once we have agreed and implemented the changes to the PMT.

   Justin Fischer departed the meeting st 10:57am

4. **Confirmation of Previous Minutes**

   4.1. Meeting No. 146 held 12 August 2026 & 17 August 2026
   4.2. Business Arising from Previous Minutes 12 August 2026 & 17 August 2026

Item	Action	Responsible Party	Status
142.6	Jarrod Hellmuth, LGAQ to share copies of LGAQ's to the RIA to reduce the open road default limit and National Road Safety Strategy.	Jarrod Hellmuth, LGAQ	Outstanding
144.3	Review and refine the Benefit Cost Analysis (BCA) component of the Program Management Tool (PMT) to be refined to improve its effectiveness with the project prioritisation framework.	Amanda Hancock, FNQROC & All Councils	Ongoing – see Item 3.

144.5	FNQROC to Investigate feasibility of collective licencing for Australian Standards.	Amanda Hancock, FNQROC	Ongoing
145.1	Amanda to seek further information from TMR regarding Notifiable Road Use Agreements, including how they operate and the circumstances in which additional maintenance contributions may be required.	Amanda Hancock, FNQROC	Outstanding
146.1	Seek RRTG endorsement of the updated 2026-27 – 2029/30 work program.	Amanda Hancock, FNQROC	Complete
146.2	Prepare a report for the RRTG, seeking approval of the FNQ Road Treatment Practice Guides and, subject to approval, recommending their endorsement by the FNQROC Board.	Amanda Hancock, FNQROC	Complete
146.3	FNQROC to liaise with councils to identify current barriers to participation in the Regional Bitumen Reseal arrangement and explore potential actions to address those barriers.	FNQROC	Complete
There are currently three councils participating in the 2026-27 Regional Bitumen Reseal Program, with a fourth council recently indicating their interest in joining the arrangement late in the process. Feedback received from one council highlighted concerns regarding the application of the Bitumen Rise and Fall Equalisation process with a preference indicated for the Rise and Fall Equalisation mechanism to be a mandatory component of the arrangement rather than an optional provision. This would provide greater certainty for participating councils during project planning and delivery. The timing of the Regional Bitumen Reseal Program was also raised for discussion, with participants noting the importance of ensuring the program schedule aligns with councils' delivery requirements. Further feedback for consideration to be sought ahead of the next arrangement.			
146.4	Investigate existing council asset data and available TMR safety information to determine what information is already available to support the identification and prioritisation of future TIDS project, identify information gaps, and recommend possible actions.	Amanda Hancock, FNQROC & All councils	See Item 3.

5. Confirmation of Previous Minutes – RRTG

5.1. Minutes of Meeting No. 90 – 11 September 2026

5.2. Business Arising from Previous Minutes – 11 September 2026

Action Item No.	ACTION	Responsible Person(s)	Status
557.3	Douglas Shire Council to provide TMR with details of roads where washouts have been identified as a concern for further investigation. (updated)	Douglas Shire Council	
576.1	Cassowary Coast Regional Council to follow up with TMR regarding the relevant section of roadworks that appears to have remained incomplete for an extended period and seek an update on the project's status and anticipated completion timeframe.	Cassowary Coast Regional Council	Complete
576.2	TMR to take action to address loose stone on roadworks between Feluga to Mission Beach	TMR	Complete
579.1	Proposed priority questions for government speakers attending the Roads & Transport Forum, to be held as part of the LGAQ Annual Conference to be submitted to Amanda Hancock as soon as possible for collating and forwarding.	All councils	Complete

6. Program

6.1. 2026-27 Program

Projects progressing well – there are 20 projects in this year's program, and the current TIDS expenditure is 44% compared with a State average of 13%.

Cairns Regional Council
ID474 – Abbott Street – LRRS – Renew footpath. This project may not be proceeding, council to advise.

Cassowary Coast Regional Council
ID556 – Butler Street – LRRS – Design and construct of intersection upgrade and asphalt overlay. No design yet.

Douglas Shire Council
ID550 – Cape Tribulation – LRRS – Daintree River ferry landside infrastructure civil works. Project costs have escalated significantly so project is now underfunded, council to update the figures in the PMT to ensure the project is able to receive any additionally funding should it become available.

