



Inland Queensland Roads Action Plan

*Driving Productivity
in Australia's Transport Network*

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Beefing up cattle supply chains in Northern Australia

The upgrade of cattle transport routes is crucial to boosting the livestock industry in North Queensland, according to Interim Chair of the Co-operative Research Centre for Developing Northern Australia and Richmond Mayor John Wharton.

Mayor Wharton attended the Northern Australia Beef Roads forum in Darwin yesterday, in his capacity as Chair of the North West Regional Road Group, representing shires from Hughenden through to the border and north to Carpentaria to Burke Shire.

The forum is part of the Australian Government's \$100 million commitment to improving key roads used for cattle transport in Northern Australia.

"The forum was well attended with representatives from across the three states and federal Ministers, including Minister Darren Chester, Senator Nigel Scullion, Senator Matt Canavan and local member, the Member for Solomon Natasha Griggs," Mayor Wharton said.

"I think with that sort of attendance it shows the importance of this program for northern Australia and other programs the Federal Government is proceeding with to develop the northern Australia.

"Infrastructure, in the context of roads and ports, is so important to developing the north.

"An excellent case of what infrastructure can do for an industry, is the eastern port access road into the Townsville Port. With the development of this road it has allowed the cattle industry fast and easy access to the port, which has also allowed the port to become the biggest live exporter in northern Australia.

"The CSIRO TRaNSIT tool model has delivered data on all of the roads that were submitted across northern Australia and worked on the basis on savings per head of cattle across the board, with regards to sealing and upgrades of those roads.

"The additional benefits that are not currently accommodated in the model are examples of savings to other roads uses, effects on unsealed roads and connectivity between communities. Our regional road group in the north west believes that this data should be utilised in future planning."

During the forum in Darwin, CSIRO presented its Transport Network Strategic Investment Tool (TRaNSIT) modelling of stakeholder priorities, which has analysed the demands and needs for improvements to the roads which carry cattle across the north.

The Australian Government is now seeking formal project submissions from the relevant jurisdictions.

The successful projects under the Beefs Roads Programme are expected to be announced from mid-2016.

IQ-RAP Secretariat – Regional Development Australia Townsville and North West Queensland Chief Executive Officer Glenys Schuntner said the beef roads program recognises the importance of the cattle industry to northern Australia. In northern Queensland alone there are more than 7 million head of cattle in normal seasons.

“While currently there are tough drought conditions, we are confident the industry will return to pre-drought scale with opportunity to grow further, particularly with exports to the Asian markets,” Ms Schuntner said.

“With an estimated one million cattle being transported in the northern Queensland region each year, a fit for purpose, reliable road network is required.

“The Inland Queensland Roads Action Plan recognises this and complements the TRaNSIT modelling in identifying the key strategic road corridors across the state road network. More productive freight friendly routes will help sustain local businesses and local jobs.”

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