
FNQ NRM Ltd Directors' Meeting
Friday 3rd June 2005
Innisfail, 8.30am – 4.30pm
Ratified Minutes

Attendance:

Directors – Cr Mike Berwick (Chair), Prof Peter Valentine (Director, World Heritage), Bill Shannon (Director, Industry), Chris Gloor (Director, Coastal and Marine), Ken Atkinson (Director, South West), Caroline Coppo (Director, Catchment and Community), Troy Wyles Whelan (Director, Indigenous).

Observers – Rebecca Clear (Regional NRM Facilitator), Regina Holden (NRM Facilitator, DNRM).

Staff – Allan Dale (FNQ NRM Ltd), Rachel Wicks (FNQ NRM Ltd), Lyle Johnson (FNQ NRM Ltd), Rowena Grace (FNQ NRM Ltd).

1. Welcome and Apologies

Apologies - Cr Ray Byrnes (Director, Local Government)

2. Previous Minutes – Draft Minutes 1st April 2005

- Page 1 – That Geoff Dyne's title be amended to *Dr* Geoff Dyne.
- Agenda Item 7.3, Resolution Two – should read 'The Board *noted*', as opposed to adopted.

Resolution: That the minutes are adopted as presented with the above mentioned changes.

3. Business Arising

3.1 Chair's Update – Cr Mike Berwick

Mike Berwick provided an update on the activities of the Regional Groups' Collective and the NRM Ministerial Council Community Forum held in Darwin. This included discussion on the formation of a National Body comprising State Chairs.

Directors were advised that the National Body had been formed and Cr Berwick has been appointed as the Chair for Queensland. Draft terms of reference have been developed and it is anticipated that the first teleconference for this forum will be held in June.

3.2 Traditional Owner Advisory Group Update – Troy Wyles Whelan

The Board was advised of the following key resolutions resulting from the TOAC meeting 2nd June:

- Resolution: That the report on the proceedings of the National Land and Sea Management Conference given by Eliza Morta and Troy Wyles-Whelan is accepted.
- Resolution: That the TOAC recommends \$15 000 be set aside from the 05/06 RIS allocation of \$145 000 and that \$15 000 also be set aside out of the 06/07 allocation to pay for TOAC meeting costs and funds for capacity building.
- Resolution: That the remainder of the transitional funding of \$15 000 once the ILMF has identified the costs associated with other required expenditure, be carried over and go towards the payment of costs associated with the Country Based Planning Workshop.
- Resolution: That the TOAC accepts the nominations from Kimberley Go Sam and Allison Halliday to attend the Cross Cultural Awareness Training Course.
- Resolution: That the TOAC nominates Lex Assan and Ken Reys as a recommendation to the Board to attend the 2005 Landcare Conference in Barcaldine August 2005.

3.2.1 National Indigenous Land and Sea Management Conference Alice Springs

The Board was provided with a report and feedback regarding the presentation made at the National Conference by Troy Wyles-Whelan, Eliza Morta (TOAC) and Phil Rist (Girringun). (Attachment 1).

3.3 North Regional Coordination Group Liaison

Mark Cranitch, Regional Services Director, DNR&M joined the meeting to discuss the revised role of the NRCG and its relationship to FNQ NRM Ltd.

The Board was advised that the NRCG Chair's role is to ensure that the agencies fulfill their commitments to regional bodies, foster greater collaboration and ensure efficiencies in sharing information and knowledge. With the Department facing significant reform issues in relation to land, sea and vegetation policy, this will impact on regional bodies and how all parties communicate and engage with community. It is the NRCG's role to align in-kind between departmental and regional body goals and the regional NRM plan. Science coordination was considered a major concern. He advised that new terms of reference have been developed and circulated.

