

# Regional Development Australia

## TROPICAL NORTH INC.

### Annual Report 2021 / 2022

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An Australian Government Initiative

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## From the Chair and CEO

The team and Board at Regional Development Australia Tropical North (RDATN) enjoyed a fruitful year, working to progress strategic regional development solutions that will create jobs and grow the Far North Queensland economy.

The [TNQ Plastics Industry](#) project delivered in July 2021, a Feasibility Study, Replicable Pilot Template and Business Case delivered through funding by the Federal and State governments and Cairns Regional Council. The project found that a recycling hub in Cairns, with outreach to 150km radius, is feasible, returning 17 percent on investment based on 50 percent grant contribution through the Queensland Recycling Modernisation Fund. The final stage will be completed in the coming year with delivery of an Investment Prospectus. RDATN continues to work with the resource recovery and recycling industry to take advantage of government grants to establish a strong plastics recycling industry in the Far North.

In collaboration with Etheridge Shire Council, RDATN undertook substantial analysis and crafting of a funding submission for the [Etheridge Agricultural and Irrigation Precinct](#). Work to date has identified development of an Irrigation and Agricultural Precinct, with preliminary potential economic benefits of \$700million per annum. Key to the precinct's creation is its recognition of State significance, with pre-approvals across tenure, water, vegetation management, native title, future acts and cultural heritage. The opportunity to implement best practice land management and provide wide ranging and lasting Indigenous economic participation, training and employment opportunities on this scale, is a nation first, and has broad support at the Ministerial and Director-General level. The project was presented at the second Etheridge Agricultural Forum held in Georgetown in late March 2022, and I thank Mayor Hughes and Council CEO Ken Timms for an excellent Forum which included a visit to St Ronan's Station.

The **TNQ Regional Food Network Cluster Development** project, funded by FIAL, the Department of Tourism Development, Innovation and Sport and industry partners was a short-term project to build capacity and governance around the region's agriculture and food industry cluster. The project delivered a 3-year strategy and membership model with a focus on collaborative innovation, value-added commercialisation pathways to export, and a focus on addressing food waste within the region.

As part of the TNQ Regional Food Network Cluster Development project, in June 2022, RDATN hosted a very successful **trade and investment familiarisation visit** by the **Ambassador of France to Australia, the Hon Mr Jean-Pierre Thébault**, and a delegation from the French Embassy. The visit to farms and food manufacturers on a tour of the Cassowary Coast, Atherton Tablelands, Mareeba, Mossman and Cairns was integral to the Cluster Development Project. Many of Tropical North Queensland's food products were praised by the Ambassador as being perfect for export and he will be instrumental in making introductions when local growers and manufacturers are ready to enter the European market.

We continued work on the [TNQ Economic Development Strategy \(TEDS\)](#). There has never been an opportunity as presently exists in our region, to break the spell of fragmentation that has been the hallmark of our growth for decades. Lack of a cohesive vision, underfunding, and the absence of an intergovernmental response to the future needs of our region being the key issues. Against this background, and in collaboration with local government, State government and regional stakeholders, the TEDS is a consolidated 20-year economic direction for the Tropical North Queensland region. The TEDS will be developed in parallel to the review of the FNQ Regional Plan, with the intention to deliver the final strategy in mid-2023.

Work continued on the [Lakeland Irrigation Area Scheme](#), with the Reference Design and environmental baseline studies completed and staging options and financial arrangements investigated and documented.

Cultural heritage surveys also commenced. The preferred option is a 200,000ML Roller Compacted Concrete dam on the Palmer River, with 12km gravity-fed tunnel to Lakeland, delivering water to farm gate at 40psi along two reticulation pipe systems, to service up to 18,000ha of good agricultural land. An alternative larger scheme is also viable which extends irrigation West to the Indigenous-owned Crocodile Station. The scheme will create thousands of jobs and, through early estimates, bring in more than \$400 million per annum to the region. The final Detailed Business Case is due late 2022.

After the release of the [Cairns to Tablelands Access Study](#) by Department of Transport and Main Roads, RDATN undertook an analysis of the many options presented over the past two decades and this can be found [here](#). Our organisation will continue to advocate for a solution which supports economic development of the areas to the West of the Great Divide.

Minister Enoch announced in early April 2022, that RDATN in consortium with Cook Shire Council, were successful in winning the [Regional Arts Services Network \(RASN\)](#) contract for the TNQ region. The consortium will work in collaboration with regional, Queensland and national stakeholders to deliver significant regional arts outcomes. RASN has an important role in growing our cultural vibrancy and by providing opportunities for artists and organisations resulting in new investment and employment outcomes. The three-year project will engage resources in Cooktown, Thursday Island and Cairns.

The [Compost for a Farming Future Business Case](#) was delivered to the Australian government in May 2022. The Case found substantial benefits by replacing up to 60 percent chemical fertiliser with compost. For fruit producers, the value per hectare was in the order of \$18,000. This included reduction in water use, increased fruit yield and extended crop life. The Case identifies three recommendations for the next stage of the project. These will be progressed with State and Federal governments over the coming period.

We also expanded our Board and welcomed three new members, from varying backgrounds during the last year. Noeleen Mulley, a Mualgal and Kaurareg woman from Torres Strait with strong experience in government, social services and healthcare. Krista Watkins from Evolution Foods, brings solid entrepreneurial and innovation capabilities to the Board while Michael Chiodo, ex-CEO of Townsville City Council and ex-Director General of various Northern Territory government departments, brings a wealth of knowledge and insights into strategy and also, strong government networks. We congratulate our new members and look forward to their contributions over the coming period.

Unfortunately, we had one of our long-term Board members resign due to increasing work commitments in March 2022. Fred White, previously of Sea Swift and now with Orezone, has been an exemplary Board member with strong regional and commercial insights. I personally deeply valued Fred's candor, strategic foresight and dedication to our region. He will be missed but we wish him all the best with his venture.

At the time of writing this 2021-2022 Annual Report, our long-standing Chair David Kempton resigned from the RDATN board. On behalf of the RDATN Board and staff, we thank David for his significant contribution to the TNQ region and the organisation. We wish him every success with his future endeavours.

We thank all our regional partners, stakeholders, the Queensland and Australian governments for their support during the last year and look forward to delivering jobs, trade, investment and local procurement in the coming year.

*Brett Moller (Interim Chair) & Sonja Johnson (CEO)*

## Who we are

Regional Development Australia (RDA) is a national network of 52 Committees made up of local leaders who work with all levels of government, business and community groups to support the economic development of their regions.

RDA Tropical North (RDATN) actively establishes linkages, facilitates engagement and opens conversations regarding the future planning and development of the region. We seek to remove silos, encourage collaboration towards a common regional vision and works to ensure regional projects and programs are inclusive, connected and considerate of their social, cultural and environmental impacts.

Working in close partnership with fellow RDA Committees, all levels of government, and the private sector, RDA Committees will:

- Collaborate with relevant stakeholders to identify economic opportunities and leverage private and public sector investment to the regions;
- Connect regional businesses, councils and industry sectors with international trade partners, financial markets and potential investors;
- Promote and disseminate information on Australian Government policies and grant programs to state and local governments and industry, business and community sectors;
- Support community stakeholders to develop project proposals to access funding;
- Develop and maintain positive working relationships with the local government bodies in our regions;
- Assist in the delivery of Australian Government programs, where relevant and where requested by the Minister;
- Engage with regional entrepreneurs and emerging business leaders to explore new opportunities to grow local jobs in the TNQ region;
- Provide information on our region's activities and competitive advantages to all levels of government, industry, business and community sectors; and
- Provide evidence-based advice to the Australian Government on critical regional development issues positively and negatively affecting our region.







# Regional Development Australia



An Australian Government Initiative

*Local people  
developing local  
solutions to local issues*

## Who are we?

Regional Development Australia (RDA) is a national network of committees made up of local leaders who work with all levels of government, business and community groups to support the economic development of their regions.

## What do we do?

RDA members work to actively grow strong and confident economies in their regions that harness their competitive advantages, seize on economic opportunity and attract investment.

