



JAMES McGRATH

SENATOR FOR QUEENSLAND

12 April 2016

The Hon. Darren Chester MP
Minister for Infrastructure and Transport
M1.26
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Minister,



I write in support of the Inland Queensland Roads Action Plan (IQ-RAP) Working Group and their detailed proposal to upgrade Queensland's inland road freight capacity.

This follows a meeting I had on 19 February 2016 with Ms Glenys Schuntner, the Secretariat of the Working Group and the Chief Executive Officer of the Regional Development Australia Townsville and North West Queensland Committee.

The Working Group represents 47 funding partners including 33 local governments, 8 regional roads and transport groups, 4 Regional Development Australia (RDA) committees, the Northern Queensland RDA Alliance and the Royal Automobile Club of Queensland (RACQ).

The IQ-RAP network spans around 16,000 kilometres of road within the 33 local government areas west of the Bruce Highway and outside of south-east Queensland. These rural roads cover 82% of Queensland, or 19% of Australia's entire landmass.

To date, the Working Group has raised \$200,000 without government assistance to develop its proposal.

The proposed upgrades to over 3,000 kilometres of road and about 300 bridges across the network would cost an estimated \$5.01 billion over the next 18 years.

To provide further guidance, the Working Group has been in discussions with Infrastructure Australia, which has advised that a full business case for the proposed upgrades would cost \$5 million.

I believe that the IQ-RAP proposal offers a long-term approach to road planning and funding in regional Queensland that aligns with the Government's priorities for the development of our agricultural sector and Northern Australia more generally.

The proposal would also offer national benefits to freight and supply chain routes, boost trade and productivity, and support jobs and growth particularly in regional communities.

The Working Group previously wrote to the Assistant Minister to the Treasurer, the Hon. Alex Hawke MP, on 5 February 2016 as part of its 2016-17 Budget submission.

For your information, please find enclosed a copy of the IQ-RAP proposal's most recent overview dated 30 March 2016.

I commend the IQ-RAP proposal for your consideration and look forward to a favourable response.

I have also copied this letter of support to the Ministers below.

Yours sincerely,



JAMES MCGRATH
Assistant Minister to the Prime Minister
Assistant Minister for Immigration
Senator for Queensland

Enclosed:
Inland Queensland Roads Action Plan overview

CC:
The Hon. Barnaby Joyce MP, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources
The Hon. Scott Morrison MP, Treasurer
Senator the Hon. Fiona Nash, Minister for Regional Development, Minister for Regional Health, Minister for Regional Communications
The Hon. Josh Frydenberg MP, Minister for Resources, Energy and Northern Australia
Senator the Hon. Matt Canavan, Minister for Northern Australia