4. Correspondence

Directors considered the correspondence as tabled. Discussion included:

- Role of Peter Stanton on Wetlands Advisory Board for National Pilots
- QFF re: Farm Management Systems - Allan Dale advised that while no written response was provided there had been direct dialogue and that a half-day session had been held at the Innisfail office.
- Bill Shannon tabled a brochure on farm management systems in relation to the cane industry.
- Mike Berwick advised that strategic reserve had not yet been resolved.
- Cardwell Shire Council re: Draft RIS – Allan Dale advised that Diana O'Donnell had been negotiating directly regarding investment.
- Letter to Shaun Sullivan – reference in paragraph three regarding the expectation on Regional Bodies to set targets. Allan Dale advised that Rachel Eberhard's project would provide recommendations on a logical process to establish dialogue with industry.
- Peter Valentine advised that he is a member of the GBR Consultative Committee.
- Letter to Ian Yarrol re: Introduced Fish Management in the Wet Tropics Region – Allan Dale advised that no response had been received to date.
- Tinaroo Environmental Education Centre – further information should be sought in relation to this program.
- Letters for individual Directors to be scanned and emailed on receipt.

5. Financial Committee Report

The Board considered and accepted the Financial Report of March and April 2005 as tabled.

The Board thanked Bill Shannon for his contribution to establishing the Company's financial procedures.

6. Executive Officer's Report

6.1 Emerging Workplace Management Issues for Board Consideration

Allan Dale sought in principle support to renegotiate the workplace management issues as outlined in the Appendix Four. This included a review of the employment conditions of all staff including revised role statements, performance reviews, negotiations regarding remuneration and professional development.

The Board was advised that an interim Contract Manager would be secured for a three-month period to fill the project management and contracts role following the departure of Diana O'Donnell.

The Board expressed unanimous support for the three resolutions as presented in Appendix Four and listed below.

Resolutions:

1. That the Board support the establishment of general level classifications defining the roles, functions and pay scales of Managers, Program and NRM Coordinators, Project Officers and Research and Administration Officers.
2. That the Board approve up to \$100 000 of the remaining \$200 000 of currently unallocated RIS funds being reserved for implementing a clear program of salary-level adjustments and increments.
3. That the Board authorize the EO to commence negotiation with the Commonwealth to transfer the current Regional Strategic Facilitator position into the FNQ NRM structure.

7. General Business

7.1 Management Challenges of Existing Local Government and Bioregional Boundaries

Jax Bergersen, Kuranda Envirocare briefed the Board on the concept of realigning Local Government boundaries to those of bioregions. Following discussion, the Board expressed a desire to stay informed on the development of the matter.

7.2 Board Response to the State's Green Paper on Options for Future Community Engagement in Regional NRM

The Board discussed the status of the RGC and FNQ NRM Ltd response to the State's Green Paper. There was clear support for option 1.2, which is 'Maintain current arrangements but make specific improvements including stronger links between activities of regional bodies with RPACs and other statutory regional NRM planning processes'. During the discussion, the Board felt strongly that:

- Recognising Local Government as an integral component of NRM is essential to success and that this point should be included in the FNQ NRM Ltd proposal.
- That the introduction of any other option other than 1.2 would severely curtail the ability of Regional Bodies to engage the community, secure investment from corporate partners as well as limit leveraging ability.
- That the current framework for delivering regional arrangements is still in its earliest stages. This would serve to counter preferences for other options, when the current arrangements had not yet been fully implemented, so as to allow full demonstration of Regional Body capacity.
- A vote of no confidence in the current arrangements at this stage would be undermining and counterproductive.
- The Board also sought an indication regarding security of longer-term funding.
- There was general agreement relating to the merit of undertaking a review, but that a longer-term review is required to enable Regional Bodies to demonstrate delivery. Accreditation of Regional Bodies should be undertaken every three to four years.
- The Board felt the response should stress that FNQ NRM Ltd is currently delivering outcomes in both onground and planning. Particularly given the significant hiatus experienced during the Plan's development.

Resolution: That partnership framework be clarified and is supported. Revise

7.3 Formation of FNQ NRM Ltd, CSIRO and JCU Partnership Entity for Integrated Landscapes Management

The Board discussed the proposal relating to the emerging partnerships between FNQ NRM Ltd, CSIRO and JCU. Discussion included:

- Directors queried the investment required - the partnership maybe too expensive to support on an ongoing basis.
- That the agenda appeared heavy on planning and research - it was clarified that all funds being put into the new body have been allocated in the RIS to undertake those components of projects that the research centre will be undertaking.

