

FNQ Regional Water Alliance

Minutes

Meeting No	36
Meeting Name	FNQ Regional Water Alliance
Date	5 December 2023
Time	10:00am
Venue	Kingsford Room, Level 3, Cairns Regional Council, Spence Street, Cairns

1. ATTENDANCE

Name	Organisation
Adam Schmalz	Cairns Regional Council
Toni Veronese	Cairns Regional Council
Simon Page	Cassowary Coast Regional Council
Manu Gravatt <i>via teleconference</i>	Cassowary Coast Regional Council
Brian Pickering	Croydon Shire Council
Garry Pickering	Croydon Shire Council
Peter Tonkes <i>via teleconference</i>	Cook Shire Council
Peter White <i>via teleconference</i>	Douglas Shire Council
Raju Ranjit <i>via teleconference</i>	Etheridge Shire Council
Geoff Tansley <i>via teleconference</i>	Hinchinbrook Shire Council
Cassandra Budd	Mareeba Shire Council
Morris Hamill	Mareeba Shire Council
Jennifer Hartwig <i>via teleconference</i>	LGAQ
David Wiskar	QLD Water
Helen Dawson <i>via teleconference</i>	RDMW
Dinesha Emmery <i>via teleconference</i>	RDMW
Christopher Land	Queensland Health
Anthony Archie	FNQROC
Amanda Hancock	FNQROC

2. GUESTS

Name	Organisation
Lee-Anne Willis <i>via teleconference</i>	Water Industry Worker

3. APOLOGIES

Name	Organisation
Mark Wuth	Cairns Regional Council
Shane Bandiera	Cassowary Coast Regional Council
Kerryn Bull	Cassowary Coast Regional Council
Robyn Maddalena	Cook Shire Council
Elai Semesi	Hope Vale Aboriginal Shire Council
Muhammad Abdullah	Tablelands Regional Council
Bruce Gardiner	Tablelands Regional Council
Kiley Hounslow	Wujal Wujal Aboriginal Shire Council
Sam Bann	Yarrabah Aboriginal Shire Council
Ingrid Fomiatti Minnesma	RDMW
Richard Kidston	RDMW
Melinda Eades	TCICA
Brad Milligan	QLD Health
Jess Dean	QLD Water

4. CONFIRMATION OF PREVIOUS MINUTES

Minutes noted and accepted.

5. ACTIONS FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES

Action Item	Action	Responsible Person(s)	Status
34.1	Shane Bandiera to provide Amanda with details of non- accredited training to potentially be included in the WIW program. Amanda to circulate to councils to review and for councils to add any further training for inclusion. Amanda to then send the details on to Lee-Anne to investigate further.	Shane Bandiera, Amanda Hancock & Lee-Anne Willis	See Item 10
35.1	Amanda to circulate submission from recommended respondent for the Regional Capability Plan and explore further funding opportunities before seeking FNQROC Board endorsement.	Amanda Hancock	Complete – See Item 6
35.2	Amanda to circulate email from David Wiskar seeking members for the HR Water Operator Attraction/Retention toolkit reference group. Committee to share with appropriate staff in their individual council and notify Amanda should they wish to participate.	Amanda Hancock & All Councils	Complete
35.3	Elliott to circulate invitation to the Coogee Chemicals depot open day to Cass, MSC and Bruce, TRC.	Elliott Meelen	Complete

35.4	Geoff to provide TRC and FNQROC with a copy of their telemetry Technical Specification and Scope of Work.	Geoff Tansley	Complete
35.5	Bruce to provide FNQROC with a copy of TRC's submission to the Urban Water Risk Assessment (AUWRA) project.	Bruce Gardiner	Complete
35.6	Amanda to circulate the Planned Regional Water & Sewer Infrastructure Upgrades captured in the last State Advocacy document. Councils to review and update as appropriate and return to Amanda before the next Water Alliance meeting.	Amanda Hancock & All Councils	Outstanding – See Item 14
35.7	Muhammad Abdullah, TRC and Brian Pickering, Croydon SC to be added to the FNQ Water Alliance distribution list.	Amanda Hancock	Complete

6. WATER CAPABILITY PROJECT – AMANDA HANCOCK, FNQROC

Amanda provided the following update:

- QLD Water have indicated their strong support for the Water Capability Project.
- Discussions have been underway with Stantec and information regarding the surveys and workshops conducted by QTC were shared with them.
- Given the nature and extent of the work already conducted by QTC, Stantec have provided a revised price and schedule for completion of the plan.
- A report will be presented at the FNQROC Board meeting on 7 December seeking endorsement of the recommendation of contract award to Stantec with funding to be provided by both Jobs Queensland and QLD Water and the balance paid from FNQROC reserves.
- Subject to Board endorsement, Stantec will look to undertake their first workshop with the Water Alliance in Q1 2024.