Mareeba Shire Council
ID576 – Springmount Road – LRRS – Replacement of RCBC crossing with reinforced concrete bridge. Project costs increased significantly. Federal SLRIP Funding of $5m received. Project costs updated accordingly.

6.2. New Projects

No new projects to be reviewed. Councils encouraged to add new projects for consideration, ideally LRRS roads given non-LRRS 20% funding limit.

6.3. 2027-28

No changes advised for 2027-28 or 2028-29

Nick Lennon departed the meeting at 11:28am

6.4. 2029-30

Cassowary Coast Regional Council

ID296 – McGowan Drive – Non-LRRS – Renew kerb and channel, footpath, drainage and path. $615,225 allocated as 50% maximum amount of non-LRRS funding that may be allocated.

Douglas Shire Council

ID590 – Island Point – Non-LRRS – Widening of road and new shared path. $600k allocated.
ID589 – Avalon Street – LRRS – Renew the Cape Tribulation boardwalk. $300k allocated.

Mareeba Shire Council

ID576 – Springmount Road – LRRS - Replacement of RCBC crossing with reinforced concrete bridge. $1.4m allocated.
ID582 – Springmount Road – LRRS – Intersection upgrade at Chettle Road. $250k allocated.

Unfunded Projects

The following unfunded projects were withdrawn from the program:

Cairns Regional Council

ID365 – Maitland Road – LRRS – Pavement Rehabilitation from quarry entry to Peterson Road, Project withdrawn as no longer proceeding in the current form due to the PDA.

Mareeba Shire Council

ID638 – Tinaroo Creek Road – LRRS – Gravel Resheeting. Banked project. Project withdrawn as project completed without funding

As the remaining projects seeking funding in 2029-30 and beyond are located on non-LRRS roads, it was agreed that allocation of the remaining funds available in 2029-30 be deferred pending identification and submission of additional projects currently being considered by councils.

Project Management Tool (PMT)

- Shepherds were engaged in 2024 to develop the TIDS Program Management Tool (PMT). Under the terms of our arrangement, Shepherds have now begun charging the annual data hosting fee for the platform which is $1,000 per annum for each council.
- The fees are ineligible for SCDF as the costs are now considered business-as-usual operating costs. It was therefore proposed and agreed that the costs be included in the annual TIDS program.
- The total cost is $10,000, Indigenous councils are not required to co-contribute so we will seek $6,000 in TIDS funding each year.
- Amanda will add the project to the PMT as unfunded with funds to be allocated as a priority in 2026-27 if funding becomes available.

ACTION ITEM 147.2 Seek RRTG endorsement of the updated 2026-27 – 2029/30 work program.

7. Road Treatment Study

The FNQ Road Treatment Practice Guides were approved by the RRTG at their Meeting No. 90 on 11 September 2026, with a recommendation that they be formally endorsed by the FNQROC Board. Consideration of the Guides is scheduled FNQROC Board No. 180 on 5 November 2026. Subject to Board endorsement, the Guides will be published on the FNQROC website for use by member councils. Their implementation will be supported through targeted training, partially funded by the Statewide Capability Development Fund (SCDF), which will be delivered by to be Phil Hunt Road Engineering Services, the author of the Guides.

8. Joint Purchase & Resource Sharing

See Item 4, Action Item 146.3

9. Capability Agreement & Action Plan

- Construction Contract Training
  An email was sent to the RRTG TC on 9 October 2026 seeking support for an SCDF funding application for a contribution to the costs of Construction Contract Training scheduled for the end of October 2026 which was agreed.
- Bridge inspection Training
  Following the delivery of previous Bridge Inspection Training, Cairns Regional Council has requested that an additional session be arranged. It is understood that several other councils may also be interested in participating, and it is anticipated that there would be sufficient demand from across the region to support a further training program.

ACTION ITEM 147.3 Amanda to seek nominations from councils interested in participating in a further Bridge Inspection training session.

- **Aerodrome Training**
  Individual contracts for the Regional Aerodrome Safety Audits are now with participating councils to sign. Aerodrome Design Services have advised that they have been discussing training requirements with several councils. If there is sufficient interest across the region, it may be worthwhile exploring a collective training arrangement, which could help reduce costs and improve value for participating councils. The group agreed and advised that would support an SCDF application if there is sufficient interest.

