

Bruce Highway Trust Advisory Council

Communique Meeting #2



On 26 November 2020, the second Bruce Highway Trust Advisory Council (BHTAC) meeting was held in Brisbane at the Department of Transport and Main Roads, 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.

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 rolling five-year Action Plans, in order to inform future Federal and State Budget deliberations.

Members discussed the Palaszczuk Government's 2020 State Election commitments for the Bruce Highway outlined in its *A Real Bruce Plan* policy document, which included the BHTAC preparing the Safer Bruce 2030 Action Plan to achieve a vision of a 60 per cent reduction in the rate of fatalities over the next 10 years. Members also discussed the need to carefully consider priorities relating to increasing flood resilience and unlocking economic growth, taking into consideration expert advice from the BHTAC-Technical Working Group and through better understanding customer needs.

Council members noted the Queensland Government's commitment to expand membership of the existing BHTAC to include users, road safety and regional development experts from along the Bruce Highway, north of Gympie. The selection and appointment of additional BHTAC members will proceed through appropriate governance arrangements.

Key issues raised by members at this meeting included:

- the need to consider the aspirational flood targets in the *Real Bruce Plan* in the context of developing the Inland Freight Route (NSW border to Charters Towers) to provide improved connectivity during major flooding events
- supporting upgrades to the Inland Freight Route which would attract higher productivity heavy vehicles and, improve safety on the Bruce Highway, noting the extent of Wide Centre Line Treatment implemented to date is well-regarded by the heavy vehicle industry
- the need to focus on fatal and serious injury accidents for safety metrics
- the need for the BHTAC-Technical Working Group to monitor traffic demand trends and forecasts as a result of shifts in patterns for work-from-home, online shopping, retail freight and drive-tourism as the economy recovers over the next few years.

Members noted the commitments outlined in *A Real Bruce Plan* will require the Technical Working Group to rescope some previously planned project activities allowing for additional work to be incorporated into the schedule.




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In addition to receiving an update on delivery progress and achievements of the jointly-funded \$12.6 billion Bruce Highway Upgrade Program (2013–14 to 2027–28), members reviewed and discussed several key technical research inputs to the development of a 15-year Vision for the Bruce Highway, including:

- results from the Bruce Highway Baseline Condition and Performance Audit Report, which provides an historical baseline of condition and performance trends covering the period from inception of the 2012 Bruce Highway Action Plan to the latest available data, and
- preliminary information from the Bruce Highway Economic Outlook and Modelling technical activity which is exploring the multi-modal, long-term corridor profile (Brisbane to Cairns) and economic and demographic drivers of demand.

BHTAC members gained a greater understanding of the current baseline condition of the Bruce Highway, and welcomed a detailed briefing on the positive impact that investments in highway improvements from north to south are having on overall safety, flood resilience and productivity. Since 30 June 2012, performance improvement highlights resulting from the significant joint-investment by Australian and Queensland Governments include:

	Key Asset Improvements	Performance Outcomes
 <p>Road Safety</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ 114.3km of safety widening for Wide Centre Line Treatment (WCLT) ➢ 802km of WCLT ➢ 80.1km of safety barriers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Reduction in the number of Run-Off-Road crash types, with reductions of 46% fatalities and 26% serious injuries through to 2018.
 <p>Reliability</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + 99.5km of additional lane length in sections of dual carriageway (covering 53.7km of the Bruce Highway) + 41 signalised intersections + 84 overtaking lanes + 13kms managed motorways 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Improved road productivity ✓ Significant reduction in the proportion of road where vehicles travel at less than 20% of the posted speed
 <p>Accessibility</p>	<p>Cooroy to Curra Upgrade; Yeppen Floodplain Upgrade (Gympie – Rockhampton); Yellow Gin Creek Bridge and Sandy Gully Bridge Upgrades (Mackay – Townsville)</p> <p>↑ Increased flood monitoring infrastructure, information signage and communication.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Improved accessibility through reduced annual average time of submergence during major flooding events

This critical information will guide future technical work to assess the gap between desired future standards and the types of infrastructure treatments that are having the greatest safety, flood resilience and economic growth impacts across regions and for businesses and road users generally. Members reinforced the importance of adequate and safe overtaking opportunities, well-designed and located rest areas, continuing the rollout of successful safety treatments and clear information, signage and communication of changes in driving conditions for all road users.

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Council members were also updated on the customer research activities completed to date, including more detailed insight gathered from BHTAC members through their knowledge of the Bruce Highway service attributes that are important to the end user customers they represent across the state. This valuable advice is being used to inform current technical work. It will also inform the design of additional customer research and stakeholder engagement activities to ensure regional and local perspectives and priorities are well-understood. Members requested the opportunity to review the survey questions to ensure they capture key information for the BHTAC.

Members also requested, and will be provided with, a summary of 2020 State Budget outcomes, together with ongoing reports on expenditure status against the Bruce Highway Upgrade Program budget.

Bruce Highway Trust Advisory Council members and attendees at the Brisbane meeting, Department Transport and Main Roads Conference Centre – 26 November 2020

Member	Position	BHTAC Position	Proxy
Mr Peter Garske	Company Director, Queensland Transport and Logistics Council (QTLIC)	Chair	
Ms Barbara Madden	Company Director of the Smithfield Group	Deputy Chair	
Mr Neil Scales	Director-General, Department of Transport and Main Roads	Member	
Mr Simon Atkinson (Apology)	Secretary, Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications	Member	Ms Shona Rosengren, Assistant Secretary, North-West Infrastructure, DITRDC
Mr Peter Biagini	Branch Secretary, Transport Workers Union Queensland	Member	
Dr Georgina Davis (Apology)	Chief Executive Officer, Queensland Farmers' Federation	Member	
Mr Daniel Gschwind	Chief Executive Officer, Queensland Tourism Industry Council	Member	
Mr Greg Hallam (Apology)	Chief Executive Officer, Local Government Association of Queensland	Member	Mr Robert Chow, Lead-Transport and Logistics (LGAQ)
Mr Gary Mahon	Chief Executive Officer, Queensland Trucking Association	Member	
Mr Paul Turner	Chief Communication Officer, Royal Automobile Club of Queensland	Member	