



Inland Queensland Roads Action Plan

*Driving Productivity
in Australia's Transport Network*

BETTER ROADS FOR REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The Australian Government and regional Australia can benefit through the support of this pre-budget submission. Its scope and goals align with the government's work on the National Freight and Supply Chain Strategy, the White Papers on Developing Northern Australia and Agricultural Competitiveness and the goals to encourage decentralisation, build capacity for economic diversity through opening up tourism opportunities, close the gap on Indigenous disadvantage and increase Australia's productivity, particularly in exporting.

The Australian Government can:

1. Further demonstrate its interest in the future of regional Australia by collaborating with 34 regional partners on a first of its kind project – the IQ-RAP, recognising and encouraging cross-regional collaboration and long-term strategic planning;
2. Support the development of a more robust evidence base to inform not only regional Queensland in planning and prioritising their strategic freight and tourism routes, but also regional areas across Australia;
3. Be informed of how the forecast 31,500 jobs from IQ-RAP implementation can impact local employment, especially in rural and remote areas including opportunities for Indigenous businesses and employment;
 - a. Outback Queensland, which makes up a large part of the IQ-RAP area, is experiencing extremely high unemployment at 13.1% with youth unemployment now over 60%.
 - b. Across the 28 local governments that are funding IQ-RAP 2, 17,000 people are unemployed. Neighbouring shires that will also benefit from IQ-RAP have another 25,000 people unemployed.
4. Be informed of the opportunities and impacts of increasing tourism as an economic diversifier in regional areas, especially in areas that rely heavily on mining or agriculture;
5. Be informed of opportunities and impacts to improve productivity through bitumen sealing, with reference to CSIRO TRANSIT data (which is also being referenced in the current update to IQ-RAP);
6. Be informed of opportunities to improve road safety; and
7. Be informed of opportunities and impacts of improving resilience in networks for the benefit of industries and communities.

The total cost to complete the nine proposed projects is \$2 million. This will be complemented by approximately \$200,000 of in-kind support. This new funding will leverage the \$400,000 in cash and nearly \$400,000 in-kind that has been committed to this project over the past four years by IQ-RAP partners, Working Group members and RDA Townsville and North West Queensland which has provided Secretariat and project management services.

Projects will be prioritised in consultation with the Australian Government and will take up to two years to complete.



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PROJECTS IDENTIFIED IN THE PRE-BUDGET SUBMISSION

The submission provides a Terms of Reference for individual projects with a description of the purpose, rationale, scope of works and outputs for each project. These were developed after extensive consultation. A brief summary is provided below.

- **Work Program Optimisation** will identify mechanisms to optimise road work efficiency and local government staffing by improving collaboration and delivering more predictable and consistent work flow.
- **Benefits of bitumen sealing of regional roads** will identify the economic, social and environmental impacts of the bitumen sealing of regional and remote roads by exploring road safety, travel time, road maintenance, vehicle maintenance, dust pollution and tourism implications.
- **Connecting with Inland Rail** identifies the opportunities for the IQ-RAP road network associated with the proposed Melbourne to Brisbane Inland Rail link and an intermodal facility at Toowoomba.
- **Learnings from the Outback Way** explores the successful advocacy, planning and delivery of the Outback Way upgrading from Queensland, through Northern Territory to Western Australia.
- **Road Safety Ratings** will star rate the Local Roads of Regional Significance (LRRS) in the IQ-RAP network based on the road design, condition and use data, utilising accepted methodologies.
- **Reliable access for remote communities** will identify the long-term benefits from upgrading a remote road link to reduce the frequency and duration of road closures from extreme weather.
- **Remote and Indigenous Employment Impacts** will identify the wider economic and social impacts of road construction jobs on youth unemployment, long-term unemployment and training and skills development across regional, remote and indigenous communities.
- **Drive tourism potential across IQ-RAP** will establish the potential for increased drive and coach tourism visits resulting from road network improvements across the outback.
- **Incorporate learnings in IQ-RAP 3** will assemble the learnings and data from the eight prior projects and use these to update IQ-RAP and other road planning exercises in 2020.
- **IQ-RAP Social and Economic Program Management** will ensure all projects take account of prior learnings and are effectively managed and delivered on time and budget, and that outcomes are made available to all stakeholders across Australia.

The IQ-RAP Working Group will be the responsible Steering Committee and would welcome Federal and State Government representation. Program management will occur within the Secretariat.