

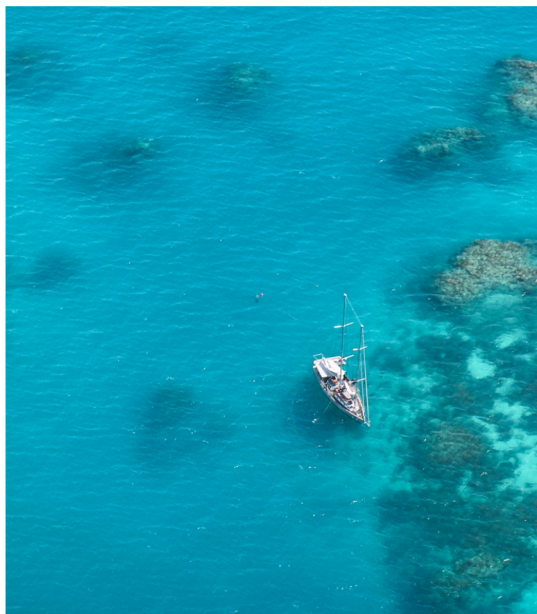


# Far North Queensland

*Northern Australia's largest  
and fastest growing region.*



## FEDERAL PRIORITIES | NOVEMBER 2019







## Member Councils



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# Foreword

## *Sustainable Economic Growth and Development for Far North Queensland*

### Our Organisation

The FNQROC region is the largest and fastest growing region in Northern Australia. It extends over 320,000 square kilometres with a population of approximately 275,673<sup>1</sup> and gross regional product is \$15.15 billion<sup>2</sup>. Unemployment for the 2018 June quarter was 6.97% which is above the Australian, Queensland and regional Queensland average.

The communities within the thirteen Councils of Far North Queensland welcome the opportunity to contribute further to the National and State domestic productivity through the utilisation of existing assets, identifying our gaps and working collaboratively to support sustainable economic growth and development for Far North Queensland.

### Transport

History tells us that investment in transport infrastructure is a vital precursor to the economic growth and development of a region and the nation. Until this investment is made the FNQ region will fail to deliver on its vast potential. Resilient transport infrastructure to ensure connectivity across the region is essential; the current situation however is far from satisfactory and the state of the roads and ports is an inhibitor to further exploit the vast untapped potential that FNQ North Queensland offers.

### Water and Energy

Reliable and affordable water and energy is critical to the FNQ region if it is to have sustainable economic growth and development. COAG policies including Northern Australia White Paper, Regionalisation, Asian Market Access and Indigenous Advancement have identified the strategic importance of FNQ to economic and social development. FNQ has a seasonal over and under water supply and bulk storage and control via new and enlarged dams is a key solution offering the collateral benefits of hydroelectric power, tourism and lifestyle opportunities.

### Environment

Our region's world renowned natural assets, natural resources and environment are key factors in the economic success of the region. The region includes two World Heritage listed areas, the rainforests of the Wet Tropics and the reefs and waters of the Great Barrier Reef (GBR) and to the west, the Gulf Rivers Strategic Environment areas.

The economic success of our natural assets is evidenced by the growth in our largest industry, tourism, which is valued at over \$3.1 billion dollars. This is in addition to the contributions from the region's growing global reputation in primary industries, education, health, marine and aviation.

### Social Infrastructure

There is universal agreement that strong, resilient and healthy individuals, families and communities play a vital role in building the ongoing prosperity, wellbeing and economic development of a region. It has been demonstrated that long term economic growth in the regions occurs through investment in human capital development.

### Communication

An equitable communication network for the region is essential if FNQ is to have sustainable growth and development. The size of FNQ means there is a reliance on communication networks whether mobile, broadband, fixed Wi-Fi or satellite. To be competitive in current marketplaces (national and international) and drive increased productivity and access to greater economic opportunities through a global marketplace our communication network is essential. FNQ has vast untapped potential for the development of an array of 'Agri Business', tropical expertise and tourism products which can be exported from the region. An equitable communication network will also support efficient and effective employment, government service delivery, education, health, workplace health and safety and social wellbeing.

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<sup>1</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics, Regional Population Growth, Australia (3218.0)

<sup>2</sup> National Institute of Economic and Industry Research (NIEIR) 2018.

## **Far North Queensland is seeking a commitment to:**

### **Critical Infrastructure**

**Kuranda Range Road** - Funding by State and Federal Government for an allocation of \$21 million for a Strategic Evaluation and Detailed Business Case.

### **Road Investment**

**Road Infrastructure:** The development of a Regional Road Stimulus Package with a focus on safety.

**Road Infrastructure: Gulf Developmental Road** - Funding by State and Federal Governments for:

- a. The reinstatement of a Western Roads Program with an annual allocation of \$8 million per year for 5 years be attributed to the Gulf Developmental Road to upgrade 48km of single sealed road to dual seal; and
- b. The allocation of \$25 million to upgrade the Gilbert River Bridge from single to dual lane carriageway.

**Road Infrastructure: Burke Developmental Road** - Funding by State and Federal Governments for an allocation of \$17 million to complete the sealing of 11.04km on Burke Developmental Road between Dimbulah and Chillagoe.