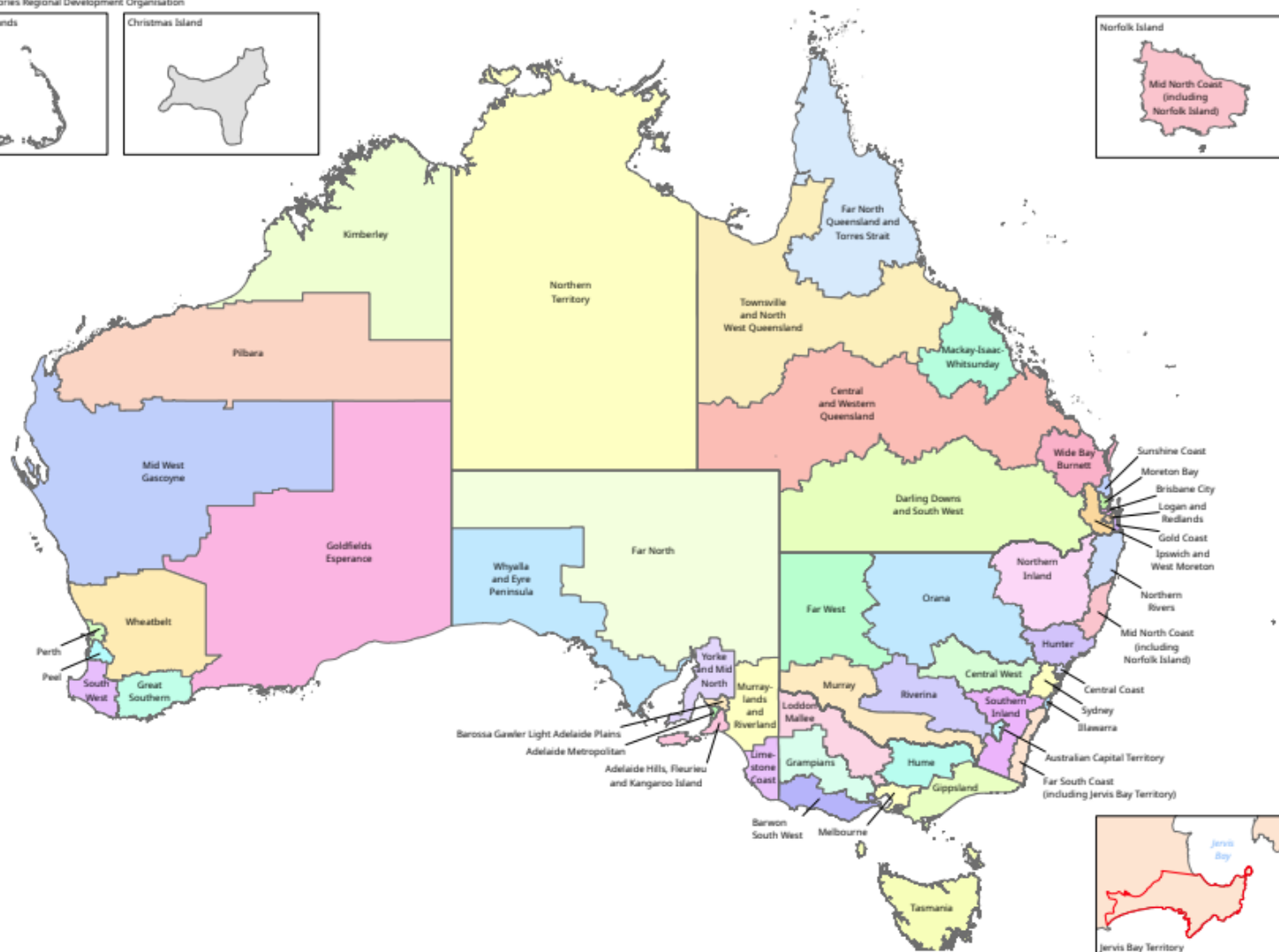
## Contact

For more information on working with or joining your local RDA visit [www.rda.gov.au](http://www.rda.gov.au) or email [rda@infrastructure.gov.au](mailto:rda@infrastructure.gov.au)

All postal correspondence:  
GPO Box 594, Canberra ACT 2601

[www.rda.gov.au](http://www.rda.gov.au)

Indian Ocean Territories Regional Development Organisation



## Our Board

The RDATN Board, drawn from leaders and experts from across the region, has an active and facilitative role in the community and a clear focus on growing a strong and confident regional economy that harnesses its competitive advantages, seizes on economic opportunity and attracts investment.



*RDA Tropical North Board; L to R Rear: Bill Shannon, Carolyn Eagle, David Kempton (resigned at the time of Annual Report compilation), Jodie Duignan-George, Joe Moro, Krista Watkins; L to R Front: Noeleen Mulley, Cr Brett Moller (Interim Chair at the time of Annual Report compilation), Mike Chiodo. (Absent: Fred White)*

### David Kempton – Chair



David Kempton has been living and working in Queensland's far north for over 30 years. Initially in Cooktown where he opened the first law practice since 1935, and ultimately in Cairns as a sole practitioner and later with Preston Law where he now works as a specialist consultant. David was the Member for Cook and Assistant Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs in 2012 – 2015.

Since arriving in the north in 1985, David has developed a keen sense of community and strongly believes that true community growth and social reform come through economic development. David is keen to see the RDA take a lead role in projects and programs that bring long term benefits to the region. David has a very hands on approach to the future of our region.



## Brett Moller – Deputy Chair



Brett is an elected Councillor on the Cairns Regional Council representing Division 1 - the largest division with predominately rural and farming land and being the growth corridor in the southern part of the greater Council area. He represents Council on the Audit Committee, the Cairns Gallery Limited and the Cairns River Improvement Trust. He is a respected and practicing lawyer of over twenty-five years, having been admitted in the Supreme Court of Queensland and High Court of Australia, and was a former partner in a regional law practice until his election to Council in 2016.

Brett has significant Directorship experience. He is a former Chair of the Queensland Government owned Ports North Corporation, former State President of the Chamber of Commerce & Industry Queensland, served as a Director on the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry and MSF Sugar boards and was Deputy Chair of the Mulgrave Central Mill Co. Ltd. With his extensive Board and Director experience, Cr Brett Moller is a strong community and business advocate who believes effective community leadership comes from meaningful collaboration.

## Carolyn Eagle – Treasurer



Carolyn has a diverse professional and business background. She has served on the governing bodies of State and Local government, as well as supported strategic partnerships and initiatives that provide both public and private sector growth opportunities.

Carolyn is a committed representative of our region, known for her integrity and ability to unlock opportunities that generate beneficial outcomes for our region.

Carolyn is a Fellow of the Institute of Chartered Accountants Australia and holds a number of other professional qualifications. She is a Director of Pacifica Chartered Accountants and heads their Assurance & Advisory Services division.

## Michael Chiodo – Secretary



Mike Chiodo has over 30 years of Senior Management and Leadership experience in both the Private and Public Sector in Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia and the Northern Territory.

Most recently as Chief Executive Officer of Townsville City Council played a key strategic leadership role and led the organisation through events such as the unprecedented monsoon event of 2019. He continued to be the driving force behind catalytic and transformative projects as well as leading the city's ongoing recovery efforts.

Previously Chief Executive of the Department of Local Government, Community Services and the Office of Aboriginal Affairs for the Northern Territory Government, Mike has extensive experience in organisational reform, strategic planning, project management, infrastructure and service delivery across urban, regional and remote communities including:

- Management of funding and delivery of essential services & infrastructure to regional and remote Indigenous communities
- Coordination of service delivery for regional centres, remote communities
- Oversight of Local Governments and Regional Councils across the Northern Territory.

Mike has extensive experience and expertise in place leadership, community planning and organisational reform. He has led and been a member of various Steering Groups with the Commonwealth and State Governments regarding funding and delivery of Major Infrastructure programs.

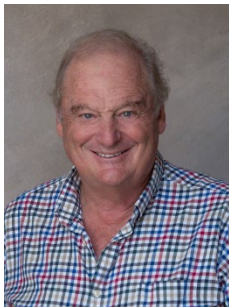
## Jodie Duignan-George – Board Member



Jodie is the Associate Vice-Chancellor, Cairns and Far North Region for CQUniversity. Jodie commenced with CQUniversity in 2014 to establish a campus in Cairns. With a 20+ year career in higher education, Jodie has a strong understanding of the issues facing the sector, particularly from a regional university perspective. Her interests, however, extend beyond higher education to include regional development more broadly.

She is an engagement specialist and a strategic thinker who loves working with 'out of the norm' ideas. Jodie is an active member of her community, serving on the Management Committees of Study Cairns (as Vice President) and Cairns Chamber of Commerce (as Vice President). Jodie is also a Director on the Board of Advance Cairns and the Company Secretary of Engagement Australia.

## Bill Shannon – Board Member



As Queensland Director of the Northern Australia Infrastructure Facility Board (NAIF), Bill brings a wealth of complementary experience and local knowledge to the RDATN Committee. He is interested in sustainable economic development and natural resource management.

Previously the Mayor of the Cassowary Coast Regional Council (2008 – 2016), and a cane and cattle farmer, Bill has also been an active member of the Advance Cairns Advisory Committee, Director of Terrain NRM and was Chair of the Far North Queensland Regional Organisation of Councils. He has an economics degree from the University of Sydney, is a chartered accountant, a public company director and a member of the Governance Institute of Australia.

## Joe Moro – Board Member



Born in Mareeba, Joe has a background in farming and operates a successful mango farm and motor mechanic business - Moro Auto Repairs.

Elected as President of Mareeba District Fruit and Vegetable Growers Association in 1995, Joe has since become involved in several community activities and organisations. He has had a long involvement in the community interests. Not only does he deal with fruit and vegetable issues, but a wide range of economic development and social issues as well.

He has represented the area on a local, state and national basis. He has always had a wide community interest and sees an important need for a strong voice, and someone who can find and pursue the issues for the Atherton Tableland community.

## Fred White – Board Member



Fred joined Sea Swift in January 2009 as CEO after spending 20 years in the mining industry, predominately in Mount Isa. Fred was one of the few General Managers in the modern era to have worked from the ground up, holding management positions with Mount Isa Mines and later Executive Management positions with Xstrata Zinc.

Since joining Sea Swift, Fred has successfully steered the company through the GFC and change of ownership whilst retaining all personnel and positioning the organisation for further growth during this period.

Fred grew up and has spent the majority of his life in remote and regional Australia, is part owner and Managing Director and CEO of Sea Swift, has held various Board positions, and is a Member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.

## Noeleen Mulley – Board Member



Noeleen is no stranger to the tropical north. Born and raised in Cairns, she is well-known within community and public sector networks. She is very committed to advancing the needs and interests of First Nations' peoples.

Noeleen has invaluable experience and knowledge from within the housing, health, and human services sectors. Her leadership and contribution, whether in the community or the public sector, has procured meaningful change for the betterment of people.

Leadership roles undertaken by Noeleen have included, the management of the National Indigenous Housing Strategy in Queensland, and more recently, the Chief Executive Officer for Apunipima Cape York Health Council and the Mamu Health Service. She has worked with many people living in communities throughout the tropical north, particularly in the Cape York Peninsula and the Torres Strait islands.

An Indigenous woman with an ambitious outlook for First Nations' Peoples, Noeleen brings with her a wealth of experience and knowledge.

## Krista Watkins – Board Member



Krista Watkins is a leader in agricultural innovation and the co-founder and Managing Director of Natural Evolution, a company specializing in green bananas and other waste produce products.

Krista is an advocate for innovation and disruption, and passionate about reinvigorating the Australian Food manufacturing industry. Krista's interest in reducing waste and finding uses for unsaleable produce led to the development of Natural Evolution in 2015.

