

# Transport and Resources Committee - Public works inquiry into the state controlled roads from Birdsville to Bedourie and Birdsville to Windorah Inquiry 2023

## DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT AND MAIN ROADS

### Response to public submissions – September 2023

Submission	Summary of Issue/s Raised	Department of Transport and Main Roads (TMR) Response
<p>No. 1 Boulia Shire Council</p>	<p>Comment in relation to part (a) of the terms of reference – the stated purpose of the works and the apparent suitability of works for the purpose:</p> <p>Any road works completed with the intent on improving the trafficability of the existing road network in remote rural areas becomes a lifeline for not only the local residents but tourism, the agricultural sector along with the developing mining industry and freight traffic.</p>	<p>TMR's Central West District is the largest in Queensland, covering a vast area almost the size of Victoria. It stretches from east of Alpha to the Northern Territory border in the west, with the southern boundary extending south of Windorah to Birdsville, near the South Australian Border and stretching north to just south of Mount Isa.</p> <p>This expansive district includes seven of Queensland's most remote local government areas: Barcaldine Regional Council, Barcoo Shire Council, Boulia Shire Council, Blackall-Tambo Regional Council, Diamantina Shire Council, Longreach Regional Council and Winton Shire Council. It is home to iconic tourism attractions and events and is a major contributor to Queensland's mining and agriculture industries.</p> <p>The district is made up of 4378 kilometres of state-controlled roads and during the past decade, TMR has delivered a program focused primarily on progressively sealing unsealed sections of dirt roads. Currently, only around 800 kilometres of unsealed road remains across this vast area. During this time, TMR has also delivered other works to improve the trafficability of the network, including widening narrow-sealed roads, improving flood immunity and replacing aged bridges.</p> <p>TMR understands the importance of the state-controlled road network and its vital contribution to the liveability of remote communities, and acknowledges the upgrades delivered have provided numerous communities with the safe, efficient and reliable transport network they deserve, improving access to essential services like health and education, vital goods and services, and employment opportunities. TMR recognises that improving the road network also supports the long-term growth of industries, including agriculture and freight by strengthening supply chains, reducing travel times and decreasing costs to operators.</p>

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	<p>Comment in relation to part (b) of the terms of reference – the necessity for, and the advisability of, the works:</p> <p>This road network is vital to the connectivity for many remote residents as well as providing a sustainable link from the eastern seaboard for both tourists who support the many small businesses in towns to the north and south of the shire.</p> <p>The development and construction of the road network also provides immediate monetary support for the communities in the district both for council employees and local contractors.</p> <p>In remote locations such as these the interconnected relationships between the local economy and road infrastructure is vital and cannot be underestimated.</p>	<p>TMR acknowledges the tourism sector in Outback Queensland is vital to the State's economy and appreciates the importance of the state-controlled road network in providing the enabling infrastructure needed to support and grow various industries, including tourism.</p> <p>In addition to improving roads near Birdsville as outlined in TMR's submission, works have also been delivered to upgrade and strengthen various sections of the National Highway network, including the Landsborough Highway and Capricorn Highway, to assist in safely and efficiently moving people from the east coast to far western Queensland, benefiting all road users and supporting local enterprise.</p> <p>Importantly, these investments support local jobs, with local councils remaining a key delivery partner for TMR's Central West District.</p>
No. 2 Michael Allpass	<p>The gravel road sections from both Windorah and Bedourie should be completely sealed with bitumen, wide enough to allow safe passing of passenger vehicles and road trains alike.</p>	<p>TMR acknowledges that Birdsville is the only township in the Central West District that does not have fully sealed access.</p> <p>TMR works closely with the Outback Regional Roads and Transport Group (ORRTG), comprising of representatives from seven local councils to undertake strategic planning, determine the priority of roads and allocate relevant funding to projects in the area.</p> <p>In-line with priorities identified by the ORRTG, a program of sealing works has recently been delivered on the 185-kilometre-long Eyre Developmental Road (Bedourie – Birdsville).</p> <p>This road was assessed as the priority link to Birdsville given it has the least amount of unsealed road remaining and could therefore provide fully sealed access more quickly and efficiently than alternative routes.</p> <p>Since 2019, more than 36 kilometres of the road has been progressively sealed through five separate projects totalling an investment of \$23 million. There is currently 15.7 kilometres of unsealed road remaining between Bedourie and Birdsville.</p> <p>Works have also been delivered to improve the Birdsville Developmental Road (Morney – Birdsville) which provides access between Birdsville and Windorah. During the past five years, \$9.24 million in sealing has been delivered on this</p>

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		<p>265-kilometre-long road, further reducing the length of unsealed sections to 196.7 kilometres.</p> <p>The Eyre Developmental Road (Bedourie – Birdsville) and Birdsville Developmental Road (Morney – Birdsville) now represent the two highest ranked unsealed road priorities in TMR's Central Queensland Region.</p> <p>In consideration of their priority status, TMR's long-term strategy is to secure funding, through various state and federal government programs, to strengthen connectivity, communities and industry.</p>
<p>No. 3 Diamantina Shire Council</p>	<p>Comment in relation to part (a) of the terms of reference – the stated purpose of the works and the apparent suitability of works for the purpose:</p> <p>As a large portion of the roads are unsealed gravel roads, the majority of work undertaken is maintenance activities as required by the Department of Transport and Main Roads (DTMR). Due to the large increase in traffic volumes throughout the tourist season, these gravel sections are significantly damaged on a regular basis resulting in increased maintenance requirements between major community events such as the Big Red Bash and Birdsville Races. The largely unsealed road between Birdsville and Windorah is not fit for purpose for the large numbers of tourism and freight traffic that this road is required to support.</p> <p>This gravel road is susceptible to wet weather and as of the date of this letter, the Birdsville - Windorah Road has been open with no restrictions for only 61% of the calendar year so far.</p> <p>Over the last decade, a significant amount of pave and seal works on the Bedourie - Birdville road has seen this link nearly completely sealed (16km remaining). When this link is sealed it could be considered fit for purpose. This will provide a sealed link to Birdsville for the first time and will enable continued growth in tourism and improved resilience to rainfall events and flooding.</p> <p>This road is also susceptible to wet weather and as of the date of this letter, the Bedourie - Birdsville Road has been</p>	<p>Routine maintenance works on the state-controlled road network are carried out under Road Maintenance Performance Contracts (RMPC) delivered primarily through sole invitee arrangements to local governments and RoadTek.</p> <p>Maintenance funding is provided to ensure the complete length of the network is maintained. In the past five years, a total of \$17.9 million in RMPC funding has been provided to Diamantina Shire Council (\$17.2 million) and Barcoo Shire Council (\$0.7 million), specifically for the Eyre Developmental Road (Bedourie – Birdsville), Diamantina Developmental Road (Windorah – Bedourie), and Birdsville Developmental Road (Morney – Birdsville).</p> <p>As part of the RMPC process, prior to the commencement of each sole invitation contract period, a Schedule of Routine Maintenance Work is agreed upon. TMR recognises that local governments are the closest level of government to the community and appreciates its input and expert guidance as the appointed network manager in confirming the recommended works schedule.</p> <p>Typically, unsealed roads require gravel re-sheeting, utilising best local material on a cyclic basis to ensure the road network is maintained in a safe condition. The road type can be impacted by wet weather and high traffic volumes causing rutting, scouring and softening of the road surface. TMR recognises its RMPC providers deliver maintenance works within the Routine Maintenance Guidelines and take action to maintain a safe environment for all motorists in line with prescribed intervention levels and response times.</p> <p>TMR acknowledges the challenges presented to the road network in and around Birdsville as a result of the continued success of popular annual events from July to September including the Big Red Bash and Birdsville Races.</p>