Allan Dale indicated that with frameworks almost complete, the next step was to conclude negotiations by bringing all players to the table with the intention of pursuing full operation by the end of July.

Resolution: The Board provided unanimous support for the resolutions as outlined below:

1. That the Board give in-principle support for the paper outlining the basis for negotiation of an FNQ NRM, CSIRO and JCU Partnership Entity for Integrated Landscapes Management.
2. That the Board approve the allocation of up to \$50 000 per annum for two years of the remaining \$200 000 of currently unallocated RIS funds for the establishment of a Senior Planner position to lead the operation of the joint entity.

7.4 Partnership Agreement – Joint Steering Committee Memo Re: NHT Extension MOU

The Board considered the Partnership Agreement as tabled.

Resolution: The Board provided overall endorsement for the MOU as tabled with minor grammatical amendments.

7.5 Review of the Vegetation Management Act Codes

Kevin Burton, a Dairy farmer from Tolga and former member of the Vegetation Management Committee, provided feedback from a landholder's perspective regarding the impacts of the Vegetation Management Act on onground activities. This raised issues regarding impacts on landholders' rights, compensation, and inadequacies in science underpinning decision-making as well as broader issues not covered by the review of the Regional Vegetation Management Plan Codes for the Wet Tropics. Concerns included:

- The erosion of opportunities for tradable development rights under the Act (such as rezoning or reconfiguring properties to enable sale of part of the property or tradable timber rights).
- A lack of eligibility in this region for compensation for loss of use in return for conservation agreements due to the high area of remaining forest considered endangered, of concern or essential habitat.
- Industry came to the table in good faith and trust is being eroded.
- Landholders perceive they are being stopped from doing what they want on their properties due to the science involved - more robust science is required to drive decisions;
- Issues regarding the accuracy of critical habitat mapping.
- That support is sought from the NRM Board to assist landholders to access financial incentives/compensation (particularly in regards to exclusion based on critical habitat) for eco system services;
- Subdivision requirements – the aim is to protect rainforest by selling it for conservation purposes, but sale is constrained by minimum size (would require resumption of good quality agricultural lands).
- IPA process – inconsistency in policy and classification systems (eg: remnant vegetation).

Kevin Burton thanked the Board for the opportunity to comment on this issue and recommended that the VMC committee (which had been in abeyance), which had built up a high level of trust and capacity to provide high level comment and had the ability to respond to issues quickly, be retained to provide advice on issues as they arise.

There was general agreement amongst the Board of the need to support the region to access available compensation as well as continue to lobby for recognition of ecosystem services.

There was also agreement that the Board should encourage the Minister to have habitat for all endangered species defined as compulsory.

The Board also sought clarification on the issue of timber harvesting rights (both native and plantation) of properties under Conservation Agreements. Regina Holden, DNR&M has offered to assist the Board source this information.

Resolution: That the Board accepts the draft proposal as presented and will endeavor to respond to the other issues raised. This includes preparing a letter to accompany the proposal that emphasizes the need for mapping of all critical species habitat and seeks clarification regarding remnant vegetation classification.

7.6 Carbon Trading Opportunities Under the Greenhouse Gas Abatement Program

The Board was provided with an update from Allan Dale regarding the potential for FNQ NRM Ltd to take over management of the Douglas Shire Council's Federal Government Greenhouse Gas Abatement Program.

There was access to approximately \$4 million under the program for the region.

Resolution: That the Board give in-principle support to commence preliminary negotiations with Douglas Shire Council over the transfer of host management responsibilities of the Forestry component of the Greenhouse Gas Abatement Program project. A full transfer proposal would be presented to the Board for decision, outlining risks and opportunities associated with taking on management responsibilities.

7.7 GBRMPA – Research Project ‘Understanding and Engaging with Great Barrier Reef Catchment Communities for Socio-Economic and Ecological Resilience’

Dr Karen Vella and James Innes provided the Board with an introduction to the research project ‘Understanding and Engaging with Great Barrier Reef Catchment Communities for Socio-Economic and Ecological Resilience’.