Following tireless work, research and product development, Krista has gained experience across the domestic and export supply chains, commercialisation and corporate structuring. Krista's efforts have earned her the prestigious Agrifutures Rural Woman of the Year 2018, along with Ernst and Young's Entrepreneur of the Year 2019 and #eatqld food ambassador.

Krista brings with her a wide range of experience and engaged relationships with key stakeholders throughout the food, innovation, sustainability and agribusiness industry.

## Our Staff

### Sonja Johnson – Chief Executive Officer



Sonja Johnson is an economic development leader, who drives disparate ideas, strategies, resources, and budgets and unifies them to make things happen. With over 20 years' experience in managing healthcare projects, destination brands and economic and capability development programs in Australia and the Middle East; she has been responsible for improvements to patient outcomes, double-digit increases to tourist and international student numbers, hundreds of millions of dollars in economic impacts and thousands of hours of capability development within communities. As the Chief Executive Officer at Regional Development Australia Tropical North Inc., her role encompasses strategic planning, high-level stakeholder engagement and relationship management and oversight of large-scale infrastructure feasibility studies/business cases, for the Far North Queensland region.

She holds a Bachelor of Business degree from The University of Queensland and a post-graduate qualification in International Development from Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology. She is a certified Project Management Professional (PMI), member of the Institute of Managers and Leaders (ANZ), certified Australian Economic Developer (EDA) and a graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.

## Lainie Poon – Relationships Manager

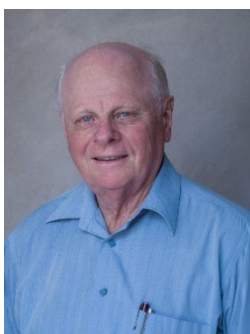


Skilled in customer service, sales, management, business development, relationship building and social media, Lainie brings a wide range of skills and experience to the RDATN office. Most recently in her career as a Finance Broker, she was recognised as a finalist in 2017 and 2018 in the national 'Women in Finance' Awards for the development and delivery of the 'Creating Wealthy Women' finance seminar.

She has extensive work experience across a wide range of industries including self-employment, hospitality, travel, tourism, sport and finance and is looking forward to increasing her knowledge of the projects and economic development in our region.

Lainie also held a Board Member position with the Cairns Business Women's Club in 2018.

## Tony Potter – Project Director



Tony brings to the team a specialist background in infrastructure planning and delivery and strategic planning. He is a Registered Professional Engineer Qld. His career has ranged through Main Roads, Cook Shire, and private consultant for project management and strategic planning including the upgrade planning for the Mulligan Hwy to Cooktown.

His second term with the Qld Dept of Transport and Main Roads (TMR) (to 2015) resulted in the position of Regional Director for Far North Qld, enhancing his skills in major infrastructure delivery, policy planning, team management and significant financial accountability. Outstanding contributions in this period include the development and implementation of the First Stage of the Peninsula Developmental Road upgrade to Weipa (\$265M), and the restoration work resulting from Cyclone YASI (\$700M) including the reconstruction of the Cardwell Foreshore.

Since joining RDATN, Tony has worked with SMEC in delivering the feasibility study and Detailed Business Case for the Lakeland Irrigation Area. He has also undertaken the role of superintendent for the Charleston Dam with Etheridge Shire Council concurrently with project management work for RDATN.

His interest in strategic planning commenced in Cook Shire and was instrumental in the initiation of the Cape York Land Use Study.

Tony's passion is the identification and implementation of public works for the betterment of the community and the advancement of the economic profile of North Qld.



## Linda Adams – Office Coordinator



Recently joining the RDATN in April 2022 as Office Co-ordinator, Linda has extensive employment experience in both Administration and Management roles in numerous industries including finance, insurance real estate and banking.

Since relocating to Cairns in 2011, Linda has held seats on the boards of the Business Liaison Association and the Cairns Business Women's Club. She is a member of the Australian Institute of Management and Leaders and has degrees in Business and Finance.

Linda has lived and worked throughout Australia and also the Solomon Islands as a liaison to the Australian High Commission in Honiara and brings to RDATN a wealth of experience.

## Marilyn Miller – Regional Arts Services Network (RASN) Officer



As a dancer, Marilyn co-founded Australia's first contemporary Indigenous dance company AIDT-the Company, in the early 90's.

She is founder of BlakDance Australia Ltd, now in its 10<sup>th</sup> year, and sits on the BlakDance Cultural Council. She is also the Deputy Chair of the Cairns Indigenous Art Fair (CIAF).

Marilyn's most recent representation in Indigenous dance internationally was at the First Nations Performing Arts Dialogue in New York (Jan 2019) and then at the Moshkamo Festival-First Nations forum, in Ottawa Canada (Aug 2019).

Throughout her career Marilyn has worked in the roles of Artistic Associate, Festival Director, Creative Producer, Artistic Director, Youth Mentor, Life Coach/Counsellor, Course Coordinator, General Manager, Board member and Chairperson.

## Contractors & Consultants

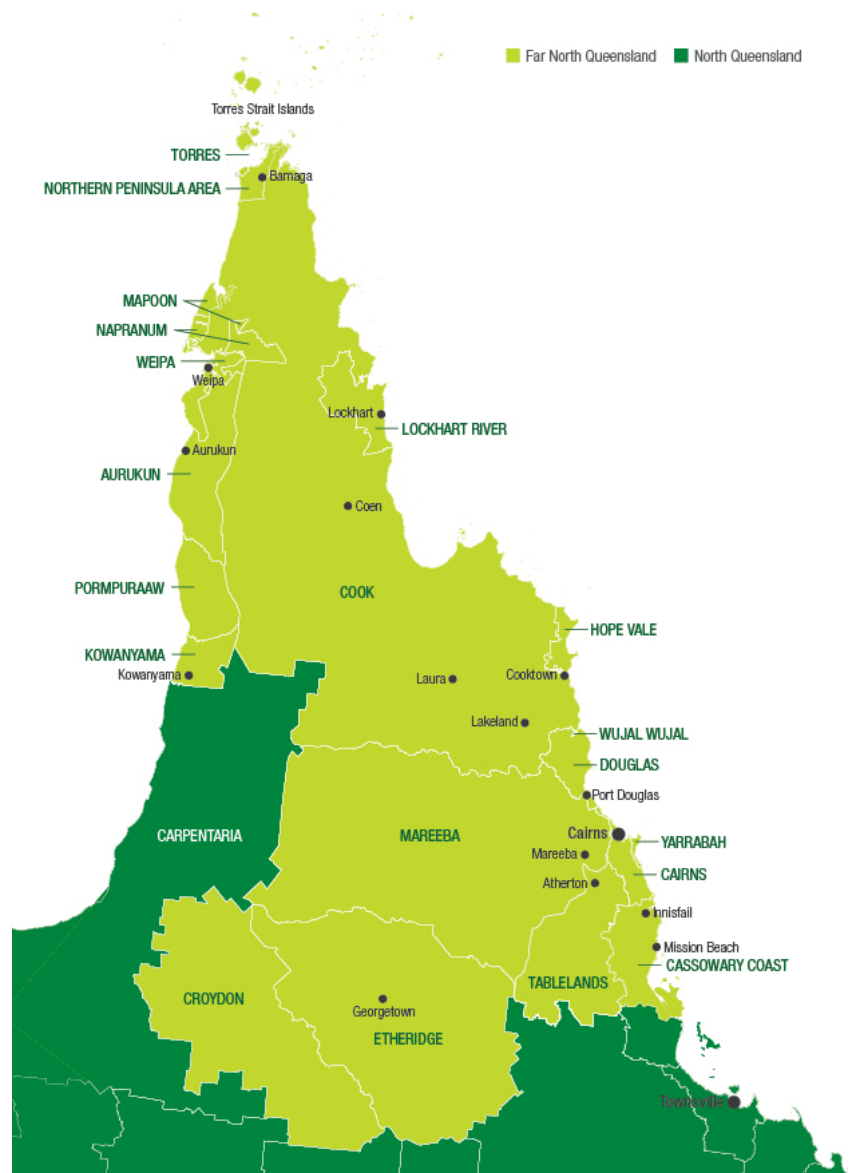
- Rachel Burgess Bookkeeping - Bookkeeper/Accountant
- SMEC (Lakeland Irrigation Area Scheme)
- Environment North (Etheridge Irrigation and Agricultural Precinct)
- FNQ Food Incubator Pty Ltd (TNQ Regional Food Network Cluster Development Project)
- Jodie Ferrero Consulting (TNQ Regional Food Network Cluster Development Project)
- Cook Shire Council (Regional Arts Services Network)
- Torres Strait Islanders Media Association (Regional Arts Services Network)
- RPS Consultants (FNQ Plastics Industry Proposal)
- Price Waterhouse Coopers (Compost for a Farming Future)
- Outsource Management (Strategic Plan and Compost for a Farming Future)
- Sunah Design Studio
- Jessups – Auditors.

# Strategic Context

## Far North Queensland

The Far North Queensland region has a total area of 273,157.4 square kilometres accounting for 16% of Queensland's land mass. It encompasses 21 local government shires and regions:

- Aurukun Shire Council
- Cairns Regional Council
- Cassowary Coast Regional Council
- Douglas Shire Council
- Mareeba Shire Council
- Cook Shire Council
- Croydon Shire Council
- Etheridge Shire Council
- Hope Vale Aboriginal Shire Council
- Kowanyama Aboriginal Shire Council
- Lockhart River Aboriginal Shire Council
- Mapoon Aboriginal Shire Council
- Napranum Aboriginal Shire Council
- Northern Peninsula Area Regional Council
- Pormpuraaw Aboriginal Shire Council
- Tablelands Regional Council
- Torres Shire Council
- Torres Strait Islands Regional Council
- Weipa Town Authority
- Wujal Wujal Aboriginal Shire Council
- Yarrabah Aboriginal Shire Council



The region experiences a summer monsoon (wet season) from November to April, followed by a lower rainfall winter and early summer dry season, May to October.

It is home to two World Heritage listed areas - the Great Barrier Reef and the Wet Tropics Rainforest and is the only region to have an international border (Papua New Guinea).

