

Bruce Highway Trust Advisory Council

Communique Meeting #5



On 11 and 12 August 2022, the fifth Bruce Highway Trust Advisory Council (BHTAC) meeting was held in Cairns, chaired by Mr Peter Garske, Company Director, Queensland Transport and Logistics Council and supported by Deputy Chair Ms Barbara Madden, Company Director of the Smithfield Group who attended the meeting virtually.

The role of the Council is to oversee the development of a new 15-year Vision for the Bruce Highway (Brisbane – Cairns) and to identify priorities to be delivered through three, rolling five-year Action Plans and the *Safer Bruce 2030* Action Plan, in order to inform future Federal and State Budget deliberations.

The objective of the BHTAC is to guide the BHTAC-Technical Working Group (BHTAC-TWG) in the preparation of the Vision and Action Plans, which includes providing advice and direction to the BHTAC-TWG on stakeholder needs, expectations and priorities.

At the Cairns meeting, the Department of Transport and Main Roads (TMR) provided BHTAC members with an update on the status of the current \$13 billion Bruce Highway Upgrade Program (BHUP) (2013-14 to 2027-28), including progress on delivery of:

- major capital projects (including construction of interchanges, flood plain upgrades, lane duplication, ring roads)
- pavement widening and rehabilitation works
- Wide Centre Line Treatments
- overtaking lanes
- protected right-hand turns
- signalisation of intersections
- new bridges
- new and upgraded rest areas
- flood area treatments
- roadside safety barriers
- township entry treatments.

Members were also briefed on the outcomes for the Bruce Highway from the recent 2022 Federal and State Budgets, as well as public commitments made prior to the 2022 Federal Election.

Members were then given an update on development of the Bruce Highway Duplication Strategy, including the intent, approach taken, the interface with the draft *15-year Vision and Action Plans for the Bruce Highway* and next steps.

For the remainder of the meeting, Council members were briefed on and discussed the draft *15-year Vision and Action Plans for the Bruce Highway* and the draft *Safer Bruce 2030* Action Plan.

Results of recent activities to inform the draft 15-year Vision and Action Plans for the Bruce Highway and the draft Safer Bruce 2030 Action Plan

BHTAC members were briefed on the strategic considerations in the development of the draft *15-year Vision and Action Plans for the Bruce Highway* and the *Safer Bruce 2030* Action Plan, the structure of the documents and how they align with customer research insights and BHTAC member feedback.

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Members discussed the draft Vision, and how it was developed to align with the three key objectives from the 2017 *Future-Proofing the Bruce* and 2020 *A Real Bruce Plan* policies; namely: to unlock economic growth; build flood resilience; and improve safety.

Members noted the important role of the technical analysis and insights from the customer research, together with the feedback received from BHTAC members to inform prioritization of projects for delivery and inclusion in the draft *15-year Vision and Action Plans for the Bruce Highway* and *Safer Bruce 2030 Action Plan*. Members were then provided a detailed briefing of the draft priority projects which included scheduling of these priorities across the three, five-year rolling action plans. Members noted priorities focused on delivering significant capacity and safety upgrades along the corridor.

Acknowledging the draft *Safer Bruce 2030 Action Plan* is guided by the *National Road Safety Strategy 2021-2030*, the *Queensland Road Safety Strategy 2022-2031* and the *Queensland Road Safety Action Plan 2022-2024*, BHTAC members received a presentation on the Queensland Government's broader approach to road safety across the Queensland road network and how the actions within the draft *Safer Bruce 2030 Action Plan* align with the national and state road safety frameworks, strategies and plans.

Members took part in facilitated interactive feedback sessions where they were able to share their views on the draft structure, content and priorities of the draft *15-year Bruce Highway Vision and Action Plan* and draft *Safer Bruce 2030 Action Plan*.

