

24 June 2020

Keep it Coming - Western Queensland COVID-19 recovery receives roads funding boost

Members of the Western Queensland Alliance of Councils have welcomed funding from the Australian and Queensland governments which will see up to \$200 million in funding invested in vital roads projects across the region.

The announcement this week means that works on key inland corridors can get underway now and over the next six months, providing an immediate boost to our regional economies, business, industry and local jobs.

The funding ticks off many of the priority road projects across the region, improving safety conditions for all road users and providing better heavy vehicle access to key cattle, mining and agriculture industry infrastructure. Importantly, our tourism sector will benefit from more sealed roads as Queenslanders are encouraged to 'go bush' as part of COVID-19 recovery initiatives. A safe and seamless road network that connects our communities is absolutely critical to growing the tourism industry in Western Queensland.

Jointly funded regional roads projects for the West include:

- Burke Development Road: progressive sealing
- Cloncurry – Dajarra Road: sealing and widening sections
- Gregory Developmental Road (Charters Towers – The Lynd): widening priority sections
- Richmond – Winton Road: widening priority sections
- A regional package of works will deliver targeted upgrades such as progressive sealing, pavement strengthening and widening and bridge and floodway upgrades to roads including:
 - Gregory Downs – Camooweal Road
 - Eyre Developmental Road (Bedourie – Birdsville)
 - Cramsie – Muttaborra Road
 - Balonne Highway (Bollon – Cunnamulla)
 - Mitchell Highway (Cunnamulla – Charleville)

Our roads network has a far-reaching impact well beyond this region. They are the economic arteries that connect our communities and provide critical links to the coast and ports, driving economies across the nation.

Mayor Jack Bawden, Chair of the North West Queensland Regional Organisation of Councils said:

“The Western Queensland Alliance of Councils has consistently advocated that investment in roads is the one thing that was needed most across our region. It is good to see that the Australian and Queensland governments have been listening. The Regional Economic Enabling Fund is a very welcome start that will deliver much needed sealing of roads, pavement strengthening and widening and floodway upgrades. Importantly, it will also provide the opportunity for our local workforces to deliver many of the works. In short, keep it coming!”

Mayor Tony Rayner, Chair of the Remote Area Planning and Development Board said:

“The combined region of Western Queensland pumps billions into the economy, and the 21 councils of this region are ready to make sure that continues. Throughout the pandemic we have been working with all levels of government and our communities to ensure we can focus our efforts and investment where it is needed most. This funding adds extra fuel to the tank as we continue on the road to recovery”.

Mayor Samantha O’Toole, Chair of the South West Local Government Association said:

“This investment is welcome news as we get back to business. The funding will have a long-term effect, benefiting our local economies, industry and our local council workforce. These roads are essential links across all three regions. Works will not only boost efficiency for industry, but also ensure safe, reliable roads for locals and the many tourists we hope to see head our way now and into the future.”

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