### **Water**

**Nullinga Dam** - Water pricing principles for dams to reflect useful life, not economic/financial life for upper bound pricing.

**Gilbert River Irrigation Project** - Commitment from Federal Government for \$150 million towards a total estimated capital cost of \$450 million subject to:

- Completion of the detailed business case currently being undertaken
- \$150 million in State grant or loan funding which is repaid through returns from water sales
- A successful loan application of \$150 million to the Northern Australia Infrastructure Fund (NAIF) by the Gilbert River Irrigation beneficial enterprise/cooperative.

**Tablelands Irrigation Project** - Commitment of \$7 million funding to proceed from Preliminary Business Case (completed) to Detailed Business Case and Environmental Impact Assessment and support for SunWater or the Department of Energy and Water Supply to be the lead proponent going forward.

### **Environment**

**Doppler Weather Radar** - Establishment of a Doppler weather radar covering central Far North Queensland.

**Reef and Rainforest** - Commitment to undertake a detailed independent review of the Great Barrier Reef (GBR) and Wet Tropics Rainforest (WTR) funding requirements for long-term management and preservation of these critical ecosystems.

### **Indigenous Liveability**

**National Partnerships for Remote Housing** - Continuance of NPRN or similar and funding for priority projects in Yarrabah not previously captured in NPRN

### **Digital Connectivity**

- a. FNQROC is seeking \$100,000 to undertake a mobile communication strategic prioritisation strategy and requests in the interim that the Federal and State Governments consider the recent audit information when approving future mobile blackspot funding, and
- b. Microwave tower/transmitter locations across the region

### **Tourism Infrastructure**

**Croydon Mountain Bike Trail Network** - Commitment of \$2.7 million for nine mountain bike trails (82.6km) within Croydon Shire Council.

**Atherton Town Centre Revitalisation Project (Priors Creek Master Plan)** - Commitment of \$21.5 million to progress implementation of Priors Creek Master Plan.

### **Arts and Culture**

**Cairns Gallery Precinct** - Commitment of \$39.8 million tripartite funding towards the establishment of this iconic cultural and tourism infrastructure project.

**National Indigenous Heritage Centre** - Funding to support initial concept development and business case preparation for a National Indigenous Heritage Centre located in Cairns.

### **Industry / Infrastructure Investment**

**Cairns Seaport/HMAS Cairns** - Strategic investment over the 10 years 2030 in upgraded facilities and infrastructure for HMAS Cairns and policy/investment to support future Seaport development.

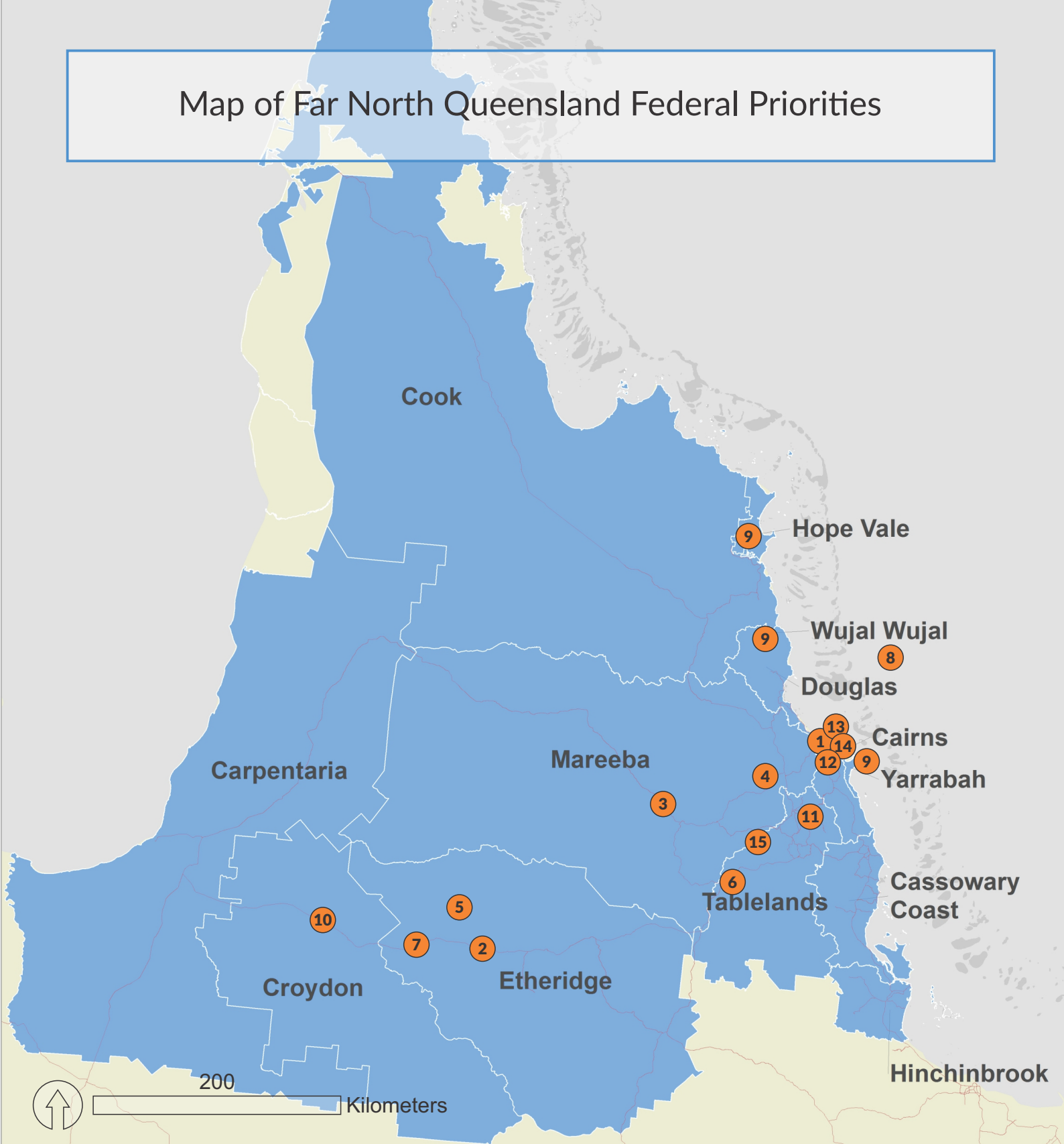
**Priority Renewable Energy Zone** - Designation of the FNQ region as a Priority Renewable Energy Zone and implementation of the policy and investment required to support regional renewable energy development.