Major infrastructure in Far North Queensland includes:

- Cairns International Airport
- Two major universities – James Cook University and Central Queensland University
- National and state highway system
- Nine ports
- Cairns Convention Centre
- Freight and passenger rail services

Far North Queensland has an estimated resident population of approximately 290,217 people (ABS ERP 2021) with 54% living in the Cairns urban area, 35% in the Douglas/Cassowary Coast and Tablelands area and 11% in the Gulf, Cape York and Torres Strait area.

The region has experienced an average annual growth rate of 0.9% over 10 years with the population expected to grow to over 378,000 by the year 2041 (Qld Government Statistician's Office, Projected Population, QLD 2016 to 2041).

Far North Queensland boasts one of the highest Indigenous populations in the country. According to 2021 ABS census data, there are 43,503 Indigenous people (ABS, Census 2021) from over 60 Traditional Owner Groups living across the Far North Queensland region. This equates to approximately 15% of the population, however, demographic data from the region's LGAs and Queensland Health indicates the population of the region's Aboriginal Shire Councils has been grossly underreported; Wujal Wujal Aboriginal Shire by up to two-thirds and Hope Vale Aboriginal Shire by 50%, for example. Multiplied across Far North Queensland's 12 Indigenous Shire Councils, it could be assumed the population is closer to 100,000 than 40,000.

Key regional industries include tourism, agriculture (est. \$1.7B export earnings), mining (\$1.1B export earnings), health, education, marine, aviation and construction.



*Port of Cairns - Credit: Ports North*

The regional labour force comprised of 136,110 persons (NIEIR 2021) with unemployment at 5.3% (March 22 quarter), Gross Regional Product (GRP) was estimated at \$17.1 billion (Source: NIEIR 2021) and the region was home to 24,250 businesses (comprising 94.5% of the economy), 1,138 medium size companies and 165 large size companies.

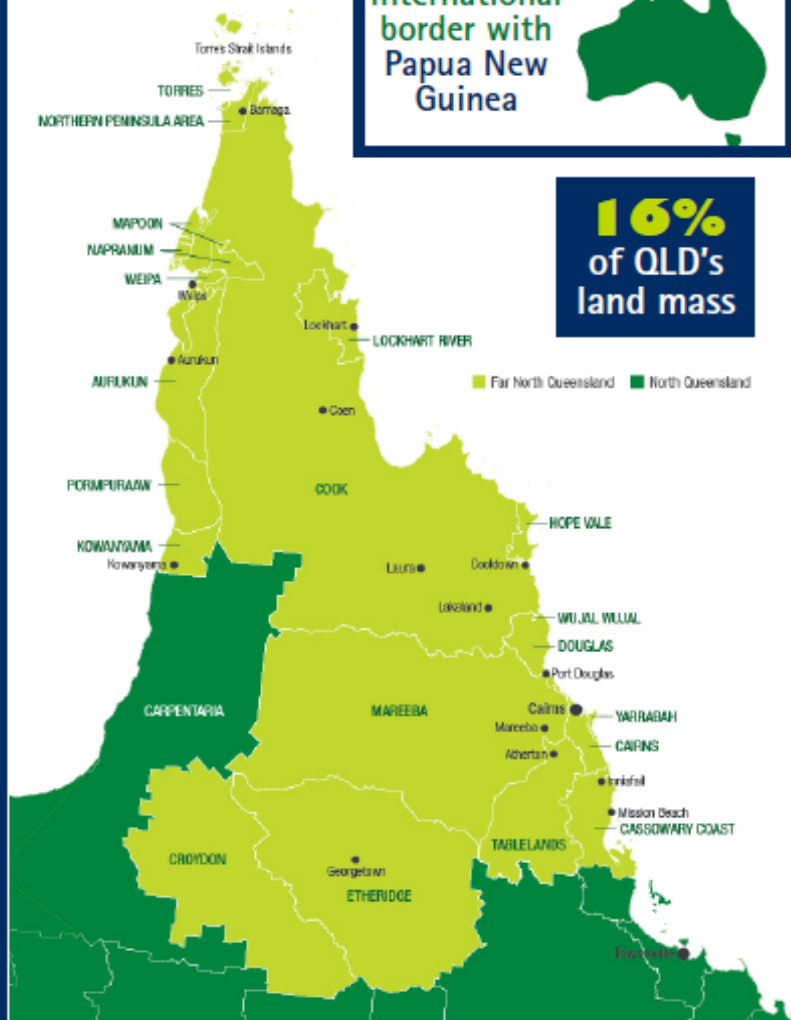
Closest capital city: Port Moresby, PNG

**844 kms**

Shares an international border with Papua New Guinea



**16%**  
of QLD's  
land mass



Land area: **273,157.4km<sup>2</sup>**

**21** Local  
Government  
Shires &  
Regions



**24,250** businesses (94.5% of the economy), **1,138** medium size companies and **165** large size companies.

## Strategic Context



Home to **2** World Heritage listed areas – the Great Barrier Reef and the Wet Tropics rainforest

**\$17.1B**  
GRP (2021)

Estimated population  
**290,217**



54% living in the Cairns urban area, 35% across the Douglas, The Cassowary Coast and Tablelands, 11% across the Gulf, Cape York and the Torres Strait.

Average annual growth rate  
**0.9%** over 10 years  
**378,000** by 2041



One of Australia's highest Indigenous population **15%** or **43,503**



From **60** Traditional Owner groups



Climate:  
Tropical with a summer monsoon (wet season) November – April, followed by a lower rainfall winter and early summer dry season, May – October.



Unemployment:  
**8.5%**  
(pre-COVID-19)



Labour force  
(2021)

**136,110**

### Key industries:



Tourism (\$3.5B)



Agriculture (\$1.7B)



Mining (\$1.1B)



Defence



Fisheries



International Education (\$183m)



Marine



Aviation Services



Business Services (\$250m)

### Major infrastructure:



International Airport



Convention Centre



Nine ports



National & State highway system



Freight & passenger rail service



Two major universities



# 2021/2022 Strategic Priorities

The RDATN Board identified the following strategic priorities for Far North Queensland region and developed a series of programs and activities to address the opportunities and challenges facing the region.

## 1. Tropical North Strategic Regional Plan (SRP)

In collaboration with stakeholders, RDATN will deliver the *Tropical North Queensland Strategic Regional Plan (SRP)*. As part of this process, the organisation will deliver an evidence-based report on the opportunities for the region, based upon the quadruple bottom line, because of the changing ways of working and living due to the pandemic. The SRP will have at its core, the *RDATN Economic Recovery and Reconstruction Strategy* which focuses on job creation and investment through water developments resulting in increased demand for value-added agricultural products, that in turn creates demand for ports and road infrastructure. To support project proposals identified in the SRP through the development life cycle, RDATN will continue development of a Project Assessment Tool. This tool aims to provide a diagrammatic view of a project's position in terms of economic, social, environmental and cultural domains throughout the project life cycle. The tool enables proponents to adjust focus where needed, to bring specific domains into positive ratings at a specific point in time.

## 2. Critical Water Infrastructure

The *RDATN Economic Recovery and Reconstruction Strategy* identifies water as the catalyst for economic growth in our region. RDATN will deliver milestones attached to the Detailed Business Case (DBC) for the Lakeland Irrigation Area Scheme (final DBC due in November 2022) and, source funding to undertake a scoping/feasibility study for the Etheridge Agricultural Precinct which seeks innovative solutions to water management from the Gilbert and Einasleigh Rivers. There is an absence of water strategy, for development purposes, for Northern Australia. RDATN will lead work around the Northern Australia Water Strategy, in collaboration with the Northern RDA Alliance (NRDAA) and CRC Northern Australia (CRCNA).

## 3. Trade and Supply Chain Focus

The tropical north region has a strong history in collaboration through industry clusters (eg. Tourism Tropical North Qld, Super Yachts and Study Cairns). To support the Australian government's objective of increasing agricultural output to \$200B by 2030<sup>1</sup>, RDATN will develop the agriculture and food industry cluster ensuring a financially viable and well governed cluster, with an increase in value-added product from the Tropical North. To further support increased production at the farm gate, RDATN will complete delivery of the *Compost for a Farming Future* project; this business case aims to replicate a compost model for farms along the Great Barrier Reef (GBR) catchment, thereby improving not only agricultural productivity but also reducing chemical runoff into the GBR. Work will also commence with the resource recovery and recycling industry, building on the *FNQ Plastics Industry* project<sup>2</sup>, to develop a viable cluster and industry as part of the Australian government's policy on waste management<sup>3</sup> and changes to plastic exports<sup>4</sup>. As part of the clusters' industry development, RDATN will drive and coordinate the *TNQ Innovation Strategy* and source funding to update and extend the Pre-Feasibility Study<sup>5</sup> into the establishment of an irradiation facility in Far North Queensland. RDATN will coordinate at least one (1) trade and/or investment familiarization

1 <https://www.fial.com.au/sharing-knowledge/capturing-the-prizecopy>

2 <https://www.rdatropicalnorth.org.au/about/initiatives/fnq-plastics-industry-proposal/>

3 <https://www.environment.gov.au/protection/waste/publications/national-waste-policy-2018>

4 <https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/C2020A00119>

5 Kleinhardt-FGI, *Establishment of Electronic Irradiation Facility in Far North Queensland*, Cairns, 2001



visit to the region and continue to co-chair the FNQ Trade and Investment Group (FNQ TIG) with Trade & Investment Qld.

#### 4. Regional Workforce Strategy

The Tropical North lacks a cohesive workforce strategy, with a heavy reliance on international students, backpackers and skilled migrants to fill roles. The region is also facing a crisis with skilled and semi-skilled workers in a range of industries. As at May 2021, the Cairns employment region's online job advertisements show 37 percent of vacancies require a Diploma level or above<sup>6</sup>, yet based on the unemployment service providers' caseloads, around 58 percent of jobseekers have not completed a post-school qualification<sup>7</sup>. RDATN will support development and delivery of advocacy and policy components of the *Regional Workforce Strategy*. The strategy, led by local government, will support the development of human capital and skills to ensure industry and business have the necessary capabilities to flourish. As part of the *Regional Workforce Strategy*, RDATN will also support industry capability development, ensuring business and not-for-profit leaders and their employees, have the necessary skills to address future consumer and supplier trends.

