

Bowen and Abbot Community Reference Group Meeting Minutes

5.30pm Tuesday 11 March 2025 – Bowen Community Centre

Chair:

Chair NQBP Chief Executive Officer, Brendan Webb

Attendees:

Recreational representatives

Cheryl Bullemor - NQCYC

Community representatives

Glenda Robertson

Richard Roberts

Lorraine Maltby

Business representatives

David Paddon – Horseshoe Bay Cafe

Tony Bale (Chamber of Commerce)

Environmental Representatives

Donna Turner – NQ Dry Tropics

Whitsunday Regional Council representative

Jonathan Cutting

Juru Enterprise Limited

N/A

Youth representative

Emma Stark – Bowen State High School

Port Industry Representatives

Mark Smith – NQXT (via Teams)

Kate Mee – APO

Damien Dederer - APO

James Gilmour - Gilmour Space

Clint Mason - Engage Marine

NQBP Representatives

Brendan Webb

Darren Brownsey

Emilie Power

Julie Keane

James Miller

Nawar Spear

MSQ Representative

Alex Cramb – (Strategy & Planning - Boat Harbours)

Max Haste – Area Manager (Townsville - Waterway Operations)

Guests

Nicola Duffy – MSQ

Stephanie Threlfall – MSQ

Trevor Ross

Dan Harris, NQBP

Apologies: Mayor Ry Collins Whitsunday Regional Council, Tim Lewis NQBP, Odette Langham NQBP, Stephanie Cora Bowen Community Centre, Bradley Stout Juru Enterprises, Matt Bowkett Engage Marine.

Item	Discussion	Action
1. Welcome to Country, meeting open, agenda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting opened at 5.35pm • Community Reference Group members were welcomed by Chair/NQBP CEO, Brendan Webb. • An Acknowledgment of Country was provided by Brendan. 	
2. Welcome and introductions	<p>Presented by CEO (Chair), Brendan Webb</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introductions – all attendees provided an overview of their personal history and background. • Apologies were recorded from Mayor Ry Collins Whitsunday Regional Council, Tim Lewis NQBP, Odette Langham NQBP, Stephanie Cora Bowen Community Centre, Bradley Stout Juru Enterprises, and Matt Bowkett Engage Marine. • CRG members were given an overview of the CRG and its purpose. 	
3. Conflict of Interest	<p>Presented by CEO (Chair), Brendan Webb</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion around conflicts of interest was held and Conflict of Interest register reviewed. • No concerns were raised. • No conflicts of interest were declared for this meeting. 	ACTION - NQBP to follow up outstanding Conflict of Interest forms
4. CEO update	<p>Presented by CEO (Chair), Brendan Webb</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NQBP is a government-owned corporation responsible for the four trading ports of Hay Point, Mackay, Abbot Point and Weipa. • Our ports help facilitate 54% of Queensland’s international trade which is worth \$53 billion. • The volume of trade is 148 million tonnes which contributes to \$35 million in annual contribution to the gross state product (GSP). • Statistics on breakdown of trade by port provided. • An overview of NQBP’s vision, mission, values and strategic themes were also provided to members. 	

<p>5. Infrastructure and operations update</p>	<p>Presented by Brendan Webb and Nawar Spear</p> <p>Bowen Jetty project consultation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NQBP is delivering the \$68 million Bowen Wharf project for the Bowen community. • We have been on a long journey of community consultation working through the concept development stages. This included discovering what's important, bringing all the big ideas together into two draft concepts as part of design, consulting with the community to gain their feedback on the draft concepts and then refining it into a final Bowen Jetty concept design. • We undertook extensive engagement connecting with people in a range of ways - through online surveys, community flyers, pop-up sessions, and direct stakeholder meetings and workshops. • From the very beginning, we wanted to ensure the project was shaped by what matters most to the locals, and the feedback we received at every stage has played a key role in guiding the design. • We had a great response from the community and all of the results of our consultation and final design are available on our website. <p>Bowen Jetty project update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construction is on track to commence in 2027, with completion expected by the end of 2028, subject to environmental approval processes. • We're actively progressing procurement of contractors and consulting services to undertake the next stages of the project. • This includes geotechnical investigations to assess the soil condition around the jetty project's location, and also for the Reference Design and Engineering Consultancy services which will incorporate the outcome of the geotechnical investigations to develop the design further. • Any suppliers interested in participating, continue to monitor the LocalBuy platform or any NQBP announcements for information on upcoming packages of work. • Once the final design is completed, we will come back to the community to update them, this will be at least 3-4 months away. <p>Presented by Brendan Webb Towage infrastructure solution</p>	
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- The existing tug wharf at Bowen Wharf is approaching the end of its economical service life and is planned to be demolished as part of the Bowen Wharf project.
- The tugs servicing Abbot Point will move from Bowen Wharf in 2026 until permanent towage infrastructure is in place.
- NQBP is preparing a Business Case exploring all long-term towage infrastructure options in line with the State Government's Business Case Development Framework.
- The business case process identifying and endorsing a preferred option is expected to be completed in late 2026.
- We are also working with Engage Marine to identify an initial towage solution for refuelling, maintenance and crew transfers.
- The operational safety and efficiency of Abbot Point is our primary concern.
- We'll keep you informed as we work towards an initial solution.

Bowen Jetty maintenance and operations

- Causeway repairs were recently completed following the weather events experienced.
- Aurecon also completed jetty inspections last week.
- There will need to be some temporary closures of the jetty to the public in May for geotechnical investigations and also some addition repairs and upgrades. These will be communicated to the public beforehand.