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	<p>open with no restrictions for only 10% of the calendar year so far.</p> <p>The poor reliability of both of these links has massive implications for tourism/ freight/ productivity and accessibility to health services.</p>	<p>TMR is committed to providing fully-sealed road access to Birdsville in the shortest amount of time possible and to achieve this, has delivered a program of sealing works on the Eyre Developmental Road (Bedourie – Birdsville).</p> <p>In line with priorities identified by the ORRTG, this road was assessed as the priority link to Birdsville given it has the least amount of unsealed road remaining and could therefore provide fully sealed access more efficiently than alternative routes.</p> <p>As a result, more than 36 kilometres of the road has been progressively sealed since 2019 through five separate projects totalling an investment of \$23 million. There is currently only 15.7 kilometres of unsealed road remaining between Bedourie and Birdsville.</p> <p>The Birdsville Developmental Road (Morney – Birdsville) also provides access to Birdsville, with an average of 42 vehicles a day travelling on this road (Traffic Analysis and Reporting System 2022). Although the road is largely unsealed with alternative routes to Birdsville available, it experiences a significant increase in traffic associated with key local events. The traffic increase can be as much as 200 per cent above the average annual daily traffic figure.</p> <p>TMR acknowledges the impact this seasonal but significant spike in traffic has on the Birdsville Developmental Road (Morney – Birdville). During the past five years, \$9.24 million in sealing has been delivered on this 265-kilometre-long road, further reducing the length of unsealed sections to 196.7 kilometres.</p> <p>In addition to impacts from drive-tourism, TMR notes that the road network surrounding Birdsville has been heavily impacted by extreme monsoonal rainfall and flooding from late 2022 and early 2023. Twenty-six councils across Queensland have received funding support through the jointly funded Commonwealth-State Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements to restore essential public assets such as roads and bridges. TMR can confirm that all emergency works on the road network near Birdsville have been completed by the respective local governments. Work is now underway to assess the need for restoration works as a result of these weather events.</p> <p>It is noted there are technical and cost complexities involved with upgrading the state-controlled road network near Birdsville given the significant river catchments in the surrounding landscape which form part of the extensive Lake Eyre Basin. The Lake Eyre Basin covers about 1.2 million square kilometres, or almost one-sixth of Australia, and is among the world's largest internally draining river systems.</p>

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		<p>Despite this, as the Eyre Developmental Road (Bedourie – Birdsville) and Birdsville Developmental Road (Morney – Birdsville) now represent the two highest ranked unsealed road priorities in TMR's Central Queensland Region. In consideration of their priority status, TMR's long-term strategy is to secure funding, through various state and federal government programs, to strengthen connectivity, communities and industry.</p> <p>TMR also recognises that improving the road network will deliver flow-on benefits to improve the liveability of surrounding communities, enhancing the safe and reliable access to essential services like health and education, vital goods and services, and employment opportunities while supporting the long-term growth of industries including tourism, agriculture and freight.</p>
	<p>Comment in relation to part (b) of the terms of reference – the necessity for, and the advisability of, the works:</p> <p>The upgrade works completed to date on the Bedourie - Birdsville link has made a significant improvement to the link and meet the requirements of not only Diamantina Shire Council but also the Outback Regional Roads and Transport Group (ORRTG). The ORRTG consists of 7 Local Governments in the region, including DTMR and has collectively Categorized the Eyre Developmental Road as an Investment Priority 1 road due to the significance of the link. The works are still not complete and additional funding is required to completely seal Bedourie - Birdsville.</p> <p>In reference to the Birdsville - Windorah Road, very little upgrade work has been done on this road. The last pave and seal project on this link was in 2018, when 1km was sealed on the outskirts of Birdsville. The capital investment in this road, excluding maintenance, has been negligible for many years. Significant funding is required to pave and seal this link to provide a more resilient link that is fit for purpose. The ORRTG has categorized this road as an Investment Priority 2 road for the region.</p>	<p>TMR works closely with the ORRTG, comprising of representatives from seven local councils to undertake strategic planning, determine the priority of roads and allocate relevant funding to projects in the area.</p> <p>In-line with priorities identified by the ORRTG, a program of sealing works has been delivered on the 185-kilometre-long Eyre Developmental Road (Bedourie – Birdsville). Since 2019, more than 36 kilometres of the road has been progressively sealed through five separate projects totalling an investment of \$23 million. There is currently only 15.7 kilometres of unsealed road remaining between Bedourie and Birdsville.</p> <p>This road was assessed as the priority link to Birdsville given it has the least amount of unsealed road remaining and could therefore provide fully sealed access more quickly and efficiently than alternative routes.</p> <p>However, works have also been delivered to improve the Birdsville Developmental Road (Morney – Birdsville) which provides access between Birdsville and Windorah. During the past five years, \$9.24 million in sealing has been delivered on this 265-kilometre-long road, further reducing the length of unsealed sections to 196.7 kilometres.</p> <p>This work includes two projects, totalling \$8.25 million and completed in 2022 and 2023 respectively by Barcoo Shire Council, with almost 13 kilometres of the road sealed. Prior to this work, Diamantina Shire Council completed a \$990,000 project in 2018 to seal a 1.18 kilometre section of the road in their district.</p> <p>The Eyre Developmental Road (Bedourie – Birdsville) and Birdsville Developmental Road (Morney – Birdsville) now represent the two highest ranked unsealed road priorities in TMR's Central Queensland Region. In consideration of their priority</p>

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	<p>Comment in relation to part (c) of the terms of reference – value for money achieved, or likely to be achieved, by the works.</p> <p>Diamantina Shire Council achieve remarkable value for money and cost-effectiveness when performing contract maintenance or construction works for DTMR. By utilising internal plant and labour and local contractors where required, large mobilization costs of contractors based in eastern areas are avoided.</p> <p>Council also has arrangements in place (such as Council owned gravel pits and water points) to access and utilize water and gravel resources at convenient locations along the road, which greatly reduces material supply costs by minimizing haulage distances.</p>	<p>status, TMR's long-term strategy is to secure funding, through various state and federal government programs, to strengthen connectivity, communities and industry.</p> <p>TMR recognises that local governments are a key delivery partner to improving the state-controlled road network within the Central West District.</p> <p>TMR acknowledges Diamantina Shire Council's role in improving the connecting road network to Birdsville, and has delivered quality outcomes completed to TMR's expectations.</p>
	<p>Comment in relation to part (d) of the terms of reference – revenue produced by, and recurrent costs of, the works or estimates of revenue and costs for the works.</p> <p>The Big Red Bash and Birdsville Races generate several million dollars of revenue every year. Once road upgrade works are complete, the revenue from tourism is projected to increase dramatically. Savings from the reduction in travel time and vehicle operation for road users are several million dollars per year.</p>	<p>TMR acknowledges the tourism sector in Outback Queensland is vital to Queensland's economy and appreciates the importance of the state-controlled road network in providing the enabling infrastructure needed to support and grow various industries, including tourism.</p> <p>TMR will continue to monitor the state-controlled road network to ensure a safe environment for all road users and undertake improvements and upgrades in-line with available funding.</p>
	<p>Comment in relation to part (e) of the terms of reference – the present and prospective public value of the works, including, for example, consideration of the impact of the works on their community, economy and environment.</p> <p><i>Economics:</i> Tourism and livestock are the primary industries that support the economic growth in the Central West Region. The two major annual events - Big Red Bash and Birdsville races alone brought over 18,500 visitors to the Shire in 2019. The</p>	<p>TMR acknowledges the tourism sector in Outback Queensland is vital to Queensland's economy and appreciates the importance of the state-controlled road network in providing the enabling infrastructure needed to support and grow various industries, including tourism.</p> <p>Similarly, TMR also appreciates the contribution made by the Central West District to Queensland's agriculture industry with the area delivering around 30 per cent of Queensland's gross output for products such as livestock (<i>Source: 2021 Annual Report – Remote Area Planning and Development Board</i>).</p>