#### 5. Close the \$1B Infrastructure Gap

As identified in a report commissioned by RDATN, Queensland government capital expenditure for the Cairns SA4 region when compared to similar regions, on average, over the past eight years, is short by approximately \$1b. The trend is similar in other LGAs in the Tropical North. Working with the FNQ Regional Organisation of Councils, the Torres and Cape Indigenous Councils Alliance and Torres Strait Island Regional Council, RDATN will advocate for key road, port and airport upgrades as determined by the *TNQ Strategic Regional Plan*. RDATN will continue membership of the Inland Queensland Roads Group and advocate for the *Inland Queensland Roads Action Plan (IQRAP)*, driven by RDA Townsville & Northwest Qld. The continued sealing of the Peninsula Development Road in Cape York Peninsula will support supply chain routes to the deep-water port of Weipa. This will aid in transitioning Weipa to normalization once Rio Tinto departs soon. To assist this key supply route and Weipa's transition, RDATN will continue to Chair the Cape York Regional Package (CYRP) Sub-Working Group and Taskforce (funded by Australian and Qld governments).



Rio Tinto - Weipa

<sup>6</sup> National Skills Commission, Internet Vacancy Index, seasonally adjusted, May 2021

<sup>7</sup> Dept. of Education, Skills and Employment, caseload data, Cairns ER, February 2021

## Outcomes from the 2021/22 Year

### Delivery of the TNQ Strategic Regional Plan (SRP)

The SRP is a requirement under the Regional Development Australia (RDA) Charter which requires RDAs nationally to “co-ordinate the development of a strategic regional plan, or work with suitable existing regional plans that will align with the Commonwealth’s regional priorities’.

From May to July 2021, RDATN engaged a consultant to review 37 existing regional plans (including economic, environmental, social) to understand whether the TNQ region had an existing regional plan suitable for Commonwealth investment purposes. The review identified that there is not one specific plan which integrates the quadruple bottom-line across economic, environmental, social and cultural pillars. The review also noted the desire by the FNQ Regional Organisation of Councils (FNQROC) and other stakeholders, for the FNQ Regional Plan 2009-2031 (Qld Statutory Plan) to be urgently reviewed.

RDATN, along with FNQROC and other agencies within the region, advocated to the State government that the FNQ Regional Plan 2009-2031 be reviewed urgently. The Queensland government agreed to undertake the review commencing in early FY23. As a result, RDATN was able to support the process by providing the reports delivered in mid-2021 to the relevant state department.



During FY22, RDATN engaged with key stakeholders and synthesised existing local government priorities and provided these to the Queensland government. RDATN also developed collateral to support the SRP (now named TNQ Economic Development Strategy (TEDS)) process which can be found [here](#). The intention is that the TEDS will closely mirror the revised FNQ Regional Plan and will therefore be delivered in FY23 once the State government has completed the economic strategy and Regional Infrastructure Plan.

As identified through the consultant review process, when compared to regions of similar size, the TNQ region lags in infrastructure investment (by \$1billion). RDATN will advocate that infrastructure needs are included in the new FNQ Regional Plan and will certainly be included in the TEDS which will be used to inform investment decisions by the Commonwealth.

### Development of the Project Assessment Tool

The RDATN Project Assessment Tool (PAT) aims to plot the positive and negative impacts of a project against its quadruple bottom line (economic, environmental, cultural and social factors) over time. This tool will assist in determining whether a project should proceed, receive support and/or funding (and if so, to what level) and what action should be taken or considered to improve project feasibility. The PAT will provide justifiable support to those making the approval decisions and fast-track the process while removing subjectivity from project approval.

The PAT was placed on hold during 2021/22 until funds can be sourced to progress the initiative.

### Continuation of the Lakeland Irrigation Area Scheme Detailed Business Case

Work continued the \$10m Detailed Business Case for the Lakeland Irrigation Area Scheme (LIAS) Detailed Business Case (DBC) during FY22.

The DBC identified the preferred scheme which includes a 205,000ML dam on the Palmer River, with a 12km transfer tunnel to the Lakeland area, with two reticulation arms servicing up to 18,000ha of fertile soils.

During the year, milestones were delivered including:

- Geotechnical reports
- Survey model
- Reference Design
- Environmental baseline studies
- Cost estimation
- Stakeholder engagement
- Initial irrigator commitments
- Staging options and financial arrangements
- Key assumptions for financial and economic assessment

The final DBC is due in November 2022. For more information, see [here](#).



*Palmer River, Lakeland*

### Progress the Etheridge Agricultural and Irrigation Precinct Feasibility Study

RDATN and Etheridge Shire Council (as 'Proponent') are working to deliver a Preliminary Business Case to develop the [Etheridge Shire Agricultural and Irrigation Precinct](#). This work commenced in FY22 and will undoubtedly continue for the coming few years.

The concept for the Project incorporates:

- a **Place** (i.e. the Precinct or Project Area – initially the whole of the Etheridge Shire)
- a water **Project** (i.e. a suite of water resource infrastructure developments, yet to emerge)
- a **Planning regime** (i.e. triple bottom line approach to protecting values).

When implemented, the Project is expected to increase water supply certainty to a range of existing growers and allow for the conversion of dryland farming (horticulture and pasture) to irrigated farming, encouraging new participants to the region. This will create diversity and ongoing sustainability for this

regional community and more significantly, allow for a substantial increase in yield and hence out-turn value. The obstacles to water access are limiting economic growth in the Shire as well as hindering planning for changing climate patterns.

RDATN has undertaken preliminary work (to be tested in the Preliminary Business Case) that suggests that a suitable development project could be supported that delivers in total:

- 50,000 ha of irrigated land
- 100,000 ha of dryland farming
- expanded cattle herd on native pasture.

Such a project will help realise the vision for Northern Australia by efficiently utilising the shire's natural resources and other competitive advantages for the benefit of the residents, the region, and the nation through the sustainable capture and utilisation of the water resource and development of areas where suitable soils are known to exist.



*Cotton, Georgetown*

Previous work has identified (all to be confirmed):

- at least 280,000 ha of land possibly suitable for irrigation
- sufficient water resources to irrigate up to 80,000 ha
- feasible projects to harness these resources
- a wealth of other competitive advantages of the Shire
- a willingness on the part of the Etheridge Shire Council and many residents and businesses to embrace actions to enhance agricultural production
- other economic activity in the region that would support agriculture or that would benefit from it.

RDATN and Etheridge Shire Council commissioned Environment North to deliver a report on the service need, preliminary benefits, objectives, land use/tenure, biodiversity, social and cultural values and water reviews, and work plan to progress the project to Preliminary Business Case stage. The project has been positioned with both Commonwealth and State governments. During FY23, funding will be sought to progress the project.

### Development of the Northern Australia Water Strategy

RDATN as part of the Northern RDA Alliance (eight RDAs north of the Tropic of Capricorn) engaged with CRC Northern Australia (CRCNA) to find a solution to addressing water access and security in the north.

CRCNA in collaboration with the Northern Australia University Alliance (NAUA) (JCU, CQU, CDU) will commence a 3 ½ year research project: *Water Security for Northern Australia Program*.

The NAUA partners will collaborate on undertaking a program of stakeholder engagement and research needs analysis in four focal catchments (Nodes) in order to design, develop and cost a cohesive and impactful research program that delivers on the core priorities of those stakeholders in those four focal catchments. These have been identified as:

- Wider Tindal Basin, NT
- Douglas Daly and Roper River, NT
- Lower Fitzroy Basin/ Gilbert River, catchment QLD
- Kimberley-Ord Irrigation Scheme, WA



The research will involve the project team gaining a better understanding of the constraints to agricultural and water resource development, engaging with key stakeholders and government agencies to better understand the issues they believe are priorities for further research and then to develop a suitable research plan to address the issues identified during this process.

The Program aligns well with the needs of the Etheridge Agricultural and Irrigation Precinct which is a joint initiative between Etheridge Shire Council and RDATN. The outcome of the research Program will enable the Etheridge Precinct to identify the most effective and efficient means to capture, store and transfer water to high value agricultural soils within the Shire, thereby growing the community's contribution to GRP, creating jobs and supporting food security.

The NRDA will continue to work with the CRCNA/NAUA to deliver on water security for the north.

### Increase capability within the agricultural and food sector

As part of a grant round offered through Food Innovation Australia Limited (FIAL), RDATN in collaboration with the TNQ Regional Food Network (TNQ RFN) were successful in winning \$150,000 to develop a viable agri-business and food cluster. The project secured cash and in-kind support from industry and a further \$37,000 through the Queensland Department of Tourism Development, Innovation and Sport.

The funding was to provide stable governance for the TNQ RFN, develop a 3-Year Strategy and viable membership model. Extensive industry engagement was expected with numerous events, initiatives and activities delivered to profile the industry cluster to prospective members.

The overall aim of the project was for the TNQ RFN to build capacity within the TNQ food supply chain, value-adding to existing agricultural products, increasing exports and embracing innovation.

The project was successfully delivered in June 2022, with implementation of the 3-year strategy commencing in July 2022. RDATN continues to work with the TNQ RFN to promote the benefits of industry collaboration.

### Deliver a trade and/or investment familiarisation trip

During development of the food cluster project (TNQ RFN), RDATN worked with RDA Canberra to curate a visit to Far North Queensland region for the Ambassador of France to Australia, H.E. Jean-Pierre Thébault and Mr Vincent Hebrail (Counsellor). The Ambassador was keen to experience first-hand the exceptional produce from the region and identify and potential trade opportunities and cultural links, between the two countries.