10. TMR Local Government Partnerships Update

Transport and Infrastructure Development Scheme (TIDS) Funding

- First quarter expenditure reports for 2026-27 were emailed out on 13 October 2026 and are also on the SharePoint Site.
- Statewide TIDS expenditure for the 2026-27 program was 13% at the end of September 2026.
- FNQ RRTG 2026-27 TIDS expenditure to the end of September was 44%, the highest across the state.
- Douglas Shire and Mareeba Shire councils are well progressed with their TIDS programs, with 89% and 71% respectively spent of their allocated 2026-27 TIDS budget to date.
- Thank you to FNQ RRTG TC and Technical Coordinator for the timely submission of your End of Financial Year Program Acquittal.
- As always, please keep working closely with your local TMR District Office to ensure TIDS claims are able to be processed in a timely manner and that projects and allocations reflect correctly in the system.

Statewide Capability Development Fund

- RRTG members can apply for training or capability-building opportunities through SCDF for this financial year. The application form, program guidelines and post-training feedback form are all available on the Alliance SharePoint Portal.
- Of the $600,000 available, approximately $283,000 has already been committed to date.
- FNQ RRTG TC has approved SCDF funding approximately $3,600 for good practice guides training.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander TIDS

- Each year, TMR invites eligible councils to submit applications for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander TIDS funding.
- Anticipated that 2027-28 project submissions will be sought in late 2026 with, applications closing in early 2027 (all dates to be advised).

Annual Progress Report

- Good news, the 2025-26 Annual Progress Report is expected to be available very soon. An email with the link to the Report will be sent out to all Alliance members.

QTRIP Industry Briefing

- TMR held a QTRIP industry briefing on Thursday, 13 August 2026.
- The briefing provided an overview of Queensland's forward transport infrastructure program, highlighted upcoming opportunities across the state, and offered insights from TMR leadership on strategic priorities, procurement approaches, and the evolving delivery environment.
- Presentation materials are now available online at https://www.tmr.qld.gov.au/qtriponline/qtrip-industry-briefing
- There are separate Regional Information presentations, a video recording of the event as well as a transcript.

Queensland Freight Delivery Plan

- TMR launched the Queensland Freight Delivery Plan 2026 (QDFP) on 10 September 2026. The plan is a roadmap for a productive, reliable, and safe freight system that will support Queensland's future growth.
- The five-year plan sets a clear vision for a productive, reliable, and safe freight system that drives economic growth and strengthens communities and their connections across the State.
- Developed through engagement with more than 500 stakeholders, including members from the Queensland Ministerial Freight Council, industry, local government, and the community, the plan outlines practical actions to ensure Queensland's freight system is ready for the future.
- The plan outlines 70 actions to be delivered over the next five years that are centred on key themes of access, efficiency, productivity, resilience and regional development.
- The plan is available to download through https://www.tmr.qld.gov.au/business-industry/transport-sectors/freight/queensland-freight-delivery-plan.

TMR Funding Programs

Active Transport Grants Program

- Applications are now open for the 2027-28 funding round of the Active Transport Grants Program.
- The grant program opened on 28 September 2026, and is supporting councils to plan, design and construct high quality and safe active transport infrastructure on the local transport network. For this program, active transport refers to travel by walking and riding bikes.
- Applications close on 30 November 2026 and outcomes are expected in March 2027.
- Several changes have been introduced for this funding round. Before applying, applicants should read the program guidelines to ensure their projects meet the eligibility requirements.
- A webinar will be held to provide further information and guidance on the funding round. Invitations will be sent to councils once details have been finalised.
- Further information, including eligibility and application requirements and program guidelines and are available at https://www.tmr.qld.gov.au/travel-and-transport/cycling/cycling-grants/active-transport-grants-program.

Remote Communities Freight Assistance

- TMR provides freight subsidies to support remote and regional communities within the Northern Peninsula, Torres Strait and Gulf region, offering direct benefit to customers.
- The Cape Freight Subsidy provides a 20 per cent discount at the point-of-sale in participating retailers across the region for eligible essential goods such as fruit and vegetables; meat and dairy; frozen goods; and groceries.
- Assistance will be available until 30 June 2028, or until funding is exhausted.
- The eligibility criteria, guidelines and all relevant information on the program is available at https://www.qrida.qld.gov.au/program/remote-communities-freight-assistance-scheme.

