

Go Green Building FNQ

Meeting Minutes 4 February 2009

Cairns City Library Community Meeting Room

The mission is to create a built environment in FNQ that is healthy and sustainable. To achieve this builders, construction service professionals, building material manufacturers, retailers, government representatives, industry and community associations and other interested stakeholders may work together as a group. As a group we may identify issues and projects and pool our resources and energy to find solutions and provide outcomes.

Meeting minutes by Sarah Hoyal

Facilitation by Dr Elaine Harding from the Cairns and Far North Environment Centre

Meeting opened at 5pm.

Apologies:

Gordon Binks, Sarah Rizvi, Ghis Gallo, Andrew Barrett, Michael Plunket, Janelle Mance, Daniel Handley, Peter Collins, David Smyth, Sue Jenkins.

Introductions:

1. Emma Thirkell, Beachcomber Building Solutions Pty Ltd
2. Andrew Cummings, NQ Build.com.au and Greenbuild.com.au
3. Sarah Hoyal, CAFNEC Management Committee, Env Scientist – NRA
4. Ris Douglass, Alternative Technology Association
5. Daryl Douglass , President of Cairns Branch of Alternative Technology Association
6. José Ruiz, Building Services Engineer – GHD
7. Julie Fry, FNQILSA
8. Peter Zieth, Architect, Leeds accredited professional with the US Green Building Council – GHD
9. Arnold Roos, RPM Environmental
10. Scott Pearson, Turner Townsend and Young Chamber, Cairns Chamber of Commerce.
11. Shaun Hartley, Structural Engineering Consultant - ARUP
12. Andrew Park, Turner Townsend
13. Ryan Cichoncki, Papyrus Australia
14. Noeline Cichonski, Papyrus Australia
15. Andrew Langtree, Andy's Sheetmetal
16. Jason Van Ballegooyan, TAFE
17. Maree Grenfell, Sustainability Officer – CRC
18. Christine Doan, Malanda North property developer
19. Nikki Swan, The First Project a commercial project to showcase green building technology.
20. Brendon Bryant, The House and Garden Company
21. Gwion Cain, The House and Garden Company
22. Greg Gilboy, Gilboy Hydraulic Engineers
23. Patrick Winter, Tropical Trend Homes
24. Di Creasey, Enviromart

Dr Elaine Harding as facilitator is representing CAFNEC. CAFNEC is interested in promoting regional sustainability and where ever possible is supporting initiatives such as this group.

Elaine also announced a funding opportunity through the Department of Tourism, Regional Development and Industry: The Aus Industry Climate Ready programme for small to medium business provides grants from \$50,000 to \$5 Mill on matching funding basis to support research and development, proof-of-concept and early-stage commercialisation activities to develop solutions to climate change challenges.

An event is being held tomorrow morning in Cairns by Aus Industry to promote the funding but it appears to be booked out.

Upcoming funding rounds closing dates:

- Round 3 - 12 March 2009 by 5:00pm AEDST
- Round 4 - 25 June 2009 by 5:00pm AEST

For more information see:

<http://www.ausindustry.gov.au/InnovationandRandD/ClimateReadyProgram/Pages/ClimateReadyProgram.aspx>

Previous meeting minutes are accepted.

Tonight's meeting has two parts to the agenda: potential projects and formalising the group and its functions.

Potential Projects:

The aim is to identify projects that the group should take-up and establish sub-groups to tackle the issues. The meeting identified 4 projects for consideration.

A. Greywater Systems – Mapping of appropriate areas in the Cairns region

Emma – Di Creasy from Enviromart introduced this issue to the group in the last meeting. There is a need for greywater users, prospective users and suppliers to identify areas of Cairns where greywater can be used, particularly in relation to soil types. Different groups and individuals already have substantial knowledge which could be collated. Perhaps Industry stakeholders could collate data, and seek support from CRC to provide resources to map and produce. Not sure how it would get picked up or distributed. Maybe available through Cairns Water or through the planning maps, like an Overlay Map.

Greg – Currently very costly to find solutions as they tend to be very site-specific. Difficult to map, as greywater systems affected by soils, closeness to watercourses and geomorphology. The Plumbing Code doesn't separate soils from greywater. First step would be to look at flood zone maps.

Emma – There are generic soil types that can be collated along with the water tables that show areas that impede or benefit gray water systems.

Greg – Yes, can start with generic information first. The Geotechnical Engineers and soil testers have information from right across the region and that may be used to determined where there are areas that have sand, silty clay and high clays where areas can be identified.

Emma – Start this project with the Cairns region in collaboration with the CRC and then more broadly in the region (including the Tablelands and Innisfail).

Greg/Elaine – Can have generic information publicly available to be used as a tool for end-users.

Emma – Currently this lack of information to end-users is an impediment to greywater uptake.

Maree – Need a toolbox as well as maps, with basic simple information on the process etc.