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	<p>majority of the tourists (83%) travelled by private vehicle, and as the road network becomes accessible to more types of vehicles through the construction of sealed roads these numbers are projected to increase. Stations within Diamantina Shire are famous for contaminant-free natural beef. However, the lengthy travel time and high freight costs due to the unsealed road network result in limited market access. In addition, the Eyre Developmental Road is a popular route for cattle from Mt Isa to cities in Southeast Queensland. Improving road conditions will allow for livestock to be transported efficiently and safely to the wider Australian market.</p> <p><i>Liveability:</i> Completion of the upgrade works on these roads will have the following benefits for residents in the communities:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Basic access to goods and services will be provided to towns efficiently.</li> <li>Provide access to social, recreational and sports services and infrastructure such as swimming pools and libraries.</li> <li>Provide consistent and reliable transportation to boarding schools for children's education (Bedourie &amp; Birdsville only have primary school from Prep up to year 6).</li> <li>Provide access to non-emergent/specialist, medical services in Mt Isa or Longreach</li> <li>Improve community cohesion between neighbouring towns</li> <li>Travellers have the option to use roads for transportation to avoid costly air travel expenses.</li> </ol> <p><i>Travel Safety:</i> Vehicles travelling on unsealed roads are more susceptible to damage due to the flying rocks and uneven running surface, resulting in chipped/ cracked windscreens and damaged chassis/ suspension and tyres. Also, increased traffic volumes create large amounts of dust, which reduces visibility, this becomes a major factor in the tourist season and presents a high risk of incidents, especially for those travellers not experienced in driving on gravel roads.</p>	<p>TMR is committed to providing fully sealed road access to Birdsville in the shortest amount of time possible and to achieve this, has delivered a program of sealing works on the Eyre Developmental Road (Bedourie – Birdsville).</p> <p>In line with priorities identified by the ORRTG, this road was assessed as the priority link to Birdsville given it has the least amount of unsealed road remaining and could therefore provide fully sealed access more quickly and efficiently than alternative routes.</p> <p>As a result, more than 36 kilometres of the road has been progressively sealed since 2019 through five separate projects totalling an investment of \$23 million. There is currently only 15.7 kilometres of unsealed road remaining between Bedourie and Birdsville.</p> <p>TMR recognises that improving the road network will deliver flow-on benefits to improve the liveability of surrounding communities, enhancing the safe and reliable access to essential services like health and education, vital goods and services, and employment opportunities.</p> <p>TMR has a compensation claim process in place should a person's vehicle or property be damaged by the condition of infrastructure or works managed by the department.</p> <p>Information about this compensation claim process is publicly available on TMR's website at <a href="https://www.qld.gov.au/transport/conditions/report/claim">https://www.qld.gov.au/transport/conditions/report/claim</a>.</p> <p>TMR takes all damage complaints seriously and investigates each matter as promptly as possible.</p> <p>TMR can confirm that it has not received any damage claims relevant to the Eyre Developmental Road (Bedourie – Birdsville), Birdsville Developmental Road (Morney – Birdsville) or Diamantina Developmental Road (Windorah – Bedourie) during the past five years.</p> <p>Qld <i>Traffic</i> is the trusted official source of traffic and travel information from the Queensland Government. Qld <i>Traffic</i> includes a website (<a href="http://www.qldtraffic.qld.gov.au">www.qldtraffic.qld.gov.au</a>) and the 13 19 40 phone service which provides statewide information on road conditions, including incidents and hazards, closures and restrictions, roadworks and special events. Motorists can check traffic conditions and plan their journey before departure.</p>

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	<p>Unfortunately, yet again this year Council has become aware of another family on their way to the Big Red Bash involved in a vehicle incident caused by low visibility due to dust.</p> <p>During flood seasons or isolated rain events, vehicles can get bogged on wet or slippery sections if unprepared, also being cut off due to flood waters is a significant risk when travelling.</p>	<p>The Qld <i>Traffic</i> website also includes driving tips for Outback road conditions and TMR encourages motorists to review this information prior to visiting Outback Queensland.</p> <p>In all situations, motorists are encouraged to drive to the prevailing conditions of the road they are travelling on. That includes slowing down when the road is wet and potentially slippery, as well as when there is reduced visibility from rainfall or dust as a result of either vehicles ahead or oncoming vehicles on unsealed roads.</p>
	<p>Comment in relation to part (f) of the terms of reference – procurement methods for the works.</p> <p>Works undertaken on these roads are procured by DTMR through sole invitee tender arrangements with Diamantina Shire, as Council has the required local knowledge and workforce to undertake the works within a timely manner while maintaining the quality required given the remote location and limited resources within the region.</p> <p>Diamantina Shire typically undertakes work with their own workforce supplemented with local contractors from the region. Any specialist works that Council is unable to undertake in-house, like bitumen surfacing or larger concrete structures, are released to open tender and awarded in accordance with Council's procurement policies and the Local Government Act.</p>	<p>TMR recognises that local governments are a key delivery partner to improving the state-controlled road network within the Central West District.</p> <p>TMR acknowledges Diamantina Shire Council's role in improving the connecting road network to Birdsville, and has delivered quality outcomes completed to TMR's expectations.</p>
	<p>Comment in relation to part (g) of the terms of reference – the balance of public and private sector involvement in the works.</p> <p>As mentioned above in (f), both the public and private sectors are involved in these projects at varying levels.</p>	<p>TMR recognises that local governments are a key delivery partner to improving the state-controlled road network within the Central West District.</p> <p>TMR acknowledges Diamantina Shire Council's role in improving the connecting road network to Birdsville, and has delivered quality outcomes completed to TMR's expectations.</p> <p>TMR also acknowledges that as the Principal Contractor for relevant projects, Diamantina Shire Council has demonstrated a strong focus on supporting the communities in which it operates by engaging locally-based suppliers and owner operators wherever possible. This approach is consistent with the Queensland Government's 'Local Industry Policy' and ensures mutually beneficial outcomes across sectors.</p>

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	<p>Comment in relation to part (h) of the terms of reference – the performance of-</p> <p>(i) the constructing authority for the works-</p> <p>Diamantina Shire contracts DTMR who is the road authority, to undertake these works. DTMR and Council work collaboratively to assess priorities and the scope of works based on the available budget. Materials used in the construction are sourced from the local gravel pits and water points and are of the best quality available. Quality is maintained by using local knowledge in the use of these types of materials that are only gained by years of experience in the Central West Region; and</p> <p>(ii) the consultants and contractors for the works; with particular regard to the time taken for finishing the works and the cost and quality of the works-</p> <p>During the pave and seal upgrade projects undertaken from 2019 - 2022, a total of 45km of new bitumen road was constructed and delivered for \$ 15.4 million. This equates to \$342,000 per km of pave and seal road construction which is exceptional value for money and a result of the efficiencies achieved by Council.</p> <p>Between 2019 - 2022 all five projects were delivered, which is a significant achievement for Council, given the overall size of the available workforce. An additional challenge encountered was that the projects had to be planned around flood seasons (late November - early April). During the four years, these projects were under construction, at least four major flood events occurred, which resulted in either delays to the commencement of projects or delays caused by these sites being inaccessible. Council managed and coordinated a range of resources, including internal staff and local contractors and consultants, to ensure the works were completed within time/ quality and budget constraints.</p>	<p>TMR recognises that local governments are a key delivery partner to improving the state-controlled road network within the Central West District.</p> <p>Given local governments, including Diamantina Shire Council, represent the closest level of government to the community, TMR appreciates its input and expert guidance as the appointed network manager and road steward in assessing road priorities and confirming the scope of works as part of its works program.</p> <p>TMR acknowledges Diamantina Shire Council's role in improving the connecting road network to Birdsville, and has delivered quality outcomes completed to TMR's expectations.</p>

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	<p>Comment in relation to part (i) of the terms of reference – the actual suitability of the works in meeting the needs and in achieving the stated purpose of the works.</p> <p>As all projects have been constructed to the standard required by DTMR the net result is an increase in the overall condition and resiliency of the network. The works that have been constructed are fit for purpose, however, more funding is required to complete the sealing of both links.</p>	<p>TMR acknowledges Diamantina Shire Council's role in improving the connecting road network to Birdsville, and has delivered quality outcomes completed to TMR's expectations.</p> <p>TMR will continue to monitor the state-controlled road network to ensure a safe environment for all road users and undertake improvements and upgrades in-line with available funding.</p>
No. 5 OBE Organic	We recommend the Queensland Government improve the trafficability of the existing road network through investments in bitumen, including appropriate overtaking lanes and causeways to ensure we can use our roads 24/7.	<p>In the past five years, TMR has invested more than \$32 million in sealing additional sections of key state-controlled roads near Birdsville including the Eyre Developmental Road (Bedourie – Birdsville) and Birdsville Developmental Road (Morney – Birdsville).</p> <p>The Eyre Developmental Road (Bedourie – Birdsville) and Birdsville Developmental Road (Morney – Birdsville) now represent the two highest ranked unsealed road priorities in TMR's Central Queensland Region.</p> <p>In consideration of their priority status, TMR's long-term strategy is to secure funding, through various state and federal government programs, to strengthen connectivity, communities and industry.</p> <p>Future upgrading of these roads will continue widening the road formation to improve road sharing between all vehicle types and provide overtaking opportunities.</p> <p>More broadly, it is noted that TMR has developed a strategy to improve overtaking opportunities on targeted sections of the road network within the Central West. This approach aims to provide overtaking opportunities every 20-25 kilometres for a minimum length of two kilometres on reduced-width segments of a road and will improve the travelling time and reduce driver frustration when sharing the road with Type 2 road trains and oversize and over mass vehicles.</p> <p>In relation to raising causeways on these sections of the state-controlled road network, TMR notes that sealing these roads will ultimately transition to requirements for improvements in the average annual time of closure for the road network. An improved overall road standard will be achieved when decreases in the average annual time of closure is achieved for all segments on the road network. This maturing of the network reflects initially the use of floodways and</p>