### **North Queensland Dairy Industry**

1) Immediate (non-repayable) financial subsidy paid directly to North Queensland Farmers (via a new element included within the Federal Drought Relief Package) as an interim measure to circumvent the imminent collapse of the North Queensland Dairy Industry, and

2) An urgent joint crisis meeting with Federal and State Ministers, local government, industry representatives, retailers and dairy farmers to formalise a plan to rescue the North Queensland dairy industry before 20 December 2019.

# Map of Far North Queensland Federal Priorities



## Legend

- |                                    |  |
|------------------------------------|--|
| ① Kuranda Range Road               | ⑨ Indigenous Liveability   |
| ② Gulf Developmental Road          | ⑩ Croydon Mountain Bike Trail Network                                    |
| ③ Burke Developmental Road         | ⑪ Atherton Town Centre Revitalisation Project (Priors Creek Master Plan) |
| ④ Nullinga Dam                     | ⑫ Cairns Gallery Precinct  |
| ⑤ Gilbert River Irrigation Project | ⑬ National Indigenous Heritage Centre                                    |
| ⑥ Tablelands Irrigation Project    | ⑭ Cairns Seaport/HMAS Cairns   |
| ⑦ Doppler Weather Radar            | ⑮ North Queensland Dairy Industry  |
| ⑧ Reef and Rainforest              |  |

## PRIORITY: CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE

Project: Kuranda Range Road

### FEDERAL REQUEST

FNQROC seeks \$21 million for a Strategic Assessment of Service Requirements (SASR), and Preliminary Evaluation and Business Case funded by State and Federal Governments.

**Project Details: Thank you! Funding has been found, State Government just needs to apply for it.**

Kuranda Range Road (Kennedy Highway, Cairns/Mareeba section) links Smithfield with Kuranda and is the coastal gateway to Mareeba, Atherton Tablelands, Cape York and Gulf. The road is technically described as low geometric standard with limited capacity.

This road currently:

- Has an annual human capital cost of \$9,631,317
- Hospitalisations per 100mil VKT is 37.06; 2.5 times the federal average of 14.7
- has 8,940 vehicles per day (12.75% commercial) which exceeds capacity
- 1.3 unplanned closures/week. An alternative route (Gillies Highway) is located 91km away and approximately once a month (0.7 times) experiences unplanned closures at the same time
- Industries reliant on the road have increased beyond expectations:
  - Commercial vehicle growth on average is 4.4% per annum since 1998
  - Primary Production Growth was estimated to be 2.6% per annum, it has been 5.9% per annum since 1994/95
  - Construction was estimated to grow by 4-5% per annum, the average has been 8.7% per annum since 1995/96
  - Mining has grown 3.2% per annum since 1995/96.

This road is now demonstrably stifling economic development and urban growth in the Cairns, Mareeba, Cape York Peninsula, Atherton Tablelands and Gulf Savannah regions.

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## PRIORITY: ROAD INVESTMENT

### FEDERAL GOVERNMENT REGIONAL ROAD STIMULUS PACKAGE

With low interest rates and a need to stimulate the economy, the Federal Government is in a position to invest in regional road infrastructure (with a focus on safety) to enable economic development and growth.

To support this initiative, FNQROC has undertaken a Regional Road Investment Strategy (Draft) which prioritises road investment across the thirteen FNQROC member councils. The final strategy is due for release early 2020.

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## PRIORITY: ROAD INVESTMENT

### UNLOCKING THE NORTH – GULF DEVELOPMENTAL ROAD AND BURKE DEVELOPMENTAL ROAD

The constraints of the Gulf and Burke Developmental Roads hold back the capacity of the region to be an economic contributor to the State and National Economies. It also limits the potential of inland freight networks which connect to and from markets as far south as Melbourne and to eastern seaports.

