

Neil Scales

Director-General
Department of Transport and Main Roads
Brisbane QLD 4000

1 March 2019

Dear Mr Scales

RE: Queensland Regional Transport Plans Consultation Response

Thank you for providing the opportunity to review and provide feedback on the consultation draft of the Queensland Regional Transport Plans (the Plans).

Engineers Australia is the national peak body of the engineering profession. We are a professional association with about 100 000 individual members. Established in 1919, Engineers Australia is a not for profit organisation constituted by Royal Charter to advance the science and practice of engineering for the benefit of the community.

This submission has been informed by members, especially those who form the Transport Australia Society Queensland (TAs). TAs is an Engineers Australia technical society and home for transport professionals in Queensland. TAs QLD focusses on key transport decisions affecting the well-being, productivity and sustainability of Queensland cities and regions. TAs is motivated to promote sound and consistent transport planning approaches across Australia, advocating for planning frameworks by government to guide sustainable growth.

Engineers Australia welcomes the publication of the draft Regional Transport Plans for Queensland by the Department of Transport and Main Roads and acknowledges the inherent complexity of producing consistent planning documents in an inconsistent planning environment.

The Plans, to be delivered within the Australian Transport Planning and Assessment Framework, must connect regional and state land use planning to advance the government's broader infrastructure objectives for integrated growth, resilience and sustainability for the community, economy and environment.

The cascading principles for infrastructure investment for *reform, better use, improve existing and new*, embedded within the State Infrastructure Plan and the Transport Coordination Plan should provide further information detailing the application of these principles in project plans and strategies.

The recent adoption in 2017 of the South East Queensland Regional Plan, *ShapingSEQ*, provides South East Queensland with a framework for regional growth. It is noted that the South East Queensland Regional Transport Plan covers only part of the area covered by *ShapingSEQ*. Western extents of *ShapingSEQ* are covered by the Darling Downs Regional Transport Plan. Variances in the comparative structure of the two planning documents must not inhibit the integrated development of infrastructure to recognise the importance of resilient transport links from the west.

The Plans demonstrate a commitment to best practice transport planning underpinned by principles which support a connected, sustainable and resilient transport network to promote productivity and

growth. Whilst adhering to solid transport planning principles, each Regional Transport Plan should be supported by an Implementation Plan to develop the path from Regional Transport Plans to capital expenditure or operating expenditure. Currently, the implementation plans¹ link the Regional Transport Plans to the capital and operations investment via project definition and prioritisation in consultation with partners.

Whilst the challenges of setting specific targets for diverse communities spanning varied geographic and societal contexts and in the absence of fixed funding are acknowledged, it is recommended that *success* is clearly defined in order to provide a baseline. Once the baseline for success is established, progress is measurable and should be reported against annually.

Transport is undergoing significant disruption and change, and it is difficult to accurately predict the opportunities and challenges set to emerge in the next 15 years. We therefore encourage the Department to schedule periodic reviews of the Plans to ensure the content and objectives remain contextually relevant.

It is unclear whether the success of the Plans is reliant on an ongoing committed funding stream. Infrastructure funding models must consider changing commuter behaviour as we move towards electrification, automation and connectivity of a shared transport network.

It is understood the documents have been compiled with key governmental, peak body and community stakeholder engagement. It is recommended that broad community engagement remains a priority as key milestones are approached and at regular intervals in accordance with changes to the market and technological advances.

On behalf of our members, Engineers Australia would like to congratulate the Department of Transport and Main Roads on the work and objectives in the Regional Transport Plans and we look forward to supporting progress. Thank you once again for the opportunity to provide comment and for taking the time to consider the above.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me via email at sgrady@engineersaustralia.org.au or via telephone on (02) 6270 6195.

Yours faithfully,

Sybilla Grady
Policy Advisor

¹ Draft Regional Transport Plan, South West Region, 2018, Page 62, Figure 13, *Regional Transport Plans are a critical step in Transport and Main Roads Investment lifecycle.*