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	Additional, significant and timely investment in road maintenance (on roads which are currently unsealed) immediately after major events like the Big Red Bash and the Birdsville Races, should be an immediate priority.	<p>small culverts to upgraded channel crossings and larger culverts or bridges to manage standing water and average rain events.</p> <p>The routine maintenance service providers on roads supporting access to these events have indicated to TMR that they strategically prioritise their allocated RMPC funding with grading parts of the unsealed network prior to and following tourism events.</p> <p>TMR notes that the outcome of this work can at times be impacted by various factors including inclement weather, access to water and availability of suitable materials.</p>
	Regard should be given to communications for stakeholders using the Windorah – Birdsville Road & Birdsville – Bedourie Road.	<p>TMR is aware that large parts of the Central West District remain without mobile phone coverage and developed an initiative to help improve connectivity while reducing driver fatigue and improving road safety.</p> <p>In 2022, TMR arranged for the installation of six Telstra 4GX small cell units at the following locations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Birdsville Developmental Road at Rainbow Serpent Rest Area near Betoota between Morney and Birdsville</li> <li>• Eyre Developmental Road at Cacoory Bore Rest Area between Birdsville and Bedourie</li> <li>• Diamantina Developmental Road near the Tropic of Capricorn at Marion Downs between Bedourie and Boulia</li> <li>• Diamantina Developmental Road between Windorah and Bedourie at the Morney Rest Area</li> <li>• Kennedy Developmental Road between Winton and Boulia at the Hamilton Rest Area</li> <li>• Aramac-Torrens Creek Road.</li> </ul> <p>These locations are included on the Telstra coverage map at <a href="https://www.telstra.com.au/coverage-networks/our-coverage">https://www.telstra.com.au/coverage-networks/our-coverage</a>.</p> <p>The units enable Telstra customers nearby to access email, basic data, make voice calls and send and receive text messages in areas where there was previously no coverage. This provides an additional reason for motorists to stop in a safe area and refresh.</p>
	<p>Better signage is required to educate motorists about sharing the roads with trucks.</p> <p>Case Study #1 – Cars &amp; Trucks on roads Some cars don't want to share the road with trucks. We've heard of one circumstance where a truck and</p>	<p>Road safety is a top priority for TMR. When considering signage on the state-controlled network, TMR uses national standards and guidelines outlined in the <i>Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD)</i>.</p> <p>TMR can confirm that a series of road safety signs are installed on the Eyre Developmental Road (Bedourie – Birdsville), Diamantina Developmental Road</p>

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	<p>vehicle pulling a caravan came to a dead stop, facing each other, with the vehicle refusing to pull off the road to let the fully laden truck pass along the single lane bitumen. They were worried they would slide into the table drain and be unable to get out. The situation was only resolved when the truck driver negotiated that he would arrange to have the car and caravan pulled out of the drain if they did slide into it.</p> <p>For the vehicles with UHF radios, who do give way to the trucks on the Windorah – Birdsville Road, we understand that they communicate on Channel 40 by way of comments to the truck driver like, 'It's all yours. We'll get out of the way'.</p> <p>Local Governments, Safety Bodies and concerned individuals have attempted to educate caravan towers on road etiquette, however, there is no guarantee that they are aware of the <a href="#">Best Practice when sharing roads with Heavy Vehicles</a>. This increases the risk of accidents in remote areas.</p>	<p>(Windorah – Bedourie) and Birdsville Developmental Road (Morney – Birdsville). In total, there are around 30 educational signs in place on these roads.</p> <p>These educational signs are aimed at increasing awareness and understanding about various road safety matters including prompting motorists to give way to road trains. The signs are designed so that the specific safety message displayed can be changed to suit current conditions and situations. TMR will review the current safety messages displayed and update as needed to ensure they address the issues of safely sharing the road with trucks.</p> <p>Road safety signage is also in place at rest areas with tips for safe driving in Outback Queensland, including advice to give way to road trains, to slow down and move off the road.</p> <p>In addition to education signage installed on roadsides and at rest areas, the Queensland Government provides <i>QldTraffic</i> as the trusted, official source of traffic and travel information. <i>QldTraffic</i> includes a website (<a href="http://www.qldtraffic.qld.gov.au">www.qldtraffic.qld.gov.au</a>) and the 13 19 40 phone service which provides statewide information on road conditions, including incidents and hazards, closures and restrictions, roadworks and special events. Motorists can check traffic conditions and plan their journey before departure.</p> <p>The <i>QldTraffic</i> website also includes driving tips for Outback road conditions with a specific section on driving near heavy vehicles. Safe driving on Outback roads requires motorists to give way to larger vehicles. Motorists are encouraged to stay alert and drive to the road conditions, including driving safely and responsibly near heavy vehicles.</p> <p>TMR encourages motorists to review this information prior to visiting Outback Queensland.</p>
	<p>Better signage is required to educate motorists about overtaking on outback roads.</p> <p>Case Study #2 – Overtaking on dirt roads. With a full load of cattle, livestock trucks will typically move at around 60km/hour or less, on unsealed roads. This is frustratingly slow for tourists, leading some to sit behind the truck and proceed inefficiently on their journey. This creates a long queue of traffic, which is held up due to their inability to overtake on the existing gravel roads.</p>	<p>Road safety is a top priority for TMR. When considering signage on the state-controlled network, TMR uses national standards and guidelines outlined in the MUTCD.</p> <p>TMR can confirm that a series of road safety signs are installed on the Eyre Developmental Road (Bedourie – Birdsville), Diamantina Developmental Road (Windorah – Bedourie) and Birdsville Developmental Road (Morney – Birdsville). In total, there are around 30 educational signs in across these locations.</p>

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	<p>Others will attempt to overtake the truck, leading to a high risk of an accident. When the wind is blowing left to right across the unsealed roads, vehicles attempting to overtake the truck on the right-hand side will be driving into a wall of dust.</p> <p>Essentially, they will have zero visibility as they overtake at speed. If a vehicle is coming in the other direction, there is a high chance of a head on collision.</p> <p>To provide an overtaking opportunity in these circumstances, the only solution is for the truck to move to the right-hand side of the unsealed road, allowing the vehicle to overtake on the left-hand side of the road, to ensure a clear line of site during the overtaking manoeuvre. This is only possible when all drivers have UHF connection with the road train. Bitumen roads will provide safe overtaking opportunities.</p> <p><b>Moving supplies in the tourist season</b> The Queensland Government must prioritise the movement of essential supplies on unsealed outback roads, which can be severely impacted by wet weather events.</p>	<p>These educational signs are aimed at increasing awareness and understanding about various road safety matters including how to safely share the road with trucks. The signs are designed so that the specific safety message displayed can be changed to suit current conditions and situations. TMR will review the current safety messages displayed and update as needed to ensure they address the issues of safely overtaking trucks.</p> <p>Road safety signage is also in place at rest areas with tips for safe driving in Outback Queensland including advice to allow enough space for overtaking and not to follow too closely in dusty conditions.</p> <p>In addition to education signage installed on roadsides and at rest areas, the Queensland Government provides <i>QldTraffic</i> as the trusted, official source of traffic and travel information. <i>QldTraffic</i> includes a website (<a href="http://www.qldtraffic.qld.gov.au">www.qldtraffic.qld.gov.au</a>) and the 13 19 40 phone service which provides statewide information on road conditions, including incidents and hazards, closures and restrictions, roadworks and special events. Motorists can check traffic conditions and plan their journey before departure.</p> <p>The <i>QldTraffic</i> website also includes driving tips for Outback road conditions with a specific section on overtaking a road train. Motorists are encouraged to stay alert and drive to the road conditions, including driving safely and responsibly near heavy vehicles.</p> <p>TMR encourages motorists to review this information prior to visiting Outback Queensland.</p> <p>TMR's Central West District covers a vast area almost the size of Victoria and is made up of 4378 kilometres of state-controlled roads. During the past decade, TMR has delivered a program focussed on progressively sealing unsealed sections of dirt roads. Currently, only around 800 kilometres of unsealed road remains across this vast area.</p> <p>TMR will continue to monitor the state-controlled road network to ensure a safe environment for all road users and undertake improvements and upgrades in-line with available funding.</p>
	<p>Whether you are in the business of beef or tourism, resources, disaster management or Local Government, the business case for investment in our road networks should be broadened to consider the perspective of, or impact on, products and animals, as well as people.</p>	<p>TMR appreciates the detailed information provided and will consider and include this input as part of future planning projects for relevant areas of the state-controlled road network.</p>