These negative impacts and lost opportunities will compound over time on far northern communities and industries while connected communities prosper. The challenge is to improve heavy vehicle transport links in Far North Queensland and connect them to southern centres including via direct inland route to Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide and Perth.

Securing efficient heavy vehicle transport with links to seaports and markets is imperative for future economic growth, particularly in regard to emerging Asian markets. Interior routes, especially when the Hann Highway is sealed, will provide major savings in transport distances and time to major southern markets in Melbourne, Adelaide and Perth, but also Sydney, due to freight cost efficiencies with multi-trailer heavy transport.



## PRIORITY: ROAD INVESTMENT

Project: Gulf Developmental Road

### FEDERAL REQUEST

FNQROC Seeks funding by State and Federal Governments:

- a) the reinstatement of a Western Roads Program with an annual allocation of \$8 million per year for 5 years be attributed to the Gulf Developmental Road to upgrade 48km of single sealed road to dual seal,
- b) the allocation of \$25 million to upgrade the Gilbert River Bridge from single to dual lane carriageway.

### Project Details:

The Gulf Developmental Road is part of the Savannah Way (National tourist route 1) and starts at the intersection of the Kennedy Developmental Road and links through to Normanton. In total the route is 396.274km and is an east/west major freight and tourist route linking the region to both Cairns and Townsville.

The section of road between Mt Surprise and the Gilbert River Bridge is approximately 170km, it has a 70km stretch of road which is a mixture of single lane bitumen carriageway broken up into many sections by dual lane carriageway. There are 48km of intermittent one lane seal with gravel shoulders that are too narrow to permit safe passing of road trains and caravans. In addition, there are numerous bridges with only 6 meters between kerbs, and as tourist traffic volumes increase there is increasing risk due to the need to give way for freight vehicles up to Type 2 standard (up to 53.5m in length).

Flooding is still a major impediment to industry. Between 5 January 2017 and 8 February 2019 the road has been closed for 52 days. The Gilbert River Bridge (4m above stream level) is a low-level single lane crossing with high crests at either end preventing road users to see the bridge. Not only is this a significant safety issue, this crossing is impassable during the wet season. Approximately \$25 million is required to upgrade/replace this crossing.

In the last five years:

- there has been 26 incidents resulting in 3 fatalities and 16 hospitalisations<sup>3</sup>, 21 of these were single vehicle incidents. The Human Capital cost of these incidents are \$3,562,525 per year<sup>4</sup>.
- There has been significant growth in the agriculture sector between Georgetown and Croydon with over 40,000 hectares of dry cropping which is now starting to show in the commercial vehicle figures. In one year, commercial vehicle numbers have increased significantly on the single sealed sections:
  - Georgetown to Kennedy Developmental Road 23.58% to 46.48% and
  - Croydon to Georgetown 23.38% to 28.38%.

The upgrade will:

- Increase safety
- Reducing road freight transport costs
- Optimize supply changes to efficiently link producers, distributors and consumers on an integrated network
- Support self-drive tourism.

<sup>3</sup>TMR Crash data from Queensland roads <https://data.qld.gov.au/dataset/crash-data-from-queensland-roads>

<sup>4</sup>Table 18 Estimation of crash costs by injury severity, Human Capital (HC) values, June 2013 <https://atap.gov.au/parameter-values/road-transport/4-crash-costs.aspx> (\$2,622,924/fatality, \$608,184/hospitalisation, \$24,217/injury, \$9,257/property damage)

## PRIORITY: ROAD INVESTMENT

**Project:** Burke Developmental Road

### FEDERAL REQUEST

FNQROC seeks funding by State and Federal Governments for an allocation of \$17 million to complete the sealing of 11.04km on Burke Developmental Road between Dimbulah and Chillagoe.

### Project Details:

The Burke Developmental Road commences at Dimbulah and ends in Normanton, it links Mareeba, Chillagoe and Normanton. Burke Developmental Road is a critical link for Gulf of Carpentaria and Cape York Peninsula between Peninsula Development Road, Ootann Road and Kennedy Development Road.

It is 92km between Dimbulah and Chillagoe with 16.05km unsealed near Chillagoe. This stretch of road is a key route for cattle transportation servicing cattle producers between Chillagoe and Almaden.

In 2016 two packages of sealing works were approved and \$5.97 million funding provided to progressively seal 12.2km of this road. After these works 11.04km is remaining to be sealed at an estimated cost of \$17 million.

There are a high proportion of single vehicle accidents with the section between Dimbulah and Chillagoe being 2.7 times the national average for hospitalisations per 100mil VKT.

In the last five years there has been 17 incidents resulting in 11 hospitalisations<sup>5</sup>. The human capital cost of these incidents are \$1,386,439 per year<sup>6</sup>.

The entire length is above the State average for fatalities and Federal average for hospitalisations per 100mil VKT.

