

Far North Queensland Zone — Overview 2024

Membership. The Far North Queensland Zone of the QBA consists of the following four clubs:

- Cairns Bridge Club
- Tableland Bridge Club
- Malanda Bridge Club
- Tully Bridge Club (currently not participating in Zonal Activities).

Additional clubs may be added as advised by the QBA.

Zone Representative. Each club nominates a person or persons to act as their Zone Representative(s), one representative per 150 home club members or part thereof. These Representatives are appointed at each Club's AGM and the clubs must advise the Zone Secretary and QBA Manager of a change in its Zone Representative(s). Most Zone business will be conducted electronically.

Zonal Secretary. The Zone Representatives elect one of their number as the Zone Secretary. The Zone Secretary, in conjunction with their local club will operate an appropriate bank account and will present an annual financial statement of the Zone affairs to clubs. Jan Cluff (Cairns) is the current Zone Secretary.

Events. The Far North Queensland Zone conducts the following events each year.

1. Grand National Open Teams (GNOT). Cairns, Tablelands and Malanda Clubs conduct qualifying rounds.
2. Zonal Teams and Zonal Pairs are qualifying events for the subsidies to play in the Queensland Festival of Bridge. The current Festival is held in Brisbane from the 12th to the 14th of October and comprises the Queensland Open Teams and Queensland Open Pairs championships. The subsidy amount and the number of pairs subsidised is determined by the Zone.

The venue for each qualifying event is negotiated annually between the clubs. The Teams selection is normally held in mid-May, the Pairs selection is normally held in late-June, and the GNOT Regional Final is normally held in mid-August.

The current agreed schedule is:

- Saturday, 16 March 2024, GNOT Qualifying Event at Tableland Bridge Club.
- Sunday, 14 April 2024, Heat 1 GNOT Qualifying Event at Cairns Bridge Club.
- Sunday, 28 April 2024, Zonal Teams Selection Event at Cairns Bridge Club.
- Sunday, 19 May 2024, Heat 2 GNOT Qualifying Event at Cairns Bridge Club.
- Monday, 17 June 2024, GNOT Qualifying Event at Malanda Bridge Club.
- Sunday, 23 June 2024, Zonal Pairs Selection Event at Cairns Bridge Club.
- Sunday, 28 July 2024, GNOT Zone Final Event at Malanda Bridge Club.

All entries to be communicated to the event organiser at least 72 hours prior to the start of the event. Entries are subject to being cut-off earlier at the discretion of the event organiser in consultation with the Zone Secretary, should this be necessary to allow for adequate preparation for the event or the bridge movement to be employed. If an additional The Zone Secretary is responsible for facilitating the formation of an additional Pair or Team should such be required to ensure the utilisation of a fair and functional bridge movement.

Zonal Teams and Pairs. The Zone has agreed to sponsor two teams (up to 8 players) to play in the Queensland Festival of Bridge. In the Zonal Teams four subsidies will be awarded to the

highest placed team able to attend the Festival. In the Zonal Pairs the four subsidies will be awarded to the two highest placed Pairs able to attend the Festival. Across the Teams and Pairs a player will only be eligible to receive one subsidy in all. The dates of the events must be agreed by the QBA and be in line with the overall state and national calendars for the events. Teams/Pairs must nominate as a contending or non-contending team/pair before commencement of a Zone event. Clubs are expected to provide other Clubs in the Zone with entry forms they host.

GNOT. The Conduct of Qualifying Heats and Final within the Zone is subject to The QBA Regulations, Section E, pages 31 to 33 and the relevant ABF GNOT General Regulations.

All entrants entering the GNOT Zone Final must be prepared to play online in the Phase Two using RealBridge (28 to 30 September 2024 inclusive) and, if successful in qualifying, to travel and play in the National Final to be held in Sydney on 23 and 24 November 2024.

Cairns, Tableland and Malanda clubs conduct heats of the GNOT to decide the participants in the Zone Final. Players may play in more than one qualifying heat. Qualifying places at Tableland and Malanda clubs are not open to visiting players and teams can comprise any combination of Tableland and Malanda club members.

There will be ten teams in the 2024 GNOT Zone final, comprising six from the Cairns club through its two heats and four from the Tableland and Malanda clubs combined through the Tableland and Malanda events. The current agreed cost of participation in the GNOT is \$750 and is to be shared between Cairns (60%), Tableland (20%) and Malanda (20%) plus \$10 per team which participated in each qualifying event, to be paid by the club running each qualifying event or events.

Selection Rules Pertaining to Club GNOTs with Two Qualifying Events. In relation to these rules, the term *Eligible Team* is used to denote a team from an eligible club or clubs which has indicated its willingness to play in the national finals of the GNOT.

The following pertains to the situation where there are a total of six qualifying places over two events (eg the two Cairns heats in 2024).

1. Two of the available Zone Final places are filled by the top placed Eligible Teams in the first Qualifying Event.
2. The top two placed Eligible Teams in the second event fill Zone Final places.
3. The remaining available Zone Final places are filled by the highest placed team or teams in either of the two qualifying events. If there is a tie in team placements, then the team in the event which has the fewest qualifiers takes precedence.

The following pertains to the situation where there are a total of four qualifying places over two events (eg the Tableland and Malanda events in 2024).

1. One of the available Zone Final places is filled by the top placed Eligible Team in the first Qualifying Event.
2. The top placed Eligible Team in the second event fills a Zone Final place.
3. The remaining available Zone Final places are filled by the highest placed team or teams in either of the two qualifying events. If there is a tie in team placements, then the team in the event which has the fewest qualifiers takes precedence.

These processes are objective, clear and known *a priori*. They are designed to allow entrants from both events to have good opportunities to qualify whilst ensuring that the quality of the teams' performance is a major determinant of qualification whilst taking account of the relative strengths of the fields faced. The predominant outcome will be three teams qualifying from each event but a four/two or two/four split could also occur.

Any player(s) players can play who are part of qualifying team(s) from the first event can play in other teams in the second event but such teams in the second event would then be deemed as non-qualifying.

Substitutes. Substitutions after the Zonal Teams, Zonal Pairs or the GNOT Regional Final are permitted on an emergency basis only and need to be approved by the Zonal Secretary in line with QBA and ABF regulations.

Eligibility. Entry to qualifying events to represent the Far North Queensland Zone is unrestricted. However to be considered as part of a qualifying team or pair or to receive a subsidy to play in the Queensland Teams or Pairs or in the GNOT Zone Final, players must be a Zone resident as specified by the QBA residential eligibility requirements and approved by the Zone Representatives.

Residential requirements to be a subsidised, qualifying player include:

- A *bona fide* Zonal resident who has been a financial member, for at least six months prior to the event, of a club affiliated with the Zone.
- A new Zonal resident who is a financial member of a club affiliated with the Zone, and who satisfies the Zone Secretary that changed employment, family or other commitments are such that it is likely that their bridge will be predominantly played at clubs affiliated with the Zone for at least six months after the event.

Subsidies. The amount of subsidy given is dependent upon on the amount of money raised by entry fees from the trials and the rebate received from the QBA. The current subsidy is \$400 per player. All Entry Fees collected from the Zonal Teams and Pairs events are used to augment the zonal fund from which the subsidies are paid. The masterpoints awarded (Gold for the GNOT, Red for the Teams and Pairs) are paid for by the Zone.

Applicable Regulations. QBA and ABF Regulations apply strictly to all Far North Queensland Zone events.

February 14, 2024

This Overview should be reviewed annually and revised as necessary.