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	<p>Case Study #3 – Fuel logistics            Fuel supplies to Birdsville are typically hauled from Quilpie via Windorah to Birdsville. During tourist season, the fuel trucks haul more fuel, more often. During the Big Red Bash, they pull 3 trailers at time, each holding 30,000 Litres of fuel. It's about 130 Tonne, per movement. During the Big Red Bash, approximately 5000 vehicles need to fill up in Birdsville.</p> <p>To cater for the fuel needs of tourists during the Big Red Bash, approximately 300 000 Litres of fuel are needed in Birdsville and another 700 000 Litres are needed in feeder towns like Windorah, Bedourie and Boulia. 300 000 Litres would typically be delivered to Birdsville from Quilpie in three truck movements.</p> <p>Last year, when rain closed the Windorah – Birdsville Road, the fuel truck had to travel from Quilpie up to Winton, across to Boulia and down to Bedourie and then Birdsville, to deliver fuel to the Birdsville community. That's an awfully long round trip and at significant costs to business. Had the Windorah to Birdsville Road been all-weather &amp; open, this detour could have been avoided.</p> <p>Ahead of the Big Red Bash in July 2023, the first movement of 94,000 Litres of fuel was hauled to Birdsville from Quilpie. The Windorah – Birdsville Road was subsequently closed due to wet weather. This necessitated a significant change in arrangements, as the next two lots of fuel had to be hauled from Townsville via Bedourie to Birdsville. These examples come at a significant cost to business.</p> <p>Case Study #4 – Essential Supplies            A fortnightly freight run currently operates out of Townsville, usually with two trailers. This service provides essential food supplies to towns enroute, including Longreach, Jundah, Windorah, Birdsville, Bedourie, Boulia and Winton. It also backhauls everything from broken down vehicles to recycling out of these small communities.</p>	<p>TMR is committed to providing fully-sealed road access to Birdsville in the shortest amount of time possible and to achieve this, has delivered a program of sealing works on the Eyre Developmental Road (Bedourie – Birdsville). In line with priorities identified by the ORRTG, this road was assessed as the priority link to Birdsville given it has the least amount of unsealed road remaining and could therefore provide fully-sealed access more efficiently than alternative routes.</p> <p>As a result, more than 36 kilometres of the road has been progressively sealed since 2019 through five separate projects totalling an investment of \$23 million. There is currently only 15.7 kilometres of unsealed road remaining between Bedourie and Birdsville.</p> <p>Works have also been delivered to improve the Birdsville Developmental Road (Morney – Birdsville) which provides access between Birdsville and Windorah. During the past five years, \$9.24 million in sealing has been delivered on this 265-kilometre-long road, further reducing the length of unsealed sections to 196.7 kilometres.</p> <p>The Eyre Developmental Road (Bedourie – Birdsville) and Birdsville Developmental Road (Morney – Birdsville) now represent the two highest ranked unsealed road priorities in TMR's Central Queensland Region.</p> <p>In consideration of their priority status, TMR's long-term strategy is to secure funding, through various state and federal government programs, to strengthen connectivity, communities and industry.</p> <p>TMR recognises the significant and far-reaching benefits of this approach, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• improved transport efficiency and reliability</li> <li>• improved road surface conditions contributing to lower maintenance costs</li> <li>• increased freight efficiency and trip reliability</li> <li>• improved road user safety</li> <li>• improved access to healthcare</li> <li>• improved access to education</li> <li>• employment, training and business development opportunities for Indigenous and non-Indigenous people.</li> </ul> <p>In relation to raising causeways on these sections of the state-controlled road network, TMR notes that sealing these roads will ultimately transition to requirements for improvements in the average annual time of closure for the road network. An improved overall road standard will be achieved when decreases in</p>

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	<p>Last year, during the Birdsville Races, the Windorah – Birdsville Road closed, following local rain. The freight truck was enroute to Birdsville ex Townsville, to deliver essential supplies to racegoers. It was stopped in Windorah due to the road closure. On this occasion, it was necessary for the truck to divert north to Winton and further north to Mt Isa before it could travel 685kms south to Birdsville.</p> <p>In both these examples, the operators could have simply cancelled their runs, returned to base and restarted a week later after the roads had dried out. Fortunately, for the thousands of racegoers and bashers who were stranded in Birdsville, they found an alternate route into Birdsville.</p> <p>A bitumen seal on the Windorah – Birdsville Road, plus higher causeways would;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• improve trafficability in wet weather</li> <li>• reduce wear and tear on tyres and trailers for vehicles and trucks</li> <li>• reduce pressure on truck drivers with regards to fatigue management</li> <li>• avoid the pressure on stretched local operators to serve tourists who are stranded in the outback, due to wet weather and inaccessible roads.</li> </ul> <p>Communications There is limited mobile-phone coverage, a patchy UHF network and unreliable sat phone coverage in the Channel Country. When you don't have the connectivity you need, operational decision-making is hindered, and lives can be lost, especially in summer when it's hot and there are not many people about.</p>	<p>the average annual time of closure is achieved for all segments on the road network. This maturing of the network reflects the use of floodways and small culverts to upgraded channel crossings and larger culverts or bridges to manage standing water and average rain events.</p> <p>As part of ongoing works to improve the state-controlled road network surrounding Birdsville and more broadly within the Central West District, TMR developed an initiative to improve mobile phone connectivity while reducing driver fatigue and improving road safety.</p> <p>In 2022, TMR arranged for the installation of six Telstra 4GX small cell units at the following locations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Birdsville Developmental Road at Rainbow Serpent Rest Area near Betoota between Morney and Birdsville</li> <li>• Eyre Developmental Road at Cacoory Bore Rest Area between Birdsville and Bedourie</li> <li>• Diamantina Developmental Road near the Tropic of Capricorn at Marion Downs between Bedourie and Boulia</li> <li>• Diamantina Developmental Road between Windorah and Bedourie at the Morney Rest Area</li> <li>• Kennedy Developmental Road between Winton and Boulia at the Hamilton Rest Area</li> <li>• Aramac-Torrens Creek Road.</li> </ul> <p>These locations are included on the Telstra coverage map at <a href="https://www.telstra.com.au/coverage-networks/our-coverage">https://www.telstra.com.au/coverage-networks/our-coverage</a>.</p> <p>The units enable Telstra customers nearby to access email, basic data, make voice calls and send and receive text messages in areas where there was previously no coverage. This provides an additional reason for motorists to stop in a safe area and refresh.</p>
	<p>Improved maintenance of UHF Repeaters</p> <p>Case Study #5 – A car accident, 2 kms on the Windorah side of the Cadelga turnoff In June 2023, a livestock hauler, fully laden with certified</p>	<p>TMR is aware that large parts of the Central West District remain without mobile phone coverage and developed an initiative to help improve connectivity while reducing driver fatigue and improving road safety.</p>

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	<p>organic livestock, came across a single vehicle rollover on the Windorah – Birdsville Road. Unable to get a signal on his sat phone or connect with anyone via UHF, he could not call emergency services. His only option was to sit with the injured driver next to the wreck of her car and wait. When another car came across the accident, he left her in their capable hands and jumped back in his truck heading towards Betoota.</p> <p>Down the road a bit, travelling in the opposite direction, heading west towards Birdsville, was a local station manager. He flagged him down and ask him to turn around and travel as quickly as possible back to Betoota, to raise the alarm. He knew that he would get their quicker than a truck fully laden with livestock.</p> <p>We recommend the Committee consider the data and information which flows between stakeholders who use the Windorah-Birdsville and Birdsville – Bedourie roads and whether the communication infrastructure is adequate and maintained. Could this data and information be useful for safety, compliance, traceability, biosecurity or disaster risk management purposes, if it were more accessible?</p> <p>Agricultural supply chains like ours contribute millions of dollars to the nation’s economy each year. Unfortunately, we have more real-time information coming to us from temperature trackers sitting in our boxed beef in a warehouse in Los Angeles or Jakarta, than we do from our supply chain in Australia.</p> <p>The maintenance of UHF Repeaters is a shared responsibility between Local Governments, State Government and Private Landholders depending on the location and what agreements have been reached. It is not acceptable that private landholders or a remote Local Government should be responsible for maintaining a network that is essential for public safety.</p>	<p>As part of ongoing works to improve the state-controlled road network surrounding Birdsville and more broadly within the Central West District, TMR developed an initiative to improve mobile phone connectivity while reducing driver fatigue and improving road safety.</p> <p>In 2022, TMR arranged for the installation of six Telstra 4GX small cell units at the following locations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Birdsville Developmental Road at Rainbow Serpent Rest Area near Betoota between Morney and Birdsville</li> <li>• Eyre Developmental Road at Cacoory Bore Rest Area between Birdsville and Bedourie</li> <li>• Diamantina Developmental Road near the Tropic of Capricorn at Marion Downs between Bedourie and Boulia</li> <li>• Diamantina Developmental Road between Windorah and Bedourie at the Morney Rest Area</li> <li>• Kennedy Developmental Road between Winton and Boulia at the Hamilton Rest Area</li> <li>• Aramac-Torrens Creek Road.</li> </ul> <p>These locations are included on the Telstra coverage map at <a href="https://www.telstra.com.au/coverage-networks/our-coverage">https://www.telstra.com.au/coverage-networks/our-coverage</a>.</p> <p>The units enable Telstra customers nearby to access email, basic data, make voice calls and send and receive text messages in areas where there was previously no coverage. This provides an additional reason for motorists to stop in a safe area and refresh.</p> <p>Importantly, this communication infrastructure provides an additional safety element with all mobile-users (including non-Telstra customers) able to contact emergency services in areas where mobile coverage was previously non-existent.</p>
	<p>Road Reporting The current mechanism for reporting road closures is not</p>	<p>Qld <i>Traffic</i> is the trusted, official source of traffic and travel information from the Queensland Government. Qld <i>Traffic</i> includes a website (<a href="http://www.qldtraffic.qld.gov.au">www.qldtraffic.qld.gov.au</a>)</p>