Importantly, the Burke Developmental Road runs through the Mitchell Basin, the second largest river basin the Australia, marginally less than the Murray Darling River basin. This presents a major opportunity for supporting agriculture expansion in northern Australia, which will require supporting road infrastructure to connect to markets.

Increasing the capacity of the route will enable the expansion of Far North Queensland for mining, agriculture and beef. For example, in the immediate area two large-scale operations have re-opened – Mungana Goldmine, with a 300 person workforce and Mt Lucy Mine (Almaden), shipping perlite and marble lime through to Mourilyan. Given the area's history of mining and the level of exploration, other large scale operations are likely. In the long term, agricultural expansion is likely given the location of the road near to the Mitchell River basin.

<sup>5</sup>TMR Crash data from Queensland roads <https://data.qld.gov.au/dataset/crash-data-from-queensland-roads>

<sup>6</sup>Table 18 Estimation of crash costs by injury severity, Human Capital (HC) values, June 2013 <https://atap.gov.au/parameter-values/road-transport/4-crash-costs.aspx> (\$2,622,924/fatality, \$608,184/hospitalisation, \$24,217/injury, \$9,257/property damage)



## PRIORITY: WATER

Project: Nullinga Dam

### FEDERAL REQUEST

Water pricing principles for dams to reflect useful life, not economic/financial life for upper bound pricing.

### Project Details:

From 1995 to today, we have seen the National Water Initiative put a value on water resources, which has resulted in innovative strategies to reduce water usage by both urban users and irrigators. It enabled the prolonging of any new infrastructure.

The Competition Policy Reforms and Water Initiative pricing principles enabled innovation in the sustainable use of water resulting in a period where new infrastructure was not required.

*"It is critical that governments act given the urgency of the challenges facing the water sector and the opportunities for increased productivity and efficiency. Doing nothing, or waiting until the next drought, could create a major legacy of future problems."*<sup>7</sup> This statement within the National Water Reform, Productivity Commission Report No. 87 (December 2017) highlights we do need to be proactive rather than reactive. We have seen many examples of the significant cost of reactive infrastructure at a time of crisis.

One of the core issues with the inability to be proactive is the requirement of full cost pricing (upper bound pricing) on commercial terms i.e. 25 years for new water infrastructure. With catalytic infrastructure such as dams, these commercial terms will make any investment unviable. History tells us that infrastructure such as dams takes a period of time before all water allocations are sold and entitlements used for urban consumption and to create/expand the agricultural industry.

FNQROC has commissioned a study to identify the economic growth and viability of dams over a period longer than 30 years, which will evaluate:

- Reason for dam build
- Population of the service area from construction to today
- Type and value (farm gate) of industries supported by the dam today (inclusive of charting how they came on line over the years)
- Allocation of water over the term of construction to today
- Life of dam (ie Tinaroo Dam is now 60 years and has a further 10 years life)
- State and Federal investment
- Current rate of return (economic benefits) created by irrigators (ie estimated State and Federal taxation return as a result of dam infrastructure)
- Return/mega litres of water over time (at current value)
- Any indirect benefits not initially identified with the construction of a dam.

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<sup>7</sup>[https://www.pc.gov.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0007/228175/water-reform.pdf](https://www.pc.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0007/228175/water-reform.pdf)

## PRIORITY: WATER

Project: Gilbert River Irrigation Project

### FEDERAL REQUEST

FNQROC seeks a commitment from the Federal Government for \$150 million towards a total estimated capital cost of \$450 million subject to:

- Completion of the detailed business case currently being undertaken
- \$150 million in State grant or loan funding which is repaid through returns from water sales
- A successful loan application of \$150 million to the Northern Australia Infrastructure Fund (NAIF) by the Gilbert River Irrigation beneficial enterprise/cooperative.

### Project Details:

The Gilbert River Irrigation Project which will provide significant economic growth through expansion of agricultural production in Etheridge Shire. The irrigation project will facilitate the development of greater than 28,564ha of arable land. This is on top of 20,235ha currently under dryland cropping in the Gilbert River catchment.

The proposed irrigation area sits in a 5km strip either side of a 100-km section of the Gilbert River beginning at 'Green Hills' Station and stretching downstream to the 'Chadshunt'/'Strathmore' Stations boundary. Foundational CSIRO work has clearly identified 2 possible dam sites.

The State government has awarded an allocation of 390,000 mega litres of water to the development of the project subject to development approvals.

Extensive research has been undertaken into the development of irrigated agriculture in the Gilbert River Catchment. This includes the 2013 CSIRO Report; Agricultural Resources Assessment for Gilbert Catchment (*Petheram et al. (2013)*), which provides a wealth of technical support.

The benefits include (but not limited to) of the project include:

- Predicted gross benefits from agricultural production in the region of \$540 million
- Total agribusiness development to create upwards of 500 permanent jobs and many more casual and seasonal jobs
- Transport and logistical activity will spread benefits across the region and State
- Project will encourage Indigenous people to return to country and be an integral part of the opportunities on offer
- The advent of irrigated crop production in the region will establish irrigated forage/fodder production and a substantial local supply of cost-efficient cottonseed for the cattle industry.