11. Points for noting to the FNQ RRTG or the FNQROC Board

Updated works program. See Item 6.

12. Other Business

- **Temporary Traffic Management**

  Councils continue to experience significant difficulty in securing suitably qualified personnel to undertake Temporary Traffic Management planning. Feedback indicated that the training and competency requirements necessary to obtain and maintain these qualifications are highly onerous, creating workforce constraints and limiting councils' capacity to undertake this essential function.
  It is understood that this is a statewide issue.

Action Item 147.4 Amanda to raise councils' concerns regarding Temporary Traffic Management qualification requirements with TMR and seek advice on any planned reviews of initiatives to address the issue.

- **Spray Seal Design Training**

  Cassowary Coast Regional Council plan to undertake Spray Seal Design training. Seal Design training is included in the current Capability and Action Plan. Should other councils also be interested in participating there may be merit in arranging regional training course, with the potential funding support to be explored through the SCDF. Discussion at the meeting indicated that there would likely be sufficient demand across the region to support the delivery of regional training. Subject to participant locations, it was agreed that Cairns would be the preferred venue as a more central location, rather than Cassowary Coast.

ACTION ITEM 147.3 Amanda to seek nominations from councils for potential participation in Spray Seal Design training and assess demand across the region.

13. Next Meeting Date

Regional Road & Transport Group – Thursday 5 November 2026 – Cairns
Regional Road & Transport Group Technical Committee – Friday 15 January 2027 - Cairns

The meeting closed at 1.20pm

ACTION ITEMS OVERLEAF

ACTIONS ITEMS

Actions arising from Meeting 147 – 16 October 2026

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144.3	Review and refine the Benefit Cost Analysis (BCA) component of the Program Management Tool (PMT) to be refined to improve its effectiveness with the project prioritisation framework.	Amanda Hancock, FNQROC & All Councils
145.1	Amanda to seek further information from TMR regarding Notifiable Road Use Agreements, including how they operate and the circumstances in which additional maintenance contributions may be required.	Amanda Hancock, FNQROC
147.1	David Fletcher to provide the project prioritisation model for consideration as a potential enhancement to the PMT.	David Fletcher, ESC
147.2	Seek RRTG endorsement of the updated 2026-27 – 2029/30 work program.	Amanda Hancock, FNQROC
147.3	Amanda to seek nominations from councils interested in participating in a further Bridge Inspection training session.	Amanda Hancock, FNQROC
147.4	Amanda to raise councils' concerns regarding Temporary Traffic Management qualification requirements with TMR and seek advice on any planned reviews of initiatives to address the issue.	Amanda Hancock, FNQROC
147.5	Amanda to seek nominations from councils for potential participation in Spray Seal Design training and assess demand across the region.	Amanda Hancock, FNQROC

Appendix 1 – Shepherds Discussion Paper
October 2026

Project Prioritisation Tool – Benefit, Value and Road Safety Considerations

Purpose

To seek Technical Committee feedback on potential future approaches to:

- assessing project benefit and value for money within the FNQROC Project Prioritisation Tool; and
- improving the consideration of road safety and network risk within regional prioritisation.

The intent at this stage is to confirm the problem being addressed and agree the principles to guide further development and testing, rather than adopt a final methodology.

Background

The Project Prioritisation Tool (PPT) is intended to support the Technical Committee in developing a sound technical recommendation to the RRTG on the allocation of TIDS funding. Previous review work identified that professional judgement, moderation and consideration of projects relative to one another remain important parts of this process.

The current tool includes Multi-Criteria Analysis, Risk Analysis, Benefit Cost Analysis and alignment with the Regional Road Transport Investment Strategy. Previous review work identified that both the BCA and risk components were having less influence on project prioritisation than intended. The Risk Analysis was subsequently removed from the PPT.

Benefit Cost Analysis

A conventional benefit cost analysis seeks to compare the monetary value of project benefits with the cost of delivering and maintaining the project. In transport projects, benefits can include items such as reduced vehicle operating costs, travel time savings, crash reductions and other external benefits.

