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Freight and Supply Chain Inquiry
Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development
GPO Box 594
CANBERRA CITY ACT 2601

Submission to the Inquiry into National Freight Supply Chain Priorities

Central Highland Regional Council (CHRC) wish to make the following submission to the *Inquiry into National Freight Supply Chain Priorities*.

Council is an enabler for local transport opportunity development, a provider of road maintenance and construction within its 60,000 square kilometre local government area, and a collaborator with the Bowen Basin Regional Roads and Transport Group (BBRRTG), in planning and prioritising the regions transport needs and investment strategies.

Preservation of Transport Corridors – Protection of Access Corridors

Council has taken a lead in the region with regard to preservation and protection of vital Transport Rules. We have planned for the future Yamala Enterprise Area (2000 hectares), including the proposed Central Queensland Inland Port (CQIP), some 22 kilometres east of Emerald on the Capricorn Highway.

This initiative has been at Council's own cost, but is seen as necessary in order to create and protect this priority transport development, which includes a proposed intermodal freight facility that will build on existing and improve supply chain efficiency between key origins and destinations, facilitate an increased rail share of freight movement and preserve the level of service and safety on State-controlled roads in the region.

Recommendation

That a funding source be made available to local government that will provide financial assistance to assist local government in the investigation and implementation of planning formats for the preservation of transport corridors and protection of access corridors and freight precincts from encroachment which reduces efficiency and capacity of intermodal terminal assets.

Efficient Infrastructure Investment Planning

Council undertakes planning for future capital works on important transport corridors within the region. Council uses own-source revenue to commission engineering design and survey programs on critical areas of the State Government controlled road network to enable

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lobbying to the State Transport Authority for funding. The critical areas are identified by the transport industry and local community as being hindrances to efficient transport operation and safety concerns to the community, who use these transport corridors on a daily basis for education, health and social business.

The State Government controlled roads identified for planning and design works are:

- Springsure-Tambo Road - 116 km gravel formed road
- Duaranga-Bauhinia Road - 28 km gravel formed road
- Taroom-Bauhinia Road - 115 km gravel formed road

These transport routes also contain “First Mile – Last Mile” issues. The extensive gravel pavements on these three freight routes provide a network that was never built for the current freight use, which results in road safety issues. The need for trailer hitching/checking points to ensure safe loads and livestock welfare is vital, to improve the efficiency along these routes.

These extensive unsealed roads all feed into the National Key Freight Routes, in particular the Capricorn Highway and the Dawson Highway in Central Queensland.

Being unsealed, freight movements are generally restricted to less efficient B Double and Type 1 Road Trains. Sufficient investment is required to improve the pavement to a seal standard that will allow more efficient trailer configurations.

Recommendation

That a funding source be made available for State and Local Governments to have full engineering design and survey completed on freight routes that compliment/feed into the National Key Freight Routes. This would allow long term planning for road upgrades to a seal standard that would be suitable for more efficient trailer configurations to use these particular roads.

Regional Strategic Roads.

Within the Central Highlands Regional Council area are two transport routes, namely the Springsure – Tambo Road and the Duaranga – Bauhinia Road. Whilst being important for transport, these roads also are strategic through their valuable contribution to Tourism, Education (School bus routes), medical access and Community Social wellbeing.

Both roads are feeder routes to the Rockhampton beef markets, bringing cattle from the far western areas of Queensland and the southern part of Central Queensland. Trailer configurations are restricted because of the gradients on the unsealed sections of the two roads, and animal welfare issues relating to cattle being transported in the third trailer on type 2 Road-trains, because of the dust created by the prime-mover and the two leading trailers.

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As previously stated, these two roads are State-owned assets, but the relatively remote areas that they service means that they are the main arterial roads for those parts of the Council area, and in the case of the Springsure-Tambo Road, an arterial road to far western Queensland. Improvements by way of construction of sealed pavements reduces the annual maintenance cost, as regular grading and gravel resheeting is required to maintain the running surface to a standard for community traffic as well as heavy vehicle freight movements. Further, extensive Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery (NDRRA) works have been carried out on these roads over the past ten years, to restore the gravel pavements. Future savings would be achieved if the pavements were bitumen sealed, as well as the savings to the transport industry in fuel, tyres, and time.

Recommendation.

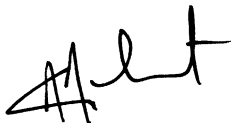
That additional funding resources be made available to State governments to enable critical arterial roads that complement the National Key Freight Routes to be improved. Capital expenditure on these roads will result in a reduction in annual maintenance costs, and costs to industry caused by the wear and tear to heavy vehicles on the gravel pavements. Indicative costs that would apply to the two particular roads mentioned are:-

- Springsure – Tambo Road - \$76,000,000
- Daringa – Bauhinia Road - \$16,500,000

These two roads are a prime example of what could be achieved by prudent capital investment.

Central Highland Regional Council appreciates the opportunity to participate in the *Inquiry into National Freight Supply Chain Priorities* and hope our submission will be given serious consideration.

Yours faithfully



Gerhard Joubert
General Manager Infrastructure and Utilities