Based on other Australian irrigation projects, the scheme is estimated to be operational in five years from business case funding approval:

- 2 years for planning, business case, water sales and approvals
- 2 years for construction
- 1 year to fill the dam

Irrigation deliveries are expected to commence in Year 6. The economic modelling was prepared on this basis.

## PRIORITY: WATER

**Project:** Tablelands Irrigation Project

### FEDERAL REQUEST

FNQROC seeks commitment of \$7million funding to proceed from Preliminary Business Case (completed) to Detailed Business Case and Environmental Impact Assessment.

#### Project Details:

Through funding from the National Water Infrastructure Fund, a Preliminary Business Case has been completed, with the recommended solution being a medium size dam at Woodleigh on Millstream as follows: -

- Capacity – 35,000 ML
- Demand – 32,195 ML per year
- Reliability – 90% of Demand is met at 98.5% Reliability

#### Project opportunities:

- Allowing the transition from a land use predominantly for beef cattle to a variety of higher value crops. The value added production benefit is \$1.35 billion estimated to the region's agriculture industry
- Providing opportunities to increase the tourism offering in the Tablelands region with contemporary attractions. The estimate recreational benefits for the community is \$9.28 million
- Providing capacity to increase total renewable energy generation in the Tablelands region and provide efficient energy storage solutions. Estimated hydro power benefit from the sale of electricity is \$2.60 million
- Increasing the region's economic resilience, diversity and competitiveness by building a stronger and more cohesive economy with complementary industries.

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## PRIORITY: ENVIRONMENT

**Project:** Central Far North Queensland Weather Station

### FEDERAL REQUEST

FNQROC seeks the establishment of a Doppler weather radar covering central Far North Queensland.

#### Project Details:

There is an area in central Far North Queensland supporting significant agricultural, grazing and mining industries which is not covered by a Doppler weather radar at 64, 128 or 256km. The area includes Richmond (in the south), Georgetown (to the east), 100k west of Croydon and North up to Pompuraaw. Whilst it appears the Bureau of Meteorology uses these stations predominately for scientific and research purposes, industry and communities rely heavily on this information on a day to day basis.

Recent events highlighted the scarcity of information with many communities unaware of the amount of rain coming and from where.

For the purposes of economic growth and community safety, the region is seeking coverage which includes fire hazards, weather, wind reading, rainfall, pressure, dew point and humidity.



## PRIORITY: ENVIRONMENT

Project: Reef and Rainforest

### FEDERAL REQUEST

Commitment to undertake a detailed independent review of the Great Barrier Reef (GBR) and Wet Tropics Rainforest (WTR) funding requirements for long-term management and preservation of these critical ecosystems.

### Project Details:

This region lies at the gateway to two of the world's greatest natural wonders in the Great Barrier Reef (GBR) and Wet Tropics Rainforest (WTR), both of which are World Heritage Listed. As well as the GBR's unquestionable environmental value, it also underpins significant components of the economy, in particular tourism.

Recent analysis by Deloitte Access Economics estimated that:

- The asset value of the GBR is \$56 billion
- The GBR provides support for 64,000 Australian jobs
- The GBR generates \$6.4 billion in revenue annually.

The preservation and effective management of these two iconic natural assets must be recognised as a strategic priority of national and global importance if their significant social, community and economic benefits are to be secured for future generations.

## PRIORITY: INDIGENOUS LIVEABILITY

**Project:** National Partnerships for Remote Housing

### FEDERAL REQUEST

FNQROC seeks support for the continuance of the NPRH program or implementation of a similar program (which includes Yarrabah) to continue program deliverables.

FNQROC seeks State & Federal Government funding support for the following priority projects in Yarrabah:

235 new dwellings - \$124.6million

Associated trunk infrastructure - \$110.75 million

Upgrades to existing housing - \$14.04 million

Repairs and maintenance to existing housing - \$4.26 million.

### Project Details:

The National Partnership on Remote House (NPRH) expired on 30 June 2018 with no indication it will be replaced with a similar program. Yarrabah Aboriginal Shire Council was also excluded from the program due to its 'as the crow flies' proximity to Cairns.

Indigenous council delegation main observations:

- a. Federal and State governments currently consult (and fund) groups that do not represent all indigenous people. Elected Councils democratically represent all residents and accordingly best placed to be consulted with when dealing with indigenous issues.
- b. Outside of remote housing outcomes, the program importantly addresses the social determinants of health, including health, education, employment and indigenous (and regional) economic outcomes.
- c. The Federal Governments own independent review highlighted positive program outcomes, however agreed 'the job is only half done' and should be continued.

Direct positive impact of NPRH Program:

- 80% of new housing construction is delivered by ATSI Councils (ie Hope Vale, Yarrabah and Wujal Wujal)
- 80% of minor works and repairs are delivered by ATSI Councils
- 87% Indigenous employment on housing projects.

Yarrabah currently has a catastrophic housing crisis with over half the population homeless. There are 4,500 people living in the community with 364 social houses and approximately 700 people waitlisted.

A 15% contingency takes into account anticipated missing data from individual applications and fluctuating family numbers, given between 80 - 100 babies are born in Yarrabah per year.