RDATN considered this an incredible and worthwhile opportunity to showcase the region via the TNQ RFN, provide additional global exposure to the region and the brand, at an international level.

In collaboration with RDA Townsville & North West Qld, Ambassador Jean-Pierre Thebault and Mr Vincent Hebrail (Counsellor) visited North Queensland and Far North Queensland over a period of five days in June 2022.



*H.E. Jean-Pierre Thébault at Charley's Chocolate, Mission Beach*



The Ambassador was particularly focused and interested in artisan and specialist food production in addition to larger-scale agriculture operations to identify investment/export opportunities.

RDATN have now established an excellent relationship with the French Embassy and will continue to engage with their office to provide regular agricultural updates and assist in identifying trade/export/investment and cultural opportunities from within the region.

This also provides an excellent opportunity for RDATN to continue our work across all levels of government in working with Austrade, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Trade and Investment Queensland and Local Governments across the region.

RDATN is grateful to the many producers and food manufacturers and Mayor who hosted the Ambassador's visit.

### Increase awareness of Australian government trade and investment opportunities

During 2021/22, RDATN delivered numerous information sessions to community and industry.

The first was in November 2021 where the programs and funding opportunities available within NAIF, Office of Northern Australia and AusIndustry was delivered. Approximately 30 people attended the session.

The second information session ([Webinar](#)) was delivered in January 2022 to inform councils and Not For Profits of the Building Better Regions Fund Round 6. Over 70 people attended the webinar with 18 Letters of Support provided.

Sessions were also held to promote the Qld Recycling Modernisation Fund to the resource recovery and recycling sector in FNQ; this supported the work that RDATN completed on the [FNQ Plastics Industry Project](#). RDATN will deliver an Investment Prospectus for plastics in FY23.

Two events were held to commence exploration of a viable hydrogen cluster in the region, with over 40 people in attendance at the dedicated workshop delivered by H2Q (Hydrogen Queensland).

RDATN continued to co-chair the FNQ Trade and Investment Group alongside Trade and Investment Queensland.

### Deliver the Compost for a Farming Future Business Case

The [Compost for a Farming Future Business Case](#) commenced in 2018 and was funded by the Federal Department of Agriculture, Environment and Water (DAWE). The Case investigated anecdotal feedback from Lakeland banana farms, over a 10-year period, that claimed reduction in chemical fertilizer use, increase in fruit yield, increase in soil organic matter, reduction in water consumption and savings in energy costs using compost.



*Composting at Shark Recyclers, Bibbohra*

Several entities were engaged to research and validate the anecdotal feedback (environmental, commercial, productivity benefits) including reports produced by Central Queensland University, PwC and Outsource Management.

The final Business Case was delivered in May 2022. Work to date has provided valuable insights regarding the appetite for, and viability of, large-scale green waste compost application within the Great Barrier Reef catchments. While the response to the project objectives has been overwhelmingly positive, further work is required to encourage uptake and increase the availability of green waste compost on a commercial scale.

Recommendations from the Case will be progressed with various industry peaks and Natural Resources Management agencies.

### Increase collaboration and investment in the recycling sector

RDATN worked with the resource recovery and recycling sector during FY22 to support the development of an industry cluster. Suitable grant funding information was forwarded to the sector with a cluster proponent emerging.

In late 2021, FNQ Circular Economy was formed. This Not-For-Profit organisation has multiple initiatives in various stages of implementation and a membership structure to support ongoing financial viability.

Numerous applications to the Queensland Recycling Modernisation Fund were submitted from the TNQ region; RDATN worked with industry to relay the findings from the TNQ Plastics Industry Project Feasibility Study and Business Case. Many applicants used the findings of these documents within their grant submissions.

RDATN is still seeking investment into a plastics recycling facility within the region and to this end will develop an Investment Prospectus in the coming year. The project will be included in any upcoming investment familiarisations.

### Coordinate the TNQ Innovation Strategy

RDATN was involved in the development of the TNQ Innovation Strategy led by James Cook University. The final strategy was delivered to the Queensland government in early 2022. The region awaits a response as to funding to deliver the strategy.

RDATN supported the Tropical Innovation Festival as part of the Collaborative Projects Fund through the state Department of Tourism Development, Innovation and Sport.

### Secure funding to update and extend the Pre-Feasibility Study for an Irradiation Facility

The Irradiation Facility project aims to update and extend previous work completed for the FNQ region, to develop an irradiation facility for tropical fruit exports from Cairns Airport. The project would support the soon to be launched Distribution Hub located at the airport site.

The project was placed on hold until funds can be sourced to progress the initiative.



*Cairns Regional Council Materials Recycling Facility*

## Development of a Regional Workforce Strategy

RDATN was to contribute to the development of a regional workforce strategy (led through the Australian government's Local Employment Coordinator) however funding was unavailable for FY22.

## Chair the Cape York Region Package Sub-Working Group and Taskforce

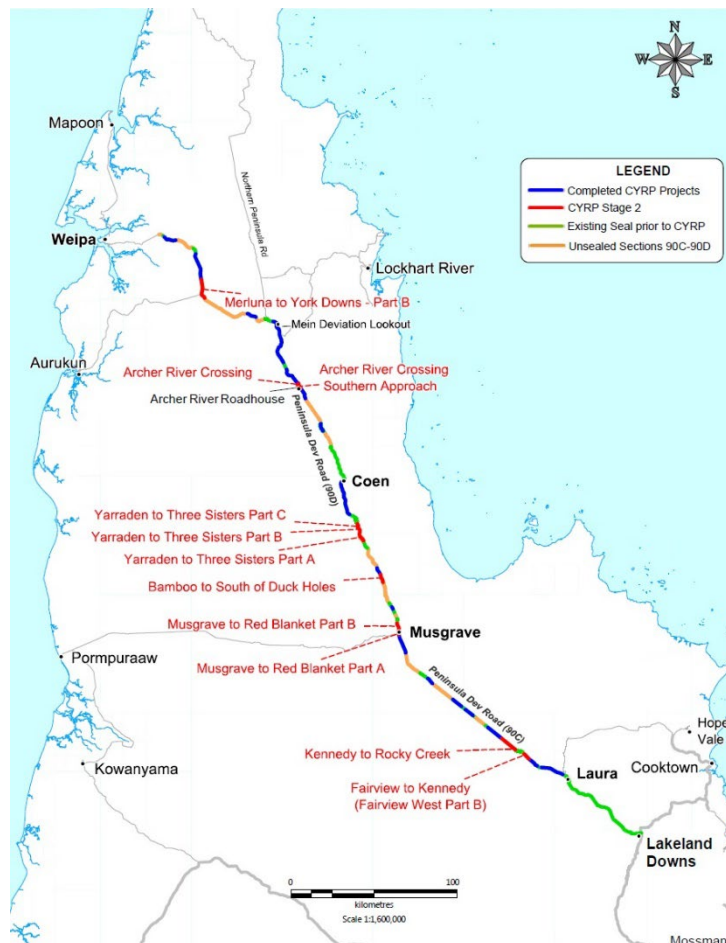
RDATN continues to Chair the [Cape York Region Package](#) (CYRP) Combined Working Group and Taskforce meetings which meet twice per year in Cape York.

Following on from Stage One, the CYRP Stage 2 is a \$237.5 million, jointly funded by the Australian and Queensland Governments to upgrade priority land transport infrastructure on Cape York Peninsula between 2019-20 and 2023-24.

The package consists of 11 projects:

- eight pave and seal projects on the PDR between Laura and Coen
- one pave and seal project north of the Archer River, including the Aurukun community access road intersection
- construction of the Archer River crossing southern approach
- construction of the Archer River crossing

Work will commence on community engagement for Stage 3 – eventually, the entire Peninsula Developmental Road will be sealed from Lakeland to Weipa enabling further economic growth in the region.



## Advocate for FNQ road needs as part of the Inland Qld Roads Action Plan

RDATN is a member of the Inland Queensland Roads Action Plan (IQRAP) which aims to develop funding cases for inland roads to both Australian and Queensland governments. The initiative is led from RDA Townsville & North West Qld.

The mayors involved in the initiative determined to hold on the updating of data associated with the Plan during 2021-22.

RDATN will include any TNQ inland road upgrades within the TEDS.

## Our Stakeholders

### Major Industry, Representative & Training Bodies:

- Tourism Tropical North Queensland and Far North Queensland Local Tourism Organisations
- Construction Skills Queensland
- Cairns Airport
- Ports North / North Qld Bulk Ports
- FNQ Growers
- Infrastructure Association of Queensland

### Economic Development Bodies:

- Advance Cairns
- Cairns & regional chambers of commerce
- Enterprise North
- Study Cairns
- Superyacht Group Great Barrier Reef

### Local Government:

- 21 Local Government Authorities across the Far North Queensland region
- Far North Queensland Regional Organisation of Councils
- Torres & Cape Indigenous Councils' Alliance

### Queensland State Government:

- Department of State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning
- Department of Tourism Development, Innovation and Sport
- Department of Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Partnerships
- Department of the Premier and Cabinet

- Department of Transport and Main Roads
- Department of Natural Resources, Mines and Energy
- Department of Employment, Small Business and Training
- Department of Agriculture and Fisheries

### Members/Relevant Ministers

- Federal Government:
- Department of Infrastructure & Regional Development
- Infrastructure Australia
- Northern Australia Infrastructure Facility
- Department of Industry, Innovation & Science
- Austrade/AusIndustry
- Office of Northern Australia
- Department of Agriculture & Water Resources
- Department of Prime Minister & Cabinet
- Relevant Ministers with a priority focus on the Minister for Regional Development, the Minister for Infrastructure & Transport and the Minister for Northern Australia & Resources

### Key Statutory Authorities:

- Wet Tropics Management Authority
- Torres Strait Regional Authority

### Indigenous:

- Various Prescribed Body Corporates, Indigenous organisations and Traditional Owners

Private Sector:

- Individuals and companies across the tourism, pastoral, agriculture, mining, manufacturing, retail, construction, renewable energy, consulting / professional services, training sectors.