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	<p>always accurate.</p> <p>A more localised road reporting system is required for Western Queensland.</p> <p>Case Study #6 – Road Condition Information - QLDTraffic In early July 2023, during the Big Red Bash, the Queensland Government’s traffic website <a href="http://www.qldtraffic.qld.gov.au">www.qldtraffic.qld.gov.au</a> listed the Birdsville – Bedourie Road as closed to all traffic. In fact, this was the only road that was open into Birdsville. When you have 5000+ tourist vehicles heading to the Big Red Bash, road users need accurate information on the condition of roads in order to make informed decisions. A more localised road reporting system for Western Queensland would solve this issue. The Queensland Government Department of Transport &amp; Main Roads should ensure that, within all remote Local Governments, there is an approved inspector of Main Roads to avoid having to rely on an employee being tasked from other areas such as Toowoomba.</p> <p>Health &amp; Wellbeing The community of Birdsville is distinctly disadvantaged when compared to similar-sized communities with all-weather road access. Specialist services like the <a href="#">Heart of Australia</a> ‘Heart Bus’ and the <a href="#">RFDS Dental Service</a> cannot reach Birdsville due to the condition of the unsealed roads between Birdsville and Bedourie and Birdsville and Windorah.</p>	<p>and the 13 19 40 phone service which provides statewide information on road conditions, including incidents and hazards, closures and restrictions, roadworks and special events. Motorists can check traffic conditions and plan their journey before departure.</p> <p>In TMR’s Central West District, <i>QldTraffic</i> is updated using information provided by appointed routine maintenance service providers in collaboration with TMR. The routine maintenance service providers typically include relevant local governments that conduct on-the-ground assessments and use local knowledge to inform the reporting system.</p> <p>TMR recognises that at times, there are delays or inaccuracies in reporting due to a range of factors however is confident these matters are quickly resolved. For the incident mentioned, TMR has consulted with the <i>QLDTraffic</i> team who has confirmed that the Eyre Developmental Road (Bedourie – Birdsville) was not closed at any stage during the Big Red Bash and was not reported as closed on <i>QLDTraffic</i>. This road remained open for the duration, safeguarding access to Birdsville.</p> <p>In addition to working closely with local governments, TMR’s Central West District employs a number of road inspectors to assist in managing the road network and road projects. Suitably qualified and experienced road inspectors are allocated to support each local government area and are based locally in TMR offices in Barcaldine and Winton.</p> <p>TMR is committed to providing fully-sealed road access to Birdsville in the shortest amount of time possible. To achieve this the department has delivered a program of sealing works on the Eyre Developmental Road (Bedourie – Birdsville). In line with priorities identified by the ORRTG, this road was assessed as the priority link to Birdsville given it has the least amount of unsealed road remaining and could therefore provide fully sealed access more efficiently than alternative routes.</p> <p>As a result, more than 36 kilometres of the road has been progressively sealed since 2019 through five separate projects totalling an investment of \$23 million. There is currently only 15.7 kilometres of unsealed road remaining between Bedourie and Birdsville.</p> <p>The Eyre Developmental Road (Bedourie – Birdsville) is the highest ranked unsealed road priority in TMR’s Central Queensland Region. In consideration of their priority status, TMR’s long-term strategy is to secure funding, through various</p>

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		<p>state and federal government programs, to strengthen connectivity, communities and industry.</p> <p>TMR understands the importance of fully sealing this link in improving the liveability of Birdsville and acknowledges benefits include providing safe, efficient and reliable transport to improve access to essential services like health and education, vital goods and services, and employment opportunities.</p>
	<p>The challenges with Queensland's Regional Road infrastructure, for supply chains like ours, is not limited to the Windorah – Birdsville and Birdsville – Bedourie Roads</p> <p>We recommend that the Queensland Government take this opportunity to consider the improvements which are necessary for safety purposes, to the Charleville – Quilpie and Quilpie - Windorah Roads.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The width of the bitumen on the road is too narrow in parts, for the white line which has been painted down the middle. It is not possible for a truck and vehicle to pass safely, whilst both vehicles attempt to stay 100% on the bitumen. A reasonable person would assume that if they stayed to the left of the white line and the other vehicle stayed to the right of the white line, then they would be able to pass safely, whilst remaining entirely on the bitumen. This is not the case.</li> <li>• On the Quilpie – Windorah Road, the width of the bitumen on the road is too narrow in parts, for a road which has been built up very high. When it gets wet, tourists do not want to move off the bitumen to allow the trucks to pass as they are scared that they will slide into the table drain.</li> <li>• On the Quilpie – Windorah Road, there is a corner about 80kms from Windorah, which if you come around at pace, could be deadly.</li> </ul>	<p>Safety is TMR's highest priority. TMR appreciates the information provided and will ensure awareness with relevant district offices, so that it can be considered as part of any future planning projects for these roads.</p>

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<p>No. 6 Arrabury Pastoral Company</p>	<p><b>Concerns</b> Large portions of the Windorah – Birdsville Road remains unsealed.</p> <p><b>Possible Solution</b> Improved trafficability of existing roads through the region by investing in laying of bitumen for overtaking lanes which will increase the safety for all travellers.</p> <p><b>Concerns</b> Rain events lead to road closures which impact the movement of people, livestock and supplies.</p> <p><b>Possible Solution</b> Raising creek crossings by way of box culverts or similar so that in average rain events roads are not cut.</p> <p><b>Concerns</b> There are a number of creeks which, when they are running, hold up the movement of transport during rain events which has huge impact on making delivery schedules and the delivery of goods and supplies to the stations and towns which are vital for care and wellness of the people who live at these stations and local communities.</p> <p><b>Possible Solution</b> Creating an opportunity to invest in laying bitumen on these regional roads to better serve the region not just for the local communities but the ever-increasing tourist traffic, which is great for the communities, but puts a great burden on maintaining roads to a safe standard for all modes of transport which use these roads.</p> <p>Consideration should also be made to the future promotion of tourism and events that are held in these remote locations without any infrastructure upgrade programmes so that local businesses and communities are not inconvenienced by the destruction to the road network that these events create.</p>	<p>TMR is committed to providing fully sealed road access to Birdsville in the shortest amount of time possible and to achieve this, has delivered a program of sealing works on the Eyre Developmental Road (Bedourie – Birdsville).</p> <p>In line with priorities identified by the ORRTG, this road was assessed as the priority link to Birdsville given it has the least amount of unsealed road remaining and could therefore provide fully sealed access more efficiently than alternative routes.</p> <p>As a result, more than 36 kilometres of the road has been progressively sealed since 2019 through five separate projects totalling an investment of \$23 million. There is currently only 15.7 kilometres of unsealed road remaining between Bedourie and Birdsville.</p> <p>However, works have also been delivered to improve the Birdsville Developmental Road (Morney – Birdsville), which provides access between Birdsville and Windorah. During the past five years, \$9.24 million in sealing has been delivered on this 265-kilometre-long road, further reducing the length of unsealed sections to 196.7 kilometres.</p> <p>It is noted there are technical and cost complexities involved with upgrading the state-controlled road network near Birdsville given the significant river catchments in the surrounding landscape which form part of the extensive Lake Eyre Basin. The Lake Eyre Basin covers about 1.2 million square kilometres, or almost one-sixth of Australia, and is among the world's largest internally draining river systems.</p> <p>Despite this, as the Eyre Developmental Road (Bedourie – Birdsville) and Birdsville Developmental Road (Morney – Birdsville) now represent the two highest ranked unsealed road priorities in TMR's Central Queensland Region. In consideration of their priority status, TMR's long-term strategy is to secure funding, through various state and federal government programs, to strengthen connectivity, communities and industry. This commitment will improve road safety and all-weather access to Birdsville.</p> <p>TMR recognises the significant and far-reaching benefits from sealing these roads, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• improved transport efficiency and reliability</li> <li>• improved road surface conditions contributing to lower maintenance costs</li> <li>• increased freight efficiency and trip reliability</li> <li>• improved road user safety</li> </ul>