## PRIORITY: DIGITAL CONNECTIVITY

Project: Mobile Coverage Audit

### FEDERAL REQUEST

FNQROC is seeking:

- a. \$100,000 to undertake a mobile communication strategic prioritisation strategy and requests in the interim that the Federal and State Governments consider the audit information when approving future mobile blackspot funding, and
- b. Microwave tower/transmitter locations across the region

### Project Details:

FNQROC has undertaken a mobile coverage audit on our heavy vehicle and tourism routes within the region. These routes totalled over 5,100km and it was found that 3,550km (~70%) was in a blackspot (3G and 4G). Within capital cities and the surrounds, this would be less than 1%, highlighting the continuing digital divide.

It is recognised that these blackspots will not be eliminated overnight, it is also recognised that a strategic prioritisation plan to reduce these blackspots is also required. To develop this strategic prioritisation plan it would require working with (but not limited to):

- Telecommunication providers to understand future planning
- Department of Emergency Services to identify priority areas for coverage
- Transport/Agricultural/grazing/mining industries
- Department of Transport to understand future capital projects and incident cluster areas in blackspots
- Ergon/Powerlink to understand future capital projects

It is also understood there are a significant number of microwave tower/transmitter locations across the region, which are at the end of their life. The taxpayer paid for these assets and we are seeking to understand if these could be used to improve mobile communications.

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## PRIORITY: TOURISM INFRASTRUCTURE

Project: Croydon Mountain Bike Trail Network

### FEDERAL REQUEST

FNQROC is seeking \$2.7million for nine (9) mountain bike trails (82.6km) within Croydon Shire Council.

### Project Details:

Mountain Biking within the FNQROC has grown significantly over the last 10 years with world-renowned technical and trail rides. Croydon Shire Council seek to capitalise on this growth and draw riders and supporters to experience outback riding within the region. World Trail Concept Plan was completed in 2018 with TRC Tourism undertaking the business case.

The features of the proposed trail network are:

- 9 Trails with an approximate length of 82.6km
- Trails ranging in length from 2 km to over 16km
- Trail difficulties will range from easy (5) to more difficult (4).

A business case prepared by TRC Tourism which identifies the following economic benefits:

- 9.1FTE (7.3 FTE direct and 1.8 FTE indirect) during construction
- 4.8 FTE in year 1 increasing to 5.7 FTE in year 10 for operations
- Benefit/Cost Analysis – Over a 10-year period using a 7% discount rate the project yields a benefit cost ratio (BCR) of 2.25.



## PRIORITY: TOURISM INFRASTRUCTURE

**Project:** Atherton Town Centre Revitalisation Project (Priors Creek Master Plan)

### FEDERAL REQUEST

FNQROC seeks commitment of \$21.5million to progress implementation of Priors Creek Master Plan.

#### Project Details:

The Priors Creek Master Plan includes catalytic tourism, recreational and commercial development opportunities that will revitalise the Atherton CBD.

The development of the Priors Creek area as a pedestrian dominated mixed use area will comprise recreation, commercial and residential uses that is attractive to tourists and residents. The site creates an opportunity to relocate and expand the Atherton Visitor Information Centre, provide entertainment, dining, accommodation, RV parking, playground and picnic facilities in the regional service centre of Atherton.

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## PRIORITY: ARTS AND CULTURE

**Project:** Cairns Gallery Precinct

### FEDERAL REQUEST

FNQROC seeks \$39.8 million tripartite funding commitment towards the establishment of this iconic cultural and tourism infrastructure project.

#### Project Details:

Establishment of the precinct will have a significant positive impact on jobs and economic growth. In addition to the significant economic impact and employment created during construction, once operational, the project will add \$20.7 million per annum to the regional economy (Gross Regional Product) and support 177 ongoing full time jobs through its direction operation and induced tourism expenditure.

An independent and comprehensive business case for the project has been completed with the preferred project option having a Benefits to Cost Ratio (BCR) of 1.19 and a Net Present Value (NPV) of \$13.3 million.

## PRIORITY: ARTS AND CULTURE

**Project:** National Indigenous Heritage Centre

### FEDERAL REQUEST

FNQROC seeks funding to support initial concept development and business case preparation for a National Indigenous Heritage Centre located in Cairns.

#### Project Details:

Cairns has the highest proportion of population that is Indigenous of any city in Australia, it is also the only city with direct connectivity to both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture. Protecting and preserving our Indigenous history, heritage and culture is not only an essential part of our community's identity, but it also provides employment opportunities and social benefits for the region's First People.

One of the great gaps that exists within our national community has been an inability to reconcile our past and to unite, accept and embrace a 'many cultures one country' philosophy. This could be demonstrated through the establishment of a National Indigenous Heritage Centre (of art, history, research, dance, language, education, storytelling and more) that unites all Australians.

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## PRIORITY: INDUSTRY

**Project:** Cairns Seaport/HMAS Cairns

### FEDERAL REQUEST

Strategic investment over the 10 years 2030 in upgraded facilities and infrastructure for HMAS Cairns and policy/investment to support future Seaport development.