Research Institutions:

- James Cook University
- Central Qld University
- Regional Australia Institute
- Cooperative Research Centre Northern Australia

Media:

- The Cairns Post, Mareeba Express, Radio, TV

Natural Resource Management:

- Cape York NRM
- Terrain NRM
- Gulf Savannah NRM
- Torres Strait Regional Authority



# Audited Financial Statements



**Regional  
Development**  
*Australia*

TROPICAL NORTH

**FINANCIAL STATEMENTS  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2022**



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**Regional Development Australia Tropical North Inc**


ABN: 30 438 376 695

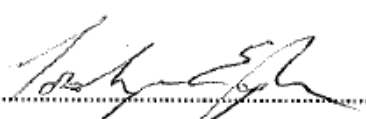
**Statement by Members of the Committee**

In the opinion of the committee the financial report as set out on pages 1 to 13:

1. Present fairly the financial position of Regional Development Australia Tropical North Inc as at 30 June 2022 and its performance for the year ended on that date in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards (including Australian Accounting Interpretations) of the Australian Accounting Standards Board.
2. At the date of this statement, there are reasonable grounds to believe that Regional Development Australia Tropical North Inc will be able to pay its debts as and when they fall due.

This statement is made in accordance with a resolution of the committee and is signed for and on behalf of the committee by:

President ..... 

Treasurer ..... 

Dated 11/9/2022

## STATEMENT OF PROFIT OR LOSS AND OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2022

**Regional Development Australia Tropical North Inc**

ABN: 30 438 376 695

### **Statement of Profit or Loss and Other Comprehensive Income For the Year Ended 30 June 2022**

		2022	2021
	Note	\$	\$
Revenue	4	5,055,270	4,728,227
Interest income		1,457	1,449
Other income	4	9,295	104
Employee benefits expense		(383,768)	(225,650)
Depreciation and amortisation expense		(10,862)	(12,063)
Stakeholder engagement		(5,637)	(8,519)
Consultants		(4,058,229)	(3,658,294)
Accounting & Audit fees		(24,685)	(19,395)
Other expenses		(125,921)	(87,202)
Unexpended grant funds		(790,734)	(360,270)
Other expenses		(6,500)	(9,700)
<b>Profit before income tax</b>		<b>(340,314)</b>	<b>348,687</b>
Income tax expense		-	-
<b>Profit for the year</b>		<b>(340,314)</b>	<b>348,687</b>
<b>Other comprehensive income for the year, net of tax</b>		<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Total comprehensive income for the year</b>		<b>(340,314)</b>	<b>348,687</b>

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

## STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN EQUITY FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2022

**Regional Development Australia Tropical North Inc**

ABN: 30 438 376 695

### Statement of Changes in Equity For the Year Ended 30 June 2022

	Retained Earnings	General Reserve	Lakeland Reserves	Total
	\$	\$	\$	\$
<b>Balance at 1 July 2021</b>	54,102	230,668	117,998	402,768
Profit attributable to members of the entity	(340,314)	-	-	(340,314)
Transfers from reserves	348,666	(230,668)	(117,998)	-
Total other comprehensive income for the period	-	-	-	-
<b>Balance at 30 June 2022</b>	<b>62,454</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>62,454</b>

	Retained Earnings	General Reserve	Lakeland Reserves	Total
	\$	\$	\$	\$
<b>Balance at 1 July 2020</b>	54,080	-	-	54,080
Profit attributable to members of the entity	348,688	-	-	348,688
Transfers from retained earnings to reserves	(348,666)	230,668	117,998	-
Total other comprehensive income for the period	-	-	-	-
<b>Balance at 30 June 2021</b>	<b>54,102</b>	<b>230,668</b>	<b>117,998</b>	<b>402,768</b>



## STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 30 JUNE 2022

**Regional Development Australia Tropical North Inc**

ABN: 30 438 376 695

### Statement of Financial Position As At 30 June 2022

	Note	2022 \$	2021 \$
<b>ASSETS</b>			
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>			
Cash and cash equivalents	5	770,224	758,150
Trade and other receivables	6	1,262,460	23,583
<b>TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS</b>		<b>2,032,684</b>	<b>781,733</b>
<b>NON-CURRENT ASSETS</b>			
Property, plant and equipment	7	28,094	30,641
<b>TOTAL NON-CURRENT ASSETS</b>		<b>28,094</b>	<b>30,641</b>
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>		<b>2,060,778</b>	<b>812,374</b>
<b>LIABILITIES</b>			
<b>CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>			
Trade and other payables	8	1,053,127	40,460
Employee benefits	10	32,647	8,876
Other financial liabilities	9	912,551	360,270
<b>TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>		<b>1,998,325</b>	<b>409,606</b>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>		<b>62,453</b>	<b>402,768</b>
<b>EQUITY</b>			
Reserves		-	348,666
Retained earnings		62,454	54,102
<b>TOTAL EQUITY</b>		<b>62,454</b>	<b>402,768</b>

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

## STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2022

**Regional Development Australia Tropical North Inc**

ABN: 30 438 376 695

### Statement of Cash Flows For the Year Ended 30 June 2022

	Note	2022 \$	2021 \$
<b>CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES:</b>			
Receipts from customers		3,825,688	4,790,838
Payments to suppliers and employees		(3,806,755)	(4,691,121)
Interest received		1,457	1,449
Net cash provided by/(used in) operating activities	15	<u>20,390</u>	<u>101,166</u>
<b>CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES:</b>			
Purchase of property, plant and equipment		(8,316)	(2,101)
Net cash provided by/(used in) investing activities		<u>(8,316)</u>	<u>(2,101)</u>
<b>CASH FLOWS FROM FINANCING ACTIVITIES:</b>			
Net increase/(decrease) in cash and cash equivalents held		12,074	99,065
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of year		758,150	659,085
Cash and cash equivalents at end of financial year	5	<u>770,224</u>	<u>758,150</u>

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

## **NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2022**

### **Regional Development Australia Tropical North Inc**

ABN: 30 438 376 695

### **Notes to the Financial Statements**

**For the Year Ended 30 June 2022**

The financial statements cover Regional Development Australia Tropical North Inc as an individual entity. Regional Development Australia Tropical North Inc is a not-for-profit Association incorporated in Queensland under the *Associations Incorporation Act (QLD) 1981 (as amended by the Associations Incorporation and Other Legislation Amendment Act (QLD) 2007)* ('the Act').

The principal activities of the Association for the year ended 30 June 2022 were to engage with all levels of government, business and community groups to support economic development of their regions.

The functional and presentation currency of Regional Development Australia Tropical North Inc is Australian dollars.

Comparatives are consistent with prior years, unless otherwise stated.

#### **1 Basis of Preparation**

The financial statements are general purpose financial statements that have been prepared in accordance with the Australian Accounting Standards - Simplified Disclosures and the Act.

The financial statements have been prepared on an accruals basis and are based on historical costs modified, where applicable, by the measurement at fair value of selected non-current assets, financial assets and financial liabilities.

Significant accounting policies adopted in the preparation of these financial statements are presented below and are consistent with prior reporting periods unless otherwise stated.

## **2 Summary of Significant Accounting Policies**

### **(a) Revenue and other income**

#### **Revenue from contracts with customers**

The core principle of AASB 15 is that revenue is recognised on a basis that reflects the transfer of promised goods or services to customers at an amount that reflects the consideration the Association expects to receive in exchange for those goods or services.

Generally the timing of the payment for sale of goods and rendering of services corresponds closely to the timing of satisfaction of the performance obligations, however where there is a difference, it will result in the recognition of a receivable, contract asset or contract liability.

None of the revenue streams of the Association have any significant financing terms as there is less than 12 months between receipt of funds and satisfaction of performance obligations.

#### **Specific revenue streams**

The revenue recognition policies for the principal revenue streams of the Association are:

#### **Grant income**

Where grant income arises from an agreement which is enforceable and contains sufficiently specific performance obligations then the revenue is recognised when control of each performance obligations is satisfied.

The performance obligations are varied based on the agreement but may include management of education events, vaccinations, presentations at symposiums.



## **2 Summary of Significant Accounting Policies**

### **(a) Revenue and other income**

#### **Specific revenue streams**

Each performance obligation is considered to ensure that the revenue recognition reflects the transfer of control and within grant agreements there may be some performance obligations where control transfers at a point in time and others which have continuous transfer of control over the life of the contract.

Where control is transferred over time, generally the input methods being either costs or time incurred are deemed to be the most appropriate methods to reflect the transfer of benefit.

#### **Revenue recognition policy for contracts which are either not enforceable or do not have sufficiently specific performance obligations**

The revenue recognition policies for the principal revenue streams of the Association are:

#### **Grant income**

Revenue in the scope of AASB 1058 is recognised on receipt unless it relates to a capital grant which satisfies certain criteria, in this case the grant is recognised as the asset is acquired or constructed.

#### **Capital grants**

Capital grants received to enable the company to acquire or construct an item of property, plant and equipment to identified specifications which will be under the Association's control and which is enforceable are recognised as revenue as and when the obligation to construct or purchase is completed.

For construction projects, this is generally as the construction progresses in accordance with costs incurred since this is deemed to be the most appropriate measure of the completeness of the construction project as there is no profit margin.

For acquisitions of assets, the revenue is recognised when the asset is acquired and controlled by the Association.

#### **Other income**

Other income is recognised on an accruals basis when the Association is entitled to it.

### **(b) Income Tax**

The Association is exempt from income tax under Division 50 of the *Income Tax Assessment Act 1997*.

### **(c) Borrowing costs**

Borrowing costs that are directly attributable to the acquisition, construction or production of a qualifying asset are capitalised as part of the cost of that asset.

All other borrowing costs are recognised as an expense in the period in which they are incurred.

## 2 Summary of Significant Accounting Policies

### (d) Goods and services tax (GST)

Revenue, expenses and assets are recognised net of the amount of goods and services tax (GST), except where the amount of GST incurred is not recoverable from the Australian Taxation Office (ATO).

