

Think Big on Road Freight

2020 QLD ELECTION PRIORITIES



Fund Bridge Investment

Funding bridge investment in the right areas would unlock key principal freight routes and enable safer, higher productivity vehicles to use those routes – delivering up to a 46% increase in productivity in some routes. Bridges are the fuses that connect the road system; and each transport route is only as productive as the declared minimal rated bridge on that route.

For example, currently major mining, agriculture and food sector markets in the Far North, South West, South Burnett, Central Highlands, Atherton Tableland, Gladstone and Mackay Districts cannot be accessed with the safest higher productivity vehicle combinations due to bridges that need upgrades. This adds costs for both primary producers and transport companies and creates unnecessary inefficiencies.

QTA maintains that the following bridges that warrant replacement/upgrades in the next 5 years. They are among at least 12 others not on the forward investment program but should be.

Rifle, Spear and McLeod River bridges - Upgrades would open access to Cape York and the Lakeland Agricultural region, allowing three trailers from Mareeba to Lakeland. This would deliver a 46% increase in productivity along the route servicing Cape York and enable Type 2 access to the Mareeba cattle sale yards.

Bungil Creek Bridge Roma (WM Ewan Bridge) - Replacement or remediation may enable high productivity vehicles to link through to Toowoomba. This would enable Type 2 vehicle access and or AB triples through to Toowoomba, delivering a 46% productivity increase and reducing the total truck trips through the Roma urban centre and other provincial towns.

Gilbert River Bridge (between Georgetown and Croydon – Gulf Development Rd),

Norman River Bridge (between Croydon and Normanton) and **Georgetown Bridge – Etheridge River Bridge** - If work is completed on the above bridges including Routh Creek and Little River, then higher mass limits could be considered for this stretch of road, extending on from Mt Garnet to the South West. This would enable safer delivery of fuel for communities and industries in Normanton and Karumba at concessional (higher) mass limits – resulting in a 12% productivity increase.

Splinter Creek crossings (on Monto-Mt Perry Road & Monto-Kalpowar Road) – trucks now travel to Biloela, across to Gladstone instead of direct access to the coast enabling significant time and distance savings to access key destinations on the coast.

Bee Creek Peak Downs Hwy (main passageway into Mackay/Bowen basin) - there is no alternative around this bridge. Upgrades would enable productivity increases for fuel and other critical supplies for mining communities and industry, and more efficient movement of OSOM mining sector equipment.

Grosvenor Creek & Cherwell Creek – Because council states the bridge is out of warranty, every time heavy loads over the 200t gross are required, a bridge assessment is applied at the client's/industry's cost.

While some of these bridges are mentioned in the government's program, the investment is insufficient to open these corridors for safer, higher productivity vehicles.



Upgrade Bremer River Bridge

The Bremer River Bridge is holding our most potentially productive corridor - the Toowoomba Bypass - to ransom. Safer, more innovative vehicles cannot currently be fully used on this corridor, forcing 25% more costly truck trips. *Replacing this bridge must be brought forward to unlock this network to meet its productive potential.* Toowoomba's Second Range Crossing (Toowoomba Bypass) has unlocked the enormous economic potential of the corridor through to the Port of Brisbane, but it still costs exporters significantly more to move a tonne of freight from Millmerran, west of Toowoomba, to the Port of Brisbane than it does to take it from the Port of Brisbane to Shanghai. The Bremer River Bridge restrictions on the Warrego Highway prevent access to high productivity and more efficient vehicle combinations - and are a significant contributor to this cost.



Activate Inland Freight Route

There is an urgent need to establish a viable alternative to the Bruce Highway, which remains vulnerable to a raft of road safety, flooding, capacity and congestion issues. Investing in transformative road and bridge upgrades on the 'Queensland Inland Highway' (QIH) would activate northern Australia, and create investment in value-adding processing facilities, logistics hubs and employment in regional centres along the corridor. This existing inland road network which includes the Castlereagh Highway; Carnarvon Highway; Dawson Highway; Gregory Highway; Gregory Developmental Road and Flinders Highway - is closer to major economic supply chains for agricultural and horticultural production and the resources sector.

The QIH has less potential for exposure to natural disaster and also offers a 10% time advantage over the Bruce Highway from Far North Queensland to Sydney and Melbourne. Upgrades to bridges and roads to enable high productivity vehicles on the QIH would reduce the number of heavy vehicles on the Bruce and reduce road accident exposure. The inland route also takes advantage of the heavy investment in the Toowoomba Bypass.



Build a 'Truck-Way' from Acacia Ridge-Port of Brisbane

The construction of a dedicated freight rail corridor between Port of Brisbane and the proposed Inland Rail Project at Acacia Ridge would reduce road traffic and alleviate congestion. *In addition, the creation of a complementary dedicated Truck-Way to the port would supplement rail freight, which is unlikely to be able to meet the full freight demand forecast by 2050.* A Truck-Way is a dedicated environment for specialised vehicles that use automation, electric power, hydrogen and other alternatives. It would offer a reduced emissions footprint, substantially quieter operations and significant flexibility, as well as creating a safer, more efficient, and productive freight route.



Reduce Disincentive of Toll Road Use

Incentivise the use of toll roads by heavy vehicles by introducing off-peak toll prices and multiple-use discounts. While road freight is a key user of south east Queensland toll roads, including the new Toowoomba Bypass, many toll prices are deemed too high despite the time savings. This unnecessarily cascades road freight traffic, contributing to congestion on non-toll roads and lost productivity for our economy.

Analysis by Australian Economic Advocacy Solutions (AEAS) shows that toll prices profoundly influence road freight vehicle usage of toll roads. Roads with a lower toll price attract a comparatively higher average daily heavy vehicle usage (e.g. Logan Motorway @ \$38c per km attracts 50,000 large vehicle movements daily), over those with higher tolls. AEAS analysis shows that for a 25% reduction in toll fee, a 34% increase in daily heavy vehicle traffic be required to deliver a net neutral proposition for the toll operator. However the QTA contests that considered toll reduction or multiple use discounts would deliver the required increased road freight movements and more, therefore also delivering an economic benefit to toll operators.

The QTA believes the next State Government should negotiate with toll operators to reach agreement on reduced toll prices for some roads so that use of those roads is more commercially viable for road freight operators. In addition, the next Queensland Government should encourage the toll operator to consider establishment and/or extension of peak and off-peak toll prices, multiple use discounts and reconsideration of heavy vehicle classes to better align toll prices with vehicle operating costs.

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Fund Heavy Vehicle Wash Down Facilities

Invest in a series of strategically located truck washes that enable disposal and recycling of effluent from heavy vehicles. This environmentally responsible move would help preserve regional biosecurity. Properly-constructed facilities that recycle the water through local sewerage systems would alleviate problems some local councils face in managing effluent.

Combining these with driver amenities would enhance hygiene in the COVID-19 environment and support driver rest needs. Locations: **Toowoomba** (Charlton); **Roma** upgrade to include another lane; **Charters Towers** upgrade to include another lane (frequently when washing down for live export); there are currently no wash facilities in the Gulf, with **Croydon** or **Normanton** recommended.

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