

Road Planning and Investment in FNQ

Northern Australia Priorities: Our Business, Trade and Investment Gateway / Infrastructure to support growth / A Northern Workforce for Growth

State Electorate: Cairns / Barron River / Mulgrave / Cook / Hill / Traeger / Hinchinbrook

Federal Electorate: Leichhardt / Kennedy

Council: ALL FNQROC Councils

Priority Recommendation

FNQROC advice for noting purposes only re future collaboration/funding opportunities.

Project Overview

FNQROC member councils have consistently raised investment on our road network as a concern. This concern has never been substantiated and as a region we are focused on trying to substantiate or debunk anecdotal evidence.

Common concerns or needs raised include:

Safety

- Single lane roads;
- Single lane bridges;
- Load limited bridges;
- Unsealed roads which deteriorate quickly under heavy transport vehicles;
- Conflict in road use between heavy transport vehicles and tourism vehicles (especially with the above 3 points);
- Equitable Community access;
- Efficient Daily commute.

Economic development

- Provision of infrastructure to support economic development, particularly efficient transport links;
- Tourist vehicles ranging from traffic delays (poor tourist experience) to the state of the road in terms of safety;
- Road train/b-double routes and the need to hitch and unhitch (Mt Garnet, Mareeba and Almaden);
- The use of some LG roads as heavy vehicle (road train) links and the inability to fund these roads;
- Bottle necks such as Kuranda Range Road restricting economic growth west of Cairns.

FNQROC has undertaken to develop a regional road transport investment strategy, bringing together multiple concurrent goals, these being the FNQROC strategic goals of developing resilient transport infrastructure and connectivity to drive sustainable economic growth and development, and maintaining equitable social infrastructure (in providing equal opportunity for prosperity to all regions) and TMR's FNQ Regional Transport Plan (yet to be released).

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The objectives we are seeking are:

- a) Recommended road investment strategy with indicative costs;
- b) Current and innovative substantiation supporting the recommended investment strategy; Recommendation for 'first and last mile' roads to be included as a Local Roads of Regional Significance (LRRS) (if identified);
- c) Executive advocacy document of prioritised investments for use by FNQROC.

The overarching purpose of this project is to develop a new, more effective basis with which to inform our infrastructure spending and funding applications to support strategic and sustainable economic growth and development for Far North Queensland.

This Regional Road Transport Investment Strategy has been scoped to three parts:

- Part 1 Tourism Network;
- Part 2 Heavy Vehicle Network;
- Part 3 'First and Last mile' network; and
- Part 4 Priority Project Listing.

It is noted that some roads may fit into 2 or more of these parts and this will be taken into consideration.

Part 1 – Tourism Network

The aim is to have an economic assessment of the impacts of induced visitation (tourism) as a result of the sealing of routes. Development of concept will be proven, and subsequently applied in various scenarios such as tourism only unsealed routes and productivity improvement of Heavy Vehicle routes which may also have a tourism element, inclusive of scenarios including first and last mile.

Currently, there are two simultaneous drivers of economic growth in the region. These being:

1. Freight task as a result of industrial and agricultural growth (direct yield, long term growth) (conceptually demonstrated through a \$ saving/Tonne/kilometre); and
2. Guided and self-drive tourism related to the maturation of the Asian (et al) economies (short lead, high yield growth as a result of the significant increase in tourism) (conceptually demonstrated through a \$ income/per person/night);

This growth in tourism is high yield, low impact when related to road infrastructure, which is considered to be a key potential consideration when demonstrating the value of specific road infrastructure investment within the region. The report will consider the effects of improvement of asset and the consequential additional growth that this would generate.

Each individual growth area should be demonstrated as a separate entity; however it is the demonstration of synergistic effect of direct investment into the infrastructure shared by these growth areas that is the intent of this section of the study (i.e. the demonstration that an individual infrastructure project may provide dual benefits to separate, but co-habiting industries.)

Part 2 – Gap Analysis and Assessment of identified Heavy Vehicle Network

A gap analysis will be conducted on the identified heavy vehicle network.

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This gap analysis will contain:

1. 'Fit for purpose-ness' analysis of the current heavy vehicle network, identifying any dimensional/structural (i.e. road formation width) deficiencies/bottlenecks in the current network; Following on from the above, an analysis of the current network identifying those parts of the network vulnerable to growth expected through 2040;
2. Consideration of opportunities for shorter routings of heavy vehicles not otherwise considered by the Heavy Vehicle Network/FNQ Regional Transport Plan (TMR), that could be developed by structural road improvement (i.e. a potential route/link where not identified, if (reasonably) upgraded would provide industry and long term network maintenance efficiencies).

Part 3 – First and Last Mile Freight Assessment

The study will provide a first and last mile freight assessment considering the movement of heavy vehicle freight on the FNQ local road network, from and to major freight source points. (*E.g. First Mile: Primary Production points (Plant/Animal cultivation, fishing/tree/plantation farming etc. Last Mile: Rail/port/industrial estates)* specifically studying these local (and/or lower order state) road linkages with the State road network.)

A material list of what particular road links are of most benefit for the region will be supplied, providing the highest economic benefit for the sum invested. It is also noted, that defining what particular sections of network are of the highest priority will provide both an investment target and a network priority list, which will be used to better risk manage the network, allowing development of a more resilient network.

The study seeks to inform the FNQROC of the most effective investments in the regional road network, both in time and efficacy, in how road projects are prioritised within the region.

Higher order validation of the above projects may be validated using CSIRO Transit modelling and project specific improvement is to be done using the FNQROC Project Prioritisation Tool.

Part 4 – Priority Project Listing

1. Commensurate with Parts 1, 2 & 3, a tabulated, and prioritised (assessed using the current project prioritisation tool) list of roads identifying their structural/formation deficiency, in conjunction with initial costing between current road standard and applicable standard is required.

Key Strategic Drivers

Economic	Provision of infrastructure to support economic development (industry + Tourism), particularly with efficient transport links. Increased economic growth opportunities.
Social Enterprise	Safer community transport access and commutes.
Employment	Employment opportunities during infrastructure construction period.
Tourism	Improved tourism experience with efficient and safer transport links.