Receivables and payable are stated inclusive of GST.

Cash flows in the statement of cash flows are included on a gross basis and the GST component of cash flows arising from investing and financing activities which is recoverable from, or payable to, the taxation authority is classified as operating cash flows.

### (e) Volunteer services

No amounts are included in the financial statements for services donated by volunteers.

### (f) Property, plant and equipment

Each class of property, plant and equipment is carried at cost less, where applicable, any accumulated depreciation and impairment.

Items of property, plant and equipment acquired for significantly less than fair value have been recorded at the acquisition date fair value.

#### Plant and equipment

Plant and equipment are measured using the cost model.

#### Depreciation

Property, plant and equipment, excluding freehold land, is depreciated on a straight-line basis over the asset's useful life to the Association, commencing when the asset is ready for use.

The depreciation rates used for each class of depreciable asset are shown below:

Fixed asset class	Depreciation rate
Plant and Equipment	20 - 33%

At the end of each annual reporting period, the depreciation method, useful life and residual value of each asset is reviewed. Any revisions are accounted for prospectively as a change in estimate.

### (g) Financial instruments

Financial instruments are recognised initially on the date that the Association becomes party to the contractual provisions of the instrument.

On initial recognition, all financial instruments are measured at fair value plus transaction costs (except for instruments measured at fair value through profit or loss where transaction costs are expensed as incurred).

## 2 Summary of Significant Accounting Policies

### (g) Financial instruments

#### Financial assets

All recognised financial assets are subsequently measured in their entirety at either amortised cost or fair value, depending on the classification of the financial assets.

#### *Classification*

On initial recognition, the Association classifies its financial assets into the following category, being amortised cost.

Financial assets are not reclassified subsequent to their initial recognition unless the Association changes its business model for managing financial assets.

#### *Amortised cost*

The Association's financial assets measured at amortised cost comprise trade and other receivables and cash and cash equivalents in the statement of financial position.

Subsequent to initial recognition, these assets are carried at amortised cost using the effective interest rate method less provision for impairment.

Interest income, foreign exchange gains or losses and impairment are recognised in profit or loss. Gain or loss on derecognition is recognised in profit or loss.

#### *Impairment of financial assets*

Impairment of financial assets is recognised on an expected credit loss (ECL) basis for financial assets measured at amortised cost.

When determining whether the credit risk of a financial assets has increased significant since initial recognition and when estimating ECL, the Association considers reasonable and supportable information that is relevant and available without undue cost or effort. This includes both quantitative and qualitative information and analysis based on the Association's historical experience and informed credit assessment and including forward looking information.

#### *Trade receivables*

Impairment of trade receivables have been determined using the simplified approach in AASB 9 which uses an estimation of lifetime expected credit losses. The Association has determined the probability of non-payment of the receivable and multiplied this by the amount of the expected loss arising from default.

#### Financial liabilities

The Association measures all financial liabilities initially at fair value less transaction costs, subsequently financial liabilities are measured at amortised cost using the effective interest rate method.

The financial liabilities of the Association comprise trade payables, bank and other loans and lease liabilities.

## 2 Summary of Significant Accounting Policies

### (h) Cash and cash equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents comprises cash on hand, demand deposits and short-term investments which are readily convertible to known amounts of cash and which are subject to an insignificant risk of change in value.

### (i) Employee benefits

Provision is made for the Association's liability for employee benefits, those benefits that are expected to be wholly settled within one year have been measured at the amounts expected to be paid when the liability is settled.

Employee benefits expected to be settled more than one year after the end of the reporting period have been measured at the present value of the estimated future cash outflows to be made for those benefits. In determining the liability, consideration is given to employee wage increases and the probability that the employee may satisfy vesting requirements. Changes in the measurement of the liability are recognised in profit or loss.

### (j) Adoption of new and revised accounting standards

The Association has adopted all standards which became effective for the first time at 30 June 2022, the adoption of these standards has not caused any material adjustments to the reported financial position, performance or cash flow of the Association or refer to Note for details of the changes due to standards adopted.

## 3 Critical Accounting Estimates and Judgments

The committee of members make estimates and judgements during the preparation of these financial statements regarding assumptions about current and future events affecting transactions and balances.

These estimates and judgements are based on the best information available at the time of preparing the financial statements, however as additional information is known then the actual results may differ from the estimates.

The significant estimates and judgements made have been described below.

### Key estimates - impairment of property, plant and equipment

The Association assesses impairment at the end of each reporting period by evaluating conditions specific to the Association that may be indicative of impairment triggers. Recoverable amounts of relevant assets are reassessed using value-in-use calculations which incorporate various key assumptions.

### Key estimates - receivables

The receivables at reporting date have been reviewed to determine whether there is any objective evidence that any of the receivables are impaired. An impairment provision is included for any receivable where the entire balance is not considered collectible. The impairment provision is based on the best information at the reporting date.



## Notes to the Financial Statements

For the Year Ended 30 June 2022

### 4 Revenue and Other Income

#### Revenue from continuing operations

	2022	2021
	\$	\$
Revenue from contracts with customers (AASB 15)		
- contracts with customers - grants	5,055,270	4,728,227
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>5,055,270</b>	<b>4,728,227</b>

### 5 Cash and Cash Equivalents

	2022	2021
	\$	\$
Cash at bank and in hand	770,224	758,150
	<b>770,224</b>	<b>758,150</b>

### 6 Trade and Other Receivables

	2022	2021
	\$	\$
CURRENT		
Trade receivables	1,244,087	-
Deposits	2,010	2,010
Prepayments	16,363	21,573
	<b>1,262,460</b>	<b>23,583</b>

The carrying value of trade receivables is considered a reasonable approximation of fair value due to the short-term nature of the balances.

The maximum exposure to credit risk at the reporting date is the fair value of each class of receivable in the financial statements.

**Regional Development Australia Tropical North Inc**

ABN: 30 438 376 695

**Notes to the Financial Statements**

**For the Year Ended 30 June 2022**

**7 Property, plant and equipment**

	2022	2021
	\$	\$
Plant and equipment		
At cost	99,966	91,651
Accumulated depreciation	(71,872)	(61,010)
	<u>28,094</u>	<u>30,641</u>

**(a) Movements in carrying amounts of property, plant and equipment**

Movement in the carrying amounts for each class of property, plant and equipment between the beginning and the end of the current financial year:

	Plant and Equipment	Total
	\$	\$
<b>Year ended 30 June 2022</b>		
Balance at the beginning of the year	30,641	30,641
Additions	8,315	8,315
Depreciation expense	(10,862)	(10,862)
<b>Balance at the end of the year</b>	<u>28,094</u>	<u>28,094</u>

**8 Trade and Other Payables**

	2022	2021
	\$	\$
<b>CURRENT</b>		
Trade payables	1,002,499	15,743
GST payable	3,538	6,777
Accrued expenses	15,216	8,335
PAYG payable	18,842	4,530
Superannuation payable	13,032	5,075
	<u>1,053,127</u>	<u>40,460</u>

Trade and other payables are unsecured, non-interest bearing and are normally settled within 30 days. The carrying value of trade and other payables is considered a reasonable approximation of fair value due to the short-term nature of the balances.

**Regional Development Australia Tropical North Inc**

ABN: 30 438 376 695

**Notes to the Financial Statements  
For the Year Ended 30 June 2022**

**9 Other Financial Liabilities**

	2022	2021
	\$	\$
CURRENT		
Unexpended grants	790,734	360,270
Grants received in advance	121,817	-
	<u>912,551</u>	<u>360,270</u>

**10 Employee Benefits**

	2022	2021
	\$	\$
CURRENT		
Provision for employee benefits	32,647	8,876
	<u>32,647</u>	<u>8,876</u>

**11 Key Management Personnel Remuneration**

The remuneration paid to key management personnel of Regional Development Australia Tropical North Inc during the year is as follows:

	2022	2021
	\$	\$
Short-term employee benefits	184,669	164,906
	<u>184,669</u>	<u>164,906</u>

**12 Auditors' Remuneration**

	2022	2021
	\$	\$
Remuneration of the auditor Jessups NQ, for:		
- auditing or reviewing the financial statements	6,500	9,700
	<u>6,500</u>	<u>9,700</u>

**13 Contingencies**

In the opinion of the Committee of Management, the Association did not have any contingencies at 30 June 2022 (30 June 2021:None).

**Regional Development Australia Tropical North Inc**

ABN: 30 438 376 695

**Notes to the Financial Statements  
For the Year Ended 30 June 2022**

**14 Related Parties**

(a) The Association's main related parties are as follows:

Key management personnel - refer to Note 11.

Other related parties include close family members of key management personnel and entities that are controlled or significantly influenced by those key management personnel or their close family members.

There were no transactions between the Association and any related parties for the year ended 30 June 2022.

**15 Cash Flow Information**

Reconciliation of net income to net cash provided by operating activities:

	2022	2021
	\$	\$
Profit for the year	(340,313)	348,687
Cash flows excluded from profit attributable to operating activities		
Non-cash flows in profit:		
- depreciation	10,862	12,063
Changes in assets and liabilities:		
- (increase)/decrease in trade and other receivables	(1,238,877)	62,505
- increase/(decrease) in trade and other payables	1,012,666	15,190
- (increase)/decrease in contract liabilities	552,280	(312,665)
- increase/(decrease) in provisions	23,772	(24,615)
Cashflows from operations	<u>20,390</u>	<u>101,165</u>

**16 Events after the end of the Reporting Period**

No matters or circumstances have arisen since the end of the financial year which significantly affected or may significantly affect the operations of the Association, the results of those operations or the state of affairs of the Association in future financial years.

David Kempton (Chair)  
Brett Moller (Deputy Chair)  
Carolyn Eagle (Treasurer)  
Michael Chiodo (Secretary)  
Jodie Duignan-George  
Guiesppe (Joe) Moro  
Bill Shannon  
Fred White (resigned 14 April 2022)  
Krista Watkins  
Noeleen Mulley