7. REGIONAL BIOSOLIDS SUB-COMMITTEE – AMANDA HANCOCK, FNQROC

Amanda provided the following update:

- An action from the first Regional Biosolids Sub-Committee was for FNQROC to provide a summary of the current situation regarding biosolids including risks, opportunities and potential costs.
- This has been provided and will be discussed at the next meeting Regional Biosolids Sub-Committee meeting scheduled for 12 December 2023.
- Representatives from RMIT will also be presenting the BTTAS-SC/BM tool, developed to assist water utilities with the identification of the most appropriate thermal treatment technology.
- A copy of the summary report, presentation and any proposed recommendations from the Sub-Committee will be provided to the Water Alliance for consideration following the meeting.

8. REGIONAL JOINT PURCHASING – ELLIOT MEELEN, FNQROC

Elliott Meelen, Regional Procurement Coordinator provided the following update:

- Water Chemicals – Contract Meetings
Contract meetings have recently taken place with Coogee Chemical (Sodium Hypo), Cleveland Bay Chemicals (Liquid Alum/Aluminium Chloralhydrate) and Northern Chemicals (Citric Acid)
- Coogee – Depot Open Day
Coogee recently conducted an open day at their Cairns depot which was well attended by Council Officers from across the region.
- Managing Chlorates – Coogee Presentation
Following the depot opening day, Coogee also delivered a presentation which included the management of chlorates.
- Regional Sewer Relining & Condition Assessments
The Regional Sewer Relining and Condition Assessments arrangement is currently underway. Trials will be taking place in early 2024 with another supplier to test suitability of materials not previously used in the region.

A copy of Coogee’s presentation circulated with the minutes.

9. QLD WATER – DAVID WISKAR

David Wiskar, Program Director, QLD Water provided a presentation with an update on the Queensland Water Regional Alliance Program.

A copy of the Queensland Water Regional Alliance Program Current Update presentation circulated with the minutes.

Anthony Archie departed the meeting at 11:00am

Dinesha Emmery joined the meeting at 11:05am

10. WATER INDUSTRY WORKER – LEE-ANNE WILLIS

Lee-Anne provided an update and in particular:

- FNQ Survey Results
- Training reimbursements
Lee-Anne is particularly keen to learn if councils have received any training reimbursements that are due.
- Upcoming Cert 3 and Cert 4 Training

Councils encouraged to contact Lee-Anne if they have any queries regarding the WIW program.

ACTION POINT 36.1 Councils to check and advise Lee-Anne, WIW of the status of training reimbursements due.

11. LGAQ – JENNIFER HARTWIG

Jennifer provided the following update:

2023 LGAQ Annual Conference Motions

The 2023 LGAQ annual conference motion outcomes are now published on congruent –

Key water motions passed were as follows:

Motion 12: SWIDS

Introduction of sewerage and water infrastructure development scheme (SWIDS) to assist regional councils to maintain W&S infrastructure with ongoing funding in the long term.

(Passed unanimously 186/0)

Motion #87 Indemnity for PFAS

Implementation of legislation indemnifying local government water service providers from liability associated with the release of PFAS as the industry are passive receivers of these substances and there are no viable technologies to remove the substances from water and wastewater treatment systems cost effectively.

Passed 161/19

Motion 138: Cost of unwater bulk water

Small and medium councils are finding Sunwater's bulk pricing exorbitant and are unable to reasonably pass these bulk water costs onto their ratepayers. LGAQ calls on the state gov to offset dividends provided by Sunwater against urban water pricing to help offset bulk water price impacts to communities. Councils seek reduction in wholesale cost of water to local communities who rely on Sunwater storages and bulk untreated water options.

(Passed 176/5)

Motion 139: Investment in skills and training

LGAQ calls on the State and Federal governments to work with local councils to identify existing skill shortages and training opportunities and to support increased investment in skills training, supply chain improvements and initiatives to ensure the reliable delivery of essential W&S services.

(Passed unanimously 173/0)

Motion 140: Investment in water infrastructure projects across regional QLD

Outcome sought is State and Federal governments make an agreement through national cabinet for funding and collaboration to build region wide water infrastructure. At the delegation in Canberra on Nov 14, this was raised with the environmental minister.

(Passed 190/1)

Motion #141: Drinking water Quality improvement pathway

Desired outcome is for the State government to provide written position clarifying timelines and expectations in advancing water quality compliance when implementing risk migration strategies (HBTs) as defined in the ADWG.

(Passed 191/3)

Motion #142: Dam upgrade safety funding

Many councils do not have the financial resources to undertake the often-significant dam upgrade projects. The desired outcome is for Local Governments to receive assistance in funding from State and/or Federal governments for dam upgrade works to meet current legislated dam safety requirements.

(Passed 190/0)

QWRAP

QWRAP Grant Deed

On Tuesday 17 October, at the LGAQ Annual Conference, QLDwater, LGAQ and the RDMW signed a new Tripartite Grant Agreement securing three further years of support and certainty for QWRAP.