Emma – Public relations/education also needs to happen.

Greg – Very good starting tool – however may already be done by some greywater suppliers. Neil Whittaker (CRC) also needs to be on side first.

Emma - Yes, we have spoken to Neil Whittaker at the CRC and he is aware of this issue and will support our activity.

Di – Also important to educate those who are using greywater systems now (that may not be approved). Users need to know where it is acceptable within the Cairns region, and where it has the potential to be environmentally damaging.

Greg – A spreadsheet is also needed to produce a budget and list of appropriate suppliers for end-users to use in the planning stage.

It was agreed to take up this project.

Greywater Sub-Group: Greg, Emma, Arnold, Di, Jason (spatial mapping with students), Maree, Nikki

Aims of the Sub Group:

- Bring other interested stakeholders i.e. system sellers, consulting professionals into this sub-group.
- Map to show areas where systems may be considered and where it is a no-go area.
- Mapping - floodzone / soils - public toolkit, other info
- Liaise with the Cairns Regional Council to help co-ordinate.

B. Water Management

Maree – In the Cairns Water brochures on rainwater tanks, the QLD Development Code and Water Savings Targets are used as a guide. This is State government legislation, not Local government. However there are also other ways to achieve water savings as well as rainwater tanks. The Council still struggles with the issues rainwater tanks bring particularly health issues (Malaria/Dengue) and upkeep. Stormwater retention/communal rainwater tanks are other options that may be considered to achieve water saving targets.

Greg – The Qld Development Code is difficult for rainwater tanks for buildings multi-storey buildings. Problems with first flush (20L per 100sqm of roof), dengue issues, wet/dry pipe problems. There also overflow issues. He is experimenting with air-conditioning condensation collection, and believes there are many alternatives for water re-use as well as rainwater tanks. There is some good emerging technology associated with rainwater harvesting.

Elaine – Suggests there should be a broad project on water-saving devices

Emma – Project could be on Water management – encouraging NQ regional projects to attract funding. Falls into exportable products/technologies.

Peter Z – Also need to consider retention as meeting water saving targets. For instance green roofs or roofs with gardens. The net benefit is retention, offsetting peak flow, cooling effect and offsetting energy demands.

Maree – Lots of opportunities for funding

Emma - There has been some discussion about creating retention tanks in parklands and open spaces that harvest rainwater and collect stormwater. The water source is then used in the immediate community. The Council may have a view that the administration and regulation of household rainwater tanks is costly in terms of maintenance control and public health. There is a view that public infrastructure is easier to manage.

Elaine – These look like broader water-saving ideas for the region – beyond individual to community scale.

Christine – Must be catchments scale water management. Tropical expertise has to be sold overseas. Only a limited market for tropical knowledge in Australia.

Emma – Project could provide seed energy for water saving projects and infrastructure.

Greg – Simple – just need to disseminate technology and knowledge to industry.

Ryan – Are we talking more than a demonstration house?

Greg – Council vetoed greywater at Redlynch demonstration house. There is also a need to educate local authorities about new technologies.

Di – In this water management project, also need to include sewage, water quality issues etc.

Maree – There have been reports done recently on Water Management in the region and she can find them and supply them to the sub-group.

Patrick – Have to make each developer provide water management as part of their sales offices.

Greg - Need to get to the developers before that. It needs to start before any development begins.

Peter Z. – Gave an example of a land management planning project in Canada, where identifying lots was the last part of the process.

It was agreed to take up this project.

Water Management Sub-Group: José, Emma, Andrew P.

C. Rainwater Tanks – Process and requirements for Council approval

Emma – This project is about rainwater tanks and tie-downs and the paper work process to install rainwater tanks. Rainwater tanks is considered as a structure and requires a tie-down and building certification and inspection of the tie-down

Greg – OzPoly has commissioned a local engineer – CMG to produce certified tie down details to go with the range of tanks.

Sarah - Gave her experience with the Council recently to get rainwater tank approval.

Emma – Rainwater tank suppliers need to come into this group to sort out this issue as it is impeding sales.

Greg – Legislation was rushed out instead of being in draft form for 12 months. The legislation brought about uptake across Queensland but there was no detail concerning the installation of the tanks in cyclonic regions of the state. The building certifiers have seen the tie downs as a building issue and not a plumbing issue. Manufacturers have not taken up the responsibility of providing tie-down systems. Could use a sub-group to prompt manufacturers to get their product certified for this region (including cyclone rating).

Maree - CRC needs to produce a flowchart which clarifies the process for rainwater tank approval.

Di – Six months ago the water tank process was very simple – not an eye sore, overflow plumbed into stormwater and no tie downs, no slabs etc. This is only an issue in the last 6 months.

Maree – Council doesn't currently have a rainwater tank policy.

Greg – Every single rainwater tank supplier in NQ should be contacted and told that their tanks are not certifiable because they do not have tie-down specifications.