The arrangement would be a tripartite agreement between UQ as essentially the policy unit and research managers, GBRMPA as an industry partner and FNQ NRM Ltd as the community partner. This would assist in avoiding the concerns regarding FNQ NRM Ltd being linked with a statutory body.

It was agreed that there was potential for this project to deliver benefits across the entire organisation, and in particular, in assisting the coordinator network. By extracting clear and simple information around key indicators, this would assist the coordinator network.

While some concerns were raised regarding the value of outcomes, the investment required and the community's response to the venture, the Board recognised the value of the initiative and as such, provided general endorsement to progress with negotiations.

7.8 Update Douglas Shire Water Quality Project

The Board was provided with an update from Allan Dale regarding FNQ NRM Ltd's lead role in future WQIP activities in the region and the undertaking to support the Douglas with implementation.

7.9 Update Coastal Catchments Initiative (CCI)

Allan Dale provided an update on the CCI and advised that the Board has accepted the CRC for Coastal Zone's offer to conduct a workshop in Tully to discuss mechanisms to implement the NWQMS in the context of the Wet Tropics. This workshop is scheduled for 30th June and 1st July.

7.10 Update Integrated GBR Catchments Water Quality Monitoring Program

Allan Dale briefed the Board on the status of Rachel Eberhard's WQ Monitoring Project. Check will Alan if these were adopted.

7.11 Update GBRMPA Marine Monitoring Program and Community Engagement

Deb Bass, Coordinator, Community Engagement in Water Quality Monitoring, Research and Monitoring from GBRMPA addressed the Board regarding the GBRMPA Marine Monitoring Program and related community engagement activities. The next step was to hold discussions with relevant sub-contractors (ie AIMS) regarding site specific issues.

7.12 Strategy Map and Business Plan

This agenda item was deferred to the next meeting.

7.13 K-12 Education Program

FNQ NRM Ltd consultants Moni Carlisle and Sinan Onigan from the Global Studies Institute (GSI), updated the Board on progress relating to the K-12 Education Program. The discussion revolved around the 'Environmental Education Feasibility Study Discussion Paper' tabled for consideration. The Board was advised that EQ and the region's Education Centers were extremely supportive of the initiative. EQ had suggested Moni present the program to the Curriculum Development Committee as next year's curriculum programs were being compiled and would be complete by September.

The Board suggested that there was a need for more detail in the report that would:

- More clearly articulate what is required to progress the preferred option;
- Present a stronger focus on adaptive learning;
- Provide more clarity about what GSI will deliver relative to K-12;
- More clearly demonstrate the formal linkages of the position back to FNQ NRM Ltd; and
- Strengthen the focus on the linkages to the 'Supporting Member' program.

The Board provided unanimous support for the program and thanked Moni and Sinan for the substantial effort they had invested in the project.

7.14 FNQ NRM Ltd Membership Body

7.14.1 Ordinary Membership

The Board considered the Ordinary Membership application form as tabled with minor amendments. The Board also agreed that the AGM would occur in late October and that a high profile key note speaker should be identified to address the gathering.

Resolution: That the Board endorse the Application Form for Ordinary Membership.

7.14.2 Supporting Membership

The Board discussed the status of Supporting Membership. Chris Gloor will provide advice on the packages for the various levels of membership and taxation statuses.

Other Business:

Standing Independent Selection Panel SISP – Colin Hunt Relocation

The Board was advised that Dr Colin Hunt, Chair of the SISP has relocated temporarily to Canberra. Colin has advised that he is seeking to retain the position, is maintaining his interest in the Wet Tropics as a landowner and is able to undertake the role from Canberra. The Board was advised the situation is consistent with the Constitution's requirements for the SISP.

Resolution: It was agreed that Colin should be provided with adequate support to undertake the role from Canberra, on an as required and agreed basis.

Brad Dorrington Memorial

Directors enquired as to the status of the JRCMA proposal to establish a memorial fund or bursary in memory of Brad Dorrington. The Board agreed they were supportive of a scholarship.

Resolution: That Rachel Wicks investigate the status of the proposal and report back to the Board.

Meeting Closed

The meeting was closed at 5.00pm.