

Far North Queensland Zone Guidelines

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 (which are currently not hosting any zonal activities; however, its members are encouraged to enter zonal events organised by other FNQ clubs).

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 runs two qualifier events, and the Tableland and Malanda Clubs each conduct a qualifying event.
2. Zonal Teams and Zonal Pairs are qualifying events for the subsidies to play in the Queensland Festival of Bridge. The current Festival is to be held in Brisbane 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. With respect to the GNOTs events typically, the Cairns Club runs two qualifying heats and the Malanda and Tableland Clubs each run one qualifying heat. The FNQ Teams and Pairs selection events are normally held at the Cairns Club in mid-May and late-June respectively, and the FNQ GNOT Regional Final is normally held at the Malanda Club in mid-August.

All entries to be communicated to the event organiser at least 48 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. 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.

Should any GNOT qualifying event have to have a limit on the number of entrants allowed (for capacity or other zone-approved reasons) then initial priority will be given to entries comprising players from the host club. In such instances, all entries with four host-club players which are received up to three weeks prior to the event, will secure a place in the event and the rest of the places will be filled in order of receipt of other teams' entries, up to the capacity limit advertised. Currently the Tableland GNOT qualifier is restricted to a maximum of ten teams. Other GNOT qualifier events and the zonal team and pairs finals do not at present have an advertised limit. However, in consultation with, and approval from, the zone secretary and zone representatives, entry numbers can be limited if special circumstances arise.

Zonal Teams and Pairs. The Zone has agreed to sponsor up to eight players to participate in the Queensland Festival of Bridge (QFoB). In the Zonal Teams four subsidies will be awarded to the highest placed team able to attend the QFoB. In the Zonal Pairs the four subsidies will be awarded to the two highest placed Pairs able to attend the QFoB. 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 in the sessions they host.

GNOT. The Conduct of Qualifying Heats and Final within the Zone are 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 which currently is undertaken on RealBridge and, if successful in qualifying, to travel and play in the National Final which is currently held in Brisbane.

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 the Tableland and Malanda heats are not open to visiting players and qualifying teams can comprise any combination of Tableland and Malanda club members. Qualifying places at Cairns heats are not open to visiting players and qualifying teams can only comprise members of the Cairns Club.

There will be ten teams in the current 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 \$14 per team which participated in each qualifying event, to be paid by the club running each qualifying event or events. These monies are passed on to the QBA by the Zone Secretary.

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 is a total of six qualifying places over two events (eg where the Cairns Club has two heats).

1. Two of the available Zone Final places are filled by the top placed Cairns Club Eligible Teams in the first Qualifying Event.
2. The top two placed Cairns Club Eligible Teams in the second event (excluding those Eligible Teams already qualified from the first Qualifying Event) gain Zone Final places.

The remaining available Zone Final places are subsequently filled by the highest placed Cairns Club team or teams in either of the two qualifying events which have not already qualified through heats one and two. 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 is a total of four qualifying places over two events (eg the Tableland and Malanda Club events).

1. One of the available Zone Final places is filled by the top placed Eligible Team comprising Malanda and/or Tableland players in the first Qualifying Event.

2. The top placed Eligible Team comprising Malanda and/or Tableland players in the second event (excluding an Eligible Team already qualified from the first Qualifying Event) gains a Zone Final place.

The remaining available Zone Final places are filled by the highest placed team or teams comprising Malanda and/or Tableland players in either of the two qualifying events which have not already qualified through events one and two. 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 the heats and events to have good opportunities to qualify whilst ensuring that the quality of the teams' performance is a major determinant of qualification and taking account of the relative strengths of the fields faced. The predominant outcome will be three teams qualifying from each heat, but a four/two or two/four split could also occur, and for two teams qualifying from each event but a three/one or one/three split could also occur.

Any player or players who are part of qualifying team(s) from the first event or heat can play in other teams in the second event or heat 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 Festival of Bridge or in the GNOT Zone Final and beyond, 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 full member, for at least six months prior to the event/heat, of a club affiliated with the Zone.
- A new Zonal resident who is a financial full 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/heat.

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, but this is subject to review and modification. 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 6, 2026

This Overview should be reviewed annually and revised as necessary.