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• improved access to healthcare</li> <li>• improved access to education</li> <li>• employment, training and business development opportunities for Indigenous and non-Indigenous people.</li> </ul> <p>In relation to raising creek crossings as part of current and ongoing upgrade works, TMR notes that sealing these roads will ultimately transition to requirements for improvements in the average annual time of closure for the road network. An improved overall road standard will be achieved when decreases in the average annual time of closure is achieved for all segments on the road network. This maturing of the network reflects the use of floodways and small culverts to upgraded channel crossings and larger culverts or bridges to manage standing water and average rain events.</p> <p>While TMR acknowledges the tourism sector in Outback Queensland is vital to the Queensland's economy, it does not play a role in the promotion of events. However, at a local level TMR is confident that the appointed routine maintenance service providers work in a timely manner to address any road impacts associated with increased traffic from events, to ensure a safe environment for all road users. This approach is consistent with prescribed requirements outlined in the TMR's Routine Maintenance Guidelines.</p>
<p>No. 7 Livestock and Rural Transporters Association of Queensland Inc</p>	<p>We recommend that the roads between Birdsville and Bedourie and from Birdsville to Windorah be sealed with bitumen at an appropriate width to all to allow for safe passing of oncoming traffic.</p> <p>This will improve trafficability in wet weather, reduce wear and tear on tyres and trailers for vehicles and trucks and reduce pressure on truck drivers with regards to fatigue management.</p>	<p>TMR acknowledges the contribution made by the Central West District to Queensland's agriculture industry with the area delivering around 30 per cent of Queensland's gross output for products such as livestock (Source: 2021 Annual Report – Remote Area Planning and Development Board).</p> <p>TMR is committed to providing fully sealed road access to Birdsville in the shortest amount of time possible and to achieve this, has delivered a program of sealing works on the Eyre Developmental Road (Bedourie – Birdsville). In line with priorities identified by the ORRTG, this road was assessed as the priority link to Birdsville given it has the least amount of unsealed road remaining and could therefore provide fully sealed access more efficiently than alternative routes.</p> <p>As a result, more than 36 kilometres of the road has been progressively sealed since 2019 through five separate projects totalling an investment of \$23 million. There is currently only 15.7 kilometres of unsealed road remaining between Bedourie and Birdsville.</p> <p>Works have also been delivered to improve the Birdsville Developmental Road (Morney – Birdsville) which provides access between Birdsville and Windorah.</p>

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		<p>During the past five years, \$9.24 million in sealing has been delivered on this 265-kilometre-long road, further reducing the length of unsealed sections to 196.7 kilometres.</p> <p>The Eyre Developmental Road (Bedourie – Birdsville) and Birdsville Developmental Road (Morney – Birdsville) now represent the two highest ranked unsealed road priorities in TMR's Central Queensland Region. In consideration of their priority status, TMR's long-term strategy is to secure funding, through various state and federal government programs, to strengthen connectivity, communities and industry.</p> <p>This commitment will improve road safety and all-weather access to Birdsville and provide significant and far-reaching benefits including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• improved transport efficiency and reliability</li> <li>• improved road surface conditions contributing to lower maintenance costs</li> <li>• increased freight efficiency and trip reliability</li> <li>• improved road user safety</li> <li>• improved access to healthcare</li> <li>• improved access to education</li> <li>• employment, training and business development opportunities for Indigenous and non-Indigenous people.</li> </ul>
<p>No. 8 Outback Music Festival Group Pty Ltd</p>	<p>Condition of roads on return trip from the festival due to the large number of vehicles have travelled to Birdsville and back towing their vans, the road deteriorates significantly with corrugations, ruts, loose rocks and soft bulldust hole sections. This causes significant challenges for people's trips home after the festival.</p> <p>The issue of the timing of the Birdsville Races, another major event that attracts huge crowds, is staged only 7 weeks after the Big Red Bash.</p> <p>There is insufficient time for the councils to properly regrade and repair the roads damaged by Big Red Bash traffic.</p> <p>Impact of significant rain to the roads during the time of festival.</p>	<p>TMR is confident that the locally appointed routine maintenance service providers work in a timely manner to address any road impacts associated with increased traffic from events, to ensure a safe environment for all road users.</p> <p>TMR recognises its RMPC providers deliver maintenance works within the Routine Maintenance Guidelines and take action to maintain a safe environment for all motorists in-line with prescribed intervention levels and response times.</p> <p>The respective routine maintenance service providers have not advised TMR of any difficulties in maintaining the road network due to the timing of the Big Red Bash and Birdsville Races.</p> <p>TMR notes that rainfall immediately prior to the Big Red Bash held on 4 – 6 July 2023 impacted road access to Birdsville, however access was maintained at all times via the Eyre Developmental Road (Bedourie – Birdsville) including the Lake Machattie detour.</p>

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No. 9 Rural Organics	<p>I totally endorse this OBE submission.</p> <p>OBE supplies a world class product which is exported to markets throughout the world as well as to their fellow Australians. So in turn It is only right and fair that the conditions where their product is produced are continually assessed and kept up to that high standard as well in this day and age.</p> <p>Also as discussed by OBE services used by those in the area of Birdsville, Windorah and Bedourie include Local operators servicing tourists which includes the annual Birdsville races and the Red Bash Health services and essential supplies.</p> <p>My property is outback on the Barrier Highway. In fact there is one point on it that is 900 kilometres from Melbourne, Sydney, Canberra and Adelaide. This Barrier highway gives crucial access and service to many critical areas from Perth through to Brisbane simply because there are sealed roads. In which case it is only in severe exceptional circumstances that it is un accessible.</p> <p>I firmly believe that the Queensland government needs to be striving to service this same access to the Birdsville, Windorah and Bedourie area in which Case open it up to the world just as OBE services the world markets and can continue to serve without poor unnecessary road transport access problems.</p>	<p>TMR understands the importance of the state-controlled road network in supporting the long-term growth of industries, including agriculture and freight by strengthening supply chains, reducing travel times and decreasing costs to operators.</p> <p>TMR also acknowledges the tourism sector in Outback Queensland is vital to Queensland's economy and appreciates the role of the state-controlled road network in sustaining and growing tourism.</p> <p>The townships of Birdsville, Windorah and Bedourie are located within TMR's Central West District, which is the largest in Queensland covering a vast area almost the size of Victoria. It stretches from east of Alpha to the Northern Territory border in the west, with the southern boundary extending south of Windorah to Birdsville, near the South Australian Border and stretching north to just south of Mount Isa.</p> <p>The district is made up of 4378 kilometres of state-controlled roads and during the past decade, TMR has delivered a program of works focused primarily on progressively sealing unsealed sections of dirt roads. Currently, only around 800 kilometres of unsealed road remains across this vast area.</p> <p>In the past five years, TMR has invested more than \$32 million in sealing additional sections of key state-controlled roads near Birdsville including the Eyre Developmental Road (Bedourie – Birdsville) and Birdsville Developmental Road (Morney – Birdsville). As a result of this focussed effort, only 15.7 kilometres of unsealed road remains between Bedourie and Birdsville.</p> <p>As the Eyre Developmental Road (Bedourie – Birdsville) and Birdsville Developmental Road (Morney – Birdsville) are the two highest ranked unsealed road priorities in TMR's Central Queensland Region, TMR's long-term strategy is to secure funding, through various state and federal government programs, to strengthen connectivity, communities and industry.</p>
No. 10 Syngensis	<p>Pavement construction Pty Ltd (PCL) is the Queensland based parent entity for Polypave® an innovative, non-toxic Australian '<i>polymer</i>' roads construction technology. Additional information is attached for your perusal and further technical details are available on request.</p> <p>Infrastructure built with Polypave® will resolve Queensland's regional roads (and rail) challenges.</p>	<p>TMR provides standards, guidelines, specifications and other technical information relevant to safely building, maintaining and operating the state-controlled road network.</p> <p>In 2013–14, TMR implemented the Australian Road Research Board's Transport Infrastructure Product Evaluation Scheme (TIPES) certified process to assess the suitability of products for use on the state-controlled road network. TIPES is a national scheme that provides an independent, fit-for-purpose</p>