These assessments are commonly associated with larger project or business case assessments and can require significant project-specific data, modelling and professional judgement. A standalone project-level BCA can also involve a material cost to prepare, particularly where transport modelling or detailed benefit calculations are required.

Appendix 1 – Shepherds Discussion Paper
October 2026

The TMR BCA tool embedded within the PPT sought to provide a lower-cost, broad-scale alternative by incorporating a simplified BCA methodology within the prioritisation tool. The current calculation considers project costs against vehicle operating cost savings, travel time savings, crash cost savings and externalities. The previous review found that these benefit calculations were the most complex part of the PPT.

Previous advice also identified a number of limitations with the approach. In particular:

- the methodology was based on a 2011 TMR CBA framework;
- the original methodology was more suited to rural link upgrades where travel time, closures and operating costs could be readily quantified;
- it had subsequently been applied to a much broader range of project types, including projects whose benefits arise through maintaining access, preserving assets, improving safety or providing other user outcomes;
- project costs have continued to escalate while many of the underlying benefit parameters remain based on older values; and
- the complexity of the calculation was producing relatively little useful differentiation between projects.

Previous advice recommended limiting the existing BCA to projects where it was suited and considering a more detailed update at a future stage if the Committee considered this valuable.

The question for the Committee is therefore less about reproducing a detailed economic appraisal and more about what the BCA component is intended to contribute to regional prioritisation.

At a broad level, it is suggested that the intended outcome is to provide an indication of whether a project represents reasonable value for money and benefit to the regional transport network.

A simpler future approach could potentially consider:

- a small number of clearly defined benefit factors;
- different benefit expectations for different project or treatment types;
- known project cost;
- benchmark cost measures where suitable, such as cost per kilometre, cost per square metre or other relevant unit rates; and
- simple scoring or value bands to identify whether the scale of investment appears proportionate to the likely benefit.

This would not seek to calculate every transport benefit in dollar terms. Rather, it would provide a more proportionate and transparent means of differentiating projects for regional programming purposes.

Considerable further work would be required to develop the factors, benchmarks, scoring approach and project-type matrix. It is proposed that any methodology be workshopped with the Committee and tested against existing projects, including sensitivity testing, before being incorporated into the PPT.

Road Safety and Network Risk

Previous review work also identified limitations with the current risk approach. Before removal if the risk factor from the PPT the old methodology primarily linked risk likelihood directly to asset condition, which does not adequately account for exposure or the relative significance of different roads within the regional network.

There has more recently been discussion around the potential use of broader network risk assessment approaches. Before committing to a complex network-wide risk model, it may be useful to first clarify what the RRTG is seeking to achieve through greater consideration of road safety.

If the objective is to encourage greater regional investment in road safety, there may be a number of relatively practical steps available using existing or readily accessible information.

These could include:

- improved regional reporting and consideration of crash history;
- use of Compass IoT or similar information to identify emerging operational issues;
- better use of available road condition information;
- greater recognition of proactive road safety audits or other documented safety assessments (similar to proactive Blackspot applications); and

This could provide multiple pathways for a project to demonstrate road safety benefit. For example, a project may be supported by crash history, condition information, observed vehicle behaviour or a proactive road safety audit.

This is broadly consistent with the principle used in other road safety funding programs, where both demonstrated crash history and proactive assessment can provide evidence of a safety need.

Regional Condition Information

There may also be value in developing a more consistent regional understanding of the LRRS network. A number of councils already hold RACAS information. Subject to council agreement, there may be an opportunity to consolidate this information into an FNQROC regional dataset or hub, identify gaps in coverage and undertake targeted assessments where information is missing.

A consistent regional condition dataset would have value beyond road safety. It could improve visibility of the LRRS network and support more strategic consideration of where investment may be warranted.

Condition alone should not determine priority. However, condition considered alongside factors such as:

- traffic volume;
- heavy vehicle use;
- speed environment;
- road hierarchy and regional function; and
- crash or safety information

could help identify higher-order LRRS roads where deterioration or safety issues may warrant greater regional attention.

This may ultimately provide a more practical and dynamic basis for informing investment than relying solely on a single static network risk score.