Question – Tony Bale – Will there still be consideration of a two-stage approach to the jetty? A public arm, and a commercial arm?

Answer – This is currently still on the table and is being considered. We will need to investigate thoroughly what the impacts would be to operations and public and whether the impacts can be minimised, versus costs. It is expensive to mobilise twice so this is a big consideration. What need to understand what an initial solution looks like for Engage Marine. We need to consider local buy, local spend requirements, traditional owner commitments etc.

Question – Tony Bale – Are you still working towards a permanent MOF (marine off-loading facility) where capital dredging will be required?

	<i>Answer – This is one of the options being investigated as part of the Business Case. It would need capital dredging and onshore disposal, so needs to be investigated and understood completely.</i>	
6. Environment update	<p>Presented by Indigenous Programs Manager, Julie Keane</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NQBP has a long-standing partnership with James Cook University to implement an extensive ambient marine monitoring program across all Ports including Abbot Point. • It focuses on marine water quality, coral and seagrass. • Monitoring information collected is displayed on our public dashboards available on the NQBP website. • The program was recently extended to include monitoring of water quality and seagrass communities within McCane's Bay and Bowen Wharf. • NQBP also partners with Juru Enterprise Limited (JEL) to undertake turtle monitoring along Eastern and Dingo Beaches at Port of Abbot Point during the nesting season. • There were around 46 nests this year which is the largest number in a few years. • 11 local JEL staff are also employed to assist NQBP with our weed and pest management. • We're hoping to build their capacity in this area so they can assist us with larger projects in the future. • As part of the partnership with JCU we also have marine science scholarships for university students. • There are also scholarships available within our Indigenous Program too. 	
7. Community update	<p>Presented by Senior Advisor Community Relationship, Emilie Power</p> <p>NQBP Sponsorships and Donations Program</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NQBP has several sponsorship and donation programs including the NQBP Community Fund, Corporate sponsorships and donations, CRG sponsorships and Indigenous Program sponsorships. • Over 50 applications received in 2024 for the NQBP Community Fund. • Increase of funds from previous years (From \$60k to \$100k). • 14 initiatives were selected across all four Ports, 6 of these were from Bowen. 	ACTION – NQBP to send email to CRG members requesting CRG sponsorship nominations

	<p>CRG sponsorship allocation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The CRG will receive an annual budget of \$5,000 for donations and sponsorships each financial year. • CRG members can nominate and decide on where to allocate these funds. • A clear set of criteria will guide the decision-making process for sponsorships and donations. • Once opportunities are nominated, members will vote to determine which initiatives to support. • An email will be circulated in the coming days, requesting nominations. 	
<p>8. General business</p>	<p>Gilmour Space (James Gilmour)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gilmour Space are the largest space tech company in Australia building rockets and satellites. • Bowen Orbital Spaceport currently employs 14 people in Bowen. • Committed to broadening and diversifying employment opportunities in Bowen. • Approval has been received to launch Eris – 30 tonne launch vehicle. • Launched recently pushed out due April due to weather launch window suitability. <p>Maritime Safety Queensland (Alex Cramb)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keen to leverage off planning that is occurring in Bowen (Master Plan / Bowen Wharf / Bowen Foreshore). • The new Queensland Gov has committed to a new master plan for its Bowen State Boat Harbour, MSQ is currently inputting in relevant government processes to determine the project scope, timing and confirm funding allocation (expected to commence mid-2026). • Will be able to provide a further update at the July meeting on where this is at. <p>Whitsunday Regional Council (Jonathan Cutting)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bowen Foreshore Master Plan – looking to launch public consultation this Friday until Easter. Concept plan informed by stakeholder interviews over the past few months. Will continue to meet with those stakeholders but also wider consultation to the entire Bowen community through workshops, online, information stalls at shopping centres and markets. • Information to be distributed to Bowen CRG members when available. 	<p>ACTION – James Gilmour to send public document on launch to NQBP to share with CRG members</p> <p>ACTION – Jonathan Cutting to share Bowen Foreshore Master Plan community consultation information.</p>

	<p>Abbot Point Operations (Damien Dederer / Kate Mee)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rain event for February saw over 900mls fall at the terminal. • The port was closed for a number of days both onshore and offshore due to the weather. • Back to full operations now. • APO spent \$25M after cyclone Debbie on water management, has now been fully tested and proved to be a valuable investment, all water was kept within environmental approvals. <p>Engage Marine</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Back to full operations after recent weather events. • Engage Marine is expanding their operations in Queensland. • Recently won a contract with Port of Townsville, Mourilyan and Cairns. <p>General Business</p> <p>Comments – Tony Bale - Thank you, impressive group of people at this meeting. There are some big opportunities in the pipeline for Bowen. The Bowen Jetty project is a catalyst for broader potential to launch Bowen on the map. The planning for the foreshore is crucial. Creating a cohesive vision with the right blend of public and private investment is required. It would be good to use the Bowen Jetty as a hub for Bowen Tourism. We need to recognise the history of the Bowen Jetty and the Catalina through exhibitions. Hopefully lessons learnt from the Flagstaff Hill development will be applied across the planning phases. For discussion later would be how we activate the area for community events.</p>	
9. Next meeting	Next meeting to be held on Tuesday 15 July 2025	
10.	Meeting closed at 7.10pm	