#### Project Details:

The Cairns Seaport is a critical enabler for the city of Cairns and the broader FNQ region. The Port is also strategically located from a naval, marine logistics and marine tourism perspective with close physical proximity to Asia, PNG and the Pacific. The port also serves as the natural consolidation and redistribution centre for supplies shipped to the coastal communities north of Cairns, as well as the Torres Strait Islands and the Gulf of Carpentaria.

A specific initiative already identified is the Stage 2 development of the Cairns Marine Maintenance Precinct which incorporates the Seaport's three operating slipways and associated marine maintenance facilities.

The Stage 2 development requires a capital investment of \$24 million for further facility upgrades together with an additional \$1 million required to support business case development to guide precinct operation.

## PRIORITY: INDUSTRY

**Project:** Priority Renewable Energy Zone

### FEDERAL REQUEST

Designation of the FNQ region as a Priority Renewable Energy Zone and implementation of the policy and investment required to support regional renewable energy development.

#### Project Details:

The FNQ region has an abundance of natural resources (sun, wind and water) that can be harnessed for renewable energy generation. There are a number of significant renewable energy projects either already operating or planning the Far North Queensland region.

The FNQ region has significant potential to support further renewable energy project development. Not only does such development support delivery of the regions and nation's energy security and emission reduction targets, it also aligns with the region's 'clean and green' image.

## PRIORITY: INDUSTRY

**Project:** North Queensland Dairy Industry

### FEDERAL REQUEST

FNQROC is seeking:

1. Immediate (non-repayable) financial subsidy paid directly to North Queensland Farmers (via a new element included within the Federal Drought Relief Package) as an interim measure to circumvent the imminent collapse of the North Queensland Dairy Industry, and
2. An urgent joint crisis meeting with Federal and State Ministers, local government, industry representatives, retailers and dairy farmers to formalise a plan to rescue the North Queensland dairy industry before 20 December 2019.

#### Project Details:

Dairy farming in North Queensland is on the brink due to continuous and successive hits:

- deregulation of the milk industry (1 July 2000)
- lack of bargaining power<sup>8</sup>
- limited scope to reposition their business or switch to a different farm enterprise<sup>9</sup>
- cost of electricity
- cost of freight, and
- now the significant increase in the cost of feedstock due to successive droughts.

Currently there are 43 farms supplying the Malanda Milk factory (owned by Lion Pty Ltd), nine supplying Mungalli Creek Dairy and one milking buffalo.

There is imminent risk that many of the 43 farms supplying the Malanda Milk factory will cease operations within 12 months as most are running at significant losses, exacerbated by increase in the cost of feedstock due to drought conditions down south and the delay with readdressing the inherent findings emanating from the ACCC Dairy Inquiry. This in turn will trigger the closure of the Malanda Milk Factory resulting in approximately 100 job losses. This will be a huge impact on an area which already has 67% of its resident population in the lowest 2 SEIFA index quintiles.

<sup>8</sup>ACCC Dairy inquiry – April 2018 [https://www.accc.gov.au/system/files/1395\\_Dairy%20inquiry%20final%20report.pdf](https://www.accc.gov.au/system/files/1395_Dairy%20inquiry%20final%20report.pdf)

<sup>9</sup>ACCC Dairy inquiry – April 2018 [https://www.accc.gov.au/system/files/1395\\_Dairy%20inquiry%20final%20report.pdf](https://www.accc.gov.au/system/files/1395_Dairy%20inquiry%20final%20report.pdf)





# Who are we?



**13 Local Governments**

**17% of QLD Councils**

**316,663km<sup>2</sup>**

**1235km of eastern seaboard**

## We are the largest & fastest growing region in Northern Australia

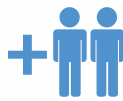


276,405 people



(ABS ERP 2018)

inter-census pop. growth



+18,057

hinterland growth



+6,494

number of registered business numbers



employment in marine servicing activities



employment in aviation servicing activities



crops \$1B and growing



## WE RANK 2ND FOR

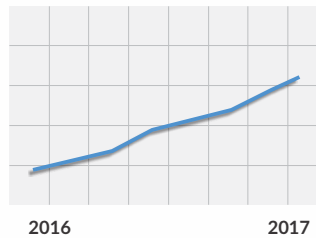


**Livestock: \$816m and growing**  
2nd to Central West Queensland

**Growth in employed workforce**  
2nd to Northern Territory

## OUR ECONOMY

**GRP**  
  
**\$15.15B**



**2016/17**  
International Exports - \$1.53B  
Domestic Exports - \$7.6B

Value of minerals produced has grown by 18% to

**\$807m**  
in the last year

## MANUFACTURING

**26%**  
in the last 10 years

## BASE INDUSTRIES - output by industry



**TOURISM**  
**\$3.2B**



**PRIMARY INDUSTRIES**  
**\$3.2B**



**MINING**  
**\$1.05B**



**CONSTRUCTION**  
**\$3.2B**



**MANUFACTURING**  
**\$2.8B**

Source: National Institute of Economic and Industry Research (NIEIR) ©2016. Compiled and presented in economy.id by .id, the population experts.





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