Di – People that are trying to install tanks have to have their paperwork in Brisbane by the 16th of February to get their rebate and this is very frustrating.

It was agreed to take up this project.

Rainwater Tank Sub-Group: Di, Sarah, Nikki, Shaun, Andrew P, Maree (liaison)

D. Community Awareness

Emma – The Cairns Home and Lifestyle Show is being held on the 28-29th March. There was talk at the last meeting of trying to replicate the TAFE Sustainability day from 2008, but Emma suggests starting with some kind of presence at the Cairns Home and Lifestyle Show. She has discussed the 'green' theming of the Show with organizers. Through Peter Collins, HIA Greensmart trainers may deliver information sessions at the Show. Show sponsored by Cairns Post. Emma encouraged members to take out a display space at the show.

Patrick – Our Go Green build Group should have a stand at the show, not to push their own individual products but to help people find out information about how they can 'Green Build'.

General discussion about prizes and general consensus that prizes for the best Green display and should come from the Go Green group. Maybe it should be a rainwater tank.

Emma – Asked for people to email her on emma@greenbuild.com.au if they want to get involved in this subgroup.

If you want to book a display at the show and get more information phone:

David Low at Access All Areas on 07 4773 6611 or email david@aaaem.com.au.

The project will be discussed at the next meeting.

A sub group needs to be formed at the next meeting.

Formalising the Group and its function:

Group Objectives/ Mission/ Charter Discussion

Emma – Recap on last month's discussion. AGDF membership \$500 per year. Not much happening in NQ anyway. Regional Sustainability Framework (RSF) may form independently.

Christine – RSF has a membership of policy-focused people and is working through the three tiers of government. This group (Go Green) is full of practical doers. Therefore there should be a natural alliance.

Emma – Jim Turnour is supportive of Go Green.

Jason – Spoke about the background of the Regional Sustainable Framework as a high level group that ties the three levels of government together working triple bottom line principles and their charter will be based on this. The framework would lobby for funds and secure investment that is needed carry out projects that we are talking about.

Christine – The RSF is not all political. It has concerns with economic, environmental and political outcomes.

Greg – We have to ask what we want out of this group. We are a group of like minded people that are getting together to share information and spreading the message or are we going to tackle tasks.

Elaine – We can do both of those

Emma – We are project lead.

Peter Z – What about Institutional organizations such as the Centre of Tropical Design in Townsville.

Jason – He sees that institutions like that and the RSF take a regional approach to sustainability. This group would work with the regional groups at the higher level.

Elaine - RSF could help Go Green fund projects.

Emma – The RSF are addressing more than just building issues. They are addressing agriculture, tourism, industry development, environmental issues. The idea is to keep this group building and construction focused. This is a green building group.

Nicky – There is a need for a group like this that is paddock level, grounded and community led.

Maree – Regional issues can be addressed by the framework that can carry through the philosophy and create policy advice.

Nikki – But policy advice can be created without going back to the paddock and consulting the needs of the end users.

Christine – and that is why the RSF were excited about having a group to work with that were already addressing important issues and filling a gap that they can't fill.

Nikki- The public are only really interested in the work we do that is useful to them as the end user of policy.

Elaine – Suggested a community level, project focused network.

Patrick – The group needs a website.

Nicky – Example of Bioneers. Consult online with similar minded people using a blog. However a website needs funding.

The website could also be used to help us manage the group and the subgroups work

Emma – We might be able to find some funding to put that together.

Elaine – We could ask the RSF to help us secure funding for a website.

Name of the Group:

Emma – Be good for everyone in the group to have a think and put together some ideas for the group name.

Peter Z. – The group should go beyond buildings alone, as this does not allow consideration of the triple bottom line, the social and economic components.

Patrick – Although it is all connected. The water run off affects the sewerage.

Emma – It is important to choose something that has green building in it as people are familiar with the Green Building Council in the US and Australia and what they do.

José - What about “Go Green FNQ”?

Nicky – “Green” is overused.

Elaine – Suggests everyone think more about names and the nature of the group (whether it needs to be incorporated etc) and email Emma over the next few weeks.

Nicky – Interest in leading edge technology/innovation – showcasing and promotion of tropical green design.

Maree – Suggest an interactive mind mapping tool to help identify objectives.

Greg – This group could be a focus on identifying holes in the process and troubleshooting green design and building issues.

Group Functions

Project Coordinator – Peter Z.

Facilitator – Elaine Harding (March meeting)

Administrator/Network Coordinator – Nicky/Emma

Minute Taker – Sarah (March meeting)

Media spokesperson – Decide after clearer idea of group set-up, objectives and mission.

Suggested Agenda Items – March Meeting

- Name of the Group
- Clarify function and roles of the group
- Potential presentations, forums and programs
- Advice panels
- Legal advice liability issues

Meeting ended 7.10pm