

# weekend **comment**

## Road plan right way

THE Regional Development Australia Townsville and North West Queensland Committee, on behalf of the Inland Roads Action Plan (IQ-RAP) Working Group, welcomes the launch of the State Infrastructure Plan 15 Year Strategy and the whole of government approach to reviewing, planning and capturing the maximum value from future infrastructure investment.

The strategy recognises that strategic investment must capture a strong return on invest-

ment with benefits in the short, medium and long term. The IQ-RAP is a case in point. It is the first of its kind and scope in Australia.

It identifies and prioritises investment over a 16,000km strategic road network – west of the Bruce Highway and outside SEQ – over the next 18 years, across 82 per cent of Queensland, in collaboration with 47 funding partners including 33 local governments.

By spending on regional road projects, governments

can achieve multiple benefits such as creating short and long term jobs, driving productivity gains for agricultural, mining, freight and logistics and other businesses, supporting investment attraction and economic growth through opening up opportunities such as new drive tourism routes as well as critical safety and connectivity benefits.

High level economic analysis suggests that the IQ-RAP can generate 15,000 FTE jobs and very significant time and

cost savings to all who use the road network between northern Queensland and southern markets as well as between western production areas and ports to reach export markets. The IQ-RAP provides a compelling case for investment into the road network.

The IQ-RAP Working Group has engaged with all levels of government and there has been strong interest and support for the plan as it aligns with the State Infrastructure Plan Strategy and the Australia

Infrastructure Plan.

The Working Group looks forward to working with all levels of government to bring this regional development initiative to fruition. With high unemployment in regional areas, the IQ-RAP presents an opportunity to quickly address our economic challenges with benefits across all industries and communities.

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