Budget Underspend Last financial year there was a significant underspend of around \$300K bid pool funding and we encourage the alliance to continue submitting project applications.

The ongoing underspend of QWRAP is a problem that might not reflect well on the program going forward. Better promotion of the QWRAP program to both officers and elected representatives is needed to increase bid pool funding applications and this needs to be the focus of the partner groups and QWRAP regions for this financial year.

Funding for travel and accommodation associated with training Councils may not be aware that as part of the QWRAP they can access bid pool funding to cover the costs of travel and accommodation for staff to attend training e.g. Cert 3. So long as the criteria of 2 or more participating councils is met. Standard rules around travel allowance in local government apply here for cost efficiencies.

Funding for project management Please note there is also new funding allocations for project management which can apply to any sort of significant water/sewerage collaborative project. Criteria for project management is still being defined, but please let LGAQ know if there is anything they can do to assist the Alliance project management funding support is sought within bid pool applications.

Bid Pool Documents The feedback period for the new bid pool documents has closed and these documents will now be uploaded to the Qldwater website. The new documents have updated application criteria and a signature block at the end of the bid pool funding application.

Please have a read of the bid pool procedure and start using the new templates for funding applications and associated reporting.

12. QUEENSLAND HEALTH – CHRISTOPHER LAND

Christopher Land provided the following update:

- Queensland Health (QH) is currently reviewing the drinking water incident guideline after seeking feedback/input from Water Supply Regulator (WSR). The revised version will be published in the new year.
- Queensland Health is currently working on a guidance document for blue green algae.
- QH is continuing with disaster management preparation. Noting that there is a cyclone warning out for Cairn's region for the upcoming week.

13. RDMW – DINESHA EMMERY

Dinesha confirmed that work is continuing on the Urban Water Risk Assessment Project and agreed to circulate the presentation recently delivered to the Whitsunday, Isaac, and Mackay Water Alliance (WIWMA) which provides an overview of the project.

A copy of the Urban Water Risk Assessment and additional slides and information regarding the National Performance Report circulated with the minutes.

14. PLANNED REGIONAL WATER AND SEWER INFRASTRUCTURE UPGRADES – AMANDA HANCOCK

An action arising from the previous meeting was for council officers to review the information previously captured in the Planned Regional Water and Sewer Infrastructure Upgrades document used for the last State advocacy meeting

to ensure it is still up to date. This remains outstanding and is important to ensure we have a current list is infrastructure priorities to consider should suitable funding opportunities arise.

Amanda will recirculate the document for councils to review.

ACTION POINT 36.2 Amanda to circulate again the Planned Regional Water & Sewer Infrastructure Upgrades captured in the last State Advocacy document. Councils to review and update as appropriate before the next Water Alliance.

15. UPCOMING EVENTS

Regional Biosolids Sub-Committee Meeting – 12 December 2023 Cairns.

16. GENERAL BUSINESS

- Garry, Croydon advised he is aware of the challenges associated with the EBA when recruiting water staff, so welcomes the work that QLD Water is doing in this space.
- Morris, MSC advised that he was keen for his council to be involved in QLD Water's HR/IR project and will liaise with QLD Water.
- Toni, CRC –
 - CRC are participating in the HR/IR project being led by QLD Water.
 - They will be making a submission on the consultation for the development of End of Waste Codes. Submissions close on 31 January 2024.
- Peter, CSC advised that they would be proceeding with micro credentials for SCADA next year.

ACTION POINT 36.3 Morris, MSC to liaise with QLD Water regarding participation in QLD Water's HR/IR project.

17. NEXT MEETING

Next meeting scheduled for Friday 9 February 2024 in Cairns.

The meeting closed at 12.30pm.

Minutes prepared by Amanda Hancock, Regional Strategic Infrastructure Coordinator

ACTION ITEMS OVERLEAF

AGREED ACTION ITEMS

Action Item	Action	Responsible Person(s)
34.1	Shane Bandiera to provide Amanda with details of non-accredited training to potentially be included in the WIW program. Amanda to circulate to councils to review and for councils to add any further training for inclusion. Amanda to then send the details on to Lee-Anne to investigate further.	Shane Bandiera, CCRC
35.6	Amanda to circulate the Planned Regional Water & Sewer Infrastructure Upgrades captured in the last State Advocacy document. Councils to review and update as appropriate and return to Amanda before the next Water Alliance meeting.	Amanda Hancock & All Councils
36.1	Councils to check and advise Lee-Anne, WIW of the status of training reimbursements due.	All Councils
36.2	Amanda to circulate again the Planned Regional Water & Sewer Infrastructure Upgrades captured in the last State Advocacy document. Councils to review and update as appropriate before the next Water Alliance (See Action Item 35.6)	Amanda Hancock & All Councils
36.3	Morris, MSC to liaise with QLD Water regarding participation in QLD Water's HR/IR project.	Morris Hamill, MSC