Consistent with our commitment to deliver conferences and events in rural and regional centres, IPWEAQ hosted the Northern Roads Symposium (NRS) in Cairns, 11-13 June 2019. These events offer an opportunity to address issues which focus on the particular needs of councils imposed by local conditions. In the case of the NRS, this meant investigating the use of locally available materials in the construction, maintenance and operations of road assets related to northern climatic conditions.

Presentations were delivered by leading industry experts on best practice utilising non-standard materials as well as reviewing learnings from various recent projects in terms of material selection, construction methods and performance evaluation.

The symposium also looked at strategies for maximising outcomes when funding is limited, discussed and analysed the technical expertise and experience available to support industry stakeholders.

Presentations ranged from CSIRO’s Stephen McFallan discussing the scientific modelling around heavy vehicle transport on lower volume roads, to highly practical explanations of managing foam bitumen stabilisation from TMR’s Damian Volker. We also heard about the development of the Lower Order Road Guidelines from IPWEAQ’s Craig Moss followed by a presentation on how that guide has been used in practice from Mareeba Council’s Glena Kirk. This was a small sample of the wealth of material discussed across the two days which covered every element of design, construction and maintenance of roads in a tropical environment.

As always, our events offer plenty of opportunity for networking and catching up in less formal surroundings and we had positive feedback on the social events and technical tours that formed part of the event. The symposium dinner at the Aboriginal Cultural Centre of Tjapukai was very well received with great entertainment and outstanding food using bush tucker and including the best and native ingredients, including the best marinated kangaroo anyone had ever tasted.

Thank you to everyone who contributed to the success of this event. Presentations are available in IPWEAQ’s globally-recognised Knowledge Centre.