

Queensland Regional Roads Forum Key Outcomes

The Queensland Regional Roads Forum was held in Longreach on the 4 December, 2013 at the initiative of the Regional Development Australia (RDA) Committees from Townsville and North West Queensland, Far North Queensland and Torres Strait, Fitzroy and Central West, Mackay-Isaac-Whitsunday and Darling Downs and South West.

50 representatives from organisations with a direct interest in roads attended the forum, such as the Queensland Department of Transport and Main Roads, the Queensland Department of State Development, Infrastructure and Planning, local government Mayors and Chief Executive Officers including those involved with Regional Roads Groups, RACQ, Agforce, regional economic development organisations and transport organisations amongst others. Collectively we were able to identify a way forward that will encourage stakeholders to work together on a coordinated approach to prioritising Queensland's regional roads and effectively lead to better outcomes for road management.

We were successful in meeting our objectives for the forum, which were:

1. To provide updates to all stakeholders on road planning across the entire inland region of Queensland - that is, roads outside of South East Queensland and away from the coastal routes of the Bruce and Burnett Highways;
2. To hear from different organisations about their road development priorities;
3. To facilitate discussion about criteria for prioritising road upgrades and identify consensus points on road priorities and where further work needs to be done; and
4. To develop an agreed framework for advocacy to progress work on priority roads.



The outcomes we achieved at the forum were as follows.

- a) Identification of criteria for prioritising regional roads – Economic value (including productivity on supply chains), Safety, Strategic Intent, Access and Social value; and an initial listing of regional roads priorities by forum participants.
- b) Identification of information gaps and information sources regarding Queensland regional roads.
- c) Identification of opportunities for joint advocacy and collaboration to progress priority rural roads.
- d) Agreement to the need and benefits of collaboration of advocacy efforts for regional roads.
- e) Agreement that all roads have merit, and priorities are determined by different means. It is important to cross-reference the priorities identified at the Regional Roads Forum against documents such as the Regional Roads Groups' priority documents and those identified in strategic government policy documents such as *Developing Northern Australia*.
- f) There was support for a future working group to be established. An Interim Working Group is to be established for the period to 31st March, 2014 to:
 - Draft the TOR for a future working group and consult stakeholders on its suitability.
 - List available information and evidence based sources as preparation for undertaking a gap analysis.
 - Establish contact with each Regional Roads Group and obtain lists of priorities and evidence based studies for cross referencing with forum identified priorities and strategic government policy documents such as the *Developing Northern Australia*.
 - Determine other stakeholders and their future participation and commitment.
 - Hold initial discussions with government to determine budgetary cycles.
- g) Membership of the Interim Working Group is:
 - Cr Rick Britton, Chair of the IWG, Mayor Boulia Shire Council (Regional Development Australia rep)
 - Cr Peter Maguire, Mayor Central Highlands Regional Council (Local Government and Regional Roads Group rep)
 - Cr Butch Lenton, Mayor Winton Shire Council, (Local Government and Regional Roads Group rep)
 - Dave Burges, Chief Executive Officer, Quilpie Shire (Local Government and Regional Roads Group rep)
 - Cr Ian Groves, Councillor, Barcoo Regional Council, Industry (AgForce – Cattle Industry rep)
 - Darlene Irvine, Executive Officer, Far North Queensland Regional Organisation of Councils (Local Government FNQ rep)
- h) An agreement by stakeholders to advocate for support to develop a Western Roads Action Plan, similar to the one developed for the Bruce Highway which was a critical piece of work to secure support for funding commitments; and
- i) A strong sense of collaboration and agreement to work across borders to achieve better outcomes in western regional roads funding.