Key advice and suggestions provided by BHTAC members included:

- recognise road safety is everyone's responsibility and, in particular:
 - fatigue management is critical in addressing road safety, in particular rest areas for both heavy vehicle drivers and general road users
 - the complexity of improving road safety, including the need for infrastructure, education and enforcement, with further detail to be provided to BHTAC members at the next BHTAC meeting on the implementation of the actions outlined in the draft *Safer Bruce 2030 Action Plan*.
- support the delivery of identified priorities with clear design standards to ensure a consistent user experience
- ensure there is sufficient funding allocated to maintain the existing road asset through rehabilitation of pavements to improve safety, efficiency and road user experience, as well as address climate impacts
- continue to advocate for regional area investment and connectivity to trade, industry and intermodal facilities
- consider the impacts of price escalation, particularly in the current economic climate
- continue to plan for future needs and trends, such as electric vehicles, hydrogen fuels and active transport.

Overall, BHTAC members indicated their support and confidence in the process undertaken by TMR to develop the draft *15-year Vision and Action Plans for the Bruce Highway* and draft *Safer Bruce 2030 Action Plan*, including the technical inputs, customer research insights and consideration of BHTAC member feedback.

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Overview of the Bruce Highway Program in North Queensland

Members were provided an overview of the current Bruce Highway Upgrade Program in North Queensland Region, including completed and committed works, identified deficiencies and future needs.

BHTAC members participated in a tour of sections of the Bruce Highway and the surrounding road network. This tour was hosted by the TMR Regional Director, North Queensland and District Director, Far North Queensland and members valued the opportunity to view the following project sites:

- the completed Cairns Southern Access Corridor (Stage 4), Kate Street to Aumuller Street project
- Cairns Southern Access Corridor (Stage 3), Edmonton to Gordonvale project, which is under construction, and
- Cairns Southern Access Corridor (Stage 5), Foster Road intersection upgrade project, which is in the planning phase.



BHTAC members at the site for the new overpass at Maitland Road (Bruce Highway in background). This location is within the footprint of the Cairns Southern Access Corridor (Stage 3), Edmonton to Gordonvale project, currently under construction.

From Left to Right: *Back Row* – Robert Dorgelo (Regional BHTAC member), Elise Pearson (Regional BHTAC member), Tania Dennis (Regional BHTAC member), Frances Schafer (QTA), Cory Heathwood (LGAQ), Brett Fraser (QTIC). *Front row* - Brian Hughes (Regional BHTAC member), Julie Boyd (Regional BHTAC member), Peter Garske (BHTAC Chair), Anita Mumford (Regional BHTAC member).

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Bruce Highway Trust Advisory Council members and attendees at the Cairns meeting, 11 & 12 August 2022

| Member | Position | BHTAC Position | Proxy |
|--|---|----------------|--|
| Mr Peter Garske | Company Director, Queensland Transport and Logistics Council (QTLC) | Chair | |
| Ms Barbara Madden (attended virtually) | Company Director of the Smithfield Group | Deputy Chair | |
| Mr Neil Scales | Director-General, Department of Transport and Main Roads | Member | |
| Mr David Mackay | First Assistant Secretary, Infrastructure Investment Division, Federal Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and Arts (DITRDCA) | Member | Sharyn Owen (Assistant Secretary Queensland, NT and WA Branch, DITRDCA) (attended virtually) |
| Ms Jo Sheppard (apology) | Chief Executive Officer, Queensland Farmers' Federation (QFF) | Member | Not applicable |
| Mr Brett Fraser | Chief Executive Officer, Queensland Tourism Industry Council (QTIC) | Member | |
| Ms Alison Smith | Chief Executive Officer, Local Government Association of Queensland (LGAQ) | Member | Cory Heathwood (Head of Advocacy, LGAQ) |
| Mr Gary Mahon | Chief Executive Officer, Queensland Trucking Association (QTA) | Member | Frances Schafer (Membership Development Officer (NQ) (QTA) |
| TBC | Branch Secretary, Transport Workers Union (TWU) Queensland | Member | Mr Joshua Millroy, (TWU) Queensland (apology) |
| Mr David Carter | Group Chief Executive Officer, Royal Automobile Club of Queensland (RACQ) | Member | Ms MJ Bellotti (Group Executive Member and Community), RACQ |
| Ms Elise Pearson | Regional Representative | Member | |
| Ms Anita Mumford | Regional Representative | Member | |
| Ms Julie Boyd | Regional Representative | Member | |
| Mr Robert Dorgelo | Regional Representative | Member | |
| Ms Tania Dennis | Regional Representative | Member | |
| Mr Brian Hughes | Regional Representative | Member | |