

20 November, 2015

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Dear Director-General

Re: RDA Townsville and North Queensland Submission to the Queensland Tourism and Transport Strategy discussion paper

I write to you to make a brief submission on behalf of Regional Development Australia Townsville and North West Queensland (RDA) and the Inland Queensland Roads Action Plan Working Group.

Regional Development Australia Townsville and North West Queensland (RDA) is an Australian Government initiative that focuses on enhancing the growth and development of Australia's regions. The Townsville and North West Queensland region accounts for one quarter of Queensland's land mass and, with a population of approximately 269,730, represents 5.8% of Queensland's population.

RDA welcomes the opportunity to make a submission to the Queensland Tourism and Transport Strategy discussion paper to support the State's tourism industry. Although we do not directly work in tourism marketing and development, we do work on infrastructure initiatives to ensure greater productivity, access and competitiveness for all industries including tourism.

RDA is also leading a state-wide Inland Queensland Roads Action Plan project that will deliver a 15 year road plan with prioritisation for road upgrades in the area outside SEQ and west of the Bruce Highway. The project is financially supported by 33 councils across regional Queensland.

It is in this context that we provide the following comments.

Question 3 - Queensland is a big state – what does this mean from a tourism and transport perspective?

The Drive Market is of great importance to Queensland, however many of our roads are not up to the standard they should be for safety and comfort as well as economic productivity for industry. With a large state, distributed population and tourism industry active in all regions, this means that a plan is required to address regional road upgrades to ensure that they meet the needs of all industries including tourism across the state. For example, there are opportunities to seal roads that tourists would then use on expanded drive routes – eg on the Hann Highway from Hughenden to the Lynd. As you will be aware, many tourists will not drive on unsealed roads; hire car companies usually ban the use of hire cars on unsealed roads.



Question 4 - What should be the priorities for tourism and transport?

As above, the priority for growing drive tourism is the development of the supporting road infrastructure to ensure safe and comfortable roads. This means a focus on sealing roads, widening roads to accommodate all regular users, provision of passing lanes and rest areas.

Freight

We also note that the road network is critical for freight movement to and from all tourism related businesses. Hence not only is the road network relevant for safety and access for tourists, but also for the delivery of fuel, food products and all inputs to construction and maintenance of tourism facilities. Hence a productive, efficient freight network is also required. This doubles the importance of the road network to the tourism industry and hence planning of networks that meet multiple needs.

In the current drought and tough economic conditions in regional Queensland, tourism's importance to the long-term economic resilience of Queensland increases, and hence it is critical that appropriate infrastructure exists to support the targeted and required growth in the number of visitors to all regional areas.

RDA will finalise its Inland Queensland Roads Action Plan by January 2016 and will share the prioritised 15 year Inland Queensland Roads Action Plan with the Queensland Government to seek opportunities for collaboration in rolling it out. The plan will identify specific roads on the network that can be improved for economic and social benefits including tourism.

I will be happy to provide any further information required or to answer any questions you may have.

Yours Faithfully



Glenys Schuntner
Chief Executive Officer