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	<p>Polypave® will assist the Committee to deliver a long lasting, resilient solution to demonstrate its performance for future regional infrastructure projects.</p>	<p>assessment of road construction products that fall outside the scope of established standards, supporting innovative, durable and cost-effective transport infrastructure.</p> <p>TMR can confirm that the Polypave® product is currently being assessed by the Australian Road Research Board under the TIPES certified process.</p> <p>TMR is always open to constructive discussions about innovative products and services.</p>
<p>No. 11 Birdsville Race Club</p>	<p>Roads to and from the Birdsville Races are always at the mercy of the elements.</p> <p>In 2016 rain forced road closures for multiple days and in 2010 over 4000 people were stranded in Birdsville for 3 days post races.</p> <p>Forced road closures can be catastrophic financially for the club and other businesses but perhaps more importantly is safety.</p>	<p>TMR acknowledges the Queensland Government recognises the Birdsville Races as a “world-renowned” event and appreciates the detailed information provided. This input will be considered and included where relevant as part of future planning projects for upgrades to the state-controlled road network near Birdsville.</p> <p>Birdsville is located in TMR's Central West District which is the largest in Queensland, covering a vast area almost the size of Victoria. It stretches from east of Alpha to the Northern Territory border in the west, with the southern boundary extending south of Windorah to Birdsville, near the South Australian Border and stretching north to just south of Mount Isa.</p> <p>The district is made up of 4378 kilometres of state-controlled roads and during the past decade, TMR has delivered a program focused primarily on progressively sealing unsealed sections of dirt roads. This has resulted in only around 800 kilometres of unsealed road remaining across this vast area.</p> <p>Specifically in the Birdsville area, TMR has invested more than \$32 million in the past five years to seal additional sections of the Eyre Developmental Road (Bedourie – Birdsville) and Birdsville Developmental Road (Morney – Birdsville). Only 15.7 kilometres of unsealed road now remains between Bedourie and Birdsville.</p> <p>This focus on sealing dirt roads is delivering important improvements in road safety, travel reliability and efficiency across the Central West.</p> <p>As the Eyre Developmental Road (Bedourie – Birdsville) and Birdsville Developmental Road (Morney – Birdsville) are now the two highest ranked unsealed road priorities in TMR's Central Queensland Region, there is a long-term strategy to secure funding, through various state and federal government programs, to strengthen connectivity, communities and industry.</p>

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		<p>This approach will ultimately provide fully sealed access to Birdsville with benefits for local businesses, industry and the community, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• improved transport efficiency and reliability</li> <li>• improved road surface conditions contributing to lower maintenance costs</li> <li>• increased freight efficiency and trip reliability</li> <li>• improved road user safety</li> <li>• improved access to healthcare</li> <li>• improved access to education</li> <li>• employment, training and business development opportunities for Indigenous and non-Indigenous people.</li> </ul> <p>TMR acknowledges the tourism sector in Outback Queensland is vital to Queensland's economy and appreciates the importance of the state-controlled road network in providing the enabling infrastructure needed to support and grow various industries, including tourism.</p> <p>TMR will continue to monitor the state-controlled road network to ensure a safe environment for all road users and undertake improvements and upgrades in-line with available funding.</p>
<p>No. 12 Birdsville Roadhouse</p>	<p>I own and operate the two service stations in town, which in addition to providing fuel, also supply groceries, postal services and automotive repairs. As a business owner who relies on the road network for delivery of critical supplies, I am grateful for this opportunity to provide some additional insight for this public hearing.</p> <p>Connection, in all its forms, throughout regional and remote areas underpins the sustainability of these communities and allows us to live a life of relative convenience, somewhat similar to that of our coastal cousins. Now whilst I am fully aware that we may not hold the same power in terms of votes garnered, I do believe that we punch above our weight when it comes to natural resources, tourism and agriculture.</p> <p>I have spent most of my 36 years living in Birdsville and it still astounds me that we do not have a fully sealed access road from any direction.</p> <p>Living in this reality, we understand that freight costs are likely to be higher with transport companies having to</p>	<p>TMR acknowledges that Birdsville is the only township in the Central West District that does not have fully sealed access and has invested more than \$32 million in the past five years to seal additional sections of two key links including the Eyre Developmental Road (Bedourie – Birdsville) and Birdsville Developmental Road (Morney – Birdsville). Through this focussed effort, only 15.7 kilometres of the Eyre Developmental Road remains unsealed.</p> <p>As the Eyre Developmental Road (Bedourie – Birdsville) and Birdsville Developmental Road (Morney – Birdsville) now represent the two highest ranked unsealed road priorities in TMR's Central Queensland Region, TMR's long-term strategy is to secure funding, through various state and federal government programs, to strengthen connectivity, communities and industry.</p> <p>In delivering future upgrades to the state-controlled network near Birdsville, TMR notes there are technical and cost complexities involved given the significant river catchments in the surrounding landscape which form part of the extensive Lake Eyre Basin. The Lake Eyre Basin covers about 1.2 million square kilometres, or almost one-sixth of Australia, and is among the world's largest internally draining river systems.</p>

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	<p>navigate dirt roads, that sometimes supplies might be delayed due to road conditions, and that in some cases it might be many weeks, or indeed months between resupplies.</p> <p>And whilst we certainly understand that mother nature often cuts off many communities throughout Queensland, the difference is that our roads do not require extreme weather events to be closed.</p> <p>It's not the one in fifty-year flooding event or the one in one hundred year storm that we are here to talk about.</p> <p>It's the fact that ten to twenty millimetres of rain can seriously impact on supply chains.</p> <p>In 2023 Birdsville should not continue to be held ransom by the weather.</p> <p>Local businesses shouldn't need to be concerned that a small amount of rainfall is going to result in cancelled bookings, running out of fuel, food going to waste, or supplies not getting here.</p> <p>An example of this is that in 2022 I was left with seven pallets of ice after the Birdsville Races, when the supply truck had to turn around at Windorah due to a very small section of the road being closed after rain. After making a long detour, by the time it arrived most of the visitors in town had left. Not even considering all the fresh produce that went to waste, I don't think you need to be a rocket scientist to work out that a town of 100 won't use 1365 bags of ice before the bill is due.</p> <p>While there is no doubt that we have developed skills and processes for dealing with this uncertainty, I for one would be pleased to be rid of this added challenge in operating a remote business, and be able to focus more on building business and providing locals and visitors with a better experience.</p> <p>After all, tourism is what sustains the Birdsville community, and while the town may survive without it, it certainly won't</p>	<p>Sealing these roads will ultimately transition to requirements for improvements in the average annual time of closure for the road network. An improved overall road standard will be achieved when decreases in the average annual time of closure is achieved for all segments on the road network. This maturing of the network reflects the use of floodways and small culverts to upgraded channel crossings and larger culverts or bridges to manage standing water and average rain events.</p> <p>TMR understands the importance of fully sealing road access to Birdsville and the far-reaching benefits this would deliver to local businesses, industry and communities including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• improved transport efficiency and reliability</li> <li>• improved road surface conditions contributing to lower maintenance costs</li> <li>• increased freight efficiency and trip reliability</li> <li>• improved road user safety</li> <li>• improved access to healthcare</li> <li>• improved access to education</li> <li>• employment, training and business development opportunities for Indigenous and non-Indigenous people.</li> </ul> <p>TMR acknowledges the tourism sector in Outback Queensland is vital to Queensland's economy and appreciates the importance of the state-controlled road network in providing the enabling infrastructure needed to support and grow a variety of industries, including tourism.</p>

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	<p>thrive.</p> <p>As a business owner I am looking for ways to make Birdsville a year round destination, and while the idea of encouraging travellers to visit in summer may sound ludicrous, the fact remains that in order for business to survive in these towns we need more than a 5 month window for generating revenue.</p> <p>With most of Australia's population living between Brisbane and Melbourne, it makes sense that the easiest access route for most of these visitors is going to be via Windorah, and if we want to see Birdsville and the towns along the way benefit, then we need to be looking at the crucial role that road conditions play in ensuring people are confident to make plans to visit.</p> <p>If the local community and visitors can have this confidence in access, then our ability to plan for the future, attract more residents, and to invest in the infrastructure required to serve a growing customer base, will ultimately ensure that towns like Birdsville remain viable and